

Dashing Through the Snow: A Christmas Novel

By Debbie Macomber

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NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • Savor the magic of the season with Debbie Macomber’s newest Christmas novel, filled with warmth, humor, the promise of love, and a dash of unexpected adventure.

Ashley Davison, a graduate student in California, desperately wants to spend the holidays with her family in Seattle. Dashiell Sutherland, a former army intelligence officer, has a job interview in Seattle and must arrive by December 23. Though frantic to book a last-minute flight out of San Francisco, both are out of luck: Every flight is full, and there’s only one rental car available. Ashley and Dash reluctantly decide to share the car, but neither anticipates the wild ride ahead.

At first they drive in silence, but forced into close quarters Ashley and Dash can’t help but open up. Not only do they find they have a lot in common, but there’s even a spark of romance in the air. Their feelings catch them off guard—never before has either been so excited about a first meeting. But the two are in for more twists and turns along the way as they rescue a lost puppy, run into petty thieves, and even get caught up in a case of mistaken identity. Though Ashley and Dash may never reach Seattle in time for Christmas, the season is still full of surprises—and their greatest wishes may yet come true.

Praise for *Dashing Through the Snow* and Debbie Macomber

“Wonderful and heartwarming . . . full of fun, laughter, and love.”—*Romance Reviews Today*


“This Christmas romance from [Debbie] Macomber is both sweet and sincere.”—*Library Journal*

“There’s just the right amount of holiday cheer. . . . This road-trip romance is full of high jinks and the kooky characters Macomber does so well.”—*RT Book Reviews*

“Macomber’s name is almost as closely linked to Christmas reading as that of

Charles Dickens.”—*The Romance Dish*, on *Mr. Miracle*

From the Hardcover edition.

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Editorial Review

Review

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About the Author

Debbie Macomber, the author of *Silver Linings*, *Last One Home*, *Love Letters*, *Mr. Miracle*, *Blossom Street Brides*, and *Rose Harbor in Bloom*, is a leading voice in women’s fiction. Nine of her novels have hit #1 on the *New York Times* bestseller lists, and three of her beloved Christmas novels have been hit movies on the Hallmark Channel, including *Mrs. Miracle* and *Mr. Miracle*. In 2013, Hallmark Channel began production on the original series *Debbie Macomber’s Cedar Cove*, based on Macomber’s Cedar Cove books. She has more than 170 million copies of her books in print worldwide.

From the Hardcover edition.

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Chapter One

“What? Are you kidding?” Ashley Davison couldn’t believe what she was hearing. The reservation clerk for Highland Airlines glanced up nervously. “I’m sorry, but I can’t sell you a ticket to Seattle. If you’d kindly step aside and wait a few minutes—”

“Can’t or won’t?” Ashley cut in, growing more frustrated and worried by the minute. She drew in a deep breath in an effort to control her patience. The woman behind the desk, whose name tag identified her as Stephanie, was clearly having a bad day. Getting upset with her, Ashley realized, wasn’t going to help the situation. She made a determined effort to lower her voice and remain cool-headed.

“I .??. I can’t. I’m sorry .??.”

Ashley refused to take no for an answer. Surprising her mother by flying home for Christmas was too important. “I understand getting a ticket to Seattle three days before Christmas is pushing my luck,” she said, doing her best to appear calm and composed. “If I’d been able to book a seat sooner, I would have. Getting Christmas off from work was a complete surprise. I attend graduate school and I also work at a diner. I hated to miss the holidays with my mother, but I didn’t have any choice. She’s a widow and my brother lives in Texas and can’t get home for Christmas, so there’s only me.” Perhaps if the reservation clerk knew her story, she might reconsider the can’t sell you a ticket part of this discussion.

“Then my boss decided to close the diner between Christmas and New Year’s for renovations after the refrigeration unit broke, and then he thought he may as well get a new deep fryer, too, so it just made sense to close down. All this happened at the very last minute, and because he felt so bad he gave me a Christmas bonus so I could fly home.”

“I’m so sorry .??.” Stephanie said again, looking nervous. “If you’d kindly move aside and wait a few minutes.”

“I haven’t seen my mother since last August,” Ashley continued, refusing to give up easily. “I wanted to surprise her. It would mean the world to both of us to be together over the holidays. Would you please look again? I’ll take any seat, any time of the day or night.”

Stephanie didn’t so much as glance down at her computer screen with even a pretense of trying to accommodate her. “I can’t .??. I wish I could, but I can’t.”

Ashley couldn’t help wonder what was up with this can’t business. That made it all the more nonsensical.

“You can’t,” she repeated. “There must be more of an explanation than that. It just doesn’t make sense.”

The reservation clerk frowned. Her eyes roamed about the area as if she was looking for someone. That, too, was irritating. It was as if she was seeking a replacement or someone to rescue her.

“I believe you have your answer,” the man behind her in line said impatiently. He shifted from one foot to the other, letting Ashley know he didn’t appreciate her arguing with the clerk.

Ashley whirled around and confronted him face-to-face. “In case anyone forgot to mention it, this is Christmas. How about a little peace on earth and goodwill toward men? Be patient. I’ll be finished as soon as possible and then you can talk to Stephanie, but for now it’s my turn.”

In response, he rolled his eyes.

Ashley returned her attention to the woman at the counter. “If you can’t find me a seat on a plane to Seattle, I’d be willing to fly standby.”

Stephanie shook her head.

“All the flights to Seattle are already booked?” The man next in line blurted out the question.

Stephanie’s eyes widened as if she, too, was surprised he’d jumped into their conversation. “I .??. didn’t say

that. I'll speak to you directly in just a moment," she said.

"Excuse me?" Ashley flared, forgetting her resolve to remain calm and collected. This was too much. With her hands on her hips, she stared down at the other woman. "This is discrimination. Just because he's a man and good-looking you can dredge up a seat for him, but not for me?" This was gender discrimination. Where was a television crew when you needed one? This would make a juicy piece for the six-o'clock news.

Seeing that the line was getting long and the Grinch behind her wasn't the only one with a short fuse, Ashley decided to drop the entire matter.

"Okay, fine, have it your way, but I think this is just plain wrong." With that, she grabbed hold of her suitcase and with all the dignity she could muster started to walk away, feeling more stressed with each step.

"Miss, miss," the airline employee called after her. "If you'd kindly wait a few minutes I'm sure we could resolve this."

"No way," Ashley refused. "As you've repeatedly said, you can't sell me a ticket." With that, she headed out of the airport with her dignity in shreds.

Ashley hadn't expected it would be easy to catch a last-minute flight. She'd already tried to find an available seat online, without luck. For reasons she couldn't understand she kept getting booted off the website. That was the reason she'd decided to come directly to the airport and try her chances there.

Naturally, flying home was her first option. But other modes of transportation were also possibilities. She could always try the bus or travel by train, if there was even one scheduled. The most expedient way to make the trip would be to drive. Unfortunately, her fifteen-year-old hand-me-down car wasn't in the best of shape and she was afraid of it breaking down along the way. To top it off, snow was predicted. Under normal circumstances, snow close to Christmas would be ideal, but not in an aging vehicle. If she could afford .??.

Ashley stopped mid-step. Why hadn't she thought of this earlier? She could always rent a car! The solution was right in front of her, the answer obvious. She should have thought about it long before now. And really there was no better place to rent a car than in an airport.

Perfect.

Reversing direction, Ashley headed toward the car rental agencies, traveling down the escalator, rolling her suitcase behind her. When she reached the rental area, all of the agencies displayed signs that stated all their cars had been rented. All but one. Ashley made her way to that counter.

The longer she waited in line, the more she fumed about the airline clerk who'd insisted she couldn't sell her a seat. The nerve. And then to basically reassure the man in line behind her that there were seats available. That was discrimination of the worst kind, even if the guy was eye candy. Stephanie was clearly looking to do him a favor, which only served to irritate Ashley further. Truth be told, she'd noticed him, too. Hard not to, really. He was tall and stood with military precision, his dark appearance lean and strong. She suspected he was either military or former military. He gave that impression.

The line for the car rental agency slowly crept forward. As luck would have it, the very man who'd been so annoying at the airline counter came to stand behind her again.

It gave Ashley satisfaction to see he hadn't been any more successful with Stephanie in obtaining a seat than she had.

"So Stephanie couldn't sell you a seat, either," she said, trying hard not to gloat.

"All she had available was standby," he grumbled, fingering his cell.

Ashley would have gladly accepted a chance for a standby flight. It wouldn't have mattered how long she had to wait. "Not good enough for you, I suppose."

He glanced her way and frowned, his look darkening. "I can't take the chance. I need to be in Seattle."

"I do, too," she insisted. "It's almost Christmas."

"This is for a job interview."

"A job?" Ashley echoed. "And you have to be there right before Christmas?"

Instead of answering, he returned his attention to his phone, frowning once again. Apparently he wasn't interested in making conversation with her. Fine. Whatever. That being the case, she wasn't interested in talking to him, either.

Users Review

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Michael Carr:

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