

Tangled in the Snow

written by

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INT. BEAUTY SALON - MIAMI - DAY

An abstract golden image fills the screen, shimmering softly. The camera zooms out, and the golden strands come into focus, revealing they're not abstract at all—they're the soft, blonde hair of BRIANA (26), a petite and feminine woman, sitting in a salon chair.

Briana's hands rest delicately on the counter as a nail technician applies fresh polish to her nails.

NAIL TECHNICIAN

White nails—again?

BRIANA

I might be proposed to tonight.

NAIL TECHNICIAN

Didn't you think that last month?
And the month before that?

BRIANA

Well, this time feels different.

NAIL TECHNICIAN

Why is that?

BRIANA

I've always told my boyfriend that
he shouldn't propose to me if my
nails aren't done.

NAIL TECHNICIAN

Can't miss out on that perfect
photo, right?

BRIANA

Exactly. And he never notices my
nails, but today he suddenly tells
me they looked awful. Then, he said
he has plans for us tonight.

NAIL TECHNICIAN

Sounds like he's up to something.

BRIANA

I can't believe it's finally
happening after six years!

NAIL TECHNICIAN

He really made you wait, huh?

BRIANA

I think he was just too caught up
in work to plan a proposal.

NAIL TECHNICIAN

Let me guess—lawyer? Surgeon?

BRIANA

Software engineer. At Apple!

NAIL TECHNICIAN

So, he's got that bag... Good for
you! And the longer the wait, the
bigger the ring.

BRIANA

I guess so...

INT. JOSE'S APARTMENT - MIAMI - NIGHT

The door opens, and Briana steps in, dressed to impress in a pink dress and heels. She holds a small clutch in one hand, her nails freshly painted white.

She glances around and sees JOSE (29), a muscular build nerd with an average face, in the kitchen. He's casually pouring creatine powder straight into his mouth before washing it down with water. He looks ready for a workout instead of a romantic evening.

JOSE

Hey, baby! Where are you coming
from?

BRIANA

(confused)
Wait, aren't we going anywhere?

JOSE

(even more confused)
Yes... The gym?

BRIANA

So, your big plan for us tonight
is... the gym?

JOSE

(excited)
Yeah! There's this new place that
just opened up. State-of-the-art
equipment. I thought you'd love it!
Why don't you change, and we can
leave in ten?

BRIANA
(holding back tears)
Wait. Seriously? You're not... taking
me out to propose tonight?

JOSE
No, no, no. Proposing? What?

BRIANA
Jose, you've dropped every hint
possible that it was gonna happen,
and you know how important this is
to me. And tonight, I thought... I
mean, I hoped...

JOSE
I mean, you always complain that I
don't plan for dates. I... didn't
realize you were expecting... that.

BRIANA
A gym night, Jose? I got all
dressed up because I thought maybe,
finally, you were serious about our
future.

JOSE
Bri, come on. Let's not turn this
into a thing. We'll go out
somewhere nice soon.

BRIANA
Here we go again, dodging the
marriage conversation. Six years
together, and do you still think
it's too soon for us to get
married?

BRIANA (CONT'D)
You were never gonna propose, were
you?

JOSE
We'll get engaged soon. I promise.

BRIANA
You keep saying "soon," Jose.
Maybe... maybe I don't want to keep
waiting.

She heads toward the door, leaving Jose speechless.

INT. BRIANA'S APARTMENT - MIAMI - DAY

Briana sits on the couch, eyes red from crying. There's a knock at the door. She ignores it. The knocking continues, more insistent.

BRIANA

Whoever it is, I'm not opening the door.

BELLE

It's me, Belle. Open up, or I'm coming in!

BRIANA

(sighs)

Alright, I'm coming.

She opens the door, and her friend BELLE (26) walks in.

BRIANA (CONT'D)

Girl, you won't believe it. I thought Jose would be so mad that I broke up with him, he'd skip the Aspen trip altogether.

BELLE

Wait, he's still going? Why?

BRIANA

He said he's not missing the trip unless he gets a refund.

BELLE

Ugh, he's so stingy! I can't believe you wanted to marry this guy. With his salary, losing that money shouldn't even faze him.

BRIANA

And he didn't even wanna go in the first place. Remember how I had to beg him to use his PTO?

BELLE

Oh, I remember. That man never takes a single day off.

BRIANA

I tried to call the airline, but they said the tickets are non-refundable.

BELLE

So, what's the plan?

BRIANA

I'm not going, Belle. I can't be trapped with him in a ski resort for days. Breaking up with him after six years was hard enough. I need to stand by my decision.

BELLE

But this trip was your dream! You've always wanted to learn how to ski.

BRIANA

What am I supposed to do, then?

BELLE

Maybe he'll change his mind last minute. But if he doesn't, you're strong enough to enjoy this trip without letting him ruin it.

BRIANA

I love how much faith you have in me.

BELLE

Women break up in their minds long before the actual breakup. Think of all those times you thought about ending things because he kept putting off the proposal.

BRIANA

Right. I won't even remember he exists during this trip.

INT. AIRPORT - MIAMI - DAY

Briana walks through the nearly empty airport, wheeling her suitcase behind her. She approaches the airline counter, relieved at the quietness.

BRIANA

Good morning, I'd like to check in for my flight to Aspen.

Suddenly, a familiar voice interrupts.

JOSE
 (to the airline
 representative)
 Can you check us in together? We're
 under the same reservation.

Briana turns, startled, and her eyes widen as she sees her
 ex, standing right behind her. He must've had the same idea
 about arriving early.

AIRLINE REPRESENTATIVE
 Of course. I'll need both of your
 IDs, please.

BRIANA
 (impatient)
 Actually... Is there any chance you
 could change my seat?

AIRLINE REPRESENTATIVE
 I'm sorry, ma'am, the flight is
 completely full.

INT. AIRCRAFT - MIAMI - MOMENTS LATER

Briana steps onto the aircraft, scanning the rows as she
 looks for her seat. Jose waves to her from a few rows ahead,
 giving her a hopeful smile.

JOSE
 Hey, over here!

Briana forces a smile back, her tension visible. He stands up
 to help her stow her carry-on in the overhead compartment.
 Briana slides into her seat by the window, while Jose takes
 the middle seat beside her.

Later, during the flight, Jose dozes off, his head drifting
 onto Briana's shoulder. She rolls her eyes and tries to nudge
 him off—once, twice—but eventually gives up, sighing in
 frustration.

After some time, Briana becomes restless, her legs shifting
 anxiously. She looks toward the aisle, needing to use the
 bathroom. She glances at THE PASSENGER in the aisle seat,
 then to Jose, still fast asleep.

BRIANA
 (whispering to the aisle
 passenger)
 Excuse me, can I...?

The passenger nods, standing to let her pass. Briana carefully maneuvers around Jose, as her backside briefly nears his face. She cringes internally, hoping it won't wake him.

On the way back from the bathroom, the passenger in the aisle seat stands up again, giving Briana space to return to her spot. She tries to squeeze by as carefully as possible.

SUDDENLY—

JOSE
(eyes half-open, half-smirking)
I missed that.

BRIANA
(rolling her eyes)
Shut the fuck up.

INT. AIRPORT - ASPEN - DAY

At the baggage claim, Briana quickly grabs her suitcase and slips away, disappearing from Jose's view. He scans the area, trying to spot her.

EXT. AIRPORT - ASPEN - DAY

Briana stands outside, surrounded by several suitcases, anxiously waiting for her Uber. She glances at her phone, checking the status of her ride.

A car pulls up in front of her, and the back window rolls down.

JOSE
(leaning out)
We're headed to the same hotel. No need to call another Uber.

BRIANA
I already requested the ride.

JOSE
Look, traffic's awful. You'll be stuck here forever. Just cancel it and come with me.

BRIANA
I broke up with you, Jose. You don't have to be nice to me!

JOSE

But I want to! Come on, Bri. Just accept the favor and get in.

Cars start honking from behind, pressing Briana to make a decision. She gets into his Uber.

BRIANA

No small talk during the ride. Okay?

JOSE

I promise.

INT. SKI-IN SKI-OUT HOTEL - ASPEN - DAY

Briana and Jose approach the front desk.

JOSE

We'd like to check in.

BRIANA

Actually, I'd like to book a separate room.

RECEPTIONIST

I'm sorry but we are fully booked as of now. Should I proceed with checking both of you into room 207?

BRIANA

(frustrated)

I guess... if it's the only option.

EXT. SKI AREA - ASPEN - DAY

Both Jose and Briana walks side by side, each carrying their skis.

JOSE

Am I really that awful that you can't stand to be in the same room as me?

BRIANA

I just don't think we should be sharing a bed. We're not a couple anymore, remember?

JOSE

Give us another chance. I can make this trip as romantic as you always wanted it to be.

BRIANA

Jose, no! I don't want to be in a relationship with you anymore. You need to respect my decision.

JOSE

Bri, please. I'll take you out on a date every week. I'll do whatever it takes.

Briana walks ahead, keeping her face turned away, hiding the tears welling up in her eyes from Jose.

BRIANA

(voice shaky)

It's not about dates, Jose. Do you even understand anything that isn't about computers or the gym?

JOSE

What was it about then? Just tell me.

Jose reaches Briana's hand, but she quickly pulls away, her pace quickening. She approaches the ski lift and impulsively boards alone, leaving Jose behind.

Briana sits down, as the lift ascends. Her tears blur her vision until—

BRIANA

(panicked)

Oh my God, that's way too high!

She looks frantically for the safety bar in front of her but finds nothing. Panic rises.

BRIANA (CONT'D)

(to the other passengers
on the lift, voice
trembling)

Where's my safety bar?

PASSAGER

(desperate for her)

You have to pull it down! Pull it down!

Briana finally spots the bar above her. She reaches up, struggling to pull it down. She holds on tightly until she reaches the top of the mountain.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TOP - ASPEN - DAY

BRIANA
 (to the lift operator)
 I need to go back down on the lift.
 Please, let me board again.

LIFT OPERATOR
 You can't! The only way down is by
 skiing.

BRIANA
 But I haven't even had my first ski
 lesson yet!

LIFT OPERATOR
 Well, looks like today's your first
 lesson then. Don't worry, everyone
 starts somewhere.

BRIANA
 You don't understand. I can't do
 this!

LIFT OPERATOR
 Just take it slow. Trust me, you'll
 be okay.

Briana turns and faces the snowy descent, with fear written all over her face.

EXT. MOUNTAIN SLOPE - ASPEN - DAY

Briana struggles down the slope, falling multiple times. Each time, she has to unclip her boots from the skis just to get back up. Frustration builds with every attempt, and now, determined to stand without removing her skis, she finds herself struggling even more.

A man, his face hidden beneath ski gear, approaches her.

SKI INSTRUCTOR
 Hi, there! Need help?

BRIANA
 (embarrassed, brushing
 snow off her pants)
 No. I'm good, thanks.

SKI INSTRUCTOR

You sure?

BRIANA

Can you tell that I'm bad at this?

SKI INSTRUCTOR

It's because I'm a ski instructor.

SKI INSTRUCTOR (CONT'D)

First time on this trail?

BRIANA

First time skiing, actually.

SKI INSTRUCTOR

Do you remember basic movements
from your lesson?

BRIANA

I was about to have my first
lesson... then I boarded the lift.

SKI INSTRUCTOR

Wait, what? Why'd you do that?

BRIANA

I thought I could take the lift
back down.

SKI INSTRUCTOR

Yeah, they don't really let you do
that.

BRIANA

Now, I know.

SKI INSTRUCTOR

Alright, let's get you moving then.
Bend your knees and slightly lean
forward.

BRIANA

Okay...

Briana tries to follow his instructions, but as she starts
gaining speed, her panic rises. She abruptly falls down into
the snow.

SKI INSTRUCTOR

Why'd you stop? You were doing
fine.

BRIANA
I was skiing too fast.

SKI INSTRUCTOR
Trust me, you weren't.

BRIANA
(looking down, admitting
quietly)
I think I'm just... scared of
heights.

SKI INSTRUCTOR
I get it, but you can control your
speed. If you feel like it's too
much, just make a "pizza" with your
skis—point the tips inward to make
a V. It'll slow you down, even stop
you if you need it.

BRIANA
"Pizza" position, right. Okay, I'll
try.

She starts in the V position, but quickly forgets about it,
gaining speed. Panicking, she falls backward, landing on her
butt in the snow.

SKI INSTRUCTOR
Good start, but you've got to keep
the pizza position steady to avoid
going too fast. And remember—don't
let your legs drift apart!

BRIANA
Oopsie...

SKI INSTRUCTOR
You know what—let me give you a
hand. Later, you can practice more
on the bunny hill.

BRIANA
Yeah, that'd be great.

She extends her hand, and the ski instructor takes it,
helping guide her carefully down the slope toward the bottom
of the mountain.

SKI INSTRUCTOR
See? You made it.

BRIANA

With your help! Thanks for not leaving me up there.

SKI INSTRUCTOR

I couldn't just abandon a first-time skier, could I? Plus, you did better than you think!

BRIANA

(ironic)

Sure, if falling counts as doing well!

SKI INSTRUCTOR

Everyone falls in the beginning. It's how you get up that matters! And you did. Every time.

BRIANA

(blushing)

Thanks again! I wouldn't have made it down without you.

The SKI INSTRUCTOR (26), tall, brown-skinned with a sun-kissed tan, pulls off his goggles and mask, revealing a charming smile that catches her off guard.

BRIANA (CONT'D)

(surprised, smiling)

So, there is a face behind all that the gear... What's your name?

SKI INSTRUCTOR

You can call me Ray!

BRIANA

You're not American, are you?

SKI INSTRUCTOR

Nope. Ray's my American name. I'm actually from Brazil.

BRIANA

No way! Me too. What's your Brazilian name?

SKI INSTRUCTOR

It's Renan.

BRIANA

I thought I picked up an accent. *Prazer*, Renan! I'm Briana.

BRIANA (CONT'D)

Briana extends her hand for a handshake, but Renan turns it to kiss the palm of her hand.

RENAN

(flirty)

O prazer é todo meu, Briana.

BRIANA

(teasing)

Is this how you greet everyone you help off a mountain?

RENAN

Only the ones I want to get to know more.

RENAN (CONT'D)

Can I teach you skiing tomorrow on the benny hill?

BRIANA

I don't know if I ever want to ski again after today.

RENAN

What? No way this is your last time skiing. You have to at least give it another shot. Consider it part of the deal for rescuing you from the top of the mountain today.

BRIANA

So, you helped me just to rope me into more lessons?

RENAN

Exactly! Now I'm determined to help you enjoy it. Deal?

BRIANA

Okay, fine. One more lesson—just because you saved me.

RENAN

Tomorrow, then.