



It was supposed to be our first Christmas Eve in our newly purchased cabin with our 6-year-old daughter, Nicola. We were almost there. So close.

After multiple (five or six maybe?) failed attempts, I suggested we give up, but my husband, Tim, was so worked up and determined to drive his truck all the way up to our cabin's driveway that he continued to gun it despite several inches of snow-packed road ahead.

The quarter mile, slightly inclined, dead-end road rarely got plowed because nearly every cabin that dotted the road was closed up for the season.

But not ours! We were determined to turn our summer cabin, set high up in the Rocky Mountains, into a year-round abode, despite the lack of insulation and central heat.

So, Tim persisted.

And, I complained and generally cast aspersions at his foolhardy stubbornness.

"Emileeeee ..." The tone of how he said my name was enough to strike an

Rookie Mistake

The cabin Christmas that almost wasn't **BY EMILY O'BRIEN**

avalanche. He didn't care for my logic.

And then – miraculously – he fish-tailed all the way to the driveway.

“See, I knew I could do it!” he beamed. But as Tim turned the truck around, in order to make for an easier exit the next day, the back tires slid into a snow-covered ditch.

I looked in the truck bed for a shovel. It was gone.

“I took it out last week. I didn't think we'd need it,” he said.

There was no time to truly *get mad*, even though I was raging inside – voicing it was only going to complicate matters. You see, the cabin wasn't exactly what I'd call “a safe place” to be stranded. No cell service, no landline or Internet, only enough food and water for 24 hours (transported by us).

Because of all of this, we would only stay a night at a time. But if we were stuck for days, well, that could be bad. That could be one of those stories you hear on the news and wonder, “*What were those idiots thinking?*”

Okay, I said to myself, scooping snow out of the wheel wells with my hands, *DO NOT PANIC*.

So, I did what any good Girl Scout would do. I went inside and hunted for materials and fashioned a shovel from a metal dustpan and the wooden handle of old broomstick, bonded together with the MacGyver-preferred tool of choice: duct tape. I tried it out, and it actually worked. I contemplated using it as a weapon (but only for a split second).

Then, Tim came up with the idea to grab leftover shingles from a recent roofing project for traction. The shovel/shingles combo did the trick! We celebrated by hugging and jumping, and all of that anger somehow – magically – melted away. If my eyeballs weren't nearly icicles, I might have even cried out of pure joy.

Just before sunset when our bones were finally warmed by the fire, we spotted a group of neighbors snowshoeing in to their cabins, pulling their presents and grandchildren on sleds.

“Oh, so that's how you do it! Next time!” we laughed in unison and clinked our glasses. **CL**