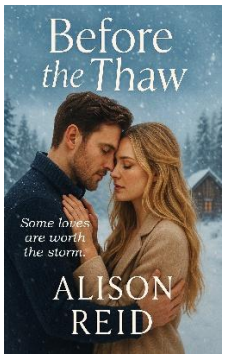
Before the Thaw



by Alison Reid

She was waiting for the man she loved to show up.

Instead… the man who never stopped loving her nearly died on her doorstep.

Jade Bell has spent three years giving her heart to the wrong man—holding on through distance, disappointment, and a grief she was forced to carry alone.

A weekend away in a remote Lake District cabin is her last chance to fix what's already breaking.

But Dean Clarke never comes.

Instead, a storm rolls in.

And with it… Duncan Armstrong.

The man she once almost loved.

The man she was told could never love her back.

Half-frozen and barely conscious, Duncan collapses at her door after walking through a brutal snowstorm to reach her—risking everything just to make sure she isn't alone.

And suddenly, nothing makes sense anymore.

Not the past she thought she understood.

Not the man who abandoned her.

And not the one who came for her when it mattered most.

Trapped together by the storm, old truths begin to unravel.
Secrets surface. Walls break.

Because the deeper Jade looks… the clearer it becomes:
The wrong man let her go.
The right one never did.

And this time… she might be brave enough to choose him.

Tropes:

❄️ Snowed In
🏡 Forced Proximity
❤️ He Never Stopped Loving Her
🤫 Secret Pining
🛡️ Protective Hero
💔 Wrong Man, Right Man
🔥 Slow Burn

Reader Guide:

🔥 Heat: ★★★☆☆ (Moderately Steamy) *Several open-door scenes with moderate detail*
💔 Angst: ★★★☆☆ (Moderate) *Meaningful emotional conflict with a balanced tone*
❤️ Emotion: ★★★☆☆ (Emotional) *Strong emotional connection & satisfying character growth*
📖 Dual POV
🌶️ Open-Door Romance
✔️ No Cheating
✨ Guaranteed HEA