

Love's Release

By Antoinette de Poi

This last evening in December was clear and cold, with the stars shedding their pale winter light over the recently fallen snow that dusted the landscape. But the beauty of God's creation was lost on Ronni.

She saw no hope of a fresh beginning or a brighter future. To her, a New Year only meant more of the same emptiness that she had felt since she was old enough to understand that other people had love and family and friendship in their lives.

And so she hated the thought of having to deliver newspapers in the wee hours of January first. The warm glow of Christmas decorations and the festivities in the homes that she passed only reinforced her feeling of being left out of the joys of life.

And, if that wasn't bad enough, a patrolling police cruiser quickly flashed its lights and pulled her over. Ronni guessed that the officer must have thought that she was drunk or something from too much partying when he saw her van weaving from one side of the street to the other as she threw the papers onto yards or tucked them into mailboxes.

As soon as he came up to the van window she hastily explained that she was just delivering newspapers. He suspiciously peered into the van's dark interior, checked her license, registration, and insurance and let her go with just a warning.

After that, Ronni was really feeling depressed as she continued her drive down Sycamore Lane. All she saw were the different homes still entertaining party guests. A dark line of cars filled both sides of the street, left there by the many happy celebrants and blocking her way as she maneuvered her van down the middle of the icy lane.

Ronni was still distracted by the thoughts of her encounter with the police officer and very intent on her forward progress but, even if she had checked her rear view mirror as she turned the corner, she probably wouldn't have been able to see the black sedan slowly pull away from the curb, its headlights still off, and carefully follow the minivan at a discrete distance.