



A
DREAMSPINNER
PRESS

Day Dream

SMOKY

CONNIE BAILEY

“WHERE are you taking us?” Jaramie looked nervously around at the broken streetlights, the dark alleys, and the overflowing Dumpsters.

“Just get out of the car. You’ll be fine.” Tommy rolled his eyes. “You sound like an old maid at a nudist camp.”

“I do not.” Jaramie gave his friend a wounded look. “But come on, admit it: this neighborhood looks pretty rough.”

“Do you want to hear some really good music or not?” Tommy said, playing on Jaramie’s biggest weakness. Jaramie loved good music in all its forms, from symphonic to hip hop.

“Where is this club anyway?” Jaramie asked. “I don’t see any signs, and I expect to be squashed by a garbage truck any second.”

“There isn’t a sign. I told you; they don’t want just anyone coming in.”

Jaramie sighed. “How did I let you talk me into this?”

“Oh for fuck’s sake, will you please stop bitching for five minutes? You always do this. I have to coax and beg and practically get out the cattle prod to get you out of the apartment, and you always end up enjoying it.”

“Sorry I’m such a drag.” Jaramie said as he shut the car door quite a bit harder than necessary.

Tommy rolled his eyes again. “You know I love you, and you’re a great roommate.”

“Really?”

“Of course.” Tommy took Jaramie’s arm as they began to walk. “I just wish you were a little more... self-confident.”

“I do too.”

Tommy sighed. “I wish I knew what you see when you look in the mirror, because it’s obviously not the same thing I see when I look at you. You’re drop-dead gorgeous, and you have a body that won’t quit. You’re beautiful right down to the ground, but you don’t seem to know it.”

“Looks aren’t everything.”

“No, but looks are usually what attract people in the first place.”

“I don’t like those kinds of people.”

“At this rate you’ll never get a boyfriend. Just don’t whine to me about it, okay?”

A dimple appeared in Jaramie’s left cheek. “But what will we talk about at work?”

Tommy glanced at his friend and saw that Jaramie was teasing him. “You’re right. It would be boring to actually talk about the job,” he said, and then turned serious. “I thought I was going to love it, but just because I love clothes doesn’t mean I love selling them.”

“Seriously,” Jaramie said in agreement. “The only thing I like about working at the mall is the discount we get on the merchandise.”

Tommy glanced at Jaramie again, admiring his friend’s figure in the tight, artfully ripped, heather-toned jeans and cream-colored, semi-transparent shirt. Maybe Tommy was a little conceited, but he thought he had a real knack for choosing the right clothes for a body type, and the outfit he’d picked for Jaramie had turned his roommate into a sex bomb just waiting to detonate. If all went well, Tommy hoped to get Jaramie laid tonight. As much as he loved his friend, he was tired of listening to him complain about not having a man when men were falling over themselves to get close to the bashful beauty. It was Tommy’s opinion that Jaramie was a little *too* picky for his own good. Well, the guys that frequented the Caveman’s Club were far from shy.

“Here it is.” Tommy stopped beside a roll-up garage door and turned to Jaramie for inspection. Jaramie automatically adjusted the hang of Tommy’s chocolate suede jacket and ran a critical eye over the snug beige tank top and curve-hugging corduroy pants.

“You look fantastic,” Jaramie said. “I love those suede boots.”

Tommy looked down. “I’ll have to go without lunch all week, but they’re worth it.”

“Thanks for letting me borrow your Doc Martens,” Jaramie said.

Tommy transferred his gaze from his feet to Jaramie's. The dusty purple jeans looked very sharp tucked into the tops of the olive green combat-style boots. "Just don't spill anything on them," he said.

"As if." Jaramie tossed his head, his dark blond hair floating around his face like silk floss. "Where's the door?"

"Are you looking for a way in, Cupcake?" Tommy and Jaramie's heads spun around at the sound of the black-coffee voice. They peered into the alley mouth but didn't see anyone. Light winked on polished metal, and a shadow separated from the greater darkness, coalescing into a lanky young man slinking toward them with all the ramshackle grace of a tomcat on the prowl. From the studded cap on his long unraveled curls to the chain-swagged motorcycle boots, he was wrapped in black leather and almost every inch of exposed skin was decorated with tribal tattoos. "Cat got your tongues?" he drawled.

"We're not tourists," Tommy said. "I've been here before."

"I guess you know the rules then. No couples."

"We're not a couple," Tommy answered. "And who are you? I don't remember this place having a doorman."

"I'm usually the back door man," the stranger said with a wry smile. "My name's Samuel, but everyone calls me Smoky."

"Smoky, huh?" Jaramie said. "I've never had a nickname."

“You do now, Cupcake.”

Jaramie frowned, his full lips forming a pout. “That’s not exactly a cool nickname.”

Smoky ran his eyes over Jaramie from head to toe and back again. “I’d like to oblige you, but you’re most definitely a Cupcake.”

“Come on, Jaramie,” Tommy said, tugging at his friend’s arm. “Let’s go in.”

“Right this way,” Smoky said, tipping Jaramie a wink. “Don’t worry, Cupcake; once you’re inside, you can ditch your mother.”

Tommy’s eyes bulged with outrage, but an insult from a stranger wasn’t worth taking issue over. “Just do your job,” he said dismissively.

Smoky gave him a Mona Lisa smile and turned away to lead them down the alley. “The entrance has changed since you were here,” he said over his shoulder. “We aren’t using the garage anymore.” Raising a gloved hand, he knocked a code on a door with peeling paint. The door opened, and a very large man stood aside to let them in. “We have the entire warehouse now,” Smoky said as he slapped hands with the bouncer. “More room to move, if you know what I mean.” He gave Tommy the same top to bottom visual assessment he’d given Jaramie. “And judging by your frame, I’d say you do. I’ll bet you can really burn up a dance floor.”

“He’s an awesome dancer,” Jaramie said.

“What about you?”

Jaramie shook his head. Smoky's frankly appraising eyes made Jaramie feel flustered, and he was suddenly anxious to find a table and sit down. "Let's find a seat," he said to Tommy.

"Not until you dance," Smoky said. "We have rules here at the Club."

Jaramie's head whipped toward Tommy. "What's he talking about?" he asked.

"Smoky's right," Tommy said. "Everyone has to dance their first time here."

"And you didn't bother to mention that little fact?"

Tommy shrugged. "You're not a bad dancer; you just need to loosen up a little."

Jaramie turned back to Smoky. "Are there any taxis that will come into this area?" he asked as he took out his phone.

"No way!" Tommy grabbed Jaramie's phone and dropped it in his pocket. "You're going to have a good time tonight if it kills you."

Smoky's eyes glittered in the shadow of his hat brim as he smiled at Jaramie. "Listen to your mother, Cupcake; she knows what's best for you."

"Do you just wait by the door to insult people, or do you wait tables too?" Tommy inquired in his sweetest voice. "I'd like a rum and Coke, and Jaramie will have a Cosmo."

Smoky chuckled, and Tommy felt a strong pulse behind his pubic bone. Smoky might be annoyingly self-assured,

but he was as sexy as a tongue bath, which annoyed Tommy even more. “Have a seat over here,” Smoky said, gesturing to a postage stamp-sized table hidden behind a pocked column. “I’ll get you some drinks, and when I come back, Cupcake and I are going to dance.”

“Let’s get out of here,” Jaramie said as soon as Smoky was out of earshot.

“Relax.” Tommy craned his neck to see the stage. “The band is really good, and you don’t have to dance with that pushy thug if you don’t want to.” He paused. “You do have to dance though, and it can’t be with me.”

“What? You should have told me.”

“If I had, you wouldn’t have come.”

“That’s sneaky.”

“You force me to be sneaky.”

“That’s ridiculous.”

“You’re ridiculous.”

“Now you’re being mean.”

“No, I’m not; I’m being honest. You could get any man in this room, in this city—hell, in the world—if you’d just put yourself out there a little more.”

“I’m not comfortable showing off.”

Tommy opened his mouth to reply, but he was pre-empted by a loud burst of music from the sound system. The lights came on over a deejay’s booth and a tall, handsome

man smiled at the crowd from behind twin turntables. "Let's get this party started!" the disc jockey shouted in an East European accent as he played a highly danceable tune from a few years back.

"He's a hottie!" Jaramie blurted out.

"Yeah, and he knows it, too," Tommy said. "His name's Janos and he claims to be from Moscow. I once had the honor of blowing him. The next time I saw him, he pretended he didn't know me."

"Maybe the head just wasn't that good," Jaramie teased.

Tommy snorted. "Give me a break. If it wasn't for my strict policy about benefits, I'd get down and show you what you're missing. My blow jobs are legendary."

"That's what it says on the men's room wall," Smoky quipped as he set a couple of drinks down on the table. "Come on, Cupcake. Let's dance."

"I need a couple of drinks in me first," Jaramie said.

"No you don't." Smoky took Jaramie's hand and pulled him out of his chair. "Let's go."

Tommy started to stand up, but stayed where he was. After all, he'd be able to see Jaramie from here, and how much trouble could his friend get into in plain sight? Tommy still found Smoky's manner irritating, but it would do Jaramie good to dance with a stranger.

"Go on," Tommy said. "You might forget about that stick up your ass and actually have some fun."

Jaramie gaped at his friend. "I don't have a stick up my ass!"

"Prove it. Get out on that floor and shake it loose."

"Come on," Smoky said, squeezing Jaramie's fingers gently. "What have you got to lose?"

"Just a stick," Tommy answered.

Smoky raised his eyebrows at Jaramie. "Are you going to let him get away with that, or are you going to show him you can shake it?"

"All right."

Jaramie sighed and let Smoky lead him to the big dance floor. The feel of the leather-gloved fingers wrapped around his quickened Jaramie's pulse, and he was fatalistically certain that his nervousness would make him clumsy, as usual. Prepared for a humiliating experience, he completely missed the look of lusty admiration on the deejay's face as he passed by. Nor did he catch the hand signal Smoky gave Janos. However, he did notice when the music stopped in mid-song, freezing the dancers in confusion.

"We have a virgin in the house tonight, my babies," Janos said into the microphone. Jaramie could feel every eye in the room focusing on him, and he blushed bright pink. "Isn't he a pretty one?" the disc jockey continued. "Now let's see if he can move as good as he looks." Selecting a record, Janos put the needle down and talked over the musical intro. "Come on, pretty baby," he crooned. "Show us what you got. Janos likes what he sees, but it takes more than eye candy to sweeten my tooth." Janos did a little bump and

grind as the audience hooted and applauded, forming a ring around Jaramie and Smoky.

“Don’t run out on me,” Smoky whispered as Jaramie looked around for an exit. “Come on, Cupcake. I know you’ve got what it takes. Just follow my lead and you’ll be fine; I promise.”

For no good reason, Jaramie found himself trusting this leather-clad alley cat. Closing his eyes to block out the stares of the crowd, he let Smoky pull him to the center of the circle. Smoky moved behind Jaramie and rested his hands on Jaramie’s slim hips.

“Just feel the beat,” Smoky said in Jaramie’s ear as he started to sway.

Jaramie allowed himself to be guided by Smoky’s hands on his hips, moving in time with the rhythm. One of Smoky’s hands slid around to rest on Jaramie’s lower belly, and he pressed his crotch to Jaramie’s butt. Smoky started with small moves, gradually increasing the arc of his hip swing, the close contact between their bodies forcing Jaramie to move with him. Janos began clapping his hands, and the crowd took up the cadence, but Jaramie wasn’t aware of them any longer. Smoky’s warmth at his back, the sultry sway of Smoky’s long, lean frame, and the strong arms that held him so securely formed an invisible cocoon that held only two. The rest of the world could have crashed down around them, and Jaramie would have danced on, oblivious to the destruction. When the music stopped, he blinked like a man waking from a dream to find he’d sleepwalked into an unfamiliar place.

“You did good,” Smoky murmured as the crowd applauded. “Take a bow.”

Jaramie blushed again. “Thanks,” he said. “I need another drink.”

“Hey, where you goin’, baby?” Janos said into the microphone. “I need an assistant. Want to apply for the job?”

“No thanks; I’m afraid I’d blow it,” Jaramie heard himself say. His blush deepened as laughter erupted around the room.

“Good one,” Smoky said. “Janos needs to lose a pound or two of cockiness. May I walk you back to your table?”

“Good idea. Tommy gets pissy if he thinks he’s been abandoned.”

“I don’t think he’s too concerned at the moment.” Smoky pointed to the dance floor where Tommy was undulating to the music. “He’s got some sweet moves.”

Jaramie watched his friend move as though his body had extra joints and a rubber spine. “He’s an amazing dancer,” he said with sincere admiration.

“I’ll bet he’s an amazing lover too.”

“I wouldn’t know.”

“Really? The two of you never hooked up? Not even out of curiosity?”

“I’m not... like that,” Jaramie said slowly. “I know you think I’m a square, or lame, or whatever word you use for

someone who's sexually unsophisticated, but I can't jump into bed with just anybody."

"No? What does it take to get into your pants?"

Jaramie glanced involuntarily at the deejay's booth as he answered. "I'm not really sure; it's always a surprise to me when I meet someone I want to sleep with."

"If you want to meet Janos, I can easily arrange it."

Jaramie grimaced like a kitten tasting sour cream. "He's hot and all, but Tommy warned me about him."

"There's a reason we call him Sneezy." Smoky smiled. "He uses guys—and girls—like Kleenex; blows his nose once and tosses them away."

"That's definitely not what I'm looking for. He makes me hard, but I'm not looking for a one night stand."

"Then you're in the wrong place, Cupcake."

"Look, Samuel—Smoky—whatever, my friend talked me into coming here."

"Oh? Do you have to be talked into things?"

"I don't like the way this conversation is going."

"Can't take criticism?"

"Not from strangers who don't know me."

"How can you say we're strangers after that dance?"

"Just because you shoved your cock up against my ass doesn't make us best friends forever."

“That’s better.” Smoky chuckled. “You’ve got some fire in you after all.”

“Are you making fun of me?”

Smoky shook his head. “No, Cupcake; I am most certainly not making fun of you.” He took Jaramie’s hand again. “Can I show you something?”

“What?”

“Just come with me. Come on; be brave.”

“I don’t want to make Tommy worry.”

“No problem.” Smoky signaled the deejay again. “All fixed. Janos will tell your friend that you’re with me.”

“I don’t think I should.”

“Why not? You’re not really scared, are you?”

“A little,” Jaramie said honestly. “I don’t really know you, and your clothes send a message.”

Smoky stroked a hand down one of the studded leather straps that crisscrossed his chest. “And to think I dressed down tonight.”

Jaramie had to smile at that. “I guess I’m not exactly dressed for church either,” he said.

“Come with me,” Smoky said, his voice dropping a half-octave. “I promise you won’t regret it.”

The little hairs rose on Jaramie’s forearms as that dark chocolate voice melted in his ears. Dancing with Smoky had

raised his heart rate and put a blizzard of butterflies in his belly, but he'd felt that effect with other men, and he'd managed to resist them. Why was the little voice in his head telling him that this one was different? Why did he feel so sure that each step he took brought him closer to a point of no return? Why was he being such an old maid? "Okay," he said. "Show me."

"Excellent!" Smoky pulled Jaramie down a narrow hall beside the stage that led to an even narrower staircase. "Sorry about the climb, but it'll be worth it."

Jaramie followed the other man up the steep steps and through the door at the top. He'd counted three stories and wasn't particularly surprised when they emerged onto the roof, but the panorama spread out in front of him took his breath away. "It's beautiful," he said, walking to stand at the edge and lean against the wall.

"It really is, isn't it?" Smoky came up behind Jaramie and slipped his arms around him.

"What are you doing?"

"Holding you. Do you mind?"

"I guess not." In fact, it felt wonderful to have Smoky's arms around him. "But don't get any funny ideas."

"Like what?" Smoky nuzzled at Jaramie's nape.

"Like that."

"Are you sure you don't mean this?" Smoky licked the hollow behind Jaramie's left earlobe.

“Cut it out.” Jaramie groaned as one of Smoky’s hands slid down to brush his crotch.

“I thought so. The dancing turned you on a little, didn’t it?”

“None of your business.”

“Hey, there were two of us involved, you know. Be fair.” Smoky pressed his crotch to Jaramie’s backside, letting him feel how hard he was.

“Man, you really don’t take no for an answer, do you?”

“I haven’t heard you say no yet.” Smoky squeezed the bulge in Jaramie’s jeans.

Jaramie moaned, leaning heavily on the retaining wall. “Please,” he whispered.

“You don’t have to beg,” Smoky said, squeezing again. “Just let me love you.”

“You mean let you *make* love to me.”

“We have to start somewhere.” Smoky’s breath was warm on the back of Jaramie’s neck. “Come on, pretty baby. Let me love you and see where it takes us.”

“I don’t—”

“Usually do this kind of thing,” Smoky finished for him. “I believe you. I won’t think you’re a slut. I was just hoping that I turned you on as much as you turned me on.”

Jaramie sucked in a sharp breath as Smoky squeezed a little harder. “I don’t think I’ve ever been this horny,” he said. “That’s what scares me.”

“Why is it scary?” Smoky continued to fondle Jaramie through his jeans as he talked.

“I don’t know what will happen if I let myself go.”

“No one does, but I can promise you that I’ll make you feel good. What’s so bad about that?”

“Nothing, I just—” Jaramie’s words trailed off into a moan. “Damn it; that does feel good.”

“Just relax.” Smoky deftly unbuttoned Jaramie’s jeans and slipped his hand through the fly, unhindered by underwear. “Let me please you.”

Jaramie silenced the nattering voice in his brain and turned his head, offering his lips.

Smoky leaned forward, taking Jaramie’s mouth in a kiss as exciting as it was awkward. Licking delicately at Jaramie’s lush lips, Smoky enticed them to open. His first taste of Jaramie set an instant hunger in him for more, and he forgot all about the calculated slow seduction that was his trademark. He felt a craving that he was instantly convinced would be with him the rest of his life; he was addicted on the first hit, no doubt about it and the irony of it did not escape him. The seducer seduced; the hunter ensnared, hoist upon his own petard, as the cliché went. He supposed that it had to happen sometime, but he’d never imagined he’d be roped in by a blushing pretty boy. Twinks didn’t appeal to him at all, but he hadn’t been able to resist teasing this cupcake,

and now look at him. He was hooked and being reeled in closer with each passing second.

“Wait!” Jaramie said breathlessly. “This is happening too fast. My head is spinning.”

“You’re not alone,” Smoky answered. “I’ve never felt like this before, but I don’t think I can stop. Tell me it’s okay to keep going. Please.”

“Shit!” Jaramie gasped as the ball of Smoky’s thumb glided over the tip of his cock. “It’s okay; keep going.”

Smoky adroitly slid Jaramie’s jeans down over the curve of his ass and caressed the velvety skin. Jaramie shivered as the night air touched his bare flesh but didn’t think too hard about what was happening. He wanted to go with the flow for once in his life—no careful calculations or second guesses—and if he was making a big mistake, he’d take responsibility for it, but he didn’t get the sense that this leather stud meant him any harm. Giving himself up to pure sensation, he braced his hands against the concrete wall in tacit submission.

“Damn, you’ve got a beautiful ass,” Smoky murmured, as he parted Jaramie’s cheeks. “I promise there’ll be more foreplay next time, but I have to have you right now, or I’m going to explode.”

Next time. Jaramie’s heart leaped and settled into an even faster rhythm. He moaned at the exquisite feeling as Smoky rubbed delicately at the sensitive skin around his hole. When Smoky knelt to lick at the crinkled opening, Jaramie’s knees almost buckled. He thought he was going to

scream the first time Smoky's tongue darted into him, but he was soon rocking his hips, pushing back into the intimate caress, his body begging for more. It had been months since he'd slept with anyone, and Smoky Samuel was a talented man. Jaramie groaned when Smoky stopped, but it was a temporary frustration. Smoky's finger replaced his tongue, thrusting and finding Jaramie's prostate while he stroked Jaramie's arousal with his other hand. "Are you ready for me, pretty baby?" Smoky asked, his voice grainy with desire.

Jaramie nodded vehemently, too breathless to answer in words, pushing his ass shamelessly onto Smoky's fingers. He heard the creak of leather as Smoky freed his cock, and he stole a look under his arm. Smoky's dick was as long and slender as the man himself and Jaramie abruptly couldn't wait to feel it filling him up.

"Easy," Smoky said softly as he rolled on a condom. "I'm going to make this so good for you. Just let me take care of you, okay?"

Jaramie stilled the rocking of his hips and felt the head of Smoky's cock nudge his entrance. Liquid fire ran through his veins, and he trembled with the strain of holding himself in check as Smoky worked the tip inside him. "Come on. Come on. Come on," he chanted breathlessly, as Smoky paused on the threshold.

"I'll give you what you need," Smoky said, wrapping his hands around Jaramie's hipbones. "Just be patient for another minute." Slowly, he eased his length into the tight channel until his balls rested against Jaramie's. Just as slowly, he withdrew before pushing back in.

“Fuck!” Jaramie exclaimed. “That feels incredible. Don’t stop.”

“Don’t worry,” Smoky said in a strained voice. “I’m not going to stop until you beg me to.”

With the same sweet, sultry rhythm he’d exhibited on the dance floor, Smoky thrust into Jaramie, savoring each whimpering moan of pleasure that told him he was hitting the right spot. He reached around and took hold of Jaramie’s arousal again, pumping it to the same beat. Jaramie rocked his hips, fucking Smoky’s fist with unselfconscious enthusiasm as Smoky drove him closer and closer to the peak. He clutched desperately at the top of the wall as though he feared he might fly off into the night sky as Smoky’s agile fingers wrung a climax from him. Pleasure bloomed at his core and swept through him, leaving him panting and sagging in the aftermath. Smoky’s arm around his waist held him upright until he got a grip on the wall again. Nearly delirious with the force the orgasm, he held on as Smoky plunged into him, deep and hard.

“So good,” Jaramie murmured, as Smoky shuddered and thrust one last time, burying his spurting cock to the hilt.

“Me too. Never felt anything this good,” Smoky said, his lips moving against the fabric of Jaramie’s gauzy shirt. He leaned there for a long time, taking deep breaths as the echoes of his climax reverberated throughout his body. “You’ve ruined me for anyone else.”

“Yeah, right.” Jaramie moved restlessly. “Would you mind pulling out now?”

“Sorry.” Smoky withdrew gently, peeled off the condom, and tucked himself away. When Jaramie turned, Smoky tried to pull him into an embrace.

“You don’t have to pretend this meant something to you,” Jaramie said. “I’m a big boy.”

“Whoa,” Smoky said softly. “Why so harsh? I thought we just shared something beautiful.”

“A lubeless fuck on the roof? Don’t make me laugh.”

“Do I look like a joker?” The smile dropped from Smoky’s face, and Jaramie was shocked to stillness for a moment.

“Well, really, do you expect me to believe that this meant anything to you?” Jaramie said when he found his voice. “You probably do this twice a night with the fresh meat.”

Smoky shook his head. “Not more than twice a week,” he said gravely.

Jaramie gave the other man a dubious look. “You’re teasing me now, aren’t you?”

“Yeah, I guess I am, but only because this is suddenly really important to me.”

“That doesn’t make sense.”

“Get used to it, Cupcake. I don’t always feel obligated to make sense.”

“Why do I have to get used to it?”

“Because you’re going to be seeing a lot of me, if I have my way.”

“You just had your way.”

“Well, I want my way again. What do you think about that?”

“Seriously?” Jaramie met Smoky’s eyes at last. “Don’t play with me. I’m not good at games.”

“This is no game.” Smoky paused. “Well, it might have started out that way, but you got to me in a way I didn’t expect. I admit it.”

“I really want to believe you, but—” Jaramie chewed on his lower lip. “It’s just too incredible to think that anything could come of this.”

“Why?”

“Because....” Jaramie’s voice trailed off uncertainly. “I don’t know; it just seems so unlikely.”

“It can become whatever we want it to, if we both believe in it.”

“That seems too easy.”

“Does it? Come on; was it easy for you to come up here with me? Was it easy to give yourself like that?” Smoky paused as Jaramie shook his head. “I didn’t think so. So, why did you do it?”

“I don’t know. It’s definitely not something I’d normally do.”

“Screw normal.” Smoky held out his hand. “What’s your name, Cupcake?”

Jaramie laughed abruptly. “My name’s Jaramie,” he said, taking Smoky’s hand. “It’s nice to meet you.”

“There, that wasn’t so hard, was it? Now that we’re acquainted, would you like to go out with me sometime?”

“Yeah, I would.”

“I get off in two hours.”

“I thought you got off five minutes ago.” Jaramie grinned.

Smoky laughed. “I like you,” he said. “And I have the feeling that this is the start of something really wonderful. I know it’s crazy, but I—”

“Jaramie!” Tommy burst through the door with Janos right behind him. “Jaramie!”

“I’m over here,” Jaramie said, waving at his friend.

“What the fuck?” Tommy said. “You had me worried out of my mind.”

“I told him you were okay,” Janos said. “And I tried to keep him from coming up here.”

“No problem,” Smoky said. “Thanks.”

Tommy was staring at Jaramie in disbelief. “What’s going on here anyway?”

“I was horny,” Jaramie said nonchalantly just to see the expression on Tommy’s face.

Smoky chuckled as he reached out to take Jaramie's hand and pull him closer. "If you'd come up five minutes ago, you could have caught the big finale." He looked into Jaramie's eyes for permission, and then put his arms around him.

"Yeah, right," Tommy scoffed. "As if Jaramie would ever have sex with a stranger in a public place. Are you ready to go home now?"

"You go ahead. I think I'm going to hang around for a couple of hours."

"What? Why?"

"I'm waiting for someone to get off," Jaramie said with a wicked giggle.

Tommy stared at his friend for a long moment. "Are you sure?" he asked.

"Absolutely," Jaramie said. "Thanks for dragging me out tonight. I owe you big."

"I'm not going to forget you said that," Tommy warned.

Jaramie grinned. "Why don't you see if Janos has any pipes that need cleaning?"

Tommy punched his friend hard on the shoulder. "Jerk," he said fondly.

"I'm sure Janos would enjoy that," Smoky said.

Tommy looked from Jaramie's face to Smoky's. "What really happened up here?"

"I'll tell you later, roomie," Jaramie said. "Now scamper."

"Should I worry if you don't come home tonight?"

Jaramie shook his head. "Me and Smoky are going to get better acquainted, and we might stay up all night talking."

"Okay." Tommy paused at the door to the stairwell. "Call me if, you know, you need anything."

"Thanks," Jaramie said. "See you at work."

"Yeah, see you at work, you lucky dog." Tommy blew Jaramie a kiss and disappeared down the stairs with Janos on his heels.

"About my pipes," Janos said as the door closed.

"Now, where were we," Smoky said. "Oh, yeah, I remember; I was going to kiss you."

"Would you, please?" Jaramie sighed.

Smoky swept Jaramie into his arms, bringing their lips together in a long, slow, sweet kiss that seemed to last for days. "That's better," he said, when they finally broke for air. "I knew something was missing."

"You could do that again if you wanted."

"I'd love to, but if I don't get back downstairs soon, I'll be out of a job."

"Should I come with you, or wait here?"

"What do you want to do?"

Jaramie gave his new lover a mischievous smile. “I think you know the answer to that question already.”

“You’re killing me,” Smoky said. “Give me two minutes, and I’ll tell the boss I’m quitting.”

“You’re crazy.”

“So I’ve heard. Will you wait for me?”

“For two hours?”

“Are you going to be counting the minutes?”

“With every beat of my heart.”

Smoky groaned. “I can’t believe how fast this is happening. Come downstairs with me. I’ll fake an attack of... something and get my boss to let me off early. Okay?”

Jaramie giggled again. “Tell him you’re too horny to work.”

“I think *she* just might buy it, if she gets a look at you.” Smoky put a hand on the nape of Jaramie’s neck and pulled him into another lingering kiss. “Damned if you don’t taste just like crème brûlée,” he murmured.

“You haven’t even tasted my cream yet.”

Smoky grinned. “Just one more thing to look forward to.”

CONNIE BAILEY is a Luddite who can't live without her computer. She's an acrophobic who loves to fly, a fault-finding pessimist who, nonetheless, is always surprised when something bad happens, and an antisocialite who loves her friends like family. She's held a number of jobs in many disparate arenas to put food on the table, but writing is the occupation that feeds her soul.

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