

The Love of Skunk

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A Romance

By T. E. Hudson

A romance with a few twists and at least one tragic,
unexpected death...
Oops! Shouldn't have told you *that!* Sorry!!!

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The door stuck, as per usual, and the lock refused to engage once she was inside, also as per usual. No amount of LocLube or any other oily spray-in mess had resolved it, and a call to her local Council had proved less than satisfactory when they emailed her a list of things to try, including a liberal application of LocLube.

And, though it—the lubricant—and her other attempts—found on the Internet—failed to make things better, the Council told her it would take from several weeks to a month to get a locksmith out there.

It was just going on three months and she had about had it with the Council.

She slid the chain latch into place and hoped it would continue keeping her safe at night because certainly her little dog would sleep through any intruder.

As she leaned against the wall next to the door, huffing and puffing in her anger, she considered that she and her firm had represented dozens of people living in Council homes fighting against the injustices of such a life and the bureaucrats sitting in office safe in

the knowledge they were private offices and not open to the public, even those living in their homes.

And, her firm won on nearly eighty-seven percent of all cases.

She went out back to the garden and was greeted by her small dog, Jacob. The terrier made it very clear he was happy but was not going to forgive her for being left behind during the day. To hammer home his disgust, as soon as she went inside he went to the side of the patio and lay down in his bed. Seconds later, he was asleep.

Heading for her computer she sat down to type out an email. After placing a heading indicating she represented the legal firm of Bates, Lewis, Genner and Ogilvy, Attorneys, she added her name on the next line as Senior Legal Representative.

In the five-screen-long email she outlined everything she had done to get them to fix her front door lock, with dates, including using enough LocLube to make it leak out and run down both sides of the door. She added the dates of her other emails and that none of them had been acknowledged much less acted

on.

“This is nothing you can fault Ms. Statler over as your written instructions state to ‘Use a liberal amount of LocLube,’ with nothing else other than the suggestion she ‘shake and turn the lock multiple times.’”

At the bottom of the letter she told the Council representative, whomever that might be, she would expect the “lock to be replaced or completely and satisfactorily repaired no later than that this coming Friday, or two days hence.”

The final line was the clincher in her opinion.

“Failure to fulfill your obligation to sitting tenants, set forth by British and English law, will result in an immediate legal action asking for substantial monetary remedies due to the distress Ms. Statler had been under for in excess of 90 days, and the failure of the lock to protect her belongings, an inventory of which has been taken and will be used in court to show that several items have gone missing.”

Jennie went to her bedroom and slipped out of her dress letting it fall seductively over her

breasts, sliding down across her very taut stomach and over her hips until it dropped to the floor. It was as close as she had been to being sexy for nearly a half year.

She stepped from the garment and kicked it into the air, snagging it in mid flight and taking it to the side room where it was placed on top of a pile of things that did not require a full washing, but would benefit from her steamer/dryer to be refreshed and ready to wear another day.

Dinner was going to be had from her freezer filled with vaguely Indian and close-but-not-really Scottish dinners.

Standing in her panties and bra she considered whether tonight would be a biriani and lamb korma night, or was the evening to be filled with a frozen, yet heated to lava-like conditions, meat pie, or possibly a pastry shell filled with baked beans.

Decisions... decisions. What to do? With a shrug that spoke of her supreme dislike of the nightly what-to-eat argument, albeit with herself, she grabbed the curry and the baked beans.

“International night it is,” she said to

nobody.

She turned on the oven knowing that the microwave in her place typically took ten percent longer to cook anything. It was one reason why, when she was in the mood for something in the mornings from the frozen pancake—or flapjack?—family she used her steam iron. It would need to be on anyway to press her slacks or the front of a blouse if she was going into court that day.

Dinner in front of the television began with a comedy panel quiz game show that, for some reason, featured three of the six panelist who were stand-up comics from the U.S.

They were generally funny although one woman tried far too hard to be understood by the common British citizen using slang she likely had no idea about.

After that came an early edition of the BBC news followed by a rerun of *Yes, Prime Minister*, a series which seemed to get rerun every time there was a call for a general election, and the present Prime Minister (*not* a James Hacker) along with advice from his chief minder (again, not even close to Nigel Hawthorne's Sir Humphrey Appleby) had

made such a call just a week earlier.

Being the third General Election in fifteen months confused Jennie who was used to the Canadian way of leaving a sitting PM in office until he or she did something absolutely dreadful, like asking for a rise in taxes, or passing away, or dating an objectionable actress or actor or mass murderer.

This PM in England had gotten his office in the first of the elections triad, barely squeaked through in the second, and was now so universally hated by the general public he called this one more as a way to perform political suicide by voters rather than just to admit he was a terrible Prime Minister and resign.

Then again, British politics were both a source of confusion and mirth for Jennie.

She sighed, turned the set off and took her two foil trays to the kitchen where they were thoroughly rinsed and placed into the newest way to annoy the public, the **Recyclable Foil (Previously Containing Food; Uncoated)** container. Not, of course to be confused with the one similarly labeled except it was for “Coated” foil containers.

And, God forbid she was ever caught setting out the bins on a Monday evening with anything that had not been rinsed to within an inch of its life.

Jennie turned off all the downstairs lights and went up to her bedroom, After slipping out of her bra and panties she took a quick rinse off shower, dried herself and slipped between the bottom sheet and the duvet, naked.

It felt good, and she was tempted to make things feel a lot better, but she was dead tired so she rolled over on her stomach, buried her face in her thick, feather pillow, and fell into a deep sleep.

The sun was shining, or at least trying to through the last of a veil of thin clouds high in the sky, when her alarm brought her upright and wondering where the very nice shirtless fireman in the leather fire pants, suspenders, and holding a small puppy had gone.

She shook the last vestige of that dream out of her head, got out of bed and headed for a lingering, very hot shower and a good hair cleaning.

In the steamy cubicle she closed her eyes and tried to call back the fireman. She could not. Instead, her brain presented her with the antithesis of that man, one of her bosses, Henry Genner, or as he wished to be addressed, Sir Henry.

It wasn't that he had been awarded an actual knighthood, but he felt he was so-o-o-o-o-o close to it he ought to be accorded that honorific. Inside the firm's walls, obviously, and not outside or when anyone other than employees were present.

It felt a shame to put on her clothes, again, but Jennie had the feeling that if she showed up at work one day, starkers as the locals called it, she might be tolerated while the males of the firm got an eyeful but would be "sadly" let go at the end of the day.

"I think," she said to her little car as she climbed in, "on my final day I shall do exactly that and just see how long the leches let it go on."

Turning off the A4 she neared the parking structure and spotted the same homeless man who had stood in front of her car the previous day. She tried to get through the gate quickly,

but had to fumble for her access card and he took a long step and was in front of her car effectively blocking her from moving forward.

She pressed the button and the side window lowered so she might use her access badge and was in time to hear him saying, "...but you never say 'hello' or 'goodbye' or 'die, you bloody, smelly man.' Nothing. Have you got an issue with me other than the obvious?" He pointed at his shabby clothes.

To her horror he stepped around from the front of the rather short car to stand next to her window.

And, even worse, the button to raise the window seemed to be suddenly stuck.