

Bad Trip

by Marilyn Reeves

It was a long time before he could remember anything about her. Friends told him her name was Lana Kowalski. It had been in the paper – just a few lines. They didn't mention how she died. He had a vague recollection of a petite girl. Long brown hair. Long red fingernails. Twenty-two years old.

Someone had turned down the music from its killer pitch – afraid the cops might come and spoil the fun – but the noise level was still excruciating. The downstairs was already crowded – mostly frat boys and their dates – but still more people forced their way in, adding to the din. There was no place to sit. No more room for dancing, just bodies jammed together, doing some sort of primitive Watusi.

Donnie had had a few beers, eaten a little pizza, and taken a few tokes off a couple of joints that were being passed around. He had started feeling a bit woozy, so he wedged his way through the wall of people and headed upstairs, hoping to find a place to lie down.

The beds were overflowing and there were bodies sprawled all over the floor, but the girl made room for him on the window seat. She told him her name, but it didn't really register. He'd seen her someplace before, not sure where.

She gave him a devilish grin and said, "You wanna get really high?" Then proceeded to pull some paraphernalia out of her purse. A spoon, a lighter, a rubber tube and some white crystals in a baggie. Next thing he knew, she

had fastened the rubber band around his biceps and was injecting him with some sort of liquid solution. *Wham!* He thought he'd been kicked in the head by a mule.

Stars started flashing around the room – round and round and round they swirled. The stars turned into white doves, which became angels hovering overhead, grinning down at him with jagged teeth. The wallpaper seemed to be melting off the walls, shimmering and pulsing to the rhythm of the base drum, keeping time with his racing heart.

Her head was in his lap and her face was upside down. Her mouth was in her forehead and when she talked it looked so strange he burst out laughing. It was the funniest thing he'd ever seen! He couldn't stop laughing. At some point she started gagging and slid down to the floor, but he didn't notice she was gone.

There were eyes everywhere, peering down at him. Snakes slithering down from the ceiling. Big, hairy spiders. Nightmare shadows hovered all around. Someone was screaming.

When he finally awoke in the hospital, they said he'd been delirious for two days and two nights. In and out of consciousness. Sweating with fever, shaking with chills. He felt as if his head had been bashed in by a meat cleaver. He was so weak he could barely sip from a straw.

It had been a bad trip and still a long road ahead to recovery. He didn't think he'd be taking that journey again, any time soon.

... Lana Who?