

# Roanne Smiled

by Robert Crisman

With some of these guys it was like propping a kid on a training-wheel bike, then steering the kid down the street til he figured out what to do next.

Tricks would come into the bar. Roanne had a smile for all but the dregs and those whose eyes shouted danger. She drew a lot of the scared little guys whose demeanor seemed to shout that they'd come straight from mama's to Wong's.

A guy would come up to the bar where Roanne would be sitting, take a seat a couple of stools down, throw one of those supplicant's glances her way, then stutter out hi when he worked up the nerve.

She'd smile and say, "Hi."

He'd say hi again as if that's all he'd brought with him. She'd say, "You new here? I haven't seen you before."

He'd try to grin. "I, well, I've never been here. You know, it's, this is my first time and..." He'd grin like a sheep, blush, and shrug.

Roanne laughed a soft, sexy laugh. "Well. Welcome to the party."

He'd take a deep breath and get to it. "A friend of mine told me, you know, like, he knows you--you know...*been* with you, and he, like, described you--" He nodded at the hat that she wore, a shell of black feathers tipped forward, with a veil over one eye, her left. "Your hat, it's really--" He blushed, grinned, and nodded his head in quick tics. "It makes you stand out..."

Roanne smiled her professional's smile.

"And he said you were nice..."

Roanne laughed. The guy held his breath.

"Well, I *am* nice, she said, and helped him along with the smile. In the soft semi-darkness, it sparkled..."

His blush almost glowed in that soft semi-darkness. "Well, yeah... He said that..."

Roanne laughed. "C'mon, you can tell me."

"Well, you know, what you looked like, you know, you have, like, beautiful eyes..." The guy glowed *deep* red.

Where *did* these guys come from?

Roanne's eyes were black pools that held secrets, or so it appeared. She smiled and said, "Tell me more."

The guy blinked. "And then, he said, if I were, you know, to come here and see you..."

"Well, here I am. You see me." Roanne, the mischevious imp. Not a bad act. Underneath it all though, she began to get bored.

The guy looked nonplussed.

She leaned forward, put her hand on his arm. "You'd like to be together for awhile."

"Well...yeah."

"Well, I'd like that too. Where would you like to go?"

The guy sighed and they worked it out. They got to the place and she had to show him what to do next. The guy's whole life was a stutter. She wanted to *scream*.

She finally had to fast-forward the action.

Just hop on board, man, and let's get this done...

He blew in six seconds.

It was either fuck him, she said later laughing, or burp him and send him on home to his mom.

Next time if there was a next time, the guy'd at least know how to get on the bike.

