

## SPINNING A YARN

By: Cathy Clamp

“April, are you okay?” Henry Moran’s voice rose from a billowing cloud of dust, and was followed by a series of shallow coughs.

A deep rumble and clatter of rocks made April Powers pause and look up nervously before responding. “I think so. How about you?”

A bright flashlight beam to her left helped her make her way through the darkness of the small cavern as he responded. “Some bumps and bruises, but nothing broken.”

Fine powder covered Henry from head to toe, making his blue eyes the only spot of color. He took a handkerchief from his pocket and handed it to her. “No water, but this will help with that scrape on your arm.”

She hadn’t even noticed! Pulling a bottle from her pack, she wet the handkerchief. “Hey, between us, we’re almost competent.”

As he laughed, she looked in dismay at the bruises that would be technicolor by nightfall. “Well, I guess I’ll be wearing my long sleeved little black dress to the *Spin Us a Yarn* mixer tonight.” Her weak attempt at a joke made Henry laugh a second time and then smile warmly. Suddenly, all this had been worth it—just to see him smile that way, at her.

“Well, there’s a reason they call the club *Adventures in Dating*. I’m just glad I’m here with the queen of spelunking. We’ll be out of here in no time flat.”

She felt her eyes widen and her face grow hot. Oh, lord! Henry thought she was the experienced one? Her total knowledge was from a book on local caves she’d checked out of the library last week! She prayed there was still enough grime on her face that he couldn’t see her blush.

It had seemed such a good idea. *Adventures in Dating* was her best friend Rhonda’s latest venture. People paid a fee to be matched with someone who shared their outdoor interests. Then, at the end of the day, everyone would meet and regale the crowd with stories.

Unfortunately, while April liked caves, she’d never actually been inside one. But she couldn’t think of any other way to get to know smart, handsome Henry, a technician at the pharmacy near work. She’d admired him from afar for nearly a year, and he did cave. Rhonda spotted his name when he applied and matched them on a date. But had she really written *queen of spelunking*? Eek!

This was the result of her creative fiction. April struggled to remember the facts about this place from *Caves of Harris County*. But she drew a blank other than it was a popular spot and perfectly safe. Of course, that was before the sudden storm a few minutes ago. Lightning struck a rock overhang and sent part of it crashing down the mountain.

As much as she hated the thought, it was confession time . . . which would end any hope of a second date.

“Are you okay? You look worried all of a sudden.”

He sounded so genuinely concerned that April wanted to leap across the small distance and hold him tight. But the longer she looked at him, the closer she got to tears. She’d wanted to date him so much and now—

She turned and walked toward the rock-filled entrance. “I . . . that is—” A quick clearing

of her throat got rid of the quavering that threatened to dissolve into a full-fledged crying jag, “I . . . I’m sorry, Henry. I lied on my profile. I don’t know anything about caving. I don’t know how to get us out of here.” She turned then, blinked back the wetness and took a quick sniff to clear her nose. “I’ve just wanted to date you for so long. Please don’t hate me.”

His face moved through a dozen expressions after her confession, but the laugh caught her off guard. “Hate you? Why? I think you’re pretty terrific.”

Confusion dried the tears. “But . . . I lied.”

“Welcome to the club.” He leaned back, crossed his arms across his chest and snorted. “I’m terrified of heights, hate bicycles and can barely dog paddle. Caving was the only thing on the list of adventures that probably wouldn’t kill me. There wasn’t a check box for knitting.” He cocked his head to the side and raised one eyebrow. “But I didn’t know you wanted to date me. Have we met before this?”

She finally got the courage to move closer and sit down near him before shaking her head. “No. I see you all the time at the pharmacy, but you’re always so busy that I’ve never wanted to interrupt. I work in outpatient at the hospital on Elm and pick up ‘scrips for patients.”

That stopped him cold and he pointed at her. “Wait! *You’re* April from St. Jude’s?” When she nodded, startled, he continued with an astonished look. “I’ve been wanting to meet you for months! You crochet, right? You did the afghan for Tammy’s baby?” She could only nod, still stunned at the realization that he’d wanted to meet her! “Man! That was an awesome piece of work. I really want to get that pattern to see if it’ll work for knitting.”

Did she really hear that. . . he knitted? Wow! “Um, sure. But we need to get out of here first.”

He stood up and looked around. “Well, if I remember the book right, this was considered an easy cave because there are *two* entrances.”

A laugh bubbled up. “*Caves of Harris County?*”

He smiled and offered his hand. “Page 72. It should be around to the right.” Once his fingers were wrapped around hers, he brushed a stray hair from her cheek, sending shivers through her. “How about we skip the mixer tonight? Have you been to that new yarn shop over on 10th?”

She shook her head and then felt a warm glow as he squeezed her hand and said softly, “Personally, I’d rather *buy* some yarn for my date than *spin* one for a crowd.”