

A Life in a Year

By Shae Connor



Jared grunted as he stretched to reach the stubborn patch of icy snow in the very center of the car's roof. *Damn early snowfalls*, he thought as he knocked the mess loose with the edge of the long-handled ice scraper. *Always wet and freezing to everything.*

A half-foot-deep white blanket covered almost everything in sight, except the driveways and cars that had already been dug out by neighbors and the main parts of the road through the condo complex. At least the owners' association had the plows out early.

Jared shivered his way through the last of his work, clearing away the rest of the snow from both his and Cameron's cars. His boyfriend had still been sleeping soundly when Jared slipped from their bed a couple of hours earlier, unable to sleep past eight no matter how late he stayed up. After fortifying himself with a cup of strong, hot coffee, he figured he'd get this part of the snow removal out of the way and later show Cam how to clear the driveway. It was Cam's first winter in Michigan after having spent most of his life in Tampa, so he still had a lot to learn about dealing with the weather.

Satisfied that the cars were cleared enough, Jared had just taken one step back when something wet and cold hit him in the middle of his back. He gasped out his surprise at the snowball attack and swung around to see Cameron standing a few yards away, eyes flashing humor above a giant grin. He wore sweatpants, the parka Jared had given him for his birthday the month before, and the extra pair of snow boots from the mudroom. His head was bare, and he wore a pair of Jared's mittens, which were so large on him that they'd probably slide right off his hands if he let his arms drop to his sides.

“Well, now,” Jared drawled out, talking a step forward. “Look who finally decided to drag his cute little ass out of bed.”

He took another slow, deliberate step and watched as Cam tensed, still smiling but obviously bracing himself to run if Jared went after him. Cameron was smaller and pretty darn agile, but as a former college football player, Jared had some moves of his own. Jared was planning an attack, of course, but probably not what Cameron had in mind.

“Woke up all alone in that big, cold bed,” Cameron said, not quite hitting the pouty tone he seemed to be aiming for, since that big grin remained firmly in place. “Had to come out to see if I could tempt my big, bad boyfriend back inside to warm me up.”

Oh, Jared could warm him up, all right. He took another step and paused for a few long moments before making his move. He simply lunged straight forward, a flying tackle that knocked Cam off his feet. Jared grabbed him in both arms and pulled him close, rolling so he landed on his back with Cam on top of him. By the time they came to rest in the snow, Cameron was laughing like he’d never stop, one still-mittened hand trapped between their bodies, the other one bare and resting in the center of Jared’s chest.

Jared did one of his favorite things then and kissed Cameron’s smile, giving a small smile of his own in response as Cam’s laughter trailed off into a moan. Within seconds, Cam’s lithe body was rubbing against Jared’s at every point where they touched, his cock hard against Jared’s through the heavy layers of cloth that separated them.

Jared could’ve stayed right there all day, kissing Cameron like their lives depended on it, but his ass was already cold, and he didn’t relish the idea of getting frostbite on tender body parts. He broke the kiss, but only so he could mouth his way across Cam’s jaw to whisper in his ear.

“I’m going to take you inside,” he growled out, “And strip off every stitch of clothing, and drag you into the shower and fuck you into the tile.”

Cameron moaned and bucked, his hips grinding against Jared, and Jared tightened his arms again, carefully climbing to his feet as Cam shifted to wrap his arms around Jared’s shoulders and his legs around Jared’s hips.

“Inside,” he murmured, lips busy along the side of Jared’s neck. “Snow’s pretty and all, but I’d like a hot fuck a lot more.”

As he headed inside with Cam wrapped around him, Jared couldn’t agree more.



Cameron had decided this was his second favorite place in their condo. The bed would always be in first place—huge, soft, covered in cotton sheets and a down comforter, and nearly always filled with Jared’s big, hard body.

But the thick, fuzzy rug in front of the fireplace in their living room came in a pretty strong second, especially when they were naked on it, wrapped up in each other.

The firelight danced across Jared’s smooth skin as Cameron moved above him, palms braced against Jared’s broad chest. Jared’s strong fingers, tight on Cam’s hips, helped support him as he raised and lowered himself slowly on Jared’s hard cock. Jared fit inside him so perfectly, every long stroke brushing across his prostate and sending out sparks like the logs crackling behind the firescreen.

"So gorgeous." Jared's words were a bare whisper, but Cam heard him clearly. His senses seemed heightened, every touch and sound amplified far beyond the norm. His skin buzzed with pleasure, every nerve ending aflame with desire for the beautiful man below him.

Outside, a near blizzard raged, but inside was warm and comfortable. They’d barely made it through dinner, eaten while sitting together on the sofa, before Jared had pulled Cam into his lap and kissed him with what felt like weeks of pent-up desire, though it had been only twelve hours since they’d made love that morning.

Their discarded clothes drew a path to the hearth, scattered around and mixed up with the bottle of lube and the wrapper from the condom, both applied in the least time necessary. When Jared pushed up into Cameron’s body, Cam had sighed at the feeling of *good* and *right* and *home* that always filled him when they came together.

Cam rocked forward, shifting his pelvis so that the pressure on his prostate came harder and deeper every time he moved. He moaned, his head dropping forward as his eyes fell shut, and he heard an answering groan from his lover.

"Yeah." The rough edge of Jared’s voice vibrated through Cam’s body, making him shiver. "That’s perfect, babe. You’re just.... God, you’re the hottest thing I’ve ever seen. Can’t believe you’re mine."

Cameron wanted to reply, wanted to give Jared's words back to him, but he'd gone beyond words. He hung on the edge, pushing against that perfect spot, every breath coming out as a gasp. He was seconds from reaching for his cock when a much larger hand wrapped around it, and Cam cried out as Jared started to stroke.

"Fuck yeah." It was Jared's turn to gasp. "Come on, baby. Come for me. Come all over me."

It was a request Cameron couldn't have denied even if he'd wanted to. A few more hard tugs and he started to come, shooting out hot, wet ribbons across Jared's stomach and chest.

"Yes!" Jared's cry blended with Cam's helpless moans, and he felt Jared's hands clamp down hard on his hips. Jared pistoned up into him, reaching for his own climax, and he found it quickly, his body shuddering under Cam as he emptied himself into the condom.

Cam's arms, which had been supporting him only tenuously at best, gave out, and he lowered himself to lie against Jared's chest. Sweat and seed mixed between them, and Cam smiled slowly, reveling in the feel of it.

Jared's arms slid around him, holding Cam closer, and Cam felt Jared's mouth press against his temple. "Love you," Jared murmured, the depth of feeling in the two words resonating throughout Cameron's body.

"Love you, too, baby," Cameron replied, the emotion inside him burning brighter than any fire could ever hope to.



“Jared!”

Jared turned, his face starting to ache from all the smiling, but he didn’t want to stop. “Bill!” He grabbed up his old college roommate in a bear hug. “Man, it’s been way too long. How have you been?”

“Great,” Bill answered, returning the hug full force. He lifted an eyebrow at Jared as they broke apart. “Looks like you’ve been doing pretty well yourself. You’ve got a live one here, hmmm?”

Jared felt himself blush a little as he glanced across the room to where Cameron was pointing party guests toward the drinks and serving up slices of birthday cake. “Yeah, he’s pretty amazing,” Jared said, forcing his gaze back to Bill. “I can’t believe he got all this set up without me knowing a thing about it. I mean, he got my brother to take me *golfing* this morning, of all things. I haven’t been on a golf course since college!”

Bill laughed, the deep, rich sound still so familiar to Jared, even four years after they graduated and with months since they’d last spoken directly. Thank goodness for email.

“He’s got your number, man.” Bill gave a leer that only people who knew him well would realize was fake. “Tight little body, too. Just your type.”

Jared rolled his eyes. Bill might be as straight as they came, but he’d never blinked at Jared’s sexuality, nor shied away from diving right into scoping out guys on his behalf.

“Tight is right.” Jared let his voice drop into a lower register, fighting back a grin. He knew Bill’s limits when it came to gay sex. “Just last night, he did this thing where—“

That was as far as he got before Bill threw up a warning hand. “All right, all right,” he said through his and Jared’s laughter. “No need to get detailed. I’ll stop.” His smile softened. “But he is good for you. I haven’t seen you this relaxed and happy... well, probably not in all the time I’ve known you.”

Jared couldn't help it. He looked over at Cameron again, this time just as Cam turned his way, and their gazes caught and held, time stretching out like taffy around them. Jared didn't know how long they stood like that, but someone finally spoke to Cameron, pulling his attention away, and Jared forced his back to his conversation with Bill.

"I've never been this happy," he said. "I never even thought I could be. I feel like anything I could say would just be a cliché, but he's just... he's not perfect, and neither am I, but we're perfect for each other."

Bill smiled. "You are," he agreed. "Anyone who spends more than five seconds in the same room with you two knows it."

"Knows what?" An arm slid around Jared's waist, and he grinned down at Cam as he lifted his own arm to wrap around Cam's shoulders.

"Oh, I was just saying how everyone knows you made the food for this shindig. Jared can't even find the right pot to boil water, forget burning it." One thing Bill had never lacked for was a quick comeback. Predictably, Cameron laughed.

"I'm working on that," he said, tipping his head to rest against Jared's shoulder. "I've got him playing sous chef for me. Not only can he usually find the right pan, he can even chop veggies without taking off a fingertip!"

Bill looked skeptical, and he and Cam launched into a quickfire back-and-forth of thinly veiled insults toward Jared's lack of kitchen skills, but Jared just let it wash over him. He had the best boyfriend in the world pressed up against his side, a roomful of friends surrounding him, and a heart filled to bursting with love. How could anything else really matter?



“Oooo, that’s a cool one!”

Cameron smiled at the glee in Jared’s voice as the burst of light above them faded into sparkles and then smoke. Jared loved fireworks, and they’d discovered the year before, before Cam moved in, that they could see one of the local midsummer fireworks displays from the back deck of Jared’s condo.

This year, they decided to stay in and watch from home, and Cam thought it was one of their best ideas yet. They’d grilled out hamburgers, and their kitchen cleaning ended up with Cameron pressed up against the counter while Jared gave him one of the best blowjobs ever. Cam’s body twitched again at the memory. He had *definite* plans to return the favor later.

They lay stretched out together on the extra-wide chaise lounge they’d bought as soon as the weather started to warm, just for nights like this. Patriotic music from a local radio station floated out through the screen door from where Jared had set up a speaker before he headed outside to join Cam. Popcorn and sodas sat on the low table next to them, though they’d hardly been touched, their attention divided between the fireworks and each other.

Another huge explosion of color pulled an appreciative sound out of Jared, and Cameron shivered at the familiarity of it, so much like the noises Jared let out when they made love. Jared caught Cam’s reaction and laughed a little.

“Don’t worry, babe,” he said, pulling Cam closer. “Nothing beats the fireworks we make on our own.”

Cam laughed even as he rolled his eyes at his boyfriend’s goofiness. One of the things he loved most about Jared was his willingness to be silly and corny, especially when it came to his feelings for Cam. Even the most ridiculous words sounded like gold when Jared said them in that awestruck, head-over-heels tone of voice.

Cameron's life had changed so much in the previous year and a half, and all of it good. He thanked his lucky stars every day that Jared had come to Tampa for a winter getaway and that he'd ended up at the same bar with Cam and his college buddies. A week of whirlwind romance and blazing-hot sex later, and Cam found himself making plans for graduate school at the University of Michigan.

All the upheaval had been worth it. Three months after he relocated, he moved in with Jared, and he'd never looked back.

Cam snuggled closer into Jared's side, and they watched the fireworks display a little longer, *ooing* and *ahhing* and pointing out favorites. When Jared moved away suddenly, Cameron was surprised, but not so much as he was when he turned to face Jared and found him lowering himself to one knee beside the chaise. His smile shook just slightly as he reached out to take Cam's hand.

"Cameron," Jared said, as serious as Cam had ever heard him, and Cam's heart pounded harder. "The year and a half since I met you has been the best time in my life. I can't imagine ever going back to what I was before you. You've made me not just a happier person but a *better* person. I love you more than I thought I could love anyone. And I want to know—"

Cam had a pretty good idea what was coming by then, but that didn't stop the gasp when Jared produced a small box seemingly from nowhere, holding it out toward Cameron. The box was open to display two rings, one larger than the other, the smaller one silver with a black band around the center and the larger black with a silver band.

"Cam—" Jared tried to say, but Cameron had already launched himself into Jared's arms, nearly knocking him over onto the deck.

"Yes," Cameron breathed into Jared's neck, where he'd buried his face to try to keep from crying. "Oh my God, *yes*."

Jared's big body shook, from laughter, relief, emotion, or some combination, Cam didn't know. All he cared about was having Jared's arms around him, holding onto him like he'd never let go, while fireworks kept right on going off, above and inside them.