

He had just settled himself down to watch the racing, and thereby find out if he were going to end the weekend richer or poorer, when the phone rang. Before the first trill had faded, he was on his feet and half way across the room, one hand automatically smoothing his hair, the other popping the first of a big bag of Revels into his mouth.

Pausing, to allow the phone to ring an egoprotecting number of times—for it would never do to let Claire think he'd been sitting round on the off-chance that she might forgive him after all—he finally picked the phone up. "Hello?" he said in his suavest voice.

"What took you so long, Bodie?" Doyle demanded in his most peeved voice. "The old arthritis slowing you down, is it?"

Oh. Doyle. Not Claire and the possibilities of a lovely afternoon of sex at all. Just his tormenting bugger of a partner who sounded in a really charming mood today, even by Doyle standards. "What d'you want, Doyle?" he asked, refusing to let himself be conned into jollying Doyle out of his fit of the moodies the way he usually did. He'd given that up for Lent, he'd decided, before he ended up being Doyle's permanent doormat.

"Remember that stacked Swedish blonde thingy I was telling you about?"

Actually, no he didn't, but stacked, Swedish and blonde—even with the typically Doyle-ian unflattering 'thingy' added on—sounded a lot more appealing than Lester Piggot on a three-year-old Arabian grey did. "Swedish? Planning on *entering* the Common Market, are we, my

old son?"

"What are you going on about now, Bodie? Never mind, I probably don't want to know. Listen, I'm having a hell of a time screwing—"

"Never! Not the Long-Haired Lover from—"

"Shut up, Bodie! If you're going to be a prat about this, I'll ring Murphy and get *him* to come and help me put it in."

For once in his life, Bodie was left absolutely speechless. "Come again? I mean, did you say what I think you just said?"

There was an extremely expressive sigh from the other end of the phone, one that warned Bodie had been given enough rope and was just about to hang himself. "Look, Bodie, I need help with the screwing—"

This was too good to be true! "What, you want me to draw you a diagram?"

"No, I've already got one of those, fat lot of help it's been. I want you to come over here—"

Bodie's voice had risen at least half an octave, and his pertinent little parts were rapidly following suit. "You want me to come over there and help you screw?"

"No, I'm fed up trying to get this stupid fucking thing up and properly screwed. I want *you* to fucking well do it for me!"

Bodie wanted to make sure that there was no room for error in this, and that he wasn't going to wind up *in flagrante delicto* with Doyle's gun doing the shooting. "You want me to do your screwing for you?"

"Christ, the penny finally drops! Any slower,

and my Gran'll be beating you at draughts." Doyle's voice took on a cadence usually reserved by the terminally insensitive for the severely mentally retarded. "Yes, I want you to come here and fit everything in and do my screwing for me."

Bodie looked at the phone as if he absolutely, positively had to have misheard what he thought he had just heard. "Em, Ray, it's not that I want to be difficult or anything...

"You? Christ, this is a first! You feeling all right, mate?"

"Fine, fine, I'm absolutely fine." Although he wasn't so sanguine about Doyle's mental health. "Listen, you did just say that you want me to come over and show you how to do your screwing?"

"You must be deaf as well as daft, you. I don't want you to come over and show me, Bodie, I already said I want you to come over and do it for me! Now, has that finally penetrated your thick skull?"

Yes, and judging by the way his prick was pricking at his track suit, his skull wasn't the only thing that was going to be penetrated this afternoon. But for all his mum had always told him never to look a gift horse in the mouth, he'd known Ray Doyle long enough to fear to tread where angels wouldn't even spit. "D'you mind if I ask why?"

Another sigh, this one saying that Doyle was an absolute saint to put up with all this. "Because you've always been good with your hands, Bodie. And though I hate to admit it, you're better than me in fact—but that's not saying much, so don't let it go to your head."

Bit late for that, Bodie thought, as his cock gave a healthy throb—it was going to one head already.

"There," Doyle was saying into his ear, "that do you? Now will you come over here and get on with it?"

Get on with it? He could hardly wait! Doyle had fantastic taste in women, and God knew where he found some of his beauties, although Bodie had tried. And if he suddenly wanted to share, well, who was Bodie to complain? "Right, fair enough. I'll come over and screw your Swedish blonde thingy—for you."

He almost slammed the phone down, he was in such a hurry to get there before Doyle changed his mind, but just before he'd cut Ray off, he heard a snatch of something that made his blood tingle even more than the thought of Ray's Swedish beauty: he heard something about him and Doyle screwing together... Not a bad idea, having a

threesome with Ray. Bodie'd always enjoyed troys, and never been overly fussy if the third were male or female, as long as the sex was good and the body attractive, and the latter was certainly true of Doyle, and if the way the randy little bugger walked was anything to go by, then the former was going to be positively heavenly.

If Cowley had had the faintest idea of the speed with which Bodie made it through London on a Saturday afternoon, our Bodie would have been stuck in Records until the Queen abdicated. As it was, he made it to Doyle's flat with positively indecent haste—in more ways than one. Pale grey track suit trousers are very good at covering, but they fail miserably when it comes to concealing a young man's rampant enthusiasm. Especially when said enthusiasm is so forthright, bold and, not to put too fine a point on it, bloody enormous.

Doyle buzzed him in almost quickly enough for Bodie's taste. "Right," Bodie said, rubbing his hands gleefully as he strode down the hall to Doyle's bedroom, "where's our Swedish friend then?"

"In the living room, where the fuck else would it be, you stupid great prick?" Doyle's voice shouted out from behind him, making Bodie about face and go into the sitting room. Where he was greeted, not by a stacked blonde to make Britt Eckland look nunnish, but by a very hot, very bothered and extremely red in the face Ray Doyle.

"Here," Doyle snarled, slapping a screwdriver into Bodie's right hand and an appallingly mangled illustrated diagram into the other, "show us what those magic hands of yours can do."

"Kinky, Doyle," Bodie said, handling the crumpled paper and the phallic screwdriver, unwilling to twig to what he was slowly beginning to dread was going on.

"Ha, bloody, ha, very funny mate, I'll split my sides laughing, you're so fucking funny. But if it's not too much trouble, Morecambe, you can just shut your face and put that fucking Swedish stacking shelf thing together for me, because I've had it up to here with the stupid fucking thing!"

Christ, but Doyle really was going to split his sides laughing, if certain details Bodie was trying so hard to ignore turned out to be true. "You don't have a girl here?"

Doyle gave him a funny look, and then, with great theatrical flourish, turned in a small, slow circle, surveying the vast kingdom of his living room. "Funny, that, I could've sworn I had my harem in here last time I looked." His tone of voice swerved from bemused back to aggrieved, Bodie being pinned by the bad humour of his stare. "Course I don't have a fucking bird in here, Bodie. I'm trying to put shelves up—remember them, the shelves you talked me into getting, the Swedish blond-wood ones? Perfect for your hi-fi, Ray, you said," Doyle muttered, doing a very credible Bodie. "Those bottom racks are just the ticket for your albums, Ray, you said." He was talking under his breath now, as he gathered up strewn nails and screws and hammers and one rather sticky tube of Bostick. "Be an absolute breeze to get it up, do it in an hour, Ray, you said."

Bodie was still trying to get his balls to believe what his eyes were seeing and what his ears were hearing. He was, unfortunately, having little success, for every time he convinced his cock that now would be a really good time to lose its enthusiasm, Ray would move, and the twitch of that luscious arse would have Bodie running up the mast with all the speed of greased lightning.

Doyle, noting the lack of agreement, turned, and seriously peeved, demanded, "Are you listening to me?"

Not a tone of voice to ignore, especially not when coming from either the George Cowleys or the Raymond Doyles of this world. "I'm listening, I'm listening. Hanging on your every word," Bodie lied blithely.

"More like getting yourself hung and me with you, as per bloody usual," Doyle was muttering from somewhere behind a rather large sheet of pale blond pine. "Come up with these brilliant ideas, every one a winner, you say, but who is it who ends up in shit to his armpits? Muggins, that's who." The wood was manœuvered, none too steadily, to prop up the back wall, while Doyle poked and prodded at various holes.

Bodie, staring at a ripe rump hugged by patched denims, was thinking about poking and prodding a few holes himself.

Doyle, oblivious to various erections going on behind him, was trying to erect something entirely different in front of him. "I mean, look at this!" he shouted. "Piles of fucking wood all over the place, screws everywhere, a how-to that's more of a bloody how-don't, glue on my carpet—"

"Need a hand then, do you?" Bodie asked, the perfect picture of innocence—now that he had

pulled his track suit top down far enough to hide a multitude of sins, one of them particularly large.

Doyle turned on him with a look that could have curdled UHT milk from fifty paces. "Me? Oh, no, not me, mate," he said, sarcasm dripping even more profusely than the glue. "Wouldn't've have called you over if I'd needed a hand screwing together this stupid bloody idea of yours, would

"Allright, allright," Bodie sighed, long-suffering as usual, but the longness this time was his cock, and it wasn't so much suffering. "Give it here, and I'll sort it out for you."

"I," Doyle said with great dignity, considering there was a tear in his T-shirt and a biro stuck between his ear and his curls, "already gave it to you. That," he nodded at what had once been pristine, neatly folded instructions, "used to be the diagram of how to do it."

Bodie looked down at the mangled lump he had dropped when trying to cover up his rather dishonourable intentions towards his partner. "Oh. Well," he rubbed his hands together, then came over, snagged the pen from its nest of curls, copped a quick feel, and then turned towards the chaos of wood and metal before his partner could react, "we don't need diagrams to show us how to do it, do we? So let's have a look-see at this then..."

Doyle, never one to stop Bodie from making a complete fool of himself, found a convenient wall to lean against, draped himself comfortably, crossed his arms, and grinned. This, he decided, was going to be worth the four hours of aggro he'd already gone through trying to put this stupid damned thing together.

Half an hour later, the grin had been wiped off his face and he was no longer propping up the wall with supercilious ease. He was, much to his surprise, crouched on the floor behind a kneeling Bodie, acting for all the world like the green apprentice.

"Cam," Bodie muttered.

Doyle put a cam into the groping hand.

"Three-quarter inch nail," Bodie said.

Doyle put a nail, this time, into the groping

"Small hammer," Bodie murmured.

Doyle put a small hammer into the groping hand, and wished, not for the first time, that the groping hand was groping where it could do him some good. He shifted, for the millionth time,

sitting nose to delectable arse with Bodie not the most relaxing position to be in. I mean, he thought to himself, just look at the way that track suit stretches across his bum! His fingers were itching to see if that shadow was just light, or if it were the cleft between Bodie's buttocks. His cock was itching, too, for much the same reason, but with greater cause. Christ, he hoped Bodie finished putting this stereo shelf unit together soon, otherwise, Bodie was going to find it wasn't only the wood round here that was going to have its holes drilled.

"Half-inch screw," Bodie said, innocently.

Oh, god, screw, Doyle thought, supremely uninnocently.

He handed Bodie a very platonic screw, and wished with all his lascivious heart that the screw in question had fulfilled the old Platonic ideal.

Bodie was now scrambling around, up and down, stretching and crouching, giving Doyle a cornucopia of interesting aspects on his partner.

"There," Bodie announced, small cabinet light now firmly screwed in place, which was more than could be said for poor Doyle. "Now all we have to do for that is attach the extension they were so very kind to supply you with." He glanced over his shoulder at a somewhat glazed-looking Doyle. "They did supply the wires?" Doyle didn't even blink. "You do know what wires are, don't you, Ray? Ray?"

It finally dawned on Doyle, who had been having a lovely time imagining a thoroughly screwed Bodie panting out "Ray, Ray," that the "Ray, Ray," he was hearing had a hell of a lot more to do with impatience and sincere doubt than with impatience due to a sincere desire to be fucked into next week. "What?"

Bodie repeated his question, somewhat rephrased now that his prickly—oh, how prick-ly Doyle was!—partner had actually come back to the land of the mentally aware. "I said, did the kit include extension wiring for the cabinet light?"

"Oh," Doyle said, trying very hard to concentrate on something other than how hard he himself was, "yeh. It's around here somewhere..."

Bodie saw it first, grabbed it and muttered something unflattering under his breath about dozy bastards who can't even help someone else who's doing all the work.

A small silence, while Bodie checked the wiring and then cursed, slowly and quite eloquently.

"What?" Doyle asked again, still sounding no more intelligent than before, but at least under enough control to pay attention to more than Bodie's bum. And crotch. And legs. And the way the hair curled on his forearms. And the way his back flexed... Needless to say, he missed Bodie's

There was a monumental sigh from his martyred friend. "This is just the wiring itself, we need to put the plugs on the end. Hand us one, will you?"

Doyle picked up the first vaguely electrical thing he could put his hand on.

That tore it. "No, you stupid berk, a *male* plug!" Was there any other kind, Doyle wondered, when sitting not three inches from the most luscious arse in Christendom? Still, he felt a proper idiot for getting muddled over such a simple instruction. He reached out to get the male plug from the packet, intending to moan right back at Bodie to cover up how stupid he felt, but then temptation stirred fractionally, and under such a terrible onslaught, Doyle immediately surrendered completely. "What's a male plug, Bodie?" he asked, sounding as guileless as a novitiate nun.

Bodie gave him a peculiar—in fact, one could almost say queer—look for that. "It's the one with the bit sticking out—"

Doyle was so innocent that, compared to him, Mother Teresa would look like the local sleazebucket. "But I thought all plugs had a bit sticking out."

This was odd, Bodie thought. Very odd. If he didn't know better... Nah. Not Doyle. Oh, all right, so he'd wondered about Doyle a time or two, but then, being as bent as the proverbial three pound note, Bodie wondered about every man he met, never mind someone as positively edible as his partner. So it was just himself having a filthy mind and indulging in wishful thinking, Bodie told himself. But then, they'd only been partnered a few months, and it wasn't the kind of thing you brought up over the football results in the morning, was it? He could just picture it, Doyle sprawled on the flea-bitten old sofa in the rest room, nose buried in whatever paper Bodie had brought in with him. See Spurs won last night. Definitely in the Semis, then. Oh, and don't know if I remembered to mention it, mate, but I'm queer. Fancy shoving it up my bum during our tea break? Yeh, right, and Cowley was going to double their wages. Down boy, he told his cock, reminding it that not even buggering

Doyle was worth being thrown out on his ear. Doyle, he realised, was still sitting gazing at him with his eyes all wide and his lips parted and, oh, god, the rotten sod was wetting his lips with his tongue! Bodie turned back to the hi-fi unit before his cock revealed not only itself, but Bodie as well. "Yeh, but there are some that are designed to go into the female—," he had to swallow then, hands fumbling as he attached wires to plug, "that's the one with a hole in it—" Christ, trust Doyle to wind him up like this! It had to be deliberate: no-one was that innocent, not in this day and age, and Doyle was good with his hands—which thought made him almost drop everything, including his inhibitions and trousers, "so it's got a long piece that sticks into the hole..."

Into the unsurprisingly tense pause, Doyle said, still playing the innocent, "Oh, you mean like a prick?"

Bodie turned round for a second, just long enough to look disbelievingly at his partner, then turned away again, obviously still not convinced by the patent expression of innocence he found on Doyle's face. Silently, he attached the wiring to the light, started working on the incidental details now that he had the main frame put together. "What're you up to, mate?" he asked, shoulder muscles flexing as he adjusted the hinges on the door that would hide the stacking components of Doyle's new and hideously expensive hi-fi system, with it's fancy tape deck and separate turntable and a few other bits Bodie was too embarrassed to admit he didn't know the proper name for. "Come on, out with it."

Doyle very nearly obliged, until he conceded that his cock wasn't what Bodie was referring to. "Tell me what you're up to," Bodie pushed.

"Up to? Me?" Doyle almost added, 'anything you fancy, Bodie, anything at all', but cowardice reared almost as high as his cock, and so he wormed his way out of it, postponing the moment of revelation until he had found out if some of his suspicions about Bodie were, happily, true. "The only thing I'm interested in getting up is this bloody shelving unit."

He got another curious look for that—which made Doyle wonder if he'd, shall we say, blown it—but Bodie let it slide, going back to the job at hand, even as the rippling of his muscles forced Doyle's hand to readjust himself within the far too confining closeness of his jeans.

A fair amount of time passed, with Bodie fiddling with hinges, checking the hang of the door, whilst both partners contemplated how hung the other man was. Bodie took a good, long look at Doyle, then turned back to the unit. He wondered, sometimes he really wondered... There was an interesting edge to Bodie's voice when he finally spoke. "Screw dowel."

For one moment of bliss, Doyle thought Bodie had said, 'Screw, Doyle?'. But then reality set in, and it was a truly peeved, not to mention terminally frustrated, Doyle who muttered under his breath: "Right now, I'd fucking screw anything!"

Bodie, suspicions confirmed entirely to his soonto-be satisfaction, murmured an indulgent and fond: "Yeh, you would, wouldn't you?"

Doyle jumped, eyes startled: he'd thought he'd been quieter than that.

"Nothing to be ashamed of," Bodie was going on, preening a little now, making sure Doyle was getting a good view of his arse, not to mention a lovely view of his balls from the rear. In fact, now that he'd added all the pertinent information and prurient deductions together, Bodie was positively smug. It was a great feeling, knowing that Doyle was not only on the simmer, which was a fairly common occurrence, but that Doyle was on the simmer for him, Bodie, and available. Oh, that was the best part: from what he'd finally put together and from the way Doyle was looking at him like a cat with a canary—now there was a thought: Doyle, eating him. Delicious!—and the things Doyle had been saying, well, Doyle was not only available, he was looking a bit on the desperate side. Smiling to himself, he started setting the dividers in place, checking to make sure the records would be held absolutely upright and not end up warped. Timing it to the last second before Ray jumped in with both feet, Bodie turned round to face Doyle, smiling, rather pointedly at a certain rather pointed part of his partner. Then, with Doyle almost squirming in front of him, he went on: "Randy old toad like you, stands to reason you'd fuck anything that stood still long enough."

Doyle, unsmiling, stared right back, giving nothing away: leastways, not until he'd added two and two and come up with a four he wanted. If Bodie was setting him up...

"Well," Bodie said, quite casually to cover his nascent trepidation that maybe, just maybe, he was wrong and his partner wasn't as bent as a corkscrew, "I'm standing still."

It was worth it, just to see Ray Doyle's mouth drop open.

"You what?" The implication hit Doyle smack in the face and went straight to his cock, which throbbed and stirred visibly, much to Bodie's delight.

"I said," Bodie repeated, smiling all the more broadly, "I'm standing still." And then, without having the decency to at least give Doyle enough warning so that he could take a breath in anticipation, Bodie leaned forward, his lips against Doyle's unexpectedly chaste.

Unexpected, full stop, exclamation mark, as far as Doyle was concerned. But not, naturally enough, unwelcome, although this chasteness simply had got to go. Never one to look a gift horse in the mouth, but always willing to kiss whatever was on offer, he opened his mouth, drawing Bodie's tongue inside him, his arms coming up to pull Bodie in closer. Only, Bodie, due to what Doyle could only name sudden brain death, wasn't cooperating. In fact, Bodie, the mad bugger, was pulling away, ending the kiss, ending the sweet press of cock on cock. Bodie, in fact, was going back to screwing the bloody shelves together.

"What's the matter with you? You taken leave of your senses or something?" Doyle shouted, quite reasonably, given the provocation—or sudden lack thereof.

After three months of feeling like a dog on a leash, lusting voraciously behind Doyle, Bodie was not about to cede the upper hand. Not until he had Doyle so frantic the rotten bugger wouldn't realise that Bodie was dangerously close to being hooked. Bodie looked at him over his shoulder and simpered, wickedly. "But I'm not that kind of boy, you great butch thing you! A little peck is all you get on the first date."

And then, while Doyle was still flabbergasted: "Pass the drill, please." He held up the large wooden dowel that Doyle had absently handed him, and lisped, "I need to screw this big hard pole in and the hole's too...tight."

Doyle got it, both the drill, and Bodie's little game. So Bodie wanted to tease and draw the whole thing out until they were both so randy they couldn't tell which was heads and which was tails. In other words, put them through the typical Bodie seduction routine: get the other person all hot and bothered and incoherent with lust, and

then Bodie could do whatever he wanted to, and just conveniently end on top. Well, Doyle didn't bend over and touch his toes for just anyone, although Bodie wasn't 'just anyone' and he'd do it for Bodie at the drop of a hat—or any other article of clothing. Once Bodie had learned his lesson, that was. If Bodie thought he could get Doyle so steamed up Doyle wouldn't care who did what as long as he got to come, well, then, two could play at that game, couldn't they? After all this time panting after his partner, he wasn't about to fall at his feet like a doormat. He'd fall at Bodie's feet on the doormat, once Bodie realised that this was going to be an equal partnership here, give and take on both sides. "Here you go, mate," Doyle said, hearty as a lumberjack, then continuing as only a Monty Python lumberjack could, tube of silicone hinge lube in his hand: "But if your rod's too big to screw it in, how's about a bit of lubricant to ease the passage, eh?"

"Oh, no," Bodie replied, burying himself amidst the maze of record dividers and shelves, to hide his cock's reaction and his own half-hysterical urge to giggle, "all we need is a bit of elbow grease."

"Elbow Grease?" Doyle said, capitalising the words into one of the most popular lubricants sold under the counters of gay-oriented shops the world over. "Nah, too messy. Better off with KY or Vaseline."

Bodie gave that the attention he thought it due—i.e., none at all, which saved him from having to come up with a suitably brilliant answer—and gave all his attention to the uprights and horizontals—in other words, a dress rehearsal for what he had in mind for himself and Doyle in a very short time.

But Doyle, being Doyle, saw right through Bodie's silence, and grinned in predatory anticipation: if Bodie was so distracted by desire that he couldn't come up with a smart-arse answer, then Bodie must be absolutely ripe for the picking. Which made Doyle's hands itch to touch, to slide his fingers between Bodie's legs to feel Bodie's arousal for himself. Time, then, for the final assault in the seduction of Bodie. "Being a bit rough, don't you think?" Doyle commented as the drill started up its racket. "Don't you know that if a hole's virgintight, you've got to ease it in gently," his hand stroked the long length of thigh covered in grey track suit, "very, very gently." He could feel Bodie

tense under his hands, could hear the sudden intake of air and the quickened breath. "Need to take your time, get things nice and wet and slick, don't you," he ran his fingers down Bodie's spine, all the way to the cleft of his arse, "so it just slides right in, the perfect fit." Bodie's breathing was doing some very interesting things now, although not, perhaps, half as interesting as the things Doyle's cock was up to. "Definitely need some lubricant for that, to get a big thing like that to slide in just right." He darted his hand, quick as a heartbeat, to press in and out into the crack of Bodie's arse: Doyle wanted to rip the cloth that was frustrating his getting inside Bodie. "Pick up some of that Elbow Grease in Boots' on the way over, did you?"

Bodie, a giveaway flush on his cheeks—the ones on his face, the nether ones still, alas and alack, under cover—gave him an arch look over his shoulder, voice trembling with banked lust as he felt Doyle's fingers rub the soft fabric against his arsehole. "Pick someone up? Whatever would Mr. Cowley say, petal?"

Doyle knew he should lob right back, "Didn't know you and him were married, sweetie", but instead, he looked steadily at his partner, leaching all the humour out of the situation. Hands now stuffed into his back pockets out of temptation's way (unless, of course, you were Bodie and had spent forever fantasising about the things you could do to that luscious rump), Doyle was very sombre when he spoke. "I don't want this to blow up in our faces and ruin everything. You do know where this is all leading, don't you?"

"Haven'tgotaclue, mate," Bodie said cheerfully, turning round fully and flicking a stray splinter of pine from Doyle's collar.

Doyle, with a self-control that would have impressed his boss no end and ruined his reputation forever, resisted the temptation to take that finger and suck on it. "Don't be stupid, you have to know where we're heading. All this—it's leading to bed, Bodie." Bodie was grinning at him, not a trace of seriousness anywhere. "Think about it! You and me, going to fucking bed—"

"Ah, but that's where you're wrong, Ray."

Which nonsensical statement was capable of shutting even Ray Doyle up.

"We," Bodie went on, another brief—too brief, but still making Doyle's briefs far too brief to cover the situation—kiss, then he had pulled back again, "aren't going to fucking bed. We," and now the covered peak of Doyle's right nipple felt the tooquick pressure of Bodie's practised hands, "are going to bed to fuck."

"Or make love," Doyle heard himself say before either cowardice, self-preservation or common sense could shut him up.

That wiped the grin off Bodie's face. He was looking at Doyle with something akin to fear, whether of the risk of failure or the dangers of commitment, Doyle couldn't tell. "Maybe," Bodie finally said. "If we're lucky. If we don't screw up."

This, as far as Doyle was concerned and conveniently ignoring that it was his own fault, was getting too serious by far. If he weren't careful, all the unexpected possibilities begun this afternoon could end up as dead as the proverbial dodo, killed by worries about the future and fears about being hurt, not to mention, he conceded magnanimously, by his own tendency to talk things to death. Not something that appeared on his list of things he wanted to do right at the present moment. "If we don't screw up," he said lightly, unable to quite resist the temptation to rub a pert nipple through soft cotton, "we'll never get this stupid shelf unit up, will we?"

"But you'll get me up. Christ, Ray! Hands off. Told you," and he too withdrew back to the safety of humour, tucking the too-intense emotions back into place, to be brought out and aahed! over later, "I'm not that sort of boy!"

"Then what," Doyle said, grabbing two handsful of Bodie's burn as his workmate turned back to the job that was ostensibly in hand, "sort of boy are you?"

"Oooh, you're beautiful when you're butch. I do so love hard men!" Bodie simpered, making Doyle smile.

Half-joking: "Oh, yeh, and how many men is that, then?"

Half-answering: "The entire Household Cavalry, at least!"

Which meant that Bodie really wasn't stringing him along and more urgently, that Doyle didn't have to worry about what he had in mind to do to Bodie... "Well, that's all right then. As long as it's the half with only two legs."

Bodie, hands braced on one shelf so he didn't fall over with sheer excitement, rubbed a wellplaced foot against an even better placed cock. "All my fellas have three legs."

"Which explains why you were always trying

to get me on the Isle of Man! Christ, but that feels wonderful. C'mon, Bodie, chuck that in and come into the bedroom with me."

So much for Doyle having the upper hand. Bodie was barely aware of what his hands were doing—after all, it didn't actually matter, since he was only doing it to drive Doyle to complete distraction and stretch the seduction out to unbearable lengths (rather like Doyle's arousal, now we stop to think about it.). All he cared about was Doyle, desperate for him, so wild with lust they wouldn't be afraid of sex that was a handspan away from love.

Doyle had always said that his partner was sex mad, but as Bodie was struggling to actually continue building the stupid shelves, Doyle decided that it was more that Bodie went mad when sex was around. "Here, are you sure that's supposed to go in there?" This, as Bodie manhandled— Doyle should be so lucky!—a slender partition into what seemed an awfully small space. Doyle's voice was almost as strangled as his poor demented cock. But if Bodie could control himself, then Doyle wasn't about to give himself a showing up by popping his cork prematurely. "Is that the right bit for in there? D'you even know what that is?"

"Course it is and 'course I do," Bodie replied cheerfully, which was hardly surprising, considering where his foot had been and that Doyle's left hand was now returning the favour in kind—or in lust, depending on how you wanted to look at it. With too much fabric covering too much skin, Doyle would have been happy to look at it any way at all, but Bodie was showing no signs of showing his bum off.

"You what?" Doyle asked, realising that he had been too busy contemplating Bodie's hidden charms to pay attention to a single word his coworker had said.

"I said, of course this is supposed to go here." He looked over his shoulder at the strained expression on Doyle's face and the strained condition, and then Bodie grinned. "And of course I know what it is. This here's what you call a Top Upright. And you know what they say, don't you?"

"Oh, go on," Doyle answered, playing straight man, so to speak and in a very limited meaning, his hands furthering their explorations, not to mention their excitations. "Tell me, what do they say?"

Bodie glanced significantly at the front of his own track suit trousers, where his top bit was

exceedingly upright. "Takes one to know one," he said proudly.

"So you're just another lump of wood, eh?" Doyle said, deflatingly.

"Well, it's big enough," Bodie came right back, completely undeflated and not averse to making a show of it, "so I can see why a titch like you might get confused, Robin."

"An' if you're a bat man," Doyle grabbed Bodie between the legs, getting a very satisfying moan for his trouble, "then we'll need more than a bit of elbow grease to fit it in any of the holes I know about.

"Course," Bodie muttered vaguely, more than a little distracted by big things happening lower down, "we could always work something out..."

"Thought the whole idea was to work something in," Doyle said, and then, because he was a cruel, callous, cold-hearted bastard, he removed his hand. No, not from his arm, from Bodie's cock, of course.

Bodie was no longer—as the Yanks would say—a happy camper. In fact, he was very displeased that Doyle was no longer playing tentpoles with him. "You're a cruel, cold-hearted bastard, Doyle!"

"Yeh, I am, aren't I?" Doyle answered, pleased. "And I'm going to stay that way till you finish screwing this thing together."

Bodie wiggled his bum at him. "Bit difficult to screwittogether," he said. "Nobody's that flexible."

"Nobody?"

Something in the way Doyle said that pricked so to speak—Bodie's attention. "You can't!" He turned round in time to see Doyle lick his lips. "No, you can't."

Doyle winked.

"You can?"

Doyle tapped the side of his nose knowingly.

"You can't!"

Then Doyle laughed.

"No, you can't, can you, you rotten sod."

"Really had you going there, didn't I?"

"You've had me going since the first day you walked into the training centre and waved your arse in my face."

Doyle preened, and patted Bodie on the bum. "Nice of you to finally get round to returning the compliment."

"Yeh, well," Bodie did a creditable impersonation of the naïf innocent he might possibly have

been in one of his former lives, but certainly couldn't claim to be this time round, "told you, I'm not forward."

"You're kidding!" Doyle exclaimed dramatically, hands examining Bodie's rump in minute detail, then slipping round to make an even more detailed exam of a less than minute part of Bodie. "Doesn't feel like it's on backwards." he announced.

Not that Bodie was paying much attention. In fact, Bodie's mind wasn't on what Doyle was saying at all, being far more interested in what Doyle was doing. What was that they said about actions speaking louder than words? At that precise instant, Bodie felt as if his body should be shouting.

Doyle, busy playing their game of oneupmanship (the non-consummated version), was still nattering on. "In fact, it feels as if it's on just right to me."

Bodie decided that this was getting out of hand—precisely because of what was in Doyle's hand at that moment. He cleared his throat and started to get a bit of his own back, mainly by removing Doyle's hand—again, not from his arm, but from Bodie's cock. "You can pack that in right now-"

"I thought you'd never ask," Doyle said seductively. "Here or in the bedroom?"

Mrs. Whitehouse would have been proud of Bodie's truly prissy tone of voice, although she would have been appalled by Bodie's real reaction. "Really, Doyle, I swear you keep your brains between your legs sometimes."

"Only sometimes?" He grabbed himself a healthy handful of Bodie's impressive arousal. "Unlike you, eh?"

Bodie squirmed, and from more than just Doyle's handling of the situation. "Leave off, Ray. Have to get this finished before we go back on call tomorrow or it'll never get done."

"Funny," Doyle murmured, breath whispering against Bodie's back, "that's exactly what I was thinking."

Bodie thought that letting Doyle win this particular chest-beating competition might well be worth it: if it wasn't a chest Doyle beat. In fact, judging by what Doyle was doing to him right now, Ray had picked on just the right anatomy to beat. Oh, yes, Bodie thought, letting his eyes close as Doyle made him feel ten feet (Bodie always did

have delusions of grandeur) tall, letting Doyle win this once might not be such a bad idea after all.

Pity Doyle had a tendency to crow over victories... "Knew you'd fall at my feet if I so much as whistled," his voice drowning out the sound of his zip being undone. "Definitely got you standing still for whatever I fancy, haven't I?"

Bodie, for some reason that to Doyle was inexplicable, decided that after that comment, Doyle could take a flying fuck off the Mersey Ferry before Bodie would let the big-headed bastard win. "Gerroff!" he shouted, pulling away amidst the loud protests of his cock. "Fallen at your feet, have I? Coming to heel like a fucking poodle? You want your head examined, Doyle."

This, Doyle decided, was what Cowley would call a slight tactical error (or a complete balls-up if he couldn't mend it). Not quite the purpose he had had in mind for their balls, which meant he had to do some fancy footwork if he was going to get Bodie back where he wanted him: under his thumb, always presupposing the part of Bodie under his thumb was a bit that needed stretching and lubricant and all sorts of wonderful things done to it. "Don't be a wally," he said to Bodie's diligently bent (sounds like a description of Doyle, doesn't it?) back. "I was only having you on." Chance'd be a fine thing, he thought, staring at Bodie, willing the other man to turn round and look at him. No such luck. Until Doyle replayed what he'd said to Bodie, and how he'd feel if Bodie'd said that to him... If Bodie'd said that, then Bodie would currently be nursing his own balls, and not in pleasure, and quite possibly no longer attached to his body. "Oh, fuck it!" he said.

"You should be so lucky," Bodie muttered, supposedly hammering a nail in, even though no nail was supposed to go there and Bodie kept on missing the damned thing anyway. He was getting up and leaving, he promised himself, just as soon as his body stopped being such a bloody big show of how turned on it was by Doyle. And just as soon as he could drag himself away from the sweet pleasure of Doyle's body so close behind him, and the alluring promise of what they might have—if Doyle wasn't such a fucking prat, he reminded himself, hitting the nail so hard Doyle was always going to have a dent in his shelves to remember this oh-so romantic encounter by.

"Okay, so I'm sorry, all right? I shouldn't've said what I said the way I said it." Such explosively shouted comment got no reaction at all. Doyle tried again, curbing his temper and frustration in enough to be coherent. "I just meant that I had you," which was easy enough to say. It was the next bit that was almost as hard as he hoped Bodie's cock was. "And that you, well, you know

Now this was interesting enough to stop pretending to hammer poor defensive nails. "Might do, if you actually explained yourself."

Doyle ran a trembling hand through his hair, then down his chest, to finger his deflating erection. "I just meant..." Funny, he thought, how all this started with a misunderstanding, and if he wasn't careful, it was going to end for the same thing. "That you, well, you..." He stopped for a second, took a deep breath, and asked himself if scoring one over Bodie was really worth not scoring at all—and worth killing something he thought just might be the best thing ever to happen in his life. There was, really, no doubt, only the old, familiar insecurities and fears that all of us carry with us. Then, before he lost his bottle, he spoke, all the words tumbling over themselves in his hurry to say them before he gave in to the yellow streak blossoming where his spine should be. "If I've got you, then you've got me."

And Bodie, the object of all Doyle's tangled emotions and passions? Bodie gave nothing away. Not a thing, just kneeling there, half in the hi-fi unit, half out, bum up in the air, and not an utter being muttered, his quietness unnerving to say the

"So," Doyle ventured, sexual tension vanquished by an emotional tension he hadn't exactly been prepared for, although he cursed himself for a moron because he hadn't seen what must've been right under his nose for weeks, "d'you want to give this a go or not?"

There. He'd said it, laid all his cards on the table—even if it meant he didn't get to lay Bodie anywhere—and now it was Bodie's turn.

As we said before: and Bodie? That worthy stayed where he was, grinning to himself, pride more than ameliorated by Doyle's somewhat hesitant confession. Blood from a stone, Bodie thought affectionately, more than a little pleased by the path this unexpected afternoon was taking. There were a lot of things he could say, but too many emotions were clamoring to be heard, to be sorted out, too many implications to be faced and

discussed and dealt with. Too much talking by far: not something he wanted to start on right now, not when his balls were heavy from arousal that had flared so brightly and then subsided so unwillingly. So. Talk later—fuck now, he decided. He'd already reminded Ray that this was going to be an equal partnership off the job as well as on it, so he could, he decided (absolutely and utterly uninfluenced, of course, by the fact that he loved being fucked and hadn't had that particular pleasure in what was, in his far from humble opinion, far too long a bout of anal celibacy), afford to be generous, and let Ray do all the work this time. Which meant that all he had to do now was find a way of stopping Ray from anguishing over this for hours until everything was neatly pigeonholed and Bodie's prick had forgotten that sex could be more than a definition of gender. So Bodie did as Doyle was wont to do: after all, didn't they say that lovers did what they wanted done to themselves? Something that put an entirely new twist on the old 'do unto others', and one that Bodie found far easier to live

Doyle was swithering between standing on his dignity and leaving dramatically with a suitable display of camouflaging temper—a plan which was severely flawed due to this being his flat—or pummelling Bodie to a bloody pulp, which was severely flawed due to a) Cowley killing him for hurting his blue-eyed boy, and b) the fact that Doyle didn't really want to hurt Bodie. At least, not irrevocably. But if the bastard didn't give him an answer soon-

Bodie gave him an answer: non-verbal, but an answer nonetheless. Bodie wiggled his bum, an invitation if ever Doyle saw one. And Doyle could be quite quick on the uptake, as his cock was merrily proving, leaping back to its previous state of affairs, even as its owner leaped headfirst into a previously unexpected affaire. "Itake it that means yes," he whispered, pushing Bodie's tracksuit top up and out of the way, his hands and eyes and mouth feasting on the exposed white skin and smooth muscles.

"By George, Ithink he's got it!" But the joke was delivered in a voice that caught on a sudden intake of breath as Doyle's fingers fastened on his nipples, flickering on him the way he had once—God, had Doyle fancied him since then?—mentioned he liked some lover or other doing. The thought flooded him with a warmth that melted into passion, and he reached as far back behind him as he could, clutching at Ray's hips, bringing his friend in closer, tugging at him until Ray was—

"Christ, that's it," he muttered, pushing back against the hardness digging into his bum. Ray must've undone his zip at some point, Bodie realised, fingers scrabbling to get Doyle's jeans down and out of the way, so that he could get his hands on that luscious arse, the one he was going to fuck before this day and night were finished. Defeated by the position he was in, he said, "Gerrem off."

Doyle sat back on his heels, Bodie kneeling in front of him, presenting himself for mounting. Themere sight was enough to make Doyle's cock throb, and he stroked himself, teasing the skin up to snug tightly over the head, feeding on the pleasure of watching Bodie moving restlessly, hungry for attention. God, but it was wonderful to know Bodie wanted him that much, and had done, for at least as long as Doyle had, so to speak, coveted his neighbour's ass. "This what you want?" Flat palmed, starting under the bunched mass of Bodie's tracksuit top, he stroked his way down Bodie's back, not stopping when he got to the trousers. There, he hooked his thumbs in, sliding the elasticated waist down and down, the heat from his hands covering the skin before the air could chill it. "Gorgeous bum," he said, mouth brushing the sensitive skin, teeth nipping tender flesh, hands touching where his mouth had left moisture and his teeth tiny indentations. He laved the deep dimples just above the swell of Bodie's arse, tongue swirling in ever larger circles, until he was caressing the larger dimple where Bodie's flanks hollowed with every move Bodie made under him. "Want me to love you like this?" he asked, hands splayed on Bodie's rear, the words breathed moistly against him.

Bodie wasn't quite sure of the exact and precise detail of what Ray was asking him, but he didn't think it would make any difference anyway. Whatever Ray did felt wonderful, and he couldn't care less about anything other than Ray keeping on with what he was doing. "Whatever takes your fancy."

Doyle's hands struggled with belt buckle and top button and jeans that even he conceded were too tight. Thank God today had been one of the days he hadn't bothered with underwear—he would have done himself a mischief if he'd had to

get himself, one handed, out of his usual French cut briefs. "You take my fancy," he said, jeans pushed open in a wide V, his cock and balls exposed and fecund. "In fact," this, as his thumb returned, pressing against Bodie's arse, "you're going to take more than my fancy, aren't you?"

Bodie's only answer was to groan, and push backwards, arsehole relaxing, trying to suck Ray inside. The reaction made Doyle laugh, breathlessly, his cock pulsing with inrushing desire. "Who's a hungry boy then?" he asked, leaning forward, hands spreading Bodie's cheeks, tongue punctuating his words with flickering licks. "Going to do this for me later?"

Bodie squirmed, reaching backward to touch whatever part of Doyle he could.

Doyle spanked him, once, playfully sharply on the left cheek, hand returning to swathe the pink mark. "Go on, you going to return the favour later?"

"Soon's you give me the chance," Bodie grated out, nowhere near in control of his lust as Doyle seemed to be. "Don't be such a fucking pricktease," he half-shouted, "get on with it."

"Get on with what?" Doyle whispered, teasing him with his prick, barely touching the puckered hole with the moist head of his cock.

"Fuck me!"

"Want that now? Not going to tell me to gerroff then, are you?"

"What d'you want, Doyle? I'm giving you my arse, what more can you fucking want?'

"If I fuck you, will you give it to me?"

Right now, Bodie would have given him the Crown Jewels on a silver platter, even if he had to castrate Philip and Charles and Andrew himself to get them. "Anything! I promise, cross my heart, vou name it—"

"That's all right then," Doyle said, moving back so that he could once more taste Bodie's skin. He began slowly, tantalisingly, tormentingly slowly, until Bodie's breath stuttered and stumbled, and then Doyle was rimming him, fucking him with his tongue, the limber muscle going inside, making Bodie wet, making Bodie open and ready. Then he was fumbling around until he found the bottle of mineral oil that was supposed to finish the wood, but which he fully intended to use to finish Bodie, and himself. A few drops in his palm, stroked gingerly across his cock so that his flesh gleamed and shone, a match for the slick sheen his tongue had left round Bodie's arse. "You ready?" he asked, one hand braced on the small of Bodie's back, the other holding his cock poised and ready, kissing the wet hole.

Bodie reached between his own legs, his wrist deliciously hard against his balls, fingers grazing Ray's as he guided Doyle's hardness into him. Glorious heat and strength and hardness filled him, and now his fingers couldn't feel Ray's cock, only the tenderness of his balls, delicate hair against his fingertips and arse as Ray plundered him to the hilt. Then his fingers could feel the hard shaft again, and his arse tingled with the delight of Ray's cock moving, and then Ray was slamming into him, his balls slapping against Bodie's, and Bodie had his hand on himself, blurring on his cock. Ray thrust into him, and Bodie collapsed, until his forehead was resting on his folded arm, and his arse was in the air, and Doyle was in his arse, and plastered all down him. He could feel Ray's hands clenched into his flesh, gripping his hips, leaving bruises that he would feel tomorrow, but which were purest pleasure right now. Every individual finger, even the ridge of bracelet digging into him, he was aware of all of it. The swell of Ray's cock every time he thrust into him, the lingering caress of Doyle's balls against his own, skin clinging to skin, greedily hanging onto the pleasure. His own cock was rigid, and he was so close to coming he no longer dared touch himself. He reached through again, to feel where Ray was fucking him, to feel where he ended and Ray began and they merged together to form one body, endlessly moving, endless pleasure shoving into him. Doyle's balls were no longer touching him, drawn up hard against the base of his cock, and Bodie braced himself, whole body listening, ready for the moment when Ray would come inside him.

He heard it, the sound exploding from Ray's throat, the come exploding from his body, heat splashing deep inside, a sudden slickness, a sudden stillness, quintessential pleasure flowing from Doyle into him. And then Ray was heavy on top of him, ragged breathing gusting across Bodie's shoulder, shivering through the dampness of sweat.

"That was..." Ray Doyle was at a complete loss for words. He forced his eyes open, made himself move, rolling himself over, bringing Bodie with him, Bodie's erection hungry and demanding, pressing against the taut belly, Bodie's eyes slitted

on the brink of orgasm. Doyle lay his head on Bodie's stomach and his tongue tip traced, with infinite delicacy, the slitted crown. Then Bodie's hands were hard on the back of his head and Bodie's cock was hard against the back of his throat, and Bodie was thrusting awkwardly into his mouth. Doyle propped himself up, leaning over Bodie, letting Bodie fuck his mouth, one hand rubbing Bodie's nipples, the other rubbing Bodie's balls, then pressing them down, away from Bodie's cock, pulling the skin just tight enough, heightening the sensation of being sucked. Another moment of that, and then he was tasting Bodie's seed, splashing down his throat, coming too fast for him to swallow it all immediately, filling his mouth with the taste, as he took Bodie inside him.

Then that, too, was over, the spasms fading into tremors that made Bodie's thigh muscles quiver, which made Doyle want to lick him there, and soothe him, and cradle him close. Dangerous, such emotion, such shattering tenderness: and the answer to why he hadn't seen that he and Bodie were heading for this with all the certainty of Niagara Falls. He wanted, also, quite desperately, to kiss Bodie, but... But there were so many things to be discussed first, so many new ground rules to be laid for this new game they were playing.

Stroking Doyle's hair, feeling his friend's—his lover's? or was this to be just sex, just fuck-buddies, just lust?—breath lingering on the damp skin of his cock, Bodie wanted nothing more than to simply cuddle up with Ray and sleep for a week. He hadn't been this well-fucked in years, couldn't, in fact, remember a better time than this. Tentatively, he drew Doyle up closer, not daring quite to look at him lest he see rejection or contempt in those too-knowing green eyes. He shuffled them around until they were lying, more or less comfortably, on the floor amidst a clutter of instructions and scattered tools and oozing glue. Ray was tucked in against him, arm across Bodie's chest, pleasured nipples content under the weight, Doyle's muscular thigh across his own, the fine hair on Doyle's leg the barest whisper against his balls. Perfect, he thought. Quite, quite perfect. Well, would be if he could kiss Ray, and cuddle him, and stay with him forever... Later, he told himself. Give him time, let him get used to us being like this, then you can tell him that this is it, never going to let him go...

Ray, for his part, was thinking very much

the same thoughts, mind chewing over the problem of how to make sure that Bodie didn't get any stupid ideas about leaving, or ignoring this, or pretending that it didn't mean anything. If the stupid bugger so much as mentioned this being just for fun, he'd kill the sod. Slowly, and imaginatively. But for now... His thumb traced the elegant arch of Bodie's collarbone, followed it to the hollow of his throat. Which simply could not be resisted. Barely needing to move, Ray leaned forward and kissed Bodie there, quite, quite tenderly. And when Bodie didn't hit him, he kissed him again, a little higher, and then higher still, again and again, small, tender kisses, until he was kissing all around Bodie's mouth, and Bodie's arms were clutching him tightly, and Bodie's mouth was open, and Bodie was kissing him with a fierceness of emotion that neither one of them was quite willing, as yet, to name. Although they both knew it for what it was, knew it and welcomed it, even as they feared the vulnerability it brought. But that was something to talk about later, when they had had their fill of kissing and holding and sex.

Spreadeagled across Bodie's body, Doyle arched

his back and rubbed their cocks together, and Bodie sucked his nipples and kneaded his arse, finger promising where his cock was going to go. "Bed," Doyle said hoarsely, pulling himself away, reaching down to grab Bodie by the hand and pull him to his feet. "Begging for trouble, doing it amongst all this stuff," meaning the spilled nails and screws and stacked dividers surrounding them, "and the only screw I want in me," he took Bodie's cock between his hands, thumbs pulling the foreskin back, his own cock kissing the exposed head, "is this one. So come on then, into the bedroom, where you can fuck me properly."

Bodie turned Doyle around, giving him a shove in the right direction so that he could follow along behind, eyes glued to the aforementioned behind of his choice, cock swelling in anticipation of being buried in that luscious construction. "Tell you something for nothing, though, Ray," he said, unable to resist reaching out to grab what was soon going to be his.

"Oh yeh?" Doyle, looking over his shoulder at Bodie, sun setting through the window gilding his skin. "And what does Confucius say then?"

"You and me doing this together—beats the hell out of Doing It Yourself."