FOOTBRIDGE CALLY DONIA

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Blah, blah, the voices droned on, perfectly £3£3£3 matching the décor, darkly unamused Victorian wainscoting topped by truly hideous red flocked wallpaper, the ostentation of gold smirking away to itself in the glow of crystal chandelier. The glasses on the table were glowing away to themselves, too, reflecting the overhead lights and the claret in the decanter.

> What little claret was left in the decanter, this far into the game.

> Bodie checked his cards again, frantically searching through a mis-spent youth full of card games to remember the rules of the refined art of bridge. Unfortunately, it was looking as if it wouldn't matter one whit what he remembered— Doyle had never known anything in the first place to remember. They were relying on their undetectable patented shorthand, Bodie telling Doyle what to play and when, but as the level inside the decanter had fallen, so had Doyle's comprehension, dropping rapidly to match Bodie's skill at the game. A filthy chuckle from North startled him, making him lose track of the play for a second.

> Mind you, he really didn't know why he was even bothering trying to keep track of the game:

if Doyle was rapidly succumbing to the wonderful world of alcoholic haze, then Cowley was quite rapidly succumbing to his own personal decanter of whisky. Which was, Bodie noted with a not altogether theatrical gulp, almost empty. Pity the poor liver, he thought to himself, as he did a quick action-replay of the day, cataloguing when and where they-meaning Cowleyhad eaten and drunk. Lunch was supposed to have been at one, but that had been cancelled because of that bloody emergency security meeting. He really wished these people would get their timing right and at least wait until after he'd had a bite to eat. But instead, there had been all that information leaked by some turncoat inside the People's Party...Something Grandiose and Important. There had been so many names and pseudonyms and changed titles flying round the meeting that he'd actually lost track of who was threatening whom. At least two European groups and one Irish group were currently after Cowley, which was more animosity than event that immovable mountain could ignore. It seemed that they were less than thrilled with the way Cowley had managed to put several political cells out of business before

the bombing season had even started. They seemed to think it just wasn't cricket to stop them before they'd even been able to blow anything up. The fact that Cowley had been crowing over the coup like a well-laid rooster hadn't exactly helped, either.

He grinned to himself, unnoticed by the increasingly befuddled occupants of the table. Missing lunch—and tea, now that he stopped to think about it—had been worth it, just to see Cowley's face when the order—the order—had come from On High to assign himself a pair of minders, especially on tonight of all nights. He glanced, carefully inconspicuous, around the room, satisfying himself yet again that none of these few old farts still nodding over their nightcaps was capable of even peeing unassisted, let alone assassinating Cowley. And Cowley, he snickered into his own properly non-alcoholicsomeone-has-to-stay-sober-on-duty drink, dour, unflappable Cowley, was getting well-oiled and letting all sorts of secrets slip out...

"Och, it was never like that," he was saying now, interrupting Bodie's train of thought. "Thon yin was never sly enough to pull the wool over my eyes like that, Allan."

Thon yin? Bodie thought to himself. *Thon yin?* Cowley was getting seriously pickled if he was coming up with things like 'thon yin' instead of 'that one'. If the old language was creeping back out, then perhaps a few juicy secrets would be as well...

"...but that's not what happened, is it though, George?" was being said by the other man at the table, Cowley's old friend from days of yore, Allan Jenkinson. Bodie looked at him carefully, trying yet again to place what it was that he recognised in the man. He knew that he didn't actually know him, but there was something on the tip of his tongue... Jenkinson was a big man, making even Bodie feel a bit on the delicate side, inundated by ripples of muscle and excellent tailoring. His hair was greying now, but it had once been a rich auburn, all the red fading away with age, as it had with Cowley. He looked back and forth between the two friends, wondering about all the tales of derring-do he'd heard about their days in the organisation that didn't even have a name.

Another helping of rich laughter, Cowley's voice now deeper and far more Scots than any-

one usually got to hear this many years into his exile South. "Oh, aye, he had us well an' truly taken in, there's no a doubt about that. But I'll tell ye something," Cowley said, leaning over to pat Bodie's arm in the manner of a confidant, albeit a rather soused one. "Aye, I'll tell ye something for nothing. The one that had us all fooled was this yin here. There's me, stuck ahint the border in a country that'd give its eye-teeth to get their hands on me, an' the only passport our lot've got is ane for a wumman. So they get me all dressed up like a dog's dinner, wi' all our contacts donating all sorts o' wee bit bauchles, till I ended up lookin' like somethin' that belanged underneath the arches, not even on the streets!"

Doyle's foot was nudging his under the table and Bodie suddenly found his cards absolutely fascinating, even if everyone else had forgotten theirs. He didn't dare look up, for he knew that if he did, he'd burst out laughing and then he might never hear the end of what promised to be a story that he could get free drinks out of for a month. Murphy alone would keep him floating in beer just to hear what the Old Man had £3£3£3 looked like tonight, with his tie pulled askew 99 and his hair all over the place. He sensed Doyle's £3£3£3 own rising hysteria and vowed not to look. He could feel Ray staring at him, willing him to look up, to let them share the joke. But he didn't dare. He was perilously close to losing all semblance of control and one of them had to stay on duty until Lucas and McCabe showed up at midnight to take over the obbo from the boring safety of their car.

He wasn't going to look, didn't matter how much Doyle fidgeted or wiggled or willed him, he wasn't going to look. Not when Cowley was getting to the good bits...

"I mean, c'n you credit that? Me, doin' thon, an' in public, all dickied up to within an inch o' my life? But it gets worse, doesn't, Allan you sly devil, you. He waits until we're oan the train, a matter o' hours yet afore we c'n get aff in a place where they're no after my guts for garters. We're locked up in wan o' thon tiny wee cabins they call sleepers, wi' wan bed. We were baith fair worn out, so we agreed to squeeze oursel's intae this wee bit bed. So there I am, still wi'this wig an' a' the rest on, when this yin here decides tae tell me that he's a poof."

Jenkinson was chuckling into his claret, remembering the incident with obvious glee. Bodie could hear the muffled laughter coming from Doyle, the last remnants of sobriety obviously keeping him from yielding completely to utter hilarity. He could just picture how Doyle would be looking, knew that expression from old and he knew, too, what would happen if he dared give in to temptation and let himself look. He wasn't going to look, he wasn't going to look, he was going to just keep on listening to Cowley, filing it all away and not stopping the flow of true confessions by falling apart at the seams. He was not going to remind Cowley that he was with two of his agents. There was no way on God's green earth that he was going to risk shutting Cowley up, not now. And he absolutely, unequivocally and irrefutably was not going to look at Ray.

That was when he felt the foot that had been nudging his slither up to tickle at his knee. He bit the inside of his mouth. He stared at the table. He took a deep breath. He pretended to play a card in a game that had been abandoned £3£3£3 by everybody else, and most of all, he willed **100** Doyle to pack it in and Cowley to keep on going.

At least part of his prayers was answered.

"So I'm lyin' there, my backside hinging out the bed, rigid wi' fear that this hulkin' great lummox had designs on my virtue..."

"Oh, never your virtue, George. Just your

"Aye, an' the way your hands were wanderin', I was beginnin' tae think ye might end up gettin'..."

"Getting you in the end, eh, George? I know it was wicked of me, but it was worth it just to see the expression on your face! I've never seen anyone blush so red, never! And when I put my arm around you to stop you from falling out of bed when we were coming into that station..."

Cowley spluttered, the whisky trying hard to do the impossible: go down the wrong way when a Scotsman is the one doing the drinking. "I nearly jumped right out o' my skin, didn't I? First time in ma whole life I actually screamed, och, but it was funny, now that I'm lookin' back on it. No' tae mention," an all-embracing sweep of his hand showed off the grandeur of his clothes, so appropriate for the occasion, "dressed like a woman."

That was almost Bodie's undoing; Cowley, as befitted this being Burn's Night, was wearing

Then something happened that was Bodie's undoing: the foot that had been tickling his knee slipped higher. A lot higher. So high, in fact, that Doyle was in extreme danger of becoming extremely indiscreet. As Bodie determinedly controlled himself, the foot continued perilously upwards, no longer in danger of becoming indiscreet, but actually being so. The only danger, Bodie realised, was if Doyle tickled him now, Bodie was liable to end up in a most embarrassing situation. Which is what the wicked little toad has in mind, Bodie thought to himself, knowing his partner only too well. Bodie, hanging on every incriminating and sotten word that was pouring from Cowley's mouth, glanced over at Doyle, expecting to meet an expression that matched his for amusement.

Instead, he found that Doyle was staring at him with a hunger usually reserved for stacked blondes. Obviously, Doyle had decided that here in Cowley's stuffy club with Cowley's old friend who happened to be gay and a horde of terrorists possibly outside the door waiting to twep their beloved boss, it was the perfect time and place to indulge in one of their endless games of camping, of one-upmanship to see who would chicken-out first. Doyle, his bloody partner, was looking at him as if he were prime beef still on the hoof. And Cowley, his bloody boss, that bastion of normalcy, was red-faced and laughing, Jenkinson hanging onto his arm like a limpwristed wall-flower.

Doyle's bare foot pressed into his crotch, massaging him like a hand, daring him to back down or up the ante, sense of humour let loose by too much booze. It occurred to him, in the surreality of this situation, to wonder how—and why—Doyle had got his shoe off. Of course, the rational part of his mind gibbered at him, trying to deny the bizarreness of the evening: Doyle'd been wearing those new leather moccasin things he'd found in Sacha's. They'd be easily enough slipped off. And he'd been fidgeting enough all night to have worked a sock off without anyone being any the wiser. Bodie was just assuming that the sock was gone—it seemed the kind of thing the hedonistically wicked bastard would do, all the better to be able to get

Bodie going enough for Bodie to embarrass himself thoroughly. Another one of Doyle's bloody jokes, one that would get Bodie in trouble but leave Doyle to come up smelling like roses.

The little bastard never tired of dropping him right in it, did he? Although that was patently clear the way Doyle was getting at him like an amorous octopus-octoped?-so that he'd wind up leaping six feet into the air, squealing about having his virtue attacked while the boss was sitting there relating the same story and with the man who had played that particular joke on Cowley also sitting there as innocent as a newborn babe. And Bodie would make his protests and Cowley would land on him for making stupid jokes at the expense of his friend and Doyle would sit there nice as bloody ninepence, laughing himself sick. Typical bloody Doyle joke...

Bodie glanced over at his partner, taking in the flushed cheeks and bright eyes, not to mention the ostentatiously fatuous 'I really fancy you, darling' look on his face. He shifted slightly, wondering if Doyle was still sober enough to have any idea of the risk of what he was doing, or if the idiot hadn't got past the fun of making his partner squirm in front of Cowley.

Toes flexed against him, the rounded ball of foot pressing into his balls, perfect pressure under the table. No, the stupid prat didn't know. The idiot was just tickling him the way he'd been doing before, trying to make him laugh and since he wasn't laughing, Doyle would just get more outrageous until Bodie made a bigger fool of himself. Well, maybe he'd teach Doyle a lesson, the little pricktease. Turn the table, turn the joke back on him, the way they always ponced around until someone cried 'uncle'. Yeh, that's what he'd do.

He looked up, to let Doyle catch the matching glint of humour in his own eyes, to let him know that he knew what the joke was and that the game had nothing to do with bridge, not now. The foot moved again, until its instep was lifting his balls up to be held tightly by his trousers, Doyle's toes burrowing between his cheeks, teasing and taunting and promising. Bodie gulped: he'd never expected Doyle to take the joke this far. It was one thing for them to goose each other, the way he'd been doing all week since that bloody gun had been nicked. He felt a bit of outrage rise in him when he

thought about the very old-fashioned looks he'd been getting from Doyle, for doing things like pinching him when they were boarding Brownie's boat or when Cowley had been driving away when they'd been talking to 'Forensics' after the geriatric car had been blown to bits. And here was the little prick trying to press his pants up his arse with his toes, and playing with his cock and balls, all with Cowley looking on. Oh, unfair, Raymond my lad, he thought, that's just not on.

But he wouldn't think about just why it was bothering him so much, wouldn't let himself acknowledge it was anything more than a natural genital reaction to direct stimulation that was getting him hard. He'd had that reaction before, on bikes and that time he'd gone riding out in the country with Doyle and those two girls. Just his brainless cock thinking for him, that was all. Just a joke getting out of hand, and he'd turn it on Doyle, he'd teach Doyle to tease him like this. Yeh, he'd teach Doyle to give him a taste of something he was too scared to admit he wanted; then he could hide it away again, where he could pretend it didn't exist. For once £3£3£3 he admitted he wanted it, it would kill him to 101 have to work beside Doyle day after day after £3£3£3 day and never touch more than as a mate messing around for a joke.

Yeh. He'd definitely show Doyle. And that way he could concentrate so fiercely on it that he'd never even see why his heart was beginning to ache harder than his balls were. His eyes went cold, the way they always did when he was going to pretend that it was all in fun, but was actually going for the jugular. He remembered his face feeling like this, this same set expression, when he'd been toying with Preston's wife. He shifted violently, crossing his legs, displacing Doyle's foot from its cosy reconnoitring of his cock. Face cold, he looked up, ready to kill Doyle with his own hurtful joke.

And got the shock of his life instead. Doyle's eyes were at half-mast, his mouth half open, shirt half undone, debauchery-in-waiting. This was not the kind of look one expected to see on one of Her Majesty's agents, but then again, this mizzled haziness was not what one expected on Cowley's face either. Flustered, Bodie looked away from the people at his table, taking in the rest of the room, suddenly feeling like a waif in

a Fellini film—a film that Fellini had made while definitely under the influence. The four of them at the table were now the only people in the room, the others either departed or finally nodded off and snoring with polite quietude in their high backed winged chairs. There wasn't even a member of staff around to lend some credence of reality to a situation that was making him as dizzy as the booze had obviously made his other three bridge partners. Casually, he glanced back up at Doyle, no longer at all sanguine as to what he was going to find. He was prepared for either the familiarly filthy chuckle with an expression that proclaimed 'gotcha!', or for a look that would have made Marge Harper run for the bedroom, whips and garters in hand.

He got, instead, the truly baffling sight of a drunken Doyle rapidly composing himself, visibly willing sobriety back in to the wine cellar his brain had become.

"Ray?"

He was ignored, Cowley swapping tales with Jenkinson, Doyle too busy shuffling cards and fidgeting. He was, Bodie realised, putting his £3£3£3 shoe back on. It ran through his mind that 102 Doyle was going to be embarrassed as hell, £3£3£3 having to leave with one sock on and one sock off. It was, after all, one thing to prepare oneself to play footsie under the table, but quite another to hide the evidence thereafter. Smugly pleased with himself, he tallied up the running score they had of who had outbrazened whom in their recurring game of teasing each other. Checking his watch, he was even more pleased to note that it was twenty to two, which meant that shortly Lucas would be outside, sitting in a chilly, stuffy car and he'd be able to go home. Not to mention get Doyle into the car and crow about how he'd won this particular little skirmish. He grinned to himself, knowing full well that Doyle would sulk and huff for a while, but then they'd start the game all over again.

> He could afford to be magnanimous, for after all, he'd won.

> On the verge of looking up again, he thought that over again. He'd won, by doing precisely nothing. Not like Doyle to just give in like that, without so much as a dirty joke or a last ditch effort to go that last step beyond anything Bodie had the brass neck to do.

And there was that look on Doyle's face. Bodie turned it over and over in his mind, examining it, trying to pigeon-hole it into a nice tidy little box. It didn't fit, not one of them. Oh, he knew the look of arousal, had seen it often enough when they'd double-dated, but... Wait a minute. He had seen it before, that time, what, a couple of months ago, when they'd ended up taking both their birds back to Doyle's because Bodie had just been forced to flit again by the sadists who ran Accommodations. He'd caught that look on Doyle's face when they'd all been in the living room together. He'd been on the sofa with his girl, kissing her, her skirt up around her waist, her legs around his hips and Doyle had been on the other settee, his own girl wrapped around him like a second skin. But Doyle had been staring, eating Bodie alive with his eyes. At the time, Bodie'd simply stared back, feasting equally on the eroticism of seeing Doyle so close to having sex. He'd even caught a glimpse of Doyle's hard-on, before Doyle's blonde had had a fit of the coys and dragged him off upstairs. But that's where he'd seen that look before, the night when Doyle had been staring at him while making love to someone else.

No. The night when Doyle had been staring at him while he was using someone else's body to make love to Bodie. That's what that look was.

"Fucking hell!"

Even Cowley straightened his drunken sight to look at him for that one. "I beg you pardon, Bodie?" he muttered, voice thicker than whisky ever was.

"Em, nothing, sir. Just sort of, well, slipped out, sir."

"Which is more than we can say for that night I tried to get you to come back to my flat with me, eh, George?" Jenkinson said. "Oh, George, George," he went on, in the best Pirates of Penzance voice Bodie had heard in years, "when will you make my heart glad and come live with me a life of debauchery and sin?"

"Ach, Allan, you know fine well we'd never be happy thegither. I mean, man, how could I ever leave my belovèd for you?"

If he'd had the attention to spare, Bodie would have fallen off his chair in shock at the sight of Cowley camping it up. It was obviously true what they said about the Scottish sense of humour then—they only let it show after you'd known

them at least 5 years, and then only on Burn's Night and other state occasions. But he was, despite the danger of injury when Murphy found out what he'd missed, too concerned by what he'd just realised about Doyle.

It wasn't a game any more. If it ever had been, he acknowledged. If it had ever been just messing about and nothing more, nothing less. He was beginning to realise just how much more it had been, and just how much less they had been settling for. Think, he shouted at himself, in the privacy of his own skull, think! Ray wants me. Really wants me. Not just fiddling about in the dark, or playing silly tricks under the table. Ray wants me.

The question is, do I want him?

His cock twitched, lonely, reminding him of where Doyle had touched him. He was still warm there, from the blood that had flooded him with Ray's...caresses. Caresses. He touched the word in his own mind, trying it on, seeing how it felt to think of it as being caressing between them, not goosing or copping a quick feel or trying it on for a joke. Caressing. Him, caressing Doyle. Ray, caressing him. His cock twitched again, putting in its tuppenceworth on the subject of Ray Doyle and caresses.

Bodie looked longingly at the claret that still twinkled merrily in the decanter, wishing it was late enough for him to be off duty and have a bit of Dutch courage. Not long now, but still... He faced something else, something he knew he did to survive: he lied to himself, constantly and efficiently, conspiring with the coward within to protect himself from things that would cause pain beyond enduring or to barrier himself from horrors he couldn't escape. And had he been lying to himself about Doyle, all those times he had promised himself that he was only looking at him that way because he was trying to see what it was all the birds saw in him? And had he been lying all those times when he'd pinched Doyle's bum and claimed it was only to see him jump? And what about all the times he'd managed it so that they would end up double-dating?

Oh, yes, he was a bloody good liar, especially when it kept him from admitting that he was attracted to his partner. Cowley's attitude to over-involvement between agents notwithstanding, he'd always known that with his proclivi-

ties, fancying your partner was definitely a fatal attraction. Unless, of course, your partner fancied you just as much but had the balls to do something about it. He uncrossed his legs, sitting slightly asplay, thinking about just how good it had felt to have Doyle touching him like that. Definitely. He definitely wanted more. As soon as they were off duty, he'd take Doyle home, have a drink with him, tell him he knew what Doyle was after and that...

An abrupt movement from across the table startled him, drawing him away from his rosy and ever-so tidy plans. Doyle, sitting there, with a face like fizz, temper thundering away under the surface. Oh, shite, he'd forgotten how it must have looked to Ray, what with him suddenly crossing his legs and shoving him off and then swearing and then going off into his own little world. By now, Ray would have worked himself up into a fine temper, him not being one to suffer with the meekness of a born pacifist. Oh, no, his Ray was much more likely to lash out and decapitate anyone who had been stupid enough to hurt him. Of course, he'd go on a guilt trip for a month afterwards, but that wasn't £3£3£3 exactly a clarion of comfort to the poor sod whose 103 head was bouncing in the gutter. And if he, £3£3£3 Bodie, didn't do something and bloody quick at that, it'd be his head bouncing in the gutter and Doyle storming off to have a good fit of depression.

But what the hell was he supposed to say? When Ray got started like this, you could beg forgiveness and all he'd do would be to prolong the agony for your cheek. Nothing you could say would be right, all of it just more faggots on the fire of Doyle's righteous indignation, to keep him warm until the chill of pain could wear off. Christ, but look at the set of that jaw! Bodie was in trouble, serious trouble, unless he could come up with a way of getting Doyle to see that he wasn't being rejected.

So if he couldn't say something, he'd have to do something. And they say that lovers always do what they want done to themselves, so he'd just heel his shoes off and play footsie with Doyle, doing unto him as he had done unto others and... He was wearing lace-ups, brand new, tight lace-ups. The only way he'd get them off would be if he were to go under the table and undo them, and even Cowley, soused as he was,

would notice that. What are you doing?' he'd be asked, and he didn't much fancy having to answer, 'Making arrangements to seduce Doyle into sodomy and fellatio, sir.' Although judging by the tolerance being shown to old Jenkinson, that might not be the problem he'd always thought it would be. But even if Cowley let him off with that, Doyle'd brain him, thinking it was just an utterly nasty joke, mocking him for his attraction.

He stared at Doyle, willing his partner to look at him, as Doyle had done to him earlier. The difference, this time, was that Doyle responded, glowering with all the ire at his command, which was about equal to the entire NATO forces, if Bodie were any judge. Refusing to bow before the fury, he let it show on his face that he wasn't messing about any more, and that there was more than a little heat in him too, although it had nothing to do with anger. He reached out with both of his well-shod feet, ignoring Doyle's attempt to pull away, trapping Ray's right foot, rubbing clumsily. But the message was getting through. He could see it, as the suspicion was born amidst the temper. Could almost see the 104 thoughts written in the green eyes.

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Funny, he noticed inconsequentially, how green Ray's eyes go in dim light like this. You'd expect them to end up all washed-out grey, but they don't. Probably temper, making his eyes so green. And he has got sexy eyes, hasn't he? Makes me think of what he'd be like in bed, every time I see his eyes so green. Want to see if they're that colour when he's coming...

Those green eyes were staring back at him, suspicion and temper both damping down, being banked and then all the heat allowed to go out of them. Bodie felt the shoe his feet were squeezing go soft and hollow, then there was heat on him, softness and hardness grazing him, following the curves of the muscles on his leg. The eyes were still watching him, warily, while the foot was caressing him, warmly. Both promise and denial, in the touch and in the look, a warning that Doyle would ram his tonsils out his arse if Bodie were just winding him up.

Fanning the cards out, Bodie made great show of mixing them, picking them up, shuffling them, keeping up a display of mundanity while his whole world changed. Jenkinson was talking, telling scurrilous tales of past friends,

while Cowley laughed and made sure, with unexpected gentleness, that Allan knew that his attitude hadn't changed, that there would be no seduction between them. And all the while, Bodie sat there, making sure that Doyle knew that his attitude had changed and that there would be a seduction here, albeit mutual.

The foot was kneading his groin again, strong toes pressing him just so. He looked at Doyle, made sure that Ray was held by his gaze, and then he shifted in his seat, echoing the move he'd made before, but trapping Ray this time, his crossed legs holding Doyle tight against him whilst the arousal grew. He could see it in Ray's eyes as it registered that Bodie was getting hard, his cock pulsing up underneath the arch of Doyle's foot. He spared a thought for how the hell they were going to get out of this room and into the car without someone noticing that he had a pole playing tents in his trousers. He decided he'd worry about that later. All he was concerned about for the moment was reeling Ray in, hooking him, making sure that the anger was erased by arousal.

That, and not being caught by Cowley.

Doyle flexed his foot, and Bodie flexed his spine as pleasure flooded through him, all of it radiating from the taut pressure on his cock, and from the hardness of Doyle's heel pushing against his balls, sweet, sweet pressure. He shifted again, trying to rub himself a bit more, trying for more contact, more stimulation. Doyle grinned at him, wickedly, with humour, but mainly with lust. The foot slid along him, hard, the inward curve of arch withdrawing until it was the outward curve of instep, and the lasciviousness of toes teasing at his arsehole. He'd never regretted anything so much in his life as sitting there in public with Doyle out of reach. All he wanted now was to grab him and fuck them both into oblivion. He didn't care where, not any more. Didn't matter if it were in his own bed, Doyle's bed or some bed in a shop window, but he wanted this man. And for far more than playing footsie with beneath a game of bridge. Not even Cowley sitting beside him, blue eyes awash in whisky, mattered compared to the need he had for the promise in those green eyes to be fulfilled.

But Doyle was looking away now, saying something in reply to a comment from

Jenkinson and leaving Bodie with nothing but the enflaming pleasure of that sure touch of foot teasing at the zip of his trousers. And that was when Bodie realised that it wouldn't be enough just to have the body: he wanted the man, too. He wanted the personality, wanted the passion, wanted to possess more than just flesh, gorgeous though that flesh surely must be. It was so much less, with Doyle turned away from him, and he had to find a way to get him back.

He checked the table, working out trajectories and remaining unclaimed space beneath it. It would be disastrous to miscalculate and get Cowley, but Jenkinson was just the type to say nothing and then take him up on his 'offer' when he least wanted him to. Leaning back in his seat, ever so casually, he stretched his leg out, his knee pressing into Ray's inner thigh. He poured another drink for Cowley, wanting the man well and truly pickled, so that nothing that happened here could ever be used to blackmail him into some job he really didn't want to do—such as the Balmoral duty that was coming up next month. A fate worse than death, that, to be stuck out in the middle of Scottish countryside with Doyle right beside him and not able to touch. For he knew, quite categorically, that by the time next month rolled in, he and Ray would be what the Americans called 'an item'. He liked the sound of that, the way it made it seem that they were a single unit. Just like the professional partnership, really, carrying over into the private. Doyle squirmed a bit as Bodie rubbed him with the hard roundness of his knee, returning a little of the teasing Doyle had been giving him. Feral, Bodie grinned across the table, waiting for Doyle to look up. Green eyes met his, and Bodie's breath stilled.

He was being eaten alive, mouthful by mouthful, by that gaze. Doyle said nothing, could say nothing, not where they were, but it was a tangible certainty between them, just precisely what was going to be done to Bodie. Ray licked his lips, white teeth nipping delicately on lower lip, tongue tip coming out to catch a droplet of sweat. Bodie gulped, gasping like a guttered fish, his cock threatening his zip, as Doyle threatened his sanity. Christ, but he *had* to have him. Now. Not later, not in half an hour, not when they were safely in the privacy of someone's flat. He'd settle for down the back of the bushes in the

garden, or on the stairs. Glancing at Cowley's drunken laughter, he decided he'd even settle for under the table. And if Doyle didn't stop pressing his arch against him like that, there was a good chance that he'd be coming under the bridge game itself. Floundering for distraction, he heaved a sigh of relief when his RT went, McCabe's tinny voice informing him, with ill grace, that they were outside and in position.

Bodie would kill to be in position right then and there. He'd kill to be thrust up to his balls in Doyle's arse, or rammed down to the tonsils in Doyle's throat: he wasn't fussy, not any more. He'd even settle for sitting right here and coming in his trousers, as long as he could do it quietly enough for no-one to notice. But, with McCabe outside, it meant that he could drag Doyle off somewhere and fuck him blind. Always providing he could stand up without cutting off the circulation to somewhere very, very important to him at this moment in time.

Jenkinson, drunk enough to have long since left discretion behind, looked at them both with eyes bright with vicarious desire. "Listen, you two," he whispered, leaning forward, scattering £3£3£3 the forgotten bones of their game, "I don't stand 105 a chance with old Cross-legged Cowley here, but £3£3£3 if I did, and I didn't want to have to wait until I could get him home, I'd take him up onto the third floor, to the gents. No-one goes there but the likes of me and thee, so you're safe enough, especially at this hour of the night."

The men's toilet wasn't exactly the romantic

trysting spot of the year, but at least he could get there without coming. He hoped... Jenkinson's words had barely been uttered before Bodie had grabbed Ray by the wrist, dragging him to his feet—his still half-shod feet and hauling him away from there, cards floating off like butterflies behind them, and Cowley, ready to sting like a bee. Bodie caught sight of the look out of the corner of his eye, and it suddenly hit him, just what a fool he had been. Cowley, the wiliest of all the old foxes, getting stinking drunk, when there were several terrorist cells after him? Christ, but maybe he did need a refresher course with Macklin, if he had thought that. On the threshold, he hesitated,

glancing back at the man who had seconded

him out of the SAS before his CO could wreak

havoc on him for his 'insubordination', and saw

the slow, sly smile. He swallowed, hard. The last time the Old Man had turned a blind eye to something as major as this, he had ended up joining CI5. God help him this time.

But then Doyle bumped up against him, hard cock nudging at Bodie's arse, hot breath tickling the back of his neck. All thoughts of the future fled him, leaving him with nought but the moment, and Ray. Without speaking, they got on the lift, waiting until the doors had shut before they fell on each other, hands shuddering under clothes, mouths sucking on skin, cocks grinding together. With a sickening lurch, the lift stopped, then settled and shifted a bit, its old bones creaking before the doors opened on a corridor dim and musty, smelling of the ages and of polish, rich wood gleaming under the brass lights and the small-paned windows. There was a sign, beckoning them discreetly with its promise of privacy, and it was Doyle who led them as they hastened towards the gents.

Inside, it was a vision from a time gone past, when Empire ruled and ostentation was second only to quality. Marble pillars, malachite and slate coloured, soared up to the ceiling; 106 gilded mirrors hung above brass-appointed £3£3£3 marble sinks. There was a mahogany screen for gentlemen to hide behind whilst they adjusted their carved false teeth or trimmed their moustaches. The cubicles—large enough even for a lady in a hooped skirt, if women had ever been admitted to this club, let alone to the public toilets-had bowls of fine white porcelain and overhead cisterns of marble to match the pillars. Even the pull chains were works of art, formed as Gordian knots, with Medusa heads as handles.

> The door swung shut behind them, shutting out the modern world and cocooning them in their own world with all the fineries of the past. Getting there had given Bodie time to catch his breath, and his thoughts. His hands, when he took hold of Doyle, were gentle, encouraging rather than demanding, kind instead of dominant. He dropped light kisses on heavy curls, his hands framing Doyle's face, one thumb stroking softly over the damaged cheekbone.

> Doyle put his hand firmly on the centre of Bodie's chest, where the shirt buttons were undone and the skin gleamed faintly in the light from the wall sconces. Startled, Bodie yielded

to the pressure, backing off in the face of the leashed fury on Doyle's. "You can pack that crap in right now, Bodie. I'm not one of your birds, and if you treat me like a woman, you stupid sod, I'll cut your balls off and feed them to you for breakfast. You got that?"

As the hand on his chest lowered, grabbing him through his trousers in a grip that was thrillingly strong, Bodie grinned. He'd always liked the lack of softness when it was man to man, always liked the fact that he didn't have to hold back. And by the look of him, Doyle was more than his match. A tiny tube of vaseline lip salve was shoved at him, and words with it. "Get that on you, mate," Doyle hissed at him, stopping long enough to bite-kiss him, his free hand massaging Bodie's cock through fabric. "You'll need it for where you're going."

Bodie yanked his trousers open, shoving them and underwear down and out of the way, to cling, cloying, at his knees. It didn't matter, for his cock was free, bobbing blindly, searching for somewhere nice to bury itself. Doyle was watching, tongue wetting his lips, as Bodie wet his cock with the glistening gel. "Get your fucking clothes out of the way," Bodie said, one hand on his cock, the other tangling in Doyle's hair, "get your sodding clothes out of the way so I can fuck you."

The trousers were pushed down, and there was no underwear to mar Bodie's first sight of Doyle, hard, rising up to tap at his belly, cock red and long, the very tip of the head peeking out from the heavy cowl of foreskin. Bodie's hand was rough on him as Doyle was turned, abruptly, without ceremony, to face the panelled wall. Knees came between his, to spread him, as he had so many criminals and hard men in his day. It was a delectable game between them, one allowing a soupçon of submission, the other allowing a dash of dominance to spice this encounter up far beyond the usual fare.

Doyle's buttocks clenched and hollowed, as he gyrated them, a wanton begging for despoilment. But nothing could ever spoil this moment, Bodie thought, hands glittering with gel palming Doyle's round arse. His thumbs sank between the cheeks, and Ray arched backwards, spreading his buttocks, displaying himself to Bodie's hunger. The pink hole waited, winking coyly with every swivel of Doyle's hips. So Bodie

impaled him with his finger, holding him still, fingering him while the muscle loosened. A second finger, now held rigid, racing in and out, making the muscle gape with need and Doyle whimper with impatience.

Positioning himself, Bodie used one hand to steady Doyle, the other to steady himself as he pressed his cock home. A stifled scream of sheer pleasure ripped from Ray's throat as Bodie shoved himself in, and Bodie heard himself echo it. He wasn't much taller than Ray, but it was enough. As he thrust upwards, Ray was lifted up onto his toes. And if Bodie thrust hard enough, if Bodie let the lust carry him, each forward snap of his hips lifted Ray up off his feet, until it was Bodie's strength, Bodie's cock that was supporting him.

Face pressed against the panelling, hands flat and white on the wood, Bodie thought he'd never seen anyone so beautiful as Doyle was at that moment, transformed by the rapture of having Bodie up him. He couldn't last, not seeing Ray like that, not with Ray's body so hot and tight around him. But he wanted to bring Ray with him, wanted to time it so that it would happen all at once. His right hand clenched itself around Ray's cock, pumping him hard and fast, as his own cock was doing to Ray's arse, filling him, leaving him empty, only to ram back up him. Rough, certainly rough, but all the better for the trust between them that they could let passion have its rein. He was biting Ray's shoulder, could taste the skin and feel the bone, while his cock was buried so deep, he couldn't feel anything at all at the tip, save the channel that led straight up to Ray's heart. He thrust again, and again, hand flying, body soaring, as he pumped and pulsed deep inside Ray, the whiteness of his cum lighting up Ray's insides.

Sated, they leaned there, neither one of them able or willing to move, until Bodie finally turned Ray round, lowering the curly head until Ray's mouth was sucking on his nipples, a softly sweet reprise of the pleasure that had thundered through him.

Ray straightened up in front of him, taking Bodie's face between his hands exactly as Bodie had done to him earlier. "Time for gentleness now," he said, voice hoarse in the aftermath. "Now that I know you're not going to treat me as if I'm fragile. I'm not the little woman to be

left at home, Bodie. I'm your partner, and it's me who guards your back when we're on the streets. You patronise me, Bodie, and you won't see me for dust."

"Didn't mean to patronise you, Ray. Just like a bit of kissing and cuddling as well as the rough stuff, that's all. Anyway, patronise—you? Sooner chance my arm with Macklin."

"As long as you've got the message, then..."

And Bodie was kissed, with such tenderness and love that it made him dizzy. Being tall and broad, being a hard man, the ex-merc, ex-SAS sergeant, no-one had ever cherished him before, not like this. He'd been pampered, he'd been seduced, he'd been fucked into the ground by men who'd subjugated him completely, but he'd never been made to feel so small and safe and serene. Tenderness was drawn from him, slowly, to feed Doyle, who fed it back to him, soothing him, elating his spirit the way the sex had elated his body.

He could definitely, definitely, get addicted to this. In fact, as the kiss finally ended, he already was. He leaned forward, unhurried, for another kiss, and then another, stopping only £3£3£3 when they were both so cold that dressing had 107 become a necessity. Bodie shocked himself al- £3£3£3 most into running, when he realised what he was doing: holding Doyle by the hand whilst using one of the soft cotton towels to wipe the seeping cum—his own seeping cum—from Ray's bum and thighs. He'd never been so far gone in his life, not even when he'd been a teenager caught in the first insane throes of love.

It took quite some time, despite the cold, to get dressed again, for there were so many lonely little places that just had to be touched or kissed or held, but eventually, they were decent again. Apart, that is, from Doyle's left foot. Which was naked, markedly so. Whose sock and shoe were still lying, in mutely snickering knowledge, under the bridge table downstairs.

Bodie looked down at the bare foot, then back up at Doyle. "We could always say that you had this really chronic case of athlete's foot and had to take your shoes off."

"On doctor's orders, you mean?"

"Yeh. I mean, it's only McCabe who's out there, it's not like it's Murphy, or someone with a brain, is it? Lucas and McCabe, they'd fall for a story like that. Wouldn't they?"

"Probably. If it wasn't for the fact that you," he ran a finger round the perfect outline of Bodie's lips, "look like you've just had a lovely time and I look like I've just been shoved up against a wall and fucked legless."

"Pity I didn't fuck you footless, that would've solved the problem, wouldn't it?"

There was a very discreet tap at the door, followed by an even more discreet cough. Footsteps—from someone who was wearing two shoes—faded down the corridor, disappearing into the geriatric lift. With raised eyebrow and a glance of shared suspicion with Doyle, Bodie opened the door with suitable caution. Nice as ninepence and considerably more expensive, lay Doyle's shoe, black sock tucked tidily inside. Bodie looked at the shoe, gloomily, then at Doyle, gloomily.

"He's got us by the short and curlies, you do know that, don't you?"

"Who has?"

"As if you don't know! Cowley, of course. The old bugger's up to something, Ray, and we're

the ones who're going to end up to our armpits in shite, if I know him. He's really got us this time."

"That a fact?" Doyle muttered, unconcernedly sitting down in the middle of the corridor to don his abandoned footwear. "You really think he's got us where he wants us, cos we, members of the security forces that we are, had sex in a public place?"

"Oh, and you think he hasn't? Listen, Ray, last time he got me like this, he got me into CI5. He's already got me body and soul, what the fuck does that leave for this time?"

A grin of wicked delight, and a micro-cassette tossed in the air. "Leaves us this, doesn't it? A bit of judicial editing of our illustrious leader's confab with old Fairy Godmother Jenkinson shall make all our dreams come true—and Cowley'll be offering us holidays for a year, won't he?"

"With pay, you little genius," Bodie scrooged, rubbing his hands in glee. "And overtime. With expenses..."

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