A HOLE IN ONE

None of it mattered any more—if it ever had. Raymond Doyle could no longer summon the energy to care what happened now. Couldn't even think of a reason why he should, not now. Not now that he'd lost £1.50 to Bodie on that last shot. He'd been so *sure* that old duffer was going to miss that long putt, and what had Colonel Bogie done? He'd gone and hit a shot Arnold Palmer would've been proud of. There was, Doyle decided miserably, no justice in this world. Colonel Bogie oh, sorry, the Right Honourable Geoffrey Waterstone-ffolkes, retd., DSM, DSO, VSO and bar or whatever the old bugger had after his name, mustn't forget to be suitably impressed—had missed every puttover three feet, so betting against him on a nine footer was a quick way to double his money, right? Not with bloody Bodie around. He glowered briefly at his new partner, irritated beyond all reason by the smooth face—no broken cheekbones for him, oh, no, not Sgt. William Andrew Philip Bodie (retd.), with probably a few extra initials after his name and all, if all the exploits "just call me Bodie" claimed were true. At least he wasn't wearing one of his fancy suits today, that was always something. Too goodlooking by half when he was all dolled up. Wasn't exactly ugly when he dressed down, either, Doyle admitted reluctantly, refusing to stare at the way the wind whipped Bodie's clothes tight against his body. Nice body, good muscles, solid and strong, right up Doyle's alley. Well, not yet. But he was working on it. Maybe. If Bodie showed the slightest interest. Christ, he decided as Bodie bent to pick

up a dropped club cover, he'd work on it if Bodie just didn't break his arm for him.

Meanwhile, oblivious to the beauty of both the countryside and the males around them, Cowley and the other old duffer had finished chatting over the score cards and were now meandering, deathly slow, across to the next tee.

Yet another pocket of combed grass, where not so much as a buttercup dared show its face, and the fuddy-duddy was wiggling an extremely unattractive backside as he prepared to slice the ball in the general direction of the flag.

"Aaaatchooo!"

"Gesundheit," Doyle muttered to Bodie, over Cowley's disapproving glare.

"Thanks," Bodie answered, smiling sweetly at his boss, drawing him a dirty look as soon as Cowley had turned back to fawn, quite professionally, on the old fart who had risen to be the Minister currently in charge of CI5's budget. "It's those bloody honeysuckles, they're getting right up my nose."

"It's Cowley that's getting up mine," Doyle muttered, careful to be quiet enough that his boss couldn't quite hear. "I mean, look at him!"

Cowley was currently praising the skill of the Minister, even going so far as to pat the other man on the back, smiling all the while. The sight was, as Doyle was so quick to recognise, truly revolting.

"It's disgusting," Bodie said succinctly, shouldering Cowley's golf-bag and waiting for Doyle to do the same to the Minister's. Their boss was now strolling across the undulating greens, the breeze tossing snatches of unctuous, politically motivated praise back to the unwilling hearing of his two employees.

"...would be more than happy. My men are always more than willing to..."

"Christ, did you hear that?" Doyle spluttered. "He sounds like he's pimping for us!"

"Don't be too sure he's not. We were," Bodie said with heavy handed innuendo, "specially selected to come up here with him."

"Nah, he wouldn't pimp for us."

Bodie waited, all too sure that Doyle, unfortunately, had a punchline coming.

And how could Doyle ever let his partner down? "He wouldn't want to share you, would he, flower?"

Bodie gave that the dirty look it deserved, but didn't bother answering. He trudged over the grass, automatically keeping his eyes peeled—as if there were hordes of terrorists lurking in the long grass of this hoiy-toity bloody course! Stupid, really, there being nothing in sight but green countryside, blue sky and old men in dreadful clothes. So unless they were here as fashion police in which case, Bodie thought Doyle would have to arrest himself-there was no reason for him and Doyle even being here, as far as he could tell. No reason at all. Apart, maybe, from the admiring, if surreptitious, stares they were getting from the Minister. Bodie blinked, slowly, the only sign he gave of a rather explosive burst of surprise. Nah. Cowley wouldn't. And a poof wouldn't be promoted to Minister. But then again, look at Burgess and Maclean... But still... He sneaked a glance at his partner, noted the other man's permanent air of just-about-to-fuck or just-been-fucked and the way those jeans were tight everywhere bar the groin, where there were some definitely interesting pleats and folds, and as for that faded spot just on the inside of the left thigh... Oh, yes, Bodie decided, if the Minister was bent that way as well as being a traditionally bent politician—and weren't all politicians crooks to some degree or other—then Doyle would be the very man to bring along for window dressing, temptation and the leverage of letting the Minister know that Cowley knew just precisely what a precarious position the Minister was in. Oh, absolutely, absolutely, that was what Cowley had brought them here for! And as the Old Man had, in a moment of total insanity, partnered him with Doyle, then he himself had to

come along as well. Mentally rubbing his hands with glee and being careful to show none of his wicked amusement, Bodie lowered his voice and attracted his nearly somnambulant partner's attention. "Psst! Doyle!"

"Yeah?" Sounding as bored as Bodie had felt before coming up the endlessly useful tease about Doyle's front and rear being the stuff of which Departmental budgets are made.

Then, so casually that it resounded with suspiciousness: "Have you noticed the way our boss' chum's been eyeing you up?" That should liven things up a bit round here, Bodie thought with satisfaction: Doyle was always so entertainingly outraged when people treated him like the sex object he pretended to be.

For once—due, perhaps, to the tightness of his jeans?—Doyle refused to rise to the occasion. "It's not me he's looking at, though, is it?"

Appalled, Bodie looked up, just in time to catch the Minister measuring not the length of his shot to the next hole, but the length of Bodie's cock next to his left thigh "Oh, great," he groaned, immediately staring at the fascinating shade of green the grass was, "that's all I need. Typical bloody Cowley!"

Now that finally got a reaction from Doyle. "Cowley? *Cowley's* eyeing you up?" Then he shrugged, lowering his voice as they meandered within earshot of their boss and his crony with access to HM Government's Treasury—or, to be accurate, HM's overdraft department. Doyle gave Bodie one of his cheekiest grins. "Least it explains why you're the old man's blue eyed boy."

Bodie opened his mouth to answer this outrage, and then shut it again, very firmly and with an exceedingly polite smile. Disparaging remarks about one's boss' sexual prowess, endowment and taste were never advisable—at least, not when said boss was already glaring suspiciously at two agents who had been well-lectured on the Sanctity of Golf and should know better than to chatter like schoolgirls on their way to a date.

But the promise of upping the budget allocation obviously must have been far more alluring than ripping his agents to shreds: Cowley just frowned at Bodie again, grabbed an iron—golfing, not steam—from the bag Bodie had dumped unceremoniously on the ground, and limited his nagging to the matter that should have been in hand but was, instead, afoot. "Here, Bodie, that's no way to

treat a fine set of golf-clubs! You're getting my good bag a' mucky. Pick it up, pick it up."

Bodie picked it up, smiled sweetly and thought dreadful thoughts of revenge whilst Doyle sniggered in the background.

Cowley busied himself doing the things Bodie, as his caddie, was supposed to be doing but never seemed quite able to remember. "I hope the pair of you at least remember well enough to keep quiet when we're addressing the ball."

"So if you lose it someone'll send it back to you?" Bodie said brightly. But not so brightly that his boss would actually hear him. Unfortunately, the fuddy-duddy in the tartan trews did. And smiled, also brightly, perfectly false teeth glinting whitely in the sun.

That wiped the smile off Bodie's face.

The Minister ran his hands lasciviously over his bulging belly—which he probably still rather fondly remembered as being solid muscle and flat as a washboard, which had last been true somewhere round about George Formby's heyday—and then, even worse, ran his tongue across his lips. And winked. At Bodie.

Who seriously considered turning tail and running. It wasn't actually that it was a man making such blatant advances at him. It wasn't even that it was a man of mature years. It was the fact that the old buzzard was the sleaziest thing he'd seen since he and his classmates each paid their sixpence to Mrs. Philips down the back alley.

"Doyle..." he hissed out of the side of his mouth.

Assuming Bodie had been watching too many old Bogie movies on BBC2, Doyle ignored him. "Oh, good shot," he said in his own best impersonation, which was somewhere between Prince Philip and Danny LaRue—a mature Prince Edward, you could say.

Mr. Cowley turned a truly excellent glare on his agent. The 'good shot' had gone into the rough—deliberately, so as not to give the Minister a right showing up and thus jeopardise that increase in budget he was angling for. Or should that be golfing for? Anyway, Cowley satisfied himself with a silent glare that was so much more discreet than a bawling out, but just as effective. He knew: he'd been practising long enough. Then, with suitably sycophantic—sorry, politically correct—smile, he turned towards the man he was having such a devil of a time not beating.

Which was exactly Bodie's situation, with one major semantic difference. Cowley was trying not to beat him at golf, whilst Bodie was trying not to beat the lecherous old toad with golf—a number five iron, to be precise. Trying not to look like the craven coward he was at that moment, Bodie sidled up closer to Doyle. There, he thought triumphantly, standing right next to his partner, now he'll think I'm otherwise engaged.

The Minister, well trained by a life in politics, immediately got hold of the wrong end of the stick—rather like the way he played golf. Instead of backing off with an embarrassed little smile, the old codger seemed to think it meant either that Bodie was displaying just how bent he was—or showing that Doyle was available too. Happily under the wrong impression, the revolting cad winked, flirtatiously, at the caddies. And Bodie understood the full meaning of 'screamingly funny': if it weren't so funny in a sick sort of way, he'd scream.

Doyle, meanwhile, had missed none of this: after all, he was an ex-copper, ex-Met, ex-Drug Squad, ex-Boy Scout: he was not only always prepared, but his later years had taught him how to use what his preparedness saw. "Funny, innit?" he said in a normal tone of voice, Scrooge and Crœsus several yards ahead and engrossed in conversation of a presumably fiscal nature.

"What is?" Now that *was* funny, the way Bodie could make a perfectly innocent question sound like a threat of grievous bodily harm.

"Your Minister—"

"He's not my bloody Minister, so—"

"All right, all right, don't go overboard." He managed to look severely put out, put upon and put down, all at the same time. No mean feat, really. Bodie, however, was unmoved, and Doyle decided not to wait until either Hell froze over or Bodie apologised, the former being more precipitous than the latter. "All I was going to say was, golf's the perfect game for the Minister."

Bodie looked at him incredulously. "The perfect game? Perfect? Doyle, either you want your head examined, or your eyes want it."

"No, I'm right. You just haven't looked at it from the proper perspective yet, that's all."

Oh, no, he could feel another one of Doyle's jokes coming on. "I'm going to regret this. All right, what's the proper perspective on that bent old geezer playing golf?"

"Obvious, innit?"

Doyle, in Bodie's opinion, not only came up with the oddest jokes in Christendom, but he also had the worst comedic timing since Larry Grayson. "What's obvious?" he asked with a patience that would have tried a saint.

Doyle slanted a glance at him. "Bent old bugger like him, stands to reason he'd be perfect for golf. All those men holding their long, rigid shafts of iron, chasing after their balls...'

Bodie, in Doyle's opinion, could turn such an interesting shade of puce if you told him the right joke at the right time. Especially if you'd timed it so that they were within hearing distance of their boss...

"Bodie!"

"Yes, sir?" Bodie managed, albeit sounding strangled.

"If I've told you once, I've told you a hundred times. No eating your damned sweeties or sandwiches or anything else whilst we're on the links." He glowered, yet again, at a Bodie whose eyes were streaming and whose Adam's apple was bobbing frantically. "Choking, are you? Well, serves you bloody right." Then the flint-hearted old sod turned his back and returned, with the smoothness of a spiv, to ingratiating several thousand more pounds out of the new Minister.

Behind his back, Bodie gave his boss an elegant, if two fingered, salute. Which made the Minister wink conspiratorially and smile in what was probably an attempt at friendly seductiveness, but came across as more of a bend-over-andspread-'em leer.

"In fact," Doyle said as soon as his partner could breathe more or less normally, just for the pleasure of seeing Bodie turn puce all over again, "you could almost say it's right up his alley because all the men pocket their balls."

He might be half-choking, but by God, he hadn't gone through SAS training without learning something. Manfully, he regained control of his breathing and straightened himself to proper military bearing—if we're willing to ignore the decided list to the left caused by a well-stuffed golf-bag—and started to give back as good as he'd just got.

"Yeh, suppose it would suit the old sod to a tee—you know, a game where the winner is the one who takes the fewest strokes to score."

"I thought they scored at the end," Doyle said

perfectly calmly, years of being a policeman even more useful than SAS training for some things. "But then again, the winner's the one who sinks his balls into the shaft first, isn't he?"

"Actually," Bodie had gone very posh, toffee nose in the air, and being acrobatic, standing on his dignity while he was at it, "it's not a shaft they sink their balls into, it's the hole."

Doyle gazed admiringly at his boss and his boss' boss. "Gosh," he said, as goggle-eyed as Biggles, "and at their age! I thought the old balls shrivelled up with age." Back to his normal self, close enough behind Bodie to land Bodie right in it without revealing a whisper of what he himself was saying, "Which goes to show, I suppose, that Cowley's a bigger arsehole than we thought."

Bodie hoped that coughing would be less wrathmongering than choking. Needless to say, he was wrong.

"Are you sickening for something?"

"No, sir," Doyle said chirpily with a truly evil smile. "He's just sickening."

"Thank you for your opinion, Doyle. If I ever want it again, I'll be sure to ask." Mr. Cowley left his Minister to 'tot up' the score cards—politicalese for 'cheat'—and managed to corner his two agents despite the fact that they not only outnumbered him, but there wasn't a corner in sight. Minor details, neither of which stopped Bodie or Doyle from feeling like rats caught by a large ginger tom. "Now, there's something I'd like to know," Mr. Cowley asked with considerable charm, another one of those details that made Doyle's bowels feel weak and Bodie's bladder threaten a deluge.

"Yes, sir?" Bodie asked, edging closer to Doyle for moral—or immoral, he wasn't fussy when he was facing Cowley—support.

"D'you like your job?"

Bodie glanced at Doyle.

"Yes, we do," Doyle answered, an idea of where all this was leading sneaking up on him, until he realised it was only Bodie crowding him as usual.

"So you'd say you enjoy your work? Enjoy having a job, a regular pay-packet, a car and flat provided, ridiculous expenses?"

Not even Doyle thought this was the moment to mention that their expense allowances really were ridiculous—ridiculously poor, that is.

"Yes, sir," Bodie said, in absolutely no doubt where this was all leading.

"Aye. An' if the pair of you want to have jobs to

go back to on Monday, hadn't you better stop behaving like a pair of schoolboys needing their backsides leathered?"

He stalked away, and Bodie kept his face very, very straight. Until Doyle muttered, sotto voce: "Need your arse leathered? Told you he fancied you!" With one depressingly lithe movement—Bodie always felt like a close relative of the Chieftain tank around his partner—Doyle hefted the Minister's golf-bag and began strolling slowly after the two main players. Bodie was scowling at him, obviously trying to come up with a suitably scathing retort to redress the imbalance of insults. As Doyle went, he offered over his shoulder, "I'd watch my bum if I were you."

"I already do, Doyle."

And that made it all worthwhile. Doyle tripped over a hummock of crab grass, dropped the golfbag, balls, clubs and all, and landed, with a satisfying wet squish, on the part of his anatomy under scrutiny.

"You're never bent!"

Bodie smiled his most sweetly dangerous smile. "Want to check my wrist, do you? Or p'rhaps you want to see if I've got any pink shirts at home. And we mustn't forget the discreet bottle of lavender in my bathroom, must we?"

Doyle got the message and back-pedalled quickly before Bodie knocked his block off for him. "Don't forget all those frocks in the wardrobe either, sweetie. All right, so you don't have to be a poof to fancy men, but get off it, Bodie, you haven't done a thing—"

"Haven't I?" Voice deliberately dropped to a purr as he leant over, hand reaching out and grasping Doyle less than helpfully and more than purely platonically. "Been watching me twenty-four hours a day, have you? Been following me home after work, checking my mates out, bugging my bedroom..." The smile widened to a grin and then was doused, Bodie putting on the bedroom face he usually kept in a jar of Vaseline by the door. "Oh, yeh, hedonist like you, bet you enjoyed that."

"How could I bug your bedroom? Cowley's too tight-fisted to just hand over a pile of bugs. Please sir, can I have some more bugs? Don't be so bloody stupid—"

Abruptly, the seductiveness was dropped and Bodie started to laugh. "Christ, but you're a gullible bugger, Doyle!" He grabbed Doyle, hauling him to his feet with much dusting off of grass, dirt and other preferably unidentified squashed things.

"You mean you— You were only—"

"Lost for words, petal?" Bodie lisped, still patting stray strands of grass off his partner. "Fuck, but you should've seen your face!"

"Great joke. Fantastic joke. With brilliance like that, you should've gone and been a boffin." Doyle was Not Amused, slamming golf-clubs into golf-bag with fine disregard for whether or not they would end up as bent as he'd thought Bodie was. As he had almost thought Bodie was, he soothed his ruffled pride. He hadn't been taken in, not completely at any rate. With another foul glare at his partner, Doyle took off his jacket—too hot today anyway—and scrubbed at the seat of his jeans. Bloody Bodie, he thought to himself, as he stuffed his rolled up jacket into some sort of long pocket on the side of the golf-bag. Face still like fizz, he shouldered the heavy bag once again and stormed off: not an easy task over rough ground with a two ton weight over one shoulder and a partner staring at your wet bum and laughing at

And that made him think. Not the bit about Bodie laughing at him, he was well used to that. But that bit about Bodie staring at his bum... He did, didn't he? And all that carry-on about dusting him off after he'd fallen—God, the man would put Oscar Wilde to shame! Doyle trudged on after his boss, nothing betraying the fact that his mind was so sharp he was in grave danger of cutting himself on it. Oh, yes, it all started to add up now, didn't it? All the camping about—"what are you getting your knickers in a twist for, Doyle? It's nothing but a bit of harmless fun, all us Army blokes do it. Why's it bother you so much—you're not bent, are you?" and himself making a big to-do, protecting a virtue he'd lost when he was fifteen and Mick Jamieson's parents had gone away for the weekend, leaving him and Mick alone in the house, each set of parents thinking they were both with the other ones—oh, all that camping about had been a hell of a lot more than the standard and usual romping of perfectly straight men. Unless they were at least six months from the nearest woman and their right hands were broken. Or unless they really were bent—or half bent, like himself—and copping a feel and covering up at the same time.

Bodie, tramping along in blissful ignorance, was too busy watching the damp patches on the

bum of Doyle's tight jeans to notice the look he was being given. Unfortunate, that. If he'd looked up at that particular moment, he might have had an inkling of the rather interesting turn his life was about to take.

But in truth, the only turn Bodie noticed was the angle that took them back onto the fairway, and in his books, that wasn't interesting at all. A fact more than noticed by their boss, whose temper was fraying round the edges. "Bodie! Wake up, man, you're not on leave yet. Here, give me—" Mr. Cowley took one look at the expression of total—real or feigned, either one was equally annoying—ignorance on Bodie's face and reached in for the club of his choice, that being quicker by half than waiting for Bodie to finally condescend to get it for him. "Och, never mind, I'll get it myself. You do realise, don't you, that the game would be over that wee bit faster if you actually did what I brought you here for in the first place?"

As the Minister chose that moment to squeeze Bodie's nether cheeks, our Mr. Bodie rightfully decided that silence was the better part of valour. Cross-eyed with the effort to refrain from shoving a number nine iron up the Minister's hole—head first, and the handle bent, just for good measure— Bodie manfully bore his burden of being a mere sex object. A rôle, by the way, he more than enjoyed usually, but being pawed by a creep tended to take the blush off things somewhat. He could just imaging waking up afterwards, turning over in the afterglow, to be confronted by those too perfect teeth floating in a glass by the bedside. Or worse, the dentures coming loose at the wrong moment, a thought that gave him the sudden, almost uncontrollable urge, to cross his legs and cover his balls with his hands.

Cowley was digging through the pouches of his golf-bag, his back turned to the other three men, and the Minister was taking advantage of this fortuitous situation in more ways than one. While Cowley's attention were focussed on pocketing two white balls, the Minister was trying to dig through Bodie's pouches, showing great interest in palming Bodie's balls, which were also firm and round but not designed to be handled quite the way the Minister seemed to think. With considerably more grace than Bodie was usually accused of, he side-stepped the amorous golfer with the enormous handicap and hastily put Cowley, Cowley's golf-bag and Doyle between

himself and the Minister that he didn't dare offend too seriously. After all, were he to outrage the Minister and bugger up the budget allocation, then Cowley would have his balls. And Bodie wouldn't put it past the Cow to simply offer the Minister Bodie's balls on a silver platter—and probably still attached to Bodie. Silver service with a difference.

"What's the matter, Bodie?" Doyle was whispering. "Wrong time of the month?"

Bodie did a glare that Cowley would have been most jealous of. "Ha bloody ha. How'd you feel if a bloke was poking you in the bum and trying to get his hands down your trousers?"

Doyle, who's brain had been going nineteen to the dozen while the Minister had been copping a feel of eggs that usually only came in pairs, answered, face impassive but the rest of his body deliberately transmitting sexual allure. "That would depend on the bloke doing the poking, wouldn't it?" He paused long enough for Bodie's ears to convince his brain that he really had heard what he thought he had just heard, and then added, as he turned away and bent over to pick up the golf-bag, his damp jeans etched across his arse, "Never complained when it was you, did I?"

At which point, Bodie could have been excused for falling over in a dead faint, if not because of what Doyle had just said, but also because someone, and not the Minister, had put his hands on Bodie's hips. Ohmy God, he wailed to himself, not fucking Cowley an' all! Then he realised he was being shifted, quite innocently, out of his boss' way.

Mr. Cowley, a man of prescience as well as presence, read the expression on Bodie's face. "If my mother were here," Cowley said very, very quietly, "she'd have a bar of carbolic soap in your mouth before you could blink."

Bodie managed a sickly smile, mind too busy bouncing around the farcicality of this entirely too surreal trip to the golf-course.

Cowley, taking this for yet another example of Bodie's army training—dumb, and therefore unpunishable, insolence being an art form in some regiments—really got his dander up. "What d'you take me for?I'll have you know I went to Edinburgh Uni, not bloody Cambridge!" And with that, in dudgeon almost as high as his dander, Cowley stalked off, so annoyed that he forgot to slice his drive and the ball flew true—and for bloody miles.

Bodie took the driver silently, stuffed it back

into the bag and began the long hike to where Cowley had, so to speak, left his balls. And as he walked away, he was aware that Doyle was staring at his arse the way Bodie himself usually stared at Doyle. Which was when it dawned on him: this wasn't exactly the first time Doyle'd ogled him. There'd been that night down the Black Swan, when Doyle'd been one over the eight and octopussed with it, his hands everywhere as Bodie had tried to steer him towards home and up the stairs. In fact, now that he stopped to think about it—and stopped pretending, for safety's sake, that it had all been his imagination and Doyle's drunken affection for anything living—that was the night he'd been fairly sure Doyle was going to kiss him at one point. When he'd dumped Doyle on the bed, and Ray'd grabbed on, not let go of him and he'd fallen on top of his partner, discovering that those hips really were as fleshless as they looked. Only thing was, now he couldn't remember if he'd felt two hard arches under himself that night, if those hip bones had had another hard arch between them \dots

A glance over his shoulder, and Doyle was following, smiling. The Minister was also following, not smiling; seeing that, Bodie was surprised that there were no bruises visible. Doyle was a vicious fighter, an absolute joy to watch. Which reminded him of that day outside the warehouse down Limehouse way. Doyle'd not complained when Bodie'd 'helped' him up the steep stairs with a hand on a certain very pert part of Doyle's anatomy. Hadn't complained whenever Bodie threw his arm across Doyle's shoulder. And had actually snuggled closer that time in the car when it'd been freezing and three o'clock in the morning and Bodie'd thought Doyle was asleep...

Well, well, well. Or, as he would say when trying to get right up Doyle's nose: 'ello, 'ello, 'ello, wot 'ave we 'ere then? Deliberately, Bodie slowed his pace, falling back until he was beside Doyle, and walking so slowly the Minister had no choice but to catch Cowley up.

A surreptitious look at Doyle, but all he could see was a tangle of curls, the tip of a nose, and an occasional, wind-swept glimpse of broken cheekbone.

"You know," he began, "the Minister was lucky he didn't hit his ball into the rough."

"The Minister," Doyle replied haughtily, "is lucky I didn't remove his balls and toss them into

the rough."

Bodie couldn't keep the impassive façade up: he grinned, delightedly, not to mention delightfully. "Chance his arm, did he?"

"Chanced more than his bloody arm. He's lucky he's not singing soprano by now."

Considering Doyle's reactions to the Minister, Bodie thought it just might be prudent to not go on blithe assumptions but actually check that Doyle wasn't entirely averse to a bit of dalliance with him. Or even better, was positively keen on bonking. "Now, the question is, was it the poking you objected to, or the poker?"

Sidelong glance, wickedly amused. "It was more a pocket knife than a poker."

Which didn't answer Bodie's question at all. Which was unfortunate, because his body was rapidly leaping to conclusions of its own and was threatening a coup attempt—coup being the French word for a blow, English being a versatile enough language to turn that into a verb, and one that was entirely appropriate, given the state of Bodie's cock.

Oh, well, he'd just have to follow the example of Bruce's spider. "Bit on the disappointing side, was he?"

"I didn't bite him on any side!"

The bastard, Bodie decided, was obviously doing it on purpose. "Wise, that. Never know what you'll catch from these politicians, do you? Probably why our mums warned us against strange men."

Doyle sniggered, amused by something he chose not to share with Bodie. After all, a frustrated Bodie is far more amusing than a mocking Bodie. "Is that what *your* mum meant?"

"And your mum didn't? Come off it, I've met yourmum and she's—" Hestopped, re-evaluating Doyle's mum. It wasn't that she was dippy or anything, it was just... Well, once you'd met Doyle's mum, you understood where Doyle got his...uniqueness from. Actually, that really weird conversation he'd had with Mrs. Doyle would make sense if he assumed that she thought that he and her son were... Nah. A mother wouldn't think that, not without getting all hot under the collar. Well, his mum wouldn't think that without having an attack of the weepies and ordering him never to darken her Christian threshold again. But then, Mrs. Doyle happily accepted a West Indian son-in-law, and she had been disappointed—

disappointed, she said!—when Ray had dropped out of art school to join the police, so maybe she wouldn't be bothered if her son... He dredged his memory and deep in the murk of his brain, he found verbatim snippets of a conversation that he'd had three weeks ago when he'd literally bumped into Ray's mum on Dawes Road. And Doyle never had explained how come his mum had recognised Bodie. Funny, that was the day Ray'd actually come up with two girls, the first time they'd ever double-dated. Hindsight was making that look more like distraction than entertainment, now. And if Doyle were willing to fork out a small fortune—'my idea, my treat', he'd said, which should have set Bodie's alarm bells ringing, Doyle far outreaching Cowley in the tightfistedness stakes—to distract Bodie from—

"Earth to Bodie, come in Bodie."

Bodie blinked, but enthusiastic as his cock was, he was a long way from coming in anything. "What?" he asked.

"I see you're still your usually scintillatingly brilliant self as always," Doyle said dryly. "But if you don't get your finger out, Cowley's going to blow his top."

Bodie wished Doyle wouldn't use words like that right now. Not when he was trying to think and his balls were conspiring with his cock to prevent anything resembling cogency from entering his mind. "What's he after now?" he grumbled, strolling over to meet Cowley halfway, a gesture that was entirely lost on a boss whose temper was not so much frayed as disintegrated.

"What the hell is the matter with you today? I asked you for my putter and you're standing there catching flies—"

The putter now gainfully employed in missing an easy shot, Bodie turned to examine the only flies he was interested in at the moment. Doyle was standing a more than decorous distance from the Minister, the golf-bag strategically placed between them. "Your shaft, sir," Doyle said, all innocence.

"Thank you very much," the Minister replied, all frustration.

Bodie actually found himself sympathising. He wished there was somewhere nearby where he could slip away and adjust himself before his Y-fronts cut his circulation—and other, less fluid but no less pulsing, parts—off forever. There wasn't

even one of those little wooden huts anywhere in sight, just flat grass, sand bunkers and a very unwelcoming water trap.

Doyle, meanwhile, had noticed Bodie's predicament, and was enjoying himself enormously, so to speak. With a very calculated roll to his walk, he strolled across the obsessively smooth green and bent from the waist, bum presented for the admiration of the world, to retrieve the Minister's ball from the cup. Still walking as if he had something wonderful and hard up his rear, he went over to Bodie and dropped the ball into Bodie's right hand. "There you go, mate," he whispered, "you can hold my balls for me."

And then he turned and walked away.

At that moment, Bodie seriously considered dropping the golf-bag, balls and shafts and all, and tackling Doyle to the ground, where he could grab balls and shafts and all, not leastly Doyle's delectable rump which was twitching in front of him, flanks hollowing and rounding with every step, the jeans drying until only the crease down the middle of Doyle's arse was still wet. The dark line wasso pronounced, so like looking at the shadowed cleft between Doyle's buttocks, Bodie was hard pressed to control himself. A panted groan from the Minister told Bodie 'hard pressed' wasn't a purely metaphoric turn of phrase. Hurriedly, and with a supremely quelling glower at the Minister, budgets be damned, Bodie lifted his hand from where it shouldn't be and put it where it should. Golf-bag once more over his shoulder, Bodie caught up with Cowley, not coincidentally putting Doyle out of his immediate vision and certainly out of his immediate temptation. Frowning fiercely in his concentration not to ravish Doyle right here in the open, Bodie accepted his boss' jacket, not even hearing the complaint about how hot it was and how he could use a drink.

He may not have been able to see Doyle, but he could hear him. Staccato words cutting the Minister off at the knee, but Doyle was careful how he phrased everything: the only way the Minister could complain about anything Doyle said would be to mention the fact that said Minister of Her Majesty's Government had just propositioned a member of Her Majesty's Security Forces. Needless to say, Doyle was having a whale of a time.

"You certainly put Casanova in his place," Bodie murmured as Cowley lavished praise on the Minister's rather feeble tee off shot. Doyle gave him a look that could only be described as sexy as hell. "Bet you wouldn't mind me putting you in a certain place, would you?" And then, cheeky bugger that he was, he looked, pointedly, at where Bodie's cords were showing signs of extreme stress.

"Right, this mucking about's gone far enough. What's your game, Doyle?"

An arched brow and a filthy chuckle. "Thought this was golf."

"I'm not talking about those two old farts, I'm asking you what you're up to."

"Oh, I'm up to anything," Doyle said, his hand drifting casually past jeans that were straining even more than usual. "I've been up to anything you fancied any time you were ready. Just didn't think you were that way inclined."

Bodie didn't believe a word of it: it was far too clear-cut and simple to be coming from Doyle. "No, come on, seriously. What are you playing at?"

"Told you. Golf." Then before Bodie could strangle him for deliberate obtuseness, he added: "You remember. Men chasing after each other trying to get a better score with their hard shafts and tight balls."

It really might be that simple and clear-cut, but still, in their line of work, and considering that Doyle could easily kill with his bare hands, it didn't do any harm to be extra-specially careful. "What are you saying?"

"Christ, you must've washed your brain this morning because you can't do anything with it! D'you want it in words of one syllable? Want me to spell it out, or d'you need visual aids?"

Certain specialised marital aids might not go amiss at this moment in time, but perhaps he should save such refinements for a later date and a less indiscreet location. "Yeh, knowing you, I do want it spelled out."

"Eye double-u a n t—"

"Stop pratting about, Doyle."

"I thought you wanted it spelled out? All right, all right," as Bodie paled with temper, "words of one syllable then. Right." He put the golf-bag down, planted his hands on his hips, and as aggressive as hell, declared: "I fancy you. Want to fuck?"

And now that it was on offer, Bodie wasn't quite sure what to do about it. Oh, he knew the whys and wherefores—he had, after all, been a

merc in Africa and an exceptionally pretty young man in the merchant navy and a particularly well-muscled man in the army, and let's not forget the fact that he was about as straight as a kirby grip—but now that Doyle was offering what he was offering, and in such a manner... Well, if all Bodie wanted was a casual encounter, there were dozens of places he could go for that—and get paid for it, if he weren't careful!

"Now what's the bloody matter?" Doyle snapped, more than a little put out: it wasn't exactly every day he offered someone his charms, and it wasn't even once a year that those charms were greeted with such an expression of knotted-brow distaste. "Don't tell me you don't fancy, for I shan't bloody believe you. Not with the way you've been playing tent-poles in your trousers today. So come on, give."

"This is going to sound really stupid."

"And coming from you that *is* going to be a shock." Sarcastic as always, but Doyle lessened the pugnacity of his pose, turned some of the threat of aggression into the promise of pleasure. It was, he conceded, bloody stupid to expect someone to confess passion when you were confronting them as if gelding was your main hobby in life. "Come one, Bodie, we haven't got all day. They'll be at the green soon if we don't get a move on."

Bodie refused to think about Cowley and absolutely refused to even remember that the Minister even existed. "As I said, this is going to sound stupid, but..."

"But?" Doyle said encouragingly, even going so far as to smile matily.

There wasn't a way to say this that wasn't going to make him sound like a complete wally. So he just opened his mouth and let his belly rumble. "I don't want a quick leg-over and then drop it."

"Don't know about you," Doyle whispered conspiratorially, "but I can't drop mine. It's attached."

"Pack it in, Ray, I'm trying to be serious here!"

"Yeh, but you're worse than a wet weekend in Largs! For fuck's sake, Bodie, it's not the future of the entire planet we're talking about. So you don't fancy a casual shag in the back of the motor. What d'you take me for? D'you think I'd risk my career for something I can get any old place and with half the risks of having it off under my boss' nose? With the amount of surveillance that goes on?" His

expression was a masterpiece of disgust, and the way he 'accidentally' bumped into Bodie was a masterpiece of subterfuge and seduction combined. Amazing, really what can be done in plain view when one is picking up a golf-bag, isn't it? Grabbing Bodie by the wrist and dragging him along, all of which was a very convenient excuse to rub his thumb along the racing pulse on the tender inner side of Bodie's wrist, Doyle started them off in pursuit of two now-distant figures who were showing disturbing signs of coming back to get them. An unnerving prospect, to put it mildly.

"So you're not just after a quick fuck?"

"Oh, I want that all right, but I want slow fucks and long fucks and you to suck me and me wanking you off in the bath..."

Bodie wondered if the rotten sod had done it on purpose. The recitation had barely ended when they were in full view of Cowley and the Minister. And it wasn't only the view that was full: Bodie's underwear was in a very similar predicament, one that Bodie knew was all too apparent. Not too many things he could do about that...

"Bodie, is that any way to carry my good jacket?"

"Sorry, sir," he muttered, but smugly, secure in the knowledge that Cowley would have liked the view even less if Bodie had *not* been carrying the tweed jacket clumsily in front of himself like that.

"Daft as a stick today. Sometimes I wonder what I was thinking when I signed you on. Here, let me have that club."

Then Cowley was off putting about with the Minister, and Bodie and Doyle were left to their own devices. Or vices, as the case may be.

"Where were we?" Bodie asked, distracted by the discomfort of being too big for his breeches.

"Wanking you in the bathtub," Doyle said with remarkable aplomb, considering that his breeches weren't faring any better than Bodie's.

"Christ, Doyle!" A deep breath, a wiggle and a wriggle, and while it didn't come close to solving the problem, at least that reinforced seam wasn't digging into him any more. "But d'you mean it? You want more than just a quick fling?"

Doyle had a wonderful joke on the tip of his tongue, but then he noticed the bead of sweat on Bodie's upper lip, and the sternly clenched expression on the face. Oh, well, there'd be other chances to use that punchline. "Course that's what I'm saying. You were the one who wanted us to be

serious, and then there you go, rabbiting on as if all it would be is a quick wank in the bushes. Typical, bloody typical. Listen, I don't know about you, mate, but I don't mess about with someone my life depends on."

"No," Bodie said, a beatific smile wreathing his face. "No, you wouldn't, would you?"

Doyle looked at him askance. "You aren't expecting a ring and me down on one knee, are you?"

"Don't know about you, mate," Bodie imitated him cheerfully, "but I find it's easier if you go down on both knees, less chance of losing your balance that way. And it's so much more reassuring for the bloke whose delicate prick you've got between your jaws."

Doyle grinned back at him, but any comment was forestalled of a very chuffed Minister and a grimly sycophantic Mr. Cowley.

"On to the next hole," Cowley said innocently, preferring not to know what puerile reason his two agents had for turning beetroot and sniggering. He had a fairly good idea, and that was more than enough for him. Especially since joining in wouldn't exactly fit with the image of the dour, canny Scot he was cultivating with the Minister. The things he did for CI5! All that, and losing at golf too. Life, sometimes, was a bitter row to hoe.

This, however, was not what Bodie and Doyle were thinking.

"Interested in sports and games, are you?" Doyle asked with spurious innocence, as if he were simply making idle conversation, for they were still well within earshot of the other two men who were consulting over the score cards. "Golf appeal to you?"

Bodie edged them a bit farther away from their boss. "The only physical activities with balls and men running around scoring that appeal to me, angelfish, can't be done in public." There, he thought, nicely seductive, and that should put Doyle in the hot seat for once.

Doyle, unfortunately, hadn't been made privy to Bodie's plan and therefore not only didn't do as he was supposed to, he turned the whole thing on its head. "Can't be done in public, eh? Says who?"

Horrifying suspicion dawning, Bodie answered: "The laws and the courts and Cowley and the rule books and—"

"Since when have you gone by the book?"
It was all too obvious what Doyle was doing,

and Bodie felt hysterics coming on. "Whenever it makes sense."

"Last time a book made sense to you," Doyle whispered from far too close, "was Lady Chatterly's *Lover.* And I'll bet it's the only time you've ever gone completely by the book in your whole life."

"That's not true!" Bodie spluttered, wounded to the core. "It was my Dad's illustrated volume of Fanny Hill that he kept in the shed on his allot ment. Anyway, that's not what we're talking about. We can't do anything in public, Ray, that's insane."

It had, of course, started as nothing more than a joke, a means to getting a rise—humourous to match the sexual—out of Bodie. But Doyle was perverse in numerous ways, and this Puritan insistence on being so chaste in public was a challenge and a dare. And if Bodie had known the unfortunate Davy Bleckinsop in first form, then Soppy would have told him just how dangerous it was to dare Raymond Doyle. Unfortunately, Soppy was off happily being a crofter in the wilds of Scotland—no, not Glasgow—and so Bodie carried on as if he himself had no idea of how quickly Doyle would dig his heels in the minute he was told he could not, must not, dare not do something. There was no such thing as a pause whilst Doyle weighed the pros and cons. A dare was a dare, and it was Bodie daring him, and what's more, the dare was something he'd always wanted to do.

Bodie: "And Cowley's all over the place with that revolting Minister of his, not to mention other golfers and caddies and groundsmen..."

Doyle was thinking about that also, but not in the danger of being caught, but the thrill of exposure, of being seen, caught in the moment of ecstasy, so vulnerable and truly naked, not merely nude. Oh, yes, something he'd fantasised about for years, ever since he and his pals had wanked each other off in the school sports' equipment shed on a Saturday afternoon. Me and Bodie, he thought hazily, lust happily drowning out the small timid voice of rationality. Doing it out in the open, not fifty yards from Cowley. That'd get the relationship off with a bang.

"What're you giggling about? You haven't been listening to me, have you? For fuck's sake, Doyle, get your brains out of your balls!"

"Scared, Bodie?" Doyle asked coolly.

"Of being caught by Cowley? Of course I'm fucking scared! What d'you think he'd do to us if he—"

"Watch?" Doyle asked languidly, walking slowly over to where Cowley and the Minister were preparing to tee off. They were at the ninth, leading off to the tenth, a long swathe of lush green grass sweeping off into the distance, the bordering stands of trees arching gracefully over it.

"Watch what, Doyle?" Cowley asked, having to come over to Bodie to sort out his golf-clubs yet

"Nothing, sir, nothing at all. What would there be for you to watch, sir?" Bodie covered for him.

Cowley was in no mood to find out why one of his top agents, one who had previously shown such promise, had suddenly taken to babbling inanely. "Never mind," he said. "I'll find out from Doyle later. Minister, I believe you tee off first at this hole."

The Minister smarmed his way over, and Bodie bore down on Doyle like an avenging angel. "What the fuck are you doing—apart from trying to lose us our jobs?"

"Don't be such a sissy, Bodie," Doyle said dismissively, knowing precisely which buttons to press to distract Bodie just long enough for them to have gone beyond the point of no return. A point which was, in Doyle's opinion, only about twenty feet away. That was where the trees began, those wonderful big trees with thick trunks. Trees that were on slightly uneven ground that sloped downwards just enough to hide them from sight, if they got it right. And if no one sliced their ball right here the way the Minister had thirty yards ahead. Doyle could see Cowley and the Minister thrashing the rough to shreds, looking for the Minister's ball.

"Just goes to show you how worked up you've got me," Doyle said, taking Bodie by the wrist and leading him off into the copse. "There's the Cow in the grass and the Minister having trouble with a bit of rough, and I'm not even going to bother making a comment." He had come to a suitably large tree, one surrounded by relatively dense undergrowth and best of all, one that had a trunk wide enough to hide a multitude of sins. Although Doyle thought they'd only have time for the one sin today. "Got other things on my mind," he whispered, taking the jacket from Bodie's hands, "haven't I?"

Bodie swallowed, hard, and opened his mouth to protest, to say they couldn't possibly do this, this was totally loony, it wasn't even comfortable. And then Doyle kissed him. Which put paid to all rational thought. He'd been on heat for too long today to simply shrug off the tactile contact, even a stranger would have been grabbed voraciously, but this was Doyle, who was doing a bit of voracious grabbing himself. Bodie reached down to the bum that had been the apple—or should that be apples?—in his Eden all day long and smoothed his hands over the lean arcs, fingertips finding the dampness where Doyle had landed so ignobly but so satisfyingly on the wet grass.

Doyle pushed his hips forward, canting them until he was plastered to Bodie, and could feel every detail of Bodie's body. Naturally, the fabric was a real nuisance, and Doyle scrabbled at it, fumbling with Bodie's trousers and underwear until the best bits had been exposed. He filled his hands with Bodie's cock and balls, and felt the leap of arousal under his hands. "You going to just stand there?" he demanded, light fingers playing with Bodie's balls, strong hand stroking Bodie's prick. "Get these fucking jeans out of the way. I want you to touch me, come on, Bodie, hurry!"

Bodie, for once in his life, did precisely as he was told. He hurried and then he touched Doyle, hot heat in his hands, hot tongue in his mouth, hot hands on his own cock. Enough heat, in fact, that he didn't notice the decidedly cooler breeze around his exposed assets. He was consumed by and consuming Doyle, completely forgetful of the delicacy of their situation, of the risk of being caught, seen by strangers.

Doyle hadn't forgotten, not at all. In fact, even as he kissed Bodie to within an inch of their lives, he was listening, listening, for the sounds of footsteps or voices, for encroaching danger, for the added high of discovery. His lips encountered a particularly appealing morsel of Bodie's neck and he fastened his teeth to it, biting and sucking, vampirically feasting on him. He let go of Bodie's cock, and stifled the moan of frustration by pressing his groin against Bodie's, Bodie's hands trapped between them, so that every move of Bodie's hands on Doyle's cock was as if Bodie were wanking himself as well. Doyle was trying to get his hand in Bodie's pocket, which Bodie wondered about fuzzily, but then Doyle's mouth fastened on his earlobe, and a tongue slid inside, and then there were kisses all down his neck, and Bodie basically gave up thinking as a useless pastime.

"Got it," Doyle announced breathlessly.

As neither of the hands on either of their cocks belonged to Doyle, Bodie begged to differ. Until he saw what it was Doyle was laying claim to. And laying suddenly became a very important and pertinent verb indeed.

"Sun-tan lotion?" he said, trying not to sound too hopeful.

"It's wet and it's slippery and it's the best we can get our hands on," Doyle answered, filling his cupped palm with the lotion and slathering it on Bodie's cock. "You're going to fuck me," he said. "Right here, up against this tree."

"What if someone sees us?"

Doyle kissed him deeply, his hands working magic down below. "Then you'll have to make sure you make it hard and fast then, won't you?" Another kiss, and then he was turning, his jeans lowered just enough to expose his arse, shirt tucked up under his armpits. Eyes half-closed in his arousal, he watched Bodie near him. "We can do each other slow and easy later. But I want you, Bodie, and I'm not going to wait. C'mon, Bodie, fuck me, get it up me—"

His voice melted into a groan as Bodie began the slow push inside him. There was no pain, Doyle too experienced for that, only an exquisite pleasure that spread from his arse to every inch of his body. His back was bowed as a saddle, a concave hollowed out by pleasure of having Bodie inside him and he leaned forward to give Bodie a better angle—and discovered one of the 'joys' of sex in the great outdoors that no-one ever mentions. Tree bark scrapes worse than five o'clock stubble, especially when it was a man's tender cock meeting the bark. Doyle didn't quite bark, he more howled, but it was enough to register with Bodie. "Here," he said, shoving something at Doyle. "Put that between you and the tree. Nice and thick, take care of it for you."

It was nice and thick and it was taking care of things for him—the jacket was helpful, too. But it was Bodie Doyle was concentrating on, Bodie inside him, Bodie's hand up inside his shirt, twisting his nipples, Bodie's hand down low on his belly, stroking his cock. A thrust inward, and Bodie pressed down on the base of Ray's cock, so that Doyle's belly was compressed by the hardness of his own cock without and the hardness of Bodie's cock from within. Deep in his arse, the heat from Bodie's cock spread up Doyle's spine, exploding in his brain.

Doyle's curls were a real nuisance, getting in Bodie's mouth, an unwelcome distraction, so he buried his face against Doyle's shoulder, mouth open and tasting skin. The pressure was building in his balls, and his cock was purest pleasure, a focus for all the good feelings in his world. He was close, and wrapped his arms around Doyle's waist, anchoring his friend as he fucked him, hard enough that Doyle was up on his toes every time Bodie buried himself in Doyle's arse. Against his forearm, he could feel the occasional brush of Doyle's hand as Doyle blurred caresses onto his cock. It was heaven, pure, unadulterated Heaven.

And then they were cast out, by the sound of a muffled but still obviously irate Scottish voice.

"Christ!" Bodie groaned fervently, torn between the necessity of stopping and the driving need to go on.

"Cowley!" Doyle corrected, pushing back, taking Bodie all the way inside himself again. "C'mon, fuck me, do it, Bodie, fast, fast, before Cowley finds us, come on, oh, yeh, that's it..."

He couldn't help himself, Doyle made him do it, by the simple act of sheathing Bodie in lush flesh. He thrust, hard, fast, and all the while, he could hear Cowley coming closer. But closer still was the stifled cries of his friend, Doyle fucking them both, inflamed by the joy of Bodie inside him and the excitement of Cowley threatening them with exposure. Faster, Bodie thrust, in a race to see who would come first: themor Cowley. Bodie fucked the clinging arse, until Doyle came with an aching groan, his spasming arse milking Bodie into tumultuous orgasm.

Cowley's voice, too close, too near, barely time to catch their breath, the aftereffects of sex still rippling through them, their hands shaking and trembling as trousers were pulled up, zips were re-zipped and shirts were tucked neatly away along with spent and limp cocks. Nothing to give them away, but flushed cheeks and a seeping dampness inside Doyle's jeans.

That, and a drying stain on the jacket Doyle had used. He looked at it in sheer disbelief. "Cowley's?" he squeaked. "You gave me *Cowley's* jacket? Fucking hell, Bodie, I thought it was yours!"

Dumbstruck, Bodie stared at the jacket in abject

horror. He had been beyond thinking, and Doyle hadn't even opened his eyes when the jacket had been shoved at him. Not the sort of excuse he fancied giving to his boss to explain how they'd managed to ruin his jacket with cum of all things.

And Cowley was coming closer and they were standing there with that self-same cum-stained jacket. They looked at each other in horror for a long moment that wasn't long enough, for now Cowley was only a tree away. Quickly, Bodie dropped the jacket and stood on it, grinding it into the undersoil, hoping to hell that it was the stained spot that was getting covered in concealing grime.

A second later, and Cowley came round the tree in time to see, not his two agents fucking themselves brainless, but Doyle looking detached and sullen, his mouth swollen and his face flushed as if he and Bodie had had a scuffle. And Bodie was standing there looking relieved and smug and just as flushed, which meant there had, indeed, been a scuffle and Bodie had won. It was then that Cowley saw what was in Bodie's hand, and saw the very large stain on the silk lining of his best jacket.

"BODIE!" he roared.

"Yes, sir?" Bodie answered with the sort of bland innocence that always raised Cowley's suspicions.

"What have you done to my jacket? And while we're on the subject," Cowley asked none too sweetly, golf-club held rather threateningly in hand, "where exactly is my golf-bag?"

Good question, that, and Bodie had some vague memory of abandoning the hideously expensive pair of golf-bags at the same time as he had abandoned all his common sense and inhibitions.

"Well?" Cowley snapped, literally hot under the collar.

In unconscious, sympathetic reaction, Bodie lifted his hand to own collar with well-loved neck below, and remembered at least part of what Doyle had done to him.

"Answer the question, Bodie!" Cowley barked. And that, for all who wish to know, explains why, with Doyle sniggering in the background, Bodie was left to contemplate that Cowley's *bark* truly was worse than Doyle's *bite*.