

# C I V I L S E R V A N T S

*The Professionals* and *Wiseguy* back to back. Both feature hot sex and slightly bitter endings, and both deal with the problem of trying to deny your sexuality and who you are. In 'Back Alley', Doyle's a bit ahead in coming to terms with what is happening to him and Bodie, while in 'Just a Kiss' it's Frank who both reads and misreads the situation.

ADRENALIN SURGE, fear pounding through their veins, rush of life at the sheer exhilaration of survival. Doyle was stalking in front of Bodie, bootheels staccato click-click-clicking, back rigid and taut with strain, left hand clenched into a fist at his side, pocket of light gleaming briefly on it as he walked past the back window of some anonymous pub or other. Bodie held his breath for a moment as Doyle paused, a hesitation for thought, and for a dreadful minute Bodie thought Doyle was going to opt for booze, was going to drag them in there, amongst people, back to civilisation whilst he was still so high on the surviving that he could hardly keep himself from baring his teeth in a predatory smile and howling his victory for all to hear. They were *alive!* Made it through another night, magic kissed, all the bullets flying past them, knives blunted when it came to their skin. Alive. Him and Doyle, Doyle and him, link forged stronger with every time they came through a firefight like that. But Doyle was still standing outside the back door of the pub, head cocked, listening to the noisy signs of life and frivolity from inside, as if the idea was appeasing the exultation of fear conquered that was still turning Bodie's bones to jelly.

Bodie couldn't take it, not tonight. Couldn't handle the jollity of strangers, the empty smiles, the stupidity that made them feel so fucking secure in this green and pleasant land, secure in their fatuous ignorance, blissfully unaware that not two streets away, three men had been killed and a cache of high explosives whisked out from under the noses of terrorists. And none of the morons in that pub would have the least clue of the animal within, if he were to go in there. None of them would see the danger that was still singing through him, making him more alive than those fools would ever be. No, he couldn't take it if Doyle went in there. Have to leave him alone, have to leave him, back unguarded, and how could he do that after tonight? They were a team, a pair, couldn't walk away from Doyle now. But he couldn't stay with him either, not if he were going into that pub. Not if he were going to play pleasant little civil servant with some bored chit of a girl, chatting her up, buttering her up, the slow and uncertain ascent into her bed. But he'd be expecting Bodie to come in with him, sit beside him, would give him a wink and a smile, nodding at Bodie's girl, no doubt best friend of the one Doyle'd picked for himself.

It had its lure, Doyle picking a girl out for him, Doyle

## BACK ALLEY

L. A. SCOTIAN

selecting his partner for him, but it wasn't enough, tonight, to have Doyle's hand so vicariously on his sexuality. Wasn't enough to have a wink and a smile.

Wasn't enough to have a girl, for that matter. Christ, but he'd explode if he had to sit through the usual courtship crap, would burst with adrenalin and the need to move, to fuck, to do it now, and rough, and hard. Needed it, needed it right now, not in half an hour or two hours, not after all this time of watching Doyle in action, right up to the second when they would split up, each to disappear off to shag his bird, a knowing and intimate smile lingering between them, the unspoken promise to share every salacious detail in the morning.

Morning. He wouldn't make it to morning if he didn't move this very second, if he didn't fuck his brains out right now. Swallowing hard, he clenched his fists into the pockets of his leather jacket to keep from clenching those hungry hands into fistfuls of Doyle's hair as he held Ray's head and fucked his mouth. He stared at the lush hair, at the half-averted profile, thinking about that mouth, thinking of Doyle, of the sex that coiled between them, day after day, just waiting, always waiting. Whilst Doyle stood here in a dirty back alley, pondering god alone knew what. If Doyle went into that pub, Bodie knew he'd have to simply walk away and find a way to ignore the cord that chained them together. Christ, Doyle had almost died tonight, getting in the way of that maniac with the knife. The punch of adrenalin hit him right in the groin, making sure that there wasn't a chance in hell that his hard-on would subside, that the sexual heat would abate to mere flicker. Doyle had almost died for him tonight. A few more inches, and that knife would have been in his throat, not creasing the top of his shoulder.

Bodie could suddenly taste the blood. It would be seeping under the leather jacket, sticking to the softness of cotton t-shirt, staining the skin, flowing down into the hollow of Doyle's collarbone, tangling in chest hair...

He had almost died tonight. The blood was

there, the way Bodie had imagined it, seeping from a pain that was wondrous sweet, for it meant he was alive to fight another day. He flexed his shoulder, grinning at the flare of pain, free hand rubbing at his crotch, every move of his hand tugging on the small throbbing spot where the knife had kissed him and left its bite behind. Not enough to even bother with an elastoplast, the kind of wound that healed best when left unmolested and unhindered. The kind of wound that simply made him light-headed with relief. He had actually thought that knife had had his name on it, and had seen that horrible fear-driven knowledge in Bodie's eyes too. And that, he recognised, was what had given him the push, the sudden burst of energy to move, incredibly quickly, get out of there, away, down, out of range of the knife, hear it whisper seductively in his ear as it came down to fuck its way into him.

But he could think of other things he wanted to fuck him. Such as a lovely long, thick hard cock. Or fingers, three or four of them, stabbing into him, fucking him while a cock fucked his mouth and his own cock fucked a mouth, all of it hard, all of it primal male, all of it shouting to the Universe that he was still fucking alive, that the bastards hadn't got him this time. This time. Sobering thought that, as he'd stood looking into the back hall of the pub, staring at boxes of crisps and empty crates, but not so half as sobering as the realisation that he would do the same thing again, even if he knew next time round that the bastards were going to get him. He'd do it, if it meant Bodie getting out of there. If it meant not having to stare down at Bodie's corpse, at blue eyes gone fish-belly dead, at mouth gone slack with the last breath's soughing. How was he supposed to realise that, to finally see that the day he had dreaded had actually dawned and then just smile a casual goodnight and drop Bodie off at his own flat? At least if they went into the pub, if they picked up birds together, then they could stay together another hour or two, close, maybe even touching, if space was tight around the pub table and the girls were the friendly sort.

But he didn't want the softness and

pleasantness of a woman tonight. He wanted fucking. He wanted it up his arse, wanted semen erupting into his body, wanted all that masculinity and manhood becoming part of him, wanted the hardness of cock up him in celebration of surviving even the slide of the knife. And, he turned his head slightly to see the man he knew now that he would die for, he wanted that cock to be Bodie's. Wanted it to be Bodie to replenish him with spunk, with the essence of maleness. Wanted it to be Bodie to fill him up and take away the hollow hunger of adrenalin and fear.

And if Doyle didn't move, Bodie was going to either run as if all the hounds of hell were at his feet, or fuck the poor bastard up against the nearest wall. As if the thought had been heard, Doyle looked over his shoulder, eyes glinting brightly fierce in the light from the pub. But he said not a word.

Not that they ever did. Not in the feverish afterglow of a dangerous job, not in the heat of devouring passion. Yet the wildness was still there, turning and twisting, flickering in his glance, burning Bodie as it passed over him, peeling clothing and armour away in a fell swoop. And abruptly, it wasn't god who knew what Doyle had been pondering, but Bodie.

Sex.

The next step between them, the hunger fed, the need met, the sweet aching of their bodies sheathed in one another. It was there, all over Doyle's face, in his eyes, in the painful bulge of his jeans. Words stoppered in his throat by the flashflood of lust, Bodie moved to Doyle, grabbing him by the arm as he passed, never slowing his steps for a second. They both knew where they were supposed to be going, to borrow Cowley's car to get home in, but now they both knew what they were actually going to do: go to just one flat, to just one bed.

Sex.

They were going to fuck, and the knowledge flowed between them without need for word, the undulating desire alive between them as tacitly and perfectly as the unison in which they worked. Shoulder to shoulder, hip to hip, they walked on into the darkness of the

alley, to the spot Cowley had claimed to have left his car. Bodie thanked everything under the sun that Cowley had picked tonight to be magnanimous, to offer his car to replace the shot-up Capri, whilst the Old Man himself went back with the one surviving prisoner. Footsteps crunching the crumbled edges of tarmac, they hurried, the hardness at their groins hastening their movements. Bodie's cock was chafed by even the softness of his underwear, and he could barely think of anything but how much more sweetly Doyle's arse would rub at him, when he was buried in him. Or how much more sweetly, with more unconfessed, insidious pleasure, Doyle's cock would rub at his own arse, when Doyle was inside him. Tonight, thankfully, and with a sigh of relief, he didn't give a shit who was going to end up on top, no need for the usual wrestling match to see who it would be. He could survive either way, as long as it was with Doyle, as long as it was Doyle's tits on his, body on his, cock on his. That was all he needed. Doyle. To hear him, feel him, drink him in, make them part of each other. Alive. Both of them, alive and whole and—together. That made him frown, as it always did. It wasn't right, somehow, to be this...needy of Doyle, to feel this achingly hot tenderness inside for his partner: for this man. Doyle stumbled against him, or simply leaned in a bit closer, so that the lithe thigh muscle caressed his, making his breath catch in his throat and the snub head of his cock push his foreskin all the way back. Mouth dry, from lust, from adrenalin, from— He wasn't sure that he wanted to know what it was. Knew that he didn't want to know what it was. Forgot it, all of it, everything in the real world, everything in his job, his life, his philosophy, when he saw that distantly red gleam of Rover, tucked away almost completely out of sight. Christ, but he was going to fuck Doyle in there! On Cowley's seats, where the Old Man had been sitting not two hours before. That was where he was going to lie with Doyle, and let all this life flood from them. Alive. He turned to look at Ray, catching sight of the subtle move of cock on thigh and the whetting of lips as parched as his own.

He could feel his heat, the susurrant rub of denimed thigh against denimed thigh, the more liquid sound of his own jeans where they slid against Bodie's bone-coloured cords. Even licking his lips didn't moisten them enough, the skin feeling as if it would splinter and crack. But once Bodie started—

Shit. Bodie would never kiss him. Kissing was the last bastion of being straight, the one thing that marked the difference between queers having sex with each other and two straight men having it off for mutual convenience. Anyway, kissing wasn't the kind of thing they did, not really. Leastways, not until they were both well-gone and too high to think about anything other than their bodies and the keening lust in them. But the car was there, only a few yards from them, and the keys were in his hand, jangling nervously loud as he shoved them into the lock, wicked grin inviting Bodie's as he looked over his shoulder at his partner looking at him shoving a long hard object into a tight-fitting hole. He would have made a witty comment, but his brains were in his balls and the closest attempt he could make at a witticism sounded suspiciously like begging. A quick look around the alley, and he knew that there was no-one who would see them, were no back windows facing them, no doors for someone to stroll out of, and not a light in sight. Safer than some of the places where CI5 agents had been known to vent their sexual frustration. The door unlocked, he pulled the back one open, stopping for a moment to look at Bodie, to make sure that his tacit message had been received and understood.

He wanted Bodie to fuck him. Didn't want it the other way, didn't want all that power under him, he wanted it in him, filling him up, taking away the disharmonious chill of having almost—so fucking close: he could still smell the steel of the knife mingling with the rust of his own blood—died tonight.

For Bodie. Whose hands were on him, cupping his rump, fingertips roving over him, whole hand large and strong and ungentle as they pushed him into the car. With his usual grace, he turned himself, lying on the back seat, legs pulled up awkwardly, fingers fumbling in his haste to get his clothes off.

Jacket slipping to the floor, where it tangled with Bodie's and Bodie caught at them both, Doyle staring whilst those hands that had been so firm on him scrabbled in the inside pocket for the expected tube of lip balm. He grinned up at Bodie then, his own hands not slowing as he pushed impedimenta out of the way, clothing unbuttoned and unzipped, showing his skin dim in the faint light, eyes and teeth bright with his lust. A devil of wicked delight flourished in him, whispering again that this was the man he had been willing to die for.

And then it was back, with a frissoning thrill of fear and excitement—this, here and now, hovering over him with such serious eyes, was the man he had been willing to live for. The distinction seemed important, but for later, when thought would have its time and place. But for the moment all that mattered was Bodie and the intoxicating desire and elation that was flooding his veins. Flat on his back, shirt lying wide open, one shoulder bared, reflected city light from the overcast sky kissing the elegance of his collarbone and dancing in the hair on his chest, he taunted Bodie. Spitting into his palm, he stroked the wet flatness over the dry heat of Bodie's cock, the dampness of his palm limning every vein and every corpuscle all the way up to the corona, where the moistness made by his mouth mingled with the moistness made by his prick. Slowly, fingers teasing himself as much as Bodie, he dappled in the wetness, bringing the salty slickness to his mouth, to where the tip of his tongue could capture it as surely as his body had captured Bodie. Exultant, he threw his head back to laugh, but the sound died into a sobbing moan as Bodie descended on him, broad shoulders blocking out the light, the thrum of his heart drowning out the minute noises of the outside world that trespassed into the car.

He wanted to suck him inside, until his bones were hollow straws. Hands steady, mind reeling, he pushed aside the clinging fabric, unnoticed of how Doyle winced as dried blood pulled free, setting new droplets rolling, slowly, like tears, down the arch of

bone and the curve of chest. Not looking at Doyle, Bodie lowered himself, until his cock was pressed against the demanding surge of Doyle's and his mouth was open, tongue laving with voracious tenderness at the claret drops. It was frightening, to be so fiercely aroused by the taste of Ray's blood, this saline thickness more exciting than the forbidden sweetness of cum. For this, surely, was more taboo still, with its baggage of Transylvanian terrors and white-skinned Baronesses who had fed upon the blood of young virgins.

Because it had nothing to do with eternal youth for him. Oh, no, this was the sexual thrill of his partner's life, spilled for him, wounded for him, seeping from the flawless skin to be consumed in lust and—

Suddenly harsh, he pulled his mouth away from Doyle's wounded flesh, moving to crouch between his legs, back bent under the lowness of the car ceiling, bodies cramped together, his own clothes as dark as the shadows at Doyle's groin. His cock echoed Doyle's, seeping and aching, balls drawn up tight, filled with the resurgent roar of need. Roughly, he tugged at denim he had never thought could ever be too tight, until now, when he wanted it out of the way, to reveal Ray to him, to make his partner vulnerably naked. But finally the jeans were off and Ray lay there, so very, very close to him, too close for him to see him clearly, only a dizzying impression now of pallid skin and brown hair, pink cock slowly reddening with lust, he found his control slipping, skittering from him as common sense had. Hands fumblingly shaky, he found the small tube of lip balm, his own lips peeling back from his teeth in feral mockery of his usual smile: funny, wasn't it, how one of them always managed to have something just like this in his pocket the day they had to go into one of Cowley's little cock-ups? Sometimes it was this, occasionally it was even a carefully unexplained and unquestioned tub of cream, the unobtrusive smallness tucked into the glove compartment, or lying ever so casually in a bedside drawer. But they always had something to make the fucking easier, to aid and abet the sliding thrust of cock into arse, or cock against cock, when they were both so

wild that spit didn't keep them wet for long enough. Curling his body over under the confines of the car roof, he shoved his left knee between Ray's, his right leg braced stiffly immobile between the back seat and the driver's seat, his strength holding them steady. His fingers were slippery now, snaking inside Doyle, the enraptured face going wilder with every twist of the screw, those fingers scissoring and turning this way and that, loosening a mouth of muscle that was already eager. The pink hole became a maw, Doyle's face staring at him with the fixed glare of extreme passion, breath panting so loudly that Bodie could even hear it over his own. And the words—those, of course, were silent. Never spoken, never uttered, never brought out to face the light of day, no matter when they did this, no matter where. That face wanted more, the arse impaled on his stiff fingers demanded more, slim hips gyrating to suck him in deeper, his knuckles digging into the tautly hollowed muscles of Doyle's rump. He was going to have Doyle, lay claim to him, brand him with his invisible mark there, deep in his soul where no-one would ever see it, but he'd know.

They'd both know. Both, and the thought ambushed him as the groan fled lushly from Doyle even as Bodie's fingers abandoned his arse, the pink vulnerability sucking at him with blind desperation. But Doyle wasn't blind, those green eyes watching him with terrifying knowledge as if Doyle could see all the way into the darkest corner of his being. The secret stirred, redolent as a beast, and Bodie stared at Doyle, locking them gaze to gaze, hand to hand as he gripped the strong hands in his own, and then, finally—

He was thrusting inside him, no long slow penetration, not for the two of them, it was never like that. Eyes widened as he refused to let Bodie go, rejecting his body's urge to close in on itself and miser the ecstasy away in the secret pleasure places, he stared up at blue eyes gone dark with passion as Bodie plundered his body. He wanted to watch this, wanted to see the moment as well as feel it.

He wanted, quite terrifyingly, to *know* Bodie. To see him, and not just like this, face twisted

with some inner pain even as the pleasure rifled through them both. He shifted a little on the pliant leather of the car seat, bracing himself more securely, letting go of Bodie's hands to cajole the other man in closer, nearer, breath for breath, heartbeat for heartbeat, whilst their pulses shouted in harmony and their bodies moved in unison, Bodie thrusting into him so hard, so wonderfully fucking hard, tearing into him, sundering him, until it was their union that reforged him. He heard them both moaning, throaty, animal noises, mingling with the wet slap of balls hitting his arse and clinging, briefly, caressingly, to his own sweat-damped skin. Above him, Bodie's eyes were tightly closed, shutting his partner off from him, separating them into two separate entities who just happened to be using each other's bodies.

And he wanted more than that. He was nothing but a tangle of pleasure and a haze of undefined need, but he knew he wanted more than Bodie turning away from him to listen to nothing but self-pleasure. His right hand rose, slowly, counterpoint to the rhythmic beating of cock up his arse, then his fingers closed on the curve of shoulder, touching the fineness of skin with a caress that was always taboo. Until they got his far. Until their bodies overruled their minds, and their fears, and it was nothing but the two of them in the entire Universe. His hand cupped Bodie's cheek, thumb brushing the corner of Bodie's mouth, there, where the lips were parted and the tip of Bodie's tongue could be seen. And touched. But he didn't linger, his hand moving round, pulling Bodie down, lower, lower, only a few inches, but for them, an eternity of distance. Eyes still wide open, all the green leeched by the dimness of light, until they were as silver as a mirror for Bodie to see himself in, he watched and watched, until Bodie finally looked at him, actually looked at him, and all the walls were down, all the barricades thrown aside and nothing left but the man himself.

And what he saw took Doyle's breath away.

But then Bodie was kissing him, driving recognition out of his mind and filling him instead with the devouring hunger that was Bodie's mouth, Bodie's tongue, his partner

filling him, tongue fucking his mouth as cock fucked his arse. He locked his arms round Bodie's shoulders, hauling him in tight, his arse clutching Bodie close, body milking him, his own cock rubbing hard, hard, along the sweetly rough line of belly hair that pressed down into him with every thrust of Bodie's hips. And he was drinking Bodie in, drowning in the sweetness of him, consuming him, absorbing all that life and love and sheer perfection. Cum was pooling in his balls, heat spreading, and Bodie was fucking him faster and deeper, until a moment strung itself out to impossible length, exquisite pleasure, and he was cumming and cumming, his keening cries sucked in by Bodie's mouth, Bodie's back sweat-slicked under his clawing hands, Bodie's cock fucking life into him, the sudden satin of cum filling his arse, Bodie sliding in and out of him so sweetly, and he could feel all that life in him, celebrating his survival, replenishing what he had almost lost.

And then it was over. Bodie's mouth left his, Bodie turning his face away, slowly easing his softening cock out of Doyle's body with a noise that was embarrassing for all the intimacy they had just had. The cooling stickiness trapped on their bellies was nothing compared to the cooling, sticky awkwardness of the atmosphere between them. Not quite looking at Bodie—not daring, in case he read the censure there, in case he read the unwilling knowledge there—Doyle sat up in the space beside Bodie, digging his jacket out from under his partner's, keeping his face averted whilst he used his hanky to mop up the seeping evidence of their insanity. In Cowley's car, Christ! He couldn't actually believe that they had been that far off their rockers, that they couldn't even have waited until they got to one of their flats—but the nearest was Bodie's and that forty-five minutes away at that. If they'd tried to get that far, they'd have ended up with Cowley's big Rover wrapped round the nearest lamppost. But to have done it in the Cow's car—Christ, he thought to himself, Ross would have a field day with that one! And Cowley would have them out on their ears so quick, their heads would be spinning. He couldn't get over how incredibly stupid they'd been. After all, this wasn't a

quick shag in some dark corner, rubbing hard and fierce and feral against each other till they came, still with trousers chastely zipped, half the time.

Except—they hadn't done it like that in months. Oh, that was how it used to be, right back at the beginning, when they had first discovered that the adrenalin rush took them both in exactly the same way, sitting in a small dark room together, hiding out for god knew how much longer, and the fear and the thrill making them both so hard. God, he could still remember hearing it, the almost-silent sound of Bodie's hand rubbing across those cords of his, and his own eruption of desire at the image that had come with the sound. Thoughtless, that night, pure survival instinct, the urge towards sex. Nothing more than a furtive wanking, side by side, never touching, but listening to each other, the sounds of their breathing, the rub of hand on prick, so attuned that he would have sworn blind he had heard Bodie's cum splash on the floor.

Cleaned up by now, he struggled his clothes back on, squirming around until he was decent once more, grateful for Bodie's silence, unwilling to even attempt conversation after tonight. Beside him, Bodie was moving, getting out of the car, going round to the driver's side, getting back in without so much as a glance at Doyle. Careful but quick, Doyle checked the back seat for anything that Cowley might find and use to hang them with, but most of the damage seemed to have been done to the tail of his own shirt, a damp patch clinging stickily to him. Yet better than than Cowley so much as suspecting them.

Fuck it, they could be tossed so far they'd bounce for what they'd just done! Never mind the fact that they weren't queer or anything: HM's Government would brand you as a shirt-lifter or a nancy boy for so much as looking at another bloke for too long. Unless you were both from the right public school, of course. A quick look at the back of Bodie's head, and he was scared by the pang of tenderness that undermined him at the sight of Bodie's hair curled by sweat and rumpled by his hands.

Not something he wanted to think about.

Not something that was safe for him to think about: too many times of Bodie telling him what he thought of queers. Too many times of sitting there in the cold light of morning coffee in CI5's rest-room while Bodie explained, carefully loud, to Murphy, just how common it was for men like themselves to fuck anything that was still alive after the combat was over. Rape, he'd explained, was the norm after any battle, but sometimes a man was lucky enough to find someone as desperate for the nearest convenient hole as he was. No, best not to think about kissing Bodie.

He got out, settling himself back down in the passenger seat, saying nothing, offering nothing, revealing nothing to this man he had just let fuck him. But it was only fucking, he reminded himself, as Bodie drove off with enviable calm. Blokes do that kind of thing all the time, he reassured himself, giving himself a quick mental run-down of the percentage of perfectly normal men who'd shag another bloke when there were no women available: prison, the navy, merchant navy, oil-rigs... All right, he conceded, eyes drawn unwillingly to the smoothly white hands that clenched the steering wheel with such strength, with the strength that had clutched him, lifting him up in the throes of orgasm to be hugged so tightly his ribs ached. But that was to be expected, really, given the kind of situation they'd been in tonight. He'd nearly forgotten that. He'd almost died tonight, for Bodie. Worse, though, he'd wanted to live for him, wanted not to hurt Bodie by dying in front of him...

Maryjesusandjoseph, what the fuck were they getting into?

He knew, inside, where his heart was beating too quickly, the beats skipping with fear worse than that kiss of the knife. *That* was the easy kiss to cope with. But the other, and the hunger and the need and the—

With frantic fear, he turned the thought off, ignoring it, kicking at it until it retreated so far into the back of his mind, he could actually pretend he'd never even thought it at all. Christ, it wouldn't be rabid terrorists he had to worry about, not if it ever came out what he'd almost been willing to admit! Bodie would be after him with the nearest hatchet,

and not even being best mates would save him. Not if Bodie suspected him of being queer. Bi, he amended, thinking about the women in his life, but Bodie wasn't the sort to make that kind of distinction. Funny, in a sick kind of way, that he had to pick as his first bloke, a man who would knock him into next week if he tried to get it to go beyond a friendly fuck. But he couldn't think about that, couldn't, in case it showed. He always had to be that bit careful, keep that bit of distance between them. Easy enough done, in some ways, especially if he'd met a nice girl, but when they were actually fucking, him and Bodie, christ, but it was only a matter of time before it all came out. He'd better start being a bit more careful, a bit more circumspect. But still, he was drawn, again and again, to stare at Bodie, as if to commit to memory the features of the man he'd wanted to live for.

And if Doyle didn't stop looking at him with cow's eyes—he stifled a snigger of pure hysteria at that unintentional pun—at him, he'd punch the stupid sod and blacken both eyes fucking shut. Christ, you'd think they were on their sodding honeymoon, stupid little prick. Typical, that. Have a bit of a fuck, just to let the adrenalin and the fear-lust out of your system, and the stupid prick was going ga-ga and gushy on him. Not that Doyle had actually said anything, of course, but the expressions spoke volumes. Probably, Bodie conceded, a hell of a lot more than Doyle would ever want shown. Best to just pretend that he hadn't noticed, let Doyle work it out of his system. Once that horrible second where the knife had looked like a dead cert was nothing more than a vaguely remembered routine oppo, then Doyle would be back to his usual caustic self. But shit, the dozy bastard looked as if he were head over heels in love...

Probably why Doyle always kissed him. Nah, he rejected the idea, no way on God's green earth was Doyle a pansy. Too tough by half, not a limp wrist on him. Just the heat of the moment, and no women available.

That, of course, ignored the minor detail of the pub they'd stood behind, and the raucous female laughter they'd both heard. But it was

different with women, he consoled himself. Wasn't fair to expect them to understand. And they took longer to be ready for it at the best of times, so what were the poor girls supposed to do when the man they were with had his balls in knots and didn't give a shit for anything but coming as quickly as he could.

So why had he licked Doyle's blood up then, instead of just squirting some gel inside him and then getting on with the serious fucking?

And why had he been so desperate to claim Doyle, wanting to make Doyle belong to him? Well, that was easy enough explained, wasn't it? Best mate—no denying that, best mate he'd had, up to and including his SAS teammates—best partner, almost killed right in front of his eyes, and if you added to that the fact that Doyle had actually deliberately *put* himself in the way of that knife to protect Bodie, well, stood to reason that a man—any man, surely—would need to make some kind of claim to him. That was it, he decided, comfortable once more. Definitely heat of the moment, and if he'd been a Viking, he'd've have raped and pillaged. Suddenly, he re-heard it, in Doyle's voice and with Doyle's knowing look and with Marty's simpering snigger: Rape all the men and pillage all the women.

Why the fuck had he let Doyle kiss him? Kiss him *again*, that part of him who could remember the way Marty had grinned at them, 'all us boys together'. Again, that same small voice demanded insistently, remembering that day in the mixed pub, rough trade mixed in with the queers who liked it butch as hell, 'bent', that punter had called them. Bent. Couldn't be. Not them. But then he thought about Doyle kissing him, bringing him down until their mouths touched, until Ray's tongue was against his, until that subversive warmth bled through him, imbuing the whole thing with more emotion than he'd ever given anyone else. He tried, for a minute, to remember his girl back in Africa, the one he'd been willing to kill Krivas for and/or risk his job in CI5. He shouldn't have done that. He remembered her, every last detail, from the way she smiled, to the way she kissed, to the way he felt when he was inside her,

kissing. Christ, boy that he'd been, he'd called that love. So what the fuck did that make what he felt for Doyle?

There was no way he was going to answer that one.

Best mates, he repeated to himself, a talisman, a charm to ward off evil. He wasn't queer. Couldn't be. He'd had too many women, for starters, liked to many of them, loved more than one. But not like Doyle. That, he told himself, was different. He needed Doyle to survive, needed him—

Needed him enough to fuck him in public, and to think it was a good idea to use Cowley's car. He squirmed in his seat, aware out of the corner of his eye that Doyle was just as uncomfortable—but he had more reason to be, mind. The way he'd ploughed into him, never done it quite as hard before. Should check to make sure Doyle was all right. Not that there was much chance that he would be, not when he considered that he himself felt like one big bundle of strained muscles and bruises. He swore blind that there was a bruise across his shoulder—must've hit himself against the front seat at some point. So poor Doyle must be dying a death over there. Take him home then, give him a couple of cans of lager, hot bath, rub down with embrocation, that should do the trick.

Yes, but what about after? Or what about during? Did he honestly think it would be just exactly the same thing he'd offer Murphy after a rough oppo? Massaging that long back, that rounded rump, probably bearing the marks of their lovemaking—

He jerked the steering wheel viciously, cutting down a side street, changing direction, no longer going home, but racing to Doyle's place. It wasn't lovemaking. Hadn't been lovemaking. Would not let it be lovemaking. They weren't like that, not them. Men who made love to other men were fairies and pansies and queers and ginger beers and anything but CI5 agents who worked in what was so delicately referred to as 'other government agencies'. No queers in HM's 'other agencies', oh, no, not after Philby and his bunch. And he and Doyle weren't queer anyway. He forced himself to take a deep breath, to get a grip on himself. It had been

nothing more than a perfectly understandable rocks-off situation that had got a bit out of hand. To be expected when one partner discovers that not only is the other one willing to die for him, but that it actually *matters* to him.

Traffic light bleeding red on their faces, Bodie dared to look at Doyle. And the thought came to him: he kissed me. His cock stirred, his heart beat a little faster, and fear came in on bovver boots.

If he faced it, if they talked about it, Doyle would suss out how he felt, which is more than he wanted to do himself right now. Doyle would know, and Doyle, bless his rotten little soul, was always one for calling a spade a spade. Queer. Doyle would call him bent and he just might not be able to remember in time to say, 'yeh, but who was it who kissed who, eh, *mate*? He might just sit there and then it would be true.

But he couldn't let it be true. He looked at the shops and pubs lining the side of the street, then at the private houses with their lights slowly going out, and thought about what it would mean if any of them heard someone laugh at him and call him queer. Oh, Christ, no, he wasn't queer. He'd beat them to a pulp if they tried that with him. As for the first pansy who fluttered his eyelashes at him—he'd kill him. Yes, he would. All right, so he wouldn't kill him, but he'd duff him up a bit. Done it before—there were faces in front of him, from Northern Ireland, that bloke down Islington and god, yes, remember him from third form, when his dad had walked in? 'He was making me do it, da, honest, he were bigger than me and I was dead scared till you came in, honest, da, I'd've done the bugger one before but I was too scared...'—do it again if one of them tried to turn him like that again.

Then, beside him, Doyle stirred—

That look on Bodie's face, when he'd kissed him, fucking hell, it couldn't have been, could it? Could it?—

—right leg brushing Bodie's, right there where Doyle's own knee had bruised him in their blind lust and the crampedness of the car. Violently, he pulled away, glowering at

Ray, precisely the way Doyle would glare at him if he messed around in public too much. So what d'you call fucking in the back seat of Cowley's fucking car then? he asked himself hysterically, then shut that down, relegating it once again to something they did when this rotten fucking job got to be too much for any sane man to cope with. What was that phrase Ross had for it? Oh, yeh, 'referred aggression and the need to affirm that you are still alive', that was it. And a hell of a lot better than lovemaking.

Doyle's place.

"You coming up?" About as much welcome in that as willingness in himself, and with an odd edge of speculation to it, far more than the simple question warranted. As if Doyle were asking him something else entirely.

"After almost twenty-four hours straight on the job?" he joked, watching the speculation burn, momentarily, into disappointment. But he went on, hurtling on without brakes, steamrolling over Doyle, over feelings, over speculations, over hopes but most of all, over his own fear-filled insecurity. "No, not me, my old son," and he found his old grin, relaxing as he pulled it on, reassured by the familiarity of a face of his own that he knew and which didn't threaten to pull his whole life apart. "Am going home, getting some kip, and then tomorrow, I'm going out with the luscious

Inge." He waggled his brows suggestively, then his face froze as Doyle didn't join in the game, as Doyle actually looked—hurt. But that wasn't how they played the game, and anger grew in him, getting ready to burst out. But Doyle spoke first, wan smile, brittle eyes, but still, with a slow unfurling of real relief.

"The big dancer? The one who wants to work her way through the *Kama Sutra*?"

"None other," he beamed, reassured beyond belief that Doyle wasn't going to turn difficult on him.

"You just make sure she doesn't get you in any knots you can't get out of. If you're late for briefing again, Cowley'll have us *both* stuck in records for a week."

"I'll be there," he said breezily, waving as he pulled away from the kerb, shouting, "see you, mate!" over the crunch of the tyres.

Oh, yeh, he wasn't queer, stupid of him to even think it for a minute. Never been queer before, wasn't likely to start just because he had a partner who reacted to danger the same way he did, now was he?

So why did it stick in his mind, why did it make him rougher with Inge than he had to be, that memory of Ray Doyle, his partner, the man who had almost died for him, the man who kissed him, left standing there on the pavement, alone?