

One Wedding, No Funerals

by Cassie Ingaben

"Oh, come on love—don't cry..." Doyle rummaged in his pockets, extracting assorted items, among which was a rumpled, dubious-looking handkerchief.

Bodie made a face, shaking his head. He pushed Doyle's hankie-filled hand away from the girl's face, and offered his own flawlessly folded one. He watched as she took it and blew her nose; then he eyed his partner uncertainly, as if to ask for assistance. Doyle had a way with words; surely he would know what to say.

Doyle pursed his lips, then started: "Look, just say the word and we'll get the Capri and take you there—nothing like an eight hours drive to put Bodie here in a good mood, eh mate?"

Bodie gave him a dirty look for that. Trust the little toad to have *him* driving all the way down practically to bloody Africa... He almost said so, then decided to leave it alone—no use getting Doyle in a tiff, and he knew he'd end up doing the driving anyway.

The girl appeared to consider the offer, then made a face and started to sob again: "But it's too late now; they already got married!"

Even Doyle now seemed to be struggling for something to say, so Bodie went in—he could never stand the sight of a woman crying, even if she was one of the fiercest fans, having them do unspeakably horrid things to each other—

"Hey, look, it's not as if it's the end of the world — you missed it this time but I'm sure she'll invite you to her next wedding—"

"*Bodie!*" Doyle thumped his arm, hard. Then he sat next to the now desperately howling girl and started to say something that sounded low and apologetic, whispering close to her ear.

Bodie made a disgusted face. This whole thing was a fiasco; and why should he worry anyway... He shivered at the haunting memory of what exactly she had had him do to Doyle last time, and briefly closed his eyes. *She* hadn't been crying then—more like gloating...

He eyed her, pouting, and sighed. Partner murder or not, she was a woman in distress and he couldn't help being gentlemanly. Even if this time probably it would be Doyle who killed *him*...

He shook his shoulders again and pulled himself mentally together: he got up, shoved his hands in his pockets, and strolled aimlessly round the room. Then he turned to where she and Doyle were sitting, crouching down till their eyes were at the same level, and made his offer.

"Hey, look love, if you really want to go see a wedding, well, ehr, we can help you with that—I always wanted him to anyway, and Doyle looks just great in white..."

The last things Bodie saw before closing his eyes, to avoid the nauseous dislocation always taking them as they were flung onto the page, were Doyle's horrified and outraged face and the fan's now happily gloating expression as she suddenly seized on the idea. He wanted to kick himself and feared that Doyle would more than help him with that — why had he done it? They *hated* getting-married stories!

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For Castalia, sad because she couldn't go to a friend's wedding in faraway Sicily. Consider this a sequel of sorts (with spoilers) to her short story "Sunshine", published in Roses and Lavender #3.

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