

**Summary:** A happier re-telling of [Crying for the Moon](#). Crossover with [The Professionals](#). Bodie and Doyle come to LA to search for a serial killer and learn some things about themselves and their relationship when they spend time with Starsky and Hutch.

**Story Notes:** This story was originally a [circuit story](#) from [The Professionals fandom](#). The circuit story has the date of November 1983. It was first published on the original Starsky and Hutch Archive in 2001.

**Categories:** Slash

**Genre:** Crossover

**Warnings:** No Warnings Needed

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## Thru' with the Twostep

by **Dargelos**

"I wonder who his decorator is," Bodie mused. Ray Doyle shot him a ragged grin. The window of the office in which they waited was gritty with smog and dust which diffracted the late afternoon rays of the sun. "View isn't worth speaking of, either." He screwed up his eyes and watched the light swim around in the grime.

The office door opened and a tired looking man with fair hair walked past them, dropped his holster on the table and settled with a sigh into the ancient chair opposite. "Sorry I kept you waiting." Doyle mumbled something about it being okay, but Bodie was feeling impatient.

"Have you read the reports?" he demanded. The man nodded.

"They tell me that you're Bodie, and you," he looked at Ray, "are Doyle, and they tell me what you want, but not why. It puts me in something of an awkward position, you realize." His eyes, icy blue and observant despite their reddened rims and heavy lids, met Bodie's and the CI5 man felt the shock of some unspoken and perhaps unconscious challenge.

"Lieutenant Hutchinson," Doyle began, choosing the American pronunciation out of deference, Bodie assumed, to their host, "we've been trying to bag Evans for a long time."

"Pity you didn't." Hutchinson pulled a thick file folder from his desk drawer, opened it and scanned the papers within. "We've lost four working girls to this guy. They," he said, his voice becoming fractionally louder as Bodie snorted contemptuously, "may not seem important to you, gentlemen, but let me assure you that this department takes their deaths very seriously."

A little taken aback, Bodie was about to protest that he did not mean to dismiss the death of a prostitute so casually, but he caught Doyle scowling at him and his perverse streak acted up. "It's

not our problem, lieutenant," he said, choosing the more Anglican pronunciation. "Our problem is to take him back to U.K. when you lot bags him which they haven't been able to do either, have they? So I guess we're in the same boat."

"We'll have him soon," Hutchinson promised. Bodie sat back, looked at his partner and smiled his infuriatingly smug smile.

"When you get him," he said, emphasizing the when, "we'll take him off your hands."

"I hadn't noticed any extradition papers," Hutchinson observed, flipping through the folder quite unnecessarily. They all knew that there were no papers. Evans had never been charged.

"This is an awkward situation from all sides, Lieutenant Hutchinson," Doyle told him. "Evans is the son of a prominent and very powerful man." Hutchinson cocked an eyebrow and waited. "He's never been charged."

"Oh. I see." The policeman stretched and stifled a yawn. "I apologize, but it's late and I'm tired. Can we slug this out tomorrow?" He studied them for a moment and Bodie had to curb the urge to say something outrageous. "Where are you staying?" Hutchinson asked, the casual air just a little too casual. Bodie tensed.

"We've only just gotten here--no reservations," he lied. Doyle's face gave away nothing.

"Well," Hutchinson drawled, "you're welcome to stay with us." Bodie was about to refuse, but Doyle leaned forward.

"We don't want to put you to any trouble on our account."

"No trouble at all," Hutchinson assured them, fastening his holster under his left arm. "It's a big place."

"It's not a bad idea," Ray decided aloud. "Thank you, we'd be happy to be your guests. We have to collect our things first."

"I don't think..." Bodie began.

"Good. Meet me downstairs in the parking lot. The Watch Sargeant will give you directions." He shrugged into his jacket and picked up the phone, clearly dismissing them. Bodie reached for the file on Evans, but Hutchinson's large hand fell across it. Their eyes met and again there was a challenge, clearer this time and entirely conscious. Bodie smiled his most wolfish smile.

"Thanks so much," he whispered.

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"Well, that's bloody marvelous," Bodie complained on their way to the car park. "He just wants to keep an eye on us; I hope you realize that."

"Oh, but think of it, Sunshine," Ray said with a seraphic smile, "while he's watching us we can keep an eye on him. Cooperation with the local constabulary is a wonderful thing." They entered the elevator and punched the button for the garage level. When the door slid shut Bodie pulled his partner into a clinch, kissed him fiercely and released him before the doors opened on the next floor. Several people entered the car.

"I like the way you work, Bodie," Doyle said quietly, two spots of color high on his cheeks. Bodie smiled to himself.

The trip from the station to Hutchinson's digs seemed endless to Bodie who had drawn the back seat, and whose legs were beginning to cramp from the lack of exercise. He was tired of sitting, tired of doing nothing while some smug bastard kept him from doing his job.

He listened to bits of the conversation from the front seat. It was mundane stuff about Los Angeles mostly. Hutchinson and Doyle began comparing notes about police work and Bodie tuned them out and began to think about the case. It was, he decided, the sort of work he hated most. He was still smarting over having to stay with Hutchinson, but he had to admit that it wasn't a bad idea when viewed with cold detachment. Cooperation with the local constabulary was an exercise in patience.

The car turned off the freeway and onto a residential street. "Almost there?" Bodie asked, not bothering to hide his boredom. Hutchinson pulled into a driveway behind a new, flashy car.

"What kind is that?" Doyle asked.

"Red. I don't know, you'll have to ask Starsky. It's new and I hate it."

As Bodie crawled out of the back of the car, the door to the house opened and a large black furry thing bounded out and knocked Hutchinson into the flowerbed.

"Chrissake, Starsky!" he yelled.

"That's Starsky?"

"No, I am." Bodie looked towards the voice and saw a man lounging in the doorway of the house. He was, like Doyle, tall and economically built, with a mop of unruly black curls and a crooked grin. The eyes that met Bodie were a shock--the same sapphire blue as Bodie's. They stared at each other for a very long time. "I'm Starsky," the man repeated. "David Michael Starsky. Starsk. Which is which?" he asked, shifting his regard to Ray.

"Raymond Doyle." They shook hands and Starsky looked back to Bodie.

"Just Bodie."

"Just? I don't think there's any just about it. Hello, Bodie." He extended his hand and Bodie took it gingerly. There was something unnerving about Starsky. There was mischief in his eyes and something else that Bodie hadn't identified yet. Starsky stepped back and motioned them past him into the house. "C'mon in."

Hutchinson and the dog came in last, having apparently resolved their differences. Hutchinson stopped in the doorway and said something to Starsky very quietly. Bodie turned in time to see Starsky smile. It reminded him of the smile with which Ray sometimes rewarded him after they had sex. A small chill ran up his spine.

"So, are you hungry? There's Chinese tonight. I hope you like it."

"Love it," Ray assured him as Hutchinson disappeared up the stairs. "Can I wash first, though?"

"God, yes, of course. Bring your things." He led the way up the stairs. From the second floor there was the sound of a shower running.

The house was built on a number of levels, and Starsky took them to the one between the ground and the second floor. "There's two bedrooms and a bath on this level and one more bath upstairs which Hutch is using right now." He flipped on the light in one of the bedrooms and motioned them in. "Look, I don't know what your sleeping arrangements are, but this is a terrific bed for two." Bodie felt the color creeping into his cheeks. Were they that obvious? he wondered. "The other room is just a double." The bed was indeed terrific, in fact, Bodie could not recall having seen a bigger one. "I fixed both rooms in case you needed them."

Bodie started to back out intending to take the other room, but Ray nodded, "This'll suit us, thanks."

"Thought it might."

"We don't want to put anyone out, though," Ray continued and Bodie wanted, irrationally, to slap him.

"Oh, no, no trouble. Hutch and I sleep together upstairs. These are all guest rooms." He stepped to the door of the bath and flicked on the light. "Dinner in fifteen minutes. I'm starving."

"You're upset, aren't you?" Ray asked after Starsky had left them alone to wash up. Bodie hesitated for a moment.

"Should I be?" he asked at last. "You only announced to the whole bloody world that we sleep together. Why," he asked with pointed sarcasm, "should something like that upset me?"

Mischief bright in his eyes, Ray stepped close to his partner and slipped his arms around Bodie's neck. "No reason at all considering their relationship," he whispered huskily, teasing Bodie with light kisses like tiny butterfly wings. "You sussed it, didn't you, Sunshine?" To which Bodie had

to agree that he had indeed sussed it. He pulled Doyle's hips against his own and rubbed his face against Doyle's cheek.

"Clever, observant ex-copper you are. Had alot of experience with gays, have you?"

"Enough." They kissed and Bodie wanted to skip dinner altogether. It had been a fortnight since they'd done it properly in a large bed with plenty of time. He'd almost forgotten how sweet Doyle was in a clinch. Their work, he reflected sadly, played hell with their sex life. "I'm hungry," Ray mumbled around a kiss. "We can do this later."

"God, I hope so." Bodie was disappointed, but philosophical. He was more tired than hungry at the moment, but he thought that the meal might renew his stamina enough to make more than just a fair showing in bed. His performance was important to him--more so it seemed, than it was to Ray who seemed to enjoy the fore and after play perhaps more. The odd thing, the one that Bodie did not trouble to consider too carefully, was that he had never been so concerned about his performance with anyone else. With the women he had known it had seemed enough to take what he wanted, sometimes carrying them along on the crest of his pleasure. It was something you had to work for, surely, and Bodie had no sympathy for a sex partner who laid back and waited to be pleased.

But with Ray it wasn't enough to take. Bodie had the compulsion to give, to pleasure Ray first and frequently, to make him crazy with it. All this was prerequisite to Bodie's own satisfaction. It certainly made the sex interesting...intoxicating, Bodie might have said if he'd been analyzing it more carefully. Strange, too, that before Ray, sex with other men was a struggle, a war in miniature, a game to be won because the consequences were...

"Hutch 'n' I used to be partners." The statement brought Bodie out of his reverie. The remains of a Chinese dinner littered the table where they sat over tea and almond cookies. The unnervingly familiar eyes caught Bodie's gaze.

"In homicide?" Ray asked, clearly fascinated.

"Uh huh. Hutch, you going to sleep on us?" Starsky asked. Hutchinson's eyes were closed like the eyes of a contented cat.

"I'm thinking."

"About what?"

"About how to excuse myself to go to bed." The icy blue eyes snapped open. "It's my night to clear away."

Starsky began to stack their plates. "You owe me one, Hutchinson," he said with a gentle smile. "Go to bed. Sleep an hour on me."

"Love it. Gentlemen, will you excuse me? We'll take up the case tomorrow at the station." He stood up slowly and stretched while Starsky cleared the table. Doyle made let-me-help noises, but Starsky shooed him away.

"You two need some sleep, too, don't you? It's what time in London? Six? Five a.m.?" Involuntarily Bodie yawned and Starsky and Doyle grinned at each other.

"You'll wake us when Hutch gets up?"

"He goes out for a run at six; you don't want to get up when he does. I'll wake you in good time, I promise." He dumped the table scraps into Bear's dish and added a can of dog food. "Bear has eclectic tastes," Starsky said as he kneed the big dog away. "You should see him with Mexican. God, what a horse! Move, Bear." He put the dish on Bear's mat and got a perfunctory lick for his troubles. "Go to sleep," he told the Englishmen. "Sweet dreams."

Ray was already in bed by the time Bodie turned off the light. Tired as he was he found the sight inviting. "You're not half bad to look at, Sunshine," he observed as he slipped between the sheets and kissed Ray's shoulder.

"You feeling up to it?"

"You know I am." He pulled Ray into his arms.

"Guess what I found in the nightstand."

"Nosy bugger. What?"

"An enormous tube of lubricant." He licked Bodie's lips. "You don't suppose..." Bodie tensed.

"You offering?" he asked with a forced ease.

"Dunno. What about you?" Doyle's fingers conveyed a clear message. Bodie wanted to scream. He'd been anxious for the sex, but not for another of their endless, pointless arguments about fucking each other.

"No, I'm not offering, I'm not interested and I don't want to discuss it if that's your next question. Do you want to do it or not?" Doyle glared at him.

"Make love," he said. "It's called making love as well as 'doing it'. You can call it making love..."

"Oh, for chrissake!"

"You can call it making love and your tongue won't shrivel up...or anything else," he muttered as an afterthought. Bodie grunted and turned to face the wall.

Doyle was silent for a long time and Bodie thought he'd fallen asleep, but suddenly he broke the silence. "Bodie, I am offering." Bodie's stomach did wild flip flops.

"I never said I wanted that," he whispered.

"You don't have to." Ray's touch was soft and tentative. "You gonna make me beg, you sod?"

Bodie rolled over on top of his lover and stared down at someone new. "Do it," Ray urged, spreading his thighs. Bodie began making love to him with a furious clumsiness that made Doyle laugh. "You're acting like a teenage virgin," he chuckled.

"Sod you, Doyle."

"That's the idea. You have done it before, haven't you? Haven't you?" Bodie nodded curtly, his erection wilting a little at the memories. "Had it done?"

"This is pointless." Bodie rolled away, but Doyle caught his arm in an iron grip.

"Just do it," he hissed. "Don't think, just fuck me." He reached across Bodie and fumbled in the drawer of the nightstand, and dropped a tube of lubricating jelly on Bodie's chest. "Use this--DO IT!" Bodie clamped a hand over his mouth.

"God, you're crazy!" He let go of Doyle and fumbled with the cap, managing to spill a glob of jelly on Ray's chest. Then he rolled Doyle onto his stomach and entered him, growling half in anger and fear and half because he'd never been so completely aroused before. He felt crazy listening to Ray moan, feeling him move up to meet Bodie's thrusts. He squeezed his eyes shut as pleasure and guilt rippled through him in alternating waves. He remembered--mostly red-tinged agony and the loss of something he'd held most precious in his young life--and was ashamed to admit that this time he was having one of the most erotic experiences of his life.

He heard Doyle repeating his name over and over like some ritual chant and something that he shut out because the sound was too painful. He wrapped his arms around the slender body. Ray's chest was slick with sweat and melting jelly and his cock was stiff against his belly. "God, yes, godyes..." Ray chanted. And again the words that Bodie could not bear to hear. He bit into Ray's shoulder to keep from crying out as he climaxed, as Ray cried out for both of them.

"Wake the house," Bodie teased when he'd recovered some of himself. He ruffled the damp curls that hung around Doyle's face.

"S'good."

"Yeah?...yeah."

"Bodie, I..."

"Go to sleep. It's late. We'll talk tomorrow," he said, the lie smooth. He had heard the one thing he feared above all else. He had heard Ray say 'love'.

Much later Bodie half woke to the sounds of activity in the hallway. There were soft footfalls on the stairwell and the sound of the door closing. He decided that it must be Hutch on his way to run, just before he slipped back into a deep sleep.

"Bodie?" A hand shook his shoulder. "Time to get up." It was Starsky. Bodie's first disjointed thoughts hovered around how attractive Starsky was in rumpled hair and nothing else.

"He come back?" Full consciousness seemed appallingly difficult. "Hutch ready?"

"He called from the station about an hour ago. They've got Evans." At which Bodie sat bolt upright and cursed. Ray grabbed for him in his sleep.

"Why didn't you wake us?" Bodie demanded as he climbed out of bed.

"Hutch got the call at three-fifteen. There was nothing you could have done then, anyhow. When you're dressed and I've had my coffee, I'll drive you down."

"Ten minutes," Bodie told him. He shook Doyle. "Get up!"

"When I've had my coffee," Starsky repeated. He sat down on the side of the bed. "Morning," he said to a sleepy-eyed Ray.

Bodie stalked into the shower feeling helpless and put upon. As he turned on the shower he heard Ray apologizing for the messy sheets, and felt himself crimson. Helpless, put upon and hopelessly embarrassed.

He dressed and wandered down to the kitchen to find Doyle drinking coffee with Starsky. "It took me a long time to get back into shape and ready to work again," Ray was saying.

"I went back for awhile after I recovered, but it got to be a hassle."

"Because of your relationship?" Starsky shrugged.

"That and the damage. I'm not young anymore; I'm forty this year." Stunned at the admissions, Bodie studied Starsky carefully. It hardly seemed possible that he, Bodie, was almost ten years younger than Starsky. "I'd better get dressed," Starsky said. "Bodie, have some coffee. I'll be a couple minutes." He rose and Bodie saw the scars, white against the deep tan of his skin. Three scars on his chest in much the same pattern as those Doyle carried, but when Starsky turned away Bodie caught sight of the exit wounds. Starsky looked back over his shoulder. "They're prettier than they used to be...imagine."

Bodie thought about it for a while.

"He died," Ray said quietly. "He stopped just like I did." Bodie shuddered and sipped his coffee. "I'd better get dressed, too." He left Bodie alone to consider things like coincidence and love.

They were escorted to the office of Hutchinson's captain, a gruff, stout, middle aged black man. "I want to see Evans," Bodie demanded after the introductions were made.

"In good time," Dobby said, gesturing at the chairs in front of his desk.

"We were wondering," Hutch began at a nod from his captain, "exactly what you plan to do with him if we turn him over to you." Bodie was half stunned, half annoyed. He slumped into the proffered chair with a casual arrogance.

"We're here," he hissed, "because it's our job to be here." Doyle shot him a warning glance.

"What Hutchinson meant, gentlemen, is that we would like to know why CI5 is involved in this, particularly in light of the fact that Evans has never been formally charged in England."

"You've mugged up on us," Doyle observed. Bodie caught a small private smile passing between Hutch and Doyle and it sent a red wave of fury creeping up his spine.

"We're taking him home to put him away and that's all you need to know." Bodie was aching for some sort of physical confrontation with Hutchinson.

"On the contrary, I need to know how you plan to put him away before I can make an informed decision."

"We're taking him back to his family who plan to have him quietly committed," Ray said. "All very quiet." Hutchinson and Dobby exchanged a look.

"We can't let him go under these circumstances." Dobby shut the file he was holding. "I have to be assured that his consignment either to an asylum or to a prison is official." Bodie sighed, wondering if they were ever going to get off this godforsaken case.

"Why?" he asked.

"Because," Ray said quietly, "he wants to know if Evans will be put away for good. So do I quite honestly. This unofficial business never sat well with me." Bodie was forced to agree, albeit silently. He had reached the point where he was willing to settle the issue unofficially with a bullet in Evans' ear.

"So, I'm afraid I have to ask you to make a decision. Call your superior and get him to charge Evans and send extradition papers immediately, or leave him here and he'll be charged by the city for however many murders we can make stick."

"How many do you think you can make stick?"

"Most, at least four," Hutchinson said quickly.

"Why don't we just shoot him now and save the phone call?"

"Wheels of justice, Bodie," Doyle said with a grin. "Will you dial or shall I?"

Cowley was Not Pleased, and yet it seemed to Bodie, who had grabbed the phone away from a patiently apologetic Doyle, that Cowley was not surprised. "I'll do what I can," he said sourly.

"I'm advised that you have thirty-six hours, sir," Bodie informed him with equal tartness.

"Then let me get on with it, Bodie."

"He'll be in touch," Bodie told them as he hung up the phone. "Which means we'll be stuck in this bloody city for at least two more days. Christ!" He scowled. "I want to see Evans." Dobeey nodded at Hutch.

"Will you gentlemen join me for lunch at one?"

"We'd like that, Captain, thank you." Doyle shoved Bodie out of the office.

They followed Hutch to the holding cells where Evans sat at rigid attention on the bed, his clothing dark with blood. He had been deprived of all valuables and all potentially dangerous items of clothing. Bodie thought it a pity that he wouldn't have a chance of committing suicide in the cell. He called Evans by name--his full name--and let the man let loose with a flood of the foulest invective that Bodie had ever heard. Evans used some words that Bodie had never heard before. "Inventive," Hutch remarked with a half-smile. "You satisfied?" Bodie nodded, feeling inexplicably sick. It was as if this man was a personification of the darkness inside himself. He, Bodie, fought love and this man slaughtered it. He looked to Doyle needing some assurance.

"You all right?" Ray asked. "You're chartreuse."

"Let's go," he snapped, pushing past Hutchinson.

They trooped back to Hutch's office. "Now what?" Bodie muttered. "We're going to be bloody useless for the next thirty-six hours, aren't we?"

"You are a little redundant," Hutch confessed. "But there's the paperwork. If that doesn't do it for you, you can always take a tour of Los Angeles." Bodie said something rude under his breath and Ray elbowed him savagely.

"Easy mate," he warned.

"Either way," Hutchinson told them, "my captain will be very happy."

"Sod your captain."

"I don't think he's the type," Hutch said evenly. He handed them a sheaf of papers. "There are typewriters in the squadroom."

"Bloody, sodding, bureaucracy," Bodie snarled as he stalked out of the office. He heard Hutchinson ask Doyle: "Is he always this bad?"

"Mostly worse," Doyle confided and their quiet laughter ate at Bodie.

"Why are you acting like this, Bodie?"

"Because I don't like feeling helpless and I don't like the fact that he's getting the better of us...and I don't like him."

"Not half, bloody obvious," Doyle decided. He typed for a few minutes. "Wonder why they want to know all this?" He shuffled a pile of forms. "Mother's maiden name," he said in a flat, nasal imitation of an American accent. "Number of fingers on left hand."

"Childhood diseases," Bodie offered in a good parody of the accent.

"First sexual experience," Doyle said, wagging his eyebrows, mock lascivious.

"Makes interesting reading," Bodie observed tiring of the game and returning to his typing. From time to time as they worked he would steal a look at Ray; would find himself moved by the irregular assortment of features that were so curiously and damnably attractive. In all his experience of sex with other men he had never thought of any man as attractive, much less beautiful in the way he found his partner beautiful. It disturbed him deeply. He thought of their love-making (tested the word and found that it fit, that it did not shrivel either his tongue or his virility) and was warmed by its memory. The memory of Ray's slender, compact body moving against his own, moving in the same rhythms and welcoming Bodie's invasion, sent a wave of heat and remembered pleasure jolting through Bodie.

And a question.

His eyes widened at the thought. "Ray," he blurted before he could stop himself. Doyle looked up, his cheeks flushed and his eyes hot. It was obvious that their thoughts had been running along the same lines. "I..." He hesitated, wondering how to ask his question. "Last night..." Ray's eyes widened, too.

"Not now, Bodie," he whispered and Bodie remembered where they were. "Later." He knew that Ray meant more than the question.

He couldn't ask over lunch since they were eating with Hutch and Dobey. The captain was fascinated by CI5 and asked a good many questions which Bodie and Doyle answered as well as they could. Bodie apologized for his short fuse and Dobey replied that he was used to it, with a deliberate glance in Hutch's direction. Bodie liked Dobey and he could tell that Ray did, too.

"Hutch told me that you used to be on the police force." Ray nodded. "Not exciting enough?"

"Too exciting sometimes."

"And you were a mercenary," he said to Bodie.

"I did a little of everything," Bodie confessed, ignoring Doyle's crooked smile.

"I took Edith to Las Vegas a few months ago--she has a sister out there--and we went to Caesar's Palace one evening." He gestured for another beer. "There were a lot of people--mostly men--hanging around the casino. They were all in fatigues and most of them were drunk, and Edith was outraged because she thought they were National Guardsmen on a toot. Turns out," he said, finishing the last of his french fries, "it was a convention of mercenaries."

"Oh, no," Doyle groaned. "God, Bodie, do they really have conventions?" Bodie was tempted to be offended, but his sense of the absurd got the better of him and he began to laugh, too.

"Just another weekend with the folks," he observed, wondering if his beer was warm enough to enjoy.

"Do you have newsletters, too?" He nodded.

"Can't say I ever subscribed, though. It's hard to get your mail in the middle of a war in the jungle."

Hutch stabbed out his cigarette. "Papers should be in tomorrow afternoon, Captain. Until then there's not much to be done." Dobby drank down the second glass of beer.

"Then don't worry about it. Take the next twenty-four and I'll call you when the papers get here. You look bushed." Hutch smiled wanly. "Gentlemen," Dobby said as he took the check, "I've enjoyed this, but I'm glad you don't work for me. Hutch and Starsky put all this white in my hair and I have a feeling that you'd finish the job. I feel for your boss."

They left with Hutch and drove back to the house. Bodie couldn't ask his question on the way.

He was restless and unhappy. He wanted to go home, wanted to be anywhere but where he was and wanted to be doing anything but what he was doing, which was nothing at the moment. "I want to see the file," he said to Hutch's nether end as Hutchinson poked through the refrigerator. Hutch closed the door and leaned back on it.

"I'm afraid it's at the office. I didn't think to pick it up after lunch. You can look at it tomorrow when we go down to make arrangements for Evan's transfer."

"Can't you go back and get it?"

"Have a heart, Bodie, it's forty-five minutes each way. Besides I want to run down to the supermarket and pick up something for dinner. The refrigerator is empty."

"See if you can get some beer that isn't cold." His request was sullen, acknowledging defeat.

Bodie took a nap while Hutch and Doyle went shopping. He couldn't help but wonder why his temper had been so foul since they'd gotten to the states. He'd been willing to place much of the blame on jet-lag, a case that he disliked...his troubling relationship with Ray. How had it gotten to be so complicated? When it had started, it had been an untroubled game, preferable to and easier than finding a girl for the night. Neither of them had been virgins with men and they understood each other's bodies wonderfully well.

So what was wrong? Bodie was jealous, he was hungry for Ray all the time in ways he'd never known existed, in ways he couldn't begin to understand. Bodie wanted something he couldn't put a name to. And he wanted to know who had taught Ray to enjoy what they'd done the night before. In all the times Bodie had been forced to play bottom man he had never enjoyed what he understood as a game of dominance and submission. He was ashamed that he now craved the experience with Ray.

He woke to Doyle's voice. "Bodie, Bodie, you've never seen such a place."

"Huhh?" He was dozey with sleep and damning himself for it. He had no business having such retarded reflexes.

"This supermarket--it's huge and it has everything you've ever even imagined eating."

"Cockles and mussels?"

"Alive, alive, o'?" Ray smiled. "No, not that I saw."

"Then spare me the hyperbole." He rubbed his face and checked his watch. He'd slept away the afternoon.

"Bodie, why are you so angry? Is it me?" Doyle sat on the edge of the bed and Bodie reached out and touched his leg.

"Not entirely. Not really." Ray traced an idle pattern in the hairs of Bodie's arm.

"I won't ask again, I promise. Okay?" And, like a kid asking for approval, his face was open and hopeful. Bodie wondered why his heart felt like breaking.

"S'okay, Sunshine. So, what's for dinner?"

"Steaks and warm beer for you, and a buncha stuff."

"Buncha stuff? buncha stuff? I have to get you home fast, you've been corrupted." Ray started to laugh and Bodie hauled him down into the bed, kissing his neck and making him squirm. "You're hardly even speaking English anymore."

They ended up having to be called down to dinner. Bodie did not ask his question.

They played Monopoly later that evening and Bodie was intrigued by the differences in the American game. The prices were listed in dollars as Bodie would have expected, but the properties were surprising. "Boardwalk? The B&O Railroad? I can't get comfortable with these places." He described the British monopoly board much to Starsky's amusement, and promised to send him a game when they got back to London. Hutch retired early.

"Starsky's got the day off tomorrow," Doyle said as he dried off from his shower. "He wants to show us Los Angeles." Bodie groaned. "Hey, he's just being nice."

"I don't want to see Los Angeles, Doyle. You go if you want, but I'm not going."

"I'm surprised. I'd have thought you would since it's Starsky who's organizing the tour." He slipped into bed.

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"I thought you were attracted to him," Doyle said bluntly.

"I am." Equally blunt. Bodie thought about it for a while. "But it's you I'm sleeping with," he added.

"Forgive me if I find little comfort there. It's more a matter of necessity than preference at this point, isn't it?"

"What?"

"If Dave would have you you'd be with him right now, wouldn't you?" His voice was surprisingly calm. Bodie snorted.

"You don't sound as though it bothers you," he observed. Doyle shook his head.

"I can't afford to let it bother me, Sunshine, now can I?" He turned on his side and said goodnight.

Bodie wanted him. He wants to possess Ray again and it ate at him as he lay looking at the back of Doyle's head. "Sunshine?" he whispered. "You asleep?"

"No."

"Last night..." Doyle rolled over to look at Bodie.

"What about it?"

"It was nice."

"Yes, it was."

"Messy sheets and all..." Ray's face split into an uncontrollable grin. "You liked it." Half question, half observation. Ray nodded. "Would you like to...make love like that again?" he asked, praying that Ray would understand what he meant, and not put any pressure on him about reversing roles.

"You know I would." Ray put his arms around Bodie and kissed his face, lips brushing Bodie's nose and eyelids and the corners of his mouth. "Make love to me, Bodie."

Their coupling was as intense and passionate as it had been the night before, but this time it was slower, the fire more contained. Ray enjoyed it. Bodie watched his face as they made love, and saw it transfigured by something that he only vaguely understood.

He finally had to ask. "Sunshine, who taught you?"

"Taught me what?" Doyle was drifting, his words slurred.

"To like this?" Doyle groaned.

"That's a helluva thing to ask, Bodie." He pushed away and buried his face in the pillow.

Doyle was gone when Bodie woke the next morning. He stumbled down to the kitchen and found Hutch sitting at the table reading the paper.

"They went out early," Hutch told him. "There's fresh coffee."

"When do you think the papers will come through?" Hutch shrugged and lit a cigarette.

"Cowley's your boss, not mine."

"I wasn't asking you to second guess him."

"What are you asking?"

"Never mind." He sipped his coffee. "It would be really nice to see that file."

"What is it with you and this file? You can see it later this afternoon."

"You don't want me to see it, do you?" Hutchinson sighed audibly.

"Don't you think that's a little paranoid? I don't see Ray losing any sleep over it." It was said with just enough archness to get under Bodie's skin.

"Maybe the problem is that I wonder...I can't help but wonder why the file gets so conveniently left behind, or pushed aside every time I ask to see it." He frowned. "You don't suppose that it has something to do with what I might find in it, do you?"

"Like?"

"Like...like how many of the murders you really can make stick?"

"You're terribly clever, Bodie, but a little late. I imagine that the charges have already been filed making this a moot point." He stood up to get himself more coffee from the machine on the counter and Bodie lunged for him without thinking, the frustrations of the last few days spilling over into action which, though ill-advised, still had the effect of making him feel as though he was accomplishing something. He grabbed Hutch's collar and spun him around, but the man was fast, and jabbed Bodie in the ribs with his elbow knocking the wind out of him. "Crazy bastard," Hutch snarled. Bodie lashed out, grabbing Hutch's ankle and flipped him off balance. He fell with a crash and Bodie pounced.

They grappled for several minutes and Bodie found that Hutchinson was a good deal stronger than he thought. The man could hold his own and might have gotten the upper hand had Bodie not been by far the dirtier fighter. Bodie felt good for the first time in two days. He was enjoying this fight, but he allowed his attention to wander and the advantage went to Hutch who pinned Bodie against the linoleum. "Stupid, don't you know what this is about?" he hissed, and the light began to dawn for Bodie. He knew. He relaxed into his grip.

"I thought it was David," he whispered.

"Not like this."

"No," Bodie agreed. "Oh no, not like this." Hutch bent his head and touched Bodie's mouth lightly with his own. He nipped at the tongue that met his own and Bodie groaned softly, wrapping his legs around Hutch's waist. Of course this was what it was all about. Still it was a contest between them, but far subtler than the way in which it had begun. They struggled for dominance and were evenly matched in strength and determination, but here, Bodie found, Hutch had the advantage. He was not afraid of losing. It ended before a winner was decided. Neither of them could wait.

"Kept your cherry all these years?" Hutch asked as he lay back on the cool floor.

"No, not that it's any of your business. I just don't like it."

"Why not?"

"Because it's what you do when you lose," he blurted. Hutch looked at him with a quizzical expression.

"You really believe that?" he asked, sitting up and taking stock of his bruises. "This is going to be fun to explain."

"Yeah, I believe it. I lost enough times to know what losing means."

"And you never enjoyed it?"

"I couldn't afford to." Hutch helped him to his feet.

"Look, Bodie, things aren't always that simple. Don't be an idiot."

"Thanks so much for the advice," Bodie said caustically. "I need a shower." He limped out of the kitchen feeling very damp and undignified.

"Want some company?" Hutch asked.

"Not particularly."

It was mid-afternoon before Bodie got his shower. When he finished, Hutch informed him that the papers had arrived and Evans had been formally charged with ten counts of murder in the U.K. "We got him for aggravated battery against the decoy, but we're waiving the charges. International cooperation and all that."

"You couldn't make anything stick, could you?" Bodie asked.

"One...maybe. It wasn't worth it to bring him in on what we had to make sure he'd be tried in his own country." Bodie couldn't help but smile a little. He admired Hutchinson's audacity now that things were settled.

"I probably would have done the same thing," he admitted.

"I know. I've got to go down there for an hour or two. Want to come along?" Bodie leaned forward and kissed him.

"Why not?"

By the time they got back to the house, Starsky and Doyle were fixing dinner. "Real Mexican a la Starsky," Starsky announced as they walked in. "You have a nice day, you two?" There was something in his voice that made Bodie wonder if he knew what had happened between himself and Hutch.

"Papers came through," Hutch picked at the greens that Doyle was preparing. "It's official now. Evans is going home to stand trial." Starsky smiled at his lover.

"You're a clever devil. Let's celebrate tonight. Let's go out." He put his arms around Hutch in a gesture that said 'mine' and looked over his shoulder at his guests. "You in the mood?"

"I don't know, Dave..."

"Oh, Bodie, don't be such an old fart. We'd love to," Ray decided for both of them.

"Good, dinner first then dancing, the decadence."

Bodie adjusted the collar of his sweater and sat down on the bed to watch Doyle finish dressing. "You're all tarted up this evening," he observed as Ray fixed the cuffs of his shirt with borrowed links.

"Think so?" Doyle asked absently. Bodie had the feeling that his partner wasn't really paying attention and he was annoyed.

"Prospect excite you?"

Doyle frowned. "What's that supposed to mean?"

"It just seems to me that I've rarely seen you bother dressing up for any other reason but the obvious one. Could be significant, don't you think?" He forced himself to sound calmer than he felt. He wanted nothing more than to spend the evening in bed with his partner exploring some of the newer and more interesting aspects of their relationship, but they had been invited to spend a night on the town with Starsky and Hutch before they left for London the next evening. He shuddered to think what they had in mind. The place they had chosen he knew by repute--ill-repute--to be a favorite hang-out of gays in the Los Angeles area, and it didn't sit well with Bodie to be paraded around a Hollywood gay bar. Doyle had been surprisingly enthusiastic, but when Bodie had demanded an explanation, Ray had just smiled.

"I imagine that you're telling me in your usual, constipated way that I look good tonight?" Doyle turned around for inspection and he took Bodie's breath away. He had never thought much about how Doyle looked, but tonight the man was magnificent. He flashed on the photograph that Starsky had shown him of a sculpture by Michelangelo of a faun with a chipped tooth. Starsky had said: "Doyle" and Bodie had agreed with an uneasy sensation in the pit of his stomach. The irregular, vaguely Italianate features were screwed into a quizzical expression now, and Bodie forced a laugh.

"Like you better in nothing," he said, roughly caressing the small, perfectly rounded backside with a deliberate air of ownership. Doyle pushed his hand away.

"That'll keep, mate. We're late."

"Whose fault?" Bodie asked. Doyle looked back over his shoulder and shot Bodie a sultry look but didn't answer. They went downstairs to meet Starsky and Hutch at the front door. Bodie adjusted his sweater yet again.

The bar was already crowded and smokey, and Bodie was glad to see that no one seemed to be paying much attention to what was going on around them. "It's okay," David whispered to him, "who's going to recognize you here?" Bodie shrugged wondering if his discomfort was obvious or if it was a natural concern in a place like this. Doyle didn't appear to be concerned in the least.

They ordered drinks, and Starsky pulled Hutch up onto the dance floor. Bodie watched for a while, admiring the way Starsky moved. He was uncomfortably aware of the attraction that David Starsky held for him, which had plagued him since they had met, and to which he had finally been forced to admit that afternoon while making love to Starsky's lover. His life was suddenly out of control and he didn't know how to put the brakes on. He wondered if Doyle had suspected, and turning to look at his partner, he found Ray staring at him. "He's very attractive," Ray offered. "Want to dance?"

Bodie shook his head. "Not really." There was silence between them until the other couple returned to the table.

"Gets my blood moving," Starsky announced as he slid into his seat. Bodie allowed himself a small smile in David's direction. "Why don't you two trip the light fantastic?" he asked, nudging Bodie.

"I'm not much for dancing," Bodie explained.

"Shame, it's a good floor." Starsky grinned at Doyle who shrugged slightly as though they were sharing some sort of unspoken communication. Bodie was irrationally irritated and he excused himself to use the washroom.

He was aware, as he stepped up to the urinal, of the watchers. One of them, a handsome blond, moved to the fixture beside Bodie's and craned his neck. "Gerroff," Bodie snarled. "Faggot."

"That," said the blond archly, "is the pot calling the kettle black, don't you think?" Bodie zipped up and left the room before he gave in to the temptation to mayhem.

He could see Doyle laughing with Hutch from across the room. Starsky was not at the table. "Having fun, are you?" he asked as he returned to his seat. He didn't trust Hutch's ethics anymore than his own at the moment, and he knew Hutch wanted Ray.

"I was telling him about the Cow and the allure of pure malt Scotch." Before Bodie could think of a suitable comment, David had returned to the table. He slipped his arms around Hutch.

"Slow dance, lover."

Ray turned to Bodie. "Just one?" he asked. It was the wrong thing at the wrong moment and Bodie lurched out of his chair and stormed out of the bar before the others had a chance to stop him. He stood out on the street feeling helpless, still seeing the hurt in Ray's eyes.

A hand touched his shoulder and he spun around ready to strike out, but he held back the blow when he saw it was Starsky. "Wanna talk?"

"No."

"I do. C'mon." Starsky gestured to follow and led Bodie down the alley beside the club. "S'not the classiest part of the city, but it'll do." He produced what Bodie identified as a joint. "Will you join me?" Bodie nodded and Starsky lit it up.

"Didn't know you did this sort of thing. Thought American cops were either crooked or hopelessly moral." He accepted the joint from Starsky and took a deep drag. The smell made him remember a lot of things, but the smoke soon mellowed the memories to the bearable point.

"Takes all kinds," Starsky said unnecessarily. "For instance, I never would have thought you were gay."

"I'm not," he snapped. Starsky raised an eyebrow but said nothing. Bodie took another drag. "Hutch wants him," he said. He wasn't sure if he was talking to himself or to Starsky.

"Will he get him?"

"Don't know." He stared at Starsky in a hazy sort of shock. "God, don't you care?"

"As much as you do." Bodie thought that one over for a moment and passed the joint back to the smaller man.

"We could trade."

"Could, but we won't. You wouldn't."

"Yeah, well..." Bodie was embarrassed and he didn't know why. "It's not like..." Like what, he wondered. "...like you and Hutch."

"What's it like then?" Starsky asked, taking the glowing cigarette back and inhaling sweet smoke. His eyes softened and he smiled a Doyle-like smile.

"Like sex is all," Bodie said, knowing it was a lie, that there was a good deal more to the relationship that he wasn't ready to deal with. Bodie went suddenly cold. He said nothing, but turned and started back to the entrance of the bar. Once in, he looked to the table and found it empty. His eyes raked the dance floor and in the midst of the swaying bodies he saw Ray, arms wrapped around Hutch's neck, body molded to that of the big blond. They rocked together to the opening chords of a song that Bodie recognized as one of Ray's new favorites. Hutch's hands moved restlessly over Doyle's back. The song was one of such palpably plaintive longing that Bodie felt something rise up inside of him that had been long dead and buried. Not for him such beauty, but his nonetheless and he would keep it. He moved across the floor, barely noticing the others.

"\*Dance by me closer,\*" the voice urged. Bodie pulled Ray out of Hutch's arms and hugged him close. "Mine," he said. Hutch faded away.

"\*Move with me gently, oh so slow...\*"

"Thought you didn't want to," Doyle said, expressionless.

"\*Through with the sneaking\*"

"Sharrup...dance." He crushed the slender body against his own, surprised, as he always was at the resilience and the strength. Wha'd you expect? he asked himself, a woman's body? Tits? The hardness excited him and he sought Ray's mouth, oblivious to the other couples around them, Wild fantasies of fucking in the middle of the dance floor tantalized Bodie as they kissed, Doyle grinding his hips against his partner in open invitation.

"\*Through with the two-step,

Where the rhythm is lost...\*"

"S'go," Doyle urged in a throaty whisper against Bodie's face.

"Where?"

"Anywhere...bed...floor, here." He stuck his tongue into Bodie's ear sending chills up his spine.

Without disengaging Ray, Bodie steered towards the table. "Problem," he told the two detectives. "Is there somewhere..."

Starsky downed the dregs of his drink and stood up. "We can go now, I think."

He held Doyle at bay throughout the seemingly endless ride, embarrassed at Ray's insistent sexual hunger and his own vehement response, but once in the bedroom that they'd shared the last fortnight in he threw Ray onto the bed and tore at his clothes. He buried his face in Doyle's damp and gently curling chest hair breathing in the man's scents greedily. He moved toward Ray's groin intending a quick release, but Ray's fingers caught his belt and drew him upwards. "Against me...hold me," he mumbled between kisses. "Your clothes." He dragged Bodie's sweater up until Bodie was lost in a sea of black wool and while he struggled to remove the blindfold, Ray's hands, clumsy with lust but still effective, shoved Bodie's slacks down just far enough to get them out of the way. Then Bodie looked down and for the first time in many years was truly frightened.

What he saw when he looked at his partner was a stranger in Doyle's skin. The eyes were empty of everything but a hot desire and Ray's soft, sensual mouth that was so vulnerable in love was now swollen and red, the mouth of an animal feeding, sucking and licking and devouring his prey. Doyle was in mindless rut and Bodie found that for all the arousal, he was also vaguely repelled. Doyle ground against him, blindly seeking release. Does he even know, Bodie

wondered, who he's with? Doyle stiffened against him with an animal cry and his hands fell away from Bodie who finished by himself a few seconds later, profoundly disturbed by what he'd seen.

By what he had caused...

He rolled away from Ray who was almost asleep and faced the wall. For all his insistence that what lay between them was solely sexual, the mindless sex that had just occurred was the exception rather than the rule in their relationship. When tenderness, even their gruff tenderness, was taken from them, the result was ugly, hopeless and terrifying. Bodie felt that he had not been touching his partner but rather something in himself that had always been untouchable, the dark side of William Bodie, the thing that Hutch had tamed. He knew it now, knew that the thing that they hated each in the other was the part of themselves they most detested. Yet Hutch had balanced his darkness. How, he wondered. How? He fell asleep wondering.

Quite early, before the sun was more than a suggestion, Bodie woke in an empty bed. He rolled over and saw Doyle sitting at the window, curls silhouetted against the dissipating greyness of the morning. "It's too early, old son," Bodie observed quietly.

"Yeah." He made no move to return to bed. "Have you ever been in love, Bodie?"

Bodie said 'no' too quickly, then asked: "Have you?" dreading the answer.

"I've just been wondering that," Ray said quietly. He sat, looking out the window for a long time. "I like this place," he said at last.

"Thinking of staying?"

"Could be. I could be a what you call it? A beach bum?" He drew his knees up to his chest and pressed his face against them. "Through with the two-step," he sang softly.

Suddenly cold, Bodie said the first thing that came to mind. "I suppose you want to sleep with that blond...wimp." Doyle looked up in surprise, frowned for a moment and then began to laugh weakly.

"Wimp?" he gasped. "You sod, where'd you get that word? Where'd you get that idea?"

"You haven't exactly..." Bodie began but thought better of it.

"What?" Doyle sat down on the edge of the bed and looked down at his partner. "I haven't what? Made a secret of my attraction to Hutch?" Doyle lay down again, rigid and self-contained, and stared at the ceiling. "That's not the reason. Do you want to hear the reason?" Bodie could only whisper that he did. "There's hope here," Ray said simply, "and none in the world we left back there."

"Hope?"

"How do you think it's going to end?" he asked without taking his eyes from the ceiling.  
"Between us, I mean, and when?"

Without much thought, Bodie replied: "With a bullet. And it'll end when it's over."

"I need a future even if you don't. I can't live in the dark, Bodie."

No Sunshine, Bodie thought, you can't, can you. "What do you want to do?"

"I want to be able to love you. Can you let me do that?"

In all honesty, Bodie had to admit that he didn't know. "Why is that so important to you? Haven't we got enough without complicating it?"

"I'm asking for a relationship and a future. Maybe I should just skip it, what do you think?" He rolled onto his side, away from his partner and was silent.

For a few minutes there was only the sound of the wind rustling through the trees and the far-away sound of morning in the human world. Bodie touched the shadowed skin of his partner's back. "I love your skin," he said uncertainly, stroking the smoothness, "and your hair. I like it long like this." Doyle rolled back to face Bodie. "And I don't know how to talk forever, Sunshine, because I can only see today. But," he said, touching the beloved face, "maybe if we take it one day at a time, we won't make a bloody hash of it."

Doyle nodded and put his arms around Bodie in a tentative embrace. "It's a decent sort of beginning at least," he remarked.

They were packed and ready to go early the next morning. Bodie found that he couldn't restrain himself from being affectionate with Ray. He didn't want to. It was good to be able to put his arms around his lover, to hold him and kiss him whenever the mood was right. And for his part, Ray seemed to enjoy the attention.

"Sunshine," Bodie said as he captured Doyle in another embrace. "I love you very much."

The roof did not fall in, the world didn't come to an end.

"Thanks, Bodie." Ray's eyes seemed abnormally bright.

"Why thanks for the truth? I should have said it a long time ago. It's not going to change alot, though," he warned.

"You'd be surprised, lover, you really would be."

Starsky captured him in the hallway, kissed him swiftly and was on his way before Bodie could react. "Just wanted to say I'd done it," Starsky said, his voice drifting down the stairwell. And Bodie laughed.

They said their goodbyes at the door, all shaking hands rather decorously, except for Starsky and Doyle who hugged each other like brothers parting. "We'll think of you when we play Monopoly," Ray promised.

"Don't forget my game."

"Not likely, Starsky."

There was a moment when it seemed that each of them was about to say something very important. For his part, Bodie wanted to say that the darkness, though not gone, was receding. He didn't think they'd understand, though. And then the moment was gone.

They stepped out into the yard and Bodie looked up. "What's that?" he asked in shocked surprise, pointing to a flowering tree that dominated the yard.

"Butterfly bush...you didn't notice it before?" Starsky asked. Bodie shook his head, awed by the masses of long, dark purplish spikes of flowers. "How could you have missed it?"

Ray slipped an arm around his lover's waist. "He's seen it now," he said. "That's the important thing."

end