



GIVE AND TAKE

...Jeff smiled, removed his fingers from David's chin and reached behind him for something David couldn't see. When he turned around again, he held two blue cords. Dressing-gown ties, David thought.

"Take off your clothes," Jeff said and his expression now was serious. "I want to see how you look naked."

Still standing, with the light flickering over his skin, David began to undo the top buttons of his shirt. Jeff sighed, as if he'd been waiting a long time for this moment and could hardly believe it had arrived at last.

His fingers were slick with sweat and it seemed an age before David was able to slip his shirt from his shoulders. It glided to the floor, but he didn't notice it land. His eyes fixed on Jeff's as David lowered his hands to the zip on his trousers. Already his cock was hard, and when he finally let his trousers and pants drop to his feet, stepping out of them and pushing them to one side, it sprang out, quivering, the tip wet with pre-cum.

He could hardly believe it. He couldn't remember the last time he'd been this excited. Caring for Patrick had taken away everything else in life but itself and, since his partner's death, the only thing he'd felt was a terrible blankness. From instinct, he reached for himself.

"Stop it," Jeff said. "I haven't given you permission to touch your cock."

David's hand obeyed the command at once and his heart began to pattern its own irregular rhythm in his chest.

Jeff eased himself down onto the bed until he was in a sitting position opposite David. The younger man's head was at the same level as his groin and it was all David could do not to thrust himself in the direction of Jeff's mouth...

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BY

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GIVE AND TAKE
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It took David thirty minutes to enter the bar on Sigmond Street. He could feel his heart thudding, and his fingers were slick with sweat. Even as the doorman nodded him in, he expected to be asked to leave. There'd be a million reasons. Too old, not good-looking enough, not the sort of clientele they wanted. It could be anything. He felt like a fraud. Perhaps he was a fraud. After all, he wasn't in his twenties any more. Not by a long, long chalk. Going to a gay bar in the sole attempt to hook up with a man wasn't the sort of person he'd been for the last fifteen years. No, for the last fifteen years, he'd been a fine, upstanding member of the community: insurance consultant, member of the local choir, regular volunteer for Help the Aged and, most of all, for thirteen of those years he'd been with Patrick. And monogamous. Contentedly

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so.

His mind skittered away from that part of his history as he stepped forward into the gloom. Once his eyes grew accustomed to the level of lighting, what he saw wasn't what he'd expected. The place was crowded, of course, but there weren't too many undulating bodies like he'd more than half-seriously anticipated. He smiled and shook his head as he strode to the bar, music reverberating in his ears. He must stop watching too much television. Especially the digital channels. No, all he saw were groups of men talking, some dancing, but nothing too heavy. Everyone was younger than he was, though, by a good ten years at least, but that didn't surprise him.

What did surprise him was the reason he'd come here at all. If Patrick had still been alive, it would have been his birthday. His fiftieth. In another month, it would be David's forty-fifth. When he'd woken up this morning, something had shifted within him and he'd known, almost from the moment he'd opened his eyes and seen once more the empty space on the other side of the bed, that more than anything he wanted to have sex tonight. With someone else.

He didn't care who that someone was either. Just as long as he was attractive, willing and not after anything else other than a one-night stand. After two years of grieving and being alone, David thought he deserved it.

At the bar, he eased himself between the small but compact groups of chattering blokes. A couple of them gave him the once-over and then moved on.

Damn it, David thought.

Perhaps this wasn't going to be as easy as he'd hoped. Perhaps he'd be the only man without a partner at the end of the evening.

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Maybe he was, after all, just too old.

“Yes, sir, what can I get you?”

The question, with its soft northern accent, drifted over him like a welcome breeze on a hot day. When David looked up at its owner, he saw a slim, aquiline face, short brown hair and eyes that made him feel safe. Even welcomed. The barman must have been at least twenty years younger than he was and way out of his league, but he couldn't help but smile back. Nor could he help the frisson of warmth in his blood. Nice to know he was still alive then, after all this time.

“Th-thanks,” he stammered, raising his voice to be heard above the beat of the music. “Whisky and soda, please.”

“Coming up.” The barman nodded and began fulfilling the order, juggling glass, bottle and siphon with expert ease, while at the same time, looking out for the next customer. He glanced at David. “You're new here, aren't you?”

“Yes, is it that obvious?”

“No, not at all, sir. Just thought I hadn't seen you here before. Nice to see a new face. I hope you have a good evening.”

“Thank you. You, too,” said David, taking his drink from the barman's long and elegant fingers and handing over the correct amount of change.

The barman laughed. “Oh, I always do. It's a great place to work.”

With another quick smile that lit up his eyes, he was gone. To the next customer. The bar was beginning to fill up.

Friday night crowds, David thought.

For a moment he wondered what Patrick would have thought about where David found himself now; his lover had always been an outdoorsman, besotted with his garden. He would have hated

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this place and the sense of rising numbers of people jostling him. No matter. Because of the crowds, David hoped his luck would be in. The conversation with the barman had lifted him; made him glad he'd decided to come here. It was, indeed, time to find someone else to share his bed with tonight.

For the next couple of hours, David worked the room. He started off slow and easy, picking men to flirt with who didn't look like they'd turn down a bloke just because of his age. The ones not in packs of young men all out on the pull. Even so, he thanked God for his relatively unlined skin and his full head of hair—a natural brown with no dye needed, yet. His regular cross-country runs helped, too. As long as anyone he managed to get into bed didn't look too closely at his feet, he hoped he'd be fine. As he warmed to the task of seduction—if what he was after could be dignified by such a word—he even managed a dance or two, a kiss and a cuddle.

But, always, he came back to the barman. There was something about the man that meant David found it hard to tear his eyes away from him. His grace of movement, the easy way he dealt with customers, even the way he handled the glasses made David's heart beat faster.

On his third drink—simply a tonic on the rocks, as he wanted to keep as clear a head as possible, and a designer beer for the bloke he was then buying for—he found himself asking the barman the question he'd wanted to know ever since the first whisky and soda.

“So then,” he said, standing a little taller to pretend a confidence he really didn't feel, “I'm David. What's your name?”

The barman looked up from where he was concentrating on opening the bottled beer, glanced at David's current companion

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and then back at David. He raised one eyebrow.

"I'm Jeff. Nice to meet you."

He looked as if he were about to say something else, but David's temporary date grabbed his arm and the drink at the same time, planted a kiss at the side of his mouth and dragged him unceremoniously back onto the dance floor. David barely had time to fling the money he owed for the drinks onto the bar before the crowd swallowed him up again.

Two dances and two different men later, he was back at the bar. On his own. This time he started the conversation with Jeff earlier, so he had time to talk whilst pouring drinks.

"Have you been down here long?" he asked, knowing it was a cliché, but not having the wherewithal to think of something more intelligent. Not when all he could think of was Jeff's fingers, Jeff's eyes, and his mouth, too.

"Six months," Jeff replied. "Thought I'd try my hand at the big city. Before I decide what to do with my life, you know?"

David nodded. He thought he might remember what that was like. "Good idea. Keep your options open for as long as possible is what I say."

Jeff handed him his drink, took the money, dealt with the change.

"Though, sometimes you have to decide what you want and then go with it." He shrugged.

And then he was gone.

David felt as if someone had punched him. He blinked after the disappearing barman and wondered what he'd meant. Exactly. Was he being that obvious, and Jeff was simply stringing him along? Or was the good-looking young barman challenging him to come out with what he really wanted and stop messing around?

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Because what he really wanted was Jeff. Wasn't it? It had taken over two hours, several cuddles and a hell of a lot of kissing with other men to admit it, but there it was. As he made his way out onto the dance floor again, it struck him that the fact of the matter was he'd come to a gay bar to get laid, but the only man he wanted sleeping with him tonight was way too young and out-of-reach.

No. He mustn't think like that. When he'd walked in here, he'd told himself he had nothing to be worried about in terms of his appearance and he wasn't going to lose that confidence just because he might have to make his move where other people might see it.

If Jeff's answer was no, then what did he have to lose? He could try other blokes and if they said no, too, well, then it was another night at home on his own. He was used to that by now. So why not start with the man he was most interested in and sod the consequences? Patrick would have told him to go for it and he'd have been right.

Making up his mind, he swung round, almost knocking over the small blond lad behind him who couldn't have been more than twenty. Hell, David thought, do their mothers know they're out? In all the senses of the phrase. Shaking his head and feeling older than he really wanted to right then, he eased his way back to the bar. This time, it took a while to get Jeff's attention. At gone two A.M. the place was all but heaving.

Finally, Jeff stood in front of him.

David swallowed. Now was his chance. As he'd admitted to himself only a few minutes ago, he'd seen no one else who had as much an effect on him as this young man did. He had to strike now. Put himself out there. Before it was too late.

"I'd like another whisky and soda, and..." He paused, cursing

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his own lack of smoothness before blundering on, "...and I'd like to take you home at the end of your shift. If there's no-one else you're with, and if you'd like to, that is."

David had no idea how many other blokes standing elbow to elbow around him had heard his plea in spite of the noise, and the desperation in it. Too many, he thought. Jeff didn't at once respond and, as the silence lengthened, David felt his throat constrict. The barman leant toward David and seized his empty glass. David felt another throb of disappointment in his chest and then the barman smiled.

"Sure," he said. "Fine by me. There isn't anyone else right now, and I'd like that."

David let out the breath he'd been holding. "Thanks."

"No problem. It's the best offer I've had all evening. I'll be out of here in a couple of hours. Is that okay?"

Yes. Oh, yes it was. David spent the rest of the time dancing, although he kept the kissing to a minimum where he could, and snatching the odd moment or two of conversation with Jeff. In that time, he managed to find out Jeff had two brothers and one sister up north, he liked London but didn't want to stay there for too long, and he was hooked on *Heroes*. Similarly, he told Jeff—briefly—about Patrick's death from cancer two years ago, that he had a soft spot for the glam rock era and he'd never missed an episode of *Frasier*.

Finally, Jeff's shift ended and it was time to leave.

Outside, the relative silence of the city felt like the cool touch of water. It was after four, but the summer air was still warm enough for David not to need his jacket. He slung it over his arm and stepped out to watch for a passing taxi, but the next moment Jeff pushed him back against the wall, took hold of his face with

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both hands, leaned in and kissed him.

David barely had time to gasp before Jeff's tongue was exploring his mouth. He hadn't expected this, not so soon, though God alone knew what he had been expecting. They were going home to have sex after all, weren't they? Heat fired up in his body and he sucked avidly on the other man's tongue. He tasted so good. Better than all the other kisses he'd experienced this evening put together. He pressed his groin into Jeff's, pulled up his T-shirt in order to touch warm skin, and was rewarded with the younger man's soft groan.

Finally, Jeff stepped back. When he spoke, his voice was lower, unsteadier than before. "I thought we should do that before we got home. I've waited a while for it anyway."

"What do you mean?"

"I wanted to kiss you—and more—the moment you walked in. I mean, God but you're hot, aren't you?"

David felt his prick push against his pants and another surge of heat flooded his body. "I'm twenty years older than you."

Jeff laughed. "So? I'm not asking you to live with me. I just want to have fun with you tonight. Or rather this morning. That's what you want, too, isn't it?"

David nodded. "Yes. Yes, it is."

"In that case," Jeff said, threading his fingers through David's, "let's go home. Where do you live?"

David told him. Jeff shook his head. "No good. Can't wait that long. My flat's nearer, so let's go there."

It took ten minutes by taxi, compared to the half-hour it would have taken to get to David's. During that time, Jeff stroked his cock, now at half-mast, and David had to stop himself groaning aloud at least twice. What he really wanted to do was get Jeff's

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tongue into his mouth again, but the thought of what the taxi driver might say held him back, and several times when Jeff leaned in toward him he turned away, heart pounding. He made do instead with touching the other man's skin where the driver couldn't see him.

Finally, the cab stopped. Jeff reached for his wallet, but David was there first, stumbling out of the taxi, grabbing notes out of his own wallet and pushing them into the driver's hand. He didn't care how they were. Didn't want change.

Laughing, Jeff turned aside as the taxi drew away and walked up a narrow set of steps bordered by shrubs and fiddled with the front door. David followed him.

"Try and be quiet," Jeff whispered. "Don't slam the door. My place is on the fourth floor. No lift."

"I'm not old," David protested. "I can do stairs."

"Yeah, I know. I'm just saying."

Inside, Jeff flicked on a light switch, and David glanced round at the narrow magnolia hallway. A telephone table stood on the left, with a dried-out begonia nestling near the phone.

It was the plant more than anything that made everything different. Because Patrick had loved plants. He would have wanted to do something about this one. He couldn't have borne to see it so uncared for. David swallowed, his hard-on vanishing as quickly as it had come, and took a step back as the door clicked shut behind him. He was here; he was being ridiculous. It was just a bloody plant. It shouldn't be affecting him like this. He...

"Are you okay?"

He glanced up to see Jeff frowning at him. "Yes, of course, I..."

Jeff shook his head. "No, you're not," he whispered. "Don't lie

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to me. What's up?"

David shrugged. He couldn't think how to explain it. Shrugged again and pointed at the bedraggled begonia.

"Patrick loved plants," he said, knowing how stupid that was even as he said it. "That's all really, he loved...plants."

For a moment, Jeff continued to frown and then his expression cleared. He held his door keys up in his hand and stared at them before sighing and tucking them inside the back pocket of his jeans again.

"Okay," he said. "I see, I think. Do you want a coffee, seeing as you're here?"

"I don't want to put you to any trouble. I..."

"Look, it's no trouble," Jeff whispered. "Come up, okay?"

Without looking back, Jeff started up the blue-carpeted stairs. Pursing his lips and feeling the evening and his intentions for it slipping away from his grasp, David followed him.

Once installed in the two-seater sofa in a room filled with magazines and CDs by singers he'd never heard of, David sipped at the coffee the other man handed him and tried to think of a way to apologize. As he spoke, Jeff slid into the seat next to him.

"The thing is, you see," David said, "the thing is, I thought I wanted sex tonight. With someone. I haven't done it in a long time. Not since...well..."

"Patrick?"

"Yes. Not since Patrick. I'm sorry, but now I'm here, I don't know if I want to do anything, have sex, make out, whatever. I don't know what the form is. *Hell*, if there's even a form. I know I'm here, and you must think I give out a whole lot of mixed messages. God, as I told you, I'll leave if you want me to."

Jeff took a gulp of his own coffee, then said, "Yes, sex was on

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offer. And no, I don't want you to leave. But the form is what we make it, I think."

"So what shall we do then?"

"We don't have to do anything. We can talk. Or we can hug. Kiss a little if you'd like that. After that, you can go home. Or you can stay. But I warn you; if you decide to sleep in my bed and sex is still off the agenda, then that's fine, I can bear it, but you'll have to forgive anything my dick thinks it wants to get up to, okay? It's got a mind of its own."

David was silent. He didn't know what to say. After a long moment, Jeff half-laughed and then brushed one hand through his hair.

"So," he said, a catch in his voice, "why don't you tell me some more about Patrick then?"

David did. He thought it would be difficult at first, like opening a box that had long since rusted shut, but, in fact, it was easy. He talked about the good times, the way Patrick had always made him laugh, his gift of nurturing all manner of plants, his easy-going nature. He talked about the bad times, too—Patrick's headaches, the way they'd worsened over the weeks, the trips to the doctor, then the hospital and how gradually the cancer had eaten away at his brain until every decision had to be David's.

"I hated that part of it," he said softly as he reached the end of what he wanted to say. "I never told anyone that because I know how selfish it sounds, but I hated it. Everything was my choice, my responsibility. It wasn't Patrick's fault—oh, I know that—but all the decisions we'd made together over the years just vanished. It was all up to me. I longed for someone else to step in, to make the decisions I struggled with, but, of course, there was nobody. And after he died, all the responsibility continued to be mine. How

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could it be anyone else's? You know, sometimes it would be so good if someone else made the choices, but if you're a normal, healthy adult, that's just fantasy, isn't it?"

In the silence, David half-smiled at the younger man, trying to downplay some of the seriousness of his words. He shouldn't have said so much—God, he hadn't even known he was going to, but something in Jeff's silence invited honesty.

For a moment, Jeff did nothing. Then he leaned over, placed both hands on David's face and kissed him. Hard.

When the kiss was over, Jeff got up. He took David's coffee mug, only a quarter-drunk, and set it on the floor. Then he took hold of his hand and pulled him up to a standing position. Without taking his eyes off David's face, he began walking backward, feeling his way past the table and toward a door opposite the one they'd come in by.

"What are you doing?" David asked, his heart beating quickly.

Jeff shook his head. "No questions. Just come with me."

He opened the door they'd now reached and pulled David through into a bedroom. Jeff's bedroom, he assumed. Jeff switched on the light. Gazing round, David saw it was tidier than the front room and there was a pile of what looked like crime novels on the bedside table. A couple of T-shirts lay on the floor. Jeff ignored them.

He stopped walking and held David's jaw with his free hand, forcing the other man to focus on his face. Jeff's eyes were a dark hazel-green, he noticed, and his lashes were as pale as his skin. An unusual mix, but arresting, too.

"So, bearing in mind what you've shared with me, what do you really want?" Jeff asked him, his voice no more than a whisper. "I mean if you could have whatever you liked from this situation

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right now, what would it be?"

For a beat of his heart, David had nothing to say. And too much. Then the words were there, in his mouth, and because it was night-time and because he had nothing left to lose, he said them.

"I don't want to be in control. I don't want to make the decisions."

He wanted to say more, but the constriction in his throat wouldn't let him. Jeff's fingers brushed his skin lightly, moved across his lips, but didn't release him.

"Would you like me to be in control then, David?"

He nodded, dumb, but his heart continued its rapid pace.

"I mean, really in control?"

Again, David nodded. Something in the air between them shifted and he felt a spark of heat—more than a spark—in his groin.

"Good, because I like being in charge. It doesn't often happen in life so, in the bedroom, I like it. Do you trust me?"

"Yes," David whispered and found, to his surprise, that it was true.

Jeff smiled, removed his fingers from David's chin and reached behind him for something David couldn't see. When he turned around again, he held two blue cords. Dressing-gown ties, David thought.

"Take off your clothes," Jeff said and his expression now was serious. "I want to see how you look naked."

Still standing, with the light flickering over his skin, David began to undo the top buttons of his shirt. Jeff sighed, as if he'd been waiting a long time for this moment and could hardly believe it had arrived at last.

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He could hardly believe it. He couldn't remember the last time he'd been this excited. Caring for Patrick had taken away everything else in life but itself and, since his partner's death, the only thing he'd felt was a terrible blankness. From instinct, he reached for himself.

"Stop it," Jeff said. "I haven't given you permission to touch your cock."

David's hand obeyed the command at once and his heart began to pattern its own irregular rhythm in his chest.

Jeff eased himself down onto the bed until he was in a sitting position opposite David. The younger man's head was at the same level as his groin and it was all David could do not to thrust himself in the direction of Jeff's mouth.

"Good," Jeff whispered. "Just do what I tell you and everything will be fine. Because obedience gets rewards. Like this."

With that, he reached forward and licked the wetness from the tip of David's cock. David groaned and arched his body, eyes closed, but the next second the contact was gone and he had to step backward to regain his balance.

"You see," Jeff said, his tone as calm as if he were doing nothing more taxing than pouring a drink, "your body's mine to do what I like with. It's not yours any more. Do you understand?"

David opened his eyes and nodded. Right now, words were beyond him. It didn't even seem like he was involved in this. Not

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as the man he understood himself to be. On the contrary, he felt as if someone else deep within him had taken over. He had no idea what might happen next, but he knew that whatever it was, he wanted it.

What happened was that Jeff stood up and walked slowly around him. David felt himself admired from every angle, the strength of Jeff's gaze all but blistering his skin.

"You have a very attractive body," said Jeff. "I particularly like this part of you."

With those words, David felt a finger slip between the cheeks of his arse and trail upward. He shivered, wanting to turn around and look at the man, but understood he could do nothing unless it was permitted. Not even that. The finger circled his hole, once and then again, before continuing its upward movement and then withdrawing. He groaned, already regretting its loss. Jeff made no comment. He simply continued his inspection.

Standing in front of him once more, Jeff ran a slow finger along the length of David's still quivering cock before briefly caressing his balls. David bit his lip to avoid saying the words that sprang to his tongue. Dirty words, shameless ones. What was happening to him? And why was he loving this so much?

Then Jeff leant closer, his mouth almost kissing David's left ear.

"Do you know," he whispered, "I could make you come just by touching you like this? Nothing more."

Again David nodded.

"Say it."

"Y-yes," David stammered, his voice hoarse. "You can make me come just by touching me like this."

"But I'm not going to. Do you know why?"

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“No.” David would have said more if he’d been able to, but Jeff’s fingers closed his lips and the younger man shook his head.

“You forget. No talking unless I allow it,” he said. “Understood?”

David nodded his assent. Jeff stepped back.

“All right,” he said. “Get on the bed. Face upward.”

At once, David did as ordered. The sheets felt cool on his back, and he shivered.

“Spread your arms out, wide,” Jeff said.

Again, David obeyed him. Blood engorged his cock. He wondered if he might even faint. Dear God, the man had barely touched him yet and his whole body was begging for it. He had never thought this might happen when he set off for the club earlier this evening, had never even dreamt it might. How long must he have been wanting it like this and never realized? He licked his lips and watched as Jeff took the blue cords he’d left on the bed when he stood up. He continued to gaze at the man, drinking him in as Jeff tied his wrists to the bedposts and then sat on the edge of the duvet to admire his handiwork. David flexed his hands and felt the knots rub against his skin. He spread his legs, too, and arched his groin toward the younger man.

“Do you want me to touch you?” Jeff asked, and David nodded, raising himself half off the mattress in his eagerness. “Tell me where then. But be careful with your answer—the right words bring rewards, as you’ve already seen, but the wrong ones mean you don’t get anything at all.”

Panting now, David blinked at Jeff. For a moment, he didn’t know how to reply and then the logic of the game brought him his response. When he spoke, his voice was hoarse and low, and Jeff had to lean forward to hear him.

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"It doesn't matter about what I want," he whispered. "What matters is giving you pleasure. That's what I'm here for—so you can use my body. Any way you want to."

Jeff smiled, his eyes glittering in the soft light.

"That's the right answer," he said. "How I love a quick learner. Now you have to be silent. And you mustn't come. Not till I say so."

He bent down and took David's cock right into his mouth. No teasing foreplay, no licking of it and no kissing. But as deeply as it was possible to go, swallowing him down right to the throat, then pulling away and swallowing him all over again. David pressed his own lips together, biting them to avoid crying out and concentrating on not spilling himself into the man. Without the order given beforehand, that was what he'd be doing right now—spilling himself into Jeff's all-encompassing, heavenly mouth, shooting his load until not a drop of anything was left.

God, this was the first time they'd met and yet here David was, the most vulnerable he'd ever been in front of anyone at all, including Patrick, and the most shameless. His breath hissed between his teeth, and the world before him shimmered and swung. His arms ached to hold Jeff's head, rock him closer, lose himself in the other man's flesh, give himself up in a way he'd never done before. He was so close to letting go, so close. He couldn't hold on. Another few moments and he'd be gone...he'd...

Then the warmth and wetness of Jeff's lips, the grazing of teeth on cock, vanished, and instead, fingers grasped him expertly, holding off the moment of collapse while David fell back on the pillow, panting and shaking. The frustration made him want to groan, but he knew he had to be silent. The next moment, Jeff's lips and tongue were all over him, kissing and sucking at his balls,

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his legs, his knees, then up onto his stomach, his nipples and the underside of his arms.

“God,” Jeff murmured as he kissed, “you’re so bloody beautiful, and so bloody vulnerable.”

With that, he sat up, tearing off his T-shirt and unbuttoning his jeans. David couldn’t help but admire his strong shoulders and the smooth skin of his chest. Then the long slenderness of Jeff’s cock as it sprang free from the briefs he was scrabbling to remove. Longer than his own, but not as thick. The tip of it glistened, and he wondered what it would feel like inside him, the very thought making his asshole tighten.

The next moment, Jeff was astride him again, this time on his chest with that slender cock pushing at his lips, demanding entry. David gave it, opening his mouth and circling his tongue around and around the length of him, tasting the other man’s salt and sweat. Unable to use his hands or any part of himself to give pleasure except his mouth, he worked it to his utmost, old memories and experiences flooding back into his head and giving him the confidence he needed. Memories of Patrick, yes, but memories, more distant, of other men also, men he’d enjoyed in the past. Men he’d forgotten about until now. Jeff groaned and, when David looked up at him, he saw the younger man had shut his eyes and his head was arched backward.

“Yes,” he was gasping. “Oh, yes.”

David must be doing something right then. The very fact it was his obedience, his own willingness to be vulnerable, that were proving so successful spurred David on to greater efforts and he sucked avidly at Jeff’s cock. He hardly knew the man, but, more than anything, he wanted to give him pleasure with his body; he wanted to be responsible for Jeff’s orgasm. He wanted to give him

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an evening he'd remember. He wanted to give and not to take, and that fact liberated him. Being bound and so utterly at Jeff's mercy was making him feel freer than he had ever been.

Jeff's hands were all over his face, his hair, his arms as he continued to thrust his cock into David's eager mouth, and then he was gone. David only just had time to gasp for breath, flailing on the bed, opening his mouth wider and reaching out for the man again, when Jeff slid back down to his legs. Without speaking, he lifted David's knees and placed his legs on his shoulders. Then he reached out to the bedside cabinet, giving David's quivering cock a teasing stroke as he did so, and brought out a packet of condoms and some lubricant.

A few moments later, he had sheathed his cock and slicked it up. David's breath was coming harsh and shallow in his throat and he ran his tongue over his lips to try and taste as much of Jeff as he could find.

This is really going to happen, he thought, and there was nothing he could do to stop it.

Just before Jeff entered him, he caught David's gaze and held it.

"I can't help it," he whispered. "I just have to have you. I can't wait any longer. You're so bloody attractive. And, David, shout all you'd like if you want to."

Then he was in, pushing his way through David's resistance and right up into the depths of his arse. All the way to the sweet spot. Stars burst behind David's eyes and pleasure flooded through his whole body. He cried out, his tone rising as Jeff continued to thrust himself as deep as he could go, and more if it was possible. Pain mixed with happiness, and the kind of release he'd never known before filled him to the brim. His spunk flew upward in a

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wild creamy arc of fluid and covered Jeff's chest. At the same time, Jeff gave a final thrust and a shout before collapsing on top of him, trembling.

David longed to hold the other man, cuddle him, maybe even murmur words too soon for the saying, but he could not. That very fact gave him pleasure, making him use his lips and tongue on Jeff's face and in his hair to show his gratitude where his arms were unable to do so.

They lay together until both had finished shaking. Then Jeff disposed of the used condom and untied David's bonds.

"Am I allowed to touch you now?" David asked.

Jeff smiled. "Yes. You've earned it."

Slowly, David lowered his arms, finding they ached, but that it didn't matter. Not at all. Then he took hold of Jeff's hand and kissed it.

"Did I please you?" he asked.

"Yes. Very much."

"Good," David replied. "Because I wanted to. In fact, it's all I wanted to do."

Jeff simply smiled and kissed him again. Then, without realizing it, David began to doze off, a feeling of satisfaction tingling across his skin. He was only half-aware of the other man nestling beside him on the bed and the duvet being drawn across both their bodies before he was fully asleep.

The sound of the shower woke him the following morning. When he blinked his eyes open, it took a moment for him to realize where he was and what exactly had happened last night. The memory, rich and vibrant, made him smile. He wondered if he should join Jeff in the shower—assuming, of course, that it was Jeff. This was a shared flat after all. But he'd just decided on *yes*

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when the bedroom door opened and the man himself appeared, wearing only a short blue dressing gown and rubbing a towel through wet hair. That answered that question then, David thought.

"Hello," he said.

"Hi. Sleep okay?"

David nodded.

"Good," Jeff replied, shrugging off the dressing gown and opening a drawer to rummage through a pile of Calvin Kleins. David felt his face redden and turned to look at the wall, though, in truth, he didn't want to, before realizing how ridiculous the gesture of courtesy was. He shouldn't feel shy. Not after what the two of them had done the night before.

He turned back to Jeff, who was now pulling on a T-shirt and reaching for the jeans he'd worn last night. "Can I... I mean do you think..."

"You could have a shower? Sure, no problem. I've got to meet a mate later on, but I can make breakfast for you first while you're in there. Sound good?"

David blinked and then tried to smile. The attempt didn't feel quite right on his face. The question Jeff had assumed he was asking wasn't what he'd intended to ask at all. He'd wanted to ask if he could see the younger man again, perhaps have a re-run of the sex they'd had. Even the thought of that made his prick harden. But something in the way Jeff had finished his sentence made him think the other man hadn't scheduled in any repeats. For him, it had been a one-night stand only, though a good one. Unless, of course, he could persuade him otherwise...

Jeff must have picked up on something of David's thoughts as he sighed, but without any hint of cruelty or contempt, and came to stand opposite him as David sat on the edge of the bed.

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“Hey,” he said, “last night was just fantastic. You’re one of the hottest men I’ve met, and it was great to do that kind of kinky stuff with you. I love it. But we’re not exactly suited, are we?”

For a moment, David paused, trying to swallow his sudden disappointment. The younger man was right, of course. It was just that...something about the two of them together made him want to know Jeff better. Much better. Could David help him change his mind? Then, from nowhere, he knew what his answer should be if he wanted to be in with a chance. He shrugged and gave the younger man half a smile.

“Of course,” he said slowly, “I’ll do whatever you say and whatever you want, whenever you want it. I only thought—if I’m allowed to make a suggestion—that you might find it nice now and then to have an older, more experienced bloke doing whatever you tell him.”

And, with that, David knelt down in front of Jeff and took hold of his now half-erect cock. The younger man shuddered, drawing in a quick, urgent breath.

“Please, may I take you into my mouth?” David asked him. “Even if it’s the last time you’ll ever allow it?”

Jeff’s response was to thrust himself forward and, for a good while, David gave him the best blow job he could think of to provide. David took him to the brink of orgasm and back, once, again, and then again until Jeff groaned and shuddered, and, at last, David’s mouth filled with the salty warmth of his cum. David swallowed him down, loving the taste of him.

While Jeff sank onto the bed and recovered, David continued to kneel in front of him, waiting patiently. Finally, when the other man’s breathing reached a steady pace, David leant forward and rested his head on Jeff’s knee.

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“Thank you,” he said. “Thank you for allowing me to do that for you. Forgive me if I did it without your express command, but I couldn’t help myself. Do you think you can find it in yourself, even if we’re not exactly suited, to give me more commands in the future? If that’s what you want, of course?”

Jeff laughed, a throaty sound, and lifted David’s head up. David could see his eyes sparkling with amusement. And something else, too.

Excitement perhaps?

“Oh, I think I might be able to see my way to doing that,” he said. “You’re very persuasive and, anyway, a little give and take never does any harm, does it?”

David smiled. For the first time in a long time, life suddenly looked good, with a new perspective, a new hope and with some rather interesting sex with a very interesting man, too.

Oh yes, a little give and take was just what he had in mind and he simply couldn’t wait to begin.

ANNE BROOKE

Anne Brooke's fiction has been shortlisted for the Harry Bowling Novel Award, the Royal Literary Fund Awards, and the Asham Award for Women Writers. She has also twice been the winner of the DSJT Charitable Trust Open Poetry Competition. She loves reading dark and quirky crime novels and has a secret passion for bird watching and chocolate. Preferably at the same time. She once took a balloon flight in Egypt but spent most of the time screaming, and she hopes she never has to do it again.

To learn more about Anne and her writing, please visit her website at:

<http://www.annebrooke.com>

* * *

**Don't miss *The Hit List*
by Anne Brooke,
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Jamie Chadwick is straight. Determinedly straight. Or so he keeps telling himself. His small conference business is doing okay and, even though he looks after his ailing father, he loves living in the countryside and life is good. Sort of. But the arrival of old college

friend, David Fenchurch, who's just come out on the distinctly camp side of camp, together with Lucy Reid, his father's sexy new physiotherapist, sets Jamie on a path he'd never dreamed of taking.

On top of all that, the unexpected return of long-lost family friend, Robert Trevelyan, himself openly gay, means that Jamie can no longer ignore the past he's kept hidden for six years. When Robert and David get together, Jamie's feelings begin to surface in surprising ways.

Who, amongst the crowd of people set to blow his life apart, will make it onto his fantasy hit list? And in the midst of Jamie's own emotional battlefield, how can he keep things together at all?

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