



ADAM CARPENTER

LUST IN  
LONDON

ra<sup>v</sup>enous  
*romance*

Lust in London  
*by Adam Carpenter*

**Ravenous Romance**

[www.ravenousromance.com](http://www.ravenousromance.com)

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Ravenous Romance(R)  
100 Cummings Center  
Suite 123A  
Beverly, MA 01915

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## Chapter One

"You sure this is you?"

What kind of question was that? Of course he was the guy pictured in the photo. He remembered standing up against a bare white wall at the lotto/deli/photo store for it, like they were taking his mug shot, he trying to affect a smile when it was the last thing he felt like doing. A recent ugly break-up with a guy who turned into a big jerk had killed his mood, leaving Jake Westbury to pose like a rock star with an attitude. But then he realized what the security agent was questioning: the photo displayed a clean-shaven Jake, and of recent weeks he'd been sporting a freshly grown goatee. He supposed the circle of hair on his face altered his appearance enough to warrant a second look.

Jake rubbed his chin. "Oh yeah, going for a new look."

"Sure thing, kid," the guy said dismissively. "Makes you look...devious. I'm supposed to take note of devious."

*Kid* Jake liked, *devious* not so much. He was thirty-eight, probably not much younger than the man behind the security desk, but he wasn't as...weathered looking as this guy. Maybe the civil-servant life took it toll. Jake was a freelance writer/frustrated novelist by design, could shave his face or not. Didn't matter. He hated being tied down to one company, four walls, a single cubicle, one boring, same look. The world was his office, and on this day said world was opening wide its embrace. Tomorrow morning, he'd be on British soil, a summer of writing and adventure awaiting him.

"Have a good flight," the guard said, handing back the passport.

As Jake made his way toward the scanners, his mind was distracted by the word *devious*. It conjured bad things, like he was a crook...or considering he was at an airport, a terrorist. A silly thought. Jake was as all-American as they came—thick brown hair, brown eyes, pale skin; he was no threat to anyone, except maybe to himself.

At the security checkpoint, he dropped his shoulder bag into the gray bin, taking out his laptop. Then he removed his blazer, his belt, his shoes, and made his way through the scanner without setting off any beeps or warnings. The body scanners were not as judgmental—you want to change your facial appearance, fine; just don't do it with metal. Jake retrieved his belongings, heading through the terminal toward his gate.

Just then panic washed over him. Nervously patting the pockets of his blazer, his pants, he realized he didn't know where he'd placed his passport. A mild sweat broke out across his forehead. Where the hell was it? Jake had stuffed it back inside... Wait, had he put it inside his carry-on luggage? You know, this was the worst part about flying, the mess they made of your head, putting all sorts of thoughts inside it about terrorists, criminals, the underbelly of the human condition, so much so they had you forgetting who you were, screwing with your prized organizational skills. Jake was the kind of person who placed his wallet in the same location every day, the back left pocket of his jeans, and yup, after a quick pat, he noted that the wallet was there. Thank God. But

his passport, that was entirely another matter. And without it, there was no way the airline personnel would let him board the aircraft, no way the stern officers at passport control on the other end would allow him entry into the country.

A summer-long trip to London, England, off to a banner start, ended before he'd even had a chance to get out of the terminal. For Jake Westbury, who planned his life to within an inch of perfection, for such an important detail to go awry, well, that just wasn't acceptable, was it?

He stopped in his tracks to review his most recent steps. He had only gotten about one hundred feet beyond the body scanners, and he knew he had his passport in his hand as he tossed his belongings into the gray bins at the checkpoint. He reviewed. Shoulder bag open, laptop out, shoes off, boarding pass... Wait, where the hell was his boarding pass? With his passport, of course, stuffed in the middle of the booklet. Bending down, he opened his bag, searching past his book and his iPod, the two items that would occupy his time on the six-hour overnight flight, taking out his laptop once more. Essentially, he emptied the small bag's contents onto the floor, shook the bag while oblivious to the strange looks he was receiving from passersby. Not one person stopped to ask if he needed help, not that he expected assistance. In this selfish world, people looked after themselves first and themselves second. *Shit, shit, shit, it's not here, no passport,* he thought, *no boarding pass,* his excessive swearing making him think he sounded a lot like his mouthy friend Freddie, though his increasing panic was more reminiscent of how the panicky Matt would react.



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*by Adam Carpenter*

Jake Westbury had always been the monkey in the middle when it came to his two best friends. The oldest of their platonic threesome, the most practical, levelheaded of them, he always felt torn between Freddie's slutty, fun-loving lifestyle and Matt's closemouthed, heart-on-his-sleeve personality. Like Freddie, too often Jake indulged his desires with little thought to the consequences, but usually the next morning he was jealous of Matt's ability to not give in to such primal urges. He was the typical horny gay after a few drinks—love the climax, regret the guy. Such was the confounding nature that was Jake Westbury. And now, with Freddie having already left for Rome, Matt in Paris nearly two weeks now, it was Jake's turn to head off on his summer adventure in London.

That is, if he ever found his passport.

He knew his flight number; he remembered his gate. The plane didn't depart for a good ninety minutes, assuming it was still listed for an on-time departure. Best thing for him to do was to head over to the gate, check in with the airline personnel to see if anyone had turned in his passport. Terminal 4 at JFK, Jake was flying out on Virgin Atlantic, and at this later hour—nearly nine thirty at night—it was not the usual swarm of people at the gates, shops, bar. With most flights having already departed, the terminal had an echoing quiet to it. Passing one gate with an overnight flight to Dubai, Jake was struck by how vast was the world, the countless places you could fly to. He was also struck by these many strangers, any of whom might have stumbled upon his passport. Swiped his passport?

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His earlier paranoia about terrorists and criminals came rushing back to him. What if his passport had fallen into nefarious hands? His identity could be easily stolen, causing all sorts of headaches with his bank accounts, his credit cards, you name it...hell, his gym membership. (The crook could have that...) Yet he had his wallet, patting his back pocket again to double, triple check, so at least he could prove who he was if needed.

Jake ventured down the terminal corridor, making his way toward Gate 4. Dozens of people were waiting in the provided chairs, some lost in their headphones, their computers, books, others just staring out into nothingness. Jake never understood those people, a six-hour flight ahead of them, already bored. What would they do on the plane? Probably these were the people who could sleep through the heaviest turbulence, bastards; but then again, they were no doubt bored, their own lives automatically put them to sleep. Jake always awoke with enthusiasm, never knowing what the day would bring. Take today—since the morning he'd been planning for a smooth flight London, and look at him now? Drama surrounding his passport.

He approached the desk at the gate, where a man and female attendant were busy talking, dressed in their distinctive Virgin suits of red and purple. They curtly dispensed with a customer who had far too many questions—what time would they begin boarding, did they board from the back or the front, what time would they be landing?—and then it was Jake's turn.

"May I help you, sir?" the woman asked.

"I sure hope so. I've lost my passport," he said. "My boarding pass too, that was inside the passport."

"Oh, dear, that's unfortunate," she said with a sympathetic, trained frown.

The man—young, cute, dark-haired, the kind Jake would take notice of at a bar, give him a smile across the crowded room—looked up at him. Scrutinizing him. Inwardly criticizing him? *Fine, treat me that way, I won't be buying you a drink, taking you home and...*

*Focus, Jake.*

"Most unfortunate," the man added unnecessarily.

Unfortunate. Jake loved British understatement.

"I was wondering...hoping, perhaps someone had turned it in? I had it earlier, obviously. Otherwise I would not have gotten through security. Probably dropped out of my blazer pocket when I removed it to put my stuff in those gray bins. They make you practically undress over there, it's a wonder people don't lose more of their belongings."

"Sorry, sir, no one has turned in a passport," she said.

"You're on this flight, sir? VS 09?" the male gate attendant asked.

"Yes."

"Hmm. We'll put out a search. Hopefully someone will find it, turn it in. Otherwise..."

Yeah, Jake knew what otherwise meant. No passport, no fly.

Regardless, they asked for his name, checking it against the manifest, nodding when they had confirmation that he'd cleared check-in. Jake Westbury, seat 44D.

"Mr. Westbury, if someone turns it in, we'll make an announcement over the terminal's intercom. I'm sure it will turn up. Can't have gone far now, can it? Did you check back at the security checkpoint?"

Jake nodded, said he had.

"Okay, I suggest you have a seat, relax."

Great, sit still and stay calm. Sure, that was easy.

"I'll be at the bar," Jake said.

The woman said nothing, but the man looked up with obvious envy. Guess it had been a long day. *Too bad, I've already decided not to buy you a drink*, Jake thought. *Cute only gets you so far, and besides...dammit, focus on what's important...* His passport, getting on the plane, landing in London, a summer searching for the ideal love. Put aside all thoughts of cute guys, drinks, picking someone up, sex...one-nighters that meant nothing. Wasn't that how this whole European venture had started—a tryst that, as amazing as it had been, had left Jake feeling empty? Where was the consuming love that went with such pleasuring climaxes? Jake pushed those thoughts aside, heading for the bar and a much-needed drink.

Setting down his shoulder bag, glad to have the weight off, he checked out the selection of beers on tap. The bartender asked for his order; he opted for a Bass. Might as well get in the spirit of the UK, even if he actually never made it over there. *No, stop with the negative thoughts*. It would all work out, someone would find the passport, return it, and he'd get on that plane and take to sky with his fellow travelers. Beer in front of him, Jake drank down a healthy gulp. He stared at

the television, which was turned to baseball. The Mets were losing. Like that was something new.

"Uh, excuse me...?"

Jake heard the voice, turned to find a young man standing behind him.

"You're Jake Westbury, right?"

"Yeah...I mean, do I know you?"

The man held up a small green booklet, a rectangular piece of paper sticking out of it. Jake practically lunged for it.

"Oh my God, you found it..."

"Yeah, it was stuck against the side of one of those bins. I was going to turn it in at the gate, but then I saw you heading for the bar," the man said, his voice heavily accented. Jake wasn't sure from where, but foreign definitely. Had to double-check, though, you know. You look a little different from the photo. The facial hair. So, I guess you're gonna need this."

Jake could barely focus on what the man was saying, what the man even looked like. All he could see was the runaway passport still being waved about in the air between them. Finally, Jake took hold of the passport, flipping it open to ensure that it was indeed his. But of course it was, the missing goatee in his picture notwithstanding. Did the addition of the facial hair really change his appearance that much? Whatever. At least he had his passport back, along with his boarding pass. Thank God.

"Hey, thanks so much. You have no idea how much I appreciate it. Look, uh..."

"Erich. Erich Sommer."

"Erich, right. Thanks again. Can I buy you a drink? Least I can do."

"Uh, sure. Why not? I'll take what you're having."

"Bass."

"Sure, that's fine," Erich said, settling into the bar stool next to Jake. "Not exactly hearty German beer, but in the States, what can you expect?"

"You're from Germany?" Aha, that was the accent.

"Munich. Born and bred."

"Then you know from beer. Headed home?"

"A brief stop in London, but yeah, then home."

Erich's beer quickly arrived, as did a refill of Jake's. He'd barely eaten. The first drink was already swimming inside his addled brain. The two men raised glasses and cheered.

"Really, Erich, you have no idea how much you've helped me."

"I'm glad to. Traveling, it's not easy these days."

Jake nodded, agreeing with his new friend. And speaking of, as they drank from their glasses, Jake finally had a moment to assess the man in front of him. Thick bodied, white blond hair, crystal blue eyes, a ruddy complexion, he looked barely old enough to shave, yet held a world-weary look to him. Good genes, hard life, that's what Jake decided. He also decided Erich was kind of attractive, not exactly his type but pleasing nonetheless. The way he looked up at the television screen, curious about the game playing out in front of them, Erich was undoubtedly straight—no sense overthinking this one.

"So, you're on this flight? Virgin, departing at ten fifty?" Jake asked.

"Yeah, not many other flights leaving at this time. Besides, I love this airline—the private screen at your seat, you can watch pretty much anything. Which is important, since I can't sleep on planes. The slightest bump in the air, my eyes open and my hearts pumps. Like we're gonna crash. Even though we never do. Well, so far, anyway. I'm still here, right?"

Jake smiled. "Good point. I'm not much of a sleeper either on flights."

A sudden uncomfortable silence fell between the two men, bodies shifting awkwardly on their bar stools. "Well, Jake, perhaps we can entertain each other on board," Erich ventured, his hand sliding over the bar to touch Jake's arm. Jake pulled back, not even sure why, but it caused a dark tint to cloud Erich's eyes. "I'm sorry if I was too forward."

"No, no," Jake said, trying to recover from the unexpected advance. "It's just...you took me by surprise. But no, your offer, it's very nice. I like your eyes—they're so piercing. Even if you hadn't been kind enough to return my passport, I can tell you're a nice guy."

"I am very nice, unassuming," Erich said.

"Except you assumed I was gay."

"Not assumed, hoped," he said with a smile. "So, Jake, I like the top of your shirt."

His words initially confused Jake. The top of his... Oh, oh. So, Erich liked what Jake's open-necked shirt had on offer, a triangle of exposed chest hair. How did you respond to that? Between his facial hair, his open shirt, Jake guessed he was

looking a bit hairy. Which was odd, since it he who usually sought out the masculine, furry type. It's not like this was his favorite pickup joint, Gaslight Tavern, not like he was going home with him. Still, did you say thanks?

"Uh, thanks, there's plenty more," Jake found himself saying, surprising himself with his bold overture. What, was he going to pick this hot guy up at the airport, take him into a bathroom stall, and fuck him while they waited out the hour that remained before boarding? Or better yet, wait until they had taken to the sky, follow the sexy blond toward permanent membership in the mile-high club, right there inside the tight confines of the bathroom?

"Hmm, I would like to find out just how much more," Erich said with a knowing smile, his fingers snaking inside Jake's shirt. He stroked Jake's hair, apparently unfazed by the fact they were surrounded by fellow travelers, breeders unaccustomed to the mating dance between gay men. Hell, Jake wasn't even sure he felt comfortable with this scenario, except for the fact that Erich's grazing made his cock thicken inside his jeans.

Truthfully, Jake wasn't used to being pursued. At Gaslight, at other gay bars, at parties, he tended to be the one to scope out someone he found appealing, exchange knowing looks, smiles, raise a glass in a toast to an uncertain but promising night. But Erich was taking the lead here, and as much as Jake wanted to resist his allure, there was something totally hot about an impromptu hookup. The reason behind his trip to London was a supposed cure for these casual



sexual encounters, an effort to put behind his anything-goes past and find true, lasting love.

But he wasn't in London yet, was he?

"So," Jake said, signaling the bartender for another round. "It should be a fun flight."

"Yes," Erich said, "very bumpy."

A suggestive comment like that, Jake nearly shot his load right there and then.

Nearly.

Jake Westbury settled in his seat with a permanent hard-on, or so it seemed. He was completely turned on. Between the alluring Virgin Atlantic Airlines and the sexy Erich Sommer seated just ten rows ahead of him, he laughed at the irony. A newcomer to the airline, to sex on an airplane too. Since their fortuitous meeting at the bar, there was little getting around the fact that some form of sex would occur on board this airplane. Erich wanted it, Jake wanted it. They had felt heat build between them, neither of them denying the attraction crackling between them. It was the anticipation of when, how, where...which position, that taunted Jake. He thought about it as he buckled himself into this seat, when he felt the orgasmic thrust of the giant jet shooting in to the dark sky. Damn, takeoff was positively arousing. After a short delay, a flight attendant had come around asking for his drink order, and considering he'd already consumed three beers, Jake probably should have stuck to Coke. Still, turned on as he was, he wanted to keep the party going. So he ordered red wine in anticipation of the beef tips he'd ordered as a meal. Keep the buzz, suck the cock.

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About two agonizing hours into the flight, meals dispensed with, a second small bottle of wine at his side, Jake was feeling woozy and tired, unsure that what he and Erich had discussed was actually going to happen. He was watching *The Hangover* on the screen and hoped it wasn't a sign of things to come. After his passport issue, he needed no further drama. In fact, he hoped the intrigue over his lost ID was the only drama he would see on this trip. After all, this was so much more than a vacation—it was a change of life based on the idea of falling in love. It was what Jake truly desired, to meet that someone special and fall hopelessly in love. No more chance encounters, no more slutty nights of great sex and bad behavior, no more nights of picking up sexy men like Nico.

Ah, Nico. The man behind this trip.

Hot, hairy, with brown eyes that penetrated the inner soul, totally nice package, Nico had been visiting New York from Spain, looking for a hot night of memorable sex. Jake had met him at the bar, followed through on the alluring dance of seduction, ended up taking him home. But when Jake had awakened in the morning, he'd been filled with regret. How many more nights would he have like this? Not that he was complaining. Nico had serviced him well—that night and that morning. It was just that...well, when would someone not only stay for breakfast but for lunch, dinner, and beyond? That was when Jake had decided he needed to change his ways, and this trip to London was his way of starting fresh.

*Yeah, you're off to a great start, Jake. A quickie on the plane.*

Erich Sommer was coming his way now, his intent as clear as the bulge in his pants. Could Jake really go through with this? Was he that appreciative of Erich's having found his passport? Was that worth sacrificing his sense of self-worth? Or maybe this fling was supposed to happen, an interim moment, sandwiched between past life and future dreams. Not quite Jake's old life in New York, not saddled with the ideals awaiting him in London either. A mere distraction lost somewhere over the Atlantic, forgotten before they landed at Heathrow.

The seat beside Jake was empty, so Erich just plopped down beside him.

"I had the pasta. Big mistake."

"Beef," Jake said.

"Couldn't wait, huh?" he said, smiling sideways at him.

"I said beef. Not sausage," Jake replied.

"Ooh, dirty boy. So, you gonna follow me?"

"Are you sure..."

Erich frowned at Jake's hesitation. "Are you worried about what we are going to do, or worried about being caught?"

Well, that was a question, wasn't it? Not one Jake knew the answer to.

"I'll tell you what, Jake. It's like...what, three in the morning New York time? Most of the people on board are sleeping, and if they're not, they're certainly not paying any attention to a couple of guys who want to have a little transatlantic fun. The flight attendants, they are in break mode, busy talking amongst each other, no doubt complaining about difficult passengers. The bathroom behind

us...it is free—I see the light off—and no one is waiting. I will go first, leave it unlocked. You follow, we lock it. Yes?"

Jake wasn't so sure about "yes," but he found his head nodding nonetheless. Though which head was in charge, Jake couldn't be sure. He was swimming in beer and wine, his mind definitely under the influence. His cock, though, it was leading the charge, thrusting against the tight enclosure of his jeans. Wanting release. Knowing it was possible.

Erich got up, disappearing from Jake's vision.

Jake turned back, noticed an empty space outside the restroom. He heard the door close, but the light did not go on. For a second he considered his options. Get up, join Erich. Stay put, piss off Erich. Not that he expected the man to cause trouble if Jake didn't follow though, but he certainly expected something in return for retrieving Jake's passport. If not for Erich, Jake might still be at JFK, or worse, back home and registering for a quickie passport. So, basically, it came down to a quickie passport or a quickie in the airport bathroom?

Jake got up from his seat, his eyes darting around his neighbors, none of them paying him any mind. God, was it always this easy, just a casual stroll down the aisle to the bathroom, sneak in when no one was paying attention, join someone else inside the tight quarters? And then what, indulge in their basest desires? The answer to that question was quite obvious once Jake slipped inside the small bathroom. He found Erich sitting on the closed seat of the toilet, pants pulled down around his ankles, his hand wrapped

around an uncut, thick cock, its tip smiling at Jake like a present.

"Lock the door," Erich said.

Shit, Jake had been so surprised by what he saw, he'd forgotten. Quickly, he slid the bolt across the lock, effectively shutting them off from the rest of the aircraft. As uncertain as he was about what was to happen, Jake was not in control. Erich stood, coming right at him, fingers undoing the buttons of his shirt to reveal Jake's chest.

"Hmm, you were right, plenty more," Erich said, brushing the fine brown fur that covered his pecs. "That's feels so nice, really sexy."

He pushed Jake up against the sink, his hand guiding his cock up over the trail of hair on Jake's stomach. Brushing his cock upward into the thicker part of Jake's chest, it finally made its way to Jake's face. Erich scraped the tip of his cock all over Jake's prickly goatee, all the while groaning with building pleasure. Fingers toyed with his nipples, the hair on his chest. Just then Erich let out a sharp cry, and his cock wasted no time in exploding. He watched as white come shot out, drenching Jake's goatee, dripping down onto his chest.

"Aw, shit, shit, shit," Erich said. "Wow, guess you really had me turned on."

Jake just nodded, trying his best to hide a smile. "Yeah, I guess so."

"Sorry, hairy chests do that to me."

Jake wanted to say the same but held back. Erich was obviously smoother than a baby.

"So, you want me to do you?" Erich asked.

Jake realized that receiving a blowjob inside a small bathroom on board an aircraft, 38,000 feet over the Atlantic was the last thing he wanted. It was almost as though Erich's messy, quick explosion had drained the passion out of Jake. "You know, Erich, it's okay. That was hot, the way your come warmed my body. Uh, I'm glad you found me sexy, and trust me, I'm really grateful that you found and returned my passport. So, why not call us even?"

"Sure, sure. Hey, Jake?"

"Yeah?"

"Don't forget to clean up. I sort of came a lot."

Erich departed, leaving a regretful Jake to stare hopelessly back at himself in the mirror. Covered in a stranger's oozy come, his shirt unbuttoned, his hard cock pressing against his pants. Jake realized the two of them had never even exchanged a kiss.

So much for romance.

He had to hope the rest of the trip would be less...uh, messy.

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## Chapter Two

Jake had to get his mind off sex.

He didn't see Erich the rest of the flight, nor during deplaning and through passport control. Maybe the guy was ashamed, trying to avoid Jake. Their encounter had been sleazy for sure, unsatisfying for Jake no doubt. But it was over, time to move on. Jake had told himself before this trip began that he was over his phase of flings. He needed to concentrate on something more permanent, like a real relationship. Go figure. Did this mean he was growing up? Maybe. But that didn't stop him from checking out this cute guy at immigration, another bearded guy on the Heathrow Express to Paddington Station, or the sexy guy on the tube with the nice package. Tube indeed.

By the time Jake arrived at his flat, his cock was pressing up against his pants and he thought first thing he would do was relieve the pressure that had built up inside his balls. Several times he thought he should have just taken a cab from Heathrow, paid the outrageous fare—at least he would have been settled already, perhaps enjoying his first lager at the local pub up on the High Street. But no, he was only just this moment trudging his suitcases up the stairs to the second floor of the house on the picturesque, tree-lined Deodar Road. The eye candy he'd observed while traveling into London had only increased his desire to get settled.

He'd taken the Heathrow Express into Paddington Station, which turned out was located nowhere near the quiet

neighborhood of Putney—situated on the Southern bank of the river Thames. A cab at that point would have been senseless, since he would have been traveling through the midday traffic of Central London. So he hopped the District Line tube, making his way south toward Wimbledon. He got off the train at the aboveground Putney Bridge station, and from there his trip had only grown more challenging. Downstairs, through the turnstiles, walk through a narrow mews that on a dark night could seem dangerous, hike up a long brick-lined staircase to the Putney footbridge, cross the river, go back down the stairs on the other side, walk two blocks to his house. All with luggage. All in surprising eighty-degree sunshine.

But now that he'd unlocked his door and entered his home for the next three months, Jake could breathe a contented sigh of relief. The flat was perfect, just like the pictures he'd seen online—nicely appointed, with casual, accessible furniture. A large bedroom, bath, kitchen were all nice, but it was the living room that represented his favorite part. Oddly, it faced the back of the apartment, but when he saw why, he completely understood the landlord's choice of design. A large bay window overlooked a lush garden below, and beyond that was a beautiful view of the Thames itself, so lovely it might well have been a postcard. He could easily make out the metal footbridge he'd just crossed to his left, and right now a northbound train was rumbling its way over the accompanying bridge.

Jake placed his heavy luggage in the bedroom. He would unpack later. Right now he was thirsty from the long trip and



the idea of his first English ale called to him. A quick check of the fridge produced happy results, as several oversize cans of Carling Lager stared back at him, along with a note: WELCOME TO LONDON. MAY THE FIRST FEW BE ON US. STEVEN & JENNIE. They were his landlords, and so far they seemed nice. Jake grabbed the can, popped the top, and...ah, a perfect, cold first sip. Satisfied, he now needed to be satiated.

He padded back into the bedroom, where he tossed off his shirt and jeans, followed by his boxers. He dropped to the bed, and his fingers wound their way down his chest, brushing at the trail of hair on his belly, finally resting on his growing cock. He stroked it once, twice with one hand while his other grazed against his goatee. He recalled how Erich's cock had felt bristling against his facial hair, how the fuzzy touch had made him come almost immediately. Jake was feeling the heat swarming all over his body. The room was near stifling, warm from afternoon sun beaming through the windows. Sweat broke out on his brow, and he intensified his stroke. His measured breath became increasingly strained. He teased his nipples, twisted them ever so slightly, feeling a tingle of pain radiate through his flush body. Erich's handsome face popped into his mind and he could hear him saying how much he liked Jake's chest, he preferred his men on the hairier side. Just then Jake thought about Nico, the man who had led him down this journey of self-discovery, the way his black-carpeted chest had felt, the way his cock had pierced him that night and the next morning...the slap of his heavy balls against Jake's tight ass...

"Oooh, shit...ohhh," Jake said, his body shuddering with the first wave of orgasm.

Then his cock jutted once, twice, shooting a thick load of white come onto his hand. He leaned forward to watch his climax as drops slid down his shaft, buried in the deep confines of his thick crop of dark pubes. His head crashed back against the pillow, his breath heavy. After a moment he reached for his beer, downing most of it with one huge gulp. The dizzying feel of alcohol coursed through his veins, again warming his body.

Getting up from the bed, he quickly washed off and then from his luggage found a pair of gray shorts. He made his way back to the living room, opening wide the windows and feeling an instant rush of fresh air break off the river.

"Well, hello!" he heard a voice from below.

"Oh, uh, hi," Jake said, realizing that two people were sitting in the tiny garden. A man and a woman, presumably the aforementioned Steven and Jennie. And indeed, Jake's guess was right on the money.

"You must be Jake—a pleasure to meet you," said the man. Jake estimated his age as mid-thirties, the woman maybe a few years younger. "Steven Pidgeon. This one here is Jennie Barth. Pop on down, join us for a drink."

"Uh, thanks. Let me get changed..."

"You look fine. It's warm out," Steven said. "Not every day in London one gets to work on his tan line."

Jake shrugged, said he'd be right down.

He wasn't self-conscious about his body—he knew he worked hard to keep it in shape. Flat stomach, strong biceps,

and muscled legs all added up to a man who knew that as he got older he needed to keep up his physical activity to maintain his appeal. Steven and Jennie, turned out, where also attired for the unseasonable warmth hovering over London. When Jake arrived in the green garden, he noticed Jennie wore a bikini, her generous breasts swelling beneath the thin material. She was pretty, with blonde streaks amid her dark roots. A warm, welcoming smile drew him in. Steven had on shorts and a tank top, a slight belly protruding. He had a bald head and a few stray whiskers on his chin. Otherwise, he appeared pretty hairless. Not that Steven was gay, but still it helped that Jake did not find the man to be his type. Last thing he needed was to imagine his landlord visiting him for a quickie at night. No complications, no flings, he reminded himself, shutting out all such sexual thoughts as he shook hands with his new acquaintances.

"Grab yourself a beer, Jake. We'll fatten you but good here in jolly London."

Jennie waved her boyfriend off. "Don't listen to him. Nice to see a man who takes care of himself. Maybe you'll be a good influence on Steven."

"Doubt that," Steven said. "Haven't done me sit-ups in a dozen fortnights."

Jennie rolled her eyes. "He's speaking that way for your benefit. Putting on airs."

Jake laughed, drank down some of his beer. "So, did I luck out or what? You guys have a nice setup here. This place is great—I'm really happy with my flat, and with this view of the

Thames, guess it's not so bad being a bit of a distance from Central London."

"Ugh, we just hate Central London," Jennie said with obvious disgust. "Piccadilly Circus, Trafalgar, Leicester Square—the tourists and terrorists can have it. Stevie and I are quite content here in our quiet enclave. Got our favorite pubs up on the High Street—hey, speaking of, a few friends are gathering a little later for a friend's birthday. The Railway, just up the road. Meet us why don't you? Unless you have other plans."

"No plans—actually, I really don't know anyone here. Kind of an impulse decision."

Steven raised an eyebrow. "How can a summer-long holiday to London be impulsive? Hmm, I think there's more to the story here. Who are you running from, Jake? Scorned lover, or maybe some thug you owe money to?"

"Ha. Far less dramatic than either scenario. Actually, I've come to fall in love."

His new friends tossed him a querulous look. "Say that again?" Steven asked.

Just then Jake felt embarrassed, his skin turning to instant sunburn. "Well, maybe not love...but, you know...meet new people."

Jennie popped another beer, handed it to Jake. "You'll need fortification, then. You've got us for starters, and if you join us tonight at the Railway, you'll be sure to meet others. In fact, if love isn't on the menu, maybe one of our friends will interest you enough to for a little romp in the hay. Kimberly will totally fall for you—she gets one look at your

yummy chest, she'll probably spread 'em right there." For effect, Jennie reached out and brushed her fingers against the light coating of hair on Jake's chest. "Ooh, that feels nice, surprisingly soft. Stevie's as hairy as a Mexican cat."

Good thing Jake's face was already red. Jennie admission might have sent him back inside. "Uh, sorry to say but I think Kimberly's gonna be disappointed..."

"Shit. Gay. Right?"

"Yeah," Jake said. "That a problem?"

"Not for us. But tonight at the pub, don't tell Kimberly. We'll have a little fun with her. She thinks she can trap anything with her...well..."

"Beaver," Steven said with a hearty laugh.

"Pigs, that's what men are."

Jake smiled. "Only the straight ones."

"That leaves off Nevil," Steven said.

"Who's Nevil?" Jake asked, alerted to the fact that they suddenly seemed to have a gay friend now that they knew Jake's own sexual orientation. Wasn't it always that way with straight people—just because you're gay and their friend is means by tomorrow morning, you'll be picking out china patterns and booking a B&B wedding in Vermont. Still, Jake wasn't opposed to meeting someone. Wasn't that why he was here, start over, start fresh? But a guy named Nevil? Serves Jake right, no one forced him to choose England.

"Nevil Masters is only tonight's birthday boy. Yeah, he'll like you...but I think you can do a lot better," Jennie said with a queenlike wave. "Actually, you know who Jake would like...and who would like Jake..."

She clammed up the moment Steven shot her a warning look. "Don't even go there."

But Jake was interested. "Sounds intriguing."

"Hunter Abbott is anything but intriguing," Stevie said, "and besides, I doubt he'll even show. Mind of his own, that fellow."

Jennie nodded. "True. Hunter is as reliable as...well, as my Stevie is hairy."

Jake set down an empty beer can. He'd have to pace himself if he was going to be in any condition for later. "His name's Hunter? I like him already. If he lives up to his billing, I might just be happy being a gatherer. Count me in for tonight. If your mysterious friend shows, I want to be there. Maybe I'll take a page from Kimberly's playbook and drop trou right then and there, let him have his way with me."

"Christ, you got me all turned on," Jennie said.

*Back at ya*, Jake thought, thinking about a guy named Hunter and a guy named Nevil and imaging both of them living up to their names. One was probably wildly sexy, aggressive in bed, while the other no doubt would lie there like a sack of potatoes. Opposites the two of them. Jake Westbury was left feeling torn. He wasn't here to meet the bad boy. A guy like Nevil, he sounded nice, safe...a guy you could build a relationship around. A guy like Hunter, surely he meant only bad news.

So then why did Jake envision his legs in the air, the bad boy pumping away at him?

\* \* \* \*

Jake closed up the back window to his flat, again gazing at the languid waters of the Thames. At six in the evening the tide had come in, the water level lower than he'd noticed earlier. Noticing that his neighbors had cleared out of the garden, Jake decided that before making us way up toward the pub he would take a quick tour of the grounds.

He'd tossed on jeans and a fresh T-shirt, throwing a casual long-sleeve shirt over it. The temperature was still on the warm side, but the BBC had reported a cold front moving in tonight, so the extra shirt would offer him some warmth when needed. A quick check in the mirror, he ran a finger through his hair, smoothed down his goatee. Was he pleased with the result? Yes, but that still didn't mean he wasn't nervous about meeting the friends of his new friends. Steven and Jennie, they were quite a pair. She was quick with an insult; he seemed unfazed by them. For a second, Jake was jealous of their relationship, the ease with which they kept company. Why was that so difficult for him to find?

As he opened his door, he heard noises coming from the flat directly next to him. Hard, urgent cries, the banging of furniture against a wall. Okay, guess that was the first drawback to the house: thin walls. He'd known them only a few hours, and already Jake was privy to the sounds of their lovemaking. *Keep that in mind*, he told himself, assuming he had opportunity this summer to give his bed a nice sweaty workout. Just then he thought of the alluring Hunter, imagining a sexy hunk with an impressively hairy chest and a big, thick dick. Fantasy was nice, but he probably looked nothing like that. A pasty Englishman with a beer gut and

crooked teeth, that's the second image that flashed in his mind. Like Steven. Jake's cock pressed against his pants, even as he tried to quiet his inner urges. The sound of climax coming from next door didn't help matters.

He made his way outside, following the path that led to the garden. Opening the wooden gate, Jake went past the table and chairs he'd previously sat at, making his way down the water's edge. All around him, the world moved, modes of transportation surrounding him. A train crossing over the Putney Bridge, boats bobbing in the turgid waters of the Thames, and above him one plane, then another, heading for Heathrow. Obviously this was along their flight path. Still, Jake was pleased to be on solid ground, his feet able to take him where he needed to go. That was the good thing about big cities—you could walk. New York was like that, London too. The differences were minimal between the two cities, but enough divided them to give Jake a sense of renewal.

For a moment he hoped his friends Matt and Freddie were experiencing their own level of romantic bliss. Whether along the Seine or the Tiber, each river was emblematic of their search for something bigger in life, a steady flow toward tomorrow. Whether grand declarations of love or the endless pursuit of the next party, his friends were hopefully enjoying their own summer excursions. So too was Jake determined to indulge his passions. About to depart for the pub, he gazed directly down from the cement wall, noticing a ladder made of rope and at the bottom, which led to a dock and a lone kayak. He guessed Steven liked to glide out on to the waters;



perhaps he'd asked to borrow it someday, take his own sojourn along the legendary river.

He recalled Jennie's directions on how to get to the Railway but figured he didn't have to take the most direct route. If they were still fucking upstairs, no telling when they might arrive, and while Jake had no problem having a drink on his own, he liked the idea of starting his trip with a night out with newfound friends. So he made his way toward Putney Road and eventually the High Street. There was a Marks & Spencer where he could stock up on food, an Orange phone store where he could add more money to his temporary mobile. An HMV store attracted his attention. Record stores were dinosaurs in New York City, so he was heartened to see this store, reminding himself a visit would no doubt introduce him to some new music. He passed other pubs, fast-food shops, a Boots pharmacy. As he ambled his way up the narrow, busy street, to his left he saw the rumbling of the National Rail train, which Jennie had said was a faster way to Central London than the tube across the bridge. He'd have to check it out and added that to his growing list of things to see and do.

At around seven fifteen in the evening he arrived at the Railway Pub, a sign above the door indicating this was a "Weatherspoon's" establishment. Just have some good cask ales, that was all Jake cared about. He made his way into the large pub located on the northeast corner of the Putney High Street and Upper Richmond Road. The place was buzzing with a large crowd that wound its way along the long bar, at tables and chairs. Jake detected another large crowd on the second

level and was beginning to wonder how he would ever find his new friends amid the dense crowd, assuming they were even done, dressed, and drinking here.

"Jake, over here!" he suddenly heard, a thin, pale arm waving above a few heads.

It was Jennie. He recognized her voice above the din of the crowd. He pushed his way through mostly thick-bodied men who were knocking back pints of thick, hearty ales and ciders. They parted as best they could, and at last Jake emerged into a tight circle of four people. Along with Steven and Jennie was a tall, striking woman with hair the color of flame, who gazed directly at Jake, a smile breaking across her pretty face. She wore high boots and a low skirt, and if Jake had to guess, this was the flirty Kimberly. The only other person was a thin man about five-eight, with wire-rimmed glasses and potent blue eyes enlarged behind them. He was cute, if bookish, and his cheeks held a ruddy, reddish innocence to them. No way was this guy Hunter, Jake decided.

"Jake Westbury, I'd like you to meet Kimberly Locket and Nevil Masters."

They all shook hands, with Jake adding a "nice to meet you" and "happy birthday, Nevil." Steven busied himself by ordering Jake a drink, handing him a pint of Green King Abbot Ale. "No more of that boring Carling for you. That's like Budweiser swill to you. This will coat your insides."

"Thanks," Jake said, taking a healthy gulp, smiling when he set the glass down. "Perfect."

The small group moved away from the crowded bar, scooping up a newly empty table and chairs. They settled

down and raised their glasses in cheer, toasting Nevil's birthday and welcoming Jake to London. Kimberly, Jake noticed, had moved in close to him, her eyes wandering over his body. Shit, so Jennie hadn't told her he was gay. She really did want her friend to make a fool of herself. How to avoid embarrassing her—and himself? That's when he noticed that Nevil was equally attentive toward him, his eyes practically sinking into Jake's. Out of the corner of his eye, Jake could see a smirking Jennie. Steven looked disinterested, happy to just knock back his brew.

"So, Jake, what brings you to London?" Kimberly asked.

"Just a chance to escape my other life in New York—I'm a freelance writer. Assignments have dried up in this economy, so I thought maybe I'd write a book. Here I am."

"How long are you staying?" Nevil asked.

"All summer."

"Really?" they both said simultaneously.

If Jake was into threesomes—well, threesomes that involved women—they could be at his flat faster than they could get their clothes off. Truth be told, neither was exactly his type. Kimberly for obvious reasons. Nevil...he just seemed a bit too queeny, too much of a twink. What was he, twenty-five?

"I think we need to let Jake settle in, maybe have a second beer," Steven said, "before the two of you begin stripping for him. Jeez, you two are practically creaming your jeans."

"Steven!" Jennie exclaimed. "Guys, really, sorry..."

"Don't apologize," Jake said, not wanting his first night in London to be marred by such juvenile antics.

Still Nevil looked positively chastised and faded into the background by playing with his mobile. Kimberly reacted the opposite, spurred on by Steven's challenge. "I don't think Jake minds the attention one bit. A man likes to know when someone finds him attractive, and who better than a vixen like myself to let him know? If two people find each other attractive, why go through some ridiculous dance?"

Jake was spared answering. Their conversation was interrupted by the arrival of someone new, his shadow arriving first before his body blocked their view of the bar. Kimberly's mouth quieted as she crossed her arms across her bosom. Nevil gazed up, sneered, then looked back down. As for Jake, he merely stared at the man standing before him, a man whom he could only describe as the perfect specimen. Heat seemed to sizzle off his body, giving rise to the temperature in the crowded bar. Jake felt a sudden tightness in his balls, a slight thickening of his interested cock. *My God*, he thought, *is this guy hot or what?* Did he dare think this was the alluded-to Hunter? He had to hope so. The guy was about six feet tall, with a strong body evident from the tight T-shirt he wore, the leg-hugging jeans. His forearms were coated with dark brown hair that matched the deliberately styled messy thatch on his head. Three days of stubble created a roguish quality to his handsome face. What had Steven said earlier? Nevil and Kimberly both might cream their jeans over Jake? Well, now it was Jake's turn, and it was all because of this guy...this hot, yummy, delicious stud before him. Jake could only imagine what Hunter looked like naked.

"Ah, Hunter, you made it," Steven said.

Bingo. Hunter, who Jake already knew was gay, seemed on the surface exactly the way he had fantasized about. He wouldn't mind one bit seeing his fantasy follow through to fruition. Which meant he wouldn't mind waking up in this guy's bed with a sore ass.

Oh, thank the good Lord he was gay.

"Who's this bloke?" Hunter asked, his direction focused on Jake.

"Oh, a new friend, visiting from the States," Jennie said. "He's Stevie's new tenant. Jake Westbury, meet Hunter Abbott."

"Pleasure," Hunter said with a crooked grin, extending his hand.

Jake thrust his hand out, perhaps a bit too eagerly. As their hands connected, Jake could feel the sharp prickle of hair on the back of Hunter's hand. An electric charge jolted him, causing him to nearly strangle on his greeting. "Hey, uh...Hunter, nice to meet you." He swallowed, took a breath. "You don't sound like you're from these parts."

"American myself, not that I usually admit to that. Haven't been home in years."

"Oh, what do you do?"

Silence hovered around the table before Jennie began to talk. Was something wrong with that question? Hunter held up his hand and silenced his friend.

"This and that," Hunter said, addressing Jake specifically. He offered nothing further. "Look, sorry gang, I've got to run. Shame I can't share a beer with you all. Nevil...good to see

you...a happy one to you. Perhaps I'll see you Friday night. I'll have to let you know." He allowed himself a private laugh. Nevil continued to sneer. "J and S—all the best till again. You too, Kims."

Hunter then gazed about the room once, twice, his eyes darting suspiciously, as though looking for someone. Or perhaps hoping not to see someone. Jake realized Hunter had been doing that pretty much since he popped up at their table. And now he was gone in a flash, faster than he'd arrived.

"Wow, who was that masked man?" Jake asked.

His Lone Ranger reference was lost on the pile of Brits before him.

"He's a bore, too full of himself anyway," Kimberly said.

"You're just jealous, sweets," Jennie said, and then looked at Jake. "She hates the gays. They don't want to date her, and she's not outrageous enough to do in drag."

Jake barely heard what she said. He was still looking at the exit door. His attention returned when he felt a touch on his shoulder. He turned to find Nevil right before him. "So, Jake, a few of my real friends are throwing me a birthday party on Friday night—that's the actual date. Steven and Jennie couldn't make it, that's why we're here tonight. But you, if you're free, why not come? In fact, if you're free beforehand, maybe I can show you a bit of London. Then we can go to the party."

Jake said nothing at first, realized they were all waiting for his answer. How could he say no in such a public forum? So he readily agreed, thanking Nevil for his hospitality, all the

while thinking of that sexy creature who had just delivered a knockout punch to Jake's heart. To his crotch too. He barely heard what next was spoken.

"Aw, shit, another gay one."

Kimberly of course said that. Then, with a melodramatic pause, she bellied up to the bar for a fresh round of drinks. Her friends all laughed, except for Jake. He had taken another look at the front door, where he spotted not Hunter but another man. A huge, hulking man wearing nothing but black, unless you counted his sour expression

Why did Jake get the sense that this beast was the man Hunter had been looking for?

And by looking for, meaning trying to avoid.

*Just who are you, Hunter Abbott, Jake wondered, and what kind of trouble are you in?*

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## **Chapter Three**

Jake Westbury usually led an ordered life, with each day planned carefully. As a freelance writer by trade, he had his patterns of writing, pitching, researching, all of which helped give structure to his days. He even had a certain schedule he ate around. Some of his friends called him OCD. He would just say he was organized, usually when placing some item in his apartment back to its proper place. And what was wrong with that? He always knew where to find his stuff, from his wallet to his keys to his cell phone. Which was why the incident at the airport when he'd lost his passport had thrown him so. Was he nervous about this London trip? Too late now, he was already here, and besides, nothing untoward would happen to him here. Could it?

Friday afternoon, Jake was walking along the Embankment having just finished off a good fish & chips and pint at the Opera Tavern pub across from the famed Theatre Royal Drury Lane. He'd crossed over the Strand, slipping down a side alley near the Savoy Hotel to the traffic-heavy river's edge. It was a beautiful day, blue sky marred only by white fluffy clouds, ideal for photographers and postcard creators. They had to get those shots sometime—it didn't always rain in London. In fact, Jake had yet to see any inclement weather in the days since his arrival. And today, with the temperature in the low eighties, Jake had opted for shorts and T-shirt, much more comfortable as he walked the city. Yet now as the afternoon waned toward early evening, he had to consider whether the



outfit was appropriate for the party he was attending. He'd be meeting Nevil in an hour on Westminster Bridge. That did not give him time enough to get back to Putney and return. Hmm, he should have considered this better. See, that was another thing that bothered his sense of order. Normally he would have packed a shoulder bag with jeans and a nicer shirt. But he didn't want to be burdened all day with a heavy bag. Maybe he'd just go shopping,

Jake looked around at his surroundings. Embankment, the Houses of Parliament, and Big Ben looming before him, across the river the London Eye millennium wheel soared into the sky. Unless you wanted souvenirs, this just wasn't an ideal shopping district. Jake considered backtracking, making his way up Charing Cross Road to Oxford Street. You could buy anything on Oxford Street, that's what he'd heard. But that would take a while too. Damn, why hadn't he taken down Nevil's mobile number? He could have called and altered when and where to meet. If he was late, Nevil might think he was being stood up.

Indecision bothered Jake Westbury.

Perhaps he'd ask Nevil if he should change. Maybe they could go shopping together.

God, that sounded so gay.

Jake emerged from under a covering of trees, wound his way down a set of cement steps so he could walk nearer along the Thames. The water wasn't the clearest, more brown than anything else, but he'd read recently that the river was on the road to recovery, that fish were actually starting to return to its waters. Unless Jake took a tour boat, he doubted

he'd be getting all that close to the water. Still, the sight of the Thames as a backdrop to the picturesque scene of London was ideal, exactly as he'd remembered it on a previous visit about twelve years ago. He'd fallen in love with the city, vowing to return and this time for longer. Three months sounded about right. He'd taken a couple days to get acclimated in Putney, filling up his fridge at Marks & Spencer, getting a mobile phone for easy calling within England, unpacking. Now he was out and about and thrilled to be doing so.

As he came to Westminster Bridge, he was able to fully absorb where he was—the sense of history from the gilt-edge spires of the Houses of Parliament to the futuristic London Eye. To ride up 500 feet and get a bird's-eye view of the entire city would be remarkable, but he'd have to return and wait on line like everyone else. For now, Jake amused himself by watching the busy activity swirling around him. Tourists and Londoners alike walked or biked across the bridge, while giant tour buses guided throngs of feet-weary visitors to and from the various sights. Jake leaned against the wall, catching the strong rays of the sun, enjoying the warmth on his skin. Was a tan in London even possible?

"You posing, catching rays, or trying to get picked up?"

Jake opened his eyes and found Nevil standing before him.

"What do you think?"

"In those skimpy clothes? I'd say a pickup."

Shit, he knew he should have gone back to Putney. Nevil himself was wearing jeans and blue chambray shirt rolled up at the sleeves.

"You're early," Jake said,

"Yeah, a bad habit of mine. I tend to be fashionably early."

"Is there such a thing?"

"Yeah, you're right, sounds bad, needy," Nevil said.

"Actually, I just got off the tube and I was thinking of just grabbing a pint somewhere, but then I saw that you were already here. So, want to join me for a drink?"

"Sure, why not? You know a pub around here? Doesn't look like much is around."

"Trust me, in London there's always a pub nearby. Come on, follow me."

The two new friends wound their way around the complex series of streets, bypassing a huge busload of tourists. Jake heard one pudgy, clueless woman ask the guard on duty outside the gated entrance of the government offices, "What's this building?" He answered politely that she was looking at the Houses of Parliament.

"God, can you be any more clueless?" Nevil asked.

Jake had to admit he had a point. If you're going to London, at least do some research.

At last, they crossed Victoria, where they found a nice pub called the Westminster Arms along Storey's Gate, with a couple of tables and chairs positioned in front of the narrow brick facade. Nevil popped in for a couple of Fuller's Pride, settled down opposite Jake. The ancient spires of Westminster Abbey jutted upward in the distance, offering up a picturesque view. The sun continued to beam down on them, Jake again embracing the warmth.

"If you wanted to get a good tan, why not pick the Riviera for your trip?"

"Oh, I'm no beach bum, it's just...well, I didn't expect such nice weather."

"It happens. It's going to be a great night. My friends have access to their roof, so the party should be really fun."

"Sounds great," Jake said.

"Thanks for coming along," Nevil said.

"Thanks for the invite."

They toasted their glasses and drank. As Jake set his glass down, he felt Nevil's hand on his. He gazed over at his new friend, wondering suddenly just how much further Nevil wanted this friendship to go. Jake was here to fall in love, or at least that was what he hoped, but was he going to resort to his slutty ways and screw the first man who made himself available to him? Nevil was cute but slight and bony. Not exactly Jake's type. Jake realized he must have given off a slight chill, since Nevil pulled his hand away.

"Sorry. You're kind of hot, Jake, couldn't resist. Especially in those shorts—you've got great legs, nice and hairy. It's been a while since I've met a nice guy. My last boyfriend...was... Well, stable is not a word that comes to mind. And hey, it's my birthday, right?"

"Oh right, Happy Birthday, Nevil," Jake said. "And actually, speaking of my shorts...I was thinking of changing before the party. Do you know where I might pick up a pair of jeans or something? You know, I don't want to meet your friends and not look the part."

Nevil laughed. "Ha, knowing my friends, you're already overdressed."

Jake drank from his beer, trying to hide his expression. Just what kind of party was he going to?

\* \* \* \*

Three hours later, the sun had gone for the day and a warm darkness was settling over the city. Nevil Masters' birthday party was in full swing, the upstairs apartment in Soho crowded with a hoard of young men, most of them seemingly gay and all dancing. Was that really the Pet Shop Boys emanating from an iPod? People still listened to them? A few women peppered the group along with some straight guy who nervously shifted from foot to foot. Jake himself felt comfortable enough, and indeed his shorts and T-shirt were near about the uniform, except for when the drinks began to have their desired effect and some of the more adventurous men stripped off their shirts. By ten o'clock, there was more skin on display than clothing.

Jake and Nevil had arrived just before eight, all indications pointing toward the fact that some of the guests had begun imbibing sometime around five. But as Nevil introduced Jake around, he was welcomed with handshakes and hugs, as well as a few suggestive come-ons, Nevil taking hold of Jake's hand each time one of his so-called friends tried to usurp his so-called date. Jake, mellowed from the two pints he'd shared with Nevil earlier, just went with the flow. Now, as Nevil was claimed by a couple friends who insisted he do some kind of shot, Jake made his way over to the window. Looking down

from the eighth floor window, he saw the busy activity of Old Compton Street below. Men were everywhere, holding hands, kissing, touching...

"It's quite a sight, isn't it?"

The voice prickled at Jake's neck, sending waves of desire through him. Such a silky sound, like a caress against his body. Jake turned around to find himself looking into the liquid ocean blue eyes of the man he'd met briefly the other night. The hot guy, the mysterious guy who'd disappeared faster than he'd appeared, the one with the hairy arms and tight package. In other words, the elusive and sexy Hunter Abbott.

"Oh, uh, hey," was all Jake could produce.

"Jake, right?"

He was amazed the guy remembered his name.

"Yes, and you're Hunter."

"Good memory," he said, his smile lighting up the room. It was crooked. It was devilish. Which meant it was perfect. *Shit, calm down, Jake, you're the guest of the guest of honor, and based on the way Nevil had been acting all night, you were probably expected to be his passionate companion a bit later.* Yet here was a man hot enough to sizzle on the sidewalk in winter, and Jake was close enough to feel the burn. He felt weak in the knees, made only worse when Hunter leaned beside him, his arm pressing against Jake's shoulder.

"I've been all over Europe, seen all the gay capitals. Nothing like London."

"They do look happy," Jake agreed.

"They're also drunk. But hey, it's Friday night, why not?"

Jake noticed that Hunter did not have a drink. Was he passing judgment on the scene beneath them? Maybe he wasn't a drinker. Maybe he liked to maintain control. What a shame that would be. Jake would love to see this man freed of his inhibitions—assuming he had any. Hunter Abbott seemed about the most free-spirited, laid-back man Jake had ever met. Even having only spent a total of five minutes with the guy, Jake knew that Hunter lived life on his own terms. Which only made him sexier. Jake noticed that he was dressed in the coolest style of jeans and a black button-down shirt. Two buttons were undone, exposing a healthy crop of dark brown hair. Which only made Hunter the sexiest guy in the room. God, Jake wanted this guy bad. How could he ditch Nevil, let Hunter know his intentions?

"So, Jake, sorry, but I've got to run. Just came by to wish Nevil a happy one."

"Wait, you're leaving..."

"Life calls, you know?" Hunter said, his mysterious manner living up to his billing. And without further explanation, he slipped into a group of six young guys who swarmed him like bees to honey.

As Jake crossed the room for a fresh beer, he noticed the six men go giggling down the back hallway, toward the bedroom. Hunter was not with them. He'd somehow slipped away. Shirts started flying off, leaving a trail of bright cottony colors behind them. Jake could only imagine what the six of them were about to do. Talk about slutty. Was that what this party was devolving into? One big gay orgy? Suddenly Jake

was feeling every bit of his late thirties and decided it was probably best to make his excuses too, thank Nevil for a fine time and then head on out. Who knows? Maybe he'd run into Hunter again...

He had no idea where Nevil had gotten off to. He didn't appear to be anywhere in the apartment, and that was when Jake remembered half the party was on the rooftop. He made his way out of the apartment, following to a doorway and a short flight of stairs that led to the roof. Once there he emerged into the starry night, felt a slight chill. The temperature had dropped—a change in the weather was coming. Now he wished he'd worn other clothes for nothing more than warmth. He was about to return back downstairs when he spotted Nevil coming toward him. His eyes were a bit glassy, whether from too much drink or maybe he'd taken some kind of drug. Jake couldn't be sure. But he was coming straight for Jake, didn't appear to be ready, willing, or able to stop. In fact, he pressed his body tight against Jake and pressed his lips to his. A wandering hand cupped his ass.

"Meet me downstairs. Bedroom on the left. I need you to fuck me."

Another kiss happened, and then Nevil made a fast exit. Jake spun around, words dying on his pursed lips as he considered the scene that had just happened. A few guys in the corner of the rooftop were watching, laughing, taking another shot. All of them eyeing Jake. As though they knew just what Nevil had said to him and they were waiting to find out if Jake was going to go through with it. Shit, now what? Could he actually go through with it? The idea of sex was not



unappealing—he was a little tipsy himself and he always got horny when he reached a certain level of drunkenness.

As Jake turned to leave the rooftop, he saw two guys on a bench, their bodies entwined, mouths passionately kissing. Jake's cock betrayed his common sense, and all of a sudden he knew he would go through with Nevil's request. What was the harm? A fun roll in the hay to launch his London vacation. It wasn't like he was going to end up dating Nevil all summer, and they certainly weren't going to fall in love, move to the States, and get married. It was just one night, a birthday present.

Jake downed the rest of his beer, made his way back downstairs, where he found the bathroom empty. He closed the door, peed a steady stream while his cock thickened with the excitement of a good fuck. He looked at himself in the mirror and knew that he would hate himself in the morning. Then he stuffed himself inside his shorts, waiting a moment for his erection to go down, not caring to show off the bulge in his pants to any of the horny boys who might be hovering nearby. He splashed water on his face, then opened the door and steeled himself for a quick fuck. Then he could leave.

Jake made his way down the hallway, briefly pausing to look back. No one was paying any attention to the fact that he was sneaking off. Those still gathered in the living room were drinking, partying, dancing to music played so loud Jake was surprised the neighbors hadn't complained. But Jake couldn't concern himself with such details. He was expected in the far bedroom. And so he continued down, finally coming to not one but two doors. Hell, Nevil had told him the door on

the left, right? Or the right? He couldn't be sure, but if one was wrong, obviously the other would be the correct door.

He opted for the door to the left. Turning the knob, he opened the door and immediately realized his mistake. The room was occupied—nearly filled. What Jake saw was the six men from earlier, all of them now naked, contorted in various positions, none of them paying him any mind, busy were they with their sexual shenanigans. Jake remembered this gang hanging out together at the party, laughing and drinking, smoking pot. No doubt getting a good buzz on before they indulged their orgiastic frenzy. They were all skinny, hairless, like a meeting of the Twink Society had been called. Thin penises with barely any pubes enveloping them were being sucked or were thrusting hard against tight little asses. Groans, moans, urgent pleas for more, stop, don't, yes, bounced off the walls. As fast as he could, Jake closed the door, but he supposed not soon enough. He made eye contact with one of the guys—he might have been thrusting his cock deep inside his partner's ass, but when he saw Jake standing in the doorway, he leered at him, tongue wiping his own lips. The message was clear: *come inside, then come inside me.*

Jake closed the door and quickly made his way to the other door. He could still hear the grunting exclamations coming from the room he'd just exited along with one loud climax. One of the twink hadn't been able to hold off. Despite the fact those boys weren't his type, his cock couldn't help but be hardened again.

This time he knocked on the door on the right. "Nevil?"  
"Yeah, get in here, fast."

Jake entered a darkened room, shadows lit only by moonlight. His eyes took a moment to adjust, but when they righted themselves, he saw that Nevil was completely naked on the bed, lying on his back, fingers of one hand pushing deep into his exposed ass. The other hand was wrapped around the shaft of his cock, which was surprisingly large.

"You don't waste time, do you?"

"No. And you better not either. Shit, I've wanted you since I met you the other night."

Nice to be wanted. Desired...

Jake came forward, peeling off his shirt and tossing it aside. His nipples had hardened already, tiny nubs sticking out of the light coating of hair on his chest.

"Yeah, nice, real nice, Jake. Great chest, love that it's hairy...like your legs, your goatee. Yeah, gonna have me a fine furry fuck tonight, yeah, bring it on. Come on, get naked, join me, do me." He paused, taking a moment to lick his lips. "Yeah, lick me. Eat me. Fuck me." He grinned. "In that order."

Jake laughed aloud, the sound echoing in the otherwise quiet, dark room. His famed ordered life now given direction, a plan. Jake was the kind of man who responded to orders, especially when it came to sex. In seconds he'd slipped out of his shorts, his hardened cock free, unleashed, jutting upward. A happy Nevil squirmed on the bed as he caught sight of the thick meat Jake had to offer. He urged his new friend closer, closer still, let me touch it, let me wrap my tongue around that engorged head, his voice low, sexy. Jake edged over, climbing aboard the soft mattress. His knees sank in the folds

of the blanket, almost trapping him. Nevil pushed his ass up to meet Jake, whose strong hands took hold of smooth cheeks. He spread Nevil's legs wide, exposing the pulsing pink entry point. His cock would feed there soon, but right now he dived in, his scratchy goatee scraping against soft skin. Nevil howled with absolute delight.

"Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, deeper...aw, fuck...Jake, give me that fuzzy goatee. Owwww..."

Jake scraped and scratched wildly, leaving Nevil's bare ass red and raw. With his tongue he thrust far into the open crack of his tight ass, the tip plying him wider, searching, hungering, thrusting. Nevil let out of a powerful scream, nearly shaking the walls. The vocal power caused Jake to pause, wondering if they could be heard, wondering too why he cared. If six guys in the other room could loudly screw each other, surely Jake and Nevil could indulge their passions, one of them the birthday boy, the other his gift.

By now Jake's cock was pulsing, dripping a bit of precome. His cock was more excited than he was, hot for the action it was denied on board the airplane with Erich, ready now to plow ahead. He pulled his tongue free of Nevil's ass, rising up on his knees. His eyes made contact with Nevil's, which urged him on. Nevil himself helped too, tossing a condom Jake's way. While Jake rolled the condom down his thick shaft, Nevil poured a generous amount of lube on his moist ass. He quickly turned over, hands taking hold of the headboard, ass primed for eager entry. Jake positioned his cock right before Nevil's waiting ass, spreading open his bare cheeks.

"Yeah, now, give that cock to me, thrust it deep inside me. Hard, fast."

Jake, energized by the dirty talk, plunged his cock inside with one massive push, grunting with enthusiasm as he plowed deep, deep inside Nevil. Nevil himself bellowed so loudly, Jake thought he might have hurt him, and for a moment he hesitated, his eager thrusts brought to a halt.

"No, no, don't stop. I want it all, just like you did. Do it again, I want to feel that pain."

Jake pulled out, and once again he shoved his hungry cock far inside Nevil. Again he screamed, and mixed with Jake's primal grunts, the room took on the feel of an animal's lair, where the beastly motions of sex played out, fast, urgent, hard, fast, dominant, dirty, wanting. Jake's cock pushed deep into him, the thick bush of pubes scraping against Nevil's ass, tickling the bare skin. A rush of adrenaline washed over Jake. He pulled out, grabbing hold of Nevil. He tossed him onto his back, lifting his legs high into the air. A panting Nevil urged him on. Jake thrust his hard cock again, again, again, a steady, rhythmic motion that awakened fresh sensations throughout his loins. Heat built, threatening to boil, to overflow. But he wasn't ready to come, not yet, not now, not with Nevil's ass still taking each hard thrust with wild, screaming passion.

"More, more, yeah, Jake, yeah...oh, give me my thick, hard present..."

Jake felt Nevil's legs wrap themselves around his ass, felt his tongue on his nipples. Nevil teased the pointy nubs, sucking, sucking. Fingers grabbed at chest hair, nearly pulling

it free of its skin. Nevil rubbed the hair raw, grabbing, touching, caressing, leaving Jake's skin reddened.

"Fuck yeah, more, harder...more..."

Nevil's fingers grabbed at Jake's back, fingernails digging into his muscled skin. Legs still wrapped around his ass, keeping Jake's cock buried deep inside his pliant ass. All the while his dirty talk continued, more, more, fuck, fuck, thick cock, give it, give it, sexy beast, hairy chest...want more, want more...

Jake felt his cock tighten. Passion built up inside him, and suddenly heat overwhelmed him. His cock exploded, orgasm shattering his body. He felt spurt after spurt shoot from the tip, his head expanding with each powerful burst. Nevil's legs unraveled from Jake's ass, letting his fresh lover free of its tight embrace. But then he tossed Jake onto his back, climbing onto his still-hardened cock, slipping it inside him again.

"Oww..." Jake screamed, his cock sensitive from his just-happened climax.

But Nevil would not be deterred. He bounced up and down on Jake's cock, one hand grazing at Jake's chest while his other hand stroked his cock. It didn't take him long—he was already primed, ready, heated. Jake watched the constricted expression overtake Nevil's face, and he cried out once, twice, his third cry shattering the silence of the room. He was like a wolf howling at the moon, no doubt heard for miles—or at the very least, into the next room. His cries continued as rosy white come shot out, more, more, more, taking to the air and dropping, dripping onto Jake's chest, mixing against

skin and hair. Nevil's loud cries finally dissipated, eventually becoming stuttered whimpers. Christ, Jake thought, was he about to cry in earnest? Was he one of those mommy's boys who cried after climax? Was he feeling regret too? Missing his old boyfriend? How did he get out of this situation? Hell, how did he get into it in the first place?

That second question, that easy. He'd been horny, he'd been drinking.

And like always, regret followed his own orgasm.

He wanted to get out.

Nevil got up from the bed, finally freeing Jake from his position on the bed. He too stood up, stretching his body. He needed the bathroom to wipe away the come that was dripping down his chest and feared he'd have to step out into the hall to do that. But fortunately a door inside the room led to a bathroom. He padded over, closing the door behind him. He flipped on the light and grabbed a towel, wiping the come away. Suddenly a second door from the other bedroom opened, and a naked Jake found himself being observed by the six guys. They were all still naked, lounging, smoking, drinking. When they saw Jake, they began to applaud.

"What ho, Nevil had himself a hairy bear," one of them said, and the other boys had a good laugh at that.

"No wonder he was screaming like a girl," another said.

A third got up from the bed and came to the door. "So, Jake, you up for another round? I'd love a ride on that thick cock."

Jake just smiled and, remembering Hunter's exit line, said, "Sorry, boys, gotta run. You know, life calls."

Lust in London  
*by Adam Carpenter*

He closed the door, turned off the lights, and went to say goodnight to Nevil. He was asleep, or maybe just passed out. Jake got dressed in the dark, slunk his way out past the other party boys, all of whom were eyeing him with a mix of suspicion and envy. They all seemed to be wondering the same thing: who was this new guy who had so royally screwed their friend tonight?

Jake didn't stick around to answer any questions.

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## Chapter Four

"Sounded like you enjoyed yourselves."

Jake nearly jumped out of his skin at the sound of the disembodied voice. There was no person attached to it, at least not as far as Jake could see in the swarming dark of night. What was it with these London guys? They couldn't approach you normally? Why must everyone sneak up on him, jolting his system? First Nevil at Westminster Bridge, Hunter sidling up to him at the party, and now on quiet street at midnight...who the hell was it now? He turned, about to scold whomever had scared him, when his eyes once again landed on the handsome, devilish grin of Hunter Abbott.

"Frightened you, did I?"

"Startled is all," Jake said, trying to act casual. His heart was still beating fast, though.

"So, that was you doing Nevil?"

Jake reddened. "Uh...doing?"

"Screwing? That better? Fucking, plowing?"

"That's not what I meant. I mean, how do you know it was me? Wait, you could hear us? I thought you left. You know, 'life calls.'"

"Well, first, thanks for confirming that was you giving Nevil his birthday present. I suspected but couldn't be certain. See, I was intrigued to learn what was going to happen tonight. These parties, Nevil usually scores with someone, and it was pretty obvious he'd set his sights on you. So, you gave in? He screams up a storm, that bitch. Let me guess, the window

was wide-open, guys on the roof were getting off from him getting off. Probably the same damn twink as always in the next room. Welcome to a Nevil Night—you've been initiated. He's always been quite the howler."

Jake realized he felt stupid, like he'd been used. No doubt all the boys at the party had known from the start exactly what was going down. Nevil telling him the wrong door so he could see the six-guy orgy, was that his way of getting off? Or trying to turn Jake on to the point where he'd need to screw. What a weird, twisted night. Was this why he'd come all the way to London? How was this different from the bad decision he made in New York? Wasn't he trying to avoid these pathetic one-night stands? The defeat must have shown on his face.

"Buck up, old boy. You're part of the in crowd now," Hunter said.

"Yeah, great. You part of that crowd too?"

Hunter faced darkened. "Nah. Nevil's not my type, no matter how drunk I am. Doesn't mean he hasn't tried. Countless times. You should see the lame ways he's tried to get me out of my clothes. Usually involves spilling a drink all over me. Never works."

"Great, you're able to resist him and I give in on his first try."

"Well, he must have enjoyed himself. He was screaming like a banshee."

"And just how do you know this?"

"Like I said, I knew what was going to happen. Nevil's as predictable as he is loud. I decided to stick around, keep a

listen. Call it my way of doing research." Hunter paused before his hand reached out, rubbing Jake's goatee. "Nevil may not be my type, but you, on the other hand...you're much more to my liking." He leaned forward, pressing Jake against the building. Jake could feel his warm breath. He could feel the man's sizable cock pressing against his leg. He was close enough to see the exposed triangle of chest hair. Just then Hunter planted a kiss on Jake's lips, deep, searching, definitely hot. A wandering hand grazed his growing crotch. Taking advantage of this sudden heated moment, Jake slipped his finger's inside Hunter's shirt, getting his first touch of the enticing dark mat that seemed to cover Hunter's chest. He wanted more than anything to rip his shirt off, see for himself just how fucking furry he was, run his hands through that carpet. Unbuckle those jeans too, suck what felt like a big cock. He felt his mouth go dry at the possibility of such a sexy encounter with Hunter.

But then Hunter pulled back. "Nice. Promising. Maybe I'll see you around sometime."

Those enigmatic words hung in the tense air between them before Hunter shoved off, his feet making quick work of the cobblestones. He disappeared through a dark mews, leaving Jake a muddled, wobbly-kneed mess. He hadn't even had a chance to ask Hunter where to find him, or what he meant by his late-night come-on. All Jake knew was that, despite having climaxed just a short while ago, his cock was hard and he was horny as hell, and it was all the fault of the sexy, elusive Hunter Abbott. Shit, Jennie and Steven had been right about him. He was trouble for sure.

Lust in London  
by Adam Carpenter

Gathering his wits about him, Jake made his way down the street, emerging onto the still-busy Old Compton Road. The narrow street was bustling with the night's gay frivolity. The night air had noticeably chilled, and Jake was still dressed in his shorts and T-shirt combo. Men were pouring in and out of gay bars like the Admiral Duncan and the old standby, Compton's, many of them tossing leering looks and come-ons at Jake. Jake didn't much feel like hanging around drunken gay men, so he headed toward the end of the street, where he found a noisy pub on the corner of Old Compton Street and Charing Cross. Called the Molly Moggs. He walked into the small, cramped space and ordered a pint of Pride. After he slapped down a five-pound note, he gazed about the room. Men, more men, and even more men. Except for one big blonde wig of a woman singing into a microphone. Shit, a drag queen. Jake had stumbled into a gay pub.

He pushed his hand into his pocket, trying his best to suggest a casual pose. That's when he felt something stuffed inside. Setting down his beer on the wooden bar, he withdrew a piece of crumpled paper. He unfolded it, read its contents with surprise.

*Hyde Park. Round Pond, near Kensington Gardens.  
Monday. 12 noon. Hope to see you. Hunter.*

Despite all sorts of warning bells going off in his head, Jake Westbury grinned. Hunter must have stuffed this into his pocket when he'd pressed him against the wall. The anticipation of meeting up with Hunter was rife with possibilities, not the least of which was fulfilling the promise of his earlier tease. Yes, he was intrigued by Hunter,

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definitely attracted to him. But only now did Jake get the sense that Hunter had developed a thing for him. His London trip was off to a fast start—not even here a week and he'd already had sex once, and the possibility of more was just a weekend away. But this trip wasn't just about sex, it was about making a connection with someone. A connection that lasted beyond one night, beyond a shattering climax or a quick grope of a hairy chest on a darkened street. Still, Jake felt his body relax, and at last he could enjoy the antics of the big drag queen who was praising the fact that it was raining men. Hallelujah, the crowd roared.

Hallelujah, indeed, Jake thought.

The sexy image of Hunter Abbott stayed with him long into the night.

Was it more than just sex he wanted from Hunter?

Hell, he hadn't even had an official date with him and already he was thinking about the future.

\* \* \* \*

Twelve ten and still no sign of Hunter. Jake Westbury had to consider the possibility that he had the location wrong. But no, as meticulous as Jake was, there was no way he could have screwed this up, even as distracted as he was about the man he was meeting. Wait, correct that, supposed to be meeting. Where the hell was he? Besides, Jake had scoped out the location over the weekend to ensure no mistakes or delays.

Jake sat down on the bench, gazing at the few people who were meandering through the lush park. None of them

matched Hunter. He checked his watch again. Ten twelve. Jake was on time, Hunter was late. But Jake was always on time. Punctuality was another of his strengths. Though when it came to elusive creatures like Hunter, it could be considered a weakness. Was he too eager to be with this man? Was Hunter toying with him, seeing how far he could push him? What if Hunter didn't even show? Jake was getting way ahead of himself, both in this moment and on this trip. *Calm down, breathe, relax, let things happen as they will.* Which was akin to telling Jake don't be yourself.

Hyde Park was huge, and Jake was glad he had taken the time on Saturday to take a tour. From the giant Marble Arch off Oxford Street all the way to the gilt-edged Albert Memorial and the wandering paths, the ponds, the ducks, the beautiful Kensington Palace and accompanying gardens, Jake had lost himself for hours during his sojourn. He thought again of Friday night when Hunter had cornered him after Nevil's party. He'd been a big tease, drawing Jake into his sexy web, but then pulling back at the last minute. The man was an enigma. A freaking sexy enigma. Which explained why a horny Jake was waiting alone on a park bench in the middle of a Monday afternoon in mid-June in London.

Another check of his watch. Twelve eighteen.

Just how long should he wait?

Just how much did he want to sleep with this guy?

Okay, he could wait a bit longer.

Whore.

Jake laughed at his inner thoughts, wondered then how his friends Matt and Freddie were faring on their own European

excursions. Had Matt met the man of his dreams along the Seine, moved into some fabulous artist's studio, and posed nude for him? Had Freddie slept his way through a Colosseum full of men? He hoped they were having more success than Jake, who so far could rack up a cheap blowjob onboard the airplane and a howling encounter with Nevil. And now this, a failed date with the hottest guy he'd ever met.

Wait, there he was...

Out of the corner of his eye, Jake could see Hunter approaching the series of benches situated around the aptly named Round Pond. He was dressed in tight jeans and a black T-shirt, thick, hairy arms exposed to the bright sunlight. His hair tousled, face scruffy from days of not shaving, he looked hot and sexy. Add to that the sunglasses covering his eyes, Jake was glad he'd waited around for him to appear. Still, he couldn't be sure if contact had been made. He watched as Hunter made his way innocently toward an empty bench opposite to where Jake sat. Did he really not see him? Should Jake get up and make his way over? He started to get up, but that's when he noticed the slightest shake of Hunter's head. As though he was saying no. No, what? As in, don't approach? Why not? A sudden memory came to Jake, the big thug of a man who had entered the Railway Pub last week, only to leave disappointed when his prey had failed to materialize. His prey. Had that been Hunter?

Was that thug around somewhere?

And if so, what did it mean?

Jake eased back onto his bench, trying to assume a casual pose but all the while uncertain what his next move should

be. Turns out, someone made it for him. He was joined on the bench by a man who appeared to be his thirties—short, no more than five-nine, with close-cropped dark hair and a heavy shadow of dark beard. He also wore sunglasses and, oddly, a three-piece suit and tie. He looked as uncomfortable as Jake felt nervous. Sweat formed on the man's forehead, whether from the combination of heat and that suit or at what was to transpire, Jake couldn't be sure. The man had brought with him a large knapsack and he placed it between himself and Jake.

"Just leave it for now," the man said.

"Huh?"

"Act innocent."

"Easy. I am."

"Not anymore," the man said.

Jake couldn't help it—he turned and looked at the man's profile. The man refused to look directly at him. "You know, sorry, I think you've got the wrong guy. I'm just waiting for a friend..."

"I know who you are, Jake. Trust me. We're being watched."

We're being watched...

Like something out of a spy movie. If he hadn't actually said Jake's name, he'd still be convinced the guy had mistaken him for someone else. This wasn't some old Alfred Hitchcock movie, he didn't know what the 39 Steps meant...and besides, what was inside the bag that he shouldn't even look at it, much less touch it?



"I'm going to leave. And when I do, the bag stays with you."

"I don't want the bag..."

The short man wiped his brow once, then said, this time aloud, "I say, chap, do you have a spare tissue? Seems I've left my handkerchief back at the office. Terrible sun today, don't you think? Quite unlike our gloomy London days, don't you think?"

What the hell was this guy talking about?

"Uh, a tissue...?"

"Perhaps in your bag?"

"My...oh," Jake said, figuring this was how the transfer was to be done. Pretend suddenly that Jake had had it with him all along. If anyone was looking (and just who might that be?) it had to appear that the knapsack sitting between them on the bench was actually Jake's, not Mr. Suit's. Jake reluctantly played along, not even sure why. He reached for the strings, untying them to open the bag. What he saw inside nearly stopped his heart. The queen's face stared back at him—or rather, many queens' faces stared back at him, in the form of bundles of cash. Twenty-pound notes, fifties, hundreds. The bag was filled with them, nearly overstuffed. What was not inside, of course, were tissues. But Jake supposed that was a ruse too, just like this entire exchange.

"Uh, sorry, no tissues."

"Ah, here is mine," the man said, pulling a white handkerchief from his inside suit pocket. Jake could see the initials S.D. sewn in to the expensive fabric. "Just put in the

wrong pocket, must have been distracted. Well, enjoy your day, sir. Stay cool."

That last statement didn't appear to be weather related.

The man got up from the bench and without another word, another look, started off down the path, weaving his way between two mothers and a pair of baby strollers, before finally disappearing into a copse of trees. Jake looked at the space where the man had been, then back at the knapsack full of money that had been left in his possession. Then he stared across the pond at the bench where Hunter was sitting.

Had been sitting.

The bench was empty.

Jake's head spun around, suddenly searching for his date, wondering where the man had gotten off to. Where was he, and what was all this about the man in the suit and the bag of cash? Just what was Jake supposed to do with it? Obviously he couldn't leave it for any random stranger to find. Clearly this was a drop-off. The little man had been instructed to sit beside Jake and leave this precious cargo with him. But why? Surely Hunter was behind the entire scenario, but what was the point? All Jake could surmise was that he'd been set up, seduced on a dark street into thinking Hunter wanted to have sex with him, and instead he'd used him for some kind of clandestine, perhaps criminal, enterprise. At least when Nevil had used him at the party he'd allowed Jake to enjoy the moment too.

Jake sat in the baking sun, considering what to do.

Was Hunter going to show up and rescue him?

Was the thug looming somewhere, waiting for the moment when Jake left...with bag in tow?

And then what?

Jake supposed there was only one way to find out. He grabbed hold of the knapsack, slipping it over his shoulders as he got up from the bench. Adjusting it so that the weight was comfortable against his back, he took a few hesitant steps forward, his eyes darting for any sudden movements. He didn't see any. Not from Hunter, not from some mysterious thug. And why did he keep thinking of the guy as a thug, anyway? What was this, a gangster movie? So the guy was large, built like a truck, a face like it had met the business end of one. Still, look at what his shallowness had gotten him? Attracted to Hunter's body alone had done nothing for him but land him in this current predicament, right?

He walked in the opposite direction of Mr. Suit, not really sure where he was headed. Around winding paths, through a smattering of tress and eventually beyond a spraying fountain, he realized he was headed again toward the Marble Arch. He supposed that was as good a location as any. He was out in the open and could be seen by anyone who might want to find him. Which included Mr. Suit, who maybe was going to rendezvous back and retake possession of the knapsack. Could be Hunter, meeting up with him after the obvious drop-off; or it could even be the thug, who would then hold him up at gun or knifepoint and demand he hand over the bag of cash. Then what?

Sweat formed on his brow as he nervously looked about, each of his scenarios continuing to play out in his mind. And wouldn't you know it? The last of those finally came to fruition. From behind a thick tree emerged the rather menacing figure of the thug. Let's call him Mr. Thick, since that pretty much described any part of him—neck, arms, legs. He moved slowly, like a tiger on the prowl, and his prey was clear—Jake. Or rather, what Jake was carrying. Keeping his present pace he should be at the Tube stop in five minutes, barring any sudden burst of speed from Mr. Thick. Perhaps he could escape him in the tunnels of London's Underground? Jake was hardly an expert when it came to losing a tail.

He made his way toward the Bond Street Tube station just down from the Marble Arch on Oxford Street. Midday, many Londoners were out and about, crowding the narrow sidewalks. Jake hoped the throngs of people heading down the long escalator would help shield him, even as he made his way down the left side of the escalator in an effort to get through the turnstiles faster. He looked back up toward street level, saw Mr. Thick entering the station. Jake turned around, not wanting the guy to see him. His heart beating faster, he finally stepped off the escalator and pulled out his Oyster card, swiping it against the turnstile before making his way into the vast underground system. He wasn't even sure where to go. All he knew was that it was important to get on the first train to arrive, hopefully before Mr. Thick made his way to the platform.

Down a long corridor, another endless flight of stairs, Jake could hear a train approaching one of the platforms. The

Central Line indicated eastbound and westbound platforms, but Jake couldn't be sure which side the train was coming into. So he stood in the middle of the corridor, listening, watching, both for the train and Mr. Thick, all to the annoyance of bustling people who skirted around him with scorns and sneers. Finally a train rushed into the station on the eastbound platform. Jake made for the opening doors just as Mr. Thick came off the last step. They were separated by just twenty feet. Mr. Thick's eyes widened at the sight of his prey, causing Jake to let out a sharp "eek" before he slipped through the doors of the train. The doors closed a second later, with Jake's knapsack stuck in the door. He couldn't turn. He just struggled with the bag, hoping it was sturdy and didn't rip. That would be a scene, a bag full of cash all over the platform being scooped up by greedy people.

Finally the doors opened again and Jake was able to get the bag in the rest of the way. Then they closed again just as Mr. Thick arrived. He was denied entry, and soon the train lumbered out of the station. Jake realized he was free. He had made it. He was clear of his pursuer. He could breathe easier now. So why was his heart still pounding as the train entered and left station after station? He finally transferred at Notting Hill Gate to the District Line, heading back toward Earl's Court and eventually his home station of Putney Bridge. As he emerged onto the platform, he was met with a warm breeze that helped settle his frazzled nerves.

So now what? Go home to his flat, await contact from Hunter?

Surely he wanted the money.

Just as Mr. Thick did.

Right now, crossing over the Putney footbridge, the calm waters of the Thames quietly passing under him, he let his guard down. And wasn't that a bad decision? Because waiting on the far end of the bridge was Mr. Thick himself. Jake paused in midstep halfway across. How had he known where to go? How did he get here so quickly? A cab through Central London? Did he catch up to him on the Tube? Probably that long wait at Earl's Court for the Wimbledon train. No matter, the detail wasn't important, just the mere fact that he was here and waiting for Jake—and the money bag. Should he turn around? Would Mr. Thick give chase again? Maybe he should just hand over the money and be done with this whole thing. What did he owe Hunter? Nada.

Jake continued to walk toward Mr. Thick. The man stood there, large arms positioned on his hips, intimidating but patient. Jake gazed around him for any other people, saw two women approaching from behind. They were busy chatting. Could they help? Would a diversion be possible?

He slowed his pace, allowing them to catch up to him, to pass him.

"The guy's a jerk. You shouldn't go out with him again," the one woman said.

"Yeah, but he's great in bed," her companion came back with.

Obviously they weren't talking about Hunter, but that was all Jake could think about. He had a feeling Hunter qualified for jerk status considering the situation he'd put Jake in. Was

he great in bed? Well, he didn't know, but wasn't that why he was putting himself through all this difficulty? To find out?

He kept pace with the two women, approaching the stairs at the far end of the bridge. Mr. Thick had started to make his move, coming toward them. Jake felt fresh sweat on his brow. What to do, what to do...

The women started down the stairs.

Mr. Thick came toward him.

*Act fast.*

Jake deliberately missed that first step, which sent him flying down the hard brick stairs. He bounced, the softness of the knapsack saving him from real injury. But his approach had worked, because both women came quickly to his aid, while Mr. Thick shied away, doing his best to distance himself from the ruckus. Eventually, the ladies helped Jake down the final steps and to the safety of the sidewalk. He thanked them, talking up his clumsy nature, etc., but they just smiled and wished him well, and then they were off. Once again Jake was alone with Mr. Thick, separated now by the long brick staircase. Jake took off, his knee in slight pain. But he was almost home...and then what? What was to prevent Mr. Thick from breaking into the house? Were Steven and Jennie home? Just what was the emergency number in London? Not 911. Shit, he couldn't remember.

Jake quickly made his way to the house on Deodor Road, but instead of going up the stairs, he darted sideways, making his way past the garbage bins and into the backyard. He had seen Mr. Thick making his way slowly down the street too, as though he could wait to seize the bag, no hurry. The

longer it took, the worse it would be for Jake. So Jake kept walking, past the flowerbeds, until he reached the edge of the yard. Now he was trapped.

Why had he gone this way? What kind of solution was this?

And then he remembered, almost as though his subconscious had been leading him here. A ladder was attached to the wall, and that ladder led down to the river, a small dock—Steven's kayak. Jake realized this was his only escape. There was no way Mr. Thick could follow him on the river. So Jake, securing the bag again to his back, climbed over the wall, down the ladder, gently so as not to slip on the wet, ropey rungs. Gradually he made his way to the floating kayak, carefully slipping into the narrow hole. He secured the knapsack on his lap, then grabbed a paddle and unleashed the craft. Soon, he was off, the kayak taking to the smooth waters with ease and grace. He paddled, sweeping himself farther out onto the river and away from the banks.

He looked back at the yard, saw Mr. Thick at the edge of the wall. Hopeless, helpless. Jake had done it, he'd pulled a fast one and managed to escape. *Man*, he thought, *my reward for all this nonsense better be worth it*. Jake, gliding gently on the river Thames, took a moment to look into the bag. Like taking a chance on Pandora, he opened the secure flap and began to pore through the contents of the bag one more time. Bundle after bundle of cash, thousands and thousands of pounds, too much to count. But if had to venture a guess, he'd figure he had in his possession about twenty-five thousand pounds sterling.

What he also discovered was a clue.



Lust in London  
*by Adam Carpenter*

Because stuffed inside the bag was a square cardboard coaster. On the front was the picture of an old-fashioned windmill, as well as lettering in some Old English-style font that said *The Windmill Pub*. Jake turned it over, and that was where he found a message clearly intended for him. It said: *You'll find me here. Hunter.*

Jake kept paddling, wondering where along the expanse of one of the world's most famous rivers he'd be able to dock. When he planned his trip to London, he'd envisioned taking a boat ride along the Thames. But never had he imagined it this way. Maybe it would have been better had his passport not been found.

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## Chapter Five

The Windmill Pub was located on Mill Street, a residential street just off the busy Tottenham Court Road. A weary Jake approached the entrance with trepidation, stealing occasional looks back as though he believed he was still being followed. But no, there was no possible way Mr. Thick could know the meeting place. Jake's heartbeat had finally returned to normal, and the break of sweat on his brow now had more to do with the warm temperatures than his frantic rowing on the Thames. The entire incident still seemed like something out of a movie. Was he really still carrying around all this cash? Had he really been the object of interest by a so-called bad guy? Had he really pulled off his daring escape? Even if he hadn't discovered the coaster from the Windmill Pub inside the bag, Jake would still have found himself at some other public establishment. Because he needed a drink, and bad.

At the entrance, Jake peered inside. At three thirty on a Monday afternoon the pub was fairly staid, quiet. A couple of older gentleman sat around the bar while the bartender busily polished glasses. There was no obvious sign of Hunter, but that didn't mean anything. Slippery guy like him, he could be hiding anywhere—in the men's room, at a corner table, across the street...or somewhere far, far away from the Windmill Pub. Maybe it wasn't even a clue.

No, he was certain. This was where he was intended to meet Hunter.

Jake pulled the door open and stepped inside, hit immediately by the yeasty smell of beer. He cautiously made his way toward the long bar, looking around at the mostly empty tables. Still no sign of Hunter. Behind the bar, a man about fifty years, weathered skin and a welcoming smile, asked him what he'd like. Jake pored over the taps, not sure which to choose.

"An ale...uh, the Young's Pale."

The man nodded, pulled the tap. Seconds later Jake had his drink and he took a healthy gulp from the foamy liquid. It tasted great, helped settle those last frayed nerves of his. He tossed down a five-pound note, took his change and his beer and with the knapsack still on his back, sat at a corner table. Across the room he saw a man reading a newspaper—the *Evening Standard*—his face hidden. As the man went to turn the page, he looked up from the paper's crinkled edge. Jake saw the same sparkling blue eyes, the same sexy scruff he'd seen in on that park bench. The one and only Hunter Abbott. Should he go over? Should he wait? Should he just get up and leave and forget this foolish venture? Jake was *this close* to Hunter; no way could he leave, not without an explanation. Besides, he was far too attracted to him to walk away now. So what to do? He got his answer in the form of a gentle nod from Hunter, as though indicating it was safe for Jake to join him.

He accidentally scraped the chair on the hard floor as he got up, but no one paid him any mind. Jake grabbed his beer and made his way to the far table, sitting down with his back to the door. The knapsack he placed on the floor between his

legs, squeezing it to make sure it stayed there. He didn't like feeling so vulnerable.

"You want to tell me what the hell is going on?" Jake asked, his voice a whisper.

"Relax. It's all good."

As though to prove it, Hunter set down the paper, sipping at his beer as though he had no concern in the world. Jake wanted to be pissed off, but damn if the sexy presence of Hunter didn't make a mess of his emotions. Being so close to him, he could almost feel the sexual energy coming off his body. His sleeves were rolled up, hairy arms on display. Jake wanted to reach out, caress them...then maybe pull at the hair in an effort to inflict some pain. A grin appeared on Hunter's face.

"So, you had a little adventure?"

"Went for an impromptu trip on the Thames."

Hunter nodded. "Clever escape. Bet Junior was plenty pissed."

"Junior? That huge slab of a man is named Junior?"

"Many blokes from the underworld have ironic names."

"Like Hunter?"

"Oh, that's not fair. I'm hardly a criminal," he said, "and besides, a more literal name I could not have."

With that he slid his hand across the table, his touch electric.

"I appreciate your help, Jake. I'd like to thank you."

"What do you have in mind?"

"I know of this flat nearby."

"So that's it? No explanation as to what you've gotten me involved in? Just meet at a pub, go upstairs, have a little fun...and then what?"

"There's nothing 'little' about the fun we could have, Jake."

Even with a sip of beer sliding down his throat, Jake felt his mouth go dry. He recalled the way Hunter had pressed against him the night of Nevil's party, the thick cock he'd felt bulging at the man's crotch. That night he'd wanted nothing more than to rip Hunter's clothes off and see just what the man had on offer. Not that Jake didn't want that now, but he wanted something more. A reason for all this cloak-and-dagger stuff.

"Give me something. The meeting in the park...you had that planned all along. I mean, since Friday."

"Yes."

"Why?"

"I needed a diversion, a fresh face who no one knew." Hunter paused, gazing about the room. "I was supposed to hand over that knapsack to Junior, but truth be told, I couldn't trust him to deliver it to man who wanted it. So I went with plan B."

"Me."

"Precisely. Look, Jake, you were never in any physical danger..." He paused, looking around at the other patrons. "Can we not do this here? Never know who is watching...or listening. I'll tell you everything. But away from the pub. Let me leave first. I'll be waiting on the street corner. Finish your beer, then leave. Give it five minutes. I'll find you. Then we'll go somewhere and I'll tell you why I did what I did. And then

I'll thank you properly for your help. Oh, and I'll take this now, if you don't mind."

The knapsack, of course. Hunter took possession of the money, offered up nothing more. As his hand reached under the table, he swiped first at Jake's crotch, then for the bag. Both seemed to have grown from the excitement. Smiling, Hunter finished off the remnants of his beer before leaving the newspaper behind and walking out of the pub. Jake didn't look back to watch him. He couldn't have left now anyway, even if he wanted. His mind might be swirling with ideas, thoughts, conspiracies, but his cock was as single-minded as always. And it was hard from Hunter's suggestive swipe, just anticipating what was soon to come. *Yeah, me, I get to come,* his cock seemed to be saying.

Jake looked up on the far wall of the pub, saw a clock in the form of a windmill. Must be why this place was called the Windmill Pub. Time was ticking forward, just as the sails of the old mill turned, churned. He wished he had time for a second beer, to steel himself for what next awaited him. Hunter Abbott had proved to be more than he had bargained for. Five minutes went by quickly and it was time to see if Hunter was as good as his word.

\* \* \* \*

First thing Jake noticed: the air-conditioning was already turned on. But hell, so was he. After walking up three flights of stairs with Hunter ahead of him, checking out an ass tight against the skin of his jeans, Jake was hot and bothered by the heat emanating from both the hallway and the man. So

now entering the cool confines of the tiny flat, Jake was grateful for the cooling breeze as it hit his face. A thought occurred to Jake: that Hunter had been here before their meeting at the pub. Again, planning, anticipating...controlling.

The flat was tiny, just one room, large picture windows allowing a flood of light into the room, the glare cut by white lace curtains. The place looked decidedly feminine, and while Hunter might be gay, he was no girly man. Which meant one thing: this wasn't his place. Jake had to wonder if Hunter even had a permanent residence, or did he slip and slide through life, begging favors and money and sofas from people, using his charm and sex appeal to get what he wanted? Whichever it was, seemed to work. A stranger's flat, a bag full of money, a willing participant in acts nefarious and soon, sexual. Or so he hoped. Damn if Hunter wasn't slippery enough to allow a promise to go unfulfilled.

Still, questions flooded Jake's mind and he hoped that finally he was going to get some answers. Hunter had promised that the moment they were hidden from the world and in seclusion inside this flat he would get his answers. What was the money for? Who was chasing after him? And why? How did Jake figure into it? Which question to ask first was Jake's only problem. Wait, correct that, the other problem was suddenly before him, and truth be told, problem wasn't exactly the right word that came to mind. Distraction worked, and Jake was convinced that was what Hunter was going for. Hunter, closing the door behind Jake, had already begun to undo the zipper of his jeans. Jake could already see the impressive bulge straining to be released.

"Hunter...you promised to tell me..."

Jake's mouth quieted at the same time it dropped open.

As Hunter slid his pants down around his ankles, his cock bounced from its hold. Jake's eyes widened at the size of it—length, girth, the bulging red, angry head. A generous amount of dark brown hair surrounded the cock, brush around a redwood. His large cock called to Jake, and suddenly all questions, all thoughts of money and thugs and danger were gone, replaced by an urge, an overwhelming desire that swept over Jake like a tsunami. On unsteady legs Jake made his way toward Hunter, dropping fast to his knees. A smiling Hunter stared down at him as Jake opened his mouth wide and slipped the tip of that giant cock inside. Christ, Jake thought, the thing must be over ten inches long, and it was impressively thick and hard and powerful, especially as Hunter began to thrust it deeper inside Jake's mouth. He took as much as he could, saliva lubricating its warm shaft, each push threatening to choke Jake. But then Hunter would pull back, allowing Jake to pause, breathe, before taking the next gulp.

Wrapping a hand around the thick shaft, Jake finally took more control. He sucked and he licked, taking the head, then shaft, more, more, more of it, trying his best to accommodate every generous, vein-laced inch. Hunter matched each thrust with a hearty groan, the sound sexy, inviting, spurring Jake to suck harder, suck, suck, taste, taste...devour. He felt the cock begin to slide down his throat. He pulled back before gagging, and as he coughed, Hunter snickered.

"Told you, didn't I?"



"Told me, yeah. Warned me, no."

Hunter pulled Jake back up, pressing him against the wall. Like the other night, he kissed Jake with deep passion, his tongue slipping in, exploring, touching, teasing, Hunter's scruffy cheeks rough against his own cheeks, his neck, his goatee. Jake felt wild sensations ripple throughout his body as he kissed the sexy beast back, one hand still wrapped around his cock, pulling, yanking, grabbing, another hand slipping around to Hunter's ass, feeling a coating of hair on the cheeks, in the crack that seemed to suck his finger inward. He pushed, which elicited a sharp cry from Hunter. He pulled back.

"Easy, Jake, you'll want to take your time, huh? Hmm, let me guess, you're versatile, huh? Like to bottom, but from what you just did, I can tell you like to top as well."

"That okay?"

"Eventually," Hunter said, "but not today. Come on, follow me."

Jake, still dressed, his cock pressing hard against his pants, watched as the half-naked Hunter made his way into the living room. Pillows had been tossed onto the floor, along with an outstretched blanket. On the nearby table, Jake noticed a large bottle of lube and several condoms—magnum sized. Stealing another look at the massive cock, he tried to imagine it fucking him, and for a moment fear seized him. Could he go through with it? Could he handle such a tool? He had a feeling there was no going back now. No way was Hunter going to let him escape with just a quick blowjob. Nope, it was obvious Hunter meant business and that he had

planned on such a thing transpiring between them. Hunter's next move ended any such debate within Jake. Because he shed himself of his T-shirt, finally revealing what Jake had long desired to see—that hairy chest he'd teased him with. And damn if it wasn't worth the wait, the anticipation. Thick coils of dark brown hair covered his chest and belly, wild whorls that grew up over his shoulders and down his muscled arms. Wow, wow, wow, the biggest cock he'd even had and a great furry chest, all on a guy with charm, looks...danger to him.

Jake quickly stepped out of his shoes, fingers unbuttoning his shirt. Pants followed in short order, and soon Jake Westbury stood naked before his fantasy come true. His cock ached, practically thrusting out of its natural skin, as though wanting to grow more in an effort to match Hunter in size. Not that Jake had anything to be ashamed of—his cock was a good six inches, lacking only the length that Hunter had been blessed with. His chest had its own sprinkling of dark hair, but again, nowhere near the lush blanket that swept over Hunter's chest.

"Nice, Jake, real nice. Chest slightly hairy, cock ready for sucking."

"Uh, thanks. You've got me so hot..."

The men made their way toward each other, Hunter wiping away spittle at the corner of his mouth, Jake reaching out like a blind man in search of something he knows is in front of him. At last their bodies connected, their lips, their tongue, skin and hair, cocks, all of them meshing into one heated exchange. Jake's fingers grazed that amazing chest, losing

them inside the dense covering of dark fur. The hair was springy, deceptively soft. But damn if there wasn't so much, oh so much fucking hair. He followed the thick trail down from his sternum to his belly, finally to where it all came together in a perfect blend with his pubes.

"You like, huh?"

"Oh yeah, the hairier the better," Jake said.

"If that's the case, I should have let you go off with my associate back at the park, furry little guy that he is," Hunter said with a laugh. "But I wanted you all for myself—and I knew you were totally locked on my chest. That's why I took my shirt off last—the way your hand went right for my chest hair, how you felt me up when I kissed you. You wanted to rip my shirt off right then, you wanted to lick my chest, pull my hair..."

"Yes, yes. Hunter, you're bad, so bad...such a tease."

"You have no idea. But now is not the time for teasing, it's time for some real action," Hunter said, and with such a statement he grabbed Jake, pushing him down onto the blanket. Crushing his body against Jake's, he kissed his neck, his half beard scratching his neck. Jake's fingers dug deep into Hunter's back, holding on as passion swept over him, threatening to spill over. His cock twitched, and for a moment he thought he'd just come, but no, not now and not yet, not with this hairy, big-cocked beast lying upon him. His climax would be shattering, mind-blowing. What his body was doing now was a taunt, a promise of what was to come...

Just then Hunter lifted Jake's legs, planting Jake's feet against his pecs. Toes curled in the hair for a stronger hold.

Hunter reached for the lube, which he applied in copious amounts to Jake's ass. Then he slipped a condom over the tip of his cock, sliding the latex roll down over the long shaft. Jake watched each step with a nervous anticipation. He was going to get royally fucked, and part of him couldn't wait while another part of him feared the thick poker poised at the entrance to his ass.

"Just breathe easy, in, then out," Hunter advised, his voice gravelly, sexy, alluring. His eyes held a sweet softness, as though he recognized the apprehensive look in his lover's eye. He'd seen it before, many times. *I'll be gentle*, he seemed to be saying, encouraging words. Jake nodded, his eyes wandering down, looking at the eager cock before it disappeared beneath him. With his fingers grasping at the blanket beneath him, Jake let out a deep breath just as he felt the first push. He resisted a moment, something he knew Hunter could sense. Hunter just grinned, his devilish smile the same one that had lured Jake into this situation. Pouring more lube directly onto his cock, Hunter smoothed the liquid over the condom before resuming his game of penetration. He pushed, then pushed again, and Jake felt himself go wide.

"Yeah, that's it, Jake, take it...take it all..."

"Fuck, fuck...owww...yes...more, don't stop..."

Jake let out a sudden, sharp cry, and he realized that the head of Hunter's cock had at last pierced him, the shaft following, inch, another inch, more inches. His ass wiggled, twitched, and then Hunter's cock slipped farther inside him, deeper, deeper. Jake's own cock was still hard—he always stayed that way when he was getting fucked—and right now

he could feel the precome leaking out. Fine, just don't let him come, not yet. He wanted to feel the full effect of Hunter's massive cock, wanted to feel every vein, every contour, each inch as he pushed as deep as he could...

"Ohhhhhh," Jake said, and he felt the first hard thrust of Hunter's cock.

Then another.

Another still, followed by the loud slap of his balls against his ass cheeks.

"Shit, shit, Hunter...now, give it all to me."

Maneuvering Jake's legs until they were wrapped tight around his furry butt cheeks, Hunter began to pound, hard, hard, harder, his long, powerful cock forced deep inside Jake's newly pliant ass. His body hovering over him, strong, furred arms holding him up, muscles bulging, chest heaving, Hunter thrust again, again, grunts escaping his lips, echoing off the walls. Each thrust was met by a moan of pleasure, of heightened desire, by Jake, who urged him on—*more, more, more, fuck me as hard as you can*—legs tightening against that ass, hands reaching up to grab hold of those tufts of thick chest hair. His cock brushed against his furry belly, sending sparkling tingles up and down his throbbing shaft. Intense heat began to boil within him. He cried out once, twice, his voice only spurring Hunter to deeper, harder thrusts.

"Yeah, Jake, take it all. Take my huge cock. You want it all, yeah, yeah."

Jake was crying and he was nodding and he was pleading never to stop, never, more, more, his body accepting each

and every one of Hunter's violent thrusts. Hunter continued to fuck and fuck more, his cock buried so far inside Jake he threatened to split him in two. Sweat dripped from his brow, sliding down his face, his chest, as though the air conditioner had been rendered moot, powerless against the force of their hot fucking. Heat spilled off their bodies, drenched their skin, matted their bountiful hair. Sunlight from outside blazed through the curtains, reflecting off their bodies, casting a glow around them. Hunter's chest and arms looked ablaze, hairy and fiery, intense. And still neither wanted to climax, neither wanted this moment to end. Jake had been imagining this all weekend, guessing at how Hunter's cock would feel inside him, how big it really was, wondering how wonderful his chest would feel while he fucked him, and now the reality was inside him, above him, heaving, thrusting, eagerly opening his ass up to the pleasures his big cock revealed.

A powerful wave crashed over Jake, and suddenly his cock was reacting, spurting. Come shot forth even before Jake knew what was happening. His orgasm had happened that fast, as though it could barely contain itself within his body. A strangling sensation took hold of him, releasing him only after his cock had drained of his seed. Still, though, Hunter hadn't yet climaxed, and he kept pounding at Jake's ass even as he watched the quivering cock of his lover lose its juice. That only spurred him on. The tight squeeze of Jake's ass after orgasm gave Hunter an extra shot of passion, and so he thrust, pushed, shoved his cock one last time before he allowed his body to release itself. He felt a thunderous explosion shoot through his shaft and out his tip, even as it

plunged again inside Jake. He bellowed, his voice shaking the walls.

"Grab my chest, yeah, heighten it. Grab my hairy chest, Jake. Do it..."

Jake needed little encouragement as he buried his hands, his face, his tongue into the curls of Hunter's fabulous chest. He licked at the fur, hands pulling at thick tufts. "Oh, Hunter, I love it. Your chest is so fucking hot, so hairy. Yeah, fuck me more, more you hairy beast. I want to feel that come..."

Jake felt the cock inside him expand further. Hunter thrust again, again, each spurt of his orgasm halting his breath, challenging his body. Just then Jake's lips found Hunter's and they kissed even as their bodies settled down after their climaxes. Hunter collapsed on top of Jake, his cock still buried inside him.

"Wow," Jake said.

"Yeah, wow indeed," Hunter said, somehow finding air in his lungs, enabling him to speak.

He pulled out, falling over onto his back. His chest heaved still. Jake liked the sight. He reached over, snuggling in tight against Hunter's torso, hand brushing the matted chest carpet. His found a nipple, tongue licking it. From the corner of his eye he saw Hunter's cock twitch, and he realized this was a mere break. Their fuck session was far from over, and in fact, it was only just beginning. Jake rolled over on top of Hunter, straddling him, pinning him to the floor. Fingers grazing his chest hair, Jake looked down at Hunter and said, "I know the perfect thing to do until your cock is ready to fuck me again."

"Oh yeah, what's that?"

"Tell me what the money is for."

Hunter let out a sharp laugh. "Are you saying I can't have your ass again until I tell you what's going on?"

"Something like that."

"You drive a hard bargain," Hunter said.

"And you drive a hard cock," Jake said. Feeling Hunter's cock poking at his ass again, he had to do something to distract him before passion overtook reason. As he stroked Hunter's chest, he wrapped a finger around a particularly long, wiry hair. Then he pulled.

"Owww..."

"Talk," Jake said, "or I begin yanking, one by one. And with all the hair on your chest, we could be here awhile."

"Okay, okay. Jeez, Jake, you're so demanding," he said, letting out a heavy sigh. "So, it's like this. Yeah, you were right, I owe someone money." He paused, visibly swallowing, like he had tasted a bitter pill. It was the first hint of hesitation to cross Hunter's face that Jake had witnessed. "A lot of money. Trouble is, I don't feel like paying him back, and in fact I have this plan to take even more money from the guy."

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## Chapter Six

"I'm what you might call the black sheep of the family, the fuck-up. It's a reputation I actually prefer, since it lowers everyone's expectations. And considering the stellar achievements of my other two siblings, it's kind of a relief too." Hunter paused to take a drink from the glass beside him. He'd found a bottle of white wine in the kitchen. "My brother, Colton, is some kind of fancy international lawyer. Negotiates big deals, takes the commission, buys land with the profits. My sister, Patsy, she married wealthy—and then happily saw the guy buried just a couple years later, leaving her piles of dough and not enough ways to spend it. Then there's me, the youngest of the three Abbott children. Mom died a couple years ago, Dad is still floating around somewhere. None of us can stand him. When I came out at sixteen, he threw me out of the house. Patsy was already gone—she had some sort of life as a TV actress for a while, so she lived with Mom in LA. As for Colton, he took our father's coldness and distance and turned it into a fierce determination to succeed. That's why he's so driven—as a fuck-you to our dad. Me, I'm a fuck-up, and that's also its own fuck-you to Dad."

Jake didn't know what to say. All he knew was that he felt ridiculous straddling this sexy man while he poured out his soul. Gently, he slid off, freeing Hunter from his hold. He drank from his wineglass, refreshed by the fruity liquid. Leaning against the hard edge of the sofa with the light

beginning to fade, Jake quietly stroked his new lover's arm to let him know he was listening, that he could trust him.

"Uh, wow. Your family sounds like a soap opera, huh?"

"Sure. *All My Siblings. Gays of our Lives.*" Hunter's tone was bitter.

"Gays? Who besides you?"

"Oh yeah, sorry, I left that part out. Brother Colton's gay too. Came out years later, but still it was nice to find out. For me, anyway, Patsy too—she loves having gay brothers. She's rather a big fag hag. For that asshole known biologically as Father, sorry, no grandkids for you, not from your boys, because we happen to like sleeping...fucking...other guys." Hunter allowed himself a snort of a laugh. "You'd like Colton, Jake, probably more so. He's hairy like me but way more successful. He'd never send you on a wild chase through the streets—ha, the rivers—of London with a bag full of money. You probably would have been better off meeting him on some plane, following him to his fancy summer villa in the south of France. You'd get to top your summer away. Me, what did you get from me?"

"A rather nice afternoon of incredibly hot sex, that's for one," Jake said.

"Yeah, playing at being a bottom."

"That was hardly playing," Jake said with a smile.

Hunter nodded, then stared away out the window. London was fading into nighttime and the mood inside this tiny flat was definitely shifting. Jake had to consider the man before him. Since the moment he'd met him he'd been intrigued—heck, even before then, when Steven and Jennie initially

mentioned him. His impromptu visit at the Railway Pub, the tease at Nevil's party, the odd encounter in Hyde Park, and now the post-Windmill Pub screw. What he'd seen each time was a man brimming with confidence and an edgy attitude, dripping with a sexiness you wanted to drown in. Now, hidden from the world and whatever troubles he was involved in, Hunter seemed like a vulnerable boy. That only made him sexier to Jake, the fact that he had let down his guard.

Jake leaned forward, sliding his naked self against Jake. He stroked the man's chest, innocently running his fingers through the thick hair. "Okay, so you told me about your family. Now what about this money situation? If you're in such a bind...well, why not ask Patsy? You said she had more money than she knew what to do with. Surely she'd help out her little brother." Jake paused to allow a crooked grin. "Not that you are little by any stretch."

Hunter seemed to break from his reverie and he turned toward Jake, kissing him.

"Who are you, Jake Westbury?"

"Me? Just a guy. A guy who came to London to get away from his oh so boring life and instead got unwittingly caught up in some scheme to which he has no clue about. All because he found some guy really attractive. Really sexy, hot..." He kissed a nipple, circled his tongue around it. "You know, Hunter, this isn't like me. I mean, sure, I've had more than my share of sexual encounters and one-nighters and stuff, but usually I lead a very measured life. Organized, planned down to the last detail. So today's adventure has certainly been one for the books. I don't even recognize

myself, the way I escaped—twice—from Mr. Thick's clutches. And can I tell you something? When that thug...Junior, when I saw him show up at the flat I was staying at, my heart started beating so fast, I thought he was going to beat the crap out of me...or maybe worse. Part of me couldn't believe I was stuck in such a predicament. The other part of me was excited—this was new, different, kinda fun in a twisted, dangerous way. So, who am I? I think I'm a guy who's looking for something but doesn't know what that something is."

Silence hovered between them. Comfortable silence, because despite the circumstances that had brought them here, the desire that had overwhelmed them, their physical releases indulged in and satiated, a deeper connection had just been established. Jake, touched by what Hunter had revealed, what Hunter had made him divulge, felt the sudden need to kiss him. Sweetly, tenderly. Hunter responded in kind, and both men came together in a building scene of kisses and touches, caresses, petting. Their bodies rolled on the floor, Hunter on top, Jake beneath his bulk, cocks hardening, poking at the other, enticing each other.

Jake and Hunter found their eyes locked. He read worry in Hunter's.

"What is it?" Jake asked.

"We need to keep moving," Hunter said.

"We? Moving? What does that mean?"

"I mean...I need to stay one step ahead of Junior. I can't stay here in this flat. Heck, I really shouldn't even be in

London. I have to get out of town, and the sooner the better. Once it's gone really dark."

"Oh. Uh, okay," Jake said, feeling passion drain from his body, from his cock.

Hunter must have felt it too. "No, no, you misunderstand. Jake, I want you to come with me."

"With you? Where?"

"Voignier Estate."

"Excuse me? Where—and what—is that?"

"It's the house...the land Patsy inherited from her deceased husband. On the outskirts of London, not too far," he said excitedly, sounding suddenly like a kid being told he's going to Disney World. "A big house, lots of land, a pool, stables...a classic English country manor. Lots of rooms, Jake, lots of place for us make love."

Make love. It had deeper connotations. It drew him hard toward Hunter's heart. Jake was tempted to just say yes, he'd follow Hunter anywhere. But there was something about this invitation that smacked as...well, planned. And that was when Jake remembered that everything Hunter had done since they'd met had been preplanned, orchestrated... Shit, and he thought he was OCD.

"You knew all along," Jake said.

"Yes, I knew I had to leave and that Patsy's home was my only answer. The only part that wasn't planned was...you."

"So you were planning to screw me here, then leave me."

Hunter nodded without embarrassment. "I guess so."

"What changed your mind?"

He paused, as if afraid to reveal what he felt. But then he said, "You did."

"How?"

Hunter leaned forward to kiss him once again, but Jake withdrew before lips could meet, before a simple kiss became a dangerous commitment. He was waiting for an answer.

"By being you," was what Hunter said, and if those words hadn't melted Jake's defense, the expression locked inside those sparkling eyes would have.

"This is crazy," Jake said, shaking his head. "I've only been in London a short while and already I'm leaving it behind? I've barely adjusted to the time change."

"Right. But London is dead in the summer. Come to the country."

"I don't even have my suitcase. I have only the clothes on my back."

"Uh, Jake, at the moment you don't have any clothes on."

Good point. "You know what I mean."

"Trust me, you won't need many clothes at the estate—it's very private. We can buy whatever else you may need."

"Oh, and with whose money?"

Hunter indicated the knapsack on the nearby table. "That can buy a lot of clothes. And condoms."

"A combo drenched in oxymoron," Jake said.

"What do you say? Jake, loosen up, come have the time of your life. Be spontaneous. Be adventurous. Be with me. Who knows? I may even let you play the top. What do you say?" Hunter asked, moving in again for another kiss.

Jake felt his resolve weakening. How was it possible he was even considering this? But he wanted Hunter's kiss more than he wanted to doubt himself, so this time Jake accepted the embrace, and then he accepted more, more, more. Desire flooded through him as his cock again sprang to action.

"Take me, Hunter. Fuck me once more before we leave for the country."

Hunter's thick cock was already hard, all ready to enter Jake.

Jake opened up his legs, all the while locking his eyes on Hunter and his alluring features. His beautiful face, the scruffy, rough beard, the thick hair of his arms and chest, and then he felt that thick cock pierce him with fierce determination. He opened wider, wider still, wrapping his legs around Hunter's furry ass. He pulled him in tighter, feeling the entire cock slide deep, deep inside him. Hunter pushed, Jake begged for more, more, please more, and soon the two men were making hot, sweaty, hard love. They pounded and they grunted, they urged and they grabbed, they fucked and fucked and fucked more until ultimately they climaxed just when the lights dimmed all around London and only their shadows kept them company. Soon it would be safe to slip out under the cover of darkness, but for now Jake hated to even let that massive cock slip out of his warm insides. Yet Hunter pulled out and stood up, beginning to put clothes on. With the zip of the zipper of his jeans, each button of his shirt buttoned, both actions closing off access to his big cock and furry chest, Jake felt like Hunter was suddenly shutting him out. Was it the vulnerable boy who was returning to their

world, or was it just Hunter's way of not telling him the entire truth?

Just what the hell was Jake doing, following this elusive, sexy figure out of London and to some waiting estate in some faraway county? What could possibly await him there, and how did it involve a huge thug named Junior and the bag full of money and the mysterious man to whom Hunter owed every last cent?

\* \* \* \*

But follow him he did, into a cab and onto the late train out of London's Paddington Station. No one appeared to be following them, and soon the golden, glowing spire of Big Ben and the attractions of London were far in the distance. The Great Western Main Line train picked up speed as it rushed toward Reading, and eventually, after a transfer, to the small village of Newbury. Hunter explained they had about a total travel time of ninety minutes. It would be past midnight when they arrived, and from there it would be another thirty minutes by cab to the estate.

"Good, that gives you plenty of time to explain what's really going on."

"Actually, the train car is pretty empty—we could always fool around."

"You've distracted me enough for one day, Hunter. Let's concentrate on your problem and why you think I can help you. So...spill."

"I did. You made me...many times."

"Christ, Hunter. Is everything a joke?"



"Relax, Jake. You take things too seriously sometimes."

"You leave me with a bag full of money, probably twenty-five thousand pounds..."

"Actually, it's fifty thousand pounds."

Jake's mouth failed him. Open, yes, but no words spilled out. He stared at the bag sitting between them, tossed so casually to the accompanying seat it may as well have contained yesterday's underwear. Hunter seemed so blase about it. Jake felt more nervous than before. That was one butt load of money. Finally, he said, "You left me in the care of fifty thousand pounds, which by current exchange rates is nearly one hundred thousand dollars. How did you know I'd even return it? You took a big chance, Hunter, with someone you hardly knew."

"I knew I could trust you. I have good instincts about people."

"The same people who you owe this money to? Did you trust your instincts when you borrowed it? And why did you—what did you need the money for? You still haven't told me much except about this little caper except that you owe a lot of money and also that you have no intention of paying it back."

"Not only do I not want to pay it back, I want to win more."

"Ah, win. Let me guess—gambling. Cards?"

"Horses."

"Horses? You mean, like, horse racing?"

"Newbury, where we're headed, is home to Newbury Racecourse. I've spent many a day there. Patsy's dearly

departed once owned a few horses, would run them in season."

"And apparently you've spent many a dollar. Er...pound."

"You win some, you lose some."

"Sounds like you lost all."

"I'll make it up. And more." He paused. "I always do. This is the first time though that I've owed...well, so much, and to the same person. Lately he's not been in a very forgiving mood. Holds a grudge like he holds his liquor."

"Is that why we're going to Newbury? To go to the races?"

"Nah, it's the off season, no racing till Fall. Can't wait for this year's Hennessy Gold Cup. I usually clean up every November when it races. Normally he'd wait for his cash, but he's being such a hard-ass. Sending Junior my way."

"So you start the new season in debt and spend the rest of the reason of the season trying to pay it back? And when that runs out, you borrow? Doesn't sound like a very smart plan."

"Henderson Fellows could stand to lose some money. He's got plenty."

"Henderson Fellows?"

"Quite a name, isn't it? I think he's got a couple other fancy British-sounding middle names in there, enough letters to fill out the alphabet. Proper English parents, a duke or a duchess, whatever, and he's the family fuck-up—see, just like me. It's what we have in common. A disgrace to his parent's if you ask me, plying his trade as a bookie. But we all must do something for a living, right?"

"Unless you're you."

Hunter didn't have a reply to that one, unless you counted a tossed-away shrug.

"So, let me guess. Junior works for this Henderson Fellows guy, sends him out to make sure his debts get paid—one way or the other. Great, if Junior had been able to corner me, what would have happened? Would he have beaten me senseless? Shot me? Kidnapped me?"

"Nothing so dramatic. He would just taken the money."

"And if he'd found you with the money?"

"Oh, he'd have taken me to see Henderson," Hunter said evasively. "What do you say we drop this awful subject? It's ruining the mood."

"But this money. Where did you get it?"

"Oh, from Patsy."

"So why not ask her for more?"

He frowned. "Dear sister says I'm on a budget. How else will I learn to be responsible with money, she's always telling me. Always trying to instruct me on how to live my life."

"Sounds like you need to take her class again."

"I know what I'd like to enroll in," Hunter said.

Hunter's mood was quite obvious, Jake could tell. His jeans could barely contain the bulge that was pressing against them. His palm rubbed against the material, all the while keeping his eyes locked on Jake's face. With his free hand he unbuttoned his shirt a few buttons, thick chest hair on display. Shit, Jake thought, his own cock growing inside his pants, this guy was turning him on again, and Jake could barely resist him. But what did he expect him to do? Suck

him off right here on the train? Lick his chest? Mount him and bounce on his cock while he penetrated him?

Just then the conductor's voice crackled over the train's speakers, announcing their pending arrival in Reading. Hunter looked a little disappointed at the reliability of the British rail system, and so by the time the train reached the platform, his cock's hardness had dissipated and the two of them rose to leave the train. Ten minutes later their transfer train arrived and they began the short journey into Newbury proper. Gone were any come-on advances, with Hunter nodding off into a faint sleep.

Jake just watched the darkened countryside pass him by, jostled by the constant motion of the train. He stole occasional glances at Hunter, still not able to believe he'd a) met this man; b) that he'd allowed this man to manipulate him into this scheme of his; and c) had wild, sweaty sex with him all afternoon. And now here they were headed to his sister's country house in the middle of the night, and what then? Was Patsy Abbott in residence, or was this another part of Hunter's plot? He realized he still didn't know how Hunter planned to pay back this Henderson Fellows fellow, nor how he himself figured into whatever Hunter had planned. But rest assured, he knew a plan had been hatched. Hunter apparently never did anything on a whim. Except for the surprise request for Jake to come along for the adventure—at least, that was what he'd claimed. Was that really true? Did Hunter actually have real feelings for him, or was it just sex? How did Jake feel about all that? He'd come to London for love and all that had motivated him so far was lust. Yes,

Hunter was fucking sexy and he couldn't wait to be with him again, but at some point they would have to decide if there was any promise of a future. Could Jake really be with someone who lived so recklessly? Could be as bad for his bank account as for his heart.

As they neared Newbury, Hunter awoke and took out his mobile phone. He dialed a preprogrammed number (of course), chatted quickly in hushed tones, and then hung up. He just smiled at Jake when given an inquiring look. Ten minutes later they arrived in Newbury proper, stepping off the train only to be met by a man dressed in black, complete with a black cap. He stood beside a stretch limousine.

"Ah, Charles, very good timing."

"Indeed, Mr. Abbott. The train was on time. I beat it by a minute."

"Excellent." He turned to Jake. "Shall we?"

Hunter slid into the back of the limo, the driver, Charles, holding the door open. Jake gave him a questioning look, received back a quiet nod but no hint of who he was or who he might work for. Okay, guess no introductions were going to happen. The door closed, with both men settled into the comfort of leather seats. Hunter poured two helpings of Scotch, giving one to Jake before sipping at his own.

"You have a chauffeur?" Jake asked.

"Alas, no. But I have friends, and friends like to help me out."

"Interesting. Just what do you have to do to have such friends?"

"Sleep with them," Hunter said with a laugh.

Jake couldn't tell if he was being serious. He usually wasn't, but when it came to Hunter he could never be sure. He kept Jake off balance, guessing what he'd do, sometimes succeeding, most times failing. Life seemed like one game for him. If there was one thing Hunter did take seriously, it was sex. With his movie-star looks and pornworthy cock, he had the desire, the equipment, and he delivered on all his urgent promises. Jake's sore ass was proof of that.

Jake didn't get to see much of Newbury itself, since they barely hit the town square before heading onto some dark, quiet highway, which took them deeper into the country. With the clock having slipped past midnight and only the hint of a moon in the sky above, they were encased in blackness. Only the headlights guided them through the winding roads of Berkshire county, and at last they arrived at a private driveway identified by two cement lions at the gate. The limo wound its way up a long, narrow access road and finally emerged through the trees. The big house named Voignier Estate presented itself.

"Welcome to Manderly," Hunter said.

"Yeah, no kidding. Hope Mrs. Danvers doesn't try to burn it down."

"Nah, we gave her the summer off," Hunter said, "so it's just the two of us."

That sounded nice, until Hunter finished his thought.

"For now."

Jake had no idea who could be joining them. He was sure Hunter knew.

\* \* \* \*

Lust in London  
*by Adam Carpenter*

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## Chapter Seven

Well, at least they didn't have to break into the place.

Jake had to admit, as they stepped out of the limousine and it sped off into the darkness and he and Hunter stood before the imposing brick-encased facade of Voignier House, the thought occurred to him that his rather crazy day would end with a case of breaking and entering. But then Hunter pulled out a key and thrust open the door with force and determination.

"Huh, I imagined us breaking the glass on the kitchen door and sneaking in through the back," Jake said.

Hunter shook his head. "Patsy got tired of replacing the glass, so she finally gave in and presented me with a key."

"Ha-ha," Jake said sarcastically.

Hunter was dead serious. "No joke."

"Hunter Abbott, I think you're the baddest dude I've ever met."

That backhanded compliment made him smile. "I hope so. You need to let go, Jake. Go with the flow, let life entertain you, not challenge you."

"Oh, and how do you propose I start?"

"The big four-poster bed in the master bedroom, you and me."

A turned-on Jake needed little additional encouragement, and not fifteen minutes after the two of them had crossed the threshold of Voignier House, Hunter's hard cock was itself crossing another barrier, one easily accessed with a hearty



swipe of lube. Jake was on his knees, arms gripping the hardwood posts as Hunter pierced him. His ass sucked in every thick inch, feeling Hunter's big balls slap against him as he thrust and he pounded. Jake felt an explosion rip through him, and quickly he was shooting his load, his cock jutting and bouncing in the air as Hunter continued his eager, hard thrusts. Suddenly the big cock exploded as well, and Hunter pumped, pumped, pumped out each drop until at last, satiated, he pulled out and fell back against the plush blankets of the bed. Jake snuggled in close to him, hands brushing the thick mat on Hunter's chest, and it was that way that both men, physically and emotionally drained from the day's excitement, contentedly fell asleep.

In the morning, they discovered there was very little in the way of provisions in the cupboards, and so a visit to the market in Newbury Towne Centre was in order. A red Mustang convertible was at their disposal, hidden and slightly dusty inside the neighboring garage. Hunter explained that this was Patsy's toy, but she was hardly here to use it. So of course he'd convinced her to give him a key.

"Is there anything you can't convince your sister of doing?" Jake asked as the car swept down the winding drive and onto the main highway.

"Yeah, paying all of my debts," Hunter said.

"Ah yes, the real reason why we've come to...what the hell is the name of this place?"

"Voignier House."

"Which means what exactly? Doesn't scream English country estate to me."

Voignier House was not its original name, Hunter explained, nor was it English by any stretch. Sure, it once claimed an English heritage, back in another century when some duke and duchess claimed ownership of not just the surrounding land but all of Berkshire, until they were undone by some political or sexual scandal. It had all happened so long ago, few in town remembered or cared about the exact circumstances. Since then the lush grounds and beautiful house had changed hands numerous times, most recently to a French winemaker who was also a bit of an Anglophile, his tastes running to things like cricket and horses. So he acquired the land for a princely sum, renamed it Voignier House in honor of his favorite varietal of grape. Charles LeBeque was his name, and he of course married an English lady, and together they raised a small family, ran horses, and of course, Charles played cricket whenever he could.

"He would have loved to have been a duke, but alas...the original family had long ago left, leaving their titles buried deep in some family closet or crypt. But some of the original stuff remains—the cricket field is located way back behind the stables," Hunter explained, "but it's fallen into disrepair since the grandchildren of the Le Beque's didn't fancy the game. Patsy married one of those grandchildren—Devon was his name—and when he died about seven years ago the land, house, and yes, the cricket field, all fell to my beloved sister. Since she's hardly ever here, I try and make good use of it. The horses are all gone too, but the stables remain. All Patsy really cared about was the house. Probably even more so

than her husband. She can be cold, my sister, when she wants to be."

"Anything like her brother?" Jake asked.

Hunter decided not to give an answer.

They arrived in Newbury and parked on a side street, and together Hunter and Jake strolled through the cobblestoned streets, stopping at various shops to stock up on food and other delicacies. Jake walked around with a sense of wonder, realizing that you didn't get any more classic English village than Newbury, what with its pubs and specialty stores, its old churches, and the River Kennet that coursed its way through the green parks, but that didn't mean that progress had not come here. A Starbucks, a McDonald's, but thankfully Hunter spurned such "advances" and instead led them toward the Lock, Stock and Barrel Pub located along the banks of the river, where they lunched on bangers and mash and pints of thick, bitter Fuller's Pride. Finally, with their spoils packed into the small trunk of the Mustang, they made their way back onto the highway, Hunter taking the curves of the road with a sense of the familiar. He was grinning like some schoolboy gone truant. Jake wasn't convinced this was the same way back toward Voignier House, and indeed he was right. Road signs began to indicate they were closing in on Newbury Racecourse, and finally Hunter made the exit ramp toward the huge complex. Pulling into the lot, he encouraged Jake to follow him.

The grounds were all quiet. English horse racing took the summer off—it was not "in season," as Hunter explained—but

it would be back in full force for the fall, a new and exciting racing year awaiting to thrill its eager crowd.

"Yeah, and take all their money," Jake said.

"Don't spoil the mood," Hunter said. "Just look around you. At the racecourse, the grandstand, at the faraway stables, take in the fresh scent of hay and horses and greens. They may not be racing now but you can feel it. You can taste it. You can hear the thunder of horses hooves on the hard-packed dirt. God, there's nothing like it."

Jake wasn't looking at his surroundings. He was concentrating on Hunter, who looked in the throes of ecstasy, even more so than when he was immersed in the art of lovemaking, during penetration and overwhelming orgasm. No, Hunter was home here. He was alive and vibrant. Racing clearly coursed through his veins. It was exciting, no doubt, being a part of this world, but as Jake had seen firsthand, danger lurked with each bet, with each cross of the finish line. Because in world that produced such winners, others had to fail. Losers they were called, and right now, Hunter in debt up to his eyeballs, Jake had to wonder if Hunter saw himself through foggy eyes.

Finally, they left Newbury Racecourse and returned to Voignier House and whatever awaited them there. It was only day one of their new adventure, and Jake for one had no clue what to expect. He'd seen another side to Hunter at the racetrack, and he wasn't sure he liked him. Sure, a man with ambitions and desires, with interests and hobbies, they attracted Jake, especially when they came wrapped up in the hairy-chested, big-cocked package of Hunter Abbott. But that

was all on the surface. Where was the real Hunter Abbott, the man beneath the body? All Jake knew was that they had escaped from the so-called bad guys, they still had the bag full of money, but that didn't mean that world wouldn't eventually intrude upon their little scene of domesticity.

It was only a matter of time before Hunter's world imploded.

Jake wondered about this guy named Henderson Fellows.

Just who was he? And how did Hunter's friend from the park fit into this mess?

He thought of last night, being picked up by Charles the chauffeur, traveling in style.

Friends helped him, Hunter had said.

When a friend needed help, it was usually to save him from an enemy.

\* \* \* \*

For the better part of a week, Jake Westbury had been waiting for the other shoe to drop. When they dined on the food they prepared, when they walked along the river's edge holding hands in front of anyone who cared to view them, when they made love in the afternoon and at night, choosing a different room, a different position each and every time, until they had exhausted themselves in their sexual tour of the old manor house. Jake had even let down his guard after a few days, believing it was possible that only the future mattered and that it came with no complications like a bag full of money and a whole lot of mystery. But then in the quiet of night as Hunter snored, when every crackle of branch

alerted and awakened Jake, he knew that the serenity he felt was short-lived. Yup, another shoe had to drop, hard, loud, thunderous, and it finally did on the following Sunday afternoon, nearly a week into their life of domestic and sexual bliss. He was wrapping up his daily laps in the pool when the outside world intruded.

Hunter was tanning himself by lying spread out on the diving board, his body clothed only in the tiniest Speedo, which Jake surprised he could actually fit into. Even flaccid his cock left a large impression, and the material was as taut as it could be. Sneaking a look, Jake had to admit he was perpetually turned on by this sexy guy, none more so than now, catching the glint of sun off his burnished chest, the thick carpet of hair shimmering thanks to the tanning oil Jake had earlier spread on it. He felt his cock stirring and thought it might be fun to slide over there, free his cock from the bathing suit, and place it inside the warm confines of his mouth. Jake was just about to do such a thing when suddenly a voice from behind took him out of the moment.

"What ho, boys, getting a bit of our rare summer sun?"

Jake jumped at the sound of the voice. Guess he wasn't as relaxed as he thought. A week of sun and sex hadn't really diminished his nerves, mostly because he knew this couldn't last, that something—or someone—would spoil this deceptive feeling of nirvana. He was right, and it came in the form of Mr. Suit.

"Ah, Sandy, good of you stop by," Hunter said, sitting up from the diving board. His legs dangled over the sides. The crystal blue water of the pool glowed beneath him. Taking off

his shades, he motioned toward Jake, who had just popped out of the water. "I believe you chaps have met, but perhaps not formally. Sandy Berenson, meet Jake Westbury. Jake, my banker and friend, Sandford Berenson."

Sandy made his way toward Jake, shaking his hand.

"Pleasure," Sandy said, "and under much nicer circumstances."

"Indeed," Jake said, skeptical still.

"Oh Jake, give Sandy a break. I told you he was operating under my orders, so he really had no say over that meeting in the park. He was nervous enough withdrawing such a large sum of cash from his branch, but he did it nonetheless. It was the only way I could avoid Junior. Sandy's a good boy, very loyal, very eager to please. So, Sandy, make yourself comfortable, grab a suit and go for a swim."

"Don't mind if I do. I needed an escape from the wife. The heat makes her shrewness act up."

"Damn hot today," Hunter said.

Sandy raised a pointed eyebrow. "As stated."

Hunter laughed loudly as Sandy went off to the house to change.

"Just a friendly pop-over?" Jake asked.

"No, no, I was expecting him."

"Of course you were."

"Jake, you should know by now, nothing in my life happens by coincidence."

"Right, it's all preplanned."

"And in my control."

Such a top.

Just then Sandy reemerged from the house, clad only in a pair of swim trunks. Jake found himself staring at the man's well-kept body. He might be on the short side, but he was in great shape. And Hunter had been right, the guy's body was as furry as you get. His chest was blanketed by a thick black pelt, a heavy trail of hair spreading out over his taut belly before disappearing beneath the line of his swimsuit. Jake had originally thought the man was okay looking, but now he'd been moved to the plus side of attractive. He felt his cock begin to stir, especially when he looked back at the hairy-chested Hunter. Jezz, it was total furfest at the poolside, and he liked it. Hunter had cleared the diving board, giving possession of it to Sandy. The man boarded, made his way toward the edge, and then dived into the air, a furry blur that descended and slipped beneath the cool waters of the pool. Jake realized he'd been staring.

"Told you," he said.

"Told me what?"

Hunter only grinned, words unspoken.

"Yeah, so he's my type. Doesn't mean anything. I mean, he just mentioned his wife. He's married, Hunter, and...oh shit, let me guess. He like to get a little on the side, right?"

Hunter grabbed his own crotch. "More than a little," he said. "But don't worry, Jake, ole Sandy is just here for a bit of business. I've got a tasty little luncheon prepared, some chilled champagne courtesy of Patsy's limitless wine cellar, and then we can all settle down and discuss the matter at hand."

"Which is what exactly?"



"Stay tuned, Jake."

"Why do I think I'm going to regret this?"

"Because that's how you live life, Jake. You regret things even before you've done them. At least enjoy yourself before you start piling on the guilt. Now, keep our guest entertained while I see to lunch."

Hunter went inside the house, and Jake plopped down at the patio table, hiding from the sun under the large umbrella. He watched as Sandy swam a few laps before lifting himself out of the pool with surprisingly muscled arms. Water dripped off his body, pooling around his feet. He padded over to the lounge chair near Jake, where a pile of towels were stacked. Jake carefully watched him. Why, he wasn't sure. Did he not trust him? What could he pull here? Was he suspicious of him or suddenly attracted to him? Sure, he had Hunter in his bed, but Jake was intrigued by this odd little character. Dressed, he looked like a nebbish. In swim trunks, he looked kind of hunky. With Sandy facing away from him, Jake couldn't help but notice that the man's furriness extended to his back, where a healthy coating of black hair was visible, damp from water of the pool. He knew a lot of the gays would be turned off by such a display, and not that Jake counted himself among the hairy-backed "bear" enthusiasts, there was still something enticing about how the locks looked on Sandy's torso. Perhaps it was because the rush of testosterone was so unexpected on him. When Jake had first met him in Hyde Park all suited up, he'd looked a bit nerdy, a bit asexual if you will. Now he was seeing another side to Sandy—actually, all sides—and to see him covered in that black hair was a total

turn-on. He wondered if it was soft and plush like Hunter's hair but it looked coarser. Who knows? Maybe he was an animal in bed, pleasuring his wife with a beastly, feral coupling. Jake pictured himself beneath that furry body, grabbing at his back while being fucked long and hard, loud groans mirroring the sounds of two gorillas in lust.

Suddenly Sandy turned around and started to make his way toward Jake, draping a towel around his shoulders, partially covering his chest. He dropped to a neighboring chair just as Jake tossed a towel over his crotch. Got to hide his erection.

"So, seems everything turned out just fine that day in the park," Sandy said, wiping water droplets from his face.

"So far," Jake said a bit defensively.

"Oh, now, don't be hostile, Jake. I was merely following instructions. Hunter can be mighty persuasive. But so can I be, when motivated."

"Oh? And what motivates you, Sandy?"

"Let's just say that ever since I met Hunter, my life has been far more interesting than I could have imagined. More exciting."

"Hmm," Jake said.

"Seems he's done the same for you."

"How so?"

"Well, here you are at his sister's rather fanciful country estate, indulging in the good life with him." He paused with a knowing, almost competitive edge. "And I assume you're sleeping with Hunter. He's rather aggressive when it comes to sex, he's got an appetite as big as... Well, I'm sure you know

what it's as big as. Tell me, have you done it in conservatory yet?"

Jake nodded wanly. "With his candlestick. I played Professor Plum."

"Haha, very good, Jake."

"What's very good?" Hunter asked, appearing as if from nowhere. So focused were Jake and Sandy on their strained conversation, they hadn't heard him approach. Hunter set down a platter of fresh fruits and artisan cheeses that he and Jake had purchased at the farmer's market in Newbury Town Centre, only to disappear again. He returned a minute later with a bottle of champagne and three crystal flutes.

Apparently satisfied that he wasn't going to get an answer to his questions, he popped the cork in rather dramatic fashion, the sound like an orgasm. Jake felt his loins stir as he looked from one man to the other. Sexy, studly, hairy, hot, controlling, competitive. He'd have to be careful with this situation—the combination of hot sun and cool alcohol could make a man vulnerable to suggestion, to a proposition he wasn't quite sure he follow through on. Because to him this seemed like an obvious and—since we were talking about Hunter here—preplanned seduction. Hunter and Sandy no doubt had had sex before, and Jake had the feeling they might be very interested in adding a third member, literally, to their coupling.

"So, boys, cheers," Hunter said, raising his glass of liquid gold.

The three men clinked glasses, then drank.

Hunter sat down, still dressed only in his Speedo. Legs wide open, his package was on full display, not hard but it didn't need to be to make an impression. He reached for some grapes and popped a few into his mouth before dropping the last into his glass. The bubbles of the champagne attacked the fruit like desire unleashed. Jake knew how that felt—even after just one sip of the bubbly he was beginning to loosen up and enjoy the mood. Around Hunter, Sandy had dropped all hostility.

"Hunter tells me you're from the States," Sandy said.

"New York. Just here for the summer."

"Lucky you. Why England?"

"I've always loved London, but I hadn't been back in several years. An opportunity presented itself, and here I am. I've got two friends who are also gallivanting around Europe. My pal Matthew is in Paris for the summer, and Freddie chose Rome. See, that's how this all came about. I told them about my summer excursion, and they followed suit."

"Why not travel together?"

Hunter smiled. "Because the idea was for them all to fall madly in love. Isn't that rich? Having the three of them pal around together limited their options. If you ask me, they weren't thinking creatively enough. But Jake assures me it's all very platonic among them. I find their ventures rather charming. It's nice to know not everyone has given up on the notion of true love."

Jake wasn't pleased with Hunter's flippant dismissal of the reason behind his trip. But he said nothing, since Jake was quite obviously playing the role of hypocrite rather nicely.

Hunter was no man to fall in love with. He was a fling—a sexy one, for sure, but still, in the end it would quite simply...end.

"Actually, I've barely had a chance to enjoy London—Hunter here stole me away. But if I've learned anything on this trip, it's to just go with the flow."

"Ah yes, like your rather clever escape on the Thames."

Jake tossed Hunter a look and then said, "I didn't know that was public knowledge."

"Hardly public," Hunter said, "not like I placed an advert in the Standard. There are certain people who are aware of my, uh, situation, and so they need to be kept in the loop. This is a need to know operation and Sandy needed to know."

"So, when do I become part of that inner circle?" Jake asked.

"Ah, so our new friend here is unaware of what's going to transpire?"

"No, I don't. I would love to know."

Hunter just shook his head. "Come on, chaps, let's just enjoy the day. Refills anyone?"

They all nodded, and Hunter played his role as host perfectly. Soon the bottle was empty and so were the platters of food. A refill on the bubbly came in the form of a fresh bottle, which they popped and drank from and indulged in again. Still, neither Hunter nor Sandy offered up any more info about what was going down, but clearly some plan or other was afoot. A plan that involved the sack full of money. Hadn't Hunter stated he planned to increase his take? Which meant not only not paying back fifty thousand pounds but earning enough more to clear the debt and come out on top.

With the racecourse closed for the season, Jake wasn't sure how Hunter was going to go about securing such a huge sum of cash.

The second bottle finished off, that was when Hunter launched into the business part of their drunken luncheon.

"Sandy, you've made the call I asked?"

"Certainly."

"And what was the reception?"

"Well, he's good and pissed for sure."

"To be expected."

"Tell me exactly what he said."

"He called you a cad."

"Who did?" Jake asked.

They ignored him.

"Said you were out of your league and that before all was said and done, you'd owe him so much you couldn't possibly pay him back. He said he would enjoy exacting his revenge."

"Utter nonsense. If things get too out of hand, Patsy will bail me out," Hunter said with a knowing grin. "She always does, that sister of mine. But this time I won't need it. I have a plan, as well as an ace up my sleeve."

"What might that be?"

"My ace?" Hunter asked. "Why, it's not a what but a who. Or is that whom? Never know the difference. No matter the grammar, our who is none other than my new friend here, Jake Westbury."

Jake had been watching the volley between these two men as though attending a tennis match, and finally one of them faulted. Jake, like a referee, suddenly said, "Uh, no, I don't

think that's going to happen. I'm done with the subterfuge, and I'm done carrying around a boatload of money."

Both men laughed at Jake's comment, and then he reddened at his double meaning. The image of himself on the Thames in a kayak with a bag full of cash flashed in his mind.

"Oh, Jake, don't take it personally," Hunter said. "You were never in any real danger, and you won't be now. See, Sandy here has arranged a game to take place two nights from now at Voignier House. We will all have a role to play. But that's for later. We'll have our strategic meeting tomorrow. For now it's all about fun, sun, bubbly."

"Speaking of...how about a bit of fun before I need to get back to the wifey?"

"Yes, yes, Sandy, we'll get to that. Impatient much?" To Jake, Hunter said, "He's not very subtle after he's had a few drinks."

"Uh, what kind of fun?" Jake asked warily.

Hunter answered his questions with not a word but an action. He stood from his chair, made his way toward the more comfortable lounge chair. From there he slipped off his Speedo, his hardening cock bouncing in the air. He spread himself onto the chair, opening his hairy legs while he stroked his cock to its full, impressive length.

Well, if that didn't answer Jake's question, nothing did.

Sandy rose from his seat and quickly made his way over. He slipped off his own swim trunks, standing naked in the backyard, his very hairy body on full display. He dropped to his knees and immediately took Hunter's large cock into his mouth. Jake watched in amazement as the entire length

disappeared; Sandy had no doubt had practice sucking that big thing. Hunter helped anyway, his hands pushing at Sandy's head, thrusting it down, down. *My God*, Jake thought. He wondered how many of Sandy's talents and actions his "wifey" was familiar with.

After a few minutes of generous fellatio, Sandy released the cock with a string of saliva still connecting them. Hunter spun around, getting on his own knees, splaying open his ass. Sandy plunged his tongue deep into the crack, licking, sucking, thrusting deep into Hunter. He was moaning loudly as Sandy ate him out, sounds that only spurred Sandy on. It spurred Jake on too. By now his cock was rock hard inside his swim trunks and he wanted nothing more now than to join in on the furfest he was witnessing. Is that what they wanted?

"Jake, what the hell? Get over here," Hunter said. "Join the fun."

Good thing a bit of champagne remained in the bottle, because Jake first drained it. The buzz in his head gave him the fortitude to join them. It had been years since he'd indulged in a threesome, and quite honestly he wasn't sure what he should be doing, who he should be doing. Should he go after Hunter, or was Sandy waiting for him? Was he supposed to suck Sandy? He pushed his shorts down around his ankles. With his hard cock leading the way, he approached the two men. Sandy was still licking at Hunter's ass, and all Jake had available to him was Sandy's hairy ass. He wasn't ready for such an intimate action with the man he'd just met, and besides, he was still sort of pissed at him for the whole



money-exchange ploy. So what he did was slap his hand against the furry butt.

"Owww," Sandy said, but he was grinning. "Do it again."

Jake slapped him again, this time not as hard.

"Harder, Jake."

This time Jake slapped that ass with new determination. The smack of skin against skin crackled in the air. Sandy spun around, giving Hunter's ass a break. Instead he grabbed harshly at Jake's cock, opening his mouth to suck it. The heat that washed over Jake threatened to knock him to his knees. He reached out, steadying himself by latching on to Sandy's shoulders. He felt the thick black hair, its texture coarse. He pulled. Sandy must have liked it, because his sucking intensified. Sliding, sucking, jerking it with his hands, cupping Jake's heavy, hairy balls. Damn, Sandy was good at cock sucking. Jake felt pressure begin to build inside him, and he let out a sharp cry. Suddenly Sandy pulled off, shaking his head.

"Not yet, not now," he said. "First, you do me."

"Do..." Jake said, feeling stupid. What did the guy want? To be sucked...to be...

"Fuck me. Fuck me nice and hard," Sandy said, and as if to demonstrate his strong desire, he spun around, his ass practically thrust into Jake's face.

Jake gazed over at Hunter, who was still lying on the lounge chair, stroking his sizable cock. He paused to reach under the chair where a towel lay clumped and then tossed something Jake's way. It was, of course, a condom and a pack of lube. Several others packets were in the folds of the

towel. Once again Hunter had planned for everything. He had known this little threesome would take place. He gave Jake the thumbs-up.

Attraction was a curious thing. Jake recalled Sandy when he'd been dressed in the suit, all buttoned up and nervous, as straitlaced as they came. Now, standing naked before him, his body coated with dark hair, pleading to be fucked, fucked hard, he was seeing rather another side to the curious man, and if he wasn't necessarily hungry to have sex with him, the booze had unleashed his inhibitions. His cock had hardened at the prospect of getting a chance to play the top. Since he'd been with Hunter, his ass had taken the brunt of all their sex, so faced with the chance to pound at someone else...well, Jake realized he was more than ready. The head of his cock was thick, red, ready, so he slipped the condom on and swiped at Sandy's hairy ass before adding a bit more lube to the condom. He positioned himself before the waiting ass, Sandy urging him, do it, slide in, hard, fast, now...

Jake pushed, pushed again, and suddenly his hard cock had entered Sandy's open, puckered ass. Grabbing hold of the cheeks of his ass, Jake thrust again, again, and Sandy cried out with evident desire. He bent over further, and Jake saw him take Hunter's massive cock into his mouth. He began to suck and Jake began to fuck harder, turned on by the blowjob he was witnessing. He could hear Hunter's groans as his cock slide between Sandy's lips, hear Sandy's frantic slurps, could hear his own balls as they slapped hard against Sandy's ass. Hot, bothered, unstoppable, Jake ran his hands over the patches of hair that covered Sandy's back, gripping

tufts between his fingers. Hunter's cock slid out of Sandy's mouth as he screamed aloud from the pain of having his furry back yanked at, but it was a howl of desire, and he started to beg, beg, beg— *harder, pull harder, more, yeah, fuck me, fuck my furry little body, give me all you've got...yeah, yeah, yeah*—and that only gave Jake more motivation, more desire, which flooded from his loins to his cock, to his heart, his hands, his brain, and suddenly all bodily functions were in overdrive. His cock thrust fast and hard, fast and hard, faster...faster...

"Uhhh...." Jake started to say.

"No, not in me, on me. Yeah, come all over me..."

Jake pulled out and whipped off the condom just in time to watch his cock twitch as shot after shot of white-hot come splattered against Sandy's furry back. Sandy then let out a strangled sound and soon his own cock was exploding all over Hunter's chest, his hands stroking the length of his shaft to elicit every last shot, every last drop. Jake was still hot and he was still horny, despite his orgasm, and he maneuvered between Sandy's legs and made way for Hunter's ass. He lifted him from the lounge chair, opening his ass, thrusting his tongue into the furry enclave. He licked and he licked more, pulling at the thick hair with his teeth and listening for Hunter's fierce cries. He saw Sandy licking at Hunter's nipples, digging through the carpet of chest hair for those fiery red tips. Both men continued to attack their leader, waiting, watching, wanting to see Hunter's throbbing cock explode. They licked, they sucked, and then they changed positions, with Sandy eating his ass and Jake grazing his

chest, and then each of them reached out a hand and together the two of them jerked him, milked him, frantic, hard, desperate, and at last Hunter let out a sharp bellow and his cock expanded. It grew warmer, and the head just exploded with a violent burst of come. Sandy lapped at it, and Jake, not to be denied, joined him at the lusty fountain, and together they drank from the member they prayed to, the cock they remained slaves to.

Finally, all three came to a rest, realizing their bodies were coated with sweat and come. Hunter rose first and announced the last one in the pool had to go home to Sandy's "shrew," and well, none of them wanted that, so they raced to the pool's edge and dived in, three bodies near-simultaneously delving into the cool waters of the shimmering pool. When they resurfaced, they decided they did not have a clear-cut winner, but since Sandy had already married the woman, it was only fair he returned to her side.

"Bastards," Sandy said. "Fine, I'll go. But I won't like it."

"Clearly," Hunter said.

Ten minutes later, Sandy was gone from Voignier House, Jake was swimming laps, and a naked Hunter was once again sunning himself on the diving board. As though what had transpired between the three of them had been a dream, and now life had awakened, resumed, and only Hunter and Jake existed in the present. But Jake, staring back at the house, at the sky, at the lush English countryside, knew that reality would soon return. A reality that had Hunter owing some guy fifty thousand pounds. And that a scheme was afoot in which Hunter would try to steal more money from him.

Lust in London  
*by Adam Carpenter*

For the first time since arriving, Jake was nervous about what tomorrow would bring. Who was this Henderson Fellows, and how it was he and Hunter had come to know each other? What did they really mean to each other? Jake feared he already knew the answer.

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## Chapter Eight

Change was in the air when Jake awoke on Tuesday morning. His first clue was the fact that he was alone in the sprawling bed, a first since he and Hunter had arrived at Voignier House. Each night they had gone to bed, horny and hungry for each other, only to wake the next morning feeling exactly the same way. Jake could barely count the number of times they had been intimate since they'd met, and with each screw Jake had felt himself forging a deeper connection with Hunter, and the only problem he could anticipate was that Hunter did not reciprocate those feelings. Love had never entered the conversation. But sweaty sex all day long with a furry guy went a long way toward burying any sense that things were not as they seemed. Jake did all he could to deny the nagging feeling in the pit of his stomach that the end was near, and damn if his nerves weren't newly rattled when he got out of bed that morning.

Hunter was nowhere to be seen. He'd showered; there was evidence of that. He'd had a quick breakfast, dirty dishes still in the sink. The red Mustang was not in the driveway, nor the garage, and finally Jake found a note under the blanket when he went to make the bed: *Errands to run. See you later.* Hunter's note was a poor substitute to his voice, his kisses, the nibbling on Jake's neck that he awoke to each morning. Showered, shaved, dressed, Jake made his way down the expansive staircase, gazing at the huge foyer before him, at the series of hallways and doors that led to various rooms of

the large house, and he realized this was the first time he'd been alone in the grand house. He didn't like it. If he wasn't already feeling displaced from his home in New York, the fact that he hadn't spent much time in his London flat (and was still paying for it) made him realize just how quickly his life had changed. In just a few short weeks, Hunter Abbott had become the center of his universe, and while Jake had come to London to fall in love, he wasn't so sure that was what was happening.

Right now the house felt stifling, so Jake exited through the front door. Outside a beautiful summer day was in full bloom, with a bright blue sky and wandering, aimless clouds. A slight breeze ruffled his hair. He breathed more easily now, as though the claustrophobia he'd just felt had been sucked away by the wind. Jake, dressed in his uniform of shorts and T-shirt, decided to take a walk along the grounds, skirting across the driveway and onto the great wide lawn. The grass was lush, so he removed his sandals. He took off like a little kid, waving his arms, the rush of air around him almost giving him flight. He felt loose, free, open, as though all he'd been worrying over had dissipated. No bags full of money, no thugs, no Hunter.

At the edge of the property a small stream cut through the ground, and Jake took to following its gurgling trail. He went beyond the stables and the old cricket field, crossing over a small, open wooden bridge. Water lapped over rocks, flowers grew on the riverbank. The scene was idyllic, causing Jake to stop there. Hanging his legs over the edge of the bridge, he dipped them into the surprisingly cool water. Pulling off his

shirt, he let the sun hit his bare chest, felt the wind ruffle his chest hair. He leaned back, staring up at the sky, and sighed.

He thought first of his friends Matthew and Freddie, in the thick of their quests for love. He thought of new friends Steven and Jennie, who were probably wondering what the hell had happened to him after Nevil's party. Or for that matter, their kayak. He'd have to apologize for that one when he got back and explained his involvement with Hunter Abbott. They had warned him, hadn't they? Trouble, trouble, trouble were the first adjectives to describe him. And yup, he was all that and more, much more, and for a second Jake allowed a smile to cross his face. It had been more than two years since his last true relationship, and while he'd dated and survived a few one-nighters or booty-call-like flings, it had been a while since he'd had any steady man in his life. All this time with Hunter, he had to wonder about the basis of their relationship. Jake knew what he wanted. Did Hunter feel the same?

A slight ruffling from the nearby trees broke Jake from his thoughts. He gazed up and saw the approaching form of Sandford Berenson heading his way. He was similarly dressed in casual summer wear and a button-down shirt and he waved over at Jake, who returned the friendly gesture. A fleeting image of Sandy and Hunter naked popped into Jake's mind. Was it only just two days ago that the three of them had indulged in a champagne-fueled sexual frenzy?

"Hello, Jake, what brings you here?"

"Just went for a walk. Didn't even know where I was going. Ended up here. It's nice, peaceful."



"Calm before the storm?"

Jake's eyes crinkled. "What does that mean?"

"Tonight. The game... Oh, so Hunter still hasn't told you?"

"Apparently not. Why not have a seat, fill me in?"

Sandy appeared visibly nervous, as though he didn't want to betray Hunter's trust and say anything he shouldn't. But he sat anyway, dangling his hairy legs over the side. Jake set aside all thoughts of sex, quieting his cock from getting too excited. Nothing was going to happen, he was with Hunter, and Sandy...wasn't he married? To a shrew?

"Can I ask you a question, Jake?"

"You can ask anything. Not sure I can guarantee an answer."

"Are you falling for Hunter?"

Silence fell over Jake as he contemplated the question set before him. It wasn't that he didn't want to give voice to his feelings; he just wasn't sure of the right answer. "I don't know. Maybe. Probably."

"Don't."

"Why not?"

"Because he'll never return it."

"You sound like you speak from experience."

Sandy laughed, shaking his head. His feet kicked at the water, sending up a spray of water that landed on their shorts. "No, no, don't mistake my relationship with Hunter. It has never been about...feelings. Sure, I like the guy—he's entertaining, he's edgy and unpredictable and darned sexy—but no, I could never see myself pursuing him seriously."

"Seeing as though you have a wife, I guess that would put a damper on things."

"My wife and I—not that it's your business—have an arrangement. Our marriage was financial at the start. It remains so today. She knows what I like. She doesn't stop me or question me. But I'm not going to run off on some fool's errand and think a sexy man like Hunter Abbott is going to change all his bad habits for the sake of his nebbishy banker friend." He paused to consider his next words.

"Hunter... He's complicated. Sure, he loves sex. He loves to have it, he loves sharing his body, and yes, sharing his rather impressive cock. Monogamy is not his strong suit—he tried it once and it failed. Not sure he ever recovered from that attempt at love, and so now he goes around living his life however he sees fit. Though I will admit, he does seem a bit changed this summer, like he's got a renewed purpose—take tonight, for example. He knows he's in a bit of spot financially, but rather than continue to run from it—as he's been doing for the past few months—he's going to face it head-on. Why the sudden change, I don't know, and before you go and give yourself too much credit, know that Hunter is fickle. He likes you, Jake—that's real obvious—but if you look for little clues, you'll be able to see he's beginning to distance himself. It's just his way."

"Little clues."

"Yes."

"He was gone from the house before I woke. Left me a note."

Sandy nodded. "Umm. Let me guess, you always have sex in the morning."

Jake blushed.

"Oh, please, Jake, I well know Hunter's sexual appetite," Sandy said with a dismissive wave. "It's voracious. But maybe the fact that the two of you didn't screw this morning doesn't mean his interest is waning. It might just be he's distracted by tonight."

"You keep dropping hints about tonight. Obviously you know what's going down."

"Hunter is having company."

"Let me guess—Henderson Fellows."

"Ah, so you know the name."

"Hunter's mentioned him. He owes him money."

"Yes. Yes, he does. But it's much more complicated than that."

"Why? Who is this Henderson Fellows...fellow."

Sandy smirked at the word play. "That I'm afraid I am unable to discuss. Suffice to say that tonight...it all comes down to this game."

"Game. What game?"

"A friendly, high-stakes poker game."

"Winner takes all?"

"And loser loses it all," Sandy said.

"How many people are playing?"

"Just two. Hunter and Henderson."

"So why does Hunter need me?"

"You'll find out."

"I don't like the sound of that."

"You shouldn't, Jake," Sandy said. "You shouldn't like anything about what's about to transpire at Voignier House. Not the game, not what happens after. You're better off having an alternate plan all your own." And with that, Sandy leaned forward and planted a kiss on Jake's surprised lips. Jake's eyes widened, but it also served to open his mouth to the point where Sandy was able to slip his wet tongue in. The intimate exchange felt odd to begin with, but add to the fact that these two men had bypassed such intimacy and instead had gone straight for the fucking had Jake feeling a mix of emotions. He wanted to pull away, but his cock had other ideas, thickening tight against his pants. Sandy began to rub at it slowly, enticingly, Jake's erection growing. Jake slid his hand inside Sandy's shirt, grabbing at the thick whorls on his chest as he unbuttoned the shirt. That thick pelt revealed itself in all its furry glory. Jake stroked his chest while Sandy reached for the zipper of Jake's pants.

"Yeah, you like that, I know you do. Hunter told me."

The tone was right and his touch was right, but suddenly the words were all wrong. The kiss and the petting and the fueled desire all felt like a sudden betrayal, especially as the name Hunter reverberated inside Jake's mind. He pulled back, releasing his hold from Sandy.

"I can't," Jake said.

"It's hardly cheating..."

"It is to me," Jake said.

"You've already done me. Quite nicely I might add."

"Yes, with Hunter's blessing, his urging."

"There's no sense being that loyal to Hunter. He'll never return it."

"That's not your problem to deal with, Sandy."

"Suit yourself, but you're being foolish," Sandy said, rising from the bridge, buttoning up the shirt Jake had undone.

"Your brain tells you one thing, but the rest of your body...it wants something else."

"I don't want a one-nighter. I'm tired of them."

"Let me clue you in on a little secret, Jake. No matter how many times you sleep with Hunter, they are all first times. They are all one-nighters, as you say, to him. Because each and every time Hunter puts every thick inch of his huge cock inside you, he'll leave out any part of his heart." He nodded Jake's way before starting back toward the woods. Then he turned around for one last warning. "Good luck, Jake. With tonight, but mostly with tomorrow. This is England, you know. The sun doesn't always rise."

\* \* \* \*

"Uh, Hunter, I think maybe you forgot an article of clothing in this outfit. At least, I sure hope so."

Jake was staring at himself in the floor-length mirror in the master bedroom. He was half-dressed in a pair of black pants, his feet clad in stylish black shoes. In his hand dangled a bowtie, but for the life of him he could not find the shirt that went with such an outfit. He'd already agreed to wear this ridiculous getup and also to playact the role Hunter had asked of him, but not without a bit of persuading and reward, both given and promised.

Hunter emerged from the shower, a towel wrapped around his waist, beads of water still clinging to his thick muscles and body hair. He tossed a smile Jake's way as he approached from behind. "Here, give me this," he said, taking hold of the bowtie. No clip on, it needed to be professionally tied, and Hunter handled it with knowing expertise. Soon Jake's neck resembled a present waiting to be unwrapped, but he still felt naked.

"Where's the shirt?"

"No shirt."

"So I'm a shirtless butler?"

"Looks that way, doesn't it?"

"I don't like it," Jake said, staring back at himself. Not that he was ashamed of his body. Quite the opposite, he prided himself on his strong pectoral muscles and flat stomach, wished at times his chest was hairier, but in this instance, on display rather obviously and to be in front of some stranger who had some weird hold over Hunter, he was glad for the smattering of dark hair that spread across his chest. He was certainly not in the league with Hunter...or Sandy.

"Trust me, you'll be fine. One of many distractions on the night."

"Hunter, just so I'm not caught unawares, just who is this Henderson Fellows? You've been a wreck all day, gone most of the day on some fool's errands, and while you've promised to tell me everything that's going on, so far those promises have fallen by the wayside."

"All in good time, my handsome Jeeves," Hunter said, planting a kiss on Jake's cheek before disappearing inside the bathroom to finish getting ready for the evening.

The kiss was manipulative, that was what Jake thought. It was not Hunter style, he who usually skipped such romantic gestures for full-on fucking. Like the strange exchange from earlier this afternoon when Hunter had first proposed the idea of Jake playing the part of Voignier House's sexy new butler.

Jake had returned to the house to find the red Mustang in the driveway. Hunter was busy in the kitchen, putting away supplies he'd purchased. An open bottle of wine was on the counter and Hunter took occasional sips from it. Finally he noticed Jake and smiled devilishly at him. He poured him a glass, Jake accepting it as he settled down at the kitchen table. That was when he noticed the suit bag hanging on the back of the door.

"What's that?"

Hunter turned. "Oh, that. It's for you."

"Me. You bought me a suit."

"Borrowed," he said.

"I ran into Sandy. He said you were having a poker game tonight."

"I am indeed, and that's why I need your help." Hunter paused. "Look, when Sandy came over the other day to discuss business, what he had to tell me regarded Henderson and the money I owe him. He wants his cash, he's tired of my games, and so I've agreed to a meeting. A meeting that comes in the form of a poker game. He's giving me a chance

to get out of debt—but of course he's arrogant enough to think I'll lose the shirt off my back, end up owing him more."

"And you don't think you're arrogant to think you'll win even more money?"

"It's not arrogance, Jake. It's confidence," Hunter said. He closed the refrigerator door and with cool hands approached Jake. He was slightly sweaty from his errands, his smelly musky and alluring, but still there was this certain coldness to him. Standing before him, Hunter removed his shirt and tossed it aside. For Jake, this was the second furry chest he'd seen in the last two hours, and his cock jumped at the sexy sight. His hand reached out, rubbing Hunter's crotch. He saw the bulge grow, build, threaten.

"So, what is it you want me to do?" Jake asked.

"As our straight brethren say, I need you to be my wingman," Hunter said, standing still while allowing Jake to unzip his jeans.

"Wingman, huh? Why?"

"Henderson will no doubt have his thug with him."

"Junior?"

"The one and only."

"What do you want me to do?" Jake asked. "I can't exactly beat Junior in smackdown."

Hunter laughed. "No fights. Your assignment is easy. Just stay by my side, do as I say."

"I like staying by your side," Jake said, sliding Hunter's pants down around his ankles. Jake's fingers slid inside the thin material, began to stroke the growing cock. Just then Hunter lifted Jake off the chair and onto the table. Hunter



grabbed at his shirt, ripping it off his body, tongue instantly finding hardened, ripe nipples. He licked, sucked, teased them until Jake cried out from the delicious pain. A grinning, unstoppable, obviously lustful Hunter stripped Jake of the rest of his clothes, then pushed him farther onto the table.

"You sure this can hold us?"

"One way to find out," Hunter said, mounting Jake, pushing open his legs.

"No, no, wait, Hunter, about tonight..."

"Forget tonight for now. Right now I just need to fuck you. Fuck you so hard."

Jake stared at up at the new lover in his life. Doubt crept into his mind and he hoped somehow his eyes did not betray him, the fact he was having second thoughts about what was about to happen. Sandy's words from earlier had penetrated deeper than Hunter's cock ever could, so much so Jake was clenching his ass, fighting the entry of the cock's big head. Hunter didn't take that as resistance. He thought of it as a part of the game. He retreated, digging out his jeans pockets a packet of lube and a magnum-sized condom. Spreading the lube, unrolling the condom, he once again climbed atop the table, its legs strong, capable. Just like Hunter, his arms and his cock, the former he used to pin Jake to the table, the second he used to pierce Jake's ass.

"Owww..." Jake cried out in genuine pain.

But Hunter didn't stop. He kept pushing, pushing, harder, and Jake tried his best to take all of it, but it hurt like never before, not even the first time. But that first time he'd wanted that raw meat inside him, thrusting inside him, capturing him,

enslaving him. Now Jake wanted something more, a connection with Hunter that went far beyond the physical. He wasn't sure what was holding him back, not after these past couple of weeks when he'd freely, wantonly given himself each and every time Hunter ravaged him. His cock should have been hard, leaking precome as the hairy-chested Hunter fucked him hard, hard, harder still. But he was soft, flaccid, and unresponsive. They'd screwed in so many rooms of the house, and now doing it in the kitchen should have been as hot as an oven, but Jake's heart felt as cold as the freezer.

Hunter continued to slam his cock inside him.

Hard.

Thrust.

Pound.

Harder.

Jake closed his eyes, willing the penetration to be over, his mind unable to wrap itself around the concept of not wanting sex with Hunter. Finally Hunter let out a cry that shook the walls of the kitchen, rattled the dishes. His flailing legs thrust out, knocking over a chair. The sharp crack of wood against the tile floor echoed, startling Jake. He moved, his ass twitching. Hunter thrust once more and then came with sheer power. Jake could feel the big head growing as each spurt shot forth inside him.

"Uhhh...uhhh," Hunter said before collapsing on top of Jake. He was breathing heavily, and Jake could feel that scratch of his chest hair against his skin. Normally he would have come at such a lush touch, but still his cock remained flaccid. What the hell was wrong with him? He knew, if not his

mind, then his heart. As much as Hunter seemed to enjoy himself just now, Jake wasn't sure if he knew whom he'd been screwing.

Hunter got up off the table, tossing the used condom into the trash.

Probably just as well, Jake thought. The sex had meant nothing—why not dispose of the condom so easily? Hunter explained that he needed to finalize his plans and then shower—why not take the suit bag upstairs and try it on? Then, as Hunter was about to leave the room, he came back and planted a passionate kiss on Jake's mouth. The act surprised Jake so much, and he found himself finally responding to the man's touch. Maybe he needed to experience something more than the physical. He drew Hunter closer to him, responding to the kiss, returning it with equal, heated fervor. Passion erupted inside Jake's body, his heart suddenly beating faster. His cock finally sprung to action. He spun around, pushing Hunter against the table's edge. Pushing him onto the table.

"Now, Jake..."

"Shut up, Hunter, just stop talking. You want me to play your wingman or whatever, you got it. I'm there for you. But right now, I'm taking hold of the controls. I'm going to drive the red Mustang. And trust me, I know how to use the stick shift also."

He reached into Hunter's discarded pants and retrieved another condom. Once ready, he lifted Hunter's legs until his furry ass was fully exposed. Then he pushed his cock at its entry, his eyes locked on a surprised, curious, panting

Hunter. Then Jake slid inside with one quick motion, earning a sharp cry from Hunter. Be he didn't care. With his hands wrapped around Hunter's ankles, he plunged in deep, as deep as he could, thrusting and pounding and driving his cock like a jackhammer. Hunter finally got into the spirit, wrapping his legs around Jake's ass. Jake then took his hands and spread them over the dark pelt on Hunter's chest. The luxurious feel of his thick fur spurred him on further, fucking, fucking, fucking, sweat dripping down his face, his chest, his back.

"Yeah, Hunter, you like it, you want it, you need to take my cock..."

Hunter suddenly pulled him in closer, burying Jake's cock farther inside him. His hands scratched at his back, nails digging into tanned flesh. Jake couldn't stop; he couldn't climax. He just wanted to keep pounding at him, giving Hunter just what Jake had wanted to do all this time. Then, in a frantic, quick motion, he pulled out, flipped over to where he lay on his back. Hunter rose up, straddled him, sank his ass down onto Jake's cock. He rode Jake, rode him hard, his hairy ass giving his hard cock a workout. Hunter's cock was erect again, big and jutting out over Jake's flat belly. Jake watched as it throbbed, grew, excited at the idea of finally getting to see it explode all over his chest. He fucked harder, thrusting upward, felt a rising heat begin to shudder through him. Yeah, he was getting ready to explode, and the climax he knew would be shattering. Like a rocket taking to the sky, he felt the pressure build, build, build in his balls. And then came liftoff, with Jake's cock exploding copious amount of come, spurt after spurt shooting deep inside Hunter. He cried

out from Jake's fucking, and soon his own cock was coming again, again, again, white spurts streaking Jake's chest.

They each needed to catch their breath, doing so as they stared at each other.

"You better be the best butler ever," Hunter said.

"Guess we'll find out," Jake had said, and if that was to be the truth, that time seemed to finally be upon them. Because time had passed, both men had showered, and now Jake was dressed as Hunter wished. A butler suddenly on duty. The ring of the doorbell announced that the evening had begun. Hunter was still behind closed doors, perfecting his own look for the night. Taking one last look at himself in the mirror, Jake decided he looked more like a Chippendales dancer than an English Manor house butler. Not much he could do about that now. The bell rang again. He made his way down the long staircase to welcome their guests to Voignier House.

The moment of truth had finally arrived.

Just on the other side of that door was Henderson Fellows.

Why did Jake feel that the opening of the front door was akin to the time he'd looked inside the canvas bag and discovered all of that hard cash? He'd taken a risk once with Pandora's box and it had worked to his advantage. Would he be so lucky taking a chance this second time? There was only way to find out, he surmised, and, steeling himself for whatever awaited him, Jake Westbury grabbed hold of the doorknob and turned it. His future faced him, except for him, what his eyes fell upon was the recent past.

"You..." he began to say, and then his voice failed him.

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## **Chapter Nine**

There were two men standing in the doorway, and Jake knew them both. One was Junior, whom he had nicknamed Mr. Thick and whom he'd once escaped his clutches via the river Thames. As he stood there in a formfitting black suit, he appeared no less threatening than that scary day weeks back. Junior gave off no hint of recognition, not when he was in the presence of the boss.

The boss. It was he who took Jake by surprise.

"Nevil..."

"Ah, my old friend Jake Westbury, how do you do? Fancy seeing you here." He was dressed in a stylish navy suit, his shirt collar open. Shiny cufflinks crusted with diamonds adorned his shirt, and a large ring was wrapped around his pinky. He looked wealthy, and he looked confident. A direct contrast to the needy man he'd met weeks ago; it was almost as though he were a different person.

"But...what are you doing here?" Jake asked.

"Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Henderson Fellows."

"But that doesn't make any sense. You're Nevil Masters."

Or did it? Was he? A different person indeed. Jake flashed back to his early days in London. There was Hunter making a quick appearance at the Railway Pub that first night along with Steven and Jennie to raise a glass in Nevil's honor, and then a few nights later he was at Nevil's actual birthday party. Each time Hunter had seemed partly cocksure, but there had

been this level of...what, exactly? His behavior had been skittish, perhaps, as though he were trying to avoid Nevil while having to, as he had stated, "put in an appearance." Had they been manipulating the situation all this time? Was there something more to their relationship? Had Jake been part of some big contest between them? One of them seemingly with a big bank account, the other with a big...

"Are you going to admit us?"

Jake realized he'd been staring, not saying anything, for far too long. "Oh, uh, yeah..."

"You haven't quite mastered British speak now, have you?" Nevil said, sashaying inside the foyer, glancing around with obvious envy. He may have money, but not English Country Manor money. He spun around and faced Jake, amusement painted on his face. "Lovely outfit. Clever of Hunter, really. I suppose I'll get to stare at your fine chest all night while we play. Lucky me, already drawing the right cards. You can hardly have an ace up your sleeve." With that, a laughing Nevil swept past Jake, but not before he gave Jake's nipple a slight tweak.

To say that Jake's mind was swirling was an understatement.

How was it that Nevil Masters and Henderson Fellows were one in the same? Hunter had a lot of explaining to do.

For now, Jake knew he had to play his part, so he escorted his two guests into what Hunter had loosely termed the "playroom," which along with leather furniture and dark-wooded bookcases contained a full-size billiards table and a gaming table, at which were positioned two straight-backed

chairs. A stack of chips and several decks of cards had been placed on the table, and on the credenza behind the table was a large silver platter, covered with a matching dome. A bar had been set up in the corner, and Jake knew his job duties included serving drinks as they night wore on. He offered up drinks to both Nevil and Junior. Junior shook his head, before moving off to the corner of the room to assume a dutiful position. Jake wasn't sure he'd ever heard a word come from the man. Guess he wasn't hired to speak.

"Martini," Nevil said.

"Right, coming up," Jake said, moving his way toward the minibar. He hesitated as he looked at the bottles, then reached for the Grey Goose.

"Jake, please. A real martini is made with gin."

"Right, sorry. This is England."

He reached for the Beefeater bottle and began to mix up a large, cool pitcher of the potent drink. Pouring it into a smart crystal glass, he dropped a couple of cocktail onions inside before handing it over to Nevil. He took a sip, proclaimed it "nicely done. Keep them coming."

Just then the door swung open and in came Hunter Abbott, looking fabulously handsome in a designer suit that showed off his form nicely. He wore a dark blue shirt and a tie, and with his hair swept back he looked like something out of an earlier era. Jake could hardly believe that this hot creature was the man whose bed he shared. An idea of slipping those clothes off him and making long, powerful love to him later tonight had his cock jumping inside his black pants.

"Ah, Henderson, how good of you to show. And early yet."



"You know me," Nevil said.

"Yes, indeed, I do," Hunter said drily. "Jake, I see that you've met our guests. Including Junior—hello, old chap. Trust all is well."

Junior had no reply. Jake wasn't even sure the man blinked. Ever.

But Junior wasn't his concern.

Nevil...Henderson...whatever the hell his name was, it was near-comical the way these two men were acting. Like a dance neither wanted to participate in. "Okay, okay," Jake said, "would one of you please explain to me why Nevil is Henderson and why you, Hunter, insist on calling him by that ridiculous name? He's Nevil Masters."

"Cheeky help you have here, Hunter. Rather outspoken."

"Yes, unfortunate. He did come highly recommended."

"I'm sure he came," Nevil slyly added.

"Jake, would you make me a martini?" Hunter asked.

"With vodka, please. How anyone can drink that gin swill is beyond me."

"Only men with good taste know a good thing."

"Only men with good taste don't allow someone to leave them over something petty."

"Petty? You call fifty thousand pounds petty?" Nevil asked, knocking back the remnants of his first drink, holding his glass out for a refill. "Before the night is done you'll owe me one big payment. I expect full restitution."

"The night is young, Henderson."

Jake just rolled his eyes. Fine, these boys want to playact some old movie from the '40s, let them. He'd duck when the

gangsters showed up with their tommy guns. Turning back to the bar, he busied himself with first refilling Nevil's drink before mixing up a large pitcher of vodka martinis. The night was playing out just as Hunter had earlier told Jake. Right down to the argument over which alcohol best served a martini. Soon Hunter had his drink, and the two rivals raised them without clinking glasses. As though avoiding any kind of physical connection. Jake noted that they hadn't even shaken hands. Just what the hell was this night really all about?

Hunter moved over to the gaming table, taking up a seat that had him facing the door. Nevil had no choice but to take the one that had his back to the door. A large picture window, draped opened to reveal the dark night outside. Jake asked if he should close them, with Hunter shaking his head.

"When we need something, we'll let you know."

Admonished, Jake felt his face go red. Why was his putting up with this?

Hunter grabbed for one of the fresh decks of cards, breaking the seal to the approval of Nevil. No previously used deck for this game, keep things on the up and up, straight and narrow. Hunter shuffled them with the expertise of a dealer, announced the game. "Seven card stud."

"Wait just one moment," Nevil said. "The money. I want proof you have it."

"Seriously, Henderson? You act as though you don't trust me."

He sipped at his gin and made a face.

"Jake, could you show Henderson my collateral?"

Jake had rehearsed this part earlier today. He went over to the silver tray and lifted the dome lid. Beneath it were the stacks of pounds notes Hunter had transferred from the canvas knapsack. Queen Elizabeth II stared at them all, her expression one of disapproval. Jake kind of had to agree, especially given the juvenile antics between these two. Rivals was the word he'd been using, but now that he saw them together, he had to admit that was the wrong choice. It dawned on Jake right here and now, watching Nevil's eyes widen at the sight of the money, at the large smirk drawn across Hunter's face, that these men were former lovers. That had to be it. This was nothing more than a pissing content between exes, one getting back at the other, though who was in control and who was the wounded party Jake couldn't be sure. And somehow he'd gotten involved, no worse than right smack in between. What made it embarrassing was the fact that Jake had easily slept with them both.

So much for a slut-free summer in London.

Money on the table, cards shuffled, the night's action was suddenly afoot. An opening ante of five thousand pounds was required, but rather than toss actual bills into the fray, they used the colored chips. Hunter tossed first, Nevil followed, and at last the first hand was dealt. Hunter won handily, took in over ten thousand pounds in winnings after upping the pot. He kept his cool while Nevil asked for a refill. Hunter accepted one too, took a large gulp, and then excitedly rubbed his hands together. He dealt again, and soon after he won again. He won the next two rounds as well, frustrating Nevil to the point where he set aside his glass and refocused his energies.

He took the next three rounds. The rounds continued. The men battled, tossing out sudden wild cards to sharpen the game, heighten the drama. Jake just stood there taking it all in, occasionally stealing glances over at Junior, who stood silently with his arms crossed. His muscle wasn't needed yet, because neither he nor Hunter had tried to pull anything fancy. Yet.

An hour into the game, with Hunter's pot totaling nearly forty thousand pounds, they called a break. Nevil left the room, his gait a bit wobbly from all the gin he'd consumed. Junior followed after his boss. Hunter approached Jake, leaning in to plant a kiss on his cheek. Jake quickly moved away, leaving Hunter to merely kiss the air between them.

"Something wrong?"

"Yeah. I don't like being manipulated."

"That's hardly what's happening."

"Oh? And what do you call this pissing contest between you and Nevil?"

"Henderson."

"Yeah, you want to explain that one?"

"It's really quite simple. His full name is Nevil Henderson Masters. His parents are very proper English folk, expect much of their son. They work for some politician, so any hint of scandal and the press would have a field day. British papers love political downfalls as much as they love gossip about the royal family. Nevil is like me, the black sheep of the family. He runs his own bookmaking business—and by that I do not mean publishing."

"I get it. He's a bookie."

"Rather a low-class job, don't you think?"

"Not if you both can afford to ante up five thousand pounds per game."

"So we've elevated our game. It makes it much more interesting."

"To me it looks like foreplay."

Hunter just laughed. "Ah, so you've figured it out, have you?"

"What, that you and Nevil were once lovers? That this game is some kind of payback for one of you breaking up with the other?"

"He's trying to prove that I'll always need him."

"And you're trying to prove what? 'Anything you can fuck, I can fuck better?'"

"Sounds like a dirty musical theater song."

"Hunter, seriously. Am I just a pawn? A way for each of you to hurt the other?"

"Quite the opposite," Hunter said. "I was attracted to you the moment I saw you at the Railway Pub, but with Nevil there..."

"Aha, you do call him Nevil."

"When discussing affairs of the heart, yes. When conducting business he goes by Henderson Fellows."

"This is getting ridiculous. He's the same man."

"He's a man who knows how to compartmentalize his life. But whoever he is, he is man who only knows money and betrayal," Hunter said. "Jake, trust me, I just need to win my money back tonight, cancel my debt. That's all that's going on. Once I do, Henderson and Nevil will both be gone, and

you and I...well, we can celebrate my triumph. I've been saving the billiard table for tonight. We've made love in nearly every room in this house, and I can't wait to get you on the table, slide my cock deep inside you... The rug burn you'll feel on your back from the felt of the pool table will drive you crazy...more so than the burn you get from when my chest scratches you. Relax, we're almost done. I'm up forty thou, and Henderson is feeling the pinch. He'll screw up soon enough, especially if you keep plying him with those strong martinis." Hunter leaned in again, and this time Jake accepted his kiss.

Just then Nevil returned, Junior in tow. He took his seat at the table and Hunter did the same. Jake watched the wary expressions on their faces as the game resumed. Cards dealt, bets were placed, and they were off again. Jake refreshed their drinks, watched as the alcohol was consumed and the cards were tossed about the table with studied concentration. Chips slid across the table, first toward Hunter, then back at Nevil. It was like each man had renewed their determination, each round a battle, the stack of money on the silver platter providing the victor his spoils.

"Haha," Hunter announced as he tossed down a flush. "Gotcha, Fellows."

Nevil set down two pair, put his hands in his head as Hunter took control of a rather large pot of chips. Jake dared ask what had just happened, and Hunter explained that he had just surpassed fifty thousand pounds, which in effect rendered him free of the original debt. The small sum of

money he was up he could now use to take even more money from Henderson.

"What do you say, Henderson? Shall we increase the stakes?"

"What do you suggest?"

"Black jack," Hunter said. "Ten thousand per hand. No more chips. Just real hard, cold cash."

"Hunter!" Jake exclaimed. This was the problem with gambling, with alcohol—once you start, you can't stop, and right now Jake was seeing the effects of both addictions combined.

But apparently Nevil was all for it. His eyes lit up. "Like before?"

"If that's how you wish to play it."

Nevil nodded his head, asked for another drink to steel his resolve.

Hunter dealt the first hand. Nevil had the queen of diamonds showing. The second card was of course facedown. Hunter had a four of spades showing. Nevil stole a peek at his card, nodded for a second. Another queen.

"Shit."

He tossed ten thousand pounds into the center of the table. And then he removed his suit jacket, draping it against the back of the chair. Was it getting warm in here, Jake wondered? But then the next game was played, with Nevil winning and setting Hunter back to his starting point. Hunter removed his tie. Money back in play, Hunter dealt an eight up, one card down to Nevil, a ten to himself. He took a card; Hunter took two. Money went Hunter's way, and suddenly

Nevil had lost his shirt. Literally. He unbuttoned it quickly, tossing it aside, ready to resume the game. Jake stared at the man's bare, muscular chest. He recalled being surprised at the good shape Nevil's body had been in that night they'd indulged in drunken sex. But why had he removed it?

"Wait a minute," Jake said, a sudden realization dawning over him. "Are you guys seriously playing strip poker?"

It was almost as though they hadn't heard Jake. The next game played out, and Nevil lost again. He harmlessly tossed off a shoe, as he did with the next round. Shit, Jake had been right—not only were they playing strip poker, but knowing Hunter's voracious sexual appetite, it all seemed like some sort of buildup to a night of wild sex. But who would be partaking of it, Jake couldn't be sure. Was Hunter envisioning another threesome, he and Nevil and Jake? Was the billiard table to serve as their meeting place, just as the lounge chair by the pool had been there for Hunter and Sandy and Jake?

Another round had Hunter up by forty thousand pounds. Which meant that in all he had won ninety thousand pounds over the course of the night, if you counted the repayment of his debt. But then he lost the next round, giving up ten of his hardly earned money. But Jake had a feeling Hunter didn't mind losing that round. It meant his shirt came off, and both Nevil and Jake let out sharp cries of desire he as bared his fabulous furred chest.

"Another martini," Nevil said.

"Yes. Me too, Jake," Hunter said.

Drinks refreshed, Jake could tell that Nevil was starting to lose his concentration. Was that Hunter's plan, to get him so



drunk he didn't know how much he was betting? He didn't realize the extreme risk he was taking? Or was Nevil now distracted by the sexy creature sitting opposite him? Jake knew Nevil like his men hairy. He'd liked Jake's chest, and he was far from the furball Hunter was.

Another round had Nevil losing again, and he removed his pants. It was clear to all that Nevil was hard, his sizable erection poking at his underwear. Jake remembered being surprised at the nice length of Nevil's cock, though it was hardly in the league with Hunter's. Still, Jake felt his own cock begin to harden, especially as the room grew quieter, hotter, the sense of the erotic overwhelming the atmosphere of the game.

Hunter dealt a fresh round.

"Queen showing," he said, flipping another card Nevil's way. He looked, then shook his head. He was good, he would stay. Hunter had a king showing. He checked his other card, allowed a rare devilish smile to cross his face. He'd hardly revealed an emotion during the entire evening, and now here he was practically showing his hand. "So, let's make it interesting, Henderson. Why not double the bet, make this our last game? I either win it all, or you get to save face and return home with twenty thousand pounds."

Nevil drank from his gin. Then he tossed in the last of his money. "Fine. I'll stay. I'm good with my hand."

Hunter nodded before adding his own bet to the table. A total of forty thousand pounds was on the line, and Jake could feel the sweat slipping down his bare back. He looked at Hunter; he looked at Nevil. The tension was palpable, and he

wondered which of them would blink. Who would win and who would lose, and what would happen afterward? Just then Hunter gave himself another card. A three. He let out a heavy sigh. He had thirteen showing. Nevil flipped his card to reveal a jack. He had twenty. Jake realized he'd been holding his breath, waiting to see Hunter's other card. He needed an eight to win. They'd already agreed there were no ties. The odds were against him, and knowing that, Nevil was practically grabbing for the money already.

Then Hunter flipped the card over.

He didn't even look at it.

"I win," he said.

Jake founded himself staring at the eight of hearts.

\* \* \* \*

"Junior, leave us."

That was Nevil's sharp order, and the man who never spoke a word the entire evening departed the billiard room.

"Jake, leave us," Hunter suddenly said.

"What..."

"Jake, please do as I ask. Take those pitchers of martinis, get them out of here. I think our Nevil has had plenty enough to drink, allowing himself to get so drunk he was willing to gamble away a small fortune tonight. I think I've had enough vodka as well. I took an awful chance as well. I think Nevil and I need to be alone for a moment. Clear our heads."

Jake took the two pitchers and made a fast exit to the kitchen, closing the door to the game room first. Whatever was happening inside that room, Jake didn't want to know. It

hadn't escaped him that Hunter had referred to his guest just now as Nevil rather than Henderson, which meant the business portion of the evening was over. Things had just gotten personal, but just how personal? Jake was about to pour the remains of the drinks down the sink when he realized he needed one badly. He wasn't a gin fan either, so he poured a large glass of the vodka martini and then took a sip. He spat it out, realizing something was wrong with it.

Yeah, it wasn't vodka.

It tasted like...water.

Jake made his way toward the bottle of Grey Goose, nearly empty now after several hours of drinks and cards. He sniffed the bottle before taking a swig. Once again he tasted nothing...just water. Hunter had pulled a fast one, replacing the vodka with pure water, which meant he hadn't been drinking at all tonight, instead letting Nevil get trashed alone. One keeping his wits about him while the other lost his cognitive reasoning. So Hunter had cheated, sort of. He'd taken advantage of a known weakness of Nevil's. Heck, Jake had seen it firsthand at the birthday party, the way Nevil had consumed beers and shots, and then he'd gotten loud, and he'd gotten horny...

Jake suddenly turned around. The glass dropped to the floor, shattering. He ignored it and instead made his way out of the kitchen and down the long corridor toward the game room. Sounds were emanating from behind the closed door, and they were sounds Jake well knew. He knew the grunts, he knew the howling, muffled as they were behind the thick wood. He approached the room quietly, gazing around first

for any sign of Junior. He appeared to have left or perhaps was waiting outside in the car. Jake leaned an ear against the door, and he could hear heaving panting, words being murmured, and then finally came a loud screech from Nevil. Jake knew exactly the reason behind such a guttural sound. Slowly he opened the door so as not to disturb. The sight before him neither surprised him nor shocked him.

It just saddened him.

Nevil was facedown on the billiard table, his hands locked in the corner pockets, ass high up in the air. A naked Hunter was plowing him from behind, hard and fast and angry, his face locked in a potent picture of pent-up desire. Nevil was screaming for more. "Give it to me, yeah, yeah, yeah, oh do me, do me now and all night...yeah, hurt me..."

"Take that big cock. Take it all," Hunter was bellowing.

He thrust harder and Nevil howled from pain. The kind of pain he asked for.

Jake's cock was hard just watching this sexual scenario play out. Hunter's sexy, hairy chest was on full display, and he rubbed at it, pulling the thick tufts even while he fucked Nevil's pliant ass. His eyes were closed, as though desire had blinded him. Instinct ruled here. He pushed and he plowed, and Nevil took and received. Hunter thrust, groaning with wild abandon, Nevil asking his hairy beast to never stop. But as hard as Jake was, he knew that was just a physical reaction. His mind was swirling, and his heart was beaten down. He'd lost all sense of purpose, of who he was and what he was doing here in this stuffy old house, thinking all was bliss with the sexy man who'd invited him here, thinking that love and

sex somehow were the same, and that he'd found what he was looking for. Now he knew he'd just been blinded by the sex, attracted too much to Hunter's body to see the forest through the trees.

He slunk back to the kitchen, pouring himself a real drink, contemplating what to do. He heard the cries of orgasm float through the hallways, and then he could hear the echo of feet on the hardwood floors, the laughs coming from both men. They had left the confines of the game room. Ironical, since all they seemed to play were games. With each other, with their twisted relationship, neither of them seeming to care who got hurt in the process. Jake had had enough, and suddenly, fueled by the strong drink coursing through this bloodstream, he made fast tracks for wherever the voices took him, ready to confront them.

But they were nowhere to be seen, much less heard. Perhaps they each had their cocks stuck in their mouths. Jake turned on his heels, uncertain where to go. Finally he found his way to the game room, and seeing the display before him—discarded chips, cards on the floor, an overturned chair, clothing strewn about, Hunter's plentiful winnings, condoms and lube beside the billiard table—Jake just shook his head. Jeez, those two must have exploded the moment they had the room to themselves, wasting no time in fucking their brains out.

Stupid them, leaving all this money out like this. Jake should just take it. Serve them right.

"Yeah, right," Jake said.

But then he eyed the stacks of money again. He went over, touching the twenties, the fifties, running his hand along the contours of the queen's face. Suddenly she was a lot more attractive, but maybe that was because Jake was feeling that all men were scum. About to set aside his thought of just taking off with the money, he then heard the voracious sounds of sex again. Hunter and Nevil had resurfaced.

Jake felt annoyed again.

Betrayed.

He grabbed the knapsack from which they'd unpacked the money.

He counted out fifty thousand pounds, the same amount he'd previously carried.

And then he grabbed Hunter's shirt, which he tossed on over his bare chest. He was still wearing the ridiculous shirtless butler outfit. No sense standing out in a crowd. Off went the bowtie and on went the suit jacket, and soon, knapsack on his back, Jake Westbury made for the front entrance. He gazed up one last time at the stairs at Voignier House.

Hunter and Nevil were fucking at the top of them. Neither saw him. Nevil was too busy bouncing up and down on Hunter's thick cock. Fine, let them satiate themselves. Let them fuck long into the night and fall asleep till noon. Let them discover the missing money at the latest possible moment.

And then Jake left, the sound of Nevil's howling orgasm ringing in his ears.

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## Chapter Ten

Gone were the mornings of acrobatic sex. Gone were the quiet walks along the lush green lawn. Gone were the feelings of love that had been blossoming inside his aching heart. Here now, returned to reality, was the real Jake Westbury. He was as organized as ever, planning his days down to the last possible minute. Motivated to get done what he'd set out, driven to depend on the one person he could count on, himself. For the better part of three weeks, he'd been on a steady diet of writing, touring museums, and taking shows in the West End, returning home to write again late in to the night. This was the summer excursion Jake had expected when he'd booked his Virgin flight way back before Memorial Day. Now he felt broken in for sure, certainly no virgin anymore. He'd learned about the way life can take you to new highs, only to deliver a brutal landing when you came down. Now, as the bright and sunny July waned and a rainy August waited around the corner, he felt renewed and relaxed, as though the adventure of earlier this summer had been but a dream.

Except he knew it hadn't been.

Mostly because he was still in possession of the fifty thousand pounds he'd stolen.

Was stolen really the right word? After all he'd experienced with Nevil and with Hunter, all he done for them, the high price his broken heart had suffered in his recruited efforts to reunite the crazy couple, he felt he'd more than earned the

cash. As for where he was keeping the money, he had little choice. He had it positioned strategically around his flat on Deodar Road, five thousand pounds here, five thousand there, etc. He had a small map of the apartment that he kept in an e-mail he'd sent to himself, so he knew the location of all the cash while maintaining security for all the cash. Life with Hunter had forced him to take such precautions.

For the first week back in London, Jake had walked on eggshells, expecting Junior or Nevil or even Hunter to appear at his front door, demanding the return of the money. After all, look at all the effort they had expounded in securing the money in the first place. Why wouldn't they go full hog in getting it back? Especially from such an easily manipulated person as Jake. Ha, no longer. Taking the money had steeled his resolve, changed him. He'd taken the bull by the horns, as they say, exacted his own brand of revenge. But he'd seen no sign of anyone, no followers, no trails on him as he made Central London his hanging place, no possible break-ins at the house. His neighbors and landlords, Jennie and Steven, had noticed his skittishness a few times as they dined outside in the yard or shared pints at the Railway. They commented on the change in him, but Jake did not give them the satisfaction of an explanation. He just claimed to be homesick.

When nothing untoward happened to him, he began to let his guard down a bit. His new schedule took shape, and as a result he was now one hundred pages into the novel he'd set about writing when he first set down in the British capital. He'd also seen a series of shows, including some fabulous Shakespeare, some revisionist Sondheim, some over-the-top



Lloyd Webber, an unnecessary O'Neil. One particular Thursday night he had gone barhopping in Soho, finally checking out the bar scene on Old Compton Street. He promised himself he'd be a good boy, no pickups, but then this cute Asian guy had eyed him, talked to him, felt him up, invited him home. Kid was like twenty-five, and it made Jake feel young, desirable, and wanted, a far cry from the manipulation and insanity that went with sex with Nevil or Hunter. He went home with the guy, named Yu, and they had a good time exploring each other's bodies. It felt strange to be with such a hairless guy after all those night with the furry Hunter, and for that night Jake had touched the smooth, silky feel of his golden skin. There were no strings attached to their night, and when Jake left in the morning he was happy with the encounter.

Otherwise, Jake Westbury kept very much to himself. Writing was solitary to being with, but with his newfound determination to make a dent on the novel, he shut himself away with an un-Jake-like reclusiveness.

Now, with the calendar set to turn to August the next day, Jake considered he needed to give himself this last day of July off from his dutiful schedule. It was tough to do, since storms had racing over London for the past three days, torrential rains that had the Thames threatening to overflow in certain areas. Going out in such weather was far from appealing. But the walls of his flat were stifling his creativity. Maybe he could just take his laptop and head to the local pub and do some writing there. It was the middle of the afternoon, and few working people had such luxuries as being able to set your

own schedule. You want a beer midday, go and enjoy. So Jake packed up his computer and ventured out into the rain.

The Railway Pub was doing slow business on this Tuesday, and that was just perfect for Jake. He ordered himself a pint of Pride and a bag of Walker's crisps, onion and cheese flavor, and made his way over to an empty table. He fired up the computer and the latest chapter he was working on and set about his happy task. Pint emptied, he went for a refill. He only his back turned to his table for a second, but when he started back, pint in hand, he noticed that he had company sitting at his table. It was the first hint that the first half of his London trip was beginning to seep back into his life.

"Hello, Sandy," Jake said.

"Ah, Jake, nice to find you here," the banker said. He was dressed as Jake had first seen him, three-piece suit, tie, beads of sweat on his brow. No knapsack.

"Am I supposed to think our running into each other is coincidence?"

"No," Sandy said, "but what brings me here it's also not what you think."

"Hunter didn't send you?"

"On the contrary."

"Nevil? Or Henderson...whatever name he really goes by?"

"My affiliation with both men does not extend to our meeting today."

"Okay. So then, what can I do for you?"

"It's what I can do for you."

"Wife not giving you much lately?"

"Ah, Jake, a comment that cuts very deep, and one I'm surprised a man of your quality would go for. A bit below the belt, if you will."

"Sorry, that wasn't nice. You're right, that wasn't like me. Guess when I saw you my defenses went straight up. Though you can hardly blame me, what with how things went down at Voignier House. God, even just saying the name of that musty old place makes me cringe. I think I'll never enjoy white wine again."

"I tried to warn you that day on the bridge, don't fall in love with Hunter Abbott."

"Yeah, well, I'm over that now. Over him."

Neither man commented on the fact that Jake probably wasn't over Hunter at all.

"So, Sandy, tell me what I can do for you."

"Maybe I should get myself a pint first. Then we can talk."

"I'll get it," Jake said. "I can afford it." He paused. "I think."

Sandy nodded. "You can."

"They're not coming after me?"

"Get my drink. We'll talk."

Jake returned to the bar, where he ordered Sandy's pint. He returned in short order and then the two men clinked their glass as a toast, neither of them sure what they were toasting to. Newfound wealth? The loss of an impending threat? The fact that Jake could finally let his tension-filled shoulders down below his ears? They drank before setting their glasses on the worn tabletop.

"I assume you are still in possession of the cash?"

Jake said nothing. He just listened.

"Fine, don't answer. Probably smart of you. But I'm going to offer you a solution. As I'm sure you're aware, you can't exactly hop aboard your return flight to the States with more than ten thousand dollars in cash—whether carry-on or packed in your luggage. The authorities get curious when someone is carrying that much cash with them. And let's not forget, you are in possession of fifty thousand pounds—nearly one hundred thousand dollars, or ten times the allotted amount allowed by our governments. What I'm offering you is the chance to safely store you money. Simply put, I will deposit your cash into several different accounts and give you ready access to them once you return home."

"Why would you do that?"

"Well, I am a banker."

"Besides that," Jake said. "What's your cut?"

"A mere ten percent," Sandy said.

"Five percent," Jake said.

"Sorry, no bargaining," Sandy said.

Jake closed his computer, started to pack it away.

"Okay, okay," Sandy said, "five percent it is. My goodness, I think our fair Hunter has underestimated you."

"You've spoken to him?"

"Obviously. It's how I know about the money."

"What does he say?"

"The fact that I'm here to help you should answer your question."

"So, how do we go about this?"

"Simple. You give me the cash and I'll deposit it into new accounts."

"All in one swoop?"

"If you want. Or we can do this over several transactions, a few visits."

"You expect me to just hand over the cash and trust you?"

"You insult me, Jake Westbury."

"I've grown cautious. Your ale isn't the only bitter thing in England."

"Touche," Sandy said, straightening his tie even though it didn't need to be adjusted. It was just something to do to distract from his newly reddened face. "Have it your way, then. When would you like to arrange the first deposit?"

"How about I call you?" Jake said.

"Fine." Sandy reached into his jacket pocket, withdrew a business card. He slid it across the table. "Call anytime. Day or night. My personal mobile is on the back."

"I'll be in touch," Jake said with a gentle nod.

"I hope so."

Sandy finished off his pint, then bade Jake a good-bye "for now." As the man left the bar, Jake scanned the rest of the bar, looking for a plant, someone who might have been curious about this meeting between him and the banker. A curious onlooker, as they say. He saw no one, and he began to think that perhaps Sandy had been on the up and up. Maybe he was feeling as tossed aside and rejected as Jake was now that Hunter and Nevil had reunited. Maybe Sandford Berenson, banker, husband, upstanding citizen, was actually a nice guy who was confused over his sexuality and stuck in a

loveless marriage while living a life of obligation. Jake suddenly felt bad for the curious man, realizing how good he himself had it. On holiday in London all summer, not a care in the world anymore, and it looked like he'd be returning to the States richer for the experience.

Unless of course he was somehow being double-crossed.

Jake had never before been paranoid.

He didn't like the feeling.

He went for a third pint and gave up on the writing, too busy contemplating his next move.

\* \* \* \*

It took Jake four days to call Sandy.

They arranged a meeting for the following Wednesday, with Jake coming to his branch office located in Holborn. It was a local English bank called Manchester Savings Limited on the busy Kingsway, and at two o'clock on the rainy afternoon Jake strode inside the classic, old-style building, making his way to the information desk. He had stuffed ten thousand pounds inside the same old knapsack, amused by the irony of the situation. He still expected to see Hunter or Nevil waiting to pounce on him, but nothing such happened. Jake was escorted into a large private office, where he was greeted with businesslike authority by, as the nameplate before him said, "Sandford Berenson."

"Ah, Mr. Westbury, so glad you could stop in today," he said, extending his hand, all of his actions done for the benefit of the bank employee who had escorted Jake into the office. Once the door was closed, Sandy dropped the act and

asked pointedly for the cash. A wary Jake opened the canvas bag and set the money on the desk. Sandy busied himself with forms, which Jake read and signed, and as he did so he realized he had no reason to be suspicious or worried. The transaction went smoothly, so smoothly in fact that the next day he returned with another ten thousand pounds to deposit. Each of those two visits he was gifted with a receipt, as well as a tracking number to his account in the Cayman Islands.

"Thank you, Sandy," Jake said, shaking his hand. Sandy's grip was strong, and he could feel the thick hairs on the top of his hand. "You're been...uh, surprisingly helpful in this matter. Part of me still cannot believe what's happened. During those weeks I lived at Voignier House with Hunter, I kept waiting for the other shoe to drop, to alert me to the fact that my little fantasy life with him would be coming to an end. I suppose I always knew it would, but I was having too much...fun."

"Yes, Hunter can be quite seductive," Sandy said.

"Again, my thanks."

As Jake got up to leave, Sandy also rose and followed him to the door. Both men paused, one ready to go, the other obviously with something on his mind.

"Are you headed home now, Jake?"

"Yes. Some work I need to finish on the new chapter."

"A novel, yes? I look forward to reading it when it's published. For now, though, maybe I offer you a ride back to Putney?" he asked.

"What for?"

"A business meeting on the other side of London requires my time, so I figured since we're both going that way, you may as well hitch a ride. Awful day outside, no reason to walk."

Jake wanted to say no, he'd take the tube, but he knew to reject Sandy would be mean. He'd been up-front and honest, ably assisting Jake with the money laundering, if you wanted to call a spade a spade. Also, the sad, longing look in Sandy's eyes made Jake feel bad for him. He was obviously feeling neglected since Hunter had stopped sleeping with him, and clearly there was no satisfaction back at home with his wife. Jake recalled that day poolside when he and Sandy and Hunter had indulged their champagne-fueled fantasies, how he had seen a whole other side to the stuffy banker, and by that he didn't mean his hairy backside. He knew that Sandy was as trapped as Jake, they were who they were, creatures of habit and control, who rarely let go their inhibition. Life had a way of leading them rather than the other way around.

Outside they went into the August rain, Jake following Sandy to the waiting black limousine, a familiar man standing with the rear door open. It was Charles the chauffeur from the Newbury train station, and now Jake realized it was Sandy whom Hunter had called that night. Was there no end to the way Hunter Abbott used the people around him—his friends, his sister, Patsy, the lovers he picked and tossed aside as readily as he fucked them? Both men got into the back of the limo. Charles sat up front and soon they pulled away from the curb. The partition separating driver from



passenger was up, and along with the tinted windows there was a feeling of claustrophobia inside the expansive seats.

"Nice way to travel around London," Jake said.

"A benefit of life with my wife," Sandy said, and with a wistful tone to his voice added, "Money is not our problem."

"We all have situations in life we don't like."

"There are plenty of things to like, also," Sandy said, and with that he leaned forward again, planting his lips on Jake's mouth. The quick move was not unlike the one he'd made that day on the bridge at Voignier House, but this time he'd slipped in faster, taking Jake by surprise. Jake tried to pull back, but the man's hold on him was strong, and for a second those muscular arms of Sandy's flashed into his mind. He might be slight of stature, but he packed hidden strength. A picture of Sandy's naked, hairy body came to him, stimulating Jake into returning the deep, soulful kiss. He knew this was the wrong thing to be doing—sex was never an answer to loneliness, and sex with someone even slightly connected to Hunter was an even worse idea. Still, Jake's cock was responding as expected.

Sandy's hand wound its way down to Jake's jeans, pulling down the zipper. Jake wanted to stop him, but then he remembered how well Sandy had sucked his cock before, and right now he was feeling that this was exactly what he wanted. Handling the stolen money had turned him on. He wanted to feel the warmth of a hot mouth, a probing tongue all over his shaft, his throbbing head. Jake shuffled out of his jeans, allowing his hungry cock to pop up. He'd never had sex in a car before, much less a limousine. He knew no one could

see them, so he just leaned back, closed his eyes, and allowed Sandy to take his cock inside his waiting mouth.

"Ahhh," Jake said, exhaling, enjoying the warmth that spread from his hardened cock to the rest of his body.

Sandy bent down, taking the entire shaft into his mouth, sucking, licking, deep throating. Tongue wrapped around his head, probing at the eyelet, fingers caressing hairy balls, Sandy's actions intensified as their desire grew. Each suck went deeper, harder, and Jake could feel the pressure begin to build already, and he felt like he was going to come. Just then Sandy released his cock, rubbing it against the harsh five o'clock shadow that coated his heavy beard. The feeling was rough, but Jake responded with an eager growl. Sandy stroked it again, against his cheeks and his chin, before slipping the cock once again into his mouth.

Jake pushed Sandy's head farther down on his cock, helping him bob, up, down, suck, suck, more, more, slurping at the hardened shaft. Just then Jake felt that familiar pressure return, and he announced that he was about to shoot his load. Sandy only sucked harder, his hand taking hold of the shaft while his tongue licked at the head, his mouth locked on the cock. Jake let out a sharp cry, felt his cock expand. Come shot out of him, with Sandy lapping up each drop, taking each spurt. He sucked, sucked again, draining Jake dry of his load. At last he pulled the cock out of his mouth, happily licking his lips as he did so.

"You're a hell of a cock sucker, Sandy," Jake said.

"Yeah, I love to do that. But you know what I like more?"

Jake saw the wanting expression on his face.

"Yeah, I can imagine."

"So, what do you think?"

"You don't have a business appointment, do you?"

"Not at all."

Jake pushed the button that sent the partition down.

"Charles," Jake said, "could you take us to Deodor Road in Putney? Many thanks."

"Sir?"

"Yes, yes, Charles. As Mr. Westbury suggests."

The partition slid back up, sealing Jake and Sandy inside the rear of the limo, both of them suddenly eager, hungry, for a new kind of deposit. They hoped the traffic was too terribly bad this time of day.

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## Chapter Eleven

What he had set about doing counted among Jake's favorite parts, the early tease that led to total satisfaction. The first hint, first taste, of sex, the notion that more awaited him, the anticipation nearly as intoxicating as the climax. Undoing the silk tie, he caught his first glimpse of the dark hair that he knew covered the man's chest, and he was all the more excited at the prospect of rediscovering it one button at a time. He pulled at the soft material, sliding the tie out from beneath the shirt collar. Then he unbuttoned the vest from the top on down, slipping it off his strong shoulders. The dress shirt quickly came next, button after button after button undone, the stark contrast of bright white cotton against the thick dark pelt nearly taking his wanton desires to new, mind-swirling heights. He tore off the rest of the shirt, exposing the full furry chest and flat, hairy belly. Thick whorls rode up his shoulder blades and onto his shoulders. He ran his fingers through the luxuriously thick hair, his tongue searching out hidden nipples beneath all that hair. Lunging his face into the fur, he lapped, licked, sucked, ate, smelling musk, tasting cologne.

"Yeah, lick my furry chest. I know how bad you want it. Jeez, you've got a hell of a hair fetish, you know that?"

"I know it, you know it. Perfectly hairy, how you feed my fetish," he said.

The man dropped the rest of his clothes right there in the living room, pants joining shirt and jacket and tie on the floor.

Jake dropped hard to his knees and began to suck at the man's cock, taking every inch into his mouth to the point where his thick pubes were threatening to slide up his nostrils. Eager fingers snaked around his balls, cupping them, following the hairy trail from his crotch to his ass, plunging his middle one deep inside him. The man arched his back, crying out in a delightful mix of pain and pleasure. He urged him on—*another finger, give me another, a third, push now, hard, deep*. Jake did everything that he begged for before finally releasing his cock from his mouth and shoving him on to the floor. Turning him over, he thrust his fiery tongue deep into the furry, dark crevice of his tight ass, licking and eating, devouring the man's entire hole with fierce determination. The tip of his tongue entered him hard, and he cried out again, again.

"Oh, more, I need you now...please, please, Jake...fuck me, and fuck me hard."

Jake was ready to comply. He readied his cock with a waiting condom, swiped a few drops of lube, and then he pushed at the furry, hungry entrance. The ass was welcoming as it nearly sucked Jake's hard cock deep inside him. He thrust hard, harder still, his groans loud and passionate and uncontrollable, desire fueling his every move, his every desperate push. The slap of his hard balls against that ass only encouraged him, and he continued to pound, pound, pound, hands reaching up to grab wildly at the thick tufts on the man's exposed back. He pulled and he screamed, and he fucked and he pounded.

"Harder, harder, more Jake, more...more."

Sandy Berenson was just as Jake had imagined, an unleashed animal in bed. Furry as a bear, he just like to be fucked deep in the ass whenever and wherever possible. Since that initial blowjob in the limo, Jake and Sandy had been sucking and fucking as often as they could. Quickie cock sucking in his locked office when Jake came to deposit more cash, a hard screw in the back of the limo, and now, for the sixth night in a row, urgent couplings at Jake's flat. Take that, Jennie and Steven, with their frequent sex and thin walls.

"Yeah, take my cock, Sandy, you like it...yeah, I love to fuck my furry boy."

Jake pulled out before he could come. He wasn't ready to rest. He wanted Sandy on his bed, he wanted his legs in the air, and he wanted to pound him into the mattress, leave him satiated, satisfied, sore. He lifted Sandy up, and together both men made quick motions to the bedroom, and once there they began kissing passionately, tongues exploring, teeth gnashing, bodies rolling around atop the blankets, Jake's hands exploring his hairy friend's body. From the thick black pelt on his chest to the belly full of hair, to his shoulders and back and ass, it was like feeling up a gorilla, and Jake, hairy man enthusiast that he was, was indulging his fetish with every grab, every pull, every lick of the man's furry torso.

He threw Sandy on to his back and lifted those hairy legs. They wrapped around Jake's ass as his pulsing cock made for penetration. Both men gazed at each other, and knowing that this was all purely physical, that they had promised no emotional attachment, this was release, this was desire, this

was indulgence of the most urgent, most beastly fashion, Jake, in one fluid motion, shoved his hardened cock into Sandy's ass. Sandy cried out. Jake fucked him hard, hard, hard, hard, each thrust slapping the bed against the wall, the noise loud, violent, and aggressive. Neither man was deterred. Jake's cock was hungry for that furry body, he couldn't get enough of it, and while he fucked him he grabbed and he pulled and Sandy cried with fury.

At last Jake felt his cock begin its ascent toward orgasm.

He thrust.

Sandy cried out.

He pounded.

Sandy screamed.

He plowed.

Sandy urged him, pleaded, begged.

Hot come raced out of Sandy's cock first, and seconds later Jake was shooting his load deep inside him. Each man continued their violent motions, rocking the bed, wanting each drop to shoot and slide and slip and drip out of them. When finally their cocks were silenced and their breathing began to return to normal, Jake allowed himself to plant a kiss on Sandy. On the lips, with passion, all while his hands brushed at the thick pelt of his chest. He kissed the chest then, enjoying the furry feeling on this tongue.

"God, I can't get enough of your hairy body," Jake said, running his hand beneath the thick carpet.

"I'm glad you like it so much. That you are getting as much as you can, while you can."

Jake felt those potent words penetrate his mind, invade their intimate world. He slid off his lover, resting on his back while staring up at the ceiling.

Sandy cuddled beside him. "I'm sorry, Jake. But we both know this is just temporary."

"I know. It's just...it's the first time either of us said it. You know, out loud."

All of Jake's monetary deposits had been accomplished two weeks ago, but that had not stopped Jake Westbury and Sandford Berenson from continuing their fresh, torrid relationship. And it hadn't all been sexual between them, the two sharing quiet dinners at fine London restaurants or just casually knocking back a few pints at various neighborhood pubs. As Sandy explained, his wife was away in Majorca for the month of August, just as she did every summer, busy sunning herself by day, dining at night, shopping away the family fortune when she could. Which left Sandy alone in London all month long, living a carefree bachelor existence until her return. Jake was enjoying himself too, since he knew his English adventure was nearly at an end, and as much as he was looking forward to reuniting with Matt and Freddie back in New York to hear about their trips, he also felt bittersweet about the end of his.

To say his trip had started on a note of high drama would be an understatement, right down to the lost passport incident at JFK, but since he'd rid himself of the twisted, dependent world of Hunter Abbott and all the trouble he brought, Jake had actually enjoyed all London had on offer. The weather had mostly cooperated, the sights, attractions



and museums had been amazing, and his unexpected, passionate fling with Sandy had been a bonus. Now, as he lay beside him contemplating the future at hand, he realized there was still one thing he didn't have the whole story on. Sandy had opened Pandora's box this time, exposing the end of their affair.

"So, Sandy, besides the five percent cut you got from me, why did you want to help me?"

"Ah, truth time, I see. Well, I had several reasons," Sandy said. "First, I liked you, and I most certainly enjoyed our time that day at Voignier House's pool, and I supposed in the back of my mind I wanted to see what sex would be like with just you. Without the pressure of..."

"Hunter."

"That cock."

"It is intimidating," Jake said, and both men laughed at the ridiculous topic of talk.

"With Nevil and Hunter reuniting so dramatically and so intensely, I knew it was only a matter of time before Hunter had no further use for me—sexually. Sure, I remain his banker, but for a man with no sustainable income, that doesn't call for much actual banking. If sister Patsy isn't paying his bills, then Nevil is."

"A patsy of a different sense," Jake said.

Sandy laughed out loud. "True, true. But the guy makes a fortune as a bookie, and he will continue to do so as the racing season gears up again. Be thankful you won't be around to witness it. Makes them both crazy, which of course

is what leads to their problems. Still, his being back with Nevil makes Hunter less reliant on his sister and her fortune."

"Always depending on others, that's our Hunter."

"Unfortunately, yes," Sandy said, "but in answer to your question, ultimately I guess I helped you because those two boys needed a lesson. You see, they've broken up numerous times over the past several years, and each time they do the war escalates between them. The fifty-thousand-pound debt was the icing on the cake, Hunter's biggest stunt to date. I think it was Hunter's odd way of truly testing Nevil's devotion to him. And trust me, it's more devotion than love...or lust. They are codependent, and they make each other happy until they are making each other—and those around them—miserable. So, you got caught up in their little scheme, their petty but big-stakes game of one-upmanship. I have to say, I rather think you came out spectacularly well in the end. After all, they are poorer for renewing their relationship, and you are fifty thousand pounds richer. A nice bit of cash for one summer, I might add."

"But it's not what I came to London for. To get richer."

Sandy leaned over, kissing Jake's chest, his erect nipple, nuzzling his neck with the shadow of his heavy beard.

"Riches, my boy, don't always come in the form of money, my fair American."

"Says the banker," Jake said. "But what do you mean?"

"Do you ever think, Jake Westbury, that you put too much pressure on yourself?"

"I repeat—what do you mean?"

"The fact that you don't know the underlying truth says much," Sandy said. "Look, Jake, you took a three-month sojourn to London—in the summer yet, a time most people think is for rest and relaxation—and not only did you tell yourself that you would fall in love, a monumental task to begin with, but when you make such a declaration it just raises the stakes. It sets you up to fail. I learned also that you came to write a book, which for most people would take years of effort and struggle, and yet you think you'll get it done before you leave. So, I ask you, with such a plan, how are you supposed to rest, relax?"

"What's wrong with having a plan?"

"Because you're so busy sticking to your plan, you miss out on the simple pleasures. If you're so busy sticking to your well thought out schedule, you're missing out on life's joyful spontaneity. Certainly neither of us could have predicted when we unceremoniously met that day in Hyde Park that our relationship would become...this. Hate me for saying it, but Hunter has a point—to a point. Go with the flow, see where life takes you. It can't all be controlled."

"He thinks so. And besides, I think I've indulged my share of pleasure," Jake said. "I think I've let my guard down a lot—and look at what happens when I do."

"Yes, but the point is that you did indeed let go, at least for a while. Your life with Hunter at Voignier House, what was that but pure fantasy, and certainly not planned. From what you've told me, sex has not exactly been lacking on this trip, so you had to have realized at some point the old adage 'if it's Monday, it must be laundry day' doesn't always work. But is

that what you really came to London for? The only time you let yourself deviate from your plan was when sex was being offered. What about that creed of yours, no more one-nighters?"

"Hey, aside from Yu—that's the Asian guy I met last month, I don't mean 'you' as in the pronoun...all of my sexual encounters have been substantive, physically satisfying, and they've lasted weeks at least."

"What about Nevil?"

"God, Sandy, and you call me OCD?" Jake said with an embarrassed laugh. "Steel-trap memory you've got. Nevil I'd like to forget, that was just an early, drunken mistake, a way to help me get acclimated. Even though I didn't know I was being played, I knew sex with Nevil was a bad idea. Still, I get your point. Fine, lesson learned. I'm richer for the experiences, and not just in financial terms. You're basically saying I need to just exhale, see the sun for the bright orb that it is, not shun its warm advances?"

"What did you tell me the other night?" Sandy asked. "Those sunny days made writing difficult. You loved when rain coated London."

"I got much more accomplished, that's true."

"Well, at least you've adapted to the English philosophy. Rain is no deterrent to life."

Jake, continuing to stare upward at the ceiling, thought about the words he'd just heard, let them sink deep into his sweaty pores. Sure, he put pressure on himself, but he was ambitious and wanted...no, expected much from life. Life

didn't come to you, not in his experience. You had to go out and chase it, find it, plan for it...

Maybe it wouldn't be so easy to let go. Jake Westbury was who he was, just as Hunter was himself, and Nevil and Sandy and heck, even the ominous, silent Junior. Changing your life was not an easy thing to accomplish, and when it came to yourself, your heart and your soul and your very being, it was a next to impossible to achieve. But Sandy's point was taken. One step at a time, adapt to the situation, accept what you have to, change what you can.

Jake slid his hands over Sandy's chest, brushing the dark pelt. He felt his cock stir.

"Ah, looks like someone has returned to the world of the living," Sandy said, responding to his lover's touch. "You want me again?"

"No," Jake said, rolling onto his back and lifting his legs. "I want you."

While the afternoon sunshine waned and the night began to settle over London, Jake and Sandy indulged their passions for one last night, Jake happily receiving Sandy's cock now, later, again, again, eyes closed to the world outside, luxuriating in the lush forest in his bed, his thickly haired lover, his piercing, thrusting cock. Tomorrow was another day, and while it may be his last one in London, there was nothing on the agenda but a parcel delivery. He would see where the day took him. For now, the night, this lover, this furry man who so fed his fetish, he took him to new heights, and for the first time in a long time he allowed his mind to shut down, to stop thinking, to just live, just enjoy.

Lust in London  
by Adam Carpenter

\* \* \* \*

New heights indeed. Jake Westbury had finally made it to the London Eye, nearly three months since his arrival, and wasn't it about time? His feet shuffled forward in the long, orderly line, where both Londoners and tourists alike waiting to gaze upon the city at night. He stared up at the magnificent wheel, at its glass capsules and spokes, still amazed at the technology and engineering behind such an attraction. He knew it had originally been intended to be taken down after the arrival of the millennium, but it had proved too popular and profitable to do. Much like the Eiffel Tower after the World's Fair more than a century ago. He neared the takeoff platform, as it was referred to, noticing the people ahead of him. A family of four, two couples, a woman who seemed to be traveling on her own, a few teenagers who were loud and obnoxious. *Please don't let me spend an hour in an enclosed capsule with them...*

Sandy had offered to come with him, but Jake and he had already said their good-bye this morning, after they had spent the night screwing each other's brains out. A morning session had capped their summertime fling, and so, with a parting kiss and a halfhearted exchange of e-mails addresses and keeping in touch, the two men parted. Now Jake was alone, just like at the start of his trip, and he thought it ideal that he end it this way. Soaring five hundred feet into the air and getting this rare, bird's-eye view of the great capital, he thought it was the perfect way to leave behind a city he'd fallen in love with.

Wasn't that ironic? It was the destination that had truly captured his heart, not the men whom he'd met, shared, lusted after, seduced, fucked, fantasized about. And now he prepared to see such city from a fabulous, soaring viewpoint. Winding his way around the metal walkway, he at last emerged onto the platform, watched as one of the glass capsules gently glided down. First the passengers cleared out;, then came a quick scan inside from security before the capsule was allowed to load a fresh group of flyers. The rowdy kids had gotten on the earlier one, so Jake joined the family of four and the two happy couples and a few other quiet foreigners who stood behind him. In all, twelve people boarded his capsule, and at last the doors closed and they began the slow progression to the top.

A more perfect night Jake could not have had. The bright sun had slipped below the horizon and a lush, full moon emerged from behind the few darkened clouds, highlighting an already beautifully lit city with the sparkle of nature. Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament glowed in gold, and in the distance the BT tower jutted high into the dark sky. Buckingham Palace was aglow, quiet, regal, surrounded by green, plush gardens closed down for the night. As his fellow flyers photographed the beautiful sights, muttering and pointing, Jake contentedly peered against the glass, taking in the stunning world spread out before him. He didn't need photos to remember such a moment; he didn't need company in which to share it. It felt good to just be alone with his thoughts, with himself, taking stock one last time of his life, his journey, his adventure.

Lust in London  
*by Adam Carpenter*

As he reached the eye's zenith, a full five hundred feet above the Thames, Jake noticed that in one of the capsules below him, a man and woman sat alone, a bucket of ice and chilling champagne between them, a lone candle casting a glow inside their pod. A London Eye employee stood inside with them for safety reasons, but he looked away, allowing the couple their privacy. The man popped the bubbly and he handed the lovely looking woman a glass. She nearly jumped for joy a second later. Jake wasn't sure, but he was fairly certain she was pulling a ring from out of the golden bubbles of the champagne. Suddenly people in capsules all around them began to applaud, and Jake joined in the celebration, envious of the newly engaged couple, of this experience, of their life ahead of them, of a future held with promise that began high in the sky above a city known for its rich past.

*Someday, Jake thought. Someday I will have that too.*

But he wasn't going to put a timetable on it. No plan this time. Just let it happen.

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## Chapter Twelve

"Well, old chap, hope you had a fun stay with us," Steven said, shaking Jake's hand while the two of them stood in the flower-rich back yard one last time. "I don't quite know all went down with you this summer, you know, that kayak business and all that happened over in Newbury, but you don't seem any the worse for wear."

"It's been quite an adventure," Jake said, smiling.

Jennie reached out and gave him a big hug, kissing his cheek. "I'd apologize for all those noisy nights Steven and I kept you awake while we...well, you know...but the last few weeks, you and Sandy kind of even up the score. He's a cute fellow. Are you going to continue to see him? Nice, trouble free. Unlike..."

"Please don't say his name," Jake said, holding up his hand in mock defense. "You first mentioned him here. Let's leave the memory where it belongs. No need to come full circle, as they say. As for Sandy, no, his life is complicated, to say the least. We had our good times. Me, I've just got to get back to New York and see what awaits me there. At least I have a new perspective on matters of the heart, something Sandy and...that other guy taught me."

Just then they heard the rumble of a car as it pulled into the driveway. Jennie said she'd go alert the cabbie that he'd be right out, giving Jake and Steven a moment to themselves.

"Come on, I want to show you something," Jake said, leading his friend and landlord to the edge of the yard. The waters of the Thames flowed gently, sparking a memory in Jake's mind. He pointed down to the river, where two brand new kayaks were bobbing in the water, tethered to the small wooden dock. "Maybe you can show Jennie the pleasures of paddling along the Thames. It's a beautiful sight to share. It would be good for you both."

"You didn't have to replace my kayak," Steven said.

"Yeah, I did. It's the least I could do."

Quite honestly, a small dent in Hunter's money had paid for the new kayaks, but Jake wasn't about to explain. He'd just been happy to find them online the other day, had them delivered yesterday while Steven and Jennie were out running errands. He was glad they hadn't discovered them. He enjoyed showing off his gift.

The two men shook hands again, then embraced with a manly hug. "A nice going-away present, Jake. We both thank you. Come back anytime."

As Jake made his way around the front of the house on Deodar Road, an unexpected sight welcomed him. A black stretch limousine was waiting in the driveway, and Jennie was chatting up Charles the Chauffeur. As always, he was dressed in traditional black, very formal, very proper.

"What's going on?" Jake asked.

"Charles here tells me he has instructions to drive you to Heathrow," Jennie said.

"Courtesy of Mr. Berenson," Charles said with a curt nod.

"He didn't have to do that," Jake said, but he wasn't going to turn the offer down. He excused himself to grab his bags, and when he came down the steps, Charles took command of them, loading them into the trunk. Jake gave his friends one last hug before approaching the limo. He stole one last look at his home for the last few months, holding his hand over his heart. Then Charles opened the door and Jake slid inside. The door closed. Jake settled into the plush leather seats...and discovered he wasn't alone.

"Hello, Jake."

He paused, unable to speak. Heck, he could barely breathe.

"Surprised to see me?" asked Hunter Abbott.

"Yeah, you could say that."

The partition separating driver from passengers slid down.  
"Mr. Abbott?"

"Yes, Charles, we're good to go."

"Where are we going?" Jake asked.

"Heathrow," Hunter said, and then when he saw the worried expression on Jake's face, he patted his knee to reassure him. "Fear not, Jake, I'm merely along for the ride. It really was Sandy's idea to send Charles after you, but I happened to be privy to inside information and convinced old Charles here to allow me to tag along."

"Ah," Jake said, following that up with studied silence. Just what did Hunter want? His money back? Was this that feared other shoe dropping, finally? For Jake, the notion of keeping all that cash had seemed pure fantasy anyway, which was why he'd hadn't spent any of it (kayaks aside), why he hadn't

indulged in some high-priced trinkets. He'd always feared that before his plane lifted off British soil, he'd have to face up to the fact that he had, literally, stolen nearly one hundred thousand dollars. Now, as he looked at Hunter, it wasn't the potential loss of the money he was really thinking about. It was the loss of Hunter himself. He was as handsome as ever, his face freshly shaved, his body strong, tan, worry free. His customary tight jeans of course showed off his sizable package, though Jake supposed that had been done on purpose, as was the shirt undone three buttons. The triangle of thick, chestnut-colored hair that had initially drawn Jake to him nearly called to him: *come, touch me like you used to, like you know you want to. Lick me, kiss me, seek out my nipples amid my dark fur.* How many times had he heard Hunter's pleas, his cries of pleasure, as Jake had fully explored his manly, hairy body, before the point of entry, during, afterward as the basked in the glow of satisfaction, when again Hunter would slide his huge cock inside him, pound him long into the dark night?

That wouldn't happen now.

Not in the limo.

Not with Hunter.

This, despite the fact that Jake's cock had grown, pressing against his jeans.

"So, to what do I owe the pleasure of this visit?" Jake asked.

"Just wanted to say good-bye."

"That's it? You couldn't have called?"

"Come on, Jake. You realize I couldn't let you leave London without seeing you one last time," he said.

"This isn't about the money, then?"

Hunter actually grinned, a curious response to say the least. "Nah, keep it, enjoy it. The whole poker game, it was never about the money. I can always get more from Patsy. She always bails me out. And before you pass judgment on that, Jake, remember, I'm the family fuck-up. It's expected of me to be so needy. Lowered expectations and all that. It only increases your potential. Like with you that night at Voignier House after the poker game. The last thing I expected you to do was leave and take all that money with you. You know, you could have taken all of it—you only took half. Why?"

"Nevil never did anything to me. Why should I make him pay?"

"So just me? I'm the one who betrayed you?"

"Can we not do this, Hunter? Look, I'm realistic about what happened. You and Nevil had a big fight, you used me against each other, and along the way you each got to fuck me. Literally, figuratively, and sadly, emotionally. Sure, I had my fun, and in the end, I suppose I got my reward. I still like to think I would have returned the money...in exchange for you."

Jake watched as Hunter looked away, perhaps only now realizing he couldn't see out the tinted windows. Or he couldn't face Jake right now. He slid the pane down, fresh air washing into the back of the limo. They were somewhere along the A4 highway, London far behind them, the runways of Heathrow and the world beyond just miles away. Not much

time left for sorry. Finally, Hunter rolled the window back up. Then he simply began to undress. First the remainder of the buttons of his shirt came undone. With Hunter's hairy chest fully exposed, Jake was trying his hardest to resist the man.

"Hunter, don't..."

"You know you want me. You just said it, Jake. You would have given back the money if you could have had me...all of me, again. Best of both worlds, I don't want the money back. But I do want you back. What we shared, that's as close to love as I've ever gotten."

"What about Nevil?"

"Nevil doesn't love me. He just wants to possess me."

"Hunter, I can't do this. I never said anything about love."

"You didn't have to," he said. "The way you cried out during orgasm, when I made hard love to you, the way you kissed me after we shot our loads... Come on, Jake. You don't have to return to New York. Stay with me. Remain here in London."

As if to further his point, Hunter slid his zipper down and reached inside for his cock. He pulled it out, the thick piece seemingly larger in the confines of the rear of the limo. Jake stared at it, couldn't help but admire its size, its power. How hard would it be to drop to his knees and take that hot cock into his mouth, suck it till it exploded, allow soothing come to slip down his throat? Would it mean a commitment, that he would indeed instruct Charles to turn the limo around and find some flat, some hotel, and let Hunter fuck him all night, every night? Or maybe just take it one last time, a parting gift from London.

"No thanks," Jake said with sudden resolve.

"No way...you're turning me...this, down?"

Jake nodded firmly. "First time a guy's said no to you? Maybe you should have thought about it first. Did you really think you could just strip down and show off your chest, your cock, and I'd fall under your intoxicating spell again? Hunter, you're the one who talks about expectations from people. People don't expect much from you, so they can't be surprised when you do something that defies your hard-earned character. Trouble is, you don't give other people the same respect. Some of us have higher expectations of ourselves, and it's that battle between desire and control that usually leads us either to better things—or a repeat of bad choices. I'm strong, Hunter, perhaps stronger than you ever gave me credit for. Heck, maybe more than I ever gave myself. So, no, Hunter, as sexually attracted to you as I am, I do not wish to indulge that desire. Button up that fur. You're only embarrassing yourself."

Hunter said nothing for a long while. Neither did Jake.

Finally Charles broke the silence, announcing their pending arrival at Terminal 4. Hunter stuffed his cock back inside his jeans, closed his shirt.

Finally, Hunter said, clapping, "Well done, Jake."

"What does that mean?"

"You didn't really think I was going to follow through on that, did you?"

"You didn't want me to suck you?"

"No."

"So you were testing me."

"I guess I wanted to know if you really did love me. Whether it was possible for anyone to love me."

Another fucking game. "You know, Hunter, this ride has been very enlightening. You speak of love even while you're using your body to make a point. Whether you were testing me or not, I suppose I'll never truly know. But this trip to London has taught me a lot—about myself and about this crazy notion called love. We all want it, we all crave it, and to get it we all do wild, stupid things. We steal boats, money, moments, and we steal hearts. And then we use them too, boats, money, moments, and yes, hearts. Did I love you? I'm not sure. I sure as hell lusted after you. There were those early days at Voignier House that I could barely believe what was happening between us. I think I was more in love with the idea of being in love, and because of that, I got easily sucked in by all you could give. Once I made my escape though, I realized that my quest for love in London had gone all wrong. It wasn't some sexy man with a hairy chest and big, thick dick that I was looking for. I wanted companionship, someone to share my life and my desires, and my ambitions."

"Sounds idealistic," Hunter said. "So, did you find him?"

"I did."

"Sandy?"

"No, no, Hunter. You still don't get it, do you?"

He shrugged, indifferent. "Guess not."

"What I learned on my summer vacation was finally how to love myself."



Lust in London  
by Adam Carpenter

With that, Jake Westbury and Hunter Abbott said a final farewell, a parting kiss laced with a taste some called bittersweet. But Jake couldn't help himself—during the kiss he gave Hunter's furry chest one last grope, and then, as they parted, they managed to ruefully smile at each other. They had met as strangers, come together as lovers, parted now, it seemed, as friends. Before long, Jake had made his way through the terminal and to his gate, and finally on board his Virgin Atlantic flight to New York's JFK.

Next stop, home, where Jake couldn't wait to see his friends. To hear about Matthew's fabulous love affair with Paris, about Freddie's slutty sojourn in Rome. And finally, to tell them both all about his lustful longing in London. He would buy the first round; heck, he could afford all the rounds.

\* \* \* \*

Somehow New York City seemed larger, the avenues wider, the buildings taller, the teeming crowds, even on this holiday weekend, thicker, moving at an even faster pace. Night had fallen on this Sunday night before the Labor Day holiday. His flight had landed about twenty-four hours ago, and though he had yet to speak with his friends, they had all sent each other texts about meeting up.

*Gaslight. Nine o'clock. See you then,* Freddie had said.  
*Bringing someone.*

*Right. Gaslight, nine,* Matthew had said. *Can't wait for you to meet my love.*

Jake confirmed with both, said nothing about whether he would be with someone.

Gaslight was still around, thankfully. Sure it had only been three months since Jake had last been here, but bars and restaurants came and went in New York with regularity, so it was nice to see his favorite haunt still open for business. The lights were dim, the crowd thin. And he didn't just mean gym-thin—there were only about a dozen guys in the bar. The music blared, a bit too loud considering the small crowd gathered. How could anyone carry on a conversation? Perhaps Jake could suggest a quiet restaurant for them to all go to. No, Gaslight was where their crazy adventure had begun, and it was here it would end.

Jake grabbed a beer, made his way to the familiar back booth, sat down by himself to wait for his friends. He grabbed his cell phone, no longer referring to it as his "mobile," read through those texts again. So Freddie had met someone, and not only that, he'd returned to New York with him. Aside from that, Jake knew nothing about this man, only that Freddie had met him in Rome. Matthew had met someone too, and apparently it was serious—he'd used the word *love*. Jake felt happy for his friends and was determined not to be disappointed by the fact he'd returned empty handed, empty hearted. He was finally comfortable with all that had happened with Erich and with Nevil, with Yu, with Hunter and with Sandy, as though the long flight had cured him of all that ailed him.

Jake downed the remainder of his first beer, decided to grab another while he waited. He headed up to the bar and

grabbed for his wallet to pay. His wallet, however, was nowhere to be found. *Shit*, he thought. *That can't be*. He'd just had it—how else had he paid for that first beer? He looked around the floor where he was standing but saw nothing. He asked the bartender if someone had turned in a wallet.

"Sorry, Jake, nothing."

"Shit," he said.

The bartender, a hunky guy with tattoos, handed Jake a fresh beer and a surprise shot of tequila. "On the house. Looks like you'll need it if you lost your wallet."

"For more than just financial reasons," Jake said. "Thanks, Bud."

He knocked the shot back before taking his beer back to his booth. What to do, what to do... How had this happened a second time? So organized, so carefully controlled was his life, yet in the span of three months he'd lost his passport and now his wallet. Would he be as lucky the second time as he was when Erich had retrieved his wallet at JFK? And how ironic, he had all this newfound money hidden in some offshore account, but here in New York he couldn't afford a beer.

About to phone Freddie to say he had to leave so he could get on the phone and start canceling his credit cards, a shadow crossed over the table. Jake looked up to find a young-looking guy standing over him, and in his hands was Jake's wayward leather wallet.

"Oh thank God," Jake said, exhaling heavily.

"Sorry it took me so long to get this back to you," the guy said, handing the wallet back. "Place is so dark, I could barely see you sitting back here. Found it by the bar. The bartender sent me your way, but still I couldn't be sure this was you. You look different with the goatee."

*This again?*

"Thanks. I really appreciate it..."

"Aaron," the guy said, extending his hand.

"Jake. Again, thanks. Can I buy you a drink?"

"It this as a thank-you, or because you want to buy me a drink?"

Ah, it was good to be back in New York, the aggressive, ambitious pickup lines of the knowing, winding Manhattan gays. Jake smiled, laughed, finally letting his eyes and brain focus on something other than his wallet. He drank in Aaron's appearance in a more cruiselike way, and what he saw was real nice. He was about five-nine, had a nice build and dark brown hair. His face was cute, tan, highlighted by a full beard. He wore shorts and a white button-down shirt, open two buttons. And wouldn't luck have it, a nice exposed triangle of fluffy chest hair. It was like temptation had found him, deciding to tease him, test him. "As a thank-you. Though under different circumstances, yeah, maybe I would have asked you if I'd seen you at the bar."

Aaron smiled. "Can I sit?"

"Sure," Jake said. "I'll be right back. What are you having?"

A beer, he said, what you're having. Jake grabbed the order, left a really good tip for Bud. He stole a look at the

entrance, saw no sign of Freddie or Matt. They were late, but that was suddenly just fine with Jake. Back at the booth, he slid in and the two men raised their bottles in toast. As they set their drinks down, they both realized they were staring at each other.

"So, Jake, I've never seen you here before," Aaron said.

"I could say the same. I'm usually here once a week, sometimes more depending on...stuff, but I've been away all summer. I left just before Memorial Day."

"Funny. I arrived in the city just after Memorial Day. My company transferred me from Chicago. My apartment is nearby, and one day I just stumbled upon Gaslight. I like that it's not like some of the other gay bars. No pretense. No attitude." He paused. "So, do you mind if I ask if you're seeing anyone?"

"I don't mind you asking. No, no attachments."

"Would you like to go out sometime?"

"You mean...a date?"

He nodded. "I don't do one-night stands, strict policy of mine," Aaron stated. "You're handsome and you seem nice. You know, genuine. So yeah, I guess I mean a date. Dinner, a movie, see how things go. I'm the new guy in town, so it's your call what to do."

"Yeah, I'd like that, Aaron. God, I can't remember the last time I went out on a real date. Sometimes it seems the gay life, we don't do that. It's just hop in the bed, as though sex is the main component of the relationship, not the complement."

"Great."

"Great."

They exchanged numbers, putting them into their cell phones and then calling each other, just to make sure real ones were given. They both laughed at their obvious paranoia—no doubt Aaron had experienced such a thing, and Jake knew he certainly had. As Jake was finishing his beer, he looked again at the door. Still no Freddie. No Matt. He checked his phone for the time.

"I'm sorry, am I interrupting something? Are you waiting for someone?"

"I am, but it's not what you think. Not a date, definitely not a date."

So Jake found himself explaining to his new friend about Freddie and Matthew and their trips abroad, and then he told him a bit about his own recent trip to London. "None of us talked to each other all summer, so I really have no idea how these last months went. I can't wait to hear and to tell them about London."

"Well, I should probably go, then," Aaron said, draining the last of his drink and getting up from his seat.

Just then Jake realized he didn't want Aaron to go. "Wait, why not stay? Like you said, you're new in town. Here's a chance for you to meet some great new friends."

"Are you sure?"

"Positive," Jake said, "but since they'll be here any second, why not sit next to me?"

So Aaron slid in next to him, and Jake could already feel the heat building between them. It felt nice, anticipation looming between them. But they would resist any urges, Jake

would call him and they would go out on a date, and then another and many more, and sometime or other, when the moment was right and their eyes locked and they both knew they were working on something great, something special, they would give themselves to each other, body, soul, heart. But that didn't mean Jake couldn't get the ball rolling tonight.

"I like your chest," he said, giving the thick hair a quick feel. "Hmm, nice, really hairy."

Aaron reddened but then quickly recovered. The dance had begun. "Oh, yeah, Jake, I'm plenty hairy, and I love guys who love it. There's lots more where all this came from."

Now where had he heard that exchange of dialogue before?

Just then the door to Gaslight opened, and Jake looked up to see two men enter the bar. A smile broke out on his face as he recognized one of them. Freddie Markson was making his way toward the bar, and at his side was perhaps one of the most striking, gorgeous men Jake had ever seen.

*Impressive, Freddie.* Both men were drenched in wide smiles, obviously madly in love with each other. Wait, Freddie, hopeless cynic, had fallen in love? Before either friend could embrace the other, Jake's cell phone rang, the caller ID indicating *Matthew Donovan*. Jake answered it, was told to put it on speakerphone.

"Hey, guys, sorry I can't be there in person. I'm still in Paris. Believe it or not, I live here now. Say hello to Anton, the painter I met and fell in love with in Paris."

"Hey, Matt. Freddie just got here, and with him is..."

"Santo," Freddie said. "My Italian stud, who makes me feel like I've never felt before."

Jake's mind was swirling. Freddie in love, Matt living in Paris. How had his friends met these wonderful men who made them so happy? He couldn't wait to know the details, but for now, just seeing the look of love on Freddie's face, the sound of devotion in Matt's, it was all Jake could do but feel his own heart swell. The entire trip had been his idea, his crazy notion to fall in love. Yet look at how his friends had turned the tables on him. He couldn't be more happy for them.

"And Jake," Freddie asked, "who is this handsome package sitting beside you?"

"Oh, sorry, this is Aaron," Jake said. "Aaron, meet Freddie and Santo, fresh off the plane from Rome, and on the phone all the way from Paris...meet Matt and Anton."

They all welcomed Aaron to their group.

"So, Aaron," Matt asked over the speakerphone, "how did you and Jake meet?"

"Yes, do tell. I want every dirty detail," Freddie said.

Aaron looked at a loss for words, so Jake just jumped in and said, "Actually, you'll never believe it, but I found Aaron real close to home."