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Queer reading,queer writing

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For rent

As soon as I'd put the ad in the paper I wondered whether perhaps it wouldn't have been better placed in a gay publication. After all, I said to myself, I *would* prefer some nice gay boy to be the tenant of the cottage. A handsome gay boy would be first prize.

But it was done. Cottage to rent, etc. I'd hesitated over the word "cottage", but then what was one to call it? It was what once had been the servants' quarters, partly "done up", as he put it, by the previous owner of the house, finally "done up", which is to say redone, by me. And now I needed a tenant.

The first caller was a woman. She would be there at three. At least take a look at her, I told myself, at least meet her. She may be very nice. This fantasy of some nice handsome gay boy in the cottage is, after all, just a fantasy.

Minutes after I'd put the phone down after speaking to the woman, it rang again. A young man's voice. That's more like it. Yes, four would be perfect. Okay, so maybe fantasies can come true.

At 3pm precisely the woman arrived. She seemed all right, mid-fifties, rather stout, a little hippyish or post-hippyish, with henna'd hair, a loosely hanging main garment, and a chunky amber necklace. She was an academic, recently divorced, just moved to Jo'burg.

"Let's see the place," she said brusquely, and when she got there went straight to the bathroom to check it out. I had led her through the house, out across the back patio, past the pool, to the cottage. She examined the rest of it, the L-shaped room that would be bedroom on one leg and lounge or study on the other, and pronounced, "Small."

I said, "Well, I suppose it's really ideal for a student, say, someone ... younger."

She gave me a sharp look and brushed past me, through the door. I thought for a moment she was going to sweep right back through the house and out and away, but she stopped beside the pool. “Oh, good,” she said brightly. “A pool is good. I like to swim. Good exercise. I was quite a swimmer in my ... in years gone by.” Then, in contrast to her earlier demeanour, she smiled at me.

I had momentary image of this stout middle-aged woman, in bathing cap and one-piece swimming costume, churning up and down my pool. “We would have to work out exactly when,” I said. “When you could swim, I mean. I do do a lot of socialising around the pool, in summer, and obviously ... ”

“Of course,” she said, suddenly stiff again. “Of course.” Then, a little less stiffly, “It would be wonderful to be able to swim again, especially in your Highveld summer. Then again ...” She threw a glance at the cottage. “It *is* rather small.” She started back towards the house. “I’ll let you know.”

“Soon,” I said, going after her, “let me know soon. There’s been a lot of interest.”

“Oh,” she said, stopping suddenly on the doorstep, and managing to arch her eyebrows and narrow her eyes at the same time. “But, surely the ad only appeared today? I’ve been looking at the paper every day for three weeks.”

I manoeuvred past her, into the house, and then led her, talking over my shoulder, through it. “I’ve got someone coming in ten minutes,” I said, “and he sounded *very* keen. If he likes it, he’ll want to move in at once.”

We had arrived at the front door. I stood aside and gestured her past me, trying halfway through the movement to make it polite and chivalrous rather than dismissive. She stepped through the door, on to the pathway to the gate, and stopped. “I’ll have to say no then,” she said. “If you have to have an answer right away. It’s not quite right for me. I have a lot of books. Despite the pool.”

“Well,” I said limply, “you can always call in a few days and see whether ...”

She nodded and left. It was barely twenty past three. Roll on four o'clock.

I made myself a cup of tea. I wondered if I was hungry. I had a cigarette. I had another cigarette. I walked down to the cottage and looked around it once more. Not big, no, but big enough for a young person who didn't need much space, someone in their early twenties, say, a student type.

At ten past four the bell rang. A male voice asked, "John?" I said yes; "Jason?" He'd given his name, earlier, when he'd called; he had not asked for a description of the cottage or been given one. "Yeah, it's me." I pressed the buzzer and opened the front door. He came through the gate.

And, yes, he fitted the bill: early twenties, not particularly good-looking but good-looking enough, as almost anyone is in their early twenties, and well-shaped, broader at the shoulders than at the waist, with strong arms revealed by a tight sleeveless dark blue teeshirt that revealed, too, or concealed, a neat early-twenties torso. He had short dark hair, cut in that spiky way. He was unshaven and his jeans were old and faded. But, yes, he fitted the bill.

As he came through the gate he gave me a quick glare, a frank evaluative but also cautionary look that made me think, And he's gay. (And then, almost subliminally, the thought: And what does he make of me? Older, yes, probably ten years older than he was, but still reasonable-looking. Or so I hoped.)

"Come in, come in," I said. He came in past me without speaking, then stood irresolutely in the hallway. "This way," I said, and walked around him, smiling into his expressionless face as I did so, and led him through the house and out the back. We passed the pool. I said, "Of course, you can make use of the pool at any time." Instant image in my mind of taut early-twenties tanned body in brief swimming costume. He looked at the glossy water and grunted.

I showed him the cottage. He looked around it in a bored way, said nothing.

I found myself filling his silences with a kind of sales patter. “Depending on how much furniture you’ve got, you could have a bedroom in this space, there’s space for quite a big bed, and this would be a lounge area ...”

“Ja,” he said suddenly. “It’s fine.” Then, “I don’t have any furniture. I’ve been staying with a friend. But now he ... I have to move out.” He didn’t meet my eyes.

“I’m glad you like it. I think it would suit you, if ... if it’s the kind of thing you’re looking for.” I had noted the *he* whose accommodation he had to leave, the suggestion of a relationship gone wrong. I said, “Would you like a cup of coffee?”

He grunted, huh, which I took as a yes.

I led him back into the house, saying as I passed the pool, “It’s so wonderful to have a pool. In summer, on the Highveld — in fact, it’s essential.” I laughed in that entirely fake way one does when feeling awkward. I led him into the lounge, and gestured at a chair. “Have a seat. Coffee? Tea?”

“Coffee, thanks.”

He sat down. I went to make the coffee.

Drinking it, and smoking one of my cigarettes, offered by me, he said, “How much did you say it was again?”

“Two thousand,” I said. “But I *am* negotiable.”

“Negotiable?” he asked, and the eyes that had tended until now to slide away from my gaze looked up directly into mine. Again, evaluative, but less cautionary. Questioning. His eyes narrowed, then, though not in the way of his predecessor, the amber-necklaced academic. His narrowing of the eyes was one of calculation. I knew a deal could be made. “Two K is a lot for me ... I’m kind of between jobs at the moment.”

“What do you do?”

“Chef. I was at the hotel school last year, but this year I had to work because of the fees, so I’m saving up for next year ...”

“But you will be working, soon, will you?”

“Ja, ja, I’ve got a job lined up. Sous-chef, it’s a new restaurant, they’ll be open in a few months.”

“Okay,” I said. I took a deep breath, tried to look like I was pondering upon this. “Well,” I said, “when I say negotiable, it depends on the person. If it was someone who could help out a bit around the house, keep an eye on things while I’m away ... I travel a lot. I do a lot of business in the far east.”

I let that sink it, hoping he was thinking: Money, glamour. He said nothing, seemed to be assessing my statement.

I carried on talking, making my case. “I do a lot of entertaining,” I said. “You know, business things, as well as personal, I have a lot of friends, a very busy social life, and if I had someone around who could help with that a bit, and ... you know, be a —” I laughed — “an attractive presence around the place, that would help.”

He narrowed his eyes at me again. “So you’re saying ... Sort of, help you host these things?”

“Yes,” I said. “Think of it as a kind of hotel school.”

Now he laughed. His face opened up a bit and seemed, for a moment, a little more handsome. Less sullen. “Okay ... okay ...” He drew the words out as if they were questions he were asking himself. Then he said, “Attractive presence?”

I chuckled, a nervous chuckle perhaps. I went for broke. “You’re a very cute boy.”

He smiled at me, then looked away.

“How old are you? If I may ask.”

“Twenty-three.”

“Well,” I said, “I suppose most people are cute at twenty-three.” Then, realising that that could sound like an insult, “But you really are very good-looking. I hope you don’t mind me calling you a boy.”

“Why should I?”

"I don't know," I said. "It could sound ... demeaning, I suppose."

He shrugged. "So, how much, then?"

"If you helped me entertain, uh, co-hosted, that kind of thing?"

He nodded.

"Oh, let's say fifteen hundred. Or perhaps even thirteen hundred. How does thirteen hundred sound?"

He cogitated. The frown was attractive, made him look like a little boy dealing with a mystifying algebraic problem. "I might not have anything for a month or two," he said. "I'll have to owe you." He gave me a quizzical look, then made a face meant to indicate trepidation, or something like it, a sort of scrunched-up look that said, Oh dear.

I thought about that for a bit. "I'm sure we could work something out. Payment in kind?"

He smiled again. "Payment in kind?"

"A guy like you, good-looking, I'm sure ..." What, I thought abruptly, am I saying? This is beginning to sound like a session on the casting couch. Or negotiations with a rentboy. But he *was* very attractive, and now I was in a state of lust, expectant, and there *was* some kind of answering energy I felt in the air between us.

"You keep saying that," he said.

"What?"

"That I'm good-looking, attractive, whatever."

"Well, you are."

"You mean that?"

"Absolutely. Why would I lie to you? Anyway, it's just a personal opinion. That's how I feel. Someone else might find you completely hideous."

He laughed, loosely and loudly now. I thought, Thank God I'm managing to strike a light, bantering tone. That's the right tone to have in these kinds of conversations. But now one could be a little more serious.

“Jason, surely you realise that you’re exceptionally cute? I mean, anyone with half an eye is going to see you and ... and fall in lust with you at once.”

“Lust?” he smiled, and the smile had some triumphant devilry in it. “Like you, you mean?”

“Sure,” I said, giving another of my factitious little laughs. Keep it light! “I admit it, I’m lusting after you.”

“Right now?”

“Right now.”

He looked at me, half-smiled again, then turned his face away. He said nothing. There was a silence.

“Well,” I said hurriedly, also looking away, looking out the window towards the glinting pool, “*that* was embarrassing. I don’t usually confess to someone that I’m lusting after him. Not in this kind of context. It’s different in, in a ... bar, I suppose.” I paused, looked back at him, then away again; he was still staring at the wall off to the side of me. “Not a good start to our ... our deal,” I said. “Which is probably off now anyway.”

Suddenly he stood up. “Why?” he asked. I looked up at him from my seated position. “Let’s be honest. You’ve got something I need and I’ve got something you need.” And he reached down and opened his fly. I didn’t move. He put his hand in his fly and rummaged, then pulled out his cock. It was half-hard, uncut, the colour of alabaster. “Lust,” he said, and thrust it at my face.

I took it in my mouth. I sucked it, pushing back the foreskin with my lips, and felt it grow to full early-twenties hardness under my tongue. I undid his belt buckle and drew down his pants, grabbing his buttocks — they felt smooth, and the right combination of hard and soft. Lust, I thought, and luck ...

I sucked some more, played with his balls, ran my hand up under his teeshirt to feel his hard belly and to cup the mounds of his pectorals. His torso was entirely smooth. Shaved? My cock

was hard now, and I reached down to grasp it, then tried to free it from my pants, but it was difficult to do it sitting down.

"Hang on," I said, and stood up. I unbuckled my belt, opened my pants, and got my cock out. He reached out and gave it a tug, but the tug was no more than cursory. I put my arms around him and tried to kiss him, but he withdrew from me. He put his hands on my shoulders and pushed me back down to seated position, and once again pointed his cock at my face. Oh, I thought, so that's how it's going to be.

I sucked him, and found it delicious, accepting that I wasn't going to get much in return. A young hard cock in one's mouth is sometimes enough. He kept his hands on my shoulders, and began to rock me back and forth so that he was fucking my face, then fucked harder, almost choking me. I withdrew a bit, let the cock out of my mouth, gazed at it a moment — the exposed head was crimson against the pale shaft. Then I took control, grabbing the base of his cock with one hand; with the other I gripped a buttock and pulled him towards me, setting the tempo of the face-fucking.

He pushed it deep when I pulled at his backside, then all the way out again, then thrust in; a few such thrusts, and then he pushed it all the way in, though not too hard, against the back of my throat, and I held it there, swallowing the whole thing. He gave another little push, and I felt a moment's gag reflex, then pulled back, let it all out, then with a swoop took it all in my mouth again.

He went, "Oh," as if surprised by the rush of pleasure, and then started to make more appreciative noises, then the noises became grunts, and the grunts became more frequent. Uh, uh, uh, with the rhythm of his thrusts into my mouth. I could feel his cock throb as it thrust as deep as I would allow it, could feel the head, as it reached the back of my throat, expand — as if it were trying to burst against my uvula. It felt like he was getting very close; I had a moment's panic that he'd come in my mouth.

But with a sudden jerk he pulled back, grabbed his cock, and with a mere stroke hit his climax. A strong white jet shot across the distance between us and hit my shoulder, and then the back of the couch behind me. And another jet, and another. Uh, uh, uh.

I was jerking at my cock. He stood before me, now absently holding his still-hard cock, squeezing it gently. I lay back on the couch and looked up at him and masturbated myself. I said, "Jerk me off."

He sat down on the couch beside me and took my cock in his hand. He pulled at it with sudden, almost malicious violence, as if to get this over with as soon as possible. That wasn't helping. I took it back, brushing his hand away, and jerked it some more. I reached out and touched his cock, now softening a bit, and held it. That he didn't mind. I touched its tip, where a drop of semen lingered; gently I rubbed it over the urethra. I jerked myself faster. I felt the beginnings of the surge. I was close enough, anyway, by the time I'd finished sucking him off; I'd just wanted some, any, reciprocal gesture on his part. I came, shooting a few centimetres, nothing like his long volley. Most of it landed in my public hair.

He was already on his feet again, pulling his pants back up and buttoning, buckling. He reached, not asking, for my pack of cigarettes. He put one in his mouth, and then with careless insolence offered me the packet. I took one. He lit our cigarettes. We said nothing, just smoked. Then the cigarettes were finished and he said, "Well, I suppose I better go."

"So," I said hesitantly, "do you want the cottage?" Not, I thought, that it matters much now; now getting a tenant into the cottage seemed like a ruse to get his cock in my mouth, not an end in itself.

"I'll think about it."

"Will you give me your number?"

"I haven't got a phone at the moment. I'll call you."

Which he never did. A week passed; four or five other people came to see the cottage. One was a gaunt quiet haunted-looking man who worked in a second-hand bookshop, said he detested

swimming, and made no comment on the size of the cottage or the price asked. He wanted to move in at once. I agreed.

I saw Jason again a few months later.

I had been to some friends, a couple, for a birthday dinner. It was a nice dinner; Kobus and Robert had a large and very stylish apartment (definitely not a "flat"). The rest of the guests had gone, and now there were just the three of us, chatting, wondering whether to go out to a club, and whether that required drugs.

Robert had mentioned them; Kobus kept talking about something else. Kobus was in the construction business. He was doing well. "I think it's getting time to build ourselves a house," he said, to me, to Robert, to the room in general. It sounded like a new manifesto, something he said often. "I don't want to just buy. I want to build. I can do it so cheaply, with the business. I mean, we've got all this stuff. This flat is getting much too full. Half the art is in the fucking garage, for Christ's sake. I mean, it's now or never. I'm making the money. If Robbie doesn't spend it all on drugs, of course."

"Speaking of which," said Robert.

Kobus said, I could see, to keep the tone of his voice free of anxiety or irritation, "I thought we weren't going to do any more of that."

"It's your birthday, for God's sake! You don't have to have any. But if I'm going to go out I'm going to need something and I am most definitely going out. We'll get some crystal meth, okay? Not coke, just crystal."

"That's worse," said Kobus.

"Oh, I admit, I've got coke issues," said Robert. "But I don't have any crystal meth issues. So it's fine." He turned to me. "John? You'll have some? Even if Mr Goody Two Shoes won't?"

I said, "Well, it *is* a party night."

Kobus backed down with a silent shrug.

"It's not even that much, between us," said Robert. "Besides," he said, as he lifted his cellphone to his ear, "you've got to see the delivery boy." He smirked at me. His boyfriend rolled his eyes.

Robert went out on to the balcony to do the deal, place the order.

We chatted chatted some more, waiting. Kobus repeated what he'd said about building a house. "Brilliant idea," said Robert absently. After about half an hour the buzzer rang. Robert went and buzzed open the front gate to the block of flats, sorry, apartments, and soon there was a knock at the door. Robert opened it quickly; he'd been standing right next to it. I was standing in the passageway.

And in walked Jason. He looked a bit different; more gaunt, and thus more handsome. The emergence of some cheekbone had given his face definition, character. The hair was slightly longer, less spiked and more floppy. He wore a black leather jacket over a tight jersey (it was winter), and black jeans. He looked every inch the drug dealer, and he looked very good indeed.

He glanced briefly up at me, giving no sign of recognition. Robert closed the door and took receipt of the crystal meth, paid out the money. "Thanks," said Jason.

"No, thank you," said Robert, as flirtatiously as possible. "Thanks for coming by."

Jason smiled somewhat grimly at us both. "Just doing my job," he said with fake bonhomie.

I had edged closer.

"Oh," said Robert cheerfully, waving his arm in an unnecessarily large gesture at me, "this is my friend John. He's cool." He made another expansive gesture, this time at Jason. "This is Damian."

"Hi," I said.

Jason looked at me. Then, as if a little reluctantly, he put out his hand and we shook. Suddenly I wanted him to acknowledge that we had met; wanted Robert to know that too. A little oneupmanship.

I said, "We've met before. Damian."

Robert made a little "Oh!" He turned to me, and said archly, "I thought Damian was our little secret."

"No," I said. "It was under ... different circumstances." I said to Jason, to Damian, "You never did call me."

He looked at me coolly. He had noted the innuendo. I thought he'd laugh and brush it off, say, oh, he'd been so busy, something like that.

But then I saw a look like the one I'd seen before, the devilish expression, cross his face. It was harder, though, more dangerous, on that more gaunt face. He gave a thin little grin. "Well," he said, and in that word alone I could hear the cruelty coming, "Once was enough."

There was a silence.

Jason-Damian held my gaze for a moment, challenging me to reply, then looked away.

I said nothing.

Robert giggled.

Damian mumbled, "Gotta go," and went.

Robert and I went back into the lounge. Kobus said, "You took your time. Were you trying to get a fuck into the bargain?"

Robert said nothing, just decanted the crystal meth and busied himself with its preparation. He folded the tin foil meticulously, not responding to Kobus's looks of inquiry or to my frowns. Then, with a dramatic snort, he said to Kobus, "In fact, it seems our friend John here has actually *done* the dealer."

Kobus laughed. "John's done everyone," he said.

"Damian said," and Robert began to choke on his own laughter, "'Once was enough.'"

They both found this very funny. Kobus said, “You losing your touch in your old age, hey, John?” I tried to laugh too.

Robert held out the tin foil to me. It was a conciliatory gesture. “Guests first.”

“He means ladies first,” said Kobus.

We did the crystal meth. I rather ruthlessly helped myself to the lion’s share and pointedly did not offer to pay Robert back for any of it. Kobus had some too in the end, and we went out. After dancing a bit, we got separated. I picked up a cute but uneducated boy who was a very enthusiastic cocksucker. In the morning, I generously drove him home, all the way to Roodepoort.

Maybe six months after that, I saw Jason or Damian for the last time.

It was during the festive season, the time of year that all the moffies go out every night if possible. The week between Christmas and New Year is always hectic in clubland. I had been to a small party with some heterosexual acquaintances, so arrived in Braamfontein well after midnight. There was no parking near the club. I had to park some way away, down a side road, alongside some entirely dark, closed office block. There were no streetlights. I thought of a friend who had narrowly avoided being mugged by some crackhead rentboys near there. But there wasn’t much option if I was going to go to the club, and of course I was going to go to the club, it was the festive season. I sat in the car awhile, doors locked, looking around for any shadowy figures. There didn’t seem to be any. I got out and went to the corner, where a car guard stood, and pointed out my car to him. It was the last in the row, in the darkest place under the trees. “The last car,” I said. “I’ll give you ten rand if it’s still there when I come back,” I half-joked. He was apparently francophone and didn’t, it seemed, take in anything more than the “ten rand” part.

But the car was, indeed, there when I came back. I gave the guard his ten rand. As I was getting into the car, a figure shambled out of the gloom towards me. I jerked with fright, and quickly locked my door. I started the car and switched its lights on, ready to pull away from the curb. Then I looked up at the person standing there, and saw that it was Jason.

He was even gaunter than he had been those six or so months earlier, and his eyes had a glazed look. From drug-dealer to addict in one easy slide, I thought. Still attractive, though, perhaps even more so. Something in his defeated mien, especially, seemed piquant after his former rude arrogance. His clothes were scruffy, even dirty. If the black jeans he wore were the same as those I'd seen him in when he was going as Damian the drug-dealer, or at least Damain the delivery boy, they had lost their shape and their gloss. He was standing there, looking at me blankly. He didn't seem dangerous. I rolled down the window.

"Hi," I said.

"Hi," he said in a slow monotone.

Trashed, I thought. I said, "What are you doing here?"

"Hey, man," he said, "I'm, like, in a bit of a spot … I lost my job, and …"

I said nothing.

After a while, still not meeting my eyes, he said, "Hey, could you help me out? I'm really desperate."

So you're selling yourself, I thought. The sexual attraction I'd felt for him on our first meeting flared, part memory, part new idea. "How much?" I said.

Now he met my eyes. There was a deal to be made. We were on the same page. He was trying to concentrate. I remembered his frown of cogitation the first time we'd met, the first time we'd struck a deal, except this time he didn't look anything like a little boy. He said, "One fifty."

"What do you do?"

"No anal."

"You mean I can't fuck you."

"Ja."

"One hundred."

His face showed no emotion. The effort of thinking was enough. He didn't think long. "Okay," he said. "You bring me back here?"

"Sure," I said, then leant to unlock the passenger door. I had a fleeting thought that this was dangerous, that perhaps it was all a ruse to mug me or otherwise rip me off, but he seemed too languid and brain-dead to do anything violent.

He came round and got in the car.

He made no conversational overtures as we drove. Too fucked, I thought. Well, let's see how fucked he is. "So," I asked, "no more hotel school?"

He grunted. It didn't seem to mean yes or no. It was just a grunt.

I couldn't think of anything else to say. We drove the rest of the way in silence. At my house, as soon as we'd got inside, I said to him, "You'll have to have a shower. Or perhaps you'd like a swim?" I chuckled at my own private joke, but I was also already leading him to the bathroom. In his state, a swim would be a bad idea.

I stood in the bathroom while he undressed and showered, watching him, making sure he washed his cock, his cavities. He did it slowly, with a kind of numb determination. I started getting turned on. He still had a very attractive body, though it was skinnier now. There was a slight hunch to his shoulders, which made his flat belly appear concave; his ribs were like ripples in his skin. His flesh was pale, except for a too-tanned face. I hoped he wasn't sick. While he was drying himself, I went to get condoms and lube.

When I came back be was standing in the bathroom doorway, towel around his waist, clothes bunched under his arm. "Come with me," I said. I led him from the bathroom to the lounge. No, we wouldn't be doing this in bed. We'd be doing it on the couch, the selfsame couch.

He sat down limply and said, "Can I have a cigarette?"

I gave him one and lit it for him. I said. "Do you want a drink or something?"

"I'm fine," he said, inhaling. He said no more.

"Give me the towel," I said, and he complied. Still he didn't really look at me, just stared with eyes half-open at nothing and dragged on the cigarette. For conversation one obviously has to pay extra. In his case, it was clearly beyond him.

Well, I thought, no point in dragging it out. As he stubbed out the cigarette, I stood up and planted myself before him as he sat on the couch. I undid my pants and took out my half-hard cock and then thrust it at his face. He took it in his mouth and sucked it, rather slackly, not trying very hard. I grabbed the back of his head and pushed my cock deeper into his mouth, grasping some of his dark hair, now long and a bit tangled, and of course wet, to establish a rhythm. He gagged a bit at first, and I withdrew, let him recover, then shoved my cock at him again. I fucked his face for a while, then drew back. I looked down at his naked body. No sign of an erection.

I reached for his cock. I played with it a bit, drawing the foreskin back, and wondered whether I should suck it. I thought of his gauntness and decided it was perhaps best not to. Anyway, it was still completely soft.

I said, "Are you going to get a hard-on?"

He looked absently down at himself. "Sorry, man," he said in a quiet, gruff voice. "I don't know what's wrong with me."

I do, I thought. "Not exactly value for money," I said.

He reached for my cock, now fully hard, and began to suck me again. He was making a bit more of an effort after that reprimand, that implied threat of non-payment. The blowjob was okay, but not fabulous. He was trying, but he lacked any skill or enthusiasm. My cock stayed hard, but I wasn't moving any noticeable distance in the direction of orgasm. I pulled my cock out of his mouth and reached down and stroked his narrow torso. He seemed to have bruises on one side, as though he'd been jabbed with a stick. I pushed him over on his side; he didn't resist, but felt like a bit of a dead weight. I grabbed his ass. It didn't feel as taut as it had all those

months (was it as long as a year?) ago, but it still felt good. He leant forward and began sucking me again. I caressed his ass and my finger found its way towards his hole.

When I touched it, I felt it pucker. He lifted his head from my lap, and said, “Uh, no anal.”

I kept my finger there, lightly pressing his hole. “Not? And you don’t get a hard-on, either? For this, you want a hundred bucks?”

He said nothing, just bent his head again and carried on sucking my cock. I kept one hand on his ass, occasionally touching his hole, and put the other on his head, grabbing his hair to set the pace of his sucking. That helped, but not enough.

I said, “You’re not a very good cocksucker.” I touched his hole again, a little more firmly. “I don’t want to fuck you. I just want to play with your hole.”

He sat up. “Okay,” he said, slurring slightly, “but don’t hurt me.”

“I won’t hurt you,” I said.

I stood up and pulled him into a different position, so he was sitting on the couch. I pushed his legs up so that his backside was exposed. He held his legs up. I reached for the lube, lying on the coffee table between some magazines and a small indoor plant. I squeezed some lube on to my fingers and wiped it on his asshole. I pressed with one finger at the pucker, then gently pushed it in. His hole clenched, then opened to let it in. I moved it around inside him a bit. Then I took it out, oozed some more lube on to my fingers, and pushed a finger in again. I worked it around, feeling the hole loosen up, then pulled it out and put two fingers together and pressed their tips at his hole. Again it clenched, then loosened; I pushed the two fingers up his ass. They were halfway in when he tightened suddenly, and said, “Hey, man, that’s ...”

I cut him short. “You want to stop?” I kept my fingers there, halfway in. “Okay, maybe I should take you back. This isn’t working.”

He closed his eyes. “’Sokay,” he slurred, and pulled his legs up again. I pushed my fingers further in. I saw a slight grimace cross his face, but it can’t have been too uncomfortable. I hoped

it was a *little* uncomfortable, though. His cock was still entirely flaccid. I didn't bother to touch it.

I worked my fingers into his ass, moving them around, feeling it loosen more, felt the slight throb inside his body. I saw his cock stiffen a bit, but that was it. I ignored it. I played with his ass, fucked him with my fingers, and jerked myself off.

My cock was very hard now. I looked at his face. His eyes were closed. With my other hand, I reached for a condom and ripped the package open with my teeth. It wasn't easy with one hand, but I got it on my cock. His eyes were still closed. I leant into him, easing my fingers out of his ass, my cock already there to take their place. With a swift thrust I entered him. He gave a little shudder, and what seemed a gasp, but his eyes remained closed, his mouth hanging open a little. He made no other movement. I began to fuck him. Within a few thrusts, I felt myself starting to come, and with a jolt I did.

When I pulled out of him he half-opened his eyes, and seemed for a moment bewildered at what was going on. Fucked, I thought. Heroin? I took the condom off and dropped it on the floor. I wiped myself with the towel and then dropped it too.

He seemed to realise it was over. Without saying anything he got up and started putting on his clothes. I noted the dirty, shapeless jeans, the small holes in the teeshirt.

When he was dressed, I said, "Let's go."

He grunted. I took that as a yes. We drove back to Braamfontein. He smoked another of my cigarettes. We did not speak on the way. I could think of nothing to say, and he seemed barely conscious anyway, his head nodding. I took him back to the exact spot where I'd found him, or he'd found me. Then he seemed to wake up, and said, "Hey, uh, sorry, please, could you maybe take me to Hillbrow?"

I said, "You didn't ask me to do that. You asked to bring you back here, and here we are. I'm not going to Hillbrow. It's too dangerous. Besides," I added, "it's not far to walk."

He said nothing. I took a hundred-rand note out of my pocket and gave it to him.

“One fifty,” he said in an automaton’s voice.

“We agreed on a hundred,” I said. “And you couldn’t even get hard.”

He took the money, shoved it in a pocket and opened the car door.

“Well,” I said, “it was nice seeing you again.”

He paused, one leg out of the car, and turned vaguely towards me.

I said, “You remember me — John? The cottage?”

He just stared at me blankly.

“Goodbye, Jason,” I said. “Or should I say Damian?”

He seemed to take something in. He thought a moment. Slowly, he said, “Hey, man, my name’s Joe.”

Then he lurched up out of the car and disappeared into the darkness.