This story has its musical reference only in the title "Lavender Blue," which comes from an old song whose lyrics include "Lavender Blue, dilly dilly." It is a The Crying Game story, but not with Fergus and Dil, the expected choice. No, Gael X. Ile was interested in Fergus and Jody, the characters whose brief and intense relationship drives the rest of the movie. We are shown a lot of their time together, but there is the night before Jody’s death when perhaps something like this occurred.

Dusk was slow to usher darkness in that night, daylight clinging on with all Jody’s desperation. He had cried, broken, jagged sobs escaping the hood over his head, when Fergus had told him.

“Our man’s broken.”

“You what?” Jody demanded, spinning his ignorance out for that precious minute longer.

“You lot broke him. Tried every trick in the book on him, apparently, so now we hear he’s spilling his guts for them.”

“What’s that got to do with me?” The beginnings of unsteadiness in that voice, as ignorance slipped through his clutching fingers like sand.

“It means,” Fergus began, then stopped for a minute, and the man with the hood over his head must have been able to hear him pacing the room, feet moving softly over the packed dirt of the old greenhouse floor, a crisp, creaking noise as Fergus came back on the slotted slats that lay round the perimeter. “It means we have to kill you,” he said all in a rush, speaking the sentence as if it were the ripping off of a band-aid, made less painful by doing it quickly, and all at once.

“You’re going to kill me?”

A minute passed before Fergus answered. “Yes. I am. I asked Peter if I could.”

A useless struggle from the bound man, protest against the world. “What’d you go and have to ask him that for, eh? For fuck’s sake, what d’you want to go and kill me for?”

Fergus threw himself down in the chair placed opposite Jody’s, the one that put them too close together. “Would you like it better if I let Jude come in here and do it?”

“No. Christ, no, that’d be worse—that would be the worst. At least you’ll regret it.” Jody shifted his head, moving his darkness around until he could sense where Fergus was sitting, so that they would have been looking at each other, if it hadn’t been for the hood. Even through the thick fabric, he could smell the fustiness of decayed hot-house plants and old fertiliser, and very faintly, and only because this near the end he was desperate for some sign of another human being close to him, Jody could smell Fergus’ after-shave and his sweat. Fear, that sweat smelled like, but then, that could be Jody himself. “You will regret it, a bit, won’t you, Fergus.”

“And what d’you expect me to say to that, soldier? You think we enjoy going round killing people?”

Quietly, impressive courage over the fear. “I think Jude might.”

“Yeh, well...you might have a point there. I’m not saying you do, mind, but she... Well, it doesn’t bother her as much as it bothers some.”

“It bothers you, doesn’t it, Fergus?”

“Not enough to stop me in the morning.” If that were what Jody was asking.

“Oh, God,” Jody murmured, and it was the bleakest of prayers. “You’re really going to do it, aren’t you?”

Jody had to look away before he could say it.
“Yes. In the morning, first light.”
That was when Jody began crying, horrible sounds that no human should ever have to make.
“Don’t,” Fergus said, not even ashamed of the pleading in his voice.
“I’m sorry,” Jody mumbled through the tears and the hood, and Fergus watched him helplessly.
“Help me,” Jody begged, pride an indulgence he no longer wanted.
“How can I?” A question asked in the absolute absence of any possible answer.
“I don’t know.” Something else, muffled by misery, and then clearly, though Fergus could well have wished him silent. “Just help me!”
There was nothing at all that Fergus could say to that, although he could imagine what Jude would say—what any good IRA soldier would say. Still, it was bad enough that Jody had to die. No point in making it harder on him. On either of them.
“Give us a cigarette,” Jody asked, and Fergus lit one up for him, putting it into his mouth.
“Don’t even smoke,” Jody mumbled, taking his first drag from a cigarette.
Not commenting, expression blank, Fergus took the cigarette back, grinding it out on the floor.
Jody choked and struggled for breath, his laughter feeble, forced, explaining what hadn’t been questioned. “Thought it was the right thing to do.”
He’d be asking to swap his hood for the traditional blindfold next, Fergus thought. This wasn’t getting them anywhere, and Fergus didn’t need Jody talking about it, was trying not to even think about it in his own head. “Go to sleep now,” he said, without much hope. Couldn’t imagine himself wanting to sleep away his last few hours of life and Jody—well, Jody had his photographs, and his cricket, and his Dil. A lot more than Fergus had, at that moment.
“I don’t want to go to sleep,” fear shivered through the words, too many of the euphemisms for death speaking of sleep, the knowledge haunting them both. Silence was too much of the tomb, and Jody had never been a man for quiet. “Tell me something,” he asked, needing to hear another person, needing someone else’s words to drown out his own thoughts. Outside of the darkness of the hood, from where tiny glimmers of light seeped in under the unravelling hem, Jody could hear Fergus shifting, uncomfortable perhaps, or worst, getting ready to leave, perhaps leave him alone— “A story—”
“Like the one about the Frog?”
“And the Scorpion. No. No. Tell me anything.”
An invitation to tell secrets, the sorts of things you always swore you’d never tell a living soul.
“When I was a child,” Fergus began slowly, the old quote too perfect for him ever to have forgotten it, and his father’s and the Father’s admonitions too bitter to leave behind.
“Yeah?” Jody prompted, wanting Fergus to keep on talking.
“I thought as a child. But when I became a man, I put away childish things.”
“What does that mean?”
It meant things in the past that Fergus still couldn’t face, and things in the present that scared the hell out of him. “Nothing,” he said, Jody still too much in the land of the living to confess such things to him.
“Nothing? Tell me something. Anything.” The last will of a dying man, the final request, the best on offer since there was nowhere round here to get the condemned man a hearty breakfast, and no hope of the sentence being commuted. Fergus told him nothing, gave him nothing but silent regrets, and the wetness of his eyes that Jody couldn’t even see. With more sadness than bitterness, and the compassion and the gentleness of that hurt more than vicious reproach ever could, Jody said: “Not a lot of use, are you, Fergus?”
“Me?” Fergus asked, looking inwards to a deeper black and more unremitting blindness than anything the hood could do to Jody. “No. I’m not good for much.”
After a time, there was only a slight difference in the darkness inside the hood and the darkness outside it. Night had come, and that meant morning was racing round the planet, coming to put an end to Jody.
“Hell of a fucking golden handshake,” he muttered.
“What’s that supposed to mean?”
“Just that when you leave a job, you’re supposed to get a gold watch or one of those stupid brass carriage clocks in a glass dome. And what am I getting? I’m getting fucking shot in the back of the head for a fight I never wanted—”
“Then you should have thought about that before you joined Her Majesty’s Fucking Army, shouldn’t you?”
“Yeh. I should. But all I was thinking about was
getting some money behind me, mebbe making enough to set Dil up in a shop of her own. I’d’ve liked that. Called it Dil’s Garden or something, play with her name a bit.”

“Diligence.”

“Daffodil. She’s a bit like a daffodil, you know.”

“What, all yellow with green legs?”

Jody almost managed to laugh, the sound as strained as Fergus’ joke had been. “Nah. I mean, she’s a bit delicate, needs looking after. Not that she’s not strong, Christ, what she’s been through, you’d have to be strong or you’d top yourself.”

They both heard it, that unwanted reference to death, and fell over each other trying to drown it out.

“—What is it that’s happened to her then—”

“You should get her to tell you her story—”

A pause, necessarily awkward, Fergus the one to take the lead. “I take it she has better stories than me?”

“Yeh. And she tells them better an’ all. Good singer too, is my Dil. You should see her, Fergus, all dolled up to the nines, up there on what they call a stage at the Metro. Does this great act, you know, old songs, from the 60s mainly, you know, torch songs…” He drifted off there, voice fading away.

“What is it?”

“Just thinking. Me…” He swallowed audibly, struggled, went on. “About me being dead, and what that’s going to do to Dil. Promise me, Fergus, you have to promise me.”

“Promise you what?” Playing for time, trying to think what the hell it would be like to tell a woman that her man had been thinking about her just before the bloke sitting in front of her now had pulled the trigger and blown her man’s brains out all over the place. Tell her that her man had been brave to the end, braver than Fergus had ever felt.

“Promise me, that you’ll take care of her.”

“And I thought you just wanted me to take her to the Metro and buy her a margarita?”

“She’ll need more than that if I’m gone. She will, Fergus, honest. People don’t understand her, and then they hurt her. You’re a kind man,” Jody said, and despite the hood, despite the gun that rested so easily in Fergus’ hand, it was obvious he meant it, that the blindness of the hood had let him see some things more clearly. “I know you are. Go and see her, make sure she’s all right. Make sure she’s all right for money and everything—”

“I thought you soldiers had a widows’ fund or something.”

“Yeh, but me and her—well, we’re not married, not in the strict legal sense.”

“Then you should have made an honest woman of her.”

That made Jody laugh, roar with laughter until the hood suffocated him so that he had to stop, coughing. “Oh, that’s a good one, Jody. An honest woman of her. Don’t think that’s something Dil ever wanted, though. Happy to be what she is.”

There were memories to be savoured there, and Fergus sat watching the bitter-sweet smile that was all he could see of them. “Always looking for the good, is my Dil. Always looking for the silver lining even when she’s having a good cry.”

“So she’s the emotional type then, is she?”

“Name a woman who isn’t. Even your Jude’s all passion and fire, isn’t she?” A pause, remembering other things, the smell of his own blood and fear still heavy in the fabric of the hood, a touch of his lip re-igniting the pain where Jude had hit him with the gun. “Bitch.”

“Oh, come on, she’s only doing her job, just like you. Fighting for her country.”

“Yeh? Only I wear a uniform and let everyone know what I am. You wouldn’t find me going round seducing blokes by lying to them, would you?”

“Oh, I don’t know,” Fergus said deliberately trying to lighten the conversation, arguing with a dying man seeming too cruel a thing to do, and the questions raised having too many doubts crowding round them. “Seducing blokes? You never can tell these days, can you?”

“No, you can’t,” Jody answered, not rising to the humour, cutting out even the faint hints of what might have been construed as flirting. Handsome, he’d called Fergus. The one with the killer smile.

“You’re going to smile when you shoot me, killer?”

“Don’t call me that!”

“Why not? It’s what you are.”

“And I suppose you’re not?”

“Not yet. Not ever going to be now, either, am I? Suppose I should thank you for that. Might give me a chance of getting through the Pearly Gates.”

“Are you honestly trying to tell me you’ve never killed someone? But you’re a soldier—”

“And this is the first time I’ve been in a war zone, and I haven’t been here over four months,
and I haven’t had to kill anyone. I’m telling you, I didn’t sign on because holding a fucking great gun turned me on.”

Peter had warned him about getting too close to the prisoner, but surely it was only decent, to know the man you were going to execute? “So why did you sign on?”

“Told you already. Needed a job. And there was nothing else to do.”

“Pretty much why…”

“Go on. Pretty much why you—what?”

“Signed on with my mob.”

“Don’t believe in diplomacy then?”

“And where has that ever got us?”

“Christ, I don’t believe this. I’ve got, what, three, four hours to go before some fucker kills me, and I’m sitting here arguing about politics I don’t give a shit for in a country I never wanted to come to in the first fucking place. Forget it, Fergus. Change the subject. Go on. Make the condemned man happy.”

“All right,” Fergus said, stretching out a bit in his chair. “I’ll tell you what. When this is all over, I’ll go to London, and buy your Dil a drink.”

Which ‘this? The Troubles? Or just Jody? “Has to be a margarita. In the Metro. Col knows how to make them the way she likes. And don’t just buy her a drink. Take care of her, make sure she’s on her feet, and for fuck’s sake, make sure she hasn’t lumbered herself with some bastard, will you?”

“That’s a lot you’re asking.”

“It’s a lot you’re doing.”

The truth of that was as dousing as winter rain. “Yeh,” Fergus finally said, “yeh. When it’s over, I’ll make sure she’s all right.”

“Promise me.”

“I’ve just said—”

“Promise me. Promise me!”

“All right, all right, I fucking promise.”

Even in the near dark, Fergus could see the ironic twist to Jody’s lips. “What, not going to say ‘cross my heart?’”

Fergus gave him a sour look for that. “No. And don’t you, either.”

“But I wouldn’t, would I? I don’t want to die, Fergus. Fuck, Fergus, I don’t want to die! I want to live, go home to Dil. See trees and grass again. See people smiling at me.”

“I’m sorry.” Barely a whisper, scarcely louder than the night breeze stirring the withered vines in the long abandoned greenhouse.

“Not half as sorry as I am, handsome.”

Neither one of them spoke for a long time after that, each one lost in his own contemplations.

It was Fergus again who broke their silence.

“Have you made your peace with your Maker?”

“Don’t believe in any of that crap. Only person I want to make my peace with is a million miles away.”

“Dil.” Not a question, a certainty, Fergus remembering Jody and Dil in that photograph, where they had looked like a real couple, an indefinable something that made them look as if they belonged together.

“Who else?”

“Your father, the one that taught you cricket.”

“I don’t see much of him any more.”

“Why not?”

“Didn’t approve of Dil, or the way I lived my life. Didn’t approve of me.”

Another resonance, and Fergus’ hand twitched on the gun. “My father neither. Always going on at me to make something of myself.”

“And have you?”

Fergus looked away, unable to expose his shame even to eyes made blind. “What do you think, soldier? Anyway, himself and everyone always said I’d never amount to anything.”

“And it’s easier to prove them right than to try and then fail them, isn’t it? Doesn’t hurt as much that way.”

“You’ve got it right there.” A hesitation, the gun shifted uncomfortably from hand to hand. “You know, it really is a fucking shame we had to meet like this.”

A wheezy chuckle. “Next you’ll be saying ‘d’you come here often?’ Yeh, but I know what you mean. I think we could’ve been great mates, you and me, Fergus. If we’d met at that pub—what’s that pub of yours called?”

“The Rock.”

“Yeh, if we’d met at the Rock, or better yet, at the Metro. We could’ve been real pals, you and me.”

“Not afraid I’d steal Dil out from under your nose?”

“Nah, she’s not your type, not your type at all. But if you did fancy her, and she fancied you, well—I’ve never been the jealous type.”

“Are you telling me that you’d share her?”

“Don’t sound so shocked. We’re not all living in 1916, you know.”

“Yeh, I know, but still…” A few moments,
Jody’s breath becoming slightly laboured, Fergus’ quick, dark eyes alight with speculation. “Would you be wanting to watch? You know, if she did, and I did…”

A definite grin then, and the answer drawn out long and lush. “Yeh. Love watching her. She’s got terrific legs, and you should see them when she’s got them spread, or wrapped them round someone…”

Fergus shifted, spreading his own legs a little to ease the sudden pressure of his jeans. “Stop that. You shouldn’t be talking about your woman like that.”

“Why not? She knows I like it, and she only does it when she’s the one that wants it. Anyway,” and this time the grin was entirely false, tainted with melancholy, “I’m not going to get the traditional hearty breakfast, am I? And we’ve already tried the cigarette. So why not go out with a bang? Better than going out with a whimper.”

“I don’t think that’s quite what they had in mind when they said that, you know.”

“More fool them, then. For fuck’s sake, Fergus, a couple of hours from now, and you’re going to fucking shoot me! Let me think about her. Let me have that at least.”

Silence.

Jody’s breath growing heavier, more vocal, and he slid his hips farther forward on the chair. “Come on,” he said, sounding desperate. “You’ve got to free my hands.”

“No fucking chance.”

“You can tie my feet to the chair—what am I going to do then, eh? Come on, Fergus, untie my hands.”

“Are you daft or something? You want me to untie your hands, and then sit here and watch you… Well, watch you.”

“Watch me wank? I didn’t ask you to watch. All I asked was let my hands go so I can have one last orgasm before you kill me. Is that too much to ask?”

“Course it is.”

“Nah. Asking you to take it out and do it for me—now that would be too much too ask.”

“Although at least then I wouldn’t have to say the pleasure was all mine!”

“That’s right, Fergus, laugh at it. It’s only a bit of sex, and you don’t even have look. Tell you what. Tie both my feet and my left hand to the chair, and just let me have my right hand free.”

“No. Peter would have my guts for garters if I did something that stupid.”

“Oh, for fuck’s sake! Come on, Fergus,” rocking back and forth on the chair, making the wood creak and groan. “It’s my last fucking chance—”

“I said no, and I mean no.”

“You sound like a virgin when you say that.”

“Well, I’m not, and I’m still not going to untie you.”

No answer, and Fergus came damned close to heaving a sigh of relief, his own tension finally beginning to ease. Untie him and watch while Jody fucked his fist. Chance’d be a fine thing. Fergus could just imagine what Peter and Jude would say if they walked in on that.

After a couple of minutes, it broke through Fergus’ thoughts that Jody wasn’t silent at all. His breathing was harsh, and heavy. His chair was creaking, and his jacket was making a noise where it rubbed against his trousers.

“I don’t believe you,” he said, torn between dismay and other feelings that didn’t bear examining. “I don’t fucking believe you. What d’you think you’re doing?”

“I’m not doing anything,” Jody replied, sounding like something out of the porno video Tim had smuggled in one year.

Fergus tapped his gun against the very obvious bulge in Jody’s trousers. “That down there thinks you’re doing something.”

“I’m thinking, that’s all, just thinking.”

He should leave well enough alone. “About Dil?”

A very sweet smile appeared beneath the hood, and Fergus felt an unexpected jab of jealousy that even here, like this, Jody could still feel that much love for someone. “Who else? She’s beautiful, is my Dil. Wonderful girl, loves me more than anyone…”

In self defence, Fergus sneered at that. “Not so much that she wouldn’t get fucked by some fella in front of you. And not so much that you could keep your paws off Jude.”

“That’s different. That’s only sex, doesn’t mean anything when you’ve someone you love.”

“Wish the girls I know thought that.”

“You’d like some of what Dil thinks. You’d like what she does even more. The things she can do with her mouth—”

They both groaned, which shocked Fergus: he’d thought he’d been in better control than that. But it had been a long time, and Jude’s kisses had been a
temptation. After this was all over, he was going to take her and fuck her—

After all this was over, Jody would be dead.

“Don’t you try anything stupid,” he said, getting to his knees, digging in his pocket for the extra bits of rope. “Try anything, and I’ll blow your fucking balls off.”

A slow, nostalgic smile for that. “Dil can blow you like nobody else. Fucking fantastic with that mouth of hers…”

Jody’s feet tied securely to the chair leg, Fergus looped rope around Jody’s left hand and the back leg of the chair before he loosened the other wrist- and fly, pulling the new rope tight before Jody could possibly do anything stupid enough to get him killed before morning.

“Here,” he said, grabbing Jody’s hand and shoving it into Jody’s crotch, “and don’t say I’m not good to you.”

“Dil’s good to me,” Jody said dreamily, weaving a web of arousal, his fingers scrabbling to undo button and fly, his smile broadening when Fergus brushed his hands aside, undid his clothes and undid his clothes and his smile broadening when Fergus

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“Dil’s good to me,” Jody said dreamily, weaving a web of arousal, his fingers scrabbling to undo button and fly, his smile broadening when Fergus brushed his hands aside, undid his clothes and pulled out his penis for the second time that night. His flesh responded with mindless hunger when he felt Fergus’ hand linger on him for that fraction of a second to long. “First time you’ve ever seen a black man’s dick?”

“What kind of thing is that to ask?”

“Well, it was dark outside when you helped me that time, and the last time, you stayed behind me the whole time. So this has to be the first time you’ve seen a black dick.”

“If you must know—yes.”

“Then you should have a good look at it. It deserves someone seeing it before the worms get at it.”

That was enough to make Fergus want to cross his legs. “Will you stop it?”

“Making you uncomfortable, am I? Is it that much bigger than yours?”

“No it is not. Not that I’ve looked, mind.”

“What? Never looked at your own dick? You are mad, then, aren’t you?”

“Just shut up, will you, and get on with it.”

Slowly, with Fergus trying not to look, Jody began stroking his dick, the flesh incredibly dark, darker even than the skin on Jody’s face. He’d wondered about that, Fergus had, when he’d been a kid sitting watching some film on the telly, American G.I.’s winning World War 2, or bad guys getting shot to bits by the good guys. Roots, with the black men all half naked, all those muscles, natural curiosity to wonder about the bits that were covered.

Curiosity, that’s all it was. Nothing else it could be, was there? He was a real man, not some prancing cissy, one of those pathetic creatures hanging round public toilets, and not one of those sinners his father and the Father were always going on about.

And it was Jody talking about Dil that was getting him excited. Listening to Jody, talking about his woman, and the things she could do, thinking about that woman…

Fergus leaned his forehead against the outreach of wall next to Jody’s chair. He closed his eyes, but he couldn’t close his ears. Beside him, he could hear Jody’s voice going on and on in erotic detail. Could hear Jody’s hand moving on his dick, faster, then slower, poor bastard obviously trying to make it last.

“She can take you in right down to the hilt. When she suck’s me off, she can take every last inch I’ve got, and fuck, what she does with her tongue—”

Breaking off there, a gasp, and the sounds of flesh on flesh stopped, Jody’s breath shuddering.

Fergus knew exactly what the other man was feeling, too close to coming when he needed it to last. Like being with a woman who was in no hurry, and trying not to disappoint her. Then—

“And when I fuck her, oh, God, there’s nothing better. She’s tight as a fucking virgin, and she tightens her hole round me, makes it even better.”

Fergus’ hand blurred as he hauled his own jeans open and grabbed his cock, his mind and body aroused beyond all his good intentions. “Is she wet?” he asked, knowing the answer perfectly well, but wanting to hear that detail, wanting to feel that wet slickness in his mind and round his cock.

“Wet? She’s so fucking wet, she’s dripping with it. Especially after I come in her. An’ especially when I fuck her second, after some bloke she’s wanted. She likes me to kiss her when he’s inside her, and I fuck her mouth with my tongue while he’s fucking her the way she likes it.”

A long, trembling moan, and Fergus wished to hell he could see what Jody was thinking about. “She’d like you, Fergus.”

“Would she now?”

“Oh, yeh, you’re her type, all right. Dark hair, dark eyes—likes her men dark, does my Dil.”
“So I can see.”
Jody didn’t say anything, but he would give his left arm to have that hood off, so that he could see if Fergus was watching him.

“Take the hood off,” he whispered.
“No. I can’t.”
“Please, Fergus. It’s the last time for me, don’t make me do it like a fucking dog rutting in the dark.”

“No.” Fainter now, Fergus’ face pressed against the coldness of the wall, his cock hot in his hand, shame burning even hotter. “I can’t.”

“Please. Go on, Fergus, you’re a kind man. It’s in your nature. Take the fucking hood off, man, let me breathe.”

No answer this time at all, save for one ragged intake of breath.

“I won’t say another word if you don’t take the hood off.”
Jody could hear Fergus’ hand moving on himself.

“Don’t you want to hear about her, Fergus? Hear what Dil would do for you?”
Another ragged breath, nearly a moan.

“Don’t you want to hear how she likes me to fuck her?”

The hood was ripped off his head so suddenly his neck hurt.

“What does she like?” Fergus demanded, still crouched down by Jody’s chair.

“She likes it kinky sometimes,” Jody whispered, staring at Fergus, unsurprised when the other man looked away. “Likes being tied up with silk scarves and stockings. Spread out on the bed, naked, so you can see everything she’s got.”

“Oh, fuck,” Fergus groaned, spitting into his palm to move his hand more slickly over his cock.
“What else? Go on, what the fuck else?”

Jody’s hand was moving quickly too, and he doubted that Fergus noticed that they were moving in unison, that the two of them were in harmony. Not much, for a man’s last time, but more than he’d hoped for, and better than a gun across the mouth.

“She likes it up the arse. You ever fucked someone in the arse, Fergus?”

Fergus’ eyes were wild, dilated, and he met Jody’s gaze. “What’s it like?” he whispered, squeezing his cock hard, his vision not quite straying to where Jody’s hand was moving, moving, an endless blur of motion on the dick that had done things Fergus had barely dared imagine. “What’s it like?”

“Tight. Oh, she’s so fucking tight, tighter’n your fist, an’ so wet, so fucking wet, better’n anything you’ve ever had before. And she loves it, Fergus, really gets off on it. Wild about it. Loves me too. Says she loves having me inside her like that, says it makes her feel…”

“Makes her feel what?”

“Special.” Abruptly, tears threatened, a wash of misery to ruin even this small solace. Jody shook his head, squeezed his cock harder. “Best thing she likes to do, is come watch me play cricket. Says seeing me bowl makes her shiver cos I’m so powerful. Then we go to the Metro, and she sings for me, and then we go home. She goes down on me, gets me good and hard and wet.”

Fergus could see it in his mind, the beautiful woman in the picture, her mouth stretched wide round Jody’s black dick, the thick flesh making her strain. She’d be able to take him easier, but not by much, and he could almost feel her round him.

“And when she’s got me hard, we get into bed, and she comes to me naked, God, she’s so fucking beautiful, the tiniest little breasts I can cover with my mouth, nipples hard against my tongue—”

Jody broke off, shivering, eyes falling shut, opening them again to stare at Fergus’ averted face. “And then she opens her legs for me, and wraps them round my hips, and I fuck her, shove my dick right up inside her, and you should hear her, Fergus, you should hear her when I fuck her…”

“Oh, God,” Fergus was muttering, breath coming in heaves, eyes closed tightly shut to keep the fantasy inside, “oh, God…”

“And she squeezes my dick when it’s inside her, and she’s so wet and smooth, and she kisses me—”

Jody came, gushing spurts of white against his hand, his cock, his clothes, the groan he made the last thing Fergus needed, his own hand moving faster just as Jody’s hand stilled, Jody watching him, Jody needing this.

“Think about being inside my woman, Fergus, think about fucking Dil, and me watching over both of you. She’s tight, Fergus, and loving, and generous. Hot and wet and—”

Fergus came, muscles spasming, no sound escaping him as he spilled his seed on the barren wall, droplets dripping down to be absorbed in the dry dirt of the floor.

Silence, then, from the men, the old, dead vines sussurating in the pre-dawn breeze, shifting
moonlight casting dancing shadows amidst the potting plants left to die on the shelves.

A deep breath, a struggle for control, sudden, horrified recognition of what he had done, that thankfully pushed aside by the anger of realising that he’d dropped his gun on the floor beside Jody’s feet. Stupid thing to do. Fucking stupid. Basking in anger, he pushed his cock back inside his clothes, wiping his hand against the pipes on the wall. Looked at Jody, sitting there like a man well satisfied, his black cock limp and lolling against his thigh.

“Will you put that fucker away?” Fergus snapped, shoving his gun into his waistband, half turning away from the man he had forgotten was his prisoner.

“Yeh. In a minute.”

“Put it away now or I’ll fucking shoot the thing for you.”

Jody looked away, mouth drooping, fumbled one-handed, tucking himself away. Wincing as Fergus grabbed his hand and twisted it too tightly behind him. “Don’t you want me to mop up the evidence as well?”

A pause. A shove that pushed his hand back into his lap.

“Go on, get on with it. And don’t muck about,” so much anger in his voice making Jody hurry it up a bit, “just get it taken care of.”

Jody bit his lip as his hands were tied roughly behind his back, Fergus’ hands not quite steady, and Fergus’ eyes, visible in the fey moonlight, uneasy, troubled. “Thought that’s what we just did.”

Fergus looking away, hurrying back to his own chair, pushing it back another few inches.

“Didn’t we just take care of it?”

“Just you shut the fuck up.”

“All right,” Jody said thickly, looking at Fergus, trying to get Fergus to look at him. To acknowledge that there had been enough. Fergus couldn’t pull the trigger in the morning after all. And for the first time, Fergus cocked the gun, the sound mouth-dryly loud.

“All right, I can take a hint,” Jody said, his voice betraying what his eyes were already showing. Lowered his head in defeat, hanging there as if he were already dead.

Fergus finally did look at him, and for a long moment. Weighed the gun in his hand. Silently, not meeting Jody’s eyes when the other man raised his head with fine courage, he put the hood back on.

They sat like that for an eternity, the time still too short.

Light was sidling in through the dusty windows. Light, and warmth, prescient of a glorious summer’s day.

It was enough to make a man weep.

“It’s almost time, isn’t it, Fergus?” Jody asked, and his voice was raw as if from screaming.

“Yes.”

“This is it then.”

“Yes.” Fergus eyed the door, and the main house that wasn’t quite visible from here, but which was there, still, and in it, still, were his colleagues and compatriots. Men and a woman who knew him. Knew his family. Everything.

“You’ll look after her, won’t you?” Jody asked, nearly begging.

When it was all over, he had said. Fergus leaned back in his chair and looked at the sunrise with loathing.

There were footsteps coming along the pebble path.

Jody, hurrying, saying it quickly. “Don’t forget your promise.”

The door handle was turning.

Fergus, bitter, fighting to stop the world from turning itself on its head. “What promise?”

And then Maguire came in, and it was time.