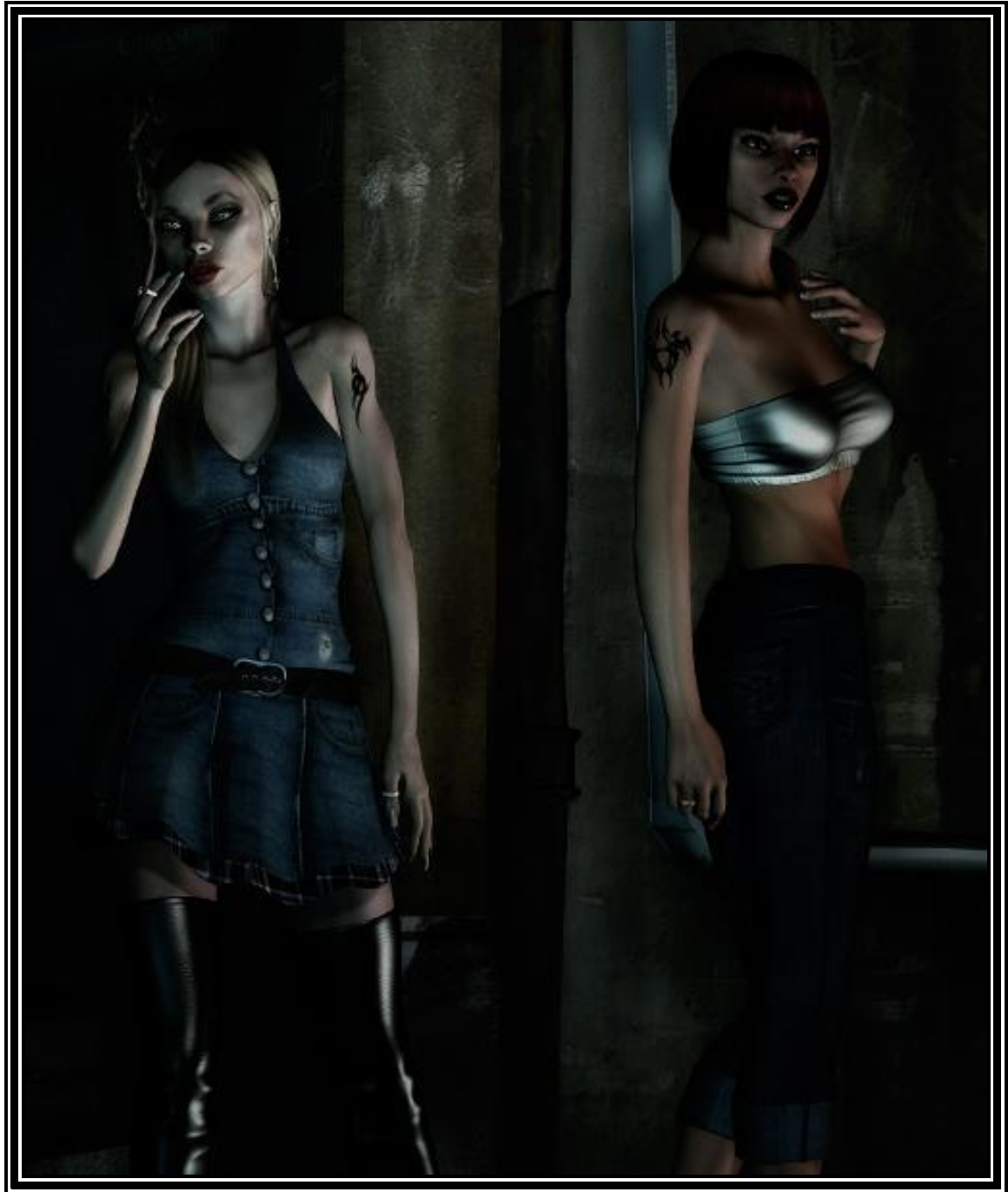


The Fix

Bradley Stoke



The light from the street lamps shone on the dark puddles on the damp pavement. A fine drizzle continued to fall, dampening Martin's spectacles as he strode along the forbidding streets. It wasn't really the night for a stroll. And this wasn't a part of town where a man would be wandering for the sights or the restful ambience. But Martin was a man on a mission. And this was the best part of town to be.

He wasn't alone. Resting by lamp posts, or in the doorways of shuttered shops, or in the shadow of hedges, he could see the occasional silhouette of women, dressed provocatively, frequently smoking, and eyeing him with rather less reserve than how he eyed them. Martin shivered. Did he have to? he wondered. But then, of course, why else would anyone choose to come out to this part of town?

In the nearly fifty years of his life, the usual pleasures of marriage or children had somehow eluded him. He had tried. God! He'd tried! But it just hadn't been his destiny. Women just didn't take to him somehow. And the chances were getting fewer, as his hair thinned, his paunch grew larger and his future shrank ahead of him. And it wasn't just romance that had eluded him. In everything he did, he knew that he had under-achieved. He wasn't one of life's winners. He'd never got the promotions he'd wanted. At least not until so late it was more a recognition of his seniority and patience than any native ability. Time and time again, he'd seen younger men leapfrog ahead of him. For them advancement, romance, marriage and respect just came naturally.

But not to him. He had no exciting past to reflect on, no youthful excesses to regret, nothing in his life that he could positively identify as an achievement for which

he could be the envy of others. But he was a man. And he had needs the same as any other man. And if they weren't to come to him effortlessly through the exercise of his charm and personality, then they would have to come to him the only other way. And that was by the exchange of dollars and cents.

Prostitutes had become his release. In fact, they almost become his chief hobby. The main source of pleasure in his life. Something he would plan in advance and savour the prospect. Something to reflect on after the event and inevitably about which to feel some degree of shame. But always something ultimately more satisfying and more exciting than downloading images off the Internet, poring through glossy magazines or watching women in improbable ecstasy on DVDs. The feel of real warm flesh against his own skin, his penis tugged and pulled and sucked, and then sometimes the pleasure of penetration (always a little more expensive and that much more to be cherished) as his prick was eased into the condom the girls always thoughtfully supplied and then into the warm liquid embrace of the two fleshy lower lips. He only regretted that he so rarely tasted the lips on the girls' mouths. But that was an intimacy they always denied him.

Martin strode along, his eyes darting nervously about as he evaluated the women on display. Part of him actually felt quite sorry for them. It couldn't be much fun to be standing around in the evening drizzle, waiting for cars to slow down and pick them up. And they really weren't dressed for the weather. The skirts were so very short, the tops so very brief, the heels so tottering and precipitous. And the faces. Sometimes so thick with make-up that it was difficult to imagine what the actual features underneath might be like.

And then Martin saw her. And he felt a slight tightening of the throat and a thump in his chest as the excitement of encounter came closer. The girl he'd had so many times before that he was almost a regular. She wasn't the prettiest in the world. But none of them were really. She was skinny, with large broad feet, and a twisted mouth on a face with a sharp chin and a long pointed nose. There she was (and of course Martin had no idea what she might be called), in her long pale tights, smoking her cigarette on the street corner, her heels so high that Martin could see right through them to the pavement edge.

And then she wasn't there. A dark brown Mondeo slowed down, and in a trice she was gone. Martin sighed as her tight, if rather fatty, bum disappeared through the car door. The last she saw of her was a glimpse of her bleached, tied-back hair through the streaks of drizzle on the passenger window. So nearly and yet not nearly enough.

Disappointed, Martin paused in his steps. He almost felt like abandoning his quest altogether. He pushed his hands into the pockets of his overcoat and continued striding on. He couldn't come this far and just turn back. Even though he knew of a nearby bar where he could at least drown his sorrows.

"Are you looking for something?" he suddenly heard a woman's voice break into his reverie. He turned his head to see the dark shadowy figure of a thin woman, dressed in black with long unkempt black hair, just by a telephone pole.

He smiled more from politeness than anything else. "Yes," he heard himself mouth as he looked at her pale emaciated face. She didn't look like she'd eaten for a long time. She had virtually no fat obscuring her high cheek-bones and her perpetually

startled gaze. “How much?”

The girl hesitated. “Twenty dollars,” she announced at length.

“For what?”

She shrugged her shoulders. “A fuck,” she decided noncommittally.

A fuck! That was cheap. What was the catch? He studied her face. It was so ill-looking. She must be a junky, Martin decided. Out for a fix. She must be desperate. But twenty dollars! He couldn’t turn down an offer like that.

“Yeah! That sounds fine!” he decided. “Where?”

“My place,” she said, emerging from the shadows in black tights that emphasised the bony knees that punctuated her slim legs, and the tiny skirt beneath the flimsy high-collared black blouse. She obviously didn’t feel the cold. “Follow me.”

Martin obeyed her command and followed her along some ill-lit lanes toward a large dilapidated apartment block, which she entered. His steps followed her steps as she ascended the stairs in the flickering bulb-light, taking the advantage to examine the girl’s strangely old-fashioned black high-heeled shoes and the bony contours of her arse. She finally arrived at a door on whatever floor Martin had lost count, opened it with a key and let him in.

Martin had been in girls’ flats before, and he was used to their spartan functionality. But this one was almost too minimal in content. In the single room of the apartment there was nothing except a mattress, bare even of sheets, on the stained bare dark floor-boards illuminated by the inadequate aura of a single low wattage light-bulb. Thick dark curtains hid all evidence of the street outside.

And they weren't alone. Slumped in the corner, staring vacantly in front of her, was another girl, and one, despite the chill in the air in an apartment that didn't even have the luxury of heating, who wore no clothes at all. Fuck! These junkies! They have no standards or decorum at all. And like the girl who'd picked him up, she was painfully thin and pale. In fact there seemed to be an unhealthy blue pallour about her. Her scrawny breasts hung on her stomachless chest, and her feet were stretched in front of her, not attempting to obscure the long dark hairs of her crotch.

There was no ceremony, but that was usual. Martin removed his clothes to reveal his paunchy waist, his slim arms and legs, and stood in the room in just his socks and spectacles. At least there was no mirror by which Martin could compare his ageing frame with his fondly held self-image of a somewhat younger man. With even less ceremony, the girl pulled off her own clothes, leaving them in a black heap on the bare floorboards. Without her clothes, she was exactly like her slumped friend. Pale, thin and ill-looking. Her large black eyes shone darkly from beneath her brow, not appearing to care about or even recognise Martin's existence.

And then she lay down on the bare mattress, buttocks sinking into its worn springs, her legs wide open and a shocking black crotch that Martin knew was soon to be all his. "Now?" he asked uncertainly.

She nodded, with a fixed stare expressing neither emotion nor meaning. Not exactly the warmest welcome Martin had ever had. But at twenty dollars. Well, you couldn't complain.

He bent his knees down onto the dark-stained mattress, feeling the well-worn springs flag under the weight of his hairy knees. At least his penis was awake. It

wasn't always so well-behaved. Sometimes it needed a bit of coaxing. Sometimes a lot of coaxing. There were the occasions when even after an embarrassed ten minutes of fellatio, he'd had to admit defeat, but still be as much out of pocket as if it had been fully erect. But today it was fully erect, a full five inches of fat, throbbing flesh, its glans pushed beyond the confines of the foreskin, ready to take possession of the pale girl's cunt.

And then he was on top of her, his hands around her white angular shoulders, his chin in her hair and the hairs of his chest brushing onto the small empty breasts with their long dark pink nipples. Her skin was so cold. Colder than he believed flesh and blood could ever be. The drugs these girls take. What *do* they do to you! He carefully eased his penis into the condom he'd brought. Uncharacteristically, this girl didn't seem to care for her health even in that department. But Martin was cautious. He had no intention of catching anything. And he'd heard that junkies were the ones most likely to carry all sorts of sexually transmitted diseases. Even the dreaded AIDS. That was one illness he could do well without.

The condom was all that kept his prick warm as it thrust deep into the girl's cunt. She continued to stare blankly at the ceiling as he thrust away, not even pretending to enjoy his passion. But in a strange way, this lack of emotional attachment was quite arousing in him, as his fleshy stomach pounded against her sharp hips and the hairs of her vagina tangled in the hairs of his groin. In. Out. Back. Forth. Push. Push.

And then, unexpectedly, a cold hand on his shoulder. He turned round to see that the other girl was there, not smiling, but quite clearly with intent. She ran her cold

fingers down his chest, and then impulsively grabbed his prick. She pulled it out of the first girl's cunt, and manoeuvred it toward her own. And then, it was inside her, as she lay by the side of her friend, who at last came to life. The two girls wrapped their arms around each other, brushing their heads together, while Martin's bursting erect penis transferred its attention inside the second girl's cunt, thrusting with an excitement he'd hardly ever experienced before. Two girls! And only twenty dollars. He didn't care whether he had to pay more. He'd so often masturbated over the fantasy of having sex with more than one woman at the same time. And now it was happening!

The first girl eased the condom off his erect prick and took it between her pale lips, her sharp teeth closing gently onto its base, while the other girl nuzzled around his neck. Fuck! This was paradise.

And then a sudden sharp pain. And a hiss. What the fuck! And a warm liquid on his face. And it wasn't semen. He grimaced in horror as he realised that it was blood. And his horror sharpened as he realised it was his own. And then a sharp agonising pain in his prick as the first girl tightened her bite. And it was the horror of seeing his penis pulled from his groin and gripped in the long fang-like canines of the girl he'd met less than half an hour before in the street that caused the blood to rush from his face and his consciousness to slip.

In his last few moments, he was vaguely aware of two sharp-toothed women, blood streaming from the corners of their lips, take chunks of flesh out from his stomach, his face, his neck, while what blood wasn't taken into their mouths to feed their addiction sprayed onto the floor and mattress to join the congealed scabs of

previous victims.