

A Well Made Man

By

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INT/PRISON CELL - NIGHT

Lyle stretches his arm across his chest, starts scratching and gazes up at the pictures of naked girls sellotaped to the grey ceiling above him. There is also an old black and white photo of Houdini. Dermot, his cellmate, is lying in a bunk below him.

LYLE

If I ever get out of here.

DERMOT

You dreamin' Lyle?

LYLE

Thought you were sleeping, Dermot.

DERMOT

Thought the same about you too, Lyle. What you dreamin' of?

LYLE

There's a list that I'm compiling, in my head.

DERMOT

Am I on it?

LYLE

No. It's not a birthday party list, Dermot. And I'm not sure you'd be on that anyway.

DERMOT

I'm not sure whether I'm relieved or upset.

LYLE

No, my list is a list of places.

DERMOT

Places? Like Bermuda? Hawaii? Vancouver?

LYLE

Vancouver? No, I don't care much for the beach, unless it's to look at girls swimming topless, whilst I'm stealing their husbands' wallets... as they're taking pictures of their wives, swimming topless. No, I'm figuring more on places where's there's people making money.

(CONTINUED)

DERMOT

Oh, you mean like a bank?

LYLE

Or a casino.

DERMOT

Or a safety deposit box facility?

LYLE

Not thinking of those kind of facilities.

DERMOT

Why rule them out?

LYLE

I don't see my future in the safety deposit box sector.

DERMOT

Why's that, Lyle?

LYLE

It's difficult to...

DERMOT

Don't need to be difficult.

LYLE

...say.

DERMOT

You ever heard of easy money, Lyle?

LYLE

There's not an offender in here who hasn't. That's why they're mostly here and not on a beach taking pictures of their topless wives.

DERMOT

Sure, I getcha'. But here's the thing. Haven't you ever noticed what the most well-built and well-guarded of places have in common?

LYLE

Guards?

DERMOT

Air.

LYLE

Air, guards?

DERMOT

And that air has to come from somewhere.

LYLE

If I'm not mistaken, Dickie, it's all around us and don't cost anything. So why guard it?

DERMOT

But it had to come from somewhere first, to get to where it's going.

LYLE

Do you mind explaining to me what you're talking about?

DERMOT

Every building has to have a way of breathing, air coming in and air going out, like lungs, you see?

LYLE

I'm not sure that...

DERMOT

So what if there was a way that you could travel in on the air going in, and travel back out again on the air going out?

Lyle mouths the words that he's just heard without saying them aloud.

DERMOT(CONT'D)

Air, Lyle. Like you said, it's all around us. and it's free.

LYLE

So, all I need to do is reduce my body to a small gang of atoms that know how to navigate and move bags of money through thin air?  
(Quietly, thinking aloud)The transporter beam, from Star Trek, I guess.

(CONTINUED)

DERMOT

Well, I have to admit that, that would be one way of doing it. But unless you've got the physics sorted out, then either you or your plan wouldn't get off the ground. Literally.

LYLE

Right, literally. So, if it doesn't take something from Star Trek, then what?

DERMOT

Star Trek?

LYLE

Guess you'd have to be a magician to figure it out.

DERMOT

Ah! Now you're thinking, Lyle. A magician's stock in trade is?

LYLE

A white rabbit..?

DERMOT

An illusion!

LYLE

...that can dig... what?

DERMOT

An illusion, just like you see on TV!

LYLE

Wearing a rabbit costume?

DERMOT

What?

LYLE

Like the wooden...oh, nothing. It was just an idea.

DERMOT

Oh, right. Well, that's what every good plan requires.

(CONTINUED)

LYLE  
A wooden horse?

DERMOT  
A good idea! Now, imagine if you could make it look like there had been a robbery when in fact there hadn't?

LYLE  
I don't get it. What's the use in that?

DERMOT  
It creates an illusion, one that distracts the attention of the police.

LYLE  
And?

DERMOT  
Areas get sealed off, traffic can't move and people aren't allowed to go down certain streets.

LYLE  
So how do we get in if its sealed off?

DERMOT  
We don't want to get in.

LYLE  
We don't?

DERMOT  
No, we're already in.

LYLE  
We are?

DERMOT  
Sure! Concealed.

LYLE  
I'm not with you, Dermot. Why are we concealed?

DERMOT  
Because we're not interested in the bank along the road that looks as if its being robbed, we're after the Post Office above our heads.

Dermot pulls out a small piece of paper which he unfolds and passes up to Lyle.

DERMOT(CONT'D)

You see? I've got it all worked out.

Lyle reaches down and accepts the piece of paper from Dermot.

LYLE

Wow.

DERMOT

Ain't it beautiful?

LYLE

And simple.

DERMOT

I'm going into solitary tomorrow, Lyle, so I want you to look after it and work out the minor details, man power, wheels, you know, the finance and all. We just got to make sure it stays our secret. We got a deal?

LYLE

Hey, you can rely on me, Dermot. You got yourself a deal.

Lyle reaches his hand down towards Dermot's bunk.

INT/MEAL HALL - DAY

DICKIE

Mind if I join you Lyle.

LYLE

Of course not, Dickie, move in.

Lyle picks up his plate of food and shuffles along the dining table bench and Dickie sits down.

DICKIE

Ah, things, eh?

LYLE

Sure. What things, Dickie?

(CONTINUED)

DICKIE

Where do I begin?

LYLE

The beginning is a pretty reasonable place?

DICKIE

Ah, Lyle, there ain't no one in this place who can keep a secret from you. It's like you're a mind reader or something.

LYLE

Dickie, what do I know? If I was a mind reader do you think I'd end up in a place like this?

DICKIE

I've stayed in worse hotels.

LYLE

And I've been caught robbing those hotels!

Both men feign laughter at the joke.

DICKIE

And that's what I don't understand about a smart, good looking fella like yourself.

LYLE

Why I rob low budget hotels?

DICKIE

No, how'd an intelligent man like you ever get caught? It just don't make any sense.

LYLE

How did any of us get caught, Dickie?(Pause for the faux pas) But I take your point.

DICKIE

I bet you done it on purpose so you don't have to go home!

LYLE

Anyone who says that is just fooling themselves and most probably those around them.

(CONTINUED)

DICKIE

S'pose so. But it's in here where the business is discussed, the work that keeps us coming back through those swing doors.

Lyle looks over his shoulder as if he's looking for the a pair of swing doors.

LYLE

Oh, right. Well, let's just say that I'm not planning on doing any more swinging, Dickie. Sometimes a man has to square up to world in which he lives and take stock.

DICKIE

You've got a plan, Lyle?

LYLE

What? Er, yes Dickie, I have a plan. Everyman has to have a plan and that's a fact.

DICKIE

Gee, I envy you with all that stuff going on inside your head. What's the plan?

LYLE

Between me and you, Dickie? It's simple but, beautiful.

DICKIE

God, Lyle, you're like one of those famous figures of history!

LYLE

Houdini?

DICKIE

Why, yeh! Now how did you do that? I bet you could even guess what color panties I'm wearing!

There's a brief, awkward silence.

DICKIE

Not that I'd want you to, mind. Just saying, I wish I could think like you and have a plan. What did you say yours was?

(CONTINUED)

LYLE

Well, you know how lungs work,  
Dickie?

Lyle leans in close to Dickie and begins to whisper in his ear. Dickie's eyes light up.

INT/ VISITING ORDER AREA - DAY

A large room with tables and chairs set out for the inmates to receive their visitors. Lyle is at a table sat opposite Bowser Egan, a notorious underworld gang leader.

BOWSER EGAN

Lyle, a little dickie-bird tells me  
that you've come up with a plan  
that is going to make us all rich?

LYLE

Plan?

BOWSER EGAN

Yes, a plan, Lyle. I'm not sure  
what you call it in here.  
Providence? A scheme?

LYLE

A providence scheme?

BOWSER EGAN

A plain old plan will do, Lyle. But  
even the plainest of plans needs  
financing?

LYLE

Financing?

BOWSER EGAN

Lyle, son. In order to have a two  
way conversation both people have  
to talk in sentences containing  
more than one or two words.  
Capisci?

LYLE

Cap...is, pee? Mister Egan.

BOWSER EGAN

Bravo, Lyle! Now we can have a  
little discourse with each other.  
Would you like that?

Lyle shows no sign of comprehension.

(CONTINUED)

BOWSER EGAN(CONT'D)  
Do you have it with you?

Lyle nods his head.

BOWSER EGAN  
Somewhere safe?

Lyle nods his head again.

BOWSER EGAN  
Good. And for my final question,  
Lyle, how do you intend to get it  
to me?

Lyle slowly looks to his left and right then opens his mouth as if he is yawning, lifts his tongue to reveal a condom with piece of folded paper inside it.

BOWSER EGAN(CONT'D)  
If you think I'm going to fucking  
french kiss you son, then think  
again.

Lyle coughs into his hand and looks around for for a tissue. Bowser winks his eye and takes a monogrammed hanker-chief from his pocket and offers it to Lyle. Lyle blows his nose in it and transfers the condom from his mouth to the hanker chief at the same time. Lyle passes the hanker chief back to Bowser.

BOWSER EGAN(CONT'D)  
Oh dear, You don't seem too well my  
friend and I can't afford to catch  
a cold in here.

Bowser raises himself from his chair and signals to a warden that he wishes to leave. Bowser leans in towards Lyle.

BOWSER EGAN  
A condom served up in snot and  
saliva? Where did you learn the  
trade son? I have serious doubts  
about the future of our fraternity,  
I really do. Goodbye.

Bowser walks to a locked door which a warden opens and he exits. Lyle is motioned by another warden to rise and is escorted to a door at the opposite end of the room.

INT/BANK - DAY

Bowser Egan is stood alongside Eyes Horgan, a criminal, at a customer work space, with worktop, in front of one of the bank's windows. The window has a view to the post office at the opposite end of the road.

BOWSER EGAN

Any questions, Eyes?

EYES HORGAN

Those cables that I have to cut, they'll dismantle the post office alarm?

BOWSER EGAN

That's right. You'll then have twenty minutes before the alarm company send anyone out to inspect the problem. (Bowser taps the side of his nose) That's been taken care of.

EYES HORGAN

And the cables are in a sewage inspection chamber that leads directly into the the air duct of the post office?

BOWSER EGAN

Simple, but beautiful, ain't it?

Bowser Egan removes his trilby, places a gloved hand into it and produces a small, clear plastic wallet which contains a folded piece of paper. He puts the plastic wallet under his hat and places it on the customer worktop before them.

BOWSER EGAN

All the information that you need is under my hat, Eyes.

Eyes Horgan moves his hand to lift the trilby.

BOWSER EGAN

Be gentle, Eyes. There's only one of them. Do you have the wherewithal?

EYES HORGAN

The...what with where?

(CONTINUED)

BOWSER EGAN

The wherewithal? The Spondoolies?  
Mazooma? le bric?

EYES HORGAN

Le, bricks? Why would I..?

BOWSER EGAN

My god, Eyes. Which school of the  
crime syndicate did you attend?  
Greenbacks, the dollar, my bung?

EYES HORGAN

Oh, right, Mr Egan. Your pay-off.

BOWSER EGAN

Shhh! Don't ever mention my name in  
a depository facility. You never  
know whose listening, Eyes.

Eyes looks about the bank.

EYES HORGAN

(Quietly)Spies?

BOWSER EGAN

Spies, Eyes? What on earth ? Never  
mind, just transfer the balance,  
please.

Eyes Horgan nods his head and slowly pushes an ASDA's  
carrier bag which is resting between his feet towards Bowser  
Egan's polished brogues. Bowser glances down.

BOWSER EGAN

ASDA, Eyes?

EYES HORGAN

It's in the same bag as the  
mini-plum tomatoes, Mister Egan.

BOWSER EGAN

Lovely, Eyes. (Nods his head in  
disbelief)I think you need some  
extra curricula in how our brethren  
distributes its wealth.

Bowser Egan picks up his hat which allows Eyes Horgan to  
reach across and take the plastic wallet from under it.  
Bowser puts his hat back on, picks up the loaded ASDA  
shopping bag and leaves the bank.

INT/POLICE STATION - MORNING

DETECTIVE FAESCH

Eyes Horgan, I am charging you with the crime of attempted robbery and anything you might say will be taken down in evidence and may be used against you in a court of law. Do you have anything to say?

EYES HORGAN

Wasn't my idea of fun, waist deep in sewage and the tide on its way back in.

DETECTIVE FAESCH

Names?

EYES HORGAN

The air down there was foul.

DETECTIVE FAESCH

I don't want any lying, Eyes.

EYES HORGAN

Filth. (Looks up at the Detective) No offense.

DETECTIVE FAESCH

You're staring down the shaft of a long, dark, sweaty barrel, and it ain't golden, Eyes.

EYES HORGAN

If only people knew what was moving around under their feet. London ain't no more than a giant...

DETECTIVE FAESCH

Bog, Eyes?

EYES HORGAN

Yeh. I read...

DETECTIVE FAESCH

Read, eyes?

EYES HORGAN

...somewhere, that there's more shit passing through London on its way to Europe than comes the other way.

(CONTINUED)

DETECTIVE FAESCH  
You amaze me, Eyes.

EYES HORGAN  
What do you mean?

DETECTIVE FAESCH  
Give me names, Eyes and maybe the  
judge won't focus on you as much as  
the mastermind behind the job.

EYES HORGAN  
You must have heard of the code  
that our, brethren, live by,  
Detective Fish.

DETECTIVE FAESCH  
It's, Faesch, Eyes. My grandparents  
were Corsican.

EYES HORGAN  
Of course, they,..I..can, Mister  
Fatch?

DETECTIVE FAESCH  
I thought you were bright, Eyes.

Eyes Horgan starts humming the Marseillaise. Detective Faesch produces a pair of enameled antique tweezers from his jacket pocket and uses them to take a small piece of flattened paper from his inside breast pocket which he places on the table in front of Eyes Horgan. At the top of the piece of paper is clearly printed; the Property of H.M.O.PRISON WORMWOOD SCRUBBS.LONDON W12 0OE.

DETECTIVE FAESCH(CONT'D)  
Want to start singing a different  
song, Eyes?

Eyes Horgan stops humming.

INT/PRISON GOVERNOR'S OFFICE - DAY

The prison governor is sat in a high backed leather chair behind his desk. He is holding up a transparent zippy bag, containing a flattened piece of paper, to the gloomy light coming in from a large semi circular window behind him. Lyle sits in a chair directly facing the Governor, several feet away from the desk. There is a prison guard either side of the office door situated on the wall behind Lyle.

(CONTINUED)

GOVERNOR

It seems that we are to be given more time to do our job, Lyle. I guess it underpins our valued contribution to society. The opposite can be said of you, I'm afraid. What do you have to say?

LYLE

I'm a victim of my own crime, sir.

GOVERNOR

I couldn't have put it better myself, except to add, greed?

LYLE

Oh, yes sir, greed. That arm of temptation that inflicts us all in our moment of weakness.

GOVERNOR

All?

LYLE

Us, sir. That is to say, not us as in you and me, but us, as in those on this side of the desk.

One of the wardens clears his throat.

LYLE(CONT'D)

That is to say, beyond that door, the criminal fraternity.

GOVERNOR

Hmm, a very peculiar practice. One that could have gone horribly wrong for the poor soul trapped in the sewer on the incoming tide. Lucky for him, he'd cut a cable setting off an alarm in the post office above his head. The police were there in seconds and heard:

The Governor refers to a report on his desk.

GOVERNOR(CONT'D)

'a long and sustained barrage of wailing and blaspheming, coming from beneath a manhole cover situated in the street, outside the post office.' Shades of the Phantom of the Opera if you ask me. But

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GOVERNOR (CONT'D) (cont'd)  
it's obvious, now, that he was simply a decoy for the bank robbery which took place further along the road. That group of your fraternity were gone by first light, along with their ill gotten gains. But the trail of evidence, Lyle, leads back to you, the mastermind of the, scheme? An ingenious illusion, some would say, the work of a true magician.

LYLE  
Houdini, sir?

GOVERNOR  
Who? Oh, yes. Alas for you he wasn't in on it and good for the outside community that a compulsive criminal such as yourself should remain within our own community a while longer, so that pensioners and people on state support can retrieve their equities without interruption. I'm sure that you can understand how waiting in line for something that doesn't exist can be most perplexing? Anything to add?

LYLE  
No, sir. Except that I'd like to put in a request to move to a different cell, if that's possible?

GOVERNOR  
That's already been taken care of, Lyle. You've been re-categorized and will be spending the next three months in the maximum security wing, in solitary.

LYLE  
Thank you, sir.

THE END.