EAT THE RUNT

ROYCE: Oh, bad karma. What if the friend actually dies? What will you tell Cory when you have to go to the real funeral?

MERRITT: By then Cory may not care where I am.

ROYCE: Oh, so pessimistic. Or is that optimistic? Your resume is impressive. And as I said I’ve checked you out. But what do you consider your most recent success? What’s given you the most gratification?

MERRITT: Besides being invited to this interview?

ROYCE: Oh, I’m easy. We’re going to put you through the wringer today. Don’t be too flattered just yet.

MERRITT: Wring me. I’ve been looking forward to it.

ROYCE: Interviews don’t make you nervous? They make me tense, no matter which side of the table I’m on. (Touches instep) I get a knot right here.

MERRITT: Is it there now?

ROYCE: Yes, and it’s awful. Right at that place you can’t get enough leverage to massage.

MERRITT: I can.

ROYCE: Only if you’re an orangutan.

MERRITT: Yours. I can get enough leverage for yours. May I?

ROYCE: (Kicking off a shoe) Well...as long as we don’t tell Inhuman Resources.

MERRITT: (Starts massaging ROYCE’s foot) You’re very tight.

ROYCE: It’s been said. Oooh.

MERRITT: Does that hurt?

ROYCE: Deliciously. (Moving foot to MERRITT’s crotch) Harder.

ACT ONE

MERRITT: (Rubbing with foot in crotch) You sure?

ROYCE: If I thought we could get away with it, I’d lie down on the floor right now.

MERRITT: Oh?

ROYCE: So you could walk on my back. You look like the perfect weight.

MERRITT: It’s been said. (They grunt, moan and murmur as they chat, ROYCE’s foot pushing hard into MERRITT’s groin.)

ROYCE: I hope you won’t find our interview process too formal.

MERRITT: I’ll survive. Interviews are inherently artificial.

ROYCE: Putting your best foot forward.

MERRITT: Yet you never know if you’re getting to know the real person.

ROYCE: Only pieces.

MERRITT: Trying to make them cohere.

ROYCE: Trying to tear down a facade.

MERRITT: Searching for contradictions.

ROYCE: Patterns.

MERRITT: Exaggerations.

ROYCE: Truth.

MERRITT: It’s all just personalities.

ROYCE: Compatibility.

MERRITT: Liking someone or not.

ROYCE: You’re rough.

MERRITT: Sorry.
ROYCE: It's good rough. Almost a religious experience.
(Licks front teeth as in the old Pearl Drops commercial)
MERRITT: How much more time do we have?
ROYCE: (Looking at watch) Fuck. You have to run over to Hollis.
MERRITT: The curator?
ROYCE: Yes, and you can't be late. You're on a strict schedule today so you can see everybody before lunch.
(Standing) That was exquisite. I'm resurrected.
MERRITT: Deep tissue. Deeper later?
ROYCE: (Grabbing MERRITT for support while putting on shoe.) After you're hired. We do have to be careful.
This is a wonderful museum and people here work very hard, but not everyone is a soft touch like me.
You never know who might be out to get you.
MERRITT: Should I guess who? Is that part of the evaluation?
ROYCE: Our Grants Coordinator, for instance.
MERRITT: Really? Chris seems so nice, so helpful.
Full of advice.
ROYCE: Chris was a candidate for your job. This job.
Your almost job.
MERRITT: But is no longer a candidate?
ROYCE: Not a serious one. Not to me anyway. But I have a feeling Chris still harbors hopes. So take any advice with a grain of salt. A cube of salt. A salt lick.
Sorry, I'm from the farm. You know what a salt lick is?
MERRITT: For the cows?
ROYCE: Oh, you know! I used to lick it sometimes when I was little.
MERRITT: Me, too. At my grandparents' farm.

ACT ONE

ROYCE: So now we have a secret.
CHRIS: (Appearing) Already?
ROYCE: Pardon?
CHRIS: Are you ready?
ROYCE: Yes, where've you been?
CHRIS: Proofing the trustee letters—
ROYCE: Hollis is waiting, and you know how that can be.
CHRIS: (To MERRITT) Shall we jog?
ROYCE: Thanks, Merritt. I'll re-connect with you after lunch. (Disappears)
CHRIS: So. How'd it go with Royce?
MERRITT: Very well, I think.
CHRIS: (Surprised) Really?
MERRITT: We seemed to bond.
CHRIS: No kidding. Royce is a tough—nut—to crack.
MERRITT: Guess I just had the right cracker. Royce even warned me not to trust you.
(They both laugh. MERRITT stops laughing first.)
MERRITT: Um...who's next? The scary curator?
CHRIS: Hollis isn't so bad. Just a little hostile to the Development Office. Never quite enough money for contemporary acquisitions. If you live through it, Hollis can take you to Sidney, our trustee. (Points) Right through there.
(CHRIS leaves. MERRITT heads in the direction CHRIS indicated and almost runs into HOLLIS, who is dressed in the latest fashion, wears sunglasses, and carries a mug of coffee.)