Chocolate

Tindersticks

It had been the perfect Friday afternoon,
the job was almost done.
The housewe were decorating was owned by a little old man,
forever in the same three piece suit he'd probabbly had since he was demobbed.
He seemed to be forever on his way to the post office,
carrying brown paper ansd string wrapped parcels under his arm.
He'd bring us out china cups of camp coffee and plates of custard cream biscuits.
The house had belonged to his parents who had both passed away within weeks of each other, a few years back.
They were the only people he had ever lived with, this was the only house he had ever lived in.
I wondered what would happen to the house when he's gone.
It was a short walk to my bedsit, once a similar house to the old man's, now broken into lots of single room accomodation.
It also once had a great garden like his, now occupied by one-storey modern block building, containing the dentist and chiropodist.
In my room was an electric cooker, which I only used in winter to keep warm,
next to that was a sink with a glass shelf above it, on which was a toothbrush and carton of marlboro's.
There was a table with a chair in one corner, a single bed in the other, and about four sq ft in the middle.
There was a wooden drawer under the bed with most of my clothes in, the rest was over the back of the chair.
I had a record player on a table and boxes of records underneath.
The bathroom for the first and the second floor was opposite my room,
it had a meter for the water which took two 50pence pieces, you'd have to wait half an hour for the water to heat up, and keep an eye on the door in case some sod pinched your bath.

There was one toilet upstairs and one outside, but no one used the outside one anymore, so it was where the local prostitutes would take their clients for a quickie.
I'd spend as little time as I could in my room, my skin was still warm and soft from the bath as I walked into town.
So I was sat on my usual bar stool in my usual pub by 6.30, the usual twelve or so regulars in at this time of the evening, nice and relaxed before the post 8.00 crush, we'd crowd around the tiny bar then pool tables, the house rule for fool was winner stays on, you'd chalk your name on the balckboard, and wait your turn. The challenger would pay for the game, so if you were good, you 'd play all night.Tonight I was great.
She walked into the pool room just as I potted the black, the next name on the list, bent down to the slot on the table and put coins in.
I was used to seeing her surrounded by burgundy flocked wallpaper and red velvet upholstery in the sunday night pub around the corner; she looked different stood here in the pool room, she looked good, she was looking at me.
I ended the game as quickly as I could, without losing badly and stood near her.
"Would you like a drink?", she asked. "I get them. What do you want?" I replied. "The same as you're having", she said.

The great thing about being a regular when the bars turned deep is it only takes a raised eyebrow and a couple of nods, and two bottles of Holster Pils had been passed over people's heads to you. We did the pool room dance for a while, moving to" excuse me"'s bending around elbows and pool cues until we decided to move on
It was too early to go to the club, so we went around the corner to the Sunday night pub. It was still quite busy on a Friday night, full of couples and students. It had a reputation as a gay bar, probably why the students came in, to feel safe.
She was my dream, we drank pernod and blacks, talked about John Barry, Ford Cortinas (she preferred the Mark 3), what was best: gel or Brylcream? I preferred the Brylcream.
She even agreed On Her Majesty's Secret Service was the best Bond film, if you accept it as a whole and not just get hung up about George Lazenby.
She smoked Silkcuts, she didn't mind Marlboros, but we both had a fondness for Old Port cigars
We moved down to the club. Upstairs for a couple of onion bhajis went down to the quiet bar, near the dance floors.
We decided to leave early, you wouldn't want to be there in the end, when the lights came on. You'd never sit down in here again. In a depressing shuffle we pushed to the door, now it was good to get up and out, while it was still a black hole, warm, and smokey, full of possibilities...
She lived by the river, the other side of town, queue for taxis was hell as usual, next to the late night chippy, the worst chips you could buy, but at this time of night, full. Outside fights and throwing up. We jumped in the taxi, nothing mattered but us.
Back at hers, a bedsit in a house similar to mine, she'd done something, painted three walls, put up some old fifties star wall paper, a big Bowie poster and some nice curtains, it would be easy for me to change my woodchip magnolia bedsit standard. Afterall, it was my job. She had a few lamps here and there were some candles. She made us proper hot chocolate, not the instant shit you get from the machine. She had Fox'sbiscuits and a small bottle of Cointreau, too. The end of a perfect day. The taste of chocolate, cigarette, and orange liqueur made it even seem better. I undid her tartan miniskirt, pulled off her black wool tights, my lips moved up her legs... What the fuck??? I had a large hard dick poking me in the eye. "Shit! you're a chap!" I felt like jumping through the window, screaming, I couldn't move...
She... he...still looked the same... I had a pain in my head, I wanted to do something, say something...
He was holding me, sobbing... "you must have known, how could you not tell?" And "I love you, I can be your woman..." His eyes were still beautiful, deep brown, his lips still chocolatey and orangey.
"Shit!" I said, "I was never a breast man, anyway..."

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