

POLICE DOOG 2

HER MAJESTY'S FINEST



By wwwolf

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Chapter 10: The Good Doctor

June 11th 1988

03:00 Hours

The Kennel, London, England

Sixty and I stared at each other as the last of the screams died away over the wireless.

“What has happened, Brother?” Sixty whispered. His words were perfect, tight and crisp, but I could hear the fear pulling at him.

“I... I don't know.”

A growl grew in my throat; I stepped back from the door and took a running leap at it.

The boom of my weight slamming hard against the polished steel echoed down the hallway, but the door didn't so much as budge.

I hit it again. And again. An angry bruise bloomed across my shoulder, but it was only pain. I could ignore it. There was nothing else I could do. I was trapped in here as the Pack was... I didn't know what was happening to the Pack.

I felt a soft hand on my tender shoulder.

It was Sixty. “Together, Brother.”

I smiled at him.

We moved as one. Our combined weight crashed against the door. It felt enough to shake the very earth, to defeat *anything*.

Yet the door held fast.

Hours of work, bruises and sprains, and we didn't so much as dent it.

I called a halt after it became obvious we were trapped.

“Come, Brother,” I said, taking a seat on the floor. “We must conserve our energy. Other than the Pack, no one knows we’re here. We...” I paused and looked at the bare concrete walls. “We could be in for a long wait.”

Sixty marched about the room, looking for something, anything to aid us. I already knew it was hopeless.

The Pack was many things, but they were not stupid. They’d been trained and honed to battle their fellow Dog. They were in over their head with whatever awaited them at that warehouse, but the two of us were well within their capabilities to restrain.

I wondered what they’d been planning to do with us when they came back.

I licked my lips. It was obvious they hadn’t expected the exercise to take long. They hadn’t even so much as left us a glass of water. The thought of what would quickly befall Sixty and I if we didn’t escape made me shiver.

It was with that dark thought slipping through my mind that I heard something. The sound was soft, far away. I wasn’t even sure I’d heard it at first.

“Sixty,” I called, my voice low. “Listen.”

He took a seat next to me. We both slowed our breathing and let our mouths hang open, straining to pick up what no human could ever hope to.

It came again. The creak of metal, it sounded like a door being forced open. The sound of a crowbar.

I raised an eyebrow.

The Pack would have no need for such a thing.

Rising, I once again walked to the door. This time I lashed out at it not with the savage force I threw myself into last time, but with a measured strike to make it resonate. It boomed like a gong.

I hit it again.

There was a long pause. Then I could hear the slow clap of leather boots coming down the hallway towards us.

“Hello?”

I smiled. That was most definitely *not* the voice of a Dog.

“Hello, Handler Llyal,” I replied, my voice calm and professional, as if this were nothing more than another day. “Would you be so kind as to assist me? We seem to be inconvenienced by this door.”

I heard the man chuckle. “Blasted silly things if you ask me. All computer controlled.” There was a clunk as he slid what I could only assume was a pry bar against it. “But we’ll have it free soon enough.” There was a grunt. “Sooner if you boys were the ones applying the muscle...”

Two minutes later I could see him through a deformation he’d made in the metal. Shortly after that Sixty and I were able to ply our own strength and force it clear.

The air of the hallway was little different from that of the room, but it smelled like freedom nonetheless.

I looked at Handler Llyal. He had a smouldering cigarette clenched between his teeth, and deep

bags under his eyes, but most jarring of all was his civilian clothing. The man was wearing a dark set of trousers and a brown leather jacket. He also had a heavy set of work gloves over his hands. I noticed he never took them off.

“Sir.” Both Sixty and I stood at attention before him. This was likely the first time my brother had seen him since graduating from the Kennel.

Handler Llyal looked us up and down with a trained eye.

“Are the two of you alright? What's going on?”

My ears pulled back.

“Please, Sir, follow me.” I gave him a quick recap of what had happened as I began to search the Pack's complex, recalling what of it I'd been shown. There had to be a proper wireless room here somewhere...

Then I stopped halfway down the hall, turning to him.

“Not to be unappreciative, Sir... but how did you find us?”

The human smiled, showing his gold teeth. “Do you think me a fool, Jonathan? I'm not about to let my prized Dog go wandering out unchaperoned after I've found him again.” He reached out and took ahold of the badge that still hung around my neck in its thick leather case.

“You may be the first Dog to go rogue,” he continued, “But we always had plans for situations like this. I'm the only one who seems to remember them though.”

Only now did I see a dot on the back of my badge that hadn't been there before. It was in a small depression that seemed purpose made for it.

“A little tracker,” he said. “Though you managed to trip it up good when you went underground. That's what took me so long.”

“So you know of the warehouse?” I asked, my ears pulling back.

He scowled.

“I know *something's* wrong. I also know the Kennel is in an uproar. More and more mystery Dogs are appearing and the administration is throwing a good and right bloody tizzy. I hope you're not expecting any help from *them*.”

I sighed.

A few moments later I'd found the control room to the complex. It was obvious this was where the Pack had planned out their assault. Maps and sketches covered the wide table in the middle of the room.

It was even more obvious that while they may be a Pack in name, they couldn't be any further from it in truth.

I could smell the scent of tempers having flared while they'd been here, of anger and near bloodshed. The Pack was filled with exceptional Dogs, but each one of them was just that. An individual Dog. They were no team, they were no family. They didn't know how to work together, only alone.

I had no doubt that the *plan* they'd come up with here was nothing more than to keep away from

each other during the battle. They'd each try to be the hero, each the alpha. They had no illusions of being a team.

I thought back to the screams I'd heard over the wireless. They'd each fought alone, and alone they had fallen to only God knew what.

I found a transmitter on the far side of the room. Placing my lips to the microphone, I pressed the button.

"This is main complex to anyone listening. Are you receiving? Over?"

There was no reply.

"Archer? Baker? Anyone? Are you receiving? Over."

Not even static came back.

I sighed and turned back to Sixty and Handler Llyal.

"It appears we can neither rely upon the Pack nor the Kennel."

I will place one point of favour in the Pack's corner: they were well prepared. Where they'd gotten the blueprints from I had no idea, but they had the layout of the warehouse we'd found, plus every adjoining building.

Handler Llyal explored the room while Sixty and I poured over the map. There was disappointingly little to learn.

The exact plans for the warehouse held nothing we did not already know. I doubted it had been chosen for any reason other than its simple availability. The warehouse was little more than a single large room. Sadly, the plans had nothing to say about the one feature that would be of value to us – the hut that had been hastily constructed in its centre.

A click came from behind us, followed by Handler Llyal's dry laugh.

Turning, I saw the man hefting an assault rifle. There was a wide grin on his face.

"It seems," he said, "That the Dogs here don't have the same compunction against killing as the two of you do."

I glanced over to Sixty. My brother was torn between a slight grin and a look of horror.

"We're not going to kill them, are we, Sir?" he asked.

I rested a hand on my brother's arm. "If necessary. But not necessarily."

I turned to Handler Llyal as he joined us at the table. "So do we have a plan, boys?" he asked, pulling a long drag on his cigarette.

I raised an eyebrow.

"I was expecting you'd be aiding us in that, Sir."

He shook his head and favoured me with a soft chuckle.

"Not going to happen, Forty-Two," he said, falling back to my old name. "You two Dogs are the geniuses here, remember. I'm just the trainer. We're in the real world now. I only looked smart to you back in your days at the Kennel because I always had the script. I knew what was going to happen,

having read a chapter ahead.”

A small smile tugged at my lips.

“Very well.” I glanced to Sixty. “Then if no one has any disagreements, here is what I suggest...”

It was five in the morning before we arrived at the warehouse again. We'd made the trip in Handler Llyal's private vehicle. An old, beat-up domestic coup, it had been a better choice than walking down the foggy London streets with a rifle strapped to his back.

He dropped me off two blocks from the warehouse. At a slow walk it was planned perfectly to give me just enough time to make it to the front entrance.

I didn't bother to try and hide as I made my way up the street. If I recalled correctly the Dogs that guarded the door were so glassy eyed that a raging bull could storm past and they wouldn't so much as twitch a whisker.

I moved slowly, not only giving time for Sixty and Handler Llyal to set up, but also to keep an eye open for the tell-tale signs of a battle.

They weren't hard to see. There was blood splattered across the pavement, tufts of fur carried by the wind, and... something. I paused to sniff at a glass needle that lay shattered on the pavement. It had been filled with a green substance that had long dried away.

Its scent left the fur of my spine standing on edge.

I *knew* that smell.

It was the scent that had come with my therapies. I'd choked on it every time Dr. Brophy had prepared a needle. Every time he'd prepared to inject me with only God knew what.

I took a deep breath, trying to still my heart, but the scent only wove deeper into me.

A hand reflexively shot up to my pocket, where I always kept my crash kit – my drugs for those times when the beast they had unleashed in me took root.

There was nothing. My kit was long gone.

I stumbled back, vision going out of focus. My breathing sped up, my heart raced. I could taste blood on the back of my tongue.

And the image of Archer and the other Dogs, held, or more likely dead, sprang to mind. I narrowed my eyes.

I wouldn't allow the things that had been done to me to be forced upon them.

Turning once again towards the door, I straightened my back, set my eyes forward, and walked briskly on.

Just as a proper Police Dog should.

I didn't even bother knocking. I slammed the door open. “This is a police search. Everyone on the ground. Now.” My voice was loud and clipped.

I hadn't been expecting anyone to actually do as I ordered.

Three Dogs stood in the small antechamber. They all looked at me, giving me a thousand yard stare that should never grace a Dog.

One of them cocked his head ever so slightly, as if hearing the buzz of a distant insect.

Stepping forward, I pulled the cuffs from my belt.

In under five seconds I had his hands restrained. The Dog still stood before me, staring off into the distance, almost as if I wasn't there at all.

I reached for my second set of cuffs.

The one who had cocked his head blinked. I could see something happening in his brain.

I smiled, exposing my teeth. "Who are you?" I yelled, pitching my voice as aggressively as I could. "Answer me, *Officer!*"

As if someone had flicked a switch the Dog shifted out of neutral. His actions were still stiff, his motions rough, but he moved.

He sprang at me with no further warning.

Dancing to the side, I let him slam headfirst into the Dog I'd cuffed. The two of them crashed against the wall, leaving a smear of blood behind.

I moved towards the third Dog before he woke. I got the cuffs around one wrist.

His other hand shot up, grabbing my hand.

I grinned, fangs glinting in the night.

Wrenching my arm up, I depended upon my unnatural strength to pull free of the Dog's grip. Then I'd remove him from the battle.

He didn't let go.

I blinked.

I could feel his fingers straining, I could feel his muscles pulled past their limits. Pain should be shooting down his arm, rendering it numb.

He looked at me blankly. There was nothing there.

I didn't have time for this. I punched him flat in the nose. That did the trick, though not in the way I'd intended. There was no yip of pain. He didn't stumble away. I pulled back my fist and he raised a hand to his nose, almost seeming surprised at the blood that rushed out.

That gave me the moment to sweep his feet, sending him to the ground. Not even he could maintain the grip on my wrist then.

I turned to look through the inner door to where the other Dogs milled about the hut. They were all making their way slowly towards us, in the direction of the commotion.

Closer at hand, the first Dog I'd sent stumbling was back on his feet.

I backed away from him. This was a problem.

The Dogs didn't seem to fight, but they also didn't react to pain. My training had been to take

down a target without damaging it. All of my moves were near useless against these creatures.

But I could do more. That was why I'd taken this role.

With each passing moment the Dogs about us were waking. My first true opponent stood before me now. A trail of drool slipped from his mouth, wetting down the matted and mangy fur of his chest.

I could see the clouds clearing from his eyes. This battle would not be so easy.

I pulled up my lips and growled. The sound felt almost alien, but it was so natural.

I leapt at the Dog before he had time to prepare. Slashing at his face, I set aside all the training I'd received. I ignored all the instincts that had been hammered into me over the years to obsessively care for the health and safety of my opponent.

I sent the Dog spinning to the floor, clutching his mussel, but didn't hear even a whimper of pain from him.

The Dogs from the main room began to reach us. Unlike the creatures that had been stationed out here, these were mutated, twisted and horrific.

The first to dive at me had lost the fur from half his face, and his ears had broken out in sores.

He spared not even the slightest of thought for his own defence as he attacked. Against anyone else the strategy would have worked.

Cupping my hands together, I slammed them down over his head as he sailed through the air. He ended up on the ground like a sack of kibble.

No matter how hard I fought it seemed that every Dog I sent to the ground was replaced by two more. They fought like rabid beasts, not Police Dogs. They didn't spare a thought for their own health. They dove and swung, fought like they were already dead. Despite my best efforts I already had long gashes down my chest and bruises all down my back from being slammed against a wall.

But I still smiled. With just a touch of luck I'd done my duty.

Turning, I fled into the street.

The breath burned hot in my lungs as I felt the claws of a dozen Dogs snatch at my tail.

There wasn't a soul to be seen as I raced out into the middle of the street, heading south. The Dogs that chased me may still be blurry eyed, but they were fresh where I was tired and worn from fighting off a dozen of their brethren.

I could only look to the sky and hope all went according to plan.

I heard the sound of a hard cough echo down the street. One of the Dogs behind me fell, clutching his shoulder.

Another coughing sound and a second Dog fell.

I sprinted onward.

The third cough was accompanied by the sound of a bullet ricocheting off the pavement. I scowled.

Not even Handler Llyal could hit moving targets one hundred percent of the time.

The plan was working well, save for one miscalculation. There were over a dozen Dogs still racing after me. Not even Llyal could shoot *that* fast.

Pulling in a deep breath, I turned and skidded to a stop, my claws skittering over the asphalt. For just a heartbeat I stared at the Dogs at the rushed me like an oncoming tide, no more than hunks of their former selves. The were what I *could* have become.

I shot out an arm and clotheslined the Dog that had been inches behind me. He hit the ground with a wet thud.

Another cough and the odds were now merely ten to one.

The Dogs were all fully awake now. They were beginning to move like proper Police Dogs, even if the deformities left them shuffling and bobbing.

My back pressed up against an abandoned store front, they formed a ring around me.

I expected to hear Handler Llyal's rifle cough again. Instead came a muffled curse. There was the sound of a scuffle somewhere not so far away.

Oh dear.

The circle of Dogs around me grew tighter.

I let a near feral grin slip to my lips. I was no mere Dog, but I was still a Police Dog. Even should I fall, Sixty would complete his task.

I didn't throw the first blow. My task was to be the distraction. The more Dogs that crowded around me the better.

When the first Dog leapt, I almost laughed.

Should I fall, so be it.

A heartbeat later a dozen Dogs threw themselves atop me.

When next I came to I was stripped naked and my hands and legs were bound.

I was almost starting to fear I was becoming used to waking up this way – only this time they were bound behind my back, and I didn't have Sixty to bite them free for me. And neither Sixty or Handler Llyal were anywhere to be seen.

I had been dumped in a corner of the warehouse. The Dogs I'd so recently fought had returned to milling about, many still dripping blood. They seemed to have all but forgotten about me. I was just about to let out a breath when I heard a scream.

It was muffled by the chipboard of the hut in the middle of the room, but it was clear as day to my ears.

It was a human that screamed.

I tried to struggle to my feet, but it was only then I discovered a final addition. There was a collar about my neck. Steel, with a padlock about the front, it was fashioned to a thick iron chain bolted to the concrete floor.

I was trapped.

Another scream came from the hut. It rose to a pitch that no human should ever reach. It broke, and it started again.

I couldn't see him, but I knew it was Handler Llyal. The man who had been the single stable force in my years growing up. One of the few men who had shown me anything approaching true affection.

His screams grew again. I could hear him crying. I could hear him pleading for mercy. I could hear his scream again. His voice was harsh and bubbly this time. I could hear the blood trickling down his throat.

I took a deep breath.

We were not defeated yet. As long as Sixty had achieved his goal we could still see victory.

A moment later the crowd of milling Dogs parted for just a moment. I could see clear across the warehouse.

On the far side a Dog lay chained to the floor. His arms and legs were bound.

I didn't bother to curse. I didn't bother to even sigh.

It was Sixty.

I'm not sure how long it was that Handler Llyal was kept in the hut. The sun came up, but not a soul arrived to investigate his screams.

At long last one of the misshapen Dogs that milled about was called in to drag him out.

Llyal's limp body left a smear of blood on the concrete floor behind him. The only glimmer of hope was when they bound him to the wall.

At least he wasn't dead.

A moment later another of the Dogs came for me.

I wanted to snap at him, I wanted to fight my way free. I wanted to do... *something*.

He never even came within reach of my fangs.

Grabbing the chain that held my collar, he began dragging me along the floor. I wasn't even given the dignity of walking.

I fought every inch of the way, but I was hauled ever onwards. I had more than enough time for my imagination to concoct dark images of what I would find behind its thin walls.

I had one good look at Sixty before I was unceremoniously thrust through the door. My brother had never sat up the whole time I watched him. Now I could see his tail twitching. I could see his ears flicking back and forth.

He looked as though he was having a fever dream.

The door was closed behind me the moment I was thrown into the hut. I could see a Bunsen burner alight in the far corner of the room. It flared, flame engorging to an unholy size as something dripped upon it.

“Hello, Forty-Two.”

I knew the voice. It was the same one that I'd heard yesterday. But there was something more to it now.

I *knew* this voice.

“Who are you?” I fought to sound proper, to hide the fear that pulled at me.

One of the shadows moved. It jerked and spasmed. It looked to be on the edge of collapsing to the floor.

“You don't remember me, Forty-Two?” he asked. “But we had so many happy times together. If it wasn't for you I wouldn't be alive today.”

The form stumbled forward, light touching its face.

I felt the sudden, overwhelming need to vomit, to scream, to rid the world of this *thing* that stood before me. It had been human once. It was no longer.

The creature that towered over me was bent and crooked. What had been human was now twisted and broken. Patches of brown and black fur sprouted from its skin haphazardly, and a muzzle pushed out its bottom jaw but met nothing above.

This. *This*. This was what happened when one forces a canine's genes into the body of a man.

“Do you know who I am, Forty-Two?” The horror's voice was soft, almost father-like.

I shook my head.

“I am Vincent Brophy.”

I growled. “Doctor Brophy is dead. He died of cancer.”

What might have once been a smile tore across the creature's lips.

“I had cancer. But cancer is nothing but a malformation of the genes. I am a *geneticist*.” He said the word as if proclaiming himself above all else. “I defeated it. I found a *cure*.”

He gestured down to himself as if pleased with the horror that was his body.

Taking a step forward, he slowly leaned down to look me in the eye.

“All I ever needed I learned from you, Forty-Two.”

I couldn't speak. It was impossible I had any relation to this monstrosity.

“All I needed was to adapt your treatments for myself. I just needed a few new test subjects...” he cast a hand at the Dogs outside the hut. “And I found a few *interesting* side effects along the way.”

His trembling hands lifted a needle, the glass catching the light. It was already loaded with a dark green, sludge-like mixture.

“Perfection,” he whispered, “In liquid form.” He shambled towards me. “Genetic therapies to rewrite the body. But you know it well, Forty-Two. They're what made you.” He grinned. “They were made *from* you. They are what keep my sickness at bay. And they...” His voice petered off. “They have a most *amusing* effect upon other Dogs. It seems the changes I've made resulted in it becoming rather *addictive*.”

He smiled. Or rather tried to. One of his lips pulled up, showing a crooked and malformed

tooth.

“But now that I have you, my perfect Forty-Two, now I can pull from the source.”

I lay bound and beaten on the filthy floor. But I was still a Police Dog.

“No.” I said it more to comfort myself than anything else. My voice was strong, steady. It didn't show a hint of the fear that clung cloying beneath it.

His gruesome smile grew.

“You were trained too well, Forty-Two. You were my first true masterpiece. Not even *we* knew how perfect you were.” He cocked his head slightly, as if hearing something. That action, on the once human *thing*, made me want to retch. “But your compatriots are not.”

A moment later there was the sound of shuffling footsteps outside the door.

Brophy smiled.

“Many of them did not survive. But this one did.”

The door opened and Archer stepped in.

Or rather Archer's body did.

His face was slack, his eyes clouded and far away. He still wore the torn remains of the uniform I'd last seen him in. Dozens of gashes and wounds criss-crossed his body. They were untreated and festering. He didn't even seem to notice.

“Please...” he raised his hands before him, pleading. “Anything... anything... please...”

Brophy's broken and ungodly body seemed to tower over us all.

“Bow before your master, mutt.”

Archer fell to his knees. The once proud Dog wept and threw himself before Brophy. He begged and licked at the misshapen toes of the creature.

And Brophy laughed.

“Do you know what I've found, Forty-Two?” he asked. “I've discovered *everything*. One serum that can cure me of any illness, one serum that can bring any Dog under my control, perhaps any human...” He began to laugh. He threw his head back and howled out a laugh that was far less human than any sound *I* had ever made. “I've become God!”

His proclamation ended in a most ungodly way as it was cut short by a fit of coughing. Phlegm and other less identifiable fluids were flung to coat the walls of the hut.

Seeming to finally notice Archer who cowered at his toes, Brophy gave the Dog a savage kick.

Archer flew back, pulling into a ball and whimpering. The image of the proud, independent Dog like this was enough to make the scene surreal.

Whatever pain must have been wracking Archer was immediately forgotten the moment Brophy picked up the needle. The green sludge sloshed about within it.

Archer was before him again, on his knees, head down.

“Please... please...” he whimpered over and over.

Brophy looked at me and smiled.

Grabbing the Dog by the arm, Brophy didn't even bother to try and find a vein. He simply plunged the filthy hypoderm down.

A scream clawed its way from Archer's lips.

I didn't bother to try and delude myself. It wasn't a scream of pain.

Seconds later Archer was left laying on the floor, his tail and ears twitching. There was a grin plastered to his face and a trail of drool dripping from him... along with other fluids.

The two of us were dragged out a moment later. I still in chains.

I had just an instant of hope as I was taken from the hut. Sixty was no longer chained to the floor where I'd last seen him. His bonds were still there, but he was gone.

Perhaps, just perhaps...

The sound of my bonds being fashioned back into the concrete floor was deafening to my raw ears.

I glanced over. Archer lay beside me. His pupils were dilated, eyes seemingly unblinking. His ears and tail continued to twitch.

"Archer?" I whispered, "Archer? Can you hear me?"

His head lazily turned, as if he were in a waking dream.

His tongue came out, licking me on the nose.

"I love you..." he whispered.

I scowled. The Dog was of no help.

I lay there all day, the Dogs milling endlessly around me. One by one they were all called into the hut. Now I knew what was done when they were out of sight.

Handler Lylal did eventually wake, but he was in no condition to aid me. The man could hardly open his eyes. From this distance I could only guess at the trauma he had undergone, but his broken and bruised form promised no end to internal wounds that required immediate medical attention.

It was Archer I focused on. The Dog continued to lay at my side, seemingly blissed out. But as the hours wore past he slowly returned to the world, even as his expression remained slack.

He eyed the hut. I could see a hunger in him.

"Archer!" I hissed. "Listen to me!"

We'd been through this a dozen times. The Dog simply didn't seem to be capable of understanding what was happening.

"It's warm, Jonathan," he murmured. "So soft..."

The hours without food or water wore at me. But more than anything, the *helplessness*...

I lashed out at him.

My fangs were the only weapons I had free. Lunging forward with what little strength I had left, I sunk my teeth into the Dog's shoulder.

He yipped. At last *something* had cut through his seemingly impenetrable curtain of bliss. I may be twice the fighter he, but Archer had more than the advantage with his limbs free.

I felt my teeth sink into the muscle of his shoulder. I felt my saliva flow as I fought for a hold.

I felt my blood splatter as he slammed a fist into my nose, a sharp crack as I tumbled backwards.

I heard drops fall like rain from my split face. They hit the ground all around me as I blacked out.

I was truly alone.