

EH2ME

by Stanley Lieber

Clientele within the CLASS ACTION had exceeded Dunbar's number. Piotr's brass ceiling exacerbated the confusion. Next, the lights had flickered out.

Tangled relationships. Trading was affected.

Looking around, they were all wearing it. Costumes sagging. Static display of doll gape. Tapped my visor, switching command to internal. Obvious, now. The marks had been made.

We got into it.

Pockets, clutches, bags, wallets, rings, jewelry, cards, bills of all denominations, passwords, pin numbers, car keys, leaves, data gloves, visors. We negotiated each item swiftly but carefully, sorting all such matter into like piles.

Finally, Piotr grunted, "It's not here."

The green door groaned inward on its hinges, pre-signaling disappointment.

Incoming communique. Some kind of shorthand.

Piotr deleted his copy of the message, unread.

"Deeper," he ordered, almost whispering.

Deeper it was.