### Summary:

David and his Jonathan by Hutchlover is now available as an ebook. Right click the link to download and save your preferred format: EPUB, MOBI, KINDLE, HTML, PDF.

Starsky dreams about another man, which affects his job performance and his relationship with Hutch.

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### Story Notes:

In most upper class households of Greek, Roman, and other pre-Christian Mediterranean societies it was common to take a young man as a lover. For the young man, it was viewed as an honor to have an older, wealthier, and more world-wise man for a lover. Most upper class marriages were contracted for procreation or political advantage; while love, sexual pleasure, and in some cases creating a life together, were reserved for same sex companions/lovers.

The characters of David and Jonathan, and the basis of their story is historically correct as per 1Samuel. However, I took a few liberties with some dialog. This story is NOT meant to offend or to pretend that I am a scholar on Jewish/Christian/Greek religions. It is only a story for entertainment purposes and should not be taken literally. I love to be educated and would encourage any discussion about the meaning behind the scriptures, however, please no posts claiming I've corrupted or misinterpreted their religious beliefs. The Holy Bible reads different ways for everyone.

I owe tremendous thanks to Molo, Range, and Flamingo for their editing and pointers. And as always my biggest supporter was Mystic Whim who pushed and shoved me to get this story out.

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1. **David and his Jonathan** by Hutchlover
David and His Jonathan by Hutchlover

As he stepped into the throne room, David — youngest son of the shepherd Jesse — stood in awe at how the stone and mud blocks fit perfectly together. In contrast to his humble abode, this grand edifice was a richly decorated structure. With camel hair thrushes, sheep's wool blankets, colorful pillows lining the floor, and woolen blankets dyed in various blues and gold, the room was considerably warmer than his father's great room. Dozens of people danced and partook of an abundance of foods and drink as they celebrated the defeat of the Philistine army at the hands of the Israelites. For a common sheep herder, it was unlike anything he'd ever seen before, and David felt his eyes rounding in awe at each step forward. His father would say it was glut and greed; shameful displays of the flesh and the weakness in man. But for a young man of David's impressionable age, the sights and smells were intoxicating.

At Saul's behest, David approached the well-built middle-aged man on the raised dais at the end of the room. As he came near the gold-lined throne, the king's subjects fell quieter, unnerving the young warrior. It seemed that everyone was interested in the young man who defeated the Philistine's greatest warrior. At the powerful man's request, David stood before his king, tall and with pride as Saul made the proclamation that "he is as mine own". He glanced around to see if he would be scolded for the shamefulness of pride that he'd always been taught it was. But he saw no censure amongst the king's subjects.

A tall, dark-haired young man, several years older than David, appeared at King Saul's side. David drew in a sharp breath, so taken was he by the Prince's beauty and the grace he commanded as he glided to the side of the throne. This must be one of King Saul's sons, David thought. With such beauty, grace, and presence, he could be nothing less.

The powerful King of the Israelites addressed his youngest son, his deep voice resonating off the stone walls. "Mine own Jonathan, take David to thy quarters. Giveth all that he require. Command thy servants to him as you would to thee."

Bowing low as a sign of respect to his king's son, David was surprised to find a large warm hand fit into his own and raise him up as an equal. "Thou art equal and bless-ed by the Lord." The rich tenor voice struck David's soul, and he followed the Prince to his quarters, almost hypnotized.

Once the tapestry had dropped over the doorway, leaving the two alone in Prince Jonathan's private quarters, David found his voice. "Thou art beauteous." Startled at his own presumptuousness of speaking without being addressed, David lowered his eyes and hoped that the compassion he'd glimpsed in the other man's eyes was not the reflection of candlelight.

He was reassured when Prince Jonathan put a hand under his chin and raised his head to meet the other's eyes. More than reassured when Prince Jonathan told David that he was in awe of David's greatness — both physically and spiritually; and honored to become a brother of one so respected by God and king.

David shook his head in denial, he was not worthy to be a friend of this important man in king's household, much less his equal. How had it all come to this, that a young man with no prospects — a lowly sheepherder, and a youngest of many sons — was now on a par with a king's son?

In the early morning hours of a gray, Bay City dawn, Hutch shook his lover's shoulder, calling to him and trying to wake him from an apparent dream. "Starsky!"
"Thou hast honored me, thy Prince." It was obvious that Starsky was dreaming as his voice was husky with sleep and his speech included words that sounded unlike any in the English language.

"Starsky! Wake up!" Hutch jostled his shoulder harder.

A dark, tousled head appeared from underneath the layers of bedclothes. "Huh? Hutch? What's wrong?" Starsky squinted his eyes as they adjusted to a wakeful state.

What's wrong? Nothing. Just that you were mumbling weirdly. What were you dreaming about?"

Starsky opened his sluggish and confused eyes all the way as his mind woke up to find his blond lover bowed over him. The feeling of being overwhelmed by... what, he didn't know, stayed with him even after he woke.

"Hutch. What the hell time's it?"

Squinting past Starsky's body, Hutch looked at the clock on the nightstand. "Uh, 5:30."

"Geez, Hutch. You woke me that early to interpret a dream?!" Starsky threw the covers back over his head, hiding from his lover and his dreams.

"Well, since I'm up, I might as well get my run in." Hutch turned down the bedcovers over him in a smooth motion, pulling them down from Starsky's torso at the same time.

As Hutch started to get up, Starsky pushed him out of the bed lightly with the rest of the way with his muscular legs. "You do that an' lemme sleep s'ummor..." he trailed off drowsily

While Hutch took his morning jog and then stopped to pick up breakfast for the two, Starsky dreamed again. Dreaming of a mysterious dark haired man, sand, warmth, and the past; the images disappearing in wisps of memory as he slowly awoke to begin his day.

The dreams were forgotten by both men by the time the two arrived at the precinct to begin their day. The next few days consisted of busy work hours chasing down crazed gunmen and incompetent criminals, so much so that neither man was up for any romantic festivities, and spent nights at their respective apartments.

While sleeping alone Starsky didn't have any confusing and powerful dreams; however, once he returned to Hutch's arms...

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And David went with Jonathan and behaved himself wisely; and he was accepted in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of the Lord. His brothers were jealous, but he shared gladly of his good fortune. He was kind, but firm to the servants; gentle with animals; open and friendly with all those in the community; he held his counsel around King Saul and his advisors, only giving responses when addressed or questioned. His advice to the household and the military persons were sound and intelligent.

Jonathan became his confidant, his adviser, his best friend, and yes, his lover. He told David he was proud of the way he handled himself, for one so young and unused to the trappings of royalty. Within months, David's popularity had surpassed that of the King. It worried David inwardly, but he kept his deference to God and King Saul and his sons, making him even more beloved of the people.

To gain the support of the young warrior, and to keep him close to hearth, King Saul gave his daughter Michal to David to wife. Michal loved David, but David loved Jonathan above all others. Honored by Saul's gift, David felt the happiest he had ever in his life. Now, rather than being the youngest son with little future, he had a wife, a love, a family, a purpose.
The two men spent their days honing hunting skills, playing games of courage, and competing against each other for the attention of the serving girls. And nights that saw discussions from politic to farming, or perhaps listening to Court Musicians. David had never known such luxury and relaxation. Being the youngest of his father's children, it was his responsibility to take care of his older brothers while they worked in the fields or with the flocks. But now he had a wife and servants to see to his needs.

"I delight in thee, my David. Herewith I giveth thee my cloak." And Jonathan took off his royal blue cloak and laid it upon the shoulders of his friend. Jonathan was just as faithful to God and David, and it comforted David to know that not all of King Saul's Court had lost the way of the Lord.

Humbled, David accepted the gift, but protested the symbol, as blue was worn only by those of the royal line. He turned to look into his beloved's face; deep brown eyes lined with pale lashes, aquiline nose, and shoulder-length brown hair. Astounded that such a man — a good man — loved him, a modest shepherd, he reached up to touch Jonathan's face and gently brushed it with his fingers. "I loveth thee too much to take thy rights."

"The prophet Samuel sayeth that a son of Jesse will be anointed king over Israel. I shalt be proud to call thee my king." To prove his words, Jonathan prostrated himself in front of David and grasped his strong callused hand, kissing the palm in reverence.

In shock, David raised Jonathan from his knees. The fear he felt from what Jonathan suggested — and should either man be found out — gave way to awe, and David grasped Jonathan's neck, pulling the other man closer, giving him a ardent kiss as he lowered the two of them onto the pallet in the center of Jonathan's tent. David had never felt such passion, beauty, and love before, even with his new wife.

And so Jonathan's soul was knit with the soul of David and the two made a covenant between them. And that covenant was before God, and God was pleased.

Late at night thereafter, Jonathan would dismiss his servants and musicians, and he and David knew each other. But David always retired to his tent or rooms - and his wife, lest he shame Jonathan and Mikal. The Pharisees had always taught that God frowned upon such things, but men in other cultures that visited King Saul's Court openly flaunted their young male lovers. How could man hold himself as high as God and decide what God liked and didn't, he wondered? Eventually David decided that if God was unhappy with how David was living his life, He would make it known. And David was always faithful to God first, making sure he lived the laws as God had given them to Moses.

Under the warm covers, Starsky snuggled closer to his blond and began paying homage to Hutch's neck with his mouth. "Jonathan." He breathed gently. "Thou art mine and I am thine."

The light ministrations roused Hutch from his sleeping state, and he wriggled under the tickling dry lips and hot breath.

Slowly, Starsky moved down to Hutch's bare shoulder and arm, and mouthed into the tanned skin, "Jonathan, mine own."

Hutch brought his hands up to the curled head to encourage the loving mouth. "Starsk, mmm, you sure know how to wake up a guy." He looked down and noticed that Starsky was still asleep and dreaming. He rubbed the thick head of curls beneath his hands. "Starsk? Hey..."

"Jonathan...." The dry lips moved over Hutch's pectorals to outline the name, as if Starsky were painting it on Hutch's chest.

"Jona...? What the?" Hutch lifted the curly head in his palms and gazed upon Starsky's sleeping countenance
that was glazed with passion. "Starsky! Damnit, wake up!" He tapped the cheeks between his palms several times to rouse his lover.

The mussed head of curls rose up and Starsky looked around as if confused by his surroundings. Feeling the tension in the long body beneath him, he brought his hands up to soothe Hutch's side and relax the taut body.

Wriggling out from underneath his lover, Hutch distanced himself as much as possible from Starsky. He looked up with wary eyes. "Starsky, who's Jonathan?"

Confusion alit in the dark blue eyes and Starsky's brows knit together. "Jonathan? I don't know any Jonathan."

Believing him, but feeling left out, Hutch still pouted. "Well, you were pawing all over me while calling out that name."

"I'm sorry babe. It must've been just a dream. I swear to you Hutch, I don't know any Jonathan." Starsky rolled onto his back and threw his arm over his eyes. "Don't tell me you're jealous." A whisper of teasing had entered his voice.

"Of course not. I trust you. It's just," Hutch paused, hating to admit to any weakness...anything as petty as jealousy, "it's unnerving to hear your lover call out another man's name at the same time he's getting amorous."

"Aw, Hutch. I'm sorry. I really don't remember what the dream was about." Rubbing his eyes, he looked over at the alarm clock on the nightstand. "Damn. We're late again."

The dream already forgotten, Hutch rolled onto his side and put his arms around his devilish lover. "Since when do you care about being late?" He snuggled closer, "You started something — now don't you think you should finish it?" burying his nose into the messy, lush curls.

Starsky stared at him warily. "You sure that dream didn't make you feel jealous? This isn't like you. You hate to be late."

"Dobey can wait for once. And yes, I'm positive I'm not jealous." Then Hutch shut up as his mouth found, and latched onto, a pale earlobe, nipping and pulling the tiny appendage as his tongue traced the outer cartilage.

With difficulty, Starsky pushed himself away and rolled out of bed, taking most of the covers with him. "As much as I'd love to take advantage of your offer, we gotta finish the paperwork on the Phillips case. The DA needs it today to file their charges within the time limit." He clicked his tongue and jerked a thumb upward to indicate his lover should be up and at 'em also.

Disappointed, slightly horny, and confused by his partner's unwillingness to play around — most unlike Starsky, Hutch sighed and rolled out the other side of the bed to prepare himself for another day. Left high and dry with his blood pulsing in his veins after Starsky's amorous handling, the rest of the day from that point on seemed off to Hutch; the shower wasn't warm enough, the eggs and coffee were cool, the air was filmy and crusty, the Torino's engine extra loud.

All day, Starsky kept up a constant chatter about their ongoing cases, the troubles with his car, vacation ideas, etc; causing the unused adrenaline in Hutch's systems to turn to tension. As Starsky pulled in front of Venice Place at the end of the work day, Hutch got out and slammed the passenger door, Starsky grimacing behind him at the impact of heavy metal upon metal.

His nerves shot and head pounding from the frustration of that morning, Starsky's faux pas, not to mention the constant verbal onslaught his partner laid on him, Hutch fumbled with the keys in his hand as he hurriedly
tried to unlock his door.

The next thing Hutch knew, Starsky was placing one of his hands over his own that held the keys; to calm Hutch.

A blaze of sensation shot from his hand where they were connected, and up Hutch's arm. He was still amazed at the response that a simple touch by his partner could generate — even after all this time. But he held onto lingering disappointment and told Starsky that he wanted to be alone tonight. "Just go home," he told his shadow as Starsky tried to follow him in.

"Go home??" Starsky was stunned. "But babe, why?"

"I've got a headache. I've had one all day just listening to your nonstop babble." Hutch finally got the door opened and stood at the entryway. "And I don't think I could stand to hear you call out some other guy's name two nights in a row while lying next to me."

Chagrined and slightly hurt, Starsky turned away toward the stairs. "I told you I was sorry. Don't even remember anything about it," he mumbled. But he honored Hutch's request and took off to his own place, alone.

That night Hutch was the one with the troubled sleep. He could never get comfortable without the warm, compact, muscular body of his best friend and lover beside him. Starsky, however, slept well burrowed within his blankets; pillows placed beside him to soothe his aching psyche. Without Hutch beside him, there were no disturbing dreams of a mysterious lover named Jonathan.

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The next morning, Hutch met Starsky at the precinct door with a fresh cup of coffee. "Sorry about last night. I really wasn't feeling well yesterday." He offered the steaming mug to his partner as a way of apologizing.

Warily accepting the peace offering, Starsky asked Hutch, "What the hell was your problem last night? And don't tell me that crap about — you know — the name thing."

"Let's talk about it later, okay?" His partner tilted his head toward the nearly full room of cops.

They didn't get settled for long before Captain Dobey came out of his office asking to speak with them. He indicated that they should have a seat, then closed the door behind them.

Once seated, Dobey went straight to the point. "Have you guys discussed your future careers with the Department, like I suggested the other day?"

The two detectives before him just looked at each other without saying anything, which Dobey took as a 'no'.

"You two are possibly the best investigators this department has. Your intuition and instincts could be better served elsewhere." He paused, gathering his next ammunition. "Isn't it better to move on now, rather than take a chance that next time — and there will be one — will be the last time. You both deserve better than becoming a statistic."

"We're good at what we do." Starsky began to protest.

Dobey looked hard at him. "You've been shot, what? Four times in the last six years? And you almost died several years ago during the Gunther investigation. You're both almost 40. How much more do you think your bodies can take? Do you want to take that chance?"
"I don't want to lose Hutch as a partner."

"You're taking a bigger chance of losing him on the streets now, if you don't listen to what I'm saying. It would hurt others in this department if something happened to either of you."

"Aw, Captain. We didn't know you cared."

He ignored Starsky. "Listen you two, I've been where you are. I can say without being too immodest that I was a damn good investigator, too. But I knew when it was my time to scale back, to take a less dangerous position. You can still do good work, help others in different capacities than as street cops."

Hutch was absently tapping his forefinger into the arm of the chair. "We understood all this when you first addressed it, sir. We just haven't had time to discuss it."

"I suggest you do so as soon as possible, then. There are various openings coming up in the next few months due to retirements, and some of those should appeal to both of you." Dobey finished with a warning. "If you don't, Dave especially with his medical history, could be taken off the street roster and placed somewhere safer, somewhere he doesn't want to go. The Department has occasionally pulled cops off the street when they feel health and safety can be a deterrent."

"We'll discuss it." Hutch promised, as both detectives rose from their chairs, effectively finishing their conversation.

Pulling their ongoing case files their brief meeting with Dobey, they headed out to Starsky's car to run down a few snitches. They pushed their conversation with their superior from their minds. Driving through the streets as they kept an eye out for recent parolees and their informants, they chatted briefly about pending cases.

Looking out the passenger window, Hutch finished the apology he started back in the squad room. "I really didn't mean to hurt you last night, Starsk. Well, one thing just led to another." He shrugged his shoulders and glanced sideways at his partner to see how the apology was going over.

Without taking his eyes from the road, Starsky kept his left hand on the wheel, and grabbed his partner's knee with his right and squeezed. "Just don't make a habit of it, babe." Putting his hand back on the wheel to make a turn, he flashed a grin at his contrite partner. "I don't like sleeping alone when I don't have to."

"If it makes you feel any better, I had a problem sleeping without you, too." Light blue eyes softened in love and understanding, as they tried to convey to Starsky's darker ones that he, too, had had a miserable night.

Too close to a soapy scene for Starsky, he quickly turned Hutch's words to playfulness. "Then I guess you'll have to make it up to me."

Wide grins and twinkling eyes met across the interior of the car and they continued on in companionable ease. Nothing more was said of the previous night, but after reporting back to the precinct after snagging a mugger and following up on some leads, they logged out for the rest of the day and headed for Starsky's without question or discussion.

Eating dinner while sitting on the couch, Hutch brought up the subject of the mysterious dreams again. "These dreams, Starsk. Do you think they might have something to do with Dobey suggesting we move on? Take the Lieutenant's exam or other, less dangerous positions? That's a big change for us, job-wise."

"I don't know, Hutch! I keep telling you that I don't remember them." Starsky threw his hands up in the air, frustrated with himself; unable to remember the whys or wherefores of his strange dreams.
"Maybe you don't want to break up the partnership, move to other departments."

"Hell, no. I don't want to work with anyone else. No one knows me the way you do, and visa versa. We might get different shifts, different buildings; barely see each other. What if you get sent out on a case and trouble happens? I don't want to take the chance of you out there without me to watch your back."

Hutch looked at him affectionately, "We'll have to eventually, you know. Leave the more physical stuff to the younger guys. Especially if they discover our relationship. Wouldn't it be better to make those choices ourselves than to have them thrust upon us."

Starsky wanted to drop the subject. "Let's talk about something else." Leaning over, Starsky took Hutch's face in his hands and kissed him passionately. "Like how I'd rather do my own thrusting." He added wickedly while giving a little thrust of his groin into Hutch's side.

Their lovemaking that night was an intense affirmation of all the feelings they had for one another. Even before becoming lovers, they were unable to hide the depth of their emotions; unashamed to show their feelings by touch and language. It wasn't any different once that last intimate step was taken, only with more levels and layers.

And Starsky's dreams that night were just as intense....

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And Saul became afraid of David because the Lord was with him, and was departed from Saul. There was tension in the palace of Saul, as he who previously was in the Lord's graces became vicious and angry. The servants also loved David for his outgoing nature and his honor; they feared their master who held life or death over them, but did not love him.

The elder man tried to trick David into doing that which went against his duty to his God. But still David never defied Saul directly or showed disrespect to his king. All which made King Saul angrier, prone to mistakes and harsher with his people. Even Saul's advisers began to defer to David, rather than to Saul's sons.

And Saul spake to his servants that David shouldst be slain. Because David was loved and held up in their eyes, one of the servants spake to his Prince of Saul's desire. Jonathan was in fear for his friend and beloved. He loved much in David, so Jonathan warned him, saying "Saul, my father, seeketh to kill thee; now therefore, I pray thee, take heed of thyself and abide in a secret place in the field. And I will commune with my father and what I see, that I will tell thee." He trembled in fear for David's life as he laid hands upon David.

But David knew what Saul's decision wouldst be, and he was not afraid. "Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found love and grace in thine eyes. He knoweth that I am beloved of thee." He had no fear of Saul, only for Jonathan. David wanted no consequence to fall upon Jonathan. He would give up everything — walk away from it all. His wife, wealth, family, status; yes, even his beloved. He put his trust in God that He would provide and see that His will be done. But he told Jonathan not be too hasty and draw attention to himself, and he convinced his Prince to let David hide himself in town.

So David escaped his king and family, and hid himself in a nearby field. The reeds were tall and the field large. All the while concerned that King Saul would use his considerable power to cause harm to Jonathan or his family.

"Jonathan, beloved. My Grace," Starsky mumbled as he tossed his head on the pillows.
His voice woke Hutch, whose eyes focused on the troubled face of his lover.

"There is but a step between me and death." The blue eyes were moving behind closed lids, and the pouting mouth spoke the words with clarity.

Those words frightened Hutch, as he wondered what kind of a dream Starsky was having now. Leaning over, he gathered the stirring head in his large hands and gently kissed his lover to bring him from his troubled dreams.

Hutch was planting whispers of kisses on Starsky's face when the latter's eyes startled open. "Hutch? What's wrong?"

"I should be asking you the same. You were having a nightmare I think, and talking about death."

Rubbing his face harshly, Starsky got up to make a bathroom run and splash cold water on his face without responding. Walking back nude into the bedroom, he glanced over at the clock on the bedside stand and grinned slyly. He waggled his eyebrows at the long form in his bed. "Since we're both wide awake, how about we use it wisely?"

Hutch knew he didn't have anything to worry about in regards to Starsky's faithfulness. When, for crying out loud, would Starsky have time for another lover. It just hurt being left out. There had to be some reason for these dreams.

This time their loving was gentle and slow, as each grasped onto different feelings. Hutch, worried over his partner's words and dream; guilty that he couldn't do anything about them to ease Starsky's pain. Starsky was left with feelings of apprehension from those same dreams, and frustration that they were upsetting Hutch.

When the moon had come over, the king sat down to eat. Jonathan and all the people arose, yet David's place was empty. Nevertheless Saul spake nothing of it, for he thought something hath befallen David. And after the second day came to pass that David's place was empty, Saul said unto Jonathan "wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to eat neither yesterday nor today?"

And Jonathan answered in earnest, "David asked leave of me to go to Shechem."

Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan as he kneweth he spake not the truth, and he said unto him, "Thou perverse son of a rebellious woman, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own shame and unto the shame of your nakedness? For as long as the son of Jesse liveth, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die." And in anger Saul cast a javelin at Jonathan to smite him; whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David.

So Jonathan arose from the table and excused himself from his father's presence for the night, keeping his anguish hid from his angry sire. Couldn't his father see how righteous and good David was? If God had chosen David as Saul's successor, who were they to argue His will?

And it came to pass in the morning that Jonathan went into the field to tell David of all he had learned, his heart heavy with sorrow. Returning with a little lad, Jonathan said to him, "Run, find the arrows which I shoot." And as the lad ran, Jonathan shot an arrow far behind the lad, amongst the tall grown weeds, far from sight. And Jonathan cried after him, "Make speed, haste, stay not." But the lad knew not anything, only Jonathan and David knew the matter. And whence the lad came back, Jonathan gave his artillery unto him and told him to carry them to the palace in his place.

As soon as the lad was gone, David arose from his place amongst the flowering weeds, and fell on his knees
to the ground. Jonathan lifted him and they kissed one another and wept. Their sadness apparent as the wind
echoed through the reeds along the banks of the nearby river.

And Jonathan said unto David, "Come and let us go further out into the field." They left for further a field to
mask themselves from Saul's emissaries, lest they be discovered and killed for their passions. Then Jonathan
made another covenant with David saying he did not fear death. "If the Lord requires it, even at the hand of
David's enemies." Threat of death would not stay their love. And Jonathan caused David to swear again
because he loved him as he loved his own soul.

And Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn to each other in the name of the
Lord, my seed and thy seed will be together for ever." And David arose and took leave from his wife, family,
lover, and status in Saul's court, looking behind not once, weeping "Jonathan, mine own! For ever I vow." Sorrow and pain resounding through each word, as they were carried on the winds across the field to
Jonathan watching his retreat.

Hutch stood over his dreaming lover. He had gotten up a short while ago to take an early morning run,
deciding to let Starsky sleep a little longer after the previous night's marathon of amorous activities.

As he ran, Hutch's mind filled with contemplation. Who was this Jonathan that Starsky spoke of in his sleep?
A past lover from his service in Vietnam? A boy he loved in New York or when he first moved out here? Had
Starsky even had another male lover in his past? Hutch didn't know for sure; they never really discussed it
before. He didn't even let his mind wander to the thought that Starsky could be in love with another or
cheating on him. He knew Starsky; at least he thought he did...

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Back at his apartment, Starsky woke at the sound of his door closing. He was tangled in the bedsheets and
there were drying tears on his face. Looking beside him he didn't see his partner. "Hutch?" Starsky called,
thinking he was elsewhere in the apartment. Only the chirping of the birds and the traffic from outside
answered him. The overwhelming silence from inside the apartment flittered down like dust particles that
swirled in streams of sunlight.

An overwhelming sense of anxiety and worry shuddered through Starsky. 'Where was his Hutch?'

Wrapping one of the sheets around his nude body like a toga, Starsky padded into the kitchen. He found a pot
of warm coffee on the sink top and a short note. Gone jogging, back in 10-15. No 'Love Hutch' or any other
romantic qualifier on the note.

Popping into the bathroom to take a quick shower to wash away the dried sweat from the previous night,
Starsky was relieved to hear the noises of his partner coming in and moving about the apartment as he
finished up with his showering. Rubbing a towel vigorously over his head to absorb as much water as possible
from the heavy locks, he walked out of the bathroom with nothing else on. "Hey babe? I hope you're planning
on taking a shower too?"

Not even showing surprised at Starsky's quiet entrance behind him, Hutch came back with a smart aleck
remark. "No Starsky, I thought to grace your presence with my odiferous scent." Hutch rolled his eyes at the
dumb question.

"Ode to what? Never mind." Starsky wandered back down the hallway to the bedroom to change for work.
"Why didn't you come join me in the shower then?"

"Because Starsk, you were almost done and I don't think we have time this morning for any extra curricular
activities.
"You didn't care about being late the other morning." Hearing the opening and shutting the cupboard doors, Hutch was apparently looking for something halfway decent to eat. They hadn't been shopping in awhile, and his cupboards were usually pretty bare anyway. *Well bare of anything of nutritional value, as Hutch would say.*

"Yeah, and you didn't care about accommodating me then either. So we're even."

Startled at the surly nature of his lover, Starsky came back out to the kitchen and watched Hutch as he finished getting himself dressed. "What's gotten into you?" Knowing what Hutch's smart-ass response would be.

The age-old response 'beside you?' didn't come, however. "Nothing." Hutch replied shortly. Obviously he was frustrated in his search as he dropped his arms and turned, walking past Starsky without even glancing and admiring the fine form in tight jeans as he usually did. "I can't find anything to eat around here, I might as well take my shower. We can stop for muffins on the way in."

"And I can get my daily donut dosage." Starsky agreed happily.

"While your partner deals with the daily sugar rush." Hutch mumbled under his breath from the bedroom as he gathered his clothes and headed for the bathroom.

Rather than argue with his grumpy partner — a sure fire way to put both of them in a bad mood and ruin any possibility of a sex life that night, Starsky gave in to Hutch's request to drive that day.

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All day long Hutch was short with Starsky. He didn't bother taking the time to complete his morning routine; leaving his hair wet, his shirt untucked, and wearing tennis shoes instead of his usual suede shoes or boots. It was if Hutch didn't care about his appearance.

Starsky stared at his lover's rigid back as he walked out of the squadroom after they had check in with Dobey at the beginning of their shift. Wondering if perhaps Hutch didn't get enough sleep the night before. He didn't think it was anything he did or didn't do that might be contributing to his partner's grumpiness.

While Starsky pondered Hutch's mood, the object of his thoughts stuck his head through the double doors of the squadroom. "Starsky! Are you gonna stand there all day like a tree, or are you gonna back me up?"

Shaking his head to clear his mind, Starsky jumped to follow Hutch, who was already halfway down the hall.

While cruising the — for once — fairly quiet streets, they got a call from Dispatch telling them to stop by The Pits.

Huggy was waiting outside for them and leaned down into the open window of the LTD. "Word on the streets is that Toga's gonna flay Gigi — Sweet Alice's one time roomie — 'cause she's been holdin' out on 'im. Thought you might wanna know." He slapped the window frame twice in good-bye, and stood up as the two pulled away from the curb.

Toga was a well known pimp that normally ran a loose ship and let his 'girls' fend for themselves, as long as they checked in with him occasionally and, of course, paid him his 'fees'. Gigi was one of Toga's early models who'd been with him a long time, and amazingly hadn't succumbed to drugs or drink.

"Well, let's go see if we can find Toga or Gigi." Starsky logged the information into their notebook.
Surprisingly — or maybe not with their luck, they spotted Toga's metallic purple Corvette as it turned in front of them just moments later.

"With that paint job, it's like he wants to be found." Starsky observed.

Glaring over at his partner, eyes widened incredulously, Hutch felt his mouth drop open, but didn't say anything about pots and kettles.

Following him a few more blocks, they were not surprised to see him pull up next to the corner where Gigi was working. In less than two minutes he had gotten out of the car, grabbed the woman's arm to force her into the passenger's side and drove away, not realizing that two cops were close behind.

They followed him to Venice and slowed down when he turned down a gravel roadway to a bleak field near a smelly, dirty canal filled with pollutants from local factories. Parking far enough away not to be noticed, they crept to the edge of the canal through the tall weeds, where Toga was shaking Gigi roughly by the arm, releasing her only to smack his fist upside her head.

Hutch charged, hitting the scarred Hispanic man in the back, and knocked Toga away and down from Gigi, while Starsky went to her aid. Rolling in the dirt and grass and struggling for the upper hand, both combatants fell into the murky water of the canal. Toga came up coughing first as he struggled to the embankment. Starsky was just about to go to his partner's aid, when he saw Toga crawl up the side with Hutch hanging onto his ankle, forehead bleeding slightly from a slight cut.

Pulling the weakened pimp to the top, Starsky pushed him onto his stomach and pulled his arms behind him, cuffing the wet man. Then he leaned over the side and helped his partner up. Going to the back of the LTD, he pulled out a blanket and wrapped it around his drenched and dirty partner, ignoring the complaints of their perp.

"I called for a back-up to take this guy in. We'll take Gigi home, and then get you in some warm clothes."

Catching his breath, Hutch shook his head in the negative. "No, Starsk. I can shower and change at Parker. Let's take care of this guy and get Gigi's statement before heading home."

"But Hutch, you need to get out of those wet clothes. You know you're susceptible to..."

Glaring at his partner, Starsky knew how Hutch felt about being reminded that his lungs would always be vulnerable to lung problems since his bout with a plague that had nearly killed him.

Holding up his hands in retreat, Starsky knew not to argue with Hutch when he was in one of his moods. "Okay. But don't think I'm gonna nurse you if you get sick."

Snorting back a smart remark, Hutch replied, "I'm not gonna get sick. And I don't need you mother-henning me, either."

*****

But Hutch did get sick. By the time their shift ended, he was already running a mild fever and had a weepy nose. Starsky unwillingly took the keys to the LTD, as Hutch was in no shape to drive, and took his partner home. Driving the LTD wasn't Starsky's favorite activities; in fact, the main reason they used his car was to avoid driving the LTD in case something this happened. Wouldn't you know that the stubborn idiot would get sick when we were driving his car.

Tucking his big, grumpy blond into the brass bed, Starsky got some aspirin and orange juice for his ailing
partner. Orange juice and chicken soup were the Jewish cure for all, according to Starsky's mother. He smoothed back the freshly washed blond strands from Hutch's forehead, avoiding the white strip that covered the slight injury. He felt the warmth radiate from his skin. "Just relax babe. Go to sleep, I'll be here."

"Go on home Starsk. It's just a cold. I'll be fine come morning. You stay here, you might catch it too."

Since his fever was only 99.5, Starsky reluctantly agreed, but placed the phone on the nightstand next to the bed. "You call me, Hutch, if you feel worse or you need me. I'll come right over."

Concerned about Hutch, Starsky didn't sleep much that night and when he did, he didn't dream — at least none that stayed with him.

The following day Starsky ended up calling Hutch in sick. It was obvious that his cold had moved to his chest, and his fever had risen to just over 100. After checking with his partner early in the morning, Starsky rubbed some Vapo-Rub on Hutch's chest, and fixed him a breakfast of orange juice, aspirin, and wheat toast; after which Starsky left him to sleep, promising that he'd call frequently during the day to check on his partner.

When he arrived at Venice Place that evening, Starsky closed the door quietly behind him in the event Hutch was sleeping. Walking quietly to the alcove, Starsky leaned over the prone figure and placed his hand on Hutch's forehead, relieved that his temperature was down. He smoothed his hand down Hutch's temple and petted his hair into some semblance of neatness. Why do you gotta be so damn stubborn, Hutch? No matter what Hutch said, he was staying.

*****

Feeling the gentle ministration, Hutch opened his eyes. He had been awake for some time, unable to sleep very much due to the cough in his chest. The care and comfort that his lover provided was a healing medicine of its own merit, and Hutch would never deny himself that care.

After bringing his partner some aspirin, water, cough syrup, and warmed chicken soup, Starsky settled down on the couch to watch the evening news. But Hutch stayed in bed and rolled onto his side facing the wall, spreading his body over the big bed, leaving no doubt of how unwell he was still feeling, and no room for his lover.

Eventually Starsky made up a bed on the couch, where he was near enough to still hear Hutch's heavy breathing and deep coughs, resigned to the fact that his sick partner didn't want to be cuddled. In what was becoming a pattern, Starsky again had no distraught surprising dreams without Hutch beside him to disturb his sleeping patterns.

*****

The next morning Starsky woke upon hearing the continuous blaring of Hutch's alarm. He went to turn it off and check on his sick partner. Touching the golden face with the back of his hand, Starsky was relieved to note the absence of fever — though he could still hear the tightness in Hutch's chest as it rose and fell with each breath.

"Hutch? Wake up buddy. Do you feel up to goin' in today?" Starsky shook Hutch's shoulder and badgered him to wake up.

Eventually Hutch's eyes opened, darker blue than usual and unhappy. "Leave me 'lone. Don't want to go in. Just want to lay here." He closed his eyes and burrowed beneath the covers.

That wasn't like his partner, Starsky thought. Hutch never let a simple cold put him down. "Come on Blintz,
stop sulking. You're fine. I can tell by the pout in your voice. I'll get Dobey to keep us on desk duty today."

The covers were pushed back forcefully as Hutch glared at Starsky. "Fine. If I agree to go in will you leave me alone?!"

Getting off the bed, Starsky threw up his hands in retreat. "I hope you get over this cold soon, Hutch. You're even grouchier than usual." He stomped to the bathroom to get dressed, thinking, *This is gonna be a winner of a day.*

After a quiet and tense filled day, Starsky knew better than to suggest they spend the night together. Instead he dropped off Hutch at his own apartment, and told him he could drive himself to work the next day and every day after that, until he got over whatever was bothering him. Starsky was a little agitated himself that Hutch wouldn't confide in him.

****

After mulling over his feelings while alone that evening, Hutch realized he was being foolish. When would Starsky ever have time for another lover? And why did he have to share everything that had happened before he met Hutch? If this 'Jonathan' was someone he knew from Vietnam, Hutch could understand Starsky not wanting to talk about it and having to relive the nightmare of the war. Feeling a little guilty, Hutch decided he would give Starsky a call and suggest a day at the park for their next schedule day off — which happened to be the next day.

His partner sounded relieved at the offer as Starsky accepted. Hutch figured a night or two apart wouldn't harm the relationship and would strengthen their resolve to never take the other for granted.

****

Abandoning the idea of going to their usual park as it was a beautiful Sunday and would most likely be filled to capacity, they opted to travel farther out to an out-of-the way field that was nicely trimmed and filled with wild flowers. By chance there was also an archery field within 100 yards.

The two relished in kisses that were open and free; fed each other sandwiches and pieces of bananas; they relaxed in each other's arms while watching the clouds overhead; and they talked a bit about Hutch's worries over Starsky's dreams.

Sitting up and crossing his legs, Hutch began to twine clover and grass between his fingers as his mind worked. "You know, Starsk. I wish you'd open up to me more."

"What the hell are you talking about, Hutch? You know I talk to you about shit I never would've talked about with anyone else." He turned onto his side, to face his partner.

"You sound like I force you to discuss our relationship."

Starsky sat up, and looked at Hutch. "Hey? What does our relationship have to do with any of this?" He waved his hand outward. "These dreams?"

The other man reared back. "You don't think you shouting out 'Jonathan' in your sleep isn't affecting our relationship?" Hutch asked incredulously.

Starsky shrugged. "It shouldn't." He grabbed Hutch by the shoulders and pulled him forward. "Hutch, listen carefully and listen close. I...love...you. Only you." He released the blond. "I'm not saying I wasn't in love with Terry or possibly Rosie. But there has never been any other guy. Now or before. Never. You gotta trust
me, babe."

Hutch sighed. "I do. It's just...I've never been very lucky in the love department and maybe my mind is
subconsciously wondering when this one will end."

"Never, love. Not even after one of or both of us is gone."

Starsky, sensing that Hutch's allergies were beginning to act up due to lying among the wild flowers and
weeds, stood up and brushed off his jeans, then offered his hand to his recumbent lover. "Up and at 'em
Blintz. Let's go play some Frisbee." He wanted to shake the moroseness away from Hutch.

Mumbling that he really wanted nothing more than to go home, but agreeable to whatever Starsky wanted,
Hutch accepted the proffered hand and pulled himself up.

Rather than showing off to each other with tricks, they just tossed the plastic disk back and forth for awhile.
Until Starsky caught sight out of the corner of his eye three arrows flying far from their objective, and a young
boy racing after to retrieve them. He'd barely caught the Frisbee as it hit him mid-chest, when a sharp pain
shot through the top of his head.

Rooted by the pain and the pounding in his head, he slowly turned to watch the scene next to him play out.
The images became blurry and another identical scene appeared in his mind and overlapped the real one
before him.

Alarmed by the sudden paleness and noticeable weakness of his lover, Hutch ran over and caught Starsky as
he began to collapse to his knees. He reached up and touched Hutch's face as tears fell from his darkened
eyes.

"The Lord be with me and thee for ever." And then David Starsky collapsed.

*****

Starsky came to in the car and refused to be taken to the doctor's or the hospital. Reluctantly, and against his
better judgment, Hutch took his lover home, since Starsky appeared to be okay. Ever since the Gunther
shooting, Hutch was always a little defensive when it came to Starsky's health.

Making sure Starsky was settled comfortably on his couch with a glass of orange juice, Hutch asked him what
happened back at the field.

"I don't know. I just felt real dizzy and got this horrible pain in my head." He lifted his hand to the top of his
head and pushed down on the curls.

Hutch knelt down and looked into Starsky's eyes, which appeared clear but confused. "What was with the
biblical talk?"

"Huh? What talk?"

"You said something about the Lord and me and thee forever." Hutch began a gentle exploration of Starsky's
head to make sure there were no bumps or cuts. Tenderly squashing the curls, he separated the dark strands to
get a better look at his scalp.

Expression confused, Starsky shook his head slowly, "I swear to you, Hutch, I don't know what you're talking
about."
Satisfied that his partner had no injuries, Hutch sat down on the couch next to him. "I'm betting it has something to do with those strange dreams you've been having lately."

"But I don't even remember any of those dreams, at least not the details...just impressions."

"Well if something like this happens again, I want you to see someone."

"Like a shrink?!" groaned Starsky.

"Or your regular doctor," Hutch suggested, "and don't give me any flak about this. I'm starting to get worried. First you start spouting off in another language and talking in a different dialect, then you're saying another man's name in your sleep, and now you pass out after getting a severe headache." To emphasize his point, Hutch pointed his finger in Starsky's face, which the other man batted away.

"All right, all right, whatever. Anything to stop your nagging." But Starsky smiled when he said it.

"A nag, am I?"

"Yeah, Hutchinson, and a mother hen to boot."

"Well, maybe I should just mother hen you into taking your clothes off so I can make you feel better?" With a fake snooty accent, Hutch added "You just leave it up to Dr. Hutchinson. He knows the cure for what ails you."

Grinning like a randy teenager, Starsky rose from the couch and walked toward Hutch's bedroom. "Well Dr. Hutchinson, I think I need to get more comfortable while you work your 'cure'." And he twitched his ass to entice his willing lover to follow him.

That night, Starsky dreamed again....

As David ran, hiding under the cover of night and a worn peasant cloak that Jonathan found for him, he wept in loss of his home and family. But mostly he wept in loss of his love. "Jonathan, thou art the truest love ever known." Not even facing the Philistine army filled him with as much fear and dread as leaving the city of his birth. He didn't know what lay ahead or what the Lord had planned for him.

He only knew that Saul would slay him; yet he was reluctant to leave Jonathan to face alone the upcoming trials Samuel had prophesied about. 'But Jonathan bade me to take leave and hide myself' he told himself as he left the city of his birth. And he could not disobey his lover and his Prince. Nor did he want to disobey the Lord and his destiny.

"For ever thou hast promised me. The Lord will smile upon our countenance and we wilst be blessed once more." Only the hope of their covenant kept David on his course. And trust in the Lord that what He had planned for them would not deny their love. He couldn't even think of what his life would be like without Jonathan by his side, but he would do as the Lord commanded.

Starsky cried out in his dreams, an anguish that crossed through time and space, erupting in a legion of tears falling from beneath his long lashes and onto swollen cheeks.

Tormented moaning and the trembling body awoke Hutch, and he gathered Starsky close and rubbed his arms to soothe his troubled partner awake.

"Shhh, David. It's just me."
While his eyes were opened, his gaze was blurred, and it was apparent that Starsky wasn't 'there' — in the same place as Hutch. "Jonathan? Hast thou come to me?"

"David, it's me. Hutch. Ken."

His face going from anguish to confusion to relief, Starsky buried his face in Hutch's chest. "Hutch. Oh man, I think I had another dream."

"Yeah, you sure did. Do you remember any of it?"

Starsky just shook his head. "Uh uh. Just a sense of sadness." He wiped his wet cheeks and looked up at Hutch. "I, uh, did I say anything out loud?"

Hutch smiled gently. "Yeah, you could say that."

"What'd I say?"

Smoothing the curls, Hutch looked outward toward the wall. "Oh just... 'Jonathan, hast thou come back to me' or something like that."

"Shit. Not again."

"Don't worry about it buddy. I know you love me." He kissed the top of Starsky's head. "But you're getting me worried."

"I'll be okay. I just gotta get over these dreams."

"So you'll go see a psychiatrist then?"

Rolling his eyes, Starsky tucked his face back into the warmth of Hutch's body. "Quit pestering me. It's not so bad I can't live with them."

"Ah, but can you sleep with them?"

"Aw, just shut up and kiss me so we can go back to sleep."

~*~

The following night Starsky had another dream. More visions of running through desert towns and barren fields. But was he running from something or toward something...or someone? This time Starsky startled himself awake. He looked over at his sleeping lover, then at the clock, which read 2:10 a.m. Sighing, he slowly rose from the bed, careful not to jostle it and bother Hutch.

He threw on a pair of briefs and crept into the living room, where he turned on a lamp and sat down in the lounge chair to read. His anxiety over the weird dreams wouldn't let him go back to sleep. And that wasn't like him. Rarely did anything keep him getting his daily six hours — even on stakeouts. Well, except bears or Satanists disturbing his vacation. Maybe some heavy reading will put me to sleep without any weird dreams, he thought, knowing that he had to get some sleep in order to perform his job to the best of his ability.

Hutch found him at 6:00 a.m., curled up on the lounge chair on his side with his face pressed against the back of the leather chair, and a throw blanket over him, a book dangling from his fingers. Starsky looked like a child who curled up and fell asleep in some absent grandparent's lap while reading his favorite fairy tale. Mouth opened, long lashes fluttering with each snore. That he — Ken Hutchinson — was blessed with the love and care of this soul almost overwhelmed him.
Shaking his head to clear his vision, Hutch grinned wryly and removed the book and set it on the end table. "You're gonna have a hell of a backache when you wake up buddy." Repositioning the blanket around Starsky's shoulders, Hutch reached out and caressed the exposed side of Starsky's stubbled face.

*****

For the most part, Starsky felt more rested when he woke up, even with the stiff back. The right side of his face was numb from being smashed against the leather chair for most of the night, but he didn't wake with the feelings of fear and torment that he had during the night and other previous nights.

He made a conscious decision not to tell Hutch that he'd dreamt again, instead playing off that Hutch's snoring was annoying, so he'd gone in the living room to relax and get some sleep.

This same pattern went on for several more days, with Hutch finding Starsky lying either on the couch or in the leather chair at his own apartment. Hutch was concerned; he had no way of knowing what was going on with his partner. But it didn't seem to bother Starsky to wake up every morning with a stiff back or sore neck, and it wasn't affecting their love or professional lives, so Hutch left well enough alone.

Eventually and inevitably, Starsky's sleep pattern interruptions began to affect his work patterns...

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Over slightly more than a week, Starsky's face became drawn, his eyes red and tired with dark circles beneath them. The irrepressible grin faded into non-existence, and he began dozing at inappropriate times — such as during a debriefing with Dobey. He was short and surly with those around him, including his partner. And he began to show a lack of detail not only in his personal attire, but more importantly at work.

The last few reports Starsky had written either had missing details, wrong information, or they rambled on with nonsensical details that had no place in their reports. Hutch found himself covering for his partner by reviewing them on the sly before they got to Captain Dobey for his approval.

The one he held in his hand was one of the worst. Starsky had misidentified a crucial witness to an assault and battery, as well as transposed the address numbers of another potential witness. It was time to talk to his partner and figure out what was going on beneath those curls.

Not wanting to confront his partner in front of their co-workers and embarrass him, Hutch waited until they were in Starsky's car.

"Starsk, we've gotta have a talk."

"Now what?" Starsky sighed melodramatically.

"Now we talk about what's bothering you."

Squinting his eyes in frustration, Starsky mumbled, "Nothin' botherin' me. I'm fine."

"Starsky, don't bother lying. You know you're terrible at it..."

"Except undercover. Yeah, I know. I've heard this speech before."

"You're not sleeping well. So something's got to be on your mind." Hutch's eyes softened in worry, which in turn bugged Starsky to no end, though he wasn't sure why.

"I told you Hutch, there's nothing to be concerned about. So I'm not sleeping well. That don't mean anything."
"It does when it starts affecting your work."

Starsky jerked the steering wheel to the right and pulled the car to the curb. Putting the transmission in park, his dark blue eyes fared in anger at Hutch's accusation. "What the hell is that supposed to mean, Hutchinson?" he scowled. "Are you accusing me of not doing my job? When have I ever not held up my half of this partnership?"

Looking directly into the angry, tired, face, Hutch quietly said, "Starsky you wrote Carmen Rodriguez's name as Armenia Rodriguez on the Moamin assault report, as well as transposed 5212 Fulton to 2512."

A flicker of alarm played in those dark eyes, replaced quickly by anger again while Starsky waited for Hutch to continue.

"You're irritable all the time, and you dozed off in front of Dobey yesterday." Hutch waved his hand at his partner. "Look at you! Have you taken a good look at yourself in the mirror lately?"

"If you gotta problem with something, buddy-boy, you better spit it out soon, 'cause I'm not gonna sit here and let you ream me like this."

Turning forward to look out the front window, Hutch sighed. "Starsky I'm not trying to make you feel bad."

"Well, you're doing a piss poor job of it then," the other interrupted.

Ignoring the sarcastic remark, even though he was starting to get annoyed as well, Hutch continued. "I'm worried you're going to make a fatal mistake on the street in the condition your in. I'm worried about you, Starsk."

"Yeah, well maybe it's you that's bothering me."

Startled, Hutch jerked his head to the left, offering Starsky a stunned, exposed look, then masked his emotions and turned his head to look out the passenger window, but not before Starsky had seen the hurt.

Wanting to take the words back, but too bullheaded to admit he'd gone too far, Starsky pulled the Torino back into traffic.

They drove silently for several minutes, the tension in the car thick like a quilt. One almost couldn't breathe with the heaviness in the air.

Down street, a large industrial truck turned right and began driving toward them on the opposite side of the road.

Starsky's eyes drifted shut and without warning the Torino started to pull left of center.

"STARSKY! WATCH IT!"

His eyes snapping open, Starsky turned to yell at Hutch for startling him. "Goddamn it Hutch..." as the oncoming truck bore down on the Torino.

"STARSKY! THE TRUCK!"

Whipping his head forward, Starsky yanked the wheel right as the truck blared its deep horn. He put the brakes on in the middle of the road, stopping traffic, his hands shaking at the near miss.

Sitting quietly amidst the piercing noise of horns from the vehicles behind them, the two detectives gathered
their frayed nerves before Starsky had the presence of mind to pull the Torino to the side of the road.

"Okay." He said quietly, staring out the front window.

Hutch shook his head to clear it. "Huh?"

"Okay, Hutch. I'll go talk to Mitchell."

"It's for your own good, babe. For us." Hutch wanted to make sure Starsky understood that no-one would think any less of him for seeing the department psychiatrist. Especially him. "I love you." He leaned over and petted Starsky's face with the back of his hand.

Closing his eyes and sighing, Starsky nodded briefly. "Yeah. I guess you were right. But that's the only reason I'm going — for us. To find out why I'm having problems sleeping."

"That's what Mitchell will help you determine, babe."

Putting the car in park, Starsky opened his door to get out. "You're driving the rest of the day. I can't take the chance of gettin' us killed."

*****

Once back at the precinct, Starsky made good on his promise and set up an appointment for the following day to see Dr. Mitchell, the department psychiatrist who was staffed onsite to help cops quickly if needed.

Hutch felt Starsky needed a good night of sleep without any distractions, so he forced his lover to go home alone. As hoped, Starsky finally got a good night's rest, and though the circles under his eyes weren't erased, there was more of a spring in Starsky's step when he bounded through the double doors the next morning. Just knowing that Starsky got a good night's rest and was going to talk to someone professional was enough to relax Hutch, and he let go his worrying during the workday.

The appointment with Dr. Mitchell was at 4:00, and Starsky had cleared it with Captain Dobey, who was heartily glad his curly haired detective was getting some help. Agreeing to meet Hutch back at Venice Place later that evening, Starsky trudged off to the other side of the building to meet with Dr. Mitchell, leaving Hutch to finish up their paperwork.

Hutch had made Starsky's favorite meal and set up the table in the greenhouse. Just as he finished laying out the table, he heard the front door click shut. Stepping into the kitchen, he watched as Starsky hung up his spring jacket and took off his holster, hanging it on the closet doorknob. Hutch promised himself he wasn't going to get into Starsky's face about his appointment this afternoon with Dr. Mitchell, though he had to tell himself that over and over.

"Dinner ready?"

"Yeah, sure." Hutch turned half-way and gestured toward the patio. "I set up the table outside if that's okay with you."

"Sounds good. Let me wash up."

While Starsky got cleaned up, Hutch served up the meal. They ate in relative silence, Hutch still anxious to know how his meeting with Dr. Mitchell went. However, Starsky didn't appear to be too upset, so he wasn't worried...just curious. But Starsky didn't seem to want to be forthcoming.
Finally, Hutch had to ask, it was driving him up a tree not knowing. "So, uh, how'd it go? Do you want to talk about it?"

Starsky pushed away his emptied plate and shrugged. "Okay. It was no big deal. I guess you could say I wasn't very open."

"Why not? What'd you talk about? That is, if you're allowed to tell me?"

"If I can't share with you, what's the point." He sighed. "I just told her I haven't been sleeping and I was worried that I was gonna get my partner or someone else hurt."

"Did you tell her about the dreams?"

Starsky stood up in frustration and started gathering the dishes. "I told you, Hutch, I don't remember those dreams!" He stalked into the kitchen and set the dishes in the sink. Leaning down with both hands on the edge, he gathered himself. "I'm sorry. Didn't mean to yell at you. It's not your fault I'm a fucking nutcase."

Pushing a glass of wine into Starsky's hands, Hutch led him over to the couch and waited for Starsky to continue.

He didn't have long to wait, as Starsky took a drink and continued. "Yeah, I told her I was having some dreams, but that I didn't remember them. I told her I kept talking about someone I didn't know and that I was speaking weird, just like you said."

"What she say?"

"Mitchell suggested that someone place a tape recorder at my bedside and turn it on in case it happened again. She said it might help her to determine the problem."

Mulling it over briefly, Hutch agreed that it might not be a bad idea. "So you're going to go back, then?"

"I guess. We could try her idea. What d'ya think?"

"Wouldn't hurt. Maybe if I played the tape for you, some of the dreams would come back."

Starsky perked up. "Yeah? And then I'd remember and I wouldn't have to go back to see Mitchell again."

Shaking his head at his lover's enthusiasm over the idea of not seeing the psychiatrist again, Hutch pulled him over for a deep kiss. "Don't jump the gun. Let's wait and see if the tape recorder idea works first."

Breathing heavily, Starsky forgot Dr. Mitchell and any dreams. "How about dessert babe?"

"What did you have in mind?" Hutch asked primly.

Starsky just winked and nodded toward the sleeping alcove. "Something golden and delicious. Say, like a Blintz." He leered as he licked his lips.

~*~

And David went into the wilderness of Engedi and established his household. He took another wife, and had more children, but no other love. He kept abreast of the wars in Israel and he prayed daily to the Lord, living as the Lord commanded.

Now the Philistines fought against Israel and fell hard upon Saul and his sons; and they slew Saul and his...
sons Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua. And it came to pass that a young man returned to the field and beheld the head of Saul.

Yet the Philistines were still wroth with David and unto the King of Israel. And it came to pass that David's two wives were taken captive. So he pursued the Philistines into Israel and overtook them.

The young man came out of the camp where Saul fell upon the earth and saw David. And David said to the young man, "How went the matter? I pray thee, tell me." And he was answered, "The people have fled from battle, and many are fallen. Saul and Jonathan, his son, are dead also."

Alarmed, David grabbed the man's cloak, "How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan be dead?" So the young man told him all he had seen. But David had to know. He had to see for himself. So he went into the field of battle to search out his love. When he came across the head of Saul on a pike, he knelt and wept. For the man may have tried to kill him, but he also treated David as a son, and because of Saul he was introduced to the greatest love of his life. Then he searched for that love, and when he found Jonathan he knelt beside his fallen lover. He took hold of his clothes and rent them, for as his cloth was torn, so was his heart.

And David lamented over Jonathan...

"Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be no rain upon you, nor fields of offerings; for there the shield of the might is vilely cast away. From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the might, the bow of Jonathan turned not back. Jonathan was lovely and pleasant in his life and in his death we wilt not be divided; he was swifter than eagles, stronger than lions.

"How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan, my lover; very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of all women."

David gathered the body of his beloved into his arms and wept. "All of Saul's sons, gone?! Why would God punish Jonathan, the best of all Saul's sons? "Oh, Jonathan...Jonathan..." he chanted, his heart hardening against his enemies at each breath of his beloved's name. For now he had to revenge Jonathan's death. His anger and grief grew greatly within him and gave him the strength needed to defeat the Philistines completely into submission. And then to take his rightful place as the head of Israel and God's witness on Earth.

"JONATH.....HUUUUTCH!" Starsky cried in anguish, waking his sleeping partner. His body trembled and was wracked by sobs. He was locked between the dreaming and the waking worlds.

"Above all. I love thee above all. Do not thou forget." He whimpered into Hutch's neck as his lover gathered him into strong arms.

"Starsk, it's another dream. Come on, baby, everything's okay."

Starsky shook his head to indicate that everything was not okay. The sadness and grief that flooded his body and torched his soul was an all-consuming fire of pain. Physical, mental, and spiritual.

Soft, light kisses gentled his temple as Hutch continued to hold him and tried to get Starsky to talk. "What are you dreaming, babe? What's bothering you?"

Shaking his head once more to clear it, Starsky remarked, "I felt like my life was ending, but I was still alive. Trapped somehow. It was a nightmare."
"You mean like you were being smothered or buried alive? Like in your late night monster movies?"

"Not like that kind of nightmare. This was like something killed what made me...me, ya know?"

"No, not really. But Starsk, it's just a dream. Remember that. It's not real."

Starsky's dark blue eyes still reflected a deep seated fear as they tracked Hutch while he got out of bed to straighten the covers. Unreasonable fear...of what? Overwhelmed him again. *Must not be fully awake yet.* "Hutch? You...you aren't going anywhere are you?"

The blond head rose to look up at his lover. "When, now?"

"No, it's just...I got the feelin' that these dreams are connected to you somehow."

"Really?"

Hutch thought this was a good sign — that Starsky was opening up to him. He just knew it. He crawled back into bed and sat up against the headboard, letting Starsky rest his head on his abdomen for security and comfort.

"That's good that you're remembering some substance of the dreams. But, Starsk, I can't promise you what I don't know about the future. And if anyone should know that, it would be you. I don't plan on going anywhere, however. Not for a long time, and certainly not without you." He petted and soothed Starsky's ruffled curls.

"How can you be so sure, Hutch? Especially in our jobs." Starsky swung his right arm over his lover's torso and squeezed. "I'm afraid to lose you."

Hutch used his finger to raise Starsky's chin. "Hey, maybe that's what these dreams are all about."

"You think?" The fear lifted slightly.

"Maybe. Sounds plausible. You should talk to Dr. Mitchell about it."

"You mean you still want me to go see her?"

"Absolutely, Starsk. This isn't going to go away. You need to talk to someone who knows how to interpret dreams and stuff."

"I thought you didn't get into psycho-babble bull."

"The mind is a vast area of knowledge that we know so little about, Starsky. There's so many possibilities to tap into. Like with Collandra."

"If you say so," Starsky said doubtfully. "I still think it's a waste of time." He couldn't get away from the terror that permeated his mind and soul. It was a living thing inside him.

Being afraid to go back to sleep, Starsky got up, retrieved a book, and settled in bed to read; while Hutch finished the crossword puzzle he kept in the nightstand, both eventually falling asleep where they lay.

*****

For the next several days the panic that infused Starsky's dreams began to map over into his waking world. An unreasonable fear of losing Hutch made him hover even closer to his partner, to the point he was getting on
the blond's nerves. If Hutch had to leave the room, the dark blue eyes would set upon the doorway until they
lit on Hutch once more. At first Hutch referred to Starsky as his puppy, but by the end of the third day, with
no deviation in his behavior, Starsky could tell he was getting on Hutch's last nerve.

He promised himself he would curb the hovering behavior, but the next morning when he walked back into
the squadroom after taking a quick trip to the men's room, Starsky was initially alarmed upon not seeing his
partner. His eyes tracked the room in time with his heartbeat and just as he was about to ask another officer
Hutch's whereabouts, Dobey stepped out to the squadroom and requested Starsky's presence in his office.

"Where's Hutch?" He inquired of his partner.

"Just get in here Starsky." The captain motioned with a beefy hand that grasped a manila folder.

Upon entering, Starsky saw his partner sitting at one of the chairs opposite Dobey's desk. He breathed an
audible sigh of relief, and wasn't surprised to see Hutch's corresponding eye roll and deep frown at the sound.

Stepping behind his desk, Dobey tapped the folder on its dark wooden top. "Since you've got most of your
current cases wrapped up or at the DA's office, I'm handing this one over to you."

Hutch made a grab for the file, "New case?"

"Jerome Clark, suspected armed robber. He's got a history of muggings and B and E's with escalating
violence, graduated to armed robbery and now with a 245 thrown in. He's a user."

Hutch looked up from the file. "So it's a simple locate and retrieve?"

"Nothing's ever simple, Hutchinson. You should know that. Find him! Get this guy off the streets."

Both men shrugged their shoulders. It was better than doing desk duty or finishing older reports. "Okay, Cap.
Whatever you say."

Dobey pointed his pencil at his curly-haired detective and then toward the door to the squadroom. "Damn
right whatever I say, Starsky! Now get your butt out there and find this guy before he busts into another place
and this time takes someone out."

"Yessir, Captain, sir." Starsky saluted, then turned to his seated partner. "Well, partner, what'd ya say? Let's
get the ball rolling."

As they arrived at the police garage, Hutch slapped the file into Starsky's hands. "You can familiarize yourself
with this, I'll drive."

"Yeah, yeah, whatever," Starsky waved his hands at his partner. "Just don't do that to me again."

Confused, Hutch asked "What?"

"Disappear without me knowing where you went." He mumbled as he got into the LTD.

"Starsky, stop! Right here, right now." Hutch turned to face him after turning the car over, before putting it in
drive. "You're getting all hung up. All you can think about is this fear, and that doesn't bode well for the work
we've got to do. You're still having problems sleeping and you refuse to acknowledge it. Now, unless you can
give me a good reason not to go back to Dobey and have him ground you until you get your head screwed
back on, I suggest you keep your mouth shut and back off."

"I'm sorry Hutch. I know it's unreasonable, but I can't help it." He couldn't deny what Hutch was saying, and
since he knew Dobey'd bench him in a second if their Captain was aware that Starsky's tank was running on empty, he sat and sulked in the corner of the passenger's seat. He knew something was bothering him, but he'd be damned if he knew exactly what it was. And he refused to acknowledge aloud that it could be his dreams and sleep patterns that left him with a sense of foreboding. His sixth sense was telling him it had something to do with Hutch; but he didn't want to acknowledge that the fear and anguish he felt each time he awoke next to Hutch might have something to do with either their relationship or with Hutch's safety.

If he dwelled on it too much, he was afraid he might go crazy. He was already driving his partner nuts, and if he kept it up, he was sure to lose Hutch. Besides, analyzing stuff was Hutch's forte. He prayed that Dr. Mitchell would be able to come up with something to figure out what was going on with him. She had prescribed some sleeping medication, but he was reluctant to take it. Of course, his partner didn't know about the sleeping pills, and if he did, Hutch would insist on him taking it. But then he'd be too drugged up to show Hutch how much he loved him.

After another two days of restless nights and waking dreams, Starsky finally was able to convince Hutch to let him drive. He was tired of dealing with the LTD and its cranky ways. Sometimes it was so simple to pull the wool over Hutch's head. All Starsky had to do was come in contact with cold water every morning, as well as several cups of the strong coffee that only the local 7-11 would sell.

They had nothing more strenuous planned than cruising the streets they normally patrolled, watching for recent parolees and on-the-lam criminals. Starsky convinced both himself and his partner that it would be a quiet day, with little required in the way of action. So far the whereabouts of one Jerome Clark, age 23, was still undiscovered, but the two detectives had their best snitches out digging for information, and anticipated a sighting soon.

Much sooner than they could have predicted, Millie announced one over the police radio that afternoon.

"Zebra Three, acknowledge 211 in progress with a possible 245 at 315 Front, cross street 3rd. Possible sighting of suspect Jeremy Clark at location. Code 2."

"Zebra Three responding." Hutch replaced the mike while Starsky went into pursuit mode.

Driving full out, reckless from the lack of sleep, Starsky was a man on a mission to snare their suspect. Hutch pulled the leather belt around his waist and clicked the lock shut as he slapped on the silent Mars light. Arriving at Ernie's Spirits and Victuals liquor shop, they parked one block west and made their way to the crime scene on foot.

"Fancy name for a corner store, eh, Starsk?" Hutch tried to infuse some levity into his partner's demeanor. He wasn't stupid enough to let his partner go into a scene with a hype on a downside, when Starsky wasn't running on all cylinders.

Through the window they could see Jerome Clark, unmasked, holding a clerk and the store owner at bay; waving a gun between the two, his arm and hand shaking and his temperament jumpy. Clark jumped in front of the owner and pistol-whipped him upside the head. The older man went straight down, a large bruise and lump already raised on the side of his head before he even hit the linoleum floor.

Waving his Beretta, Starsky motioned his partner behind the yellow brick building. "Back, Hutch. He's going out the back." Both men jumped in said direction simultaneously, Hutch's longer and more powerful legs getting him to the scene first.

Behind the store was a small asphalt court surrounded by two four-story buildings on the Front Street side, a two-story building, and a rundown multilevel apartment building opposite the alleyway. A wooden ledge jutted out from the shorter building, partially blocking the only other way out of the back court. It was beside
the entryway that Starsky and Hutch had come through. Someone had set several large metal garbage bins in
the small space the ledge, and that was what Clark was attempting to climb around to escape the detective
now bearing down on him.

"Hold it! Police!" Hutch shouted at the fleeing figure. "Starsk, cover me!" He called back to his partner, not
realizing that Starsky wasn't just behind him.

Starsky came around the corner and ran smack dab into the metal fire escape of 315 Front, which was placed
right at the edge of the back of the building; the collision stunned him and forced him down on his buttocks,
his gun clattering out of reach.

Hutch fired a warning shot into the air, startling Clark, who looked behind him briefly then continued to climb
on top of one of the metal garbage bins. Seeing no other way, Hutch took aim and fired, hitting the suspect in
the right hand and knocking his gun away. Clark collapsed in pain on the top of the bin, and Hutch holstered
his gun. He pulled the man to the ground, face down, with this bleeding right hand beneath him. Leaning over,
Hutch placed his right knee on the man's back to hold him still while he held Jerome's right hand behind him
at waist level, and reached behind for the handcuffs he kept in his waistband.

Looking over his shoulder at his prone partner, Hutch called out, "Starsk, you okay?"

Shaking the swirling birds away, Starsky leaned up on his hands to see Hutch had captured their suspect and
was now cuffing him. "Yeah. I'm fine. Somebody put a damn fire escape in my way."

Not able to watch their suspect while his head was turned to make sure Starsky was okay, Hutch didn't notice
Clark reach with his left hand and fingers into his back waistband and pull out a knife. He awkwardly twisted
his wrist and plunged the weapon into the left thigh of the cop holding him down. A stream of blood spurted
out of Hutch's thigh as Clark's knife plunged into Hutch's thigh. Shock and sudden blood loss caused him to
collapse onto Clark's back, trapping the perpetrator.

At first Starsky didn't see Clark's motion or the blood spurting down Hutch's, but he did notice his partner
collapsing headfirst onto the dusty asphalt and equally grungy perp. "Hutch? You okay? You need my help?"
In response, all Starsky heard was a loud groan from Hutch and a grunt from Clark. "I'm coming babe."

His own pain and wooziness forgotten, Starksy hopped up and rushed over to his partner. He rolled the larger
man off Clark, and immediately noticed the continuous stream of blood gushing out of Hutch's leg in time
with each pulsing beat of his heart.

Starsky's own heart jumped in panic as he finished cuffing the bleeding and injured hand of Jerome Clark. Not
wanting to remove the knife from Hutch's leg and possibly cause more injury, he yanked off his outer shirt
and wrapped it carefully around the knife to keep it stable. He didn't want to, but Starsky left his partner lying
where he was, dragging Clark clear of his prone partner to go call for two ambulances and a black and white.

Running back to Hutch, he noted his partner had passed out, probably from a combination of blood loss and
pain. Seeing him lying on his side, knife sticking through his leg, a large swath of blood covering his jeans and
staining the asphalt beneath him, Starsky's ears began ringing. The sound blocked out the moans of pain from
their cuffed suspect, and he fell to his knees at Hutch's head.

Starsky gathered the upper body of his beloved into his arms and wept. "Jonathan...Jonathan..." he chanted,
his heart hardening against his enemy at each breath of his lover's name.

"Silence!" He yelled at the groaning prisoner. "My prince is injured and thou wilt pay for the wrong you have
done unto him." He rocked Hutch in his arms, the strength and warmth of his body assuring Starsky that his
partner was still with him. "Above all. I love thee above all."
At the unnatural tone and words of Starsky's voice, Clark fell silent and waited for a more lucid person to arrive and help him.

The black and white arrived first and one of the officers took care of cordonning off the store and gathering information while giving some first-aid to the store owner.

Behind the store, the ambulance attendants found one injured man cuffed and laying on his stomach with an obvious gunshot wound through the hand, and a second, more seriously injured officer wrapped in his partner's arms with a knife wound to the leg. One of the paramedics immediately took possession of the cuffed man and began treating his wound, while the other called into the base hospital to begin treatment for the bleeding, injured detective.

Hutch awoke from his unconscious state to find Starsky rocking him, chanting "Jonathan, Jonathan," in a whispered tone; the ghostly voice reciting over and over. He was worried about his partner's frame of mind, and tried to tell the attendants through the oxygen mask to take care of Starsky, before everything swam and he closed his eyes against the storm. He needn't be concerned, as the paramedics were also exchanging glances of worry over the state of the non-injured officer.

~*~

Waking up early the next morning after surgery to repair his artery and the muscles in his left thigh, Hutch was not surprised to find his partner sitting in the chair next to his hospital bed.

Starsky was sitting bent over with his hands in his face. It appeared to Hutch that he hadn't slept all night.

"Starsk?" His voice was a raspy whisper.

The curled head came up and bleary, red rimmed eyes looked at him. "Hutch? You're awake?"

In response, Hutch poked his tongue out to wet his dry lips. "Thirsty. Can I have..."

Breaking off Hutch's sentence, Starsky eagerly guessed Hutch's need. "You can have some ice chips. Hold on. I'll be right back." Showing more energy than he actually had, Starsky jumped out of the chair, pushing it backwards and making a scraping noise on the floor tiles.

While he was gone, Hutch thought about his partner's appearance, which hadn't gone unnoticed. Dark circles around the eyes, rumpled clothing, tangled hair, and a gray palor were all Hutch needed to know Starsky's frame of mind.

A nurse came in just ahead of Starsky returning and took Hutch's vitals and gave him a shot of painkiller without asking the patient if he needed it. She explained that he was to be on pain medication for at least the next 24 hours whether he wanted it or not, for healing purposes.

"Hutch let the nurse do her job." Starsky admonished while pushing spoonfuls of ice through the pale lips. "You lost a lot of blood and need to rest. Can't have you setting back on me."

Hutch was bewildered and looked down, noticing an IV of blood and one of saline meant to replace the lost fluids in his body. Swallowing the melted ice, he asked Starsky what had happened.

"Clark didn't take too kindly to your shooting him in the hand. He stabbed you in the leg with a knife. Unfortunately he hit a major artery and you bled like a stuck pig."

"Oh." Hutch shut his eyes and drifted along with the pain medication. "You okay?"
He felt Starsky's hand soothe the hair back from his forehead. "Shh...I'm fine. You just rest. Dobey took me off the roster for a couple of days, so I'm gonna be here when you need me." He continued to pet and stroke the soft, fine hair as Hutch fell asleep. As he faded off with a soft sigh he sensed his lover leaning down and giving him a gentle kiss on the cheek. "I'm glad your safe, baby. Love you."

Hutch didn't wake again until just before dinner. By then the blood IV had been removed, Hutch having regained the volume he had lost. Starsky was still by his side, but now was asleep in the chair next to the bed. Hutch moved his hand onto the messy curls and patted them, remembering Starsky's promise to stay with him. His partner needed his sleep, so Hutch tried not to wake him each time he shifted his body, but it was hard not to make grunts of pain each time he moved his injured thigh.

A short time later an orderly brought his dinner, and the jostling of the tray table woke Starsky. Lifting his head and rubbing his eyes, he groaned away the stiffness in his back.

"Ugh, oh man. Hutch? You awake again?" Seeing the dinner on his table, Starsky went to the foot of the bed, raised it, and moved the tray into a better position for his partner to reach. "What we got here?" He lifted the cover and grimaced. "Ewww...Liver and onions and broccoli. Right up your alley."

After eating most of his dinner, including the vanilla pudding since he was really hungry, Hutch pushed away the tray table and leaned backward onto the raised bed. "Starsky, what happened?" Repeating his earlier question.

Worried that Hutch didn't remember him explaining it from that morning, Starsky retold the story of how Hutch had gotten injured.

Shaking his head back and forth Hutch re-asked the question. "No, what happened with you?" He wasn't sure he believed Starsky's bullshit about Dobey taking one curly-headed detective off the roster to care for him. A day, yes, but Dobey wasn't the over-protective type. He needed as many good men on the job as he could get.

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"You did it again, buddy. At the scene you called out 'Jonathan.' Only this time you were calling me that. I wasn't so out of it that I didn't hear what was going on around me." Even in a hospital bed, Hutch's forefinger made an impression.

Starsky put his head down. "I really don't know Hutch. All I remember is seeing you on the ground, bleeding, with a knife in your leg. Next thing I remember, I'm in a squad car on the way to the hospital."

"Does Dobey know?"

"I guess." He shrugged his shoulders and sighed. He couldn't lie to Hutch. "The paramedics told Dobey I kept chanting something and wouldn't respond to them, so Dobey put me on leave until I get my shit together." He looked up and tried to smile. "Look at the bright side. I'll be able to be at your beck and call while you're laid up."

They'd have time to discuss that later; there was no way Hutch was going to be mother-henned by his partner, nor was he going to be cooped up. Right now Starsky was more important. "Don't try to cover Star-sk. This is getting serious now. It's affecting our job."

"I know. I'm going to tell Doc Mitchell everything. I'm worried, too. If I had forgotten to finish cuffing Clark, he could've gotten away or hurt you worse." For Starsky to admit he was worried about himself was saying a lot.
"I want to go with you to your next visit."

"It's tomorrow Hutch. I don't think you'll be outta here for a few days yet."

"Shit, are you sure I can't get out tomorrow?" Hutch hated to admit he was anything but fine, and staying in the hospital was not one of his favorite pastimes.

"If you really want to go with me—" the darker man started.

"I think I need to. Your dreams are now affecting us both personally and professionally." Hutch broke in.

"I can call Mitchell tomorrow and cancel. Reschedule for the following week when you can get around better, and tell her it's important that you come with me."

~*~

Hutch spent four days in the hospital, was released to his partner's care, and given crutches with strict orders to stay off the leg for another week, and to call his doctor if any seepage appeared. They also reiterated to him that he should take advantage of the pain medicine when needed in order for him to heal better and faster.

Since both men were off while Hutch healed, Starsky stayed at Hutch's place and ran back and forth between his apartment and Venice Place. He also handled the chores: watering the plants, shopping, cleaning, all while keeping Hutch comfortable and busy with books, crossword puzzles, and the like. Keeping busy kept Starsky's mind off his worrisome dreams.

Doctor Mitchell rescheduled Starsky's next appointment for the following Monday and allowed him to bring Hutch along once Starsky gave her a brief rundown of what went down during Jerome Clark's capture. Hutch took a chair by the door, while Starsky sat across from Doctor Mitchell.

Turning on her recorder, Dr. Mitchell got oral permission for Hutch's presence. "I understand you'd like your partner, Sgt. Ken Hutchinson to be present today, correct?"

"Yes, but..." Starsky turned around and exchanged glances with Hutch. "We'd like assurances that anything that is said is, um, kept between us."

"As mentioned previously, unless we discuss something that can be of potential harm to your partner or other officers, anything we talk about comes under the patient/doctor confidentiality clause."

Rubbing his hand on his thighs, Starsky nodded. "Okay. Let's get started then."

"Relax, Detective Starsky. We're all here to help you deal with this." Dr. Mitchell attempted to put her patient at ease. "Now, David, tell me how things have been going since we talked last? You mentioned that these dreams are starting to interfere with your job performance, correct?"

"Yep. That's part of the reason I want Hutch here."

"You mentioned that you've had more dreams. Do you remember any of them?"

"More like nightmares." Starsky grumbled.

"Why do you call them nightmares, David?" Dr. Mitchell folded her hands and looked at him intently, but with compassion.
"Doctor Mitchell, perhaps you should listen to this." Interrupted Hutch from the corner. "I did as you suggested and taped a few of David's dreams." He held out a cassette tape that Starsky passed to the doctor.

The doctor accepted the tape and asked Starsky if it was okay for him to play it. Her patient looked at the innocuous item, gulped audibly, then nodded, worried that whatever was on it might prove damaging to his relationship with Hutch, not to mention his job.

"JONATH...HUUUUTCH!" The sound of Starsky crying in anguish was disturbing to his partner as Hutch sat reliving the moment again. He shuddered at the cry, noticing that Dr. Mitchell was also startled at the distress Starsky's cry.

"Above all. I love thee above all. Do not thou forget." Then came the sound of a mattress creaking and covers rustling.

"David, it's another dream. Come on, everything's okay." Hutch's voice was obvious over the magnetic tape, but muffled. "What are you dreaming, babe? What's bothering you?"

"I felt like my life was ending, but I was still alive. It was a nightmare." Starsky remarked over the tape.

"You mean like you were being smothered or buried alive? Like in your late night monster movies?"

"Not like that kind of nightmare. This was like something killed what made me...me, ya know?"

"No, not really. But Starsk, it's just a dream. Remember that. It's not real."

After some indistinguishable sounds Starsky spoke again. "Hutch? You...you aren't going anywhere are you?"

"When, now?"

"No, it's just...I got the feelin' that these dreams are connected to you."

A clicking sound was heard, as if someone had turned off the machine, followed by a lengthy silence, then a softer click. Then came an incantation.

"Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be no rain upon you, nor fields of offerings; for there the shield of the might is vilely cast away. From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the might, the bow of Jonathan turned not back. Jonathan was lovely and pleasant in his life and in his death we wilt not be divided; he was swifter than eagles, stronger than lions.

How are the might fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thy high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan, my lover; very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of all women.

Turning off the machine, Dr. Mitchell looked at both men in the eye. "Based on what I just heard can I assume that the two of you are in a homosexual relationship? With each other?"

Blond and dark brown heads nodded slowly, simultaneously.

"I'm not going to dwell on the dangers of this type of relationship in your job. I'm sure you're aware of them. I
feel in a quandary, because romantic relationships are frowned upon for working partners, yet I do realize we are under a 'doctor/patient' confidentiality clause." She paused and sighed for effect while gathering her thoughts. "I would recommend that you at least inform your superior, but unless I hear of or see any danger arising from this situation, I'm going to keep counsel for now."

"Thank you." Hutch said with quiet meaning from his corner. He told himself there was no way they could say anything to Dobey.

She turned to Starsky, "Now David, do you or have you ever known a Jonathan?"

Shaking his head negatively, Starsky denied the question for the umpteenth time.

"Can you answer the question? I'm afraid my tape recorder doesn't pick up gestures." Dr. Mitchell smiled soothingly.

"No. I don't think I ever knew a Jonathan, even back home in New York."

"And this 'Jonathan' keeps reappearing in your dreams?"

"Yeah. But I swear Hutch's the only guy in my life. Ever. That I love like that." He clarified.

"Do you always use archaic speech patterns? In these dreams?"

"Huh?"

"The way you spoke, Starsk, on the tape. The older terms and phrases."

"I guess Hutch would know more than me about that. I don't really remember much from them."

Sitting back in her chair, Doctor Mitchell thought for a moment. "I think you might be right David. About these dreams, or nightmares, having some sort of connection with Hutch's and your relationship."

'Uh, oh,' thought Starsky. 'Here comes the part where she tells us that our love for each other is because of some negative psychobabble conflict; and that we shouldn't be together.' He braced himself.

"Have you ever heard of past-life regression?"

That was not the reaction or response Starsky expected. "Huh? Past life? Like reincarnation stuff?"

"Yes, but we don't like to use that term." She looked over to Hutch. "Detective Hutchinson, have you?"

"I know the idea became popular in the '50s with the Virginia Tighe case, and has grown somewhat in paranormal studies and in the remaining hippie culture."

"Yes. But it's also becoming a serious study in the psychiatric field also."

Starsky broke in, waving his hands back and forth between him and Hutch as he turned halfway around in his chair, "But what does this have to do with me? Or us?"

"Detective Starsky, the terminology you used in your dream sequences and the verse you spoke leads me to believe you might be reliving a past life of your relationship with Detective Hutchinson in your dreams. Your partner might even have played a part in this past life."

Starsky was doubtful, "Oh, come on. You don't really subscribe to that stuff do you?" While he believed in...
many mystical things — the existence of Big Foot, the reality of UFOs — one thing Starsky always had a hard
time coming to grips with were any ideas that touched on the paranormal and the mind.

"I've studied it in school briefly, and while I've never treated anyone with the condition, you do have the
classic symptoms." She ticked them off on her fingers. "Dreams, inability to sleep, inability to distance the
dream's emotions from real life, images that overlap while you're awake, and the verbiage and terminology
you use."

"I wonder if you'd consider hypnotherapy to try to release these dreams and emotions. While I'm not trained
in past life regression therapy, I can recommend someone with the proper qualifications."

Starsky addressed his partner, "Hutch? What do you think? You're the one who believes in this kinda stuff."

"I think it's worth a shot, Starsk. Especially if it helps you."

Turning back to the doctor Starsky reluctantly agreed.

"Okay, let me contact my colleague and I'll have my secretary call you later today with an appointment. It
will probably be held at his office, if that's okay."

Starsky shrugged his shoulders. "Can Hutch come?"

"I would recommend it. Depending on your results, we might want to try to hypnotize him also." She wrote
something down on her notepad. "In the meantime, I recommend you be reassigned to desk duty until we get
this resolved." Coughing lightly, the department psychiatrist also recommended that they distance themselves
from each other for awhile. "Take a break in other words."

"Can't do that Doc. Hutch needs me."

"Starsky. I'm not an invalid. I can stay by myself."

"Yeah, and who's gonna get your stuff for you, and help you with your bath, and all that other stuff I've been
doing?" He looked at the doctor. "We'll work something out Doc. Thanks." And he rose to help his partner to
his feet and to the car.

~*~

Doctor Mitchell set up an appointment for Starsky with Dr. Les MacGruder, a hypnotherapist who had
experience not only in past-life regression, but also memory retrieval therapy.

Looking like any other psychiatric office with dark paneling, masculine colors, and the staple bookshelf, Dr.
MacGruder sat down at a plain table with a simple white tapered candle in the middle. He offered the chair
opposite him to Starsky while Hutch sat behind his partner in a leather wing chair.

After introductions and a brief rundown of what brought them to Dr. MacGruder's office, Dr. Mitchell and
Hutch sat behind Starsky so as to not distract either man.

"I thought Dr. Mitchell would've mentioned all this to you at the time she set up the appointment." Hutch
inquired as he took his seat, not sure now of his confidence in the abilities of the either professional.

"Yes, she did. But I wanted to see upfront if Mr. Starsky—"

"Dave, please." Starsky interrupted.
He nodded an acknowledgement of Starsky's request. "Okay, if Dave, was going to be upfront and honest from the beginning. Trust is very important in the art of hypnotizing." He looked around the small office. "Shall we begin now?"

"Mr. Starsky, I would like your permission to tape our conversation as Dr. Mitchell did with your sessions together."

Starsky nodded, knowing this was normal procedure, then belatedly remembered to add a verbal agreement.

After turning on the machine that sat unobtrusively by his elbow, Dr. MacGruder began the process of hypnotism. "Okay, first I'd like you to close your eyes and take several deep breaths."

Shaking his shoulders to loosen them, Starsky complied.

"Now starting at your toes and continuing with each muscle upward, clench and unclench them twice, making them totally relax the second time you unclench the muscle."

This process took approximately ten minutes, and while Starsky was doing this, Dr. MacGruder turned on a soundtrack overhead of waves breaking, and lit the white tapered candle.

"Now David, I want you to open your eyes slowly and look into the flame."

"Keep looking at the flame, and don't blink. Breathe slowly in through your nose and out through your mouth."

Staring at the flame and breathing slowly, Starsky began to feel slightly lightheaded, but not enough to pass out.

"Keep the image of the flame in your mind, and close your eyes." The therapist told him. "Do you still see the flame?" Languidly Starsky nodded. "Okay, visualize a stairway before you. You're at the top step and the flame is still before you."

"I want you to walk down the first step and continue to follow the flame downwards. As you go down the stairway, you're going back...back to another time...back to another person. I want you to distance yourself emotionally from anything you see. You're still David Starsky and you'll be able to hear and answer me."

"Tell me what you see when you get to the bottom of the stairs."

A few more minutes passed before Starsky let out a deep breath and responded in a husky voice, "There's a doorway, the flame is filling most of it."

"Is the door opened or closed?"

"Closed. I think."

"Okay, before you open the door and go through it, if you need to come home, at any time I want you to say the word 'ball."

The curly head nodded once in acknowledgment.

"Good. You can walk through the flame and open the door now, David. It won't hurt you." Dr. MacGruder waited another minute before he continued. "What do you see?"

"Desert. It's warm, dry. There're some tents and flags to the right and farther away."
"Walk toward the tents David. Can you tell what's happening?"

"There're men dressed for battle around a large tent and several guards in front of it holding long spears. Some of the men are walking toward me."

"Describe them."

"They're kinda short. Long brown hair to their shoulders. Everything's dirty and dusty. They're wearing leather skirts, hide vests with no shirts underneath, and bows strapped to their backs. On their feet are some kind of open-footed leather sandals with hide or cloth straps that crisscross up to their knees. On their heads are metal helmets that kinda look like half a football and come down over their ears. Some of them are bloody and have scratches or other injuries."

This was a much better description that the doctor had hoped for. "Excellent. You said they were approaching you. Do they say anything?"

"Yes. One is telling me that the Israeli battle against the Philistines has been lost. They drop to their knees and offer me their allegiance. They're talking in a different language, but I can understand them somehow." Starsky's face showed awe. Behind him, Hutch's eyes started to go round with dawning understanding.

"What happens next?"

"I put my hands on their shoulders and walk toward the tent." Starsky's face shows visible shock before he speaks again. "There's a man's head on a post."

"Can you describe him?"

"He's older, maybe 50. He's wearing a helmet too, bronze maybe, with gold; and he's got gray hair in Shirley Temple-like curls, even his beard." Starsky's voice fades a little and gets sad. "I know him. He was my adopted father, my king. He loved me, but he feared me."

"David, are you okay?" Dr. MacGruder broke in as he noticed Starsky's forehead beginning to bead with sweat.

"Yeah, I think so. It's so sad. He could've had everything, but was jealous — of me!" He sounded incredulous.

Dr. MacGruder continued, seeing no other outward distress in his patient. "What happens next?"

"I'm walking toward some big hills. Or dunes, I think." Beneath his closed lids, Starsky's eyes were squinting, as if looking at a distance or towards sunlight. "There's men lying everywhere. Blood and broken arrows and spears. A battle, this is a battlefield." He said in dawning understanding.

All of a sudden Starsky took a gasp of breath and jerked backward in his chair. "JONATHAN!" His breathing got faster, as if he had just run a race, and more sweat began to bead from his pores.

"David. Stay with me. Who is Jonathan? What happened to him?"

"My brother, my soul mate...He's lying here in this battlefield. He's all bloody and his brown eyes are staring at me, but he can't see me." Starsky began to tear up and shake his head back and forth. "No, no, no." He chants.

"David. Distance yourself. This is not really happening, remember."

But Starsky was on a single minded course and didn't hear the therapist. He lamented....
More than a brother to me, Jonathan,
One in soul with me...
How could I have taken such evil advice
And not stood by your side in battle?
How gladly would I die
And be buried with you!
Since love may do nothing greater than this,
And since to live after you
Is to die forever:
Half a soul
Is not enough to live.
Then - at the moment
of final agony -
I should have rendered
Either of friendship's dues:
To share the triumph
Or suffer the defeat;
Either to rescue you
Or to fall with you,
Shedding for you that life
Which you so often saved,
So that even death would join
Rather than part us.
I can still my lute,
But not my sobs and tears:
A heart too is shattered
By the plucking of stricken hands,
The hoarse sobbing of voices.**
Dr. MacGruder tried to intercede. "David! Concentrate! Listen to my voice. Can you hear me?"

A slight nod once.

"I want you to look at the sun David. Look at the sun and watch it turn into a flame."

His crying slowly subsided, but the sorrow was still evident in the hypnotized detective's demeanor.

"Do you see the flame?"

"Yes."

"Now walk toward the flame. Just beneath it you will find some steps. Walk up them - following the flame - toward the sound of my voice."

Starsky began to relax, but his face still showed some lingering anguish and fear.

"Take a deep breath when you get to the top of the stairs and blow out the flame."

Pursing his lips together, Starsky exhaled a puff of air, which blew out both the imaginary and real flame.

"Open your eyes now, David."

By this time Hutch was sitting forward in his chair with his hands clasped in his lap. The sound of waves crashing from the ceiling speaker seemed louder to Hutch.

Starsky opened his eyes. Their dark blue was even darker with glistening tears and sorrow.

Dr. MacGruder looked intently into his eye. "Do you remember anything?"

"Just the same feeling of loss I always feel when I wake up. But..." He looked around for Hutch, slightly disoriented.

"But what?" Dr. MacGruder prodded gently.

The detective turned around in his seat and pointed to his partner. "Hutch was there, I think. He was on the ground. Covered with blood." Starsky seemed confused, and his voice reflected it. "But it wasn't him."

Hutch's face drained of any remaining color. "Maybe he's overlapping events from the other week when I was injured?"

Dr. MacGruder sat back and put a finger on his chin. "Could be. But in my professional opinion, you were reliving an experience from a past life, possibly as King David."

"King David? The Bible's King David?" Starsky fell back and began shaking his head. "No way. Can't be."

"Why can't it be, Detective?" The doctor asked. "Don't you believe our souls can travel or experience other times and lives and then be reborn?"

"I don't know. It's not really my cup of tea. It's sounds kind of brazen to me to assume that I was King David. Besides, my ma — not to mention her Rabbi — would have my hide if I claimed to be King David in another life. The only reason I can pinpoint this is because I've studied Jewish history and tradition."

Starsky shook his head picturing his mother smacking him upside and calling him 'cheeky'.
The other man chuckled. "There's no need to tell her." He looked over Starsky's shoulder at Hutch. "How do you feel about this, Detective Hutchinson?"

Blinking rapidly, Hutch sputtered out, "I don't...I guess I believe in the possibilities, but I...I never thought...Starsky? King David?"

"Why not?"

"And do his dreams signify that, uh I was, uh King's Saul's son Jonathan? Is that why these dreams and feelings he's been having map over so vividly in real life?"

"Who's to say that what Dave is dreaming isn't also real life? I prefer the term, 'current day'. But to answer your question: Possibly. If you are a believer in reincarnation — as I am — then we believe that many soul mates have a tendency to find each other throughout time and history. Sometimes their lives meet but don't touch; sometimes they have such a profound impact on each other that time cannot simply erase those emotions. Such as you two do today, and possibly did as King David and Prince Jonathan — if those were your personas. And judging by what Dr. Mitchell told me about your partner's reaction to your stabbing the other week, Detective Starsky has this lingering fear of you leaving him in some form or another."

"So what do we do with this information now?" Hutch asked. Starsky was obviously still stunned over the therapist's conclusion of his dreams; Hutch didn't think he'd twitched a muscle in the intervening minutes.

Looking and nodding at the man across from him, Dr. MacGruder suggested that David continue with some therapy, perhaps joint counseling, until his deep seated fear could be overcome. "In the meantime, unless he has problems or issues on the job, he should be okay for desk duty. I would suggest street duty wait until we've had a chance to talk a few more times."

~*~

Captain Dobey accepted the request for Starsky's temporary reassignment to desk duty without comment or question. He knew something was bothering the curly-haired man, consequently affecting his job performance, and had been considering grounding him himself. However he was pleased that Starsky took it upon himself to get help without having to be forced to. And since Hutch would still be on leave for a week or so, it made for less office headaches trying to partner Starsky with someone who couldn't deal with his brand of police work.

Taking one session a week with Dr. MacGruder, Starsky appeared to be making progress. The dreams seemed to have subsided, though the fear of losing Hutch did not go away quite so easily.

Coming home from a therapy session several weeks later, Starsky was greeted by a tired Hutch lying on the living room couch. "Hey, Starsk. What'cha want for dinner?"

All he could see of his partner was the top of a blond head lying on the arm of the couch. Looking over at the clock on the bookshelf, the red numbers told him it was 6:45. Starsky wondered what was up with his partner. Hutch always had dinner ready, or at least started, on evenings that Starsky had therapy. "Hey, ya lazy lug," he said, taking a light, friendly swing at the top of the head as he walked by, "ain't it a little late to be starting dinner?"

At the light swat, Hutch's shoulders came up in a cringe and he brought his right hand up to hold his head. "Ow."

"I didn't hit you that hard. Quit bein' a baby."
"I'll get it ready. You didn't tell me what you wanted." Hutch asked again. As he raised his head to get off the couch, Starsky noted the white band on his head, just above his left eye and across his temple, as well as the stark bruise around his eye and left cheekbone.

Dropping his gun and holster on the armchair, Starsky rushed behind his partner as he walked to the kitchen. "Shit! What the hell happened?"

Rubbing his head lightly without turning around, Hutch answered, "It's nothing Starsk. Not even a concussion, just some bruising and a bad cut. Not even any stitches."

"So what the hell happened?" he asked again. "Did Dobey send ya out without me? What the hell was he thinking? You're still supposed to be on desk duty."

"I fell, Starsky." Hutch sighed, hating to admit to being clumsy. "Down the stairs at the precinct on my way out. That's all — no big deal."

Starsky put his hands on Hutch's shoulders and turned him around, looking deeply into the bright eyes before him. "You fell? That's it? He reached up and petted some loose strands on Hutch's forehead that fell around the white bandage. "You didn't pass out or anything, right?"

Grasping Starsky's hand by the wrist, Hutch pulled it down and growled, "Starsky! I'm o-kay. I've got one hell of a headache, and you're making it worse."

"I just worry about ya." Starsky lowered his head to Hutch's chest.

Pulling his love closer, Hutch wrapped his arms around Starsky's waist. "I know you do, and I can't tell you to stop worrying, that'd be calling the kettle black." The difference between Starsky's reaction to this minor injury compared to the one of a few weeks ago, was noticeable. "I think you're getting better at it though," he added for some levity.

"Yeah. Doc MacGruder's been real good. Helping me to face that all we can do is deal with what's in front of us. Stop worrying about 'what ifs' that may never happen. We've also been talking about past stuff, like the Plague. Says maybe I never dealt properly with those things then, and they've been building up all this time."

"Not a bad idea. Dr. Mitchell did the same with me during and after Gunther."

"He thinks that maybe that's why all this started. Plus, the talk about taking new jobs on the force, was a dam. Like a jar of water that kept flooding and had no where to go but pour out somehow."

Hutch nodded his head. "I did wonder about that. Even with all you've been through, I'm still glad it wasn't over some other lover."

"Never, Blintz." Starsky guffawed and elbowed Hutch lightly in the upper forearm.

Since his lover wasn't feeling up to par, Starsky offered to make dinner while Hutch rested. "Whatever you want, babe. Well, as long as it doesn't contain worm livers or toad testicles."

"Worm livers? Toad testicles? Starsky, there are no such things."

"Exactly." The brunet grinned impishly back at him.

"Are you implying that I eat what amounts to nothing?"

"If the bean sprout's in your salad....."
After dinner they rested on the couch together. Hutch's head in Starsky's lap, while the latter watched game shows as he thread his fingers through the blond hair. Hutch kept his eyes closed and basked in the gentle, almost dreamy, ministration.

"Mmm...." He stretched his long neck upward like a cat beseeching for more strokes. "You wanna talk?"

Starsky just shook his head negatively, forgetting that Hutch's eyes were closed and he couldn't see his response.

"Starsk?" The light blue eyes opened to his partner's forward stare; his dark countenance staring, but not really watching, the television.

"Huh?" Starsky glanced down at the paler than normal face. "Oh." His shoulders came up and dropped in a resigned shrug. "Not much to tell. It's just...I'm still afraid." Starsky closed his eyes and sighed, "I lost you once. It could happen again. Especially in a job like ours." Then he shrugged again. "Hell, I'm not sure I even believe in that post-life stuff. It's pretty heady shit. But if it's true...

"Starsky, we were two different people then and it was a different world. Just because we might've been separated once doesn't mean it's gonna happen every time we find each other. Besides, what if we were someone else at another time, too? I think the chances that we've been several people throughout history are pretty high. And there's no saying that we didn't have happy, fulfilling lives together in any of those."

"David, look at me." Hutch reached up and grabbed the prickly chin. "I'd like to believe our destiny is to keep finding and loving each other throughout the ages. No matter whom we were or are. Even if we're gibbons. You should focus on that, rather than who we might've been and how we were separated and if it could happen again."

Starsky pondered that for a moment, letting it bounce around in his heart and mind. "I like that idea. Never thought of it that way."

"I look at the ½ empty glass enough for both of us. Don't add to it, okay?" Hutch continued to pull the darker face forward and gave the irresistible mouth a gentle kiss. "No matter what happens, babe, I love you. I love you now and I'll love you throughout time."

He got up off his lover's lap and the couch. "Come on, babe. Let's call it a night. We've both had an exciting day." He pulled Starsky up by the hand and led him into the bedroom.

~*~

Several months later:

Starsky was back on active street duty and down to one visit a month with Dr. MacGruder.

He was startled when he found that his fear of losing Hutch also had its roots in the senseless loss of his father at an early age, and the subsequent separation from his mother and brother. He also became more comfortable talking about his relationship with Hutch to Dr. MacGruder.

One night after a session with the psychiatrist, Starsky came home later than planned.

Hutch was in Starsky's kitchen just pulling a casserole out from the oven, when Starsky came in, his arms laden with packages.

"You're late." Hutch quipped without turning around.
"Had to make a couple of stops." Starsky dropped off the packages on the couch and walked over to Hutch. He kissed the slightly bent figure on the side of the neck and patted Hutch's back.

"Where? What did you get?"

"Later." Starsky couldn't hide the glee and mischievousness on his face.

After a relaxing dinner with easy conversation, Hutch cleared the table and grabbed a beer out of the refrigerator.

"Want one?" He asked his partner as he walked past him to the living room.

Starsky grabbed the unopened bottle from Hutch's hand. "Nope, and neither do you."

"Oh, I don't?" One of Hutch's eyebrows raised in questioning confidence.

"Don't you wanna see what I bought?"

"Okay, I'll play." Hutch sighed. "What newfangled gadget did you get that's supposed to make our lives better?"

"That's what I'm hoping, that you'll wanna play." Starsky walked to his packages sitting on the couch where he'd left them when he came in earlier. "Stopped at 'Uncle Ernie's' and then 'Acme Costumes'."

"You went to a porn shop and a costume store?" Hutch wasn't sure he wanted to know the direction this conversation was going.

Starsky pulled out some leather ties from one bag, and what looked like a leather skirt from another.

"Wanna play 'David and Jonathan'?" He leered at Hutch, who's mouth dropped open.

"Wha...What the hell?!" Stuttered his astonished lover.

"Doc MacGruder says I should embrace the idea that I could've been King David and to learn more about the lifestyle and culture. After all it is part of my background."

"Somehow I doubt he meant using these... What are they?"

Holding up the leather straps, Starsky explained what his 'accessories' were for. "These are similar to the straps that the Israelite warriors used to attach their weapons onto their bodies. And this," he lifted the 'skirt', "is a warrior's dress like they wore in combat."

"Dress is about right." Snorted Hutch.

"So how 'bout it, lover?" Starsky asked as he threw one of the leather kilts to Hutch. Who caught it in his arms, but the expression on his face told a different story.

"You look like I just made you eat a burrito. Come on, Hutch. It might be fun."

"I can think of some other fun I'd rather be having."

"Yeah? Well that's the plan." Starsky leered and winked at his lover.
Hutch made a grab for the straps that Starsky held in his other hand, but Starsky pulled them back and out of Hutch's reach. "Oh, no. Those are for me."

"And just what do you plan on doing with them?"

"I'm sure I can think of something." He swatted Hutch's rear. "Now go change, my handsome Prince."

When Hutch was finished 'dressing' — or undressing as he saw it - he found Starsky in his bedroom standing with his rear facing the doorway. He stood for a moment admiring the muscular, bowed legs, imagining the plush rear beneath the leather kilt, visualizing an oral mapping of the valley of that burly back where the spine lay, and recalling the times he held onto the lean, but strong shoulders.

"Something tells me your plans are going to change." Hutch whispered.

"Huh?" Starsky heard Hutch behind him, and turned. Upon seeing his lover, his eyes burned brightly with lust. "Man, babe, you're hot."

"Look who's talking. You look like a Greek statue come to life."

The next thing Starsky knew, Hutch was directly in front of him, those long legs crossing the room in two strides. Before Starsky could take his plans in hand and get his lover into the bed, Hutch was on his knees before him; broad hands running up his thighs and cupping his genitals hidden beneath the leather, where a surprise awaited him.

Starsky was commando.

From the moment Hutch touched him, all Starsky was able to communicate was a groaning "Uh...Hutch..."

Hutch knew how to render his partner helpless. "Slight change of plans, babe." Rubbing his face gently into the leather before him, Hutch warned Starsky, "We're doing my version of David and Jonathan."

"Your version?" Starsky grabbed the long blond strands on Hutch's head. He didn't care what Hutch's version was, as long as the tender ball play continued and progressed further. He pushed Hutch's head closer to his groin, knowing that he risked marking impressions on his pale face from the leather, but not caring at that point. "You'll have to show it to me."

"That's the new plan." Hutch's voice had a smirk in it, his fingers reaching up to tickle Starsky's balls and lay pressure on the area just behind them.

By unbuckling his belt, Starsky sent a signal to his lover that playtime was over. He pushed the waistband over his hips, and Hutch pushed the kilt down the rest of the way.

With the kilt at his feet, Starsky stood before the kneeling Hutch in all his natural glory.

Hutch didn't bother to remove his own kilt. He leaned forward and began an oral adoration of Starsky's desire filled cock, while using his left hand to continue the fingertip massage of Starsky's balls. Which vibrated and retracted at the feather-lite touch.

Pleasure filled grunts and groans from Starsky became more demanding. Hutch obliged by putting his first two fingers in his mouth, lathering them with saliva, then reaching behind Starsky and pushing them into the tightened anus.

"Uh...damn. Sunuva....Oh, damn, Hutch." Starsky's fingers dug deep into Hutch's shoulder to steady himself.
While Starsky groaned incomplete sentences, Hutch continued to finger fuck him on one end and suck him on the other, while Starsky rocked his hips to get more and more stimulation from the luscious mouth and the long, thick fingers.

With one long groan and a lunge toward Hutch's throat, Starsky came, bathing his lover's throat with all the essence Hutch could wring out of him.

Hurriedly, Hutch stood up and guided a shaky Starsky backward to the edge of the bed and helped him to lie down before he collapsed on the floor.

"Oh, man. That was great, babe." Starsky said, once he got his breathing under control. He rolled onto his side, watching his partner. "Your turn."

"Too late." Hutch removed his kilt, revealing his flaccid cock. He climbed into the bed next to Starsky, cuddling close.

"What?" Starsky sat up and looked down on the floor. The kilt he had been wearing lay where Hutch had slipped it off. A creamy fluid pooled on the leather. "You mean..."

"Yep." Hutch was neither ashamed nor embarrassed. "Doing you makes me so hot."

"Now I gotta have it cleaned." Groaned Starsky. But an impish grin on his face gave away that he was not upset. "Should I be honored?"

"You better be." And Hutch leaned in for a kiss.

"We should do this more often," whispered Starsky.

Chuffing, his breath rustling his bangs, Hutch commented, "You're insatiable. I think we do it often enough." He rubbed his hand on Starsky's shoulder, always feeling that touch was the perfect way through the afterglow, sometimes arousing them for another round of loving.

"Not that. Role playing."

"Yeah." Starsky got into the idea. "You know, pick characters from history and pretend to be them. Robin Hood and Little John, Oscar Wilde and Lord Alfred, Richard the Lionheart and Philip of Spain, Alice Toklas and Gertrude Stein..."

"Starsky! They were women!"

"So? We could pretend, couldn't we?" Starsky flashed his long eyelashes copiously.

"I'm not dressing up in a skirt and hose!"

"Not even for me?" Starsky pouted with exaggeration. "You wore a leather skirt for me just now."

Hutch groaned, and tried to change the subject. "I've got a better idea." He kissed Starsky's shoulder lightly. "Why don't we just pretend we're trapped in this bed with no clothes and see where it takes us?"

Starsky closed his eyes with the onslaught of fingers traveling up and down his arm and chest. "Mmm...I think I need more persuasion. Less discussion."

With that, talk ceased as Hutch rolled over onto Starsky and took his mouth in a deep, lingering kiss; designed to melt away everything but the two of them and their love.
Jonathan's spirit lingered just beyond the field and he watched as his friend and lover laid the bodies of himself and his father into a cavern of a large hill. He felt David's pain as the other man mourned the passing of his friends: lover and king. He felt no fear, no sorrow, no anger. Jonathan only felt peace. He knew now that they had an eternity to look forward to. This was just one step of a long journey together.

"For ever in time we shall meet, my David. For I belong to thee. And thou art mine. Do not thou fret. It shall be as Me and Thee for all time."

He turned around and walked into the Lord's light to wait for his friend. Eternity stretched out before them. Life times of experiencing and learning; loss and sorrow; love and happiness.

**Peter Abelard, sixth plantus**