Confessions
by
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**Summary:** Hutch invites Starsky into an undercover assignment to save him from his "girlfriend". Is anything ever so simple?

**Warning:** Adult content and violence. If offended by this style of material please read no further.
-------Chapter One------

Hutch sat at his desk, his head down as he typed away on his typewriter, pencil in his mouth as Starsky paced the squad room nervously, looking at his watch and then impatiently staring at his partner. Hutch looked up at the curly haired cop, feeling his stress.

"Relax Starsk, we'll get this report finished before you have to meet Jenny."

The brunette looked at his watch again. "If you type any slower, I'm gonna be late...this is our first date...have you seen her? She is a knock out; she's smart and has great assets. I've never seen assets like that before."

"You say that about all of your dates." Hutch retorted.

"Yeah, but she's different, and I really think she likes me Hutch."

Hutch leaned forward and pulled the paper out of the typewriter, slapping the report on the desk and holding out a pen for Starsky to sign the sheet of close typed words.

"Hey Buddy, do you really think it is a good idea to date a fellow cop, I mean, you haven't had the best luck with that you know?" Hutch tried desperately to talk reasonably to his best friend.

"It's a date Hutch, we ain't exactly making wedding plans." Starsky quipped back as he signed the paper and slapped the pen back on the table. "Yet at least anyway," he joked and winked at his partner as he grabbed his jacket off the back of his chair and flung it on quickly. "Besides, it took me a whole week to get this date with her, I don't wanna blow it and have to wait another week or two. I wouldn't have the courage to ask again" the curly haired detective responded as he headed out of the squad room. "I'll call you later, maybe we can get together this weekend for a beer." Starsky flung over his shoulder as he pushed through the swinging doors. "Take it easy and have a good one." His voice trailed off as he disappeared down the hall.

Hutch shook his head and looked down at the desk, signed his name on the report and placed it in the metal separator on his desk in the "reports" completed section. Those would be collected, processed and on Dobey's desk by morning. He stood, stretched his back and grabbed his own jacket from the back of his chair. His mind wandered to his partner, and his boyish enthusiasm for his date tonight, thinking about how lucky the brunette was to be going out with Jenny. Detective Jenny McAlister had just transferred over from the fourth precinct a couple of weeks ago. She was smart, beautiful and available and Hutch knew from the first moment that both detectives had seen her, that Starsky was going to pursue her, so he backed off, letting his partner have first pickings.

Starsky managed to conveniently be at the station as much as possible when he knew she would be starting or ending a shift. He made sure that Zebra Three backed up her unit, Zebra Seven, any time the call came over the radio, no matter how far they were from the incident. Hutch found his partner's excitement both endearing and charming and he just hoped that things worked out. If anyone deserved true happiness and love, it was his lovable, slightly goofy partner. The blond had rarely seen Starsky this excited since Terry had died, taken too young by a bullet meant to cause the brunette the worst pain possible. Guilt and the loss of a loved on, all wrapped into one.

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Starsky and Jenny McAllister enjoyed their cozy dinner in Rigoletto's Italian Restaurant, a quaint little place near his apartment, complete with ambiance, red checkered table clothes and candles that were embedded in dark amber glasses as the light of the flame inside flickered, casting shadows across Jenny's face, her olive skin accentuating her jet black hair and her large, intriguing emerald green eyes. Her laugh mesmerized the curly haired detective as Starsky found himself getting lost in her presence.

They spent the night, talking and sharing stories, both of childhood and about their careers. Starsky had not felt this relaxed and at ease with a woman in a long time and the night seem to get away from them. Her hair was silky and smooth, draped over her shoulders, contrasting sharply with her white buttoned down shirt that was unbuttoned enough for Starsky to be able to see two ample bosoms pushed up, close together, the mounds nearly falling out of the top of the opening. He tried his best to ignore her assets, wanting to be the gentleman, and being attracted this woman's mind and personality, almost as much as he was attracted to her body.

When she laughed, her face lit up, her beautiful smile erupted across her face, occasionally throwing back her head, exposing her lean neck. Starsky lost himself at the thought of kissing and gently stoking it as he tried hard to pay attention to their topic of conversation.

They ate their dinner and enjoyed a bottle of wine as the night wore on. They found that not only did they have their careers in common, but several other things as well, baseball being one of them. Jenny let the dark haired detective know that her favorite team was the White Sox, and how much she enjoyed traveling to see them when they came anywhere close to Bay City.

Before he knew it, dinner was finished, the wine was gone and the evening was coming to an end. He knew it was almost time to take her home, but he didn't want the evening to end. He looked into her eyes, his own indigo ones searching hers. He wanted her to know how much this evening had meant to him, it had been so long since he had felt this way, the butterflies in his stomach; the nerves of saying good-night; the possibilities of a kiss to end the evening.

"I guess I should be getting you home pretty soon." Starsky offered, wanting so badly for her to stay with him, but doing the right and gentlemanly thing in taking her home.

He felt like he was in high school again, unsure and worried about how to end the night. She was beautiful, striking, and he had no idea why she was out with him, and why they had such a good time, all he knew is he never wanted to let go of this feeling. She held her glass in her hands, her large green eyes, looked up at him, piercing him with intensity. Her dark, long lashes swept across her cheeks as she slowly battèd her eyes once, looking back up at him, her tongue licking her upper lip.

"I was hoping to be able to go back to your place for a nightcap." She whispered seductively.

A flicker of excitement tingled inside him, happy that she had chosen, of her own accord, to accompany him back to his place, and that the night was not over, at least not yet. Just to be able to spend more time with her, conversing and getting to know her, made his heart skip a beat, the fluttering of butterflies in his stomach stirring once again.

"Well, um sure...my place is not far from here, so if you want to head back there, I think I have some wine." He stammered nervously.

"Wine? How about an ice cold beer? You got any of that?" She asked.

Starsky smiled a crooked smile "A girl after my own heart." He joked as he stood and rounded the table, pulling out her chair and offering his hand as she graciously accepted it and stood. They made their way to the cashier as Starsky pulled out his wallet, preparing to pay. He heard his date squeal as he turned around to
see her in an embrace with another man, he voice loud and excited.

"Ben, it is so good to see you again...how are all my boys down at 57?" She asked, pulling back from the man's grasp as Starsky took his change from the cashier and looked on.

"Ah Jenny, it just isn't the same around there without you." The large man said, a certain amount of sadness and...something else? filled his voice.

Jenny looked back at Starsky, her face flushing in embarrassment, "Oh Dave, I'm sorry, forgive my manners," with a wave of her hand she introduced the two, "Dave Starsky, this is Ben Schrader, Ben this is Detective Dave Starsky."

Both men shook hands politely. "Ben is a colleague from my old station; I haven't seen him since I got transferred." She explained. "Dave is one of my colleagues from my new home Ben."

"I see it didn't take you long to make friends Jenny." Ben noted as he held up his hand to the waitress, signaling that he was ready to be seated.

"Has it ever Ben?" She giggled as Starsky smiled, not understanding the joke. Jenny looked back at her date, "We better get going Dave, before it gets too late."

"Let me guess, drinks back at your place?" Ben winked at Starsky, giving him a slight nudge against his arm as he turned and bent to kiss Jenny on the cheek. "You be careful with this one, ya hear?" he concluded, a flicker of something other than playfulness behind his eyes.

Starsky was bothered by Ben's mere presence, and he wasn't sure if it was just because another male was giving his date attention, or the insinuations that he was making. But the brunette detective shrugged it off, gently placing his hand, cupping her elbow and leading her towards the doorway, speaking to Ben as the passed him.

"Pleasure meeting you Ben," he said half sarcastically, and the other half insultingly.

There was something about the man that rubbed Starsky the wrong way, and at the moment, Starsky didn't have the luxury of sticking around and finding out.

"Tell the boys at 57 I said hello and give them my love." Jenny said to Ben as Starsky placed his hand at the small of her back and escorted her out of the restaurant, holding the door open for her as they passed through it.

Starsky opened the passenger door to his candy apple red Torino as she climbed in. Closing the door, he rounded the front of the car, opened the door and jumped behind the wheel of the car, starting it up, bringing the monstrous engine to life and feeling its engine vibrating beneath their seats. Dropping the shifter on the column of the steering wheel, down into drive, he hit the gas and with tires squealing, pulled away from the curb, leaving a small puff of smoke behind him.

Jenny wasted no time, scooting over to the middle of the bench seat, getting as close to Starsky as possible as he raised his arm and wrapped it around her shoulder, pulling her closer and enjoying the connection.

They drove along in silence, a smile spreading across Starsky's face as he felt the start of something special. He thought back to that afternoon and Hutch's warning and attempt at persuading him against dating a fellow officer, almost chuckling inside and thankful that he did not take his friend's advice.

Pulling up in front of his dark wood panel apartment, he killed the engine, climbed out of the car and made his way around the car to open her door, once again, offering her hand as she accepted it and climbed out. They made their way up the stairs and into his modest abode. Starsky took Jenny's jacket and hung it on the
coat rack by the door as he smiled and motioned her inside.

"Make yourself at home; I'll get us that drink." He offered as she took a seat on the couch.

Jenny sat on his couch as she watched him strut into the kitchen, hearing the fridge door opening, "That was red wine, right?" he joked as he was already reaching for the Coors.

"Thought you said your pad was stocked, I said I wanted beer, if you don't have any, we could always go to the store down the street." She raised her voice so he could hear her.

A smile broke across her face as she saw him walking back into the living room carrying two beers, smiling from ear to ear. He sat down next to her, putting one beer on the table and opening the other one, handing it to her. Then the brunet picked up the second beer, opening it up for himself. He allowed himself to fall against the back of the couch, relaxed and at ease.

Jenny scooted closer to him, her drink in hand, Starsky eyed her curiously. There was something about this woman that intrigued him, sparked his interest and made him want more.

"So tell me more about yourself, your family..." Starsky struggled to make small talk with this woman, "What about your partner? What is he like?"

"Well let's see..." she said coyly, taking a swig of her beer and setting the can on the coffee table, "...he's strong, and kind, and he watches out for me." She hissed as she leaned into the detective.

"Kind of like Hutch an' me..." Starsky stammered, "We watch each others backs. Must be hard for your partner, I mean...havin' to keep an eye out for you as well as himself."

"And what makes you think I can't take care of myself?" Jenny asked, a steely note in her voice.

"Well, I didn't mean that, it's just that you bein' a girl an' all...you gotta make sure he's always there in case you get in trouble." Jenny backed up, straightening her posture as she cocked her head back, "Excuse me?" she asked indignantly.

"Well, ah... I mean...you know..." Starsky stuttered, completely backing himself into a corner he was worried about not climbing out of alive. "I meant that if you were to get attacked or something, by a guy, that he would need to..."

"Need to what?" she disputed his comments before he could make them.

"Look," Starsky leaned forward, setting down his own beer, rubbing his temples with his thumb and forefinger, "m'sorry, I didn't mean nuthin by it...I was just sayin' that if I were your partner, I would never let you out of my sight." He tried to be suave, fixing the damage he had already begun to create. "I mean, what if some guy, three times bigger then you, attacked you..."

"I'd take him down!" Jenny snapped back.

Starsky muffled a laugh, covering his mouth with his hands.

"You don't believe me?" Jenny asked, hurt by his accusations. "Stand up!"

"W-w-what?" Starsky chuckled.
"You heard me, stand up! I'm gonna show you that I can handle myself." She stood, moving the coffee table out of the way.

Starsky lifted his hand, trying to stop her from moving the table any further, he leant forward on the couch to find his body jerked off the sofa and with a hefty thud, he was on his back, looking at the ceiling, Jenny's knee at his throat cutting off his airway. He choked, his eyes widening as she let up on his neck, pulling at his arm and helping him to his feet.

"Nice trick." Starsky coughed, "But that really wouldn't help you with the element of surprise." He argued, trying to heal his bruised ego.

Jenny smiled, licked her lips. "Come at me." She instructed the brunet.

"You're kiddin', right?" Starsky argued.

Putting up both hands in front of her, tauntingly she egged him on, "Come get me." She encouraged him.

Starsky found something about this event, extremely erotic and sensual, he shook his head disparagingly.

"If you're lookin' for a fight, I ain't bitin'." He waved her off only to find his arm grabbed roughly as his body was jerked forward and then spun around. His right arm, bent cruelly backwards and pressed upwards towards his shoulders. His whole body was shoved forward, into the paneled partition that separated his bedroom from the living room and inadvertently he grimaced in pain, sucking air in through his teeth.

"Look, I ain't gonna hurt a girl." He fought against the stabbing pain in his shoulder blade and the burn in his arm.

"No? Well that's too bad, cause this girl's gonna kick your ass!" Jenny spat vehemently as she pulled him back and shoved him towards his bed causing him to stumble and land face first on his soft mattress.

"Look lady!" He spat as he felt her hand firmly grab his arm and flung him over on his back. "Don't make me hurt you." He said as she smiled and jumped on his chest, pinning him to the bed.

"Promises, promises," she hissed as she leaned forward, clamping her mouth roughly onto his, kissing him deeply, parting his lips with her tongue and demanding entrance. Starsky stopped fighting, both of his arms wrapping around her tiny frame, feeling the strength of the woman who was masterfully enticing him, causing him to become aroused beyond his expectations. She quickly showed him that she was in charge tonight and whatever she said would happen. He felt the flicker of the flame of desire begin to grow deep inside him as he tried to sit up, only to find himself pinned against the bed once again. Jenny pulled back, looking deeply into his eyes, hungrily sizing up her prey.

"You aren't scared of me are you?" She asked him, her eyes becoming harder and colder, as if she wanted to see the fear in him.

"Should I be?" Starsky asked, his interest peeked as he felt the tightening of his jeans.

"Guess you'll just have to wait and see."

Starsky's arms were still behind her as he felt the cold metal bracelet clink closed around his right wrist. His eyes opened wide as he felt her jerk his arm to his side, attaching the other end of the cuffs to the foot board of his bed.

"What ya doin'?" he asked nervously, yet excited at the same time.
"Watch..." she hissed.

Biting her bottom lip, her sparkling emerald green eyes toyed with his Indigo blue ones. She dipped her head, burying her mouth into his neck, biting and nipping at him. Starsky closed his eyes, enjoying her ministrations as she begun to grind her hips against his.

--------Chapter Two--------

Jenny sat on top of the curly haired brunette, her knees up at his chest, bent forward, kissing his neck, his collarbone and then his mouth seductively traveling from one spot to the other. Starsky felt her crotch as she ground it against his lap, occasionally rubbing strategically over his rising erection. Her light weight pants and his heavy denim jeans separated them and were the only things stopping them from having actual intercourse. Starsky felt the fire deep inside him beginning to build as he felt his pants growing increasingly tighter.

Jenny let out a throaty moan as her hands traveled down his chest, and tugged at his shirt, pulling it free from his waistband. Starsky couldn't help but lift his hips, trying to increase the pressure of her crotch against his. His one restrained hand excited him even more as his free hand cupped the back of her head, pulling her into a deep rough kiss, forcing his tongue through her lips and demanding entrance into her hot wet mouth.

Her hands wildly ran across his muscled and rippled abdomen. Feeling every taut muscle mixed perfectly with dark curly hair. Pulling back slightly, looking deep into his eyes, she sat back on his lap, noting the ever increasing bulge in his jeans. She smiled as she slowly ran her hands across his shirt, grabbing it and ripping it open, laughing as the buttons flew off, hitting the walls and floor in all directions. Starsky looked into her olive complexioned face, the fire deep inside him growing. Her aggressiveness was something that he was not used to, but something that excited the brunette beyond his wildest dreams. Without realizing it, he found himself thrusting upward, trying to satisfy the urge that burned his groin, wanting to have contact and begging for attention.

She slowly used her hands and started to unbuckle his belt, pulling the thick leather strap through the metal loop. Starsky watched on in anticipation, the fire in his groin beginning to rise as he felt his erection harden. Jenny bit her bottom lip, her eyes locked with his. She finished pulling the belt free before allowing both hands to cover his groin, caressing it gently, and then become firmer and applying more pressure. Starsky tried to pull back, the touches becoming slightly uncomfortable as she lightened up, and used feather strokes, through his jeans, outlining his stiff cock, wrapping her fingers around it as best as possible, feeling it throb in the palm of her hand.

Reaching up with his free hand, he tried to grab her breast, wanting desperately to take its ample mass in his palm, grasping it firmly and pinching her erect nipples through her gauze thin shirt. He was startled when she slapped his hand way, instantly reddening his skin and leaving a sting in its wake. She giggled as she undid the button on his jeans, and slowly lowered the zipper. At that moment, he knew that tonight would be her way, and he had to succumb to her prowess if he wanted to every find release.

Jenny slowly slicked off her shirt, over both shoulders, exposing her pale pink lace bra that expertly pushed her breasts up, heaving perfectly round mounds that threatened to fall out of their confines. Starsky watched hungrily, wanting desperately to grab and caress her mountains of flesh, imagining himself, skillfully fingering her nipples, pinching with just enough pressure to entice and stimulate. Starsky could barely make out the dark circles of her areolas through the silk thin fabric. Her hand dropped to his lap, making its way between the flaps of his zipper and making contact, through his boxers, with his aching and painful erection. Starsky let out a moan, his hips rising slightly off the mattress, demanding further contact. She giggled as she attempted to wrap her hands around his shaft, finding his boxers to be more of a hindrance.
Climbing off of the man, she made her way to his side, "Lift up," she commanded as she started to pull down, first his jeans, then followed by his underwear. Starsky used his free hand to help her with her taxing duty. Once the jeans and underwear were past his hips and nearly to his knees, she got off the bed and pulled both legs, easily slipping them all the way off. Starsky's swollen member lay nearly flat against his belly, occasionally throbbing, in need of contact and attention. Starsky watched as she unbuttoned her tight pants and wiggling her hips, sliding them to the floor.

Starsky inhaled deeply as he got his first glance at this beautiful woman in front of him, fully naked, with one of the most beautiful bodies he had ever seen. He pulled against his cuffs wanting to free himself, grab her, throw her to the bed and making love to this woman. The desire inside of him was growing, his left hand traveled lower, grabbing his own erection, trying to satisfy it with his own touch.

She smiled coyly as she climbed back on the bed, removing his hand from his crotch and bending forward, taking his penis in her hand, lowering her head, and flicking her tongue over its head, taunting him mercilessly.

Starsky looked down with his eyes, pleading with her, lifting his hips, begging her to take him entirely into her mouth. His eyes were staring into hers, brow furrowed as she looked up at him, smiling at the intense look on his face. Laughing she crawled panther like up his body, legs and arms on either side of him. As her hips crossed over his, she lowered herself onto his upper lap, slowly sliding her body downwards, allowing his aching cock to easily slip inside her already wet and hot cave. Starsky sucked in a breath through his teeth at the sensation of being fully engulfed in her body, the sensation that shot through him, making him think he was going to shoot his load at any second.

Jenny sensed his urgency as he started to raise his hips thrusting himself deeper inside her, wanting to bury himself completely as she pulled away, causing him to fall out of her center. Disappointed, he groaned as he allowed his body to relax beneath her. Never had a woman enticed and teased him in this fashion. Never had he been at a partner's mercy like this. He loved every second of the experience.

She lay atop him, her breasts pressed against his chest as the brunette's left hand reached around, taking a handful of her ass in his palm and kneaded it firmly. He tried his best to guide himself back into her, but she would not allow it. He felt as if he was about to explode without having the satisfaction of delivering his seed, deep inside this woman who tormented him with her ministrations.

Starsky roughly grabbed the back of her head, a handful of hair, pulling her face up to meet his as his excitement started to grow to an uncontrollable level. His mouth claimed hers, their tongues danced and fought for control. The brunette release her head, grabbing her leg on the inner thigh and lifting it up on his waist, allowing him to be able to guide his cock to her entrance. Just as the tip of his throbbing member came into contact with her warm inviting pussy, he couldn't control himself any longer. With an animalistic groan, he lifted his hips, thrusting deep inside her as she cried out in delight. His hand then came up to her shoulder, pressing down, forcing his body further down on to his raging erection. He felt the blood rushing to his penis as his body teetered on the brink of explosion. She pulled back, looking into his eyes, watching him biting his bottom lip, shoving her body down as he thrust upward, burying himself deeper and harder into her. His pace became faster and the look on his face more intense, bordering on anger as he forced himself into her over and over again.

Just as he was about to release himself into her, she pulled off of him, looking down at him with an evil grin. He pursed his lips together in frustrations as he felt like there was no turning back and he reached for his aching hard on, only to have his hand slapped away by Jenny. She grabbed the wrist of his free hand, pulling it to his side.

"Uh huh, not yet." She warned him, knowing that he had fully intended on finishing himself off.
He looked deeply into her eyes, "Uncuff me." He demanded gruffly, his voice husky with need.

"Why, aren't you enjoying this?" she taunted him.

"Just do it. No more games." He demanded.

She could tell by the intense stare on his face that he was serious; he wanted to be released from his confines.

"What's the matter Dave? I thought all men liked my games." She hissed as she retrieved the keys by the lamp on the nightstand.

"Well, maybe I just ain't like all men." He teased playfully back with her as she leant over, hanging her round luscious boobs in his face purposefully. He lifted his head slightly, taking her nipple in his mouth, between his teeth, biting and nipping at it. She leaned forward, allowing her breast to press against his face nearly suffocating him as he lapped and licked it while she uncuffed his wrist.

The second he felt the metal bracelet drop from his wrist, freeing his, he reached up with both hands, grabbing her by the shoulders and rolling her over on her back, pinning her underneath him.

His mouth roughly claimed hers as his tongue parted her lips and demanded entry. There was a short battle for control between the two as Starsky felt the woman beneath him finally relax under his weight, succumbing to his ministrations. He took his knee, placing it between her legs as he forced them apart, dipping his waist between them, then thrusting forward, penetrating her with one forceful movement. A gasped escaped her lips as he held, deeply embedded inside her, pulling back and smiling into her face. She tried to raise her hips, attempting to force him to fuck her as he pulled back teasingly.

"No way, not yet." He decided to give her a taste of her own medicine as he felt her body start to tremble.

He once again, bent down, laying on top of her, kissing her neck and grabbing her firm round breast in one of his hands. He ground his hips against her, occasionally allowing just the tip of his cock to penetrate her, before pulling back. She did her best to try and take him in farther, but now HE was in control...and she was at his mercy. Starsky fought hard to control himself, his erection ached and was painful, begging for release as he continued to tantalize her sensations, listening to her squeak and moan below him.

He moved his mouth to her ear, and in a deep husky voice, he whispered. "M'gonna fuck the hell outta you."

Without another word, he lifted up, rolled her over and dragged her to the side of the bed, allowing her legs to dangle over the edge. Standing on the floor, he reached forward, with both hands, spreading her ass cheeks apart. Placing the tip of his dick against her entrance, he sucked in a deep breath. Pulling back slightly, then thrusting forward he rammed himself into her, letting out an animalistic growl as the sensations overcame him.

He pulled back, nearly all the way out, stopping just short of that, and then buried himself back into her, deeper then the last time. He heard her whimper, afraid that he may be hurting her, but she made no movements indicating she wanted him to stop. Leaning over her, he pulled back and then forward once again, continuing the slow tantalizing pace until he felt his climax begin to build. Finally, he could hold back no longer as his thrusts came faster and harder, his own grunting taking over as he watched his cock slip in and out of her slick pussy.

"Oh God..."He moaned as he rammed into her one final time, trying to force himself in farther then humanly possibly. Jenny reached down between her own legs and started playing with her clit, moaning and tossing her head from side to side. The sight of her in so much pleasure was more then Starsky could bear as he felt
the wave, starting at his toes and washing over him as they both joined in mutual climaxes, he felt her tense below him as she pushed her self back against his thrusts...The curly haired brunette continued to thrust into her, trying to make sure he deposited every drop he had, deep inside the woman on his bed as he felt her body finally starting to relax.

Panting and sweating, he fell against her, feeling the sudden rush of pure relaxation fall over him.

--------Chapter 3--------

Hutch walked up to Starsky's apartment, ready to start the day and get to work. It was a well know fact that Hutch was much more of a morning person then Starsky was. He knocked lightly on the front door, but when he heard no movement coming from inside, he reached into his pocket and dug out his keys, selecting the one for Starsky's house and letting himself in. He peeked inside, tilting his head around the corner of the door and quietly calling out.

"Hey Starsk? You up yet?" he spoke and then waited for a response.

Nothing

He let himself all the way into the apartment, looking around at the beer cans on the coffee table, smiling in knowing that Starsky had company the night before. He made his way through the small living room, and towards the bedroom.

"Starsky, you had better be up, Dobey's gonna kill us if..." His words were cut short as he saw his partner laying on his bed, above the covers, wearing absolutely nothing, and his blanket slung haphazardly over his ankles. The heavy scent of sex, hung in the air. "Ah jeez Starsk,"

The startled brunette woke with a start.

"Cover up would ya?" Hutch said as he quickly turned around and walked out of the room, leaving the curly haired cop scrambling for cover.

Starsky groggily grabbed the blanket at the foot of his bed and pulled it up around him, "Ever heard of knocking?" he grumbled as he looked to his side to make sure that his acquaintance was not exposed, finding himself slightly disappointed to see the that part of his bed empty. He looked over to the bathroom, the door was open and no noise came from within. Scanning the room, he realized that her clothes that were strewn about the room were gone, as was his date. With a heavy thud, he let himself fall back against the pillow, his arm coming up and resting against his forehead, all of the memories from last night, flooding his mind. A smile broke across his face as he stretched hard, allowing his back to arch up off the bed and both arms extending over his head. Quickly, he sat up, making sure he was covered, then stood, wrapping his thin blanket around his waist and padding towards the bathroom and dropping his cover, reaching over and turning on his shower allowing it to heat up.

Turning and looking into the mirror, his mind once again traveled to Jenny as he looked at himself approvingly, scratching his fingers through the hairs on his chest, and feeling on top of the world. Finally, he turned and hopped into the shower, drawing the curtain closed behind him as he reached for the soap and began lathering himself up. The hot pulsating water pounding against his back, helped in relieving some of the tension he was feeling and the soreness he experienced from last nights escapades.

Finishing his shower, he turned off the water and stepped out of his tub, grabbing the towel hung on the wall. He wrapped it tightly around his waist, the beads of water trickling down his body and through his wiry chest hairs, being absorbed in the towel adorning his waist. Immediately, he smelt the aroma of freshly brewing coffee wafting through the air. After shaving and applying just the right amount of after shave, he
made his way into his room and got dressed. The typical faded jeans and T-shirt, always made his decisions fairly easy as to what to wear on any given day.

Walking into the kitchen, accepting the cup from Hutch's outstretched arm, he lifted it to his face, inhaling deeply and then taking a sip, wincing as the hot liquid hit his lips, but savoring the flavor nonetheless.

"You look a little peaked there Buddy. What's the matter? Jenny wear you out last night?" Hutch joked with his friend.

"You can say dat..." Starsky grumbled his reply, part from pure exhaustion, and part because man muscles in his taught frame were sore from being used like a pile driver in a way they had not been in a long time.

"Where'd you get that?" Hutch asked, pointing to Starsky's wrist.

The brunette looked at his arm, noticing the red mark, circling his wrist that must have come from the cuffs he was wearing.

"Um, oh, that...um...I was walking the neighbor's dog and the damn thing almost got away from me." He thought quickly on his feet, but even quicker on his back.

"Oh...right! Yeah, I see," Hutch responded in a condescending tone, letting his partner know, he didn't believe a word of it.

"Do us both a favor and shut up, would ya?" Starsky grouched as he finished his coffee, feeling the hot liquid nearly burn his throat as it descended, placing the cup in the sink, then turning back to face Hutch. "Let's get outta here." He said as he turned and headed for the door.

Both men headed for the car, Starsky climbing behind the wheel while Hutch jumped in the passenger side, closing the doors almost simultaneously. Starsky started his car as the monstrous engine roared to life. Tires squealing, the red vehicle pulled away from the curb and onto the mean streets of Bay City.

The ride to the station was pleasant and Starsky found himself in a particularly good mood as he thumped his palm on the steering wheel, keeping beat to music that only he could hear. The sun was shining, the birds were coughing and it was a lovely day in Starskyland. Hutch noted his friend's disposition and couldn't help but comment

"So I take it you and Jenny had a good time last night?" He asked, looking out the corner of his eye at his partner.

"You could say that...we had a very good time as a matter of fact." Starsky concurred, deciding to keep the intimate details to himself. "You know sumthin' Hutch?"

"What's that?" Hutch asked, looking out the window at his side.

"She's sumthin' else...I mean...I really like her." Starsky smiled a crooked smile. "I mean, who knows, this could get serious..."

"Starsk, buddy...I don't mean to burst your bubble pal, but it isn't always about the sex ya' know?" Hutch stated gently.

"Who said anything about sex?" the brunette retorted indignant. His face blushing as he recalled the compromising position his partner found him in this morning. He shook his head and chuckled. The rest of their drive was made in virtual silence, with the exception of casual conversation, Starsky doing his best to avoid the subject of sex as they wove their way through the streets and to the station.
Both men bolted through the swinging front doors of the station, a definite bounce in their step. Hutch had been undercover working on a case where two young women had been found dead, inside a church within the last six months, both with broken necks, found on church property. The tall blond studied and entered the churches as a priest, still mentoring to earn his place. Recently he had been contacted by a group of middle aged men that had asked him to do some personal fellowship for them and some of their "members" off site. He had met with several members of a group that called themselves, The New Nation, knowing that he had stumbled across something, but what that was, he wasn't sure yet. He wanted to meet with his partner and Dobey to try and filter through all the information he had collected.

Walking down the hallway, Starsky slapped Hutch on the chest, "You go 'head, I'm gonna hit the John." He announced as Hutch snorted slightly, nodding his head and proceeding on while his partner went down the hallway to his right.

The tall blond made his way through the sparsely filled hallways, coming to an intersection where four hallways met. Walking quickly, he passed through the corridor and onward into the adjacent hall, something out of the corner of his eye catching his attention and drawing him back. His tall frame came to a quick stop, bending backwards as he bent around a corner, his brow furrowing as he saw the woman Starsky had been with the night before, leaning against the wall, a tall Italian detective hovering over her, his arm pressed up against the wall as his face appeared buried in her neck. Hutch watched Jenny giggle as the man apparently whispered teasingly in her ear.

Jenny watched from the corner of her eye, knowing that Dave Starsky's partner was watching them, or at least, her. She gave the blond an evil smile from a distance and continued to flirt with the big cop in front of her, taking her hand and moving it back and forth on his chest. Hutch froze, and for that split second, he looked around, making sure Starsky was nowhere in sight, his mind wandering back to his and his partner's conversation in the car on the way to the station, and how hurt Starsky was going to be by this. Hutch knew what he had to do, they were in the middle of a case, and he knew that they couldn't afford for Starsky's thoughts and worries to be elsewhere. He needed the brunette focused, and on the inside of this cult swiftly, today if possible. That would give him some time and space away from Jenny, and then Hutch could explain to his friend why she was all wrong for him. Only thing left was to get Dobey to agree to move things up and bring Starsky in on the operation immediately, versus waiting any longer.

Hutch needed to get to Dobey and brief him on the past couple of weeks, but most of all, he needed to convince his Captain that the time had come, and they were ready. He knew that he was deep enough inside to be able to watch Starsky's back from a distance, the "personal fellowship" that he had begun to provide this group you people, had already gained him some liberties and trusts from with in their group.

He knew he couldn't stand back knowing that he could be going deeper inside, and not be here to watch his partner's back, he needed to take him with him, and that was the only way.

Hutch straightened up and walked towards Dobey's office, on a mission now and with a purpose. He had a feeling his partner would be upset with him, changing the plans without checking with him first, but this was a chance the blond was willing to take, to try and save Starsky's heart from being hurt by a woman he hardly knew. Hutch made his way to Dobey's office, knocking on the door and opening it without waiting for a response, only to be met by the bulging, glaring eyes of his Captain, staring up at him.

"Ever heard of waiting for someone to say 'come in' Hutchinson?" He bellowed as the tall Nordic entered and closed the door behind him "And where in the hell is your partner?"

"He's in the John Cap, but he should be here any second." Hutch responded as he leaned over Dobey's desk. "I need to talk to you Cap'n, I think we need to bring Starsky in now." he blurted out.

"Now? What's the rush? Thought you weren't ready?" Dobey responded, quizzically.
"Well I was thinking about it Cap, and I am as 'in' as I am gonna get, and I think Starsky being in there, will give me the extra edge I need. The sooner the better."

"What does your partner think about this?" Dobey asked.

"Well, I haven't exactly talked to him about it yet, it just hit me as I was walking down the hall, I really think we ought to go this direction, I really do." Hutch stood and paced the room, getting nervous about laying this all out on the table so quickly, "I mean think about it Cap, I've been in over two months, and I have only gotten so far, I think we need someone else in there working another angle, maybe able to get places I can't — with the congregation, ya know?"

"What are you saying Hutchinson?" Dobey looked up at the pacing detective, knowing him as well as he knew his own family, knowing there was something bothering him.

"I'm saying that I need your help convincing Starsky that he needs to come in early, I need his help, Cap." The tall blonde's icy blue eyes bore through his superior's deep brown one's, pleading for help.

There was a knock on the door as it flew open, the childish brunette bounced through the opening, their Captain once again irritated by his men's lack of waiting for permission to enter. Hutch let out a smirk as Starsky innocently looked at his annoyed Boss.

"What?" He shrugged his shoulders as he closed the door behind him.

"Nothing, just get in here and sit down." The rotund man directed the Detective.

Both Dobey and Hutch looked at Starsky as the brunette exchanged glances between the two.

"Why you guys lookin' at me like that?" Starsky asked, swallowing hard.

Dobey tapped his pencil on the desk a couple of times before he started scribbling something down on the pad in front of him, "Here's where we stand. Hutch here has filled me in, and it looks like they are ready for you to make your move and go on in."

Starsky glanced over at Hutch who was now avoiding eye contact with him, "I don't get it, why so soon?" Starsky questioned as he looked back at Dobey. "Thought we agreed..."

His words were cut short by Dobey's bellowing voice. "What we agreed was, when the time was right and we were ready, you'd go in. Hutchinson here, says they're ready. He's the one that has been under for over 2 months now, it's his call. I want you to get your stuff together and in order and be ready to leave today."

"But Cap..." Starsky was cut off again.

"Starsky, you heard me, now go! Hutchinson will fill you in. I have other things that need my attention, so the two of you better get out of here now." Dobey retorted sharply.

With that, Starsky gave his partner a final glance, and then rose from his chair, heading for the door, jerking it open and leaving the room, Hutch looked back at Dobey with a pained look on his face, and the followed his friend.

Hutch caught up to him in the hallway, "So you plan on filling me in now or later? Starsky snapped in an irritated tone.

Just then the brunette looked up and saw Jenny walking down the hall, "Gimme a few Hutch, I need to talk to Jenny for a minute, would ya?"
Reluctantly, Hutch stayed back as he watched his best friend walk up to her, sweeping her up in his arms, and placing a gentle kiss on her cheek. He looked on as he felt a pain in his heart, watching how happy Starsky was when he held Jenny in his arms. The curly haired cop buried his face into her neck, inhaling deeply, savoring her aroma.

"Whoa, there Romeo," Jenny pulled away, "No public displays of attention, you know better then that." She said half kidding and half serious.

"Couldn't blame me, how's a man ta stop himself, hmmm?" Starsky pulled back, looked deep into her eyes, finding himself lost once again.

"Listen, I...I'm gonna be gone for a bit, not sure how long, you know how it goes." Starsky started to explain.

Jenny nodded, "I understand, you don't need to explain." She smiled, rising up on her tip toes as she kissed his cheek, then moved her mouth closer to his ear, whispering into it, her hand moving behind his head, cupping his neck and pulling him forward, "When you get back, we can pick up right where we left off, deal?" She teased him, brushing her other hand across the front of his jeans.

Looking over his shoulders, she locked eyes with Hutch, seeing the displeasure in his expression and enjoying every bit of it.

Starsky finished saying his goodbyes before separating and parting ways with her, walking towards Hutch, looking over his shoulder as he watched her walk away, and disappearing down the hallway and behind a door.

Starsky and Hutch both walked down the hallway, Hutch was just about to say something to his friend, when Starsky interject first.

"So when were you plannin' on telling me about your decision to send me in? Didn't it occur to you that I might like to know about it?"

On that note, Hutch decided to wait to tell Starsky about Jenny, knowing that they would be separated for a while and when the moment was right, he would tell his friend what he had witnessed, but right now, he needed to explain his change of mind, and didn't want his friend to know it had anything to do with the woman he liked, at least not yet. There would be plenty of time, before the case was over, for Hutch to come clean, and he saw no reason to force the issue now.

"It just sorta came up," was the only answer Hutch could come up with so quickly, he didn't think the time was right to tell his friend he made this choice, to get him away from a woman he was sure would hurt him, and he just couldn't stand by and watch that happen.

"Sorta came up huh?" Starsky grumbled, "Why do I get the feelin' there's more to the story..." He allowed his voice to trail off as they headed outside to his car.

---------Chapter 4--------

The small modest church had no air-conditioning, even more evident on this hot summer day as the stifling heat radiated from the wooden clapboards. It was sparsely decorated, with two rows of wooden pews, one to the right, and the other on the left. At the front of the room was a small platform, and on top of that was a stand with a cheap microphone, rising out of the top. There was a small piano to the right of the podium, but its bench was empty, as was typical for most services. The platform, or mock alter had two artificial plants, adorning each side towards the front of it.
The church itself was fairly empty, only a handful of worshippers filled the seats, listening to tonight's sermon. Starsky sat in the midst of the right hand side of pews, uncomfortable and over heating and trying to get himself into his character, his mind still railing at the fact his partner had sprung this decision upon him.

He heard the door open, and looked up to see Hutch entering the room, dressed in a full length black robe, a multi colored silk sash draped around his neck, and flowing down either side of his chest. The brunette had to bite back a snort of laughter as he saw his partner enter, in all of his undercover glory and in full character. Hutch's blond hair seemed even lighter in contrast to the black robe that he wore. In his hand, he carried a red leather bible, ribbons streaming from the top of it, marking several of its pages. Even though he had seen Hutch in this light several times before, he couldn't help but be amused at his friend's uncomfortable assignment, but impressed at how the flaxen haired cop handled it and even studied up on scripture and protocol, before going in. He stood behind the rudimentary pulpit and surveyed his congregation.

"Bothers and Sisters, today I want to talk about the urges and sins of the flesh..." Hutch's sermon began and Starsky found himself, nearly laughing out loud as he thought about his previous night with Jenny. He fought hard to control his emotions and concentrated on the silken voice echoing around the church.

"It is our Fathers wish, it is his command, and his order that a woman must save herself, keep her body, her heart and her mind pure and one with the Lord. Ways of the flesh, the evil sin it leads to, is the Devil's way of trying to take the Lord's sheep from him."

There were murmurs throughout the church as people vocally agreed and some raised their hands skywards in supplication.

"The Lord shall punish those that partake in those urges outside the sanctity of marriage, those that are weak to the ways of the world and not strong within God's army. To show such weakness is a crime to our Lord, it is a slap in his holy face, it is an atrocity against his word!" Hutch raised the Bible in his hands his face a fervent study in sanctity. God he was good!

Starsky looked to his left, in the aisle directly across him, he recognized the two parishioners as regulars there, they were there for every service, every meeting. Hutch had pointed them out as members of the group they were investigating, the young woman went by the name Misty Meadows, and the large burly man next to her was known as Moses.

The girl leaned forward, peaking around Moses, locking eyes with Starsky, and batting her long dark lashes at him coyly. He smiled back at her, a lopsided grin as he felt his face flush slightly. Their moment was interrupted by Moses blocking their view, looking over angrily at the brunette and causing Starsky to straighten up quickly, focusing his attention straight ahead once again, and onto what his partner was saying.

"For a woman to give herself, pure and untouched to a man, a man who was made in God's own image, is for a woman to give her Lord the greatest gift a woman has to give, there could be no other way, it is against the word of our Savior."

Starsky thought back, back to the last time Hutch had told him he had been with a woman, the details still clear in his mind as the blond had raved about her body and her mind — but mostly her body. Hutch was giving this sermon with such conviction, he was even convincing Starsky that he actually believed it.

The brunette listened as Hutch finished his sermon; he was amazed at the ease in which his partner assumed his undercover role. He knew that the tall blond would introduce him to some of the key members of the alleged cult, hoping to get an invite back to their camp, giving him a chance to see them on their level. It
amazed the curly haired cop to think that these God fearing people may be responsible for young women's deaths and for what purpose? What was their gain? He pondered those questions as Hutch's monotone voice rambled in the background.

He had been going to services for several weeks, making sure his face was recognized to all that attended on a regular basis and after the sermon wrapped up, he typically left swiftly, not wanting to appear over anxious, but he always made sure he spoke with the minister, before making his goodbyes. At the end of the service Hutch made mention of this new parishioner, that was seeking a better way of life, a more structured surroundings, willing to give his life to invest in his future.

The service drew to an end all the parishioners rose and exited their pews. Some filed in an orderly manner out of the small run down church while others milled about. Starsky approached Hutch, now known to the church as Father Connelly, holding out his hand, and shaking Hutch's. It felt odd and weird for him to be so formal with his best friend, but the act of this charade was the most important part of the mission, at no time could either of them let on that they knew each other outside of this setting, the church's walls. They had to watch their subtle nuisances, their unconscious looks and silent communications with each other. One slip and the whole operation could be blown.

Hutch took Starsky to his side, motioning Moses to come forward to them both, which he did, taking Misty with him. Starsky stood, erect on the left side of Hutch as the large man known as Moses approached from his right.

Hutch made the introductions, "Moses, this is Ethan, Ethan Caldone. He's the guy I was telling you about. Ethan, this is Moses." Hutch stated.

Moses offered no hand to shake; he simply puffed out his chest and eyed the shorter curly haired brunette from head to toe. Starsky stood there, although intimidated by the man's size, he gave him back a look of determination and defiance.

"I'm Misty, Misty Meadows", the woman introduced herself, extending her hand in a formal greeting.

Moses quickly moved between them before Starsky could make contact, sensing the large man's irritation with his mere presence. Misty stepped back, obeying her chaperone as she dropped her head and stared at the floor.

"Father Connelly here tells me you are looking for a new start, new life. Is he telling me the truth?" Moses questioned Starsky.

"Sumthin' like that." Starsky agreed, "I mean, the way m'headed ain't getting' me nowhere. I need to change my life, try sumthin' else, you know?"

"Tell me a little bit about yourself." Moses asked the brunette as he walked towards him, leading with his arm, motioning Starsky to walk with him, leaving Hutch and Misty behind.

"Well ain't really much to tell. Father Connelly already told you m'name, I'm a 30 year old widower who cashed in on my late wife's life insurance, spent the last 6 months lowing part of it, wandering from town to town, and nuthin' just feels right, ya' know?" Starsky explained. "I mean, I have had a great time, partying, women, no strings...but sumthin's been missing."

"Go on." Moses encouraged the man.

"Well, I mean sumthin' more, deeper, meaningful. I feel like sumthin's missin' in my life..." Starsky shoved both hands in his jean pockets, shrugging his shoulders. "...so I started comin' to church, and don't get me
wrong, it helped, but still, I feel like there's more, ya know?"

"What is it exactly that you are looking for?" The large, burly man sounded sincere, "What is it that you think I can help you find?"

"A family." Starsky answered without hesitation as he locked eyes with Moses, his deep blue orbs, darkened by intensity that the large man was impressed by.

"How much is it worth to you, this family that you are seeking, what is it worth?" Moses asked his face like stone, difficult to read.

"I'd give anything to find what I'm looking for, I am getting so tired of searching for sumthin' I am not even sure exists anymore." Starsky answered as he broke his stare, looking around the church, watching as Hutch, playing the Minister's role perfectly, met with all the parishioners that sought his counsel.

"I want to take you back to my home, introduce you to some of my family, and then you can decide if this is what you are looking for." Moses said, putting his arm around Starsky's shoulder, turning him and leading him back to Hutch and Misty.

The beaten up Chevy drove for at least an hour through the hills surrounding Bay City, finally turning onto a dirt road and bouncing down it for another 40 minutes. Shortly after dusk, headlights casting an eerie hazy glare through the midst that had settled onto the mountain top, the car pulled up to a completely fenced in compound. Starsky sat there as calm as possible, with the tinge of uneasiness settling into the pit of his stomach. He knew at this moment he was alone on this assignment, but he also knew that Hutch was not far behind, making his Sunday evening visit to the camp that he had mentioned many times in his reports to Dobey.

This site was a compound made up of some of the more extreme and fanatical religious believers. They had come together to create their own civilization — The New Nation - living off the land and by the laws of their God, as the leaders of the group interpreted them. The case they had been working for several months stemmed from two young females found dead, less then a month apart by similar circumstances. Their investigation had led them to the only similarity between the two women being the church where Hutch was now ministering at.

Hutch went in, undercover starting there, and had been approached by Moses to come to their camp frequently and provide guidance and spiritual services for his "family". Immediately Hutch had seen suspicious and disturbing activity such as the control that the leaders of this cult had over their members, especially the female population.

His next objective was to get Starsky in. Hutch was the minister to the camp, but to truly find out what was happening on the inside, there needed to be someone on the inside, one of them, living like them, and becoming one of them. That was the only way for them to truly find out what was going on.

Once they had pulled up to the camp, Starsky climbed out his side of the vehicle, stretching tall, arching his back trying to work out the kinks he acquired on their long and bumpy ride. Moses had come around to his side of the car, standing next to the brunette, motioning with his hand over the camp surrounding them.

"Welcome to Camp Eden," Moses said as he himself, looked around and took in the sites approvingly.

"Camp Eden huh?" Starsky questioned innocently.

"This is our paradise. The way God truly intended man and woman to live." The large man explained.

"The way God intended it to be huh?" Starsky mimicked him.
"That's right, you see here in Eden, we know God's intentions, his master plan, for man and woman, and we believe in returning to his ways, and living the way the Bible has instructed us to live. We take it very seriously, and we only allow a handful of people inside our circle." Moses orated as he indicated Starsky to go with him to his home.

-------Chapter 5-------

Moses showed Starsky into the modest single storey wooden house, with Misty following behind. The woman couldn't take her eyes off the newest member of Camp Eden. He was so unlike all the rest of the men in the camp. They seemed boorish and rigid in comparison to the curly haired brunette. He had a slightly roguish demeanor: a touch of danger to him that she found exciting and oddly erotic. Even his physique was different to most of the men she came across in her day to day life. The men at the camp all dressed in baggy denim dungarees, with long sleeved singlets underneath checked shirts in various colours. The only time she saw a glimpse of manly chest was if the door to the bathroom swung open when Moses was in there. And the sight was not one that made her heart leap in excitement.

With the man she knew as Ethan, however, she saw something she liked. Her heart hammered in her chest and she felt like a little girl when she was with him. She was giddy and she blushed when he looked at her. She knew that it was against their law to be looking at any other man than Moses. He was her intended and she was to save herself for him, just like Father Connelly had preached, but there was a fluttering in her belly and a dampness between her legs that she hadn't known in a long time. Ethan excited her, and she liked it and she was prepared to chance her place in heaven for a night with the muscular, handsome man. As they walked into the house she stayed behind, looking longingly at the perfectly formed ass in the tight figure wrapping blue jeans, the unconscious strut in the man's step perfectly emphasizing his masculinity and availability.

Starsky walked into the plain interior of the small house and looked around. It was painted plain white with no signs of decoration on the walls, a single crucifix hanging over the fire mantle. There was a single square wooden table in the middle of the room, four hard wooden chairs arranged around it. There was no air conditioning and the in the early evening, the stored up heat of the day felt claustrophobic and sticky. Obviously, the Camp Eden folks didn't care much for comfort.

'Plain' he said, meaning it in a derogatory fashion, his voice flat and uninterested.

'We can give our hearts more fully to God when there are no distractions' Moses said seriously, missing the tone of the brunette's voice altogether.

The thoughts of his bed were tantalizing and for a moment Starsky was back with Jenny, his restrained hand jangling against the bed head as she went down on him, exciting him with her hands and her mouth. He shook himself. *Get with the plan Starsky! Don't be a fool. She'll be there when ya get back. Concentrate! Don't put yourself or Hutch in danger.*

Misty leapt forward and pulled a chair out for her visitor and was rewarded by a lop sided grin. She blushed furiously and stayed behind the chair a fraction longer than she should have.

'Thanks honey' he said, sitting down on the plain wooden seat, pulling it towards the table. He saw Moses give him a stern look.

'We don't use familiarities with our women' he said. It's against God's law to fraternize unless one is pledged.

Starsky's eyebrows rose. 'Familiar? I only said honey' he replied, angry at the rebuke. What was with these people?
'But she isn't your "honey". She's my intended and she's on her way to make supper' Moses said, closing the conversation. He motioned the woman to the kitchen angrily as Misty gave him a sullen look and headed for the back room.

'Hey, I didn't mean no offence. It's all just kinda new, ya know?' Starsky said trying to cover up his anger. He looked around again, wondering what they did around Camp Eden for kicks. 'So, what's the programme?'

Moses calmed down a little. 'Tonight we eat, and then go to see the elders. Tomorrow we'll be working. We have prayers at luncheon and then time for contemplation. Then it will be back to the fields, church and then supper. We lead a simple life'.

Starsky's heart plummeted. Just how long was he going to have to deal with all this crap. No TV, no beers, no burritos.....no Jenny. He sighed to himself.

'OK, well, can I help with the supper maybe?' he asked, wishing he could be anywhere rather than in the room with this man. Moses may have invited him home, but he wasn't the most friendly guy in the world and Starsky already felt stifled and restrained.

'Misty can managed' Moses said firmly, levering his boots off and propping them by the fireside. 'Have you decided to join us then? I saw the need in your eyes earlier. We could be good for you, and you could be the one to inject new blood into our community'.

Starsky looked steadily back at him. 'When my wife died I thought my life would end. I met Father Connelly and he told me about this place. What I've seen I like, but it'll take some getting used to. Its good to have a friend to show me the ropes' he said, trying for the flattering approach.

Moses took it at face value. 'The elders will be so pleased. Has Father Connelly told you of our rules?'

Starsky remembered Hutch's conversations about the Camp and the followers.

_They're weird Starsk. There's somethin' about 'em. Not evil exactly, but they're zealots. They take the Bible literally. I've seen members of the congregation shunned because they didn't tip up all their weekly earnings to the church! And the women are cowed. Like there's n fight in them. The men have them so far under their control they aren't allowed to think an original thought! But I haven't seen anything. No violence. I just can't get a handle on 'em_'

'Yeah he told me'

'The elders will want your bank account number and a certificate of your willingness to hand over your savings' Moses explained. He saw the brunette stiffen. 'is there a problem Ethan? A willingness to give up your worldly possessions is a proof of your commitment to the camp'.

Starsky shook his head. 'Apart from the fact that I ain't got a brass button to my name, there is no problem'.

Moses' eyebrows rose. 'No money? I thought you said you had the insurance money from your wife's untimely gathering?'

_Ok, now we get to it. Now you show your true colours!_ 'I spent the lot. I told ya. Booze, the odd reefer, women. Ya know, like I told ya, I was looking for sumthin. Just never got the answer till now. Is it a problem? Does that mean I can't join?'

The man smiled, although it was a brittle insincere smile. 'I'm sure the elders will find a way for you to pay for your keep' he said reassuringly. 'Ah, supper!'
Misty returned to the room holding a steaming bowl of stew in one hand and a stack of plates in the other. She placed them on the table and started to ladle the hot broth out onto the plates. Moses held out his hand, but the woman handed the first one to her visitor, ignoring the grunt from her "intended". The second plate she handed to Moses and headed back to the kitchen for a plate of rough cut bead. Starsky was just about to tuck in, his stomach rumbling noisily at the good smells emanating from the dish when he realised the couple were looking at him expectantly. He looked up.

'Ethan, would you like to say grace?'

He chuckled to himself, wondering what they'd think to the only grace prayer he knew reasonably well:

\[ Ba-ruch a-tah A-do-nai E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ha-o-lam, ha-mo-tzi le-chem min ha-a-retz. \]

Blessed are You, HaShem, our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

Ok well, maybe not! He put his hands together.

'For the food on the table, we thank you' he said hoping the sentiment was right, if not the words.

'A simple and beautiful prayer' Moses beamed as he dived into his stew.

The meal was eaten in silence and Starsky had chance to watch the interaction between his two hosts. Moses treated Misty with a reserved, almost cold demeanor. It was almost as though she was his servant and it was his God given right to have her wait on him hand and foot. And yet, at the same time, there was a deference to her. His looks were chaste, his hand never lingered on hers when she passed him the bread or another ladle of stew. Even though they were "betrothed" there was none of the familiarity or innuendo that Starsky was used to in his ordinary life. He found it a stilted, almost dysfunctional relationship and he was glad when the meal had ended and Misty retired to wash the dishes.

Moses stood. 'We should go see the elders now' he said, scratching at his belly through the material of his shirt. Starsky followed him out and into the cooler night air. Moses led them through the small group of simple houses. Some were complete; some were in the process of being built. Most had warm lamplight glowing in their windows and as they walked some more of the male villagers joined them on the walk to the larger building at the end of the street. They entered the exclusively male building and his host showed Starsky where to sit.

The brunette sat quietly, taking in the ambience of the place. Here, where there were no women, there was more of a friendly atmosphere, as though the men could be themselves and there were even a few small jokes made as they waited. Moses had gone off to tell the elders that Ethan was here and moments later three men appeared through the small door opposite. A hush descended on the room.

'Welcome friends' one of the men said and motioned for everyone to sit down. They started the meeting with a prayer and then got down to business.

Moses had come to sit by Starsky again and the cop leaned over towards him. 'Who're they?' he whispered.

'Adam, in the middle, is our leader. On his right is Benjamin, the man who looks after our finances and on the left is John. He is in charge of the building we're doing' Moses explained.

'Friends, we are blessed tonight to have a new member in our midst' Adam was saying. 'Come forward Ethan and make yourself know'.
Starsky looked around him, not really wanting the attention, but his host nudged him and he got to his feet, walking to the front of the room. Adam held out his hand and Starsky shook it.

'Friends, this is Ethan. Ethan wishes to join our Camp and Moses has invited him in' Adam announced. He turned to Starsky. 'Moses tells me you have no financial offerings for the church'.

The brunette shook his head. 'Is that a problem?'

The three elders muttered amongst themselves then seemed to come to a decision.

'In lieu of money, you will be asked to prove your commitment to the community by the strength of your back. You will work on the buildings and in the fields for the next week from 5:30 in the morning until 6:00 at night and then commit yourself to prayer until 10:00pm. You will be given one meal per day, after your prayers, until you have invested sufficient in the camp for us to call you a brother. Do you accept the conditions?'

*Do I have a choice here? Shit! Where's Hutch? Why does he get the easy side of the job?* He pasted a smile onto his face.

'Seems fair 'nough. When do I start?'

'Tomorrow morning. Go home and rest and welcome to Camp Eden' Adam said as the rest of the gathering chorused 'Welcome to Camp Eden' behind him.

He walked home behind Moses. *Welcome to Camp hell more like!* His stomach growled at the thought of no more food for 24 hours, and the idea of working 12 hours straight wasn't too appealing either.

As they got in, Moses showed him to a small bedroom along the dimly lit corridor towards the back of the house. It was plain, like the other rooms in the house with a single metal bed frame, a thin mattress on the bed and a single cotton sheet.

'It's simple, but too much luxury is bad for the soul' Moses informed him. Starsky smiled back.

'It's fine, no problem. Thanks.....see you tomorrow?'

'I'll wake you at 4:30 for prayers before work' his host said, leaving the door open as he left.

Sighing and cursing under his breath, Starsky started to get undressed. He pulled his shirt over his head and started to unzip his jeans as he heard a small noise behind him. Whipping round at the ready, he saw Misty at the door. She was staring at his tanned, muscular chest and flat abs, her eyes fixed on the brown curls that covered him. He was suddenly embarrassed at her fixed stare.

'Oh...her....Misty. You ok?' he stammered.

It seemed to rouse her from her trance and shyly she held out a patchwork quilt. 'It gets kinda cold at nights' she said her hand lingering a little longer than necessary on his as he took the welcome quilt from her.

'Ah....thanks' he managed, not wanting her to get the wrong idea. 'I'll erm...see ya'.

She nodded once and left, her heart hammering once again in her chest as she remembered the sight of this exotic stranger in her house.

--------Chapter 6--------
'Time to rise and shine' the voice sounded entirely too cheerful and the hand nudging his shoulder persistent, allowing him no choice but to wake up. Slowly one indigo blue eye opened and a sleep befuddled voice said 'Lo'.

Moses tried again. 'C'mon Ethan. Its 4:30. Time for prayers before you go out to the fields'.

Starsky groaned, remembering Adams words the night before. Work from 5:30am till 6:00pm. No food till tonight and then after a grueling twelve hour day, four hours of prayers. He could just imagine what Rabbi Zuckermann back at his Mom's synagogue in New York would think. Jeez, the man would be turning in his grave!. He opened his eyes and stretched, watching Moses' departing back.

Reluctantly he swung his feet out of the bed, gasping as they hit the cold floor. He'd been happy that Misty had brought him the quilt the night before because at this altitude, the night air was distinctly chilly, but he was still astounded at the way she'd looked at him — almost a hungry look as if she was starved of affection. His mind went back for a moment to the last time a woman had looked at him with that wild look in her eyes. He sighed. Jenny. What he wouldn't have given last night in his small cold bed for another night of passion with her. His cock hardened at the thought and he fought the impulse to relieve himself of the uncomfortable hard on. Even the idea of a day's hard labour couldn't quell the rising tide.

Dressing quickly in the cold air, he headed down the corridor and into the tiny living room, seeing that Moses was there already, washed dressed and savoring bacon, eggs and a hot mug of coffee. His stomach redoubled its rumbling at the incredible cooking smells and with a view to shutting them up he reached for the coffee pot.

'Adam said nothing till tonight' Moses said roughly, looking up from his plate full of breakfast.

'I was only just gonna get a coffee. He didn't say nuthin 'bout coffee' Starsky grumbled. He saw the look of zeal on the man's face and replaced the pot with a sigh. 'So, when he said nuthin, he meant no drink either?'

'Uh huh'. Moses went back to his plate and to the cop's starving eyes seemed to make even more of a display of eating the vast pile of food. Starsky looked away and vowed he'd get even.

Eventually, Moses had stuffed the last bit of bacon in his mouth and pushed his empty plate away. Rising he stretched and looked outside at the brightening sky.

'Are ya ready?' he asked.

_Do I really have a choice? Hungry. Thirsty. Shit, this assignment sucks._ The small whining voice sounded in his head, but he put a false smile on his face.

'Lead me to it'.

By lunchtime, Starsky's shoulders were aching and his back felt as though it would break. He'd been given the task of planting a field of potatoes and at first the plot had seemed small and easy to manage. But the soil was poor and the Camp Eden members preferred not to use modern equipment. So Starsky had been provided with a wooden handled hoe and several sacks of seed potatoes and told to plant them 8" deep and 12" apart.

The first furrow had been difficult, the dirt being hard and stony and two hours into the project, he'd only managed to achieve a sore back and the beginnings of a headache. Now, with the sun at its height, he was decidedly hot, incredibly thirsty and had the beginnings of one of his migraines, brought on by lack of water. He'd taken his shirt off mid morning as the temperature had started to creep up, and now he used it to
wipe the sweat from his chest and back, straightening slowly and easing out the kinks in his muscles. His skin glowed warmly from the sun, but at least with his natural coloring he had no worries about sunburn. As he leaned, panting, on the hoe, a familiar figure ambled up the hill towards him.

"How's it going there partner?" Hutch asked, his black cassock billowing in the lunchtime breeze. There were just the two of them for any distance around, and if the camp members did see the two of them on the horizon it would look as though the good Father was tending to one of his flock.

"M'hungry....m'thirsty, I'm pissed with the whole setup an' I got aches where I never knew I could get 'em. And did I mention I was pissed' the brunette stabbed at the rock hard earth with his hoe petulantly.

"But apart from that you're fine?" Hutch asked mildly, hiding his discomfort. He'd hated having to bring his partner in this early, and he'd hated that Adam had taken the decision to impose terms. But most of all he hated the secret he was keeping from Starsky, until he could find the right time. He stepped back as his partner tried to dig the handle of the hoe into his stomach.

'I heard about your meeting last night. Adam was telling me what a pious and useful addition you'll be to the flock. And he said you had no money, so you were working to earn your keep'.

'Yeah? And did he tell you I don't get fed or anythin' to drink till tonight?' The phrase came out as a whine, but the blond caught something else in there too — his partner was in pain.

'He did, which is why I brought you these' From out of his cassock, he produced a flat flask of water, a candy bar and two white pills. He handed them to the brunette, who unscrewed the top of the flask and drank deeply, water running down his chin and onto his chest, small silver beads forming on the brown fur. He saved a mouthful for the two migraine pills and popped them last of all.

"How did you know?" Starsky asked.

'Coz I know that if pushed you can do without food for a few days, but you always get a migraine when you don't drink. Will you be ok buddy?'

The brunette shrugged his shoulders. 'Will be now I took those. Have you got anything yet? Is there any chance I can get away from "Little House on the Prairieville" any time soon?'

'Not yet. There's something, but I don't know. It's just a feeling, nothing I can put my finger on'.

The curly haired cop nodded. 'I know. Have you seen the way they treat their women? They're like slaves. And sex starved slaves at that. And that Misty! I think she has the hots for me' he wiggled his eyebrows.

'Starsk, you know their rules. No touching the women unless you're gonna marry 'em. Somehow I don't see you as the marrying kind. Unless you've got a hankering for the good ole country life?'

He ducked as Starsky swung the hoe again. 'Don't worry. I know the rules. Look but don't touch. Let's just wind this up and get the hell home huh? This place creeps me out. It's like that film "Village of the Damned". And Hutch.......don't go too far'.

To complete the picture of the pastor of the community looking to the needs of the new member, Starsky knelt in front of his partner, head bowed as Hutch made the sign of the cross above his head, the picture of a needy supplicant.

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

No-one else came near the brunette for the rest of the day. By evening, as the shadows were lengthening, he
leaned panting on the hoe and looked at the half field he'd managed to plant. He was hot, more tired than he thought possible and there were large blisters across the palms of his hands from the hard wooden handle. His head, however, had settled down from a thundering miasma of migraine pain to a dull thudding ache and if it hadn't been for the hard physical labor, the effects of the powerful tablets would have made him go to sleep. He longed for a comfortable bed and the chance to rest his aching head and he hated to think what he would have been like if Hutch hadn't smuggled him the water. He was just wondering when today's penance would end, when he saw a small figure walking up the hill towards him. As Misty drew level with him, she smiled, her eyes once again devouring the sight of his bare chest and flat abdomen, the delectable line of brown hair leading down in a tantalizing line below the waistband of his jeans.

'Moses says its time for you to come to prayers' she said shyly.

'Don't suppose Moses sent you with a nice cold beer too?' he asked, winking at her. She blushed.

'We don't have beer, but I could ease your shoulders later tonight, if'n that's what ya want?' He wiggled them experimentally. While the thought of someone easing out the kinks was tantalizing, he bore Hutch's words in mind. 'Much as I love to ho.....Misty. I'd have to decline. We don't want to get your intended mad, so we?'

A shadow crossed her face and she didn't answer directly. 'Ya comin'?' she asked as she turned away and started to walk down the hill.

'Not yet, and no prospect either' he muttered wryly under his breath as he collected his shirt and began to follow.

The "church" was set up at the back of a large barn set slightly away from the camp houses and was quiet at that time of night. Most of the Camp's members were having their suppers, or setting out for meetings with the elders. Misty led the brunette inside the dim interior and over to a makeshift altar which was really no more than a wooden table with a fresh white cloth over it. It was cooler in here, but still stuffy and as his eyes became accustomed to the dimmer light he saw that there were several tapestry mats on the hay strewn ground, arranged in front of the altar, and the dark corner of the building was lit by storm lamps sending flickering light against the bare walls.

Misty watched with hungry eyes as Starsky knelt piously on one of the mats, linking his hands in front of him. He bit back a groan as his back muscles protested and as he felt the stones on the floor begin to bite into his kneecaps, he realised he was in for a long and uncomfortable night. As he pretended to start praying, she walked past him, just a little too closely and brushed his shoulder with her hip. He ignored her, not wanting to make any comment to lead the girl on, and she seemed to get the message.

'I'll be back for you at 10:00' she said quietly as she took a last lingering look at the curly haired cop knelt in prayer, backlit by the flickering light.

Slowly, the heat and the quiet permeated the brunettes being. He found it oddly relaxing to be in the big space, quiet and away from the flakes out there in the camp. He rested back on his heels, feeling the beginning of pins and needles in his feet and the burn in his thighs from the unaccustomed position. With his eyes closed, his mind began to wander, the strains of the undercover assignment and the exertions of the long day taking their toll and adding to the soporific effect of the pain meds. Before long, Starsky's head had slumped forward, his chin resting on his chest as his sleeping body slumped sideways onto the floor.

When Misty returned just before 10:00 that evening, she found the curly haired cop exactly where he'd
fallen, his eyes closed and a small snoring noise escaping his lips.

Quietly she walked towards him, looking over her shoulder to make sure there was no on looking. Tentatively, she reached out a hand and rested it on his flat stomach, feeling the rise and fall of his abdomen with each breath. He moaned at the touch, but didn't wake and as her hand dipped lower, pushing aside the fabric of his jeans waistband, he pushed his body towards her.

Encouraged, she reached out her other hand and unbuttoned his jeans, gently easing the zip down and as her hand touched, his eyes flew open. For a moment they stared, unfocussed at her as his mind brought him up to date with where he was and what he was doing. Clarity returning, he grasped her wrist with his hand and pulled her away from him.

'Shit, Misty. What're ya doin'?' he grunted hoarsely, pushing himself away from the woman.

'That's just what I was gonna ask' Moses' voice sounded in the barn

--------Chapter 7--------

Starsky jumped up as though he'd been bitten on the butt, scooting Misty out of the way as he stood, self consciously zipping his flies.

Misty looked at her betrothed. 'I was just.....'

'I can see what you were doing. You know the punishment for infidelity' Moses ground out, his eyes flashing in the dim light.

'What d'ya mean punishment? What's there to punish? Nuthin happened' Starsky stammered. He didn't like the look on Moses' face, or the direction this conversation was taking. 'Moses....buddy. Just calm down and listen huh?' the brunette held up a placatory hand.

But the religious zealot was fuming at the way he thought his woman was behaving. 'She needs to be punished and she knows the score' he pointed at Misty who shrank back under his gaze.

'No Moses. Please don't.....nothing happened....honest! We was just....'she blustered, her voice small and trembling.

Starsky took hold of her arm. 'What's he talking about, punishment? What punishment?' he asked, seeing the fear in her eyes.

She looked away. 'It's my fault' she whispered. 'He's my intended and I was being unfaithful. He's allowed'.

'Allowed to do what?' the cop persisted. Was this it? Was this what had happened to the other two girls?

'He's allowed to punish me.....to put me in the stocks' she said, eyes cast down at the ground.

'Over my dead body. You didn't do nuthin. Moses, it was my fault! I encouraged her' the brunette lied, putting himself between Moses and his girl.

'No, don't' she hissed. 'You don't understand. You don't know what'll happen. Just let him....' Misty sobbed, holding on to Starsky's arm.

'There ain't no way on God green earth that I'm gonna let him raise a finger to ya' Starsky snapped, looking back at Moses. 'If you're gonna punish someone, try it with someone who can fight back huh?'
The man stared back at him. 'You have no idea' he said slowly. 'Are you telling me that you were responsible? Be careful how you reply' he warned. 'Be careful....you don't know the consequences'.

'I sure as hell know you're not gonna lay a finger on a woman' Starsky spat out, choosing to ignore the warnings. 'Yeah, it was all my fault. I started it ok? Now what're ya gonna do?' he stood tall between the man and his woman, protecting her with his body as the sapphire fire sparkled in his eyes.

'If you're sure that it was your fault, then it's for you to be punished. I'll need to summon the men. Can I trust you to wait here, like a man?'

'You think I'm chicken? Go do your thing, I'll be here' the defiant brunette yelled, standing his ground, his temper now out of control. He had no concept of what would happen and in his temper had almost forgotten that he was undercover. Fleetingly he wondered where Hutch was, and whether calling for the men would entail calling his partner too. He hoped it would, he needed the reassuring and comforting presence. Moses looked at him with eyes that couldn't decide whether this man was brave beyond belief, or just plain stupid. He turned and left as Starsky tried to slow his breathing, his temper subsiding now that his antagonist had gone.

'You don't know what you've done' Misty whispered, terrified for her hero. 'You should go now, while you still can'.

'Ain't going nowhere. I'm not leaving you for him to go stickin' ya in some medieval stocks'.

'But you don't now what they'll do' she said sadly.

'Why don't ya explain it to me then?' he said

'I think they're here to explain it themselves' she said pointing to the barn door. Starsky followed her finger, watching as the whole membership of the camp came into the big barn and forming a circle around Misty and the cop. He stood his ground as two of the largest men walked into the circle and stood at either side of him ominously. Adam came to the front of the circle and stood before the defiant brunette.

'Moses tells me you were caught with Misty'.

'Yeah, that's about the size of it' Starsky said levelly, wondering what they were going to do. Misty had mentioned whipping. OK, he could handle that. He'd been through worse. He just wished they'd stop the dramatics and get on with it. And he kinda hoped Hutch would hurry up. He scanned the crowd quickly for the bright flaxen hair, but it wasn't there. Shit!

'He also tells me that he doesn't believe you. He thinks Misty started it. She's been behaving lewdly around you since you get here, he says'.

'You're not laying a finger on her' the curly haired cop spat out. 'It was my fault, so just get on with it huh? If you're gonna punish someone, it'd better be me'.

Adam was shaking his head. 'Before we start punishing, we need to establish where the fault lies. Moses says it's Misty, but you say not. We must let God decide'.

'Sure. What're ya gonna do? Get him on the phone?' the angry brunette sneered.

'No, we have our on messenger' Adam said evenly, ignoring the sarcasm in the man's voice.' Prepare him'.

The two huge men at either side of the brunette lunged forward quickly and took hold of his arms and dragged him over to a large cartwheel anchored to the side wall of the barn. Starsky struggled with them,
unwilling to let them get away with this easily and on his guard now that they'd mentioned a "messenger". What was that all about? He pulled back from them, trying to wrench his arms from their grip, but succeeded only in adding a whole bunch of bruises to his alreadyaching back and shoulders. As the two men hauled him to the wheel, Adam came up behind him. He took hold of the brunette's shirt and put a knife to the collar. With a quiet hiss, the blade sheered through the thin material and the two halves fell forward. Starsky cursed as the two men spun him round and forced him to the ground, until his back was to the wheel, and his legs were stretched out in front of him.

'What the fuck are ya doin?" he hissed as he felt his wrists pulled up and bound with rope to the opposite sides of the rim of the wheel. As the men stepped back from their handiwork, he tugged experimentally at his bonds, earning himself nothing but abraded skin. The hub of the wheel at his back made his spine stretch, his chest splayed and uncomfortable. Defenseless. Ready for whatever the flakes had in mind. Shit!

He stared defiantly at the leader as Adam towered over him. 'We're testing whether you're telling the truth. It's a sin to lie. God's messenger will determine whether you tell the truth or not. We will pray for you'.

'What's this messenger gonna do? Get inside my head or sumthin? I'm tellin' ya the truth' Starsky protested, his heart hammering in his chest at the look of almost insanity in Adam's eyes. He saw the man click his fingers and one of the crowd came forward with a wicker basket, handing it to the cult leader. Adam accepted it with a smile and Starsky heard the first ominous noises from inside.

They set his heart racing faster, a cold sweat breaking out over his face and chest as he resumed tugging at the ropes around his wrists.

'You're crazy, ya know that? You an' the rest of your goons. You're all insane' he yelled, panic making his voice shake.

Adam stepped forward. 'We are God's chosen. We uphold his laws. We do not allow sin. The Bible tells us that to lie is a sin. Do you admit you lied? One last chance to recant'.

'Go to hell' Starsky spat, his eyes never taking the basket.

Adam smiled an evil smile at him. 'No, not I. But I think you will go there soon' he said softly and opened the basket, tipping the contents onto the brunette's lap.

Starsky stared at the snake now coiled in hissing fury draped across his legs. His eyes widened in horror at the sight of the reptile now trying to coil its body across his lap, using the rough denim of his jeans to get a purchase. He held his legs still, trying to stop the trembling he could feel, not wanting to antagonize the serpent in any way. He held his breath as the sweat started to trickle down the sides of his face and bead on the hairs of his chest.

The snake brought up its head until the brunette could see its dark beady eyes staring lidlessly back at him, the forked tongue flicking in and out, tasting the air and questing for the warmest body it could find. Its senses homed in on the sweating, terrified man's chest, lowering it's head and beginning to snake up his body in a smooth line of venom. Starsky let out an involuntary moan, his eyes darting from the reptile to the crowd, silently searching for help. The men and women were quiet, hardly breathing as they watched the "messenger" quest for the truth. Only the quiet hiss of the storm lamps pierced the stony silence, their ghostly light sending wicked shadows dancing around the walls.

'The messenger of Eden, Eve's serpent will decide his fate' Adam intoned, stepping back to watch the snake's progress.

The snake was homing in now on the fluttering heartbeat showing on the brunette's furred chest. It too was
frightened and sought refuge wherever it could find it. The flat arrow shaped head quested backwards and forwards as the smooth muscular body snaked up Starsky's chest. He held his breath, terrified that the slightest movement would prompt the reptile to strike, the head now coming perilously close to his neck. The body slipped back on the cop's sweat slick skin and he felt the rings of muscle in its body try to grip against his stomach. The snake froze, the head up and alert. It seemed to be staring straight into his eyes; into his soul, and he held the gaze, willing the reptile to calm down and go away.

It seemed to be working, and once again, the diamond shaped head lowered and the snake continued its investigation of his body. He let out his breath slowly, inhaling gently and feeling the droplets of sweat trickling down his back. The snake seemed to be relaxing in the quiet of the barn and in the warmth of the sweating cop's body. Starsky relaxed marginally. If he could just keep still, maybe to the snake would curl up and sleep, or slither away to find somewhere nice and dark. He willed it to go away, his eyes never leaving the diamond patterned body.

The reptile felt heavy and warm against his skin and he sent soothing thoughts to it, concentrating on willing it to sleep. It seemed to be working until suddenly the barn door flew open. There was a gasp from the crowd and the change in the ambience in the barn alerted the snake. It reared its head again as its body slipped against the sweat slick skin. In an effort to keep from falling, the long tubular body coiled and as Starsky watched in horror, the startled rattlesnake opened its mouth wide, its fangs beading venom as it lunged for the detective's stomach.

--------Chapter 8--------

'Father Connelly, Father Connelly, please come quickly'. Hutch looked up as the distraught woman came barging in through the front door of the small cottage he was staying in. Fortunately the flaxen haired cop still wore the long black robes of his alter ego, and he stood, taking in Misty's disheveled appearance and wide frightened eyes.

'What is it my child' he asked calmly.

'It's the men. They've got Ethan in the barn. They're testing him' she said, pulling at his sleeve. 'Please Father. You have to come now. Maybe you could stop them. It wasn't his fault. I was....I was wicked. He was asleep and I touched him. Moses saw me and he wanted to punish m, but Ethan lied to protect me. He said he'd started it, but he hadn't Father. Please, you have to believe me. We need to hurry' she pulled again at him, but there was no need. At the news his partner was in trouble, Hutch's heart was already racing.

'What do you mean, testing him?' he asked cautiously trying to hide the fear in his voice.

'They think he's lying. They're testing him with the serpent' she sobbed.

'Serpent? What's that supposed to mean. I'm erm.....not familiar with that test?'

'Please just come. Follow me. There's no time to explain. Please, just make them stop Father, he didn't do anything. We may be in time to stop them'.

Hutch flung the door of the barn open, standing silhouetted against the night sky, his hair a golden halo around his head as the moonlight backlit him. An angel. A messenger from God. Hutch the avenging angel, come to rescue his partner. He strode quickly into the big building, heading for the crowd just as he heard his partner give one blood curdling cry. His chest constricted at the sound, knowing he was too late. He pushed the members of the congregation away and gasped as he saw Starsky tied to the big wheel, blood flowing from two puncture marks low down on his belly. As the blond priest walked in, Starsky lifted scared and sickened eyes to him in mute appeal. Get me away from these flakes now!
The flaxen haired cop saw the tail of the enormous snake as it slithered quickly beneath a pile of sacks stacked neatly in the corner of the barn and understood at once what had happened. Authoritatively, he turned on the crowd, knowing that he had to keep his undercover persona going for a while longer in order to get them both out of there. Just how long Starsky had before an antivenom would be useless was anyone's guess, but it didn't take a genius to know that the brunette needed to get to a hospital some time real soon.

Thinking quickly, Hutch turned to the hushed crowd. 'My children, the serpent has spoken. Ethan has paid the penalty and now, I must hear his confession. Please, go back to your homes and pray for his soul'.

'But we must witness the last part of the ceremony Father' Adam spoke out.

Hutch looked confused. 'The last part of the ceremony? What do you mean?'

'We must witness the eternal struggle between good and evil. God may still choose to save him, even though he has sinned'.

Hutch's mouth went dry. His heart raced in his chest as he looked at his sweating, terrified partner on the ground next to him. Starsky's head was hanging down now, the raw emotion of the last few minutes having left him weak and shaky. Coupled with the fact that he'd had the migraine and had no food or drink to speak of for the past 24 hours, he was not in good shape and the blond longed to cut him free and get him to safety. Why the hell did you have to bring him in early Kenny boy? He'd have been safer with that maneater of a girlfriend at home than here with this!

'His struggle should be a private one' he said, hoping his voice sounded both calm and strong. 'A man's soul is at stake. He should be allowed to battle his demons in private. I'll stay with him and guide him through his trials, and if the good Lord should see fit to take him from us, I'll prepare the last rites. Go with God, and pray for this sinner'. He placed his hand on the mahogany curls, looking as thought he was blessing Starsky, but the touch was as much for Hutch's reassurance as for the brunette's comfort.

The crowd looked around, uncertainly. Adam was their leader, but Father Connelly was the man they looked to for their spiritual wellbeing. Adam and Hutch glared at each other, a silent battle of wills, as Starsky groaned against the wheel on the ground. Hutch was tempted just to kneel and take his partner's body in his arms, but he needed to win the battle with the cult's leader and steadfastly held his ground, staring the other man down. His hand, carded in the chocolate curls of his partner twitched uncertainly.

Starsky felt it and the hesitancy in the blond and managed to nudge his head slightly. I'm here partner. Just get us out of here an' I'll be fine. You're doing great, now just get 'em to leave. Eventually Adam broke eye contact and looked away.

'Do as the Father says and go to your homes. Pray for Ethan and his deliverance, and pray for Father Connelly as he bears witness to the struggle' he said.

The crowd started to disperse, slowly making their way out of the barn until there was only Starsky, Adam and Hutch left in the flickering light.

'Would you like me to help you to pray with him Father?' Adam asked.

Hello no, I just want you to fuck off so that I can see to my partner, ya rabid bastard. Hutch smiled. 'It's kind of you to offer, Adam, but a man's dying confession is something only God and his priest should hear. Go home and pray for his soul, and I'll come to you when it's all over'.

Reluctantly, and with a final look at the sweating groaning man on the ground, Adam turned and walked away, pausing again at the barn door to look at the two men. One in priests robes, all golden hair and tanned skin, the other, a sinner destined for hell. With a final look, he closed the door behind him and left.
Immediately, Hutch dropped to his knees beside his partner, cupping his hand under the smaller man's chin and gently raising the head. He'd seen Starsky in pain too many times before, but there had always been an air of bravado to the brunette. This time, Hutch's heart stopped as he saw only terror in the indigo eyes.

'What took ya so long?' the brunette tried to joke, but the words came out faltering and shaky.

'I stopped to check out a nice crucifix I saw' Hutch tried to keep the mood light and his partner as calm as he could, but the tremors running through the olive tones body and the sweat beading on the forehead and cheeks reminded him he needed to move soon.

'Oh God, Starsk. What did ya have to do it for huh?' he asked, reaching up to untie the ropes around the sweating man's wrists. Gently he lowered the arms, hearing the gasp and small moan as circulation returned.

'Hate snakes! Why'd it have to be a sssnake huh? An' the ssssize of the thing. I think it was relllllated to the Lock Nessssss monssssster. Utch...feel weird' Starsky gasped.

'Weird? How weird?' Hutch asked, running his hand over the hot brow and feeling the shaking increase.

'Can't talk prrrrrproperly. Llllllips feel nnnnnumb', the eyes looked into his partner's ice blue pools seeking comfort.

'I know buddy. I need to get you to a hospital now. But I've gotta give the campers chance to get back to their homes. We can't risk being seen leaving, otherwise they'll stop us. Just try to keep calm huh?'

A shadow of a lop sided grin flashed across the handsome face. 'Rrrelax? Oh ssssure! Just a nnnice nnnnight out with the guysss. A beeeeer, pizzza, ssssnake....no prrrrrroblem. Utch, m'thirsty. Got a weird tasssste in my mouth, like I've been ssssucking on annn iron bar or sumthin'.

Hutch checked the brunette's pulse, its rate racing away way too fast. It needed to slow down, but the blond knew the venom was already starting its work on Starsky's body, slowly breaking it down, bit by painful bit. He looked at the site of the bite. The two small puncture wounds were just to the left and slightly lower than the navel and had tiny trickles of blood oozing from them, a bluish discolouration blooming around them.

'Have ya got any pain buddy?' Hutch asked gently, wondering just how long he could afford to wait before making a run for his car.

'Sssstomach huuuurts. Dunno. Lllips tingle kinda an' I feel sssssick to my sssstomach, why?'

'I think we need to get you out of here pretty fast pal. Can you feel all your fingers an' toes?' he watched as his partner experimentally wiggled his extremities.

'Fingersss feel nnnnumb....Hutch.....I can't move my legssss....oh sssshhit.....I can't.....he turned scared eyes on his friend. 'Uutch, 'm ssscared. Get me outa here....please?'

Deciding it was now or never, the blond stood and looped his hands under the brunette's arms, levering the sweat slick body into a standing position. Starsky swayed and leaned heavily against his partner, swallowing frantically at the pool of saliva that seemed to have grown in his mouth.

'Uutch.....don't ffffeel too good' he slurred.

The flaxen haired cop put a strong arm around Starsky's waist and propelled him towards the door of the barn, the brunette's feet scraping against the floor as he fought to take each step. Slowly he opened the door and peeped outside up and down the rough street. There were lights on in most of the houses and the shutters were down, doors closed. Hutch lowered the sweating cop to the ground and propped him against
the door of the barn.

'I'm gonna go get the car buddy. Just hang on. Be right back' he paused, receiving a brief nod before running off up the street, his black coat flapping in the slight breeze, leaving Starsky alone.

He'd lost all sensation below the knees and his hands had pins and needles, a precursor to the numbness that was threatening to take over his body. His lips felt huge and refused to obey him now, and it scared him to be unable to communicate properly. But the thing that worried him most was the increasingly tight feeling he had in his chest, as if the air he was breathing had solidified and he was having to suck it in forcibly. He could feel his heart pounding too fast in his chest and tried to calm it, but the sounds of the blood in his own ears was the only thing he could concentrate on. He squinted up the street in the direction Hutch had taken, shook his head and tried again. When his vision wasn't blurred beyond belief, he could see two of everything and the world appeared to have taken a decided list to the left. He tried to swallow down the fluid in his mouth, but his throat refused to work and instead he spat weakly onto the ground.

A car came into view and for the first time in his life, Starsky thought that Hutch's rusty heap of junk was quite probably the most beautiful vehicle in the world. The blond hadn't turned on the engine, instead free wheeling the car towards the barn on the slight hill, so as not to alert the villagers as to his intentions. He braked to a halt by the barn door and trotted around to the passenger side to lever his friend into the car, dismayed at the deterioration in such a short time.

'C'mon buddy, give us a little help here' he mumbled as he pulled the rapidly worsening brunette into the car and wedged him in the front seat. Running back to his own side of the car, he started the engine, switched on the lights and did a most unhutchlike tire squealing racing start out of the village and up the rough track back to the main road. As the two cops made their getaway, Adam came running out of his house, watching the departing priest, and cursing under his breath.

Casting sideways glances at his partner while steering round the hairpin bends in the road, he kept up a steady stream of encouragement.

'Stay with me Starsk. You're doing great. Just concentrate on breathing huh? That's all ya need to do. Just in and out, in and out. That's good. Ya still with me buddy?'

The car plunged back down from the hills at breakneck speed as Hutch continued to exhort his partner to hang on. The road was long and dark and although there was a bright moon out, he needed all his concentration to keep the car on the road at the speeds he was driving. The whole journey took less than half the time it had taken Moses to drive up to Camp Eden, but it was still too long for Hutch. And as for Starsky — every minute seemed to stretch into an hour as the band around his chest continued to tighten. He had no feeling any more in either his arms or legs and was having great difficulty in keeping his head up. His neck felt like it was made of rubber and the pains shooting through his body made him groan.

As Hutch pulled up at the hospital, the only sounds in the car were the increasingly loud rasping breaths his partner attempted to make, and the whimpering groans as each new pain took him and shook him. As the car skidded to a halt outside the emergency entrance, the brunette's eyes closed and he slumped unconscious against the door of the car.

--------Chapter 9--------

Hutch ran around the front of the car and pushed open the door to the emergency room.

'I need a doctor. My partner's been bitten by a snake. He's unconscious in the car. Where's the doctor' he yelled frantically.
A young man in scrubs, a stethoscope slung around his neck peeled off from a small group and hurried forward. 'Calm down sir, where's your car?' he said calmly and taking Hutch by the shoulder.

'It's out front. Hurry would ya, he's d...I think he's dying' Hutch showed the young doctor out to the car and two orderlies with a gurney followed them. The doctor opened the passenger door and made a grab for the lip body as Starsky collapsed sideways. Bending down at the side of the car he felt for the pulse in Starsky's neck, noting the shallow breathing and cold sweat across the man's body. It was there, weak and rapid, fluttering against the doctor's fingertips like a butterfly's wing.

'Get him inside quick' he ordered. He turned to the blond. 'Did you see the snake that bit him? Can you tell me what it was like? We need to decide what antivenom to give him'

Hutch nodded. 'I think it was a Diamondback, and a damned big one at that. I only saw the tail disappearing, but the sucker must've been at least six feet long'. The doctor made a mental note and hurried off.

The flaxen haired cop stood aside as the two orderlies gently maneuvered the brunette's body from the car and laid it onto the gurney. Starsky's eyes were closed and he seemed unaware of where he was although every now and then he let out a low, guttural moan. As they started to wheel the gurney into the hospital, Hutch walked at the side, never noticing the strange looks he was getting until a nurse tapped him on his shoulder.

'Father, would you like to wait over here?'

The ice blue eyes stared at the nurse in confusion for a moment, before he looked down at his priest's robes in embarrassment. 'Oh, I'm...ah...I'm not a priest, I'm a cop, we both are. We were em...on our way back from a fancy dress party when he was bitten'. He unbuttoned the cassock and took it off, leaving his jeans and tee shirt underneath it. He smiled a shaky smile, feeling suddenly more like himself. Anything to put this crazy, and suddenly deadly, undercover job behind him. He hated the fact that these assignments so often turned sour and with painful consequences. He and Starsky had done more than all the other detectives in the Metro put together — a testament to their skills, but still leaving them with more battle scars than they cared to mention.

'Can I see him? I need to see him' he pleaded, trying to look over her shoulder at the cubicle Starsky inhabited.

'Is he a friend?' she asked, stalling him. She put her hand on his arm and led him to a bank of seats.

'He's my partner, we're cops. Can I see him? Please?'

'Just as soon as the doctor has done with him, yes. Maybe you could help me with the details, huh?' she waggled the clipboard and forms under the blonde's nose. 'Can I get you a drink maybe. You look like you could do with a coffee. Sorry we don't have anything stronger'.

He nodded and she left to go to the vending machine. She came back a moment later with a Styrofoam cup which she handed to Hutch and he sipped gratefully at the scalding drink. Together they sat down and she took her pen.

'So...lets get started. Name?'

'David Michael Starsky' Hutch watched her writing on the form, small, neat round letters from a black BLc pen.

'No, Starsky. S.T.A.R.S.K.Y'.
'Sorry.' She scribbled her first attempt out and started again. 'Starsky. Got it. 'Address?'

Hutch gave his address in Bay City

'Age?'

'30'

'Religion?'

'Jewish — none practicing. Can I see him yet? What's taking so long?'

'You'll be able to see him as soon as the doctors have finished. They need to do their work now. Don't worry. It looks as though you got him here in time. They have to set up a drip and get the antivenom. Hey!' she put her hand on the quivering shoulder. 'Back to the form huh?'

Hutch dragged his eyes back from the white curtained cubicle and smiled a watery smile. 'Ah...yeah, the form'.

'Who's his next of kin?'

'His Mom is Rachel Starsky. She's in New York, but I have power of attorney'.

'And your name is?'

'Hutchinson. Ken Hutchinson. Call me Hutch. Everyone does'.

'OK Hutch, last question. Medical insurance?'

Hutch gave the name and details of the Blue Cross company just as the white curtains whooshed to one side and the doctor strode out. Behind him on the bed lay the still form of the brunette. Hutch jumped to his feet.

'How is he Doc? Can I see him?'

The young medic smiled reassuringly. 'He's resting now. We dealt with the life-threatening conditions first. He was having difficulty breathing and we may still need to put a tube in his throat to help, but at the moment he's holding his own. We'll monitor the situation carefully. People who are in shock require intravenous fluids and I've set up a line so that we can re-hydrate him and possibly give him any other medicines to maintain blood flow to his vital organs. It helped a lot that you could identify the snake so I've given him the anti-venom and so far he's had no significant allergic reaction, although we did have adrenaline ready just in case. Fortunately the bite wounds were clean, so I've had them dressed. We're going to have to monitor him closely over night and possibly keep him here tomorrow too'.

'He's not gonna like that. He hates hospitals'.

The doctor nodded. 'Yes, I saw the scars. He seems to be no stranger to damage' he said wryly. 'You can go in now if you like'.

He was talking to the blonde's back as Hutch hurried into the small cubicle to be with his partner. Starsky's eyes were closed and there was still the ominous wheezing as he breathed. Hutch reached up and brushed a damp curl from Starsky's sweat slick brow. At his touch the indigo eyes fluttered open.

'Hey buddy. How're ya doin'? Hutch asked gently.
Starsky swilled his tongue over his bone dry lips and tried to smile. 'Trific. I got bitten by a snake Hutch' the voice came out as a whine and made Hutch chuckle. His partner sounded like a petulant little boy.

'Ssssnake. Sounds kinda slippery' Starsky chuckled. 'Ssslippery ssssnake, ssslippery ssssnake, hehehehe'.

Hutch looked around at the doctor, questions in his eyes. Whilst his partner was goofy at the best of times, he wasn't usually so crazy.

The doctor smiled. 'It's ok. It's the interaction of the antivenom with the morphine we gave him for the pain. He's definitely happy! The nurse will be outside if you need anything'.

Hutch sat down on the small hard plastic chair and watched his partner drift off into a relaxed sleep. For the first time in a while, the brunette had a smile on his face and gently Hutch reached for the closest hand, taking hold and then turning it in horror. A huge blister striped the palm of Starsky's hand and as Hutch checked, it had a matching friend on the other hand. Aw buddy. That's what 12 hours hard labour in those fields does for a cops hands huh? Hutch felt like a heel for bringing his partner into this mess so early, all because he was too chicken to tell his friend that his girl was making out with everything in pants this side of the Mexican border. Or maybe chicken wasn't the right word. No, Hutch wasn't chicken to tell him, it was just that he hadn't seen the brunette so happy with a girl since Terry had been killed and it tore at Hutch's heart to have to disillusion him. But what was worse? Telling Starsky his girl was the next step up from a whore, or letting the curly haired cop continue seeing Jenny and all the while she was getting it from every other guy she met? Hadn't Starsky once told him his girl was a prostitute? Hutch's mind went back to Gillian. Smart, beautiful but ultimately dead. Neither man had good luck with their girls. It was just too easy for their enemies to get to them through their women.

Hutch put his head in his hands and settled in for the long haul. His usual position, and one he hated — sitting waiting for his friend to wake up from the latest round of trauma.

'Utch?......'ey, Utch'

The familiar, if somewhat rasping voice shook him awake and Hutch looked up, seeing his friend through bleary, sleep befuddled eyes. He wiped his hand over his face and smiled.

'You back from Lala land buddy?'

'Huh?...Feel better, but I've got the mother of all hangovers. Jeez, and without a drink too! Can we go home now please? I'm sick of snakes an' Bibles an' Priests an' did I mention snakes?'

'The doc said you could go home today, but he'll need to check you out first. How d'ya feel?'

Starsky sighed. 'Headache. I can feel my fingers an' toes again, but they're kinda tingly. And the huppopoti.....hippopiti......big animal has gotten off my chest so I can breathe again'.

Hutch nodded encouragingly. 'it was touch 'n' go for a while there pal. Ya scared me. Don't do that again huh?'

'Keep the snakes away an' I promise' the ghost of a lop sided smile flickered across the unshaven face. 'Now go get the doctor man and spring me, ok?'

Hutch ducked his head around the curtain and signaled a nurse. 'He's awake. Can we see the doctor? He wants to go home'. She nodded and went in search of the medic. Moments later the young doctor came bustling around the corner and stepped into the cubicle.
'And how's my patient this morning?' he asked, checking the chart at the foot of the bed and pulling down Starsky's lower eyelids. He checked Starsky's pulse and pulled back the dressing covering the two fang wounds. The area around the punctures was angry and swollen, with a black bruise extending around for the size of a saucer.

Starsky bit back a yelp as the doctor's fingers probed the wound, but kept a smile on his face.

'I'm good. I feel much better. Can I go home now?' he asked pleadingly.

The doctor checked the chart again. 'I don't see why not. You'll need another shot of antivenom, which I can write a script for. You'll need to get that filled soon. You'll need the injection tonight at 6pm and its important, otherwise there's a danger of relapse. Have you someone who can give you the shot?'

'I'll do that. I'm kinda used to him being...erm....injured' Hutch explained.

'Well, fine. I'll have the nurse take down the drip. You'll feel very weak and tired for a few days, so don't go in to work and if the wound starts to look infected go back to your doctor or to the nearest ER. Remember David. Rest and in the nicest possible way, I hope I don't see you again'.

As the medic departed, the brunette tried to sit up. The room spun and he suddenly felt very sick. Hutch was there at his side immediately, seeing the pallor and disorientated look in his eyes.

'What part of weak and tired and rest don't you understand mushbrain?' he said fondly, easing his partner back down to the pillows. 'Now, just stay there and wait. I need to bring the car around and you need to get rid of that needle in your hand. Ok?'

Starsky smiled as he saw Hutch going full tilt into what he called "Mother hen mode". It always made him feel better, but it also annoyed the crap out of him. But he'd ride with it for a while. He was just so damned glad to be alive and kicking. So he snuggled his had back into the pillow. 'Yes Mom' he mumbled as he drifted off to sleep again.

--------Chapter 10--------

'Zebra three to central'. Hutch steered with one hand s he held the microphone in the other, waiting for an answer.

'Hey Hutch honey, what can I do for my favorite guy today?' Minnie's voice came back over the airwaves as they neared the city limits.

'Hi honey. I bet ya say that to all the guys. Can you patch me through to Dobey?' he waited a moment and then heard the click of the receiver.

'Dobey'.

'Cap its Hutch. We're on our way back. I'll be in later to fill you in fully and I'll need a team of black and whites to go back with me to the Camp. I've got enough on the goings on there to make the arrests and I think the DA will be happy to proceed. But I've got to get Starsky home first'.

'Starsky? Is he ok? Don't tell me...'

'He was bitten by a snake Cap' Hutch could almost see the eyes rolling in the black man's head as he heard about the brunette being injured yet again. 'We spent the night at a small hospital out of town but they let him go this morning. He needs to go home and rest and I have to get his medicines'.
'Hmph...well so long as he's ok. Tell him to take care' Dobey's voice sounded even more gruff over the microphone and the line went dead.

Hutch looked in the rear view mirror at his partner curled up on the back seat. He'd managed to wheel Starsky out of the hospital in the courtesy wheelchair and to the side of the car, but when he'd tried to stand to get himself inside, his legs had buckled and he'd ended up in a heap on the floor. Hutch hadn't known whether to laugh or get help, but the brunette had pleaded with him not to tell the doctor and so with a concerted effort they'd managed to shoehorn him onto the back seat and he'd immediately lain down. With his head cushioned in the crook of his arm and his other arm thrown over his face, he looked alike a little boy hiding from the monsters. Starsky hadn't moved all the way home and now, as they drew up outside his apartment, Hutch turned in his seat and nudged his shoulder.

'Hutch.' he said, his voice muffled in the grass.

'Oh shit Starsk. Guess your legs aren't quite up to it yet huh?' The blond bent down and helped him up and as Starsky leaned heavily on him, they made their slow way up the stairs and into the apartment, stopping several times en route for them both to regain their breath, unaware that they were being watched.

The flaxen haired cop struggled with the key and pushed the door open with his foot, balancing on one leg while he held his partner up with an arm around his waist. He shuffled inside the cool apartment and took Starsky straight through to the bedroom and gently deposited him on the bed, panting slightly with exertion.

'Either you lose weight buddy, or ya stop getting hurt' he grumbled. 'My back's not up to hauling you around anymore. Can you get yourself undressed?'

'Hmm. It ain't the age, it's the milage' the brunette grunted, watching his friend straighten painfully, his hands holding the small of his back. 'Yeah, I can manage. Just go an' get the stuff huh? I'll be fine, I just need a shower and some more sleep'.

'Shower? Are ya gonna be ok in the shower on your own?' Hutch asked doubtfully.

'Oh hey Blintz. Much as I love ya like a brother, there aint no way I'm gonna let ya soap me up. Just help me get in there an' I'll sit on a stool or sumthin. I'll be fine. I've had worse than this. I bet the snake's not feelin' too good either' he grinned.

'Well now ya mention it, I wasn't offering to actually shower with you. But I'll set your stool up and help
you in there' Hutch said with a chuckle. 'I know we're close, but not that close huh?’ He set about making preparations in the bathroom as Starsky listened with tired contentment to the domestic sounds — water running, Hutch humming to himself. Yes, it was good to be home. He wriggled out of his jeans, the effort making him curse their tightness and threw them at the laundry basket in the corner of the room. By the time the blond came back, he was sitting on the edge of his bed in his boxers, panting and cursing, but more or less ready for his shower. Slowly he stood and with his partner's help headed for the bathroom. He peeled off the white dressing on his belly and poked at the bruise, wincing at the blue/black discoloration and the two small incisions. 'Ouch'

'Does it hurt bad?' Hutch asked, examining it and sounding concerned.

'Yeah'.

'D'ya need to get back to the hospital? It doesn't look too bad. No worse than this morning'.

'It's not the bite that hurts. They stuck the plaster over the hairs on my stomach. It hurt taking the sticking plaster off' the brunette whined. He poked at the wounds again sullenly.

'Hey, no picking' Hutch pulled his hand away and turned the water on, testing the temperature. 'Are you sure you're safe? I don't want you drowning right after you survived the snake'.

Starsky looked up sharply. 'Yeah, it'd be kinda inconvenient' he said wryly. Slowly he stood and braced himself against the wall. 'I'm fine. Just go get the shot an' come back. Leave the door open so as ya don't have to get me up to let you in'.

The blond watched as Starsky started to get himself ready for his shower and made sure he was steady enough to be left. Finally convinced, he backed out of the bathroom, picked up his car keys and left the apartment.

Starsky eased himself into the shower and stood under the hot water luxuriating on the heat. He'd had the same clothes on for two days now, both at Camp Eden and even at the hospital. In their drive to get the antivenom into him, the nursing staff hadn't bothered to get him undressed and even after he'd been treated he slept in his clothes, not having the strength or desire to get undressed. Now, his body felt dirty and sticky and he slowly soaped himself down, battling the weariness his body still felt. He winced as one by one the blisters across his palms popped and stung in the water, but without their fluid filled bulk, his hands felt less clumsy.

After five minutes, his skin glowing from the heat of the water, he staggered out of the shower and reached for the towel. Drying his hair, he wrapped the towel around his waist and, using the walls as a prop made his way into his bedroom, lying down on his bed with a low groan and putting his hand protectively over the wound on his belly. When he closed his eyes, the memory of the feel of the snake on his legs, and the smooth body as it slithered up his chest left him feeling shaky and sick and he moaned again, half asleep and half remembering.

Slowly he drifted into the half world, where he was more or less asleep, but was still fuzzily aware of his surroundings. He pulled the quilt up around his ears, leaving the damp towel in place because he didn't have the strength to find his pajama pants and snuggled down into the bed and relaxed.

'Zebra three to central'.

'Hey Hutch honey, what can I do for my favorite guy today?'.

'
'Hi honey. I bet ya say that to all the guys. Can you patch me through to Dobey?

'Dobey'.

'Cap its Hutch. We're on our way back. I'll be in later to fill you in fully and I'll need a team of black and whites to go back with me to the Camp. I've got enough on the goings on there to make the arrests and I think the DA will be happy to proceed. But I've got to get Starsky home first'.

'Starsky? Is he ok? Don't tell me...'

'He was bitten by a snake Cap. He spent the night at a small hospital out of town but they let him go this morning. He needs to go home and rest and I have to get his medicines'.

The microphone in the car delivered its message and the occupant nodded.

'We're gonna go round to his house'

'No, we can't. Don't do that. He's sick. He's been through enough'.

'He'll be fine. We can look after him, no problem'.

'You won't look after him, you'll hurt him'.

'Well, maybe. But suffering is good for the soul'.

'He's suffered enough. Listen to me. He'll be no use to you, he's sick. You heard. He was bitten'.

'Well, maybe he'll get bitten again'.

'Please don’t'

'We have to, and you know it'.

'No we don't. He's suffered enough'.

'Shut up. He needs to be punished dammit!'

'I don't want any part of it'.

'You don't have a whole lot of choice!'

Slowly Starsky opened his eyes. He'd heard his door open and wanted a drink. Too exhausted to get out of bed, he rolled over onto his back.

'Hutch? Is that you Blintz?'

There was no answer, and in his mind's eye the brunette could see his partner putting shopping away and setting the kettle to boil. He tried again.

'Hutch, I wanna drink'.

The indigo eyes flew open wide as a familiar figure stood at the entrance to his bedroom. Not the comforting blond he'd expected. Someone completely different.
Chapter 11

'The pharmacy say to keep this in the fridge until we need it, and to take it at precisely six o'clock. We shouldn't delay otherwise there can be side effects. They said you were lucky to get the treatment when you did. Diamondback bites are real nasty' Hutch prattled on as he put the small vial of liquid into the fridge, nestling next to the cheese and just behind the bottle of beer. Not hearing an answer from his partner. He assumed Starsky must be sleeping and started to make coffee, knowing the smell would eventually wake the sleeping brunette. He padded into the living room and sat himself down on the settee, picking up Starsky's 'Amateur Photographer' magazine and leafing through the pages.

When the aroma of freshly milled coffee still hand' had the desired effect, Hutch went for the more direct approach. Pouring out a mugful of the black brew, he made his way to his partner's bedroom.

'C'mon Sleeping Beauty. Rise 'n' shine. The days half over an' if you sleep now, you'll never sleep tonight! Starsky? Starsk? STARSKY!'

Hutch slammed the cup down on the top of the chest of drawers when he saw his partner's bed empty, the sheets ruffled and crumpled. His first thought was that the brunette had got up and had tried to make it back to the bathroom. Visions of finding a body collapsed on the floor there made the blond rush to open the door.

'Starsk? Where are ya buddy?' he shouted, forcing the bathroom door open. That room too was empty and Hutch got an increasingly sick feeling to is stomach. The apartment was not that big. There were no other places to hide and with a growing feeling of doom, Hutch looked outside, seeing the red and white striped car still where Starsky had parked it before joining Hutch undercover.

With a trembling hand, he reached for the telephone and dialed the number he knew by heart. When it picked up he requested to be put through to his Captain.

'Dobey' the usual gruff voice greeted him.

'Cap. Its Hutch. Starsky's gone. His apartment is empty. I went to get his meds from the pharmacy and when I came back his bed looked like a war zone and he'd gone. Those bastard Eden flakes have him. Its gotta be them. Can't be anyone else. I need a bunch of black and whites an' I'm gonna go up there and bust their asses right now'.

'Hold on a minute Hutchinson. How d'you know it's them? Have they left any clues?'

Hutch took a quick look around the apartment. 'No nothing. Its gotta be them Cap. Who else would want to take him? He's still feeling sick from the effects of the snake bite, an' he's got to get a second shot tonight...shit Cap! Let's just move on this one now huh? I can be back up there in under an hour. Can you get patrols up there to meet me?'

'if you're sure, I can get men up there in an hour. We'd better move quickly. Good work Hutchinson and don't worry, we'll get Starsky back'.

Hutch put the phone down and looked again around the apartment. 'Who was it buddy? Was it Adam? Did ya go easy, or with a fight? Knowing you, it'd be a fight. Don't do anything stupid huh? Just sit back an' I'll come get ya. Hang on buddy. Just hang on.'

He went out to the car, climbing in and gunning the engine. It may be a brown rust bucket, but when the need arose he could milk the extra speed from it. Right now, he floored the gas pedal and the brown LTD fishtailed out of the quiet side street and onto the main highway. Once on the main road, Hutch settled into
his seat and aimed the car towards the hills behind the city. As he drove, his knuckles showing white against the steering wheel as he fought to keep his temper in check, he tried hard not to imagine what Adam would be doing to his partner now.

The whole scene with the snake had made Hutch's blood boil. He knew his partner hated snakes of any description and the one he'd seen slithering away into the dark recesses of the barn had been one of the biggest he'd seen. He'd first realised Starsky's phobia on a field trip up to the Dobey cabin by Pine Lake. Then, the sight of his usually brave and stoical partner reduced to a quivering and sweating wreck as the big rattler faced him on the kitchen floor, made the blond realise just what a pathological fear Starsky had of the serpents. But there again, it wasn't every day a poisonous snake fell out of your fridge along with the links of sausages and beers.

When the whole Pine Lake thing had quietened down, Hutch had questioned his partner about it, trying to rationalize the fear.

'Is it that they're poisonous?'

'Nah, not really' Starsky said suppressing an involuntary shiver. 'I guess it's their eyes. They kinda stare at ya an' get under your skin. It creeps me out. An' I know they aren't slimy, but they look it'.

'So if you hate 'em, how do you know they aren't slimy?'

_The brunette gave a low moan. 'My Dad once took Nicky an' me to Bronx Zoo. They had one of those shows where you get to get up close and personal with the animals. There was this damned snake and the handler wanted someone to hold it. Nicky knew I hated 'em but he pushed me out of the front row. Thought it was cutey, like little brothers do. Anyways, the handler put the snake around my neck. An' it first it was fine...just felt like Mom's leather handbag with stuff in it. But then it started to squeeze. I guess it was as scared as me, but I could feel it squeezin' round my neck an' its head was in front of my eyes. At first the handler didn't realise, but I musta squeaked or sumthin. He leapt into action, but it took two of 'em to get the damned thing off of me. Since then, they're definitely not my pet of choice'._

Hutch smiled fondly at the memory of his partner's face, lit by the firelight in the small wooden cabin as he recounted the story and pushed his foot flat to the floor of the car as he coaxed every spare ounce of power out of the big car, nursing it around the roads he'd negotiated in reverse not 24 hours previously. He needed to get to Starsky; he needed to arrest Adam and he needed to get this whole Priest thing behind him. He'd been brought up Lutheran by his parents, but had skipped the church thing as soon as he could, and hiding behind the Priest's garb had been more difficult than he'd anticipated, bringing back strange memories of Brillcreamed heads in front of him, long, boring sermons, and Mrs Matthews, his Sunday School teacher who smelt of bleach.

Cresting the rise, he saw the camp in the valley and around a corner, hidden from the view the villagers had of the road were five black and white cars, ten patrolmen and two other detectives along with Dobey. Hutch drew to a halt and got out of the car.

'Are you sure they have Starsky? Dobey asked again as he walked towards the blond.

'If they haven't I have no idea where he is or where to start looking' Hutch said tiredly.

'OK men, listen up. We thing Starsky is down there. Hutchinson will give you the lay of the lad. We go in quiet. We're not looking for trouble. We arrest Adam and his two main henchmen, Ben and John. The rest of the villagers are hangers on and most of them are just devout followers. So be careful. Keep your weapons holstered and your tempers in check. You have warrants to search all the houses. I remind you, only fire if you, one of the team or Starsky are in danger. Any questions?'
There were shaking heads all round and they looked expectantly at Hutch. He cleared his throat.

The camp is more or less one street long. There are houses each side. The elders meeting house is at the end of the street, and they have a kinda church set up in the barn. That's the big building set back from the rest of the buildings. That's where they're likely to bolt to, if anywhere. OK?'

The men around him nodded and quickly all the officers got back into the cars and headed off down the hill towards the camp. As the police vehicles got to the beginning of the street, some of the villagers came out of their houses, unused to having quite so much traffic in their settlement. At the sight of the black and whites, a few of them ran to the elders house in the middle of the group of houses, knocking on the door to be let in.

The cars pulled up in a line down the middle of the street and the various officers got out, starting to knock on doors to search for the curly haired detective. Hutch made a beeline for the elders house and pushed his way through the throng at the door, opening the door just as Adam appeared. The leader of the cult stood on the step of the meeting house and looked around. Seeing the man he knew as Father Connelly in jeans, tee shirt and black leather jacket, the glimpse of a shoulder holster poking out beneath it, his eyebrows raised.

'It seems we tested the wrong man for lying' he observed dryly. 'What is the meaning of this?' he motioned to the cars with his hand.

Hutch's blood boiled over. He took hold of the smiling man by his lapels and pushed him back against the side of the door, wishing he'd done it weeks ago.

'What have you done with Starsky....Ethan.....the man you tried to kill in the barn yesterday?' he ground out.

A genuine look of confusion crossed the leader's face. 'I thought I saw you driving him away last night' he said, his hands trying to pull Hutch's away from his neck.

'Don't lie to me that Adam. You and your phony "brothers" followed us back and took him from his apartment this morning' he said, tightening his hold on the man's collar.

Adam turned calm, martyred eyes on the flaxen haired cop. 'Don't talk to me about lying' he said slowly. 'I'm not the one who insinuated himself into our midst as a Priest. And I'm not the one who tried to pollute a young girl's mind by flaunting his body in front of her'.

The jibe at his partner sent Hutch over the edge. As Dobey was crossing the street to join his detective, he saw the big broad hand pull back and Hutch delivered a vicious right hook. At the last moment, Adam ducked out of the way and the blonde's fist impacted with the woodwork at the side of the door, rattling the fixtures. Hutch gasped in agony as a white hot pain shot through his hand and up his forearm into his shoulder. He bent double, cradling the injured limb against his stomach and didn't see the leader's knee come up into his face. His head snapped back and he staggered back into the crowd as Adam lunged forward again, all pretence at piety gone. As the cult leader pulled his own fist back for another pop at the detective, it was caught in a strong brown hand. Using the big man's momentum he spun the assailant around and folded his hand up behind his back, locking it there as he snapped the handcuffs around the wrists.

'Adam Winchester. I'm arresting you for assault on a police officer, fraud and possible kidnap. You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law. You have the right to an attorney. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be provided for you at interrogation time and at court'. As he finished the Miranda, a uniformed officer came forward and took Adam away.

Dobey knelt down beside Hutch as the flaxen haired cop groaned on the ground. He'd bitten his tongue when Adam had driven his knee into his face and now trickles of blood were running down the side of his
mouth. His right hand hung uselessly at his side, already a swollen bluish cast to the skin. The Captain
pulled the blond up into a sitting position.

'How's it going there Hutchinson?' he asked gruffly.

Hutch shook his head, grunted and decided against repeating the maneuver. 'Think I broke my wrist' he said
unnecessarily as he looked at the mangled appendage. Gingerly he reached down with his left hand and took
hold of his right arm, gasping as the pains started again. 'Did you find Starsky?' he groaned, looking around.

There was the usual quiet businesslike air of the end of a raid. Officers were escorting cuffed villagers to
their respectively cars and women were crying at the side of the road, as their men were taken away. Other
officers were standing with notebooks open, making written notes and handing out addresses for how
families would get information. Hutch scanned all the bodies coming and going for the familiar curly
mahogany head.

'He's not here' Dobey said sadly, seeing the light go out of the ice blue eyes next to him.

Hutch pushed himself painfully to his feet and staggered against his boss. 'I need to find him Cap. Need to
keep looking'.

Dobey took hold of the left, uninjured arm and steadied his man. 'You need to get yourself checked out in
the hospital. I'll get one of the others to drive your car back. You're coming with me'.

With a weary nod, and seeing the logic in it, Hutch reluctantly followed Dobey back to the car, got in and
forced himself to stay awake as they made their way back to the same ER that had treated his partner a scant
day before.

--------Chapter 12-------

Starsky woke slowly and most certainly not unpleasantly. There was a hand, wrapped in some sort of soft
fur moving rhythmically up and down his chest and he moaned at the luxurious sensation. He kept his eyes
closed for a moment savoring the feelings coursing through his tired body and tried to wriggle around on the
soft mattress. He tried to reach for the hand that was delivering the stunning feelings, to draw it to him but
realised belatedly that he was anchored down, and that made him open his eyes wide.

His hands were fastened above his head bound one to each bedpost forcing his back to arch slightly off the
bed, thrusting his chest out. He pushed his head back to see that they were secured with what looked like
police issue handcuffs to the wrought iron framework of the bedstead. He tugged experimentally at them,
giving up almost immediately when he realised that they were securely locked. He looked instead down his
body, seeing that the towel that had been his only clothing had been removed and he was butt naked, the
snake bite wounds standing out in all their blue/black glory on his belly, the other snake down that direction
taking a great interest in proceedings. His ankles were similarly anchored to the foot of the bed with sturdy
looking ropes and straddled over his thighs was a very familiar figure.

As he closed his eyes again with a low moan, the girl took off the rabbit fur mitten, reached out and caressed
the hairs on his chest and he threw his head back at the feel of her hands on his body. She drew lines
through his fur with her nails and leaned forward to suckle at his rapidly hardening nipples. He was tired
and still weak from the effects of the poison, but it only seemed to weaken his resolve and lower his
defenses to her advances. As she continued her ministrations she took hold of his hard cock and bent to kiss
the very end, sending flashes of pleasure through his body. Licking it to wet it, she blew cold and sensuous
on the tip. He groaned in pleasure feeling the familiar hot ache in his balls and she took his length in her
mouth, sucking and licking at him as he felt her hands massaging his sac.
'Oh god ....unghh.....oh shit.....do that again.....' his hands convulsively balled into fists above his head as he fought for control. He'd never woken this way before, especially not after having been kidnapped, and his senses were on overload.

His mind was on a different planet now as her hands stroked down the inside of his thighs, then back up, parting his butt cheeks and pushing into his secret places. He felt something pushing at his opening and a part of him rebelled, clenching his muscles against the too personal invasion of his body. The lingering effects of the chloroform and the medication he'd taken made him feel spacey and light headed and he moaned again, thrashing his head from side to side. But the woman continued gently probing his body and he relaxed, feeling the very tip of her slim finger enter him. She paused as he got used to the feeling, then pushed on a little further towards the ring of muscle guarding his inner passage. He groaned again and bit at his bottom lip.

Lingering there, waiting for his body to acclimatize to the odd sensation, she leaned forward and kissed his cock again, circling it's tiny opening with her tongue and pushing it in. He was skewered; a hand in his innermost passage, her tongue invading his dick. He ground his teeth in pain/pleasure and sensing his acceptance she continued pushing her finger further into his body, the resistance of the muscle now overcome.

The sensation of her hand there was strange and foreign and Starsky was almost at the point of complaint when she hit his prostate head on, stroking the gland with a crooked finger. Sparkles of pleasure shot through his body as he arched his back on the bed, shouting out roughly and thrusting his cock harder into her hand. He was almost delirious with the multiple sensations now and he cried out again, his voice husky with need as he felt himself rushing to a great crescendo.

With her finger working its magic inside her and her mouth on his cock, his world was consumed by the feelings coursing though his body. She felt his balls pull up inside him and his cock harden into a red marble rod in her mouth. She pulled away, substituting her mouth with her hand and with one final pump watched in satisfaction as Starsky's body shuddered and he shot his load onto his belly and her hand. She continued pumping him slowly until he sagged back against the bed, weak and panting, his body sleek with a patina of sweat.

She leaned forward and kissed him with lips that tasted of his essence and he weakly kissed her back his mind returning from the moment of climax.

'Jenny?' he muttered huskily. 'What's happening to me?'

She leaned forward. 'Sssh. Don't talk. She'll be back soon and she'll be angry if she catches me here. Here, let me clean you up' she reached for the towel he'd had around his waist and slowly cleaned his stomach, wincing in sympathy as he gasped when she passed over the wounds.

'I don't understand' he said weakly. 'It was you'.

His mind went back to the last thing he remembered.

Starsky had made his way slowly back to his bedroom, leaning heavily on the wall for support. His body still felt heavy, weak and tired and he desperately wanted to sleep. He threw himself down on his bed and pulled the quilt up around his ears hugging the familiarity to him, closing his eyes and enjoying finally being home. He'd heard the front door open very quietly and smiled to himself. Hutch was trying to be quiet so that he didn't disturb him. Good old Hutch always thinking of his partner's wellbeing. He waited for a moment until he thought the blond would be in the kitchen then shouted.

'Hutch? Is that you? M'Thirsty'.
He waited for the blond to come busting in with a drink for him and looked up when he saw a different figure at his bedroom door.

'Jenny honey! How did ya know I was back? M'Sorry. Had a bit of an accident with a snake. That undercover job Hutch was on went sour. Maybe you should come back tomorrow, when I can do justice to your company' he managed a weak wiggling of his eyebrows and smiled at her as she came into the room.

'It's ok honey. Don't worry. I don't need you to lift a finger for me. I'm gonna do it all for you' she said her eyes soft and loving.

Starsky's eyes were heavy and he needed some peace and quiet, even if this wonderful woman was almost throwing herself at him. 'M'sorry hon. Maybe tomorrow huh?'

A different look now crossed her face. Instead of the tender looks of a moment ago a dark expression crossed her eyes.

'Are you giving me the brush off "lover"?'

Starsky looked up in surprise at the change not only in her attitude, but in her voice as well. 'I didn't mean to....it's just I'm still kinda weak' he tried to explain. 'C'mon Jenny, gimme a break huh?' he asked.

'Jenny isn't home right now', his girlfriend said in a harsh voice. 'That wimp who was here a moment ago isn't your girl. I'm the one you want'.

The brunette looked at her in confusion. 'Jenny don't ass about. I really am sick honey. Just gimme a...Jenny?....Jenny, what're ya...'

His protestations were cut off as the woman he knew as Jenny McAllister produced a bottle of clear liquid and a cotton rag. She poured some of the chloroform onto the rag and leaned forward, pushing it over the brunette's mouth and nose. In his weakened state, he was unable to push her away effectively and in his panic he took a deep breath, inadvertently pulling the drug deep into his lungs. With a strangled moan, his eyes closed and the hands that had been clawing at Jenny's flopped limply to the bed.

He came back to the present to hear his girl's voice telling him.

'Me?' No it wasn't me. I wasn't there when weak little Jenny came to your house. She was the one who came to see if you were alright. She was the one that was so worried about you. I just called in on the off chance I could get a little bit of the action'.

Starsky's eyebrows knitted in concentration. His body still reverberated from the astonishing climax, but his head was still stuffed with cotton candy from the combination of antivenom, morphine and chloroform. What was she saying? For a moment he thought he'd been dating twins and the thought made him laugh, but a moment later the laugh turned to a grunt of pain. Jenny had lovingly looked at the man's deflated cock and had taken a back handed swipe at it, knocking it sideways. Starsky felt as though she'd just wired him up to the plug socket, the pains of the blow shooting deep into his belly and down the insides of his legs.

'Not so funny now huh?' Jenny's voice echoed inside his head. He opened his eyes.

'Don't understand' he muttered through dry lips.

'I didn't think you would. There's not a whole lot to understand. My other half.....the Jenny who's so tender and loving? She's not the one you want. I've seen your type. David Starsky thinks he wants a tender young thing who fawns over him. But I know you like it rough. Turns you on doesn't it? Be honest with yourself. You like to be tied like this, to have to struggle against your bonds'. 
The brunette's mind was working overtime. What they fuck was she talking about? Was she.....oh shit, not.....split personality? He'd had experience of that before. Not fun! Not fun at all. Bitterly he chuckled to himself. You really know how to pick 'em Davey boy. But he also flinched at the small amount of truth in her words as he pulled at the cuffs around his wrists again. Yes, there was a certain thrill in being bound; a freedom in having his mobility taken away so that he had no control over what happened to his body. It was almost like an absolution — whatever happened, he had no control over it — it wasn't his fault!

Absolution.....absolution; like in church. Like in a church where the priest....Hutch! Where was Hutch? Hutch'll come soon. He has to find me he has to.....ungh.....shit.

Jenny saw the absence behind the indigo eyes and once again swiped at her captive's cock making it bounce to the side'.

'Where were you going there?' she asked. 'It's rude to ignore me. Mustn't ignore Jenny'.

As if to emphasise the point, she took hold of the brunette's now flaccid penis and the complete scrotum in her hands, circling the package with her thumb and middle finger. Taking a firm hold she started to exert a small amount of downwards pressure, pulling the whole set forwards and down.

At first the feelings were oddly erotic, the whole centre of his body captured in that was, but as the pulling continued, Starsky started to feel first discomfort, the flashes of pain up through his groin and into the centre of his body. He pulled again at his bonds, trying to bend his knees to relieve some of the terrible pressure, but he couldn't move and Jenny continued, her eyes never leaving her captive's face as Starsky's eyes squeezed shut and sweat began to bead on his face and neck.

'Jenny don't.....let me loose.....please Jenny.....honey' he pleaded, trying to reach the softer, gentler side of her character. But the pressure continued to build.

The woman watched his feeble thrashing in excitement, her lips parted and her eyes wide in anticipation. His entreaties only fuelled her desire to give him more and more pain and she added a tug to the steady pressure, fascinated by the results.

Starsky's body arched right of the bed as he let out a throaty, husky scream. The centre of his body was on fire. It felt as though she was trying to pull his guts right out of his body. The pains radiated out from his cock and balls up through his belly and into his chest. The sweat was flowing freely now and it pooled in the hollow of his throat. He had no idea how much longer he could stand the torment. How could this one woman deliver so much pain?

With a final gut wrenching tug, she let go of her precious package and with a low groan the brunette's body sagged back onto the bed. She leaned forward and lapped at the sweat pooled below his throat, trailing her tongue up the side of his neck towards his ear.

'You're beautiful when you're in pain you know' she whispered as Starsky gave one final strangled cry and passed out on the bed.

--------Chapter 13--------

Dobey bundled the exhausted flaxen haired cop out of the car and into the small hospital ER. The young doctor, who'd just come back on duty did a double take as he saw the big blond being helped in.

'Didn't I say I didn't want to see you nay more?' he asked good naturedly as he steered Hutch into one of the curtained cubicles.

Pained ice blue eyes lifted. 'Guess I just couldn't keep away' he said unsteadily as the nurse who'd originally
spoken to him gently leaned him back against the pillows.

'Well Hutch. I'm flattered you wanted some more of our company, but this is taking it a bit too far, don't you think?' she asked. 'What've you done now?'

Very gently, she helped the big man out of his shirt. Hutch bit back the yelp as his damaged hand and arm snagged in the material of his sleeve and was sweating by the time he was naked from the waist up. He lay back against the pillows again as the doctor made his preliminary exam, shining the pen light into the tired eyes.

'Hmm'.

'Hmm? What's hmm?' Hutch asked. He hadn't really wanted to come here. He was frantic to find his partner now that he knew the Camp Eden people didn't have him. Only Dobey's insistence and his own common sense persuaded him that he needed to get checked out. He had the mother of all headaches and felt dizzy and nauseous and if he looked quickly to the left or right, the room took a second or so to catch up. It didn't take a doctor to tell him that he had a concussion, but the medic confirmed it anyway.

'It's not a bad one, but you should really stay put for 24 hours, just so that we can observe any changes'.

'Uh huh. No Doc, I gotta go. My partner....Starsky? The guy with the snake bite? He's gone missing an' I need to find him' Hutch mumbled as the medic continued his examination.

Hutch had bruises over most of his chest and stomach, although none were particularly bad. As he looked down at himself he thought wryly that they were no worse than the ones he usually got when he'd had to chase down a perp. Just one more hazard of the trade. He yelped as the doctor started to examine his right wrist.

The limb had swollen considerably and was black from the base of his thumb almost to his elbow, although fortunately it was still virtually wrist shaped. He groaned as the medic probed it gently.

'Well, detective. You and your partner are sure giving us a run for our money. I know we're only small, but we really don't need your business to keep open' the medic quipped. He looked at the brief history the nurse had taken while he was examining the blond. 'I think you can add a concussion and broken distal head of radius to your catalogue of gunshot and knife wounds. I'll need to give you a general anaesthetic while we set your wrist, but I can't put a cast on it at the moment — there's too much swelling. I'll use a splint instead and you can go to your nearest hospital in a couple of days for them to put a cast on'.

Hutch looked worried. 'Can you do it without a general? I've really gotta be looking for my partner. I need to find him, and he still needs his second shot of antivenom. Is there any chance? Doc? He pleaded.

'Well it'll be too painful without something. Um...what about a light sedation? It'll hurt the same but you won't remember it afterwards. How that?'

The blond nodded. 'Anything. No offence Doc, I just need to get out of here and look'.

Hutch explained to Dobey what was happening while the doctor and nurse busied themselves with getting together their equipment and by the time they were ready, the police Captain had made promises to telephone the Metro to check if there had been any word on Starsky.

Back in the cubicle, the nurse put the cot sides up on the gurney and Hutch closed his eyes as he saw the doctor preparing the shot of Midazolan. He winced as the nurse but the soft cannula into the back of his hand and then the world took on a fuzzy, vaguely comic appearance as the drug started to work.
Twenty minutes later, Dobey watched as the blond came out of his drug induced stupor. He didn't want to have to deliver the bad news that there had been no news of the curly haired cop, but as usual, the first question out of the flaxen haired cop's mouth when he could speak again was of his partner.

'No news' Dobey muttered as he pushed Hutch back down onto the bed.

'Need to find him' the blond mumbled thickly, the drug still leaving his system. His right arm was now wrapped in padding and gauze bandages from the tips of his fingers to his elbow and already felt much more comfortable, but his concussion still made him feel weak and dizzy. The dizziness wasn't helped by his right arm being strapped up in a sling. But nothing mattered save from finding his partner, and despite the doctor's best efforts, within an hour, he was up, back in his shirt and following his captain in an albeit wobbly fashion out to the car.

'So what now?' Dobey asked as he eased his passenger into the car.

'Back to the metro. I can't think of anywhere else to start lookin' Maybe the drive back to town will give me some inspiration' Hutch said tiredly. The pain killers the doctor had given him had taken the edge off his discomfort, but now her felt weary and fuzzy and above all, worried. They continued the rest of the drive in silence as each became wrapped in their own thoughts, finally pulling up outside the big stone building half an hour later. Once again, Dobey solicitously helped the blond man out of the car and Hutch limped behind him up to the second floor.

Starsky's eyes opened cautiously. He'd been awake for a while but he couldn't cope with the thought of the mad woman he knew as his girl puling his family jewels off again, so he'd kept the indigo blues shut until he could fathom out whether Jenny was around or not. Deciding he was on his own, he opened them and with a gasp raised his head and looked down his body. Someone had been kind enough to preserve a little of his modesty and they'd replaced the towel across his middle, but he still felt naked and vulnerable. His shoulders burned fiercely in their current position and he longed to turn over on his side....or maybe just to move. But his wrists were still imprisoned in the metal cuffs and the rope around his ankles dug into the skin.

There were pains in his stomach as well now. An aching, burning feeling which radiated out from the two fang marks and vied for popularity with the aching in his balls. He'd never felt pain like he had when Jenny had captured them in her hand and pulled and squeezed. But there again, he reasoned, it wasn't every day that that happened to a man, fortunately. Starsky pulled again at the metal cuffs, achieving nothing more than another bruise around his wrist. He gave up with a sigh and rested his head back against the pillow.

Well you can tell a girl got me. Not many of the usual flakes would tie me up on a bed dressed in expensive cotton sheets and pillow cases.

His mind wandered back to his partner, remembering that Hutch had only gone out to get his shot from the pharmacy. What must the blond have thought when he'd gotten back to the empty apartment. Panic? Well that's what he would have felt if the roles had been reversed. Was Hutch looking for him now? And if he was, where was he looking? Had Jenny left any clue?

And what about Jenny. Starsky chuckled grimly to himself despite the situation. What was it with him and his partner. All he wanted was a nice girl to settle down with. And instead he got weirdoes who wanted to pummel his body into submission, or girls who were lovely, perfect even, but who died because he was a cop and someone wanted revenge. Oh shit, Terry. Come back darlin' I love you so much

Some small noise brought him back to the present, a rattling and then he felt cooler air over his naked chest and braced himself. The door to the basement opened and he caught sight of movement coming down the
stairs towards him. Which version of his girlfriend would he see this time? The nice, kind, loveable girl he'd originally seen at the Metro, or the sadistic siren that he now realised had wrestled with him in his apartment and had just tried her best to emasculate him. His body twitched at the memory of the pain and as the girl came into his line of sight, he swallowed hard.

'Dave? Are you ok?' Good Jenny asked, reaching down to run her hand over his brow.

'Does it look like I am? Just let me up huh?' Starsky pleaded, deciding that he might have a chance at escape while the kind version was with him.

But she was shaking her head. T'm sorry I can't. She could be back any minute and then she'd be so mad at me. I can't bear it when she's mad. You don't know what it's like having her in my head all the time. Its not me you know. That's not really me. This is who I am' she sobbed, tears falling from her eyes onto the brunette's chest and leaving tiny silver beads of moisture on the hairs there.

'I know honey, I know. If you untie me I can help. I can get you help so that she goes for ever. Just let me up and we can get out together huh?' his voice was low and level despite his pain and fear and it seemed to be working. Jenny was listening to him, her hands smoothing down the side of the brunette's flanks and making goose bumps on his flesh.

'I can't' she whispered. 'She'll know....I can't'

'Yes you can Jenny. Listen to me. Just untie me and I'll look after you, I promise. Do you trust me? I won't let anyone hurt you, but you have to let me up'.

Tentatively, Jenny's hand reached up to the metal handcuff circling Starsky's right wrist, touching it as though feeling the metal for the first time. She ran her finger around the gap, feeling the difference in texture between the hard, cold cuff and the soft warm flesh of his skin.

'That's it honey, just open 'em and we can get out of here. You don't want to do this.....its not you, I know its not you' he kept up a low stream of inane words, hoping to penetrate the double personality. 'That's it Jenny, you don't want to do this, I know you don't...'

Starsky tensed as he felt and saw the change in the woman. The soft eyes and tender touch were replaced and anger stared back at him.

'Oh but I do want to do this. I love to see you like this. Your body stretched out and waiting for me. I'm gonna keep you here for ever. My little pet. But you know what happens when pets do things and say things they shouldn't?'

Jenny knelt on the bed and straddled Starsky's waist, her hands either side of his shoulders as she looked down into his face. He stared back at her without blinking as she ground her knee into the gap between his legs. He gasped but refused to look away and she laughed.

'That's what attracted me to you. So damned brave; almost as though you're asking for more pain. Are you? Are you asking me to hurt you again?' the madness sent a brittle edge to her voice.

'I'm askin' ya to let me up' Starsky said tonelessly.

'Why should I do that? I have you where I want you now', she trailed her hand down through the hair on his chest again, circling each nipple with her nail.

'Because you don't want to kidnap a cop'.
'You're wrong' she laughed. 'I want to kidnap you and keep you here in my dungeon. But most of all, I want to hurt you. I love to hurt you'. Jenny pulled her bent knee back and drove it into Starsky's balls. He screamed and jangled in his bonds as his body broke into a sweat which started at his head and ended at his toes. His whole body was enveloped in a miasma of pain and as she kneed him again, with the same force, he screamed one more time his body arching from the bed, then fell back, insensate.

Very slowly, Jenny looked at the unconscious man beneath her and with a look of repulsion, climbed off the bed. She stood shaking by the bound body, looking at the man she'd just beaten into unconsciousness and made up her mind. Before her alter ego returned, she went to the phone in the corner of the room and dialed a familiar number.

-------- Chapter 14 --------

'Hutchinson' the blond spat into the telephone.

He'd plodded along behind his boss back up to the squad room just as one of the other guys picked up his extension. Acknowledging the call he'd held the receiver up and waggled it at the flaxen haired cop.

'Hutch, hone for you — a girl'. Hutch walked over and took the telephone, not in the mood for conversations with women missing their dogs, or worried that their drunken husbands disappearance.

The voice on the other end of the phone was soft and instantly recognizable. 'Hutch?'

Great! That's all I need. To have to explain my partner's disappearance to his girl, who just happens to be two timing him with everyone in trousers this side of the Pacific! 'Uh, hi Jenny' he said trying to keep the displeasure out of his voice. 'If you were looking for Starsky he's.....'

'He's here' she finished for him.

'What d'you mean he's there? Where? What's he doin'? Is he OK?'

'He was kidnapped from his apartment. Trust me, he's here, but I can't release him. The address is.....address is.....'

Hutch heard another female's voice arguing and pushed the receiver harder to his ear, trying to hear what was going on.

'Jenny? JENNY' he yelled down the phone, but there was a full scale argument now and he had a job making himself heard. But finally he heard Jenny's voice again, breathless and pained.

'Just come quick. 3230 Alutian Way. Hutch....he needs you' and the phone went dead. Hutch stared at the receiver for a moment, wondering what he'd just heard, then replaced it and limped into Dobey's office. Swiftly he recounted the conversation. 'It sounded like there were two women there, but they sounded kinda alike. It was weird'.

'Are you gonna go?' Dobey asked, already knowing the answer.

'What do you think Cap? I can't not go. She said he needs me'.

Dobey stood, shouldering into his jacket. 'Well you can't drive one handed and you can't shoot your gun. You need backup, an' I'm it'.

They made their way out of the building and back to Dobey's car. The last days were telling on Hutch now and his body ached in places he didn't know it was possible to ache in. But at least he had a lead now as to
where the brunette was and he was intrigued and worried that Jenny both knew and couldn't do anything about it. Dobey gunned the engine and pulled out into the traffic, light flickering it's urgent message and siren blaring as they forged their way down the road.

'What did you have to do that for?'

'He needs help. I can't stand seeing him like this'.

'You're such a wimp. He's fine'.

'He's not fine and you know it. He's hurt and he needs treatment for that wound on his side'.

'Just shut up and get back into your little dark corner. I don't need you. I never needed you. Shut up!'

'You can't send me away. I'm here and so long as I can I'll protect him'.

'You can't protect him. I need some more fun before that blond shows. Now shut up and be quiet'.

Starsky once more regained consciousness, listening to the two voices. At first, he thought maybe someone had come to rescue him and he cautiously turned his head sideways to see who the other voice belonged to. The sight stunned him. There was the girl who he'd once thought he'd loved having a heated conversation with herself. If the situation hadn't been so dire, it might almost have been comic, but just at that moment Starsky's only thought was how he could escape further punishment from the sadistic woman. He braced himself and moaned quietly as he saw her turn back towards him, fierce in her eyes.

'So you're awake again'.

'Yeah, I'm awake again' he rasped, his voice husky from screaming.

'Great! More time to play' she slunk over to the bed and sat down by the brunette's side, running her fingers through his curls. Starsky jerked his head away and she laughed throatily.

'I thought you loved me' she said.

'I loved the other Jenny, the one who wants to untie me and let me up'.

'But you enjoyed our little games. The handcuff in the bedroom? It was hot, wasn't it? I could tell you were excited by it. I thought you'd want more'. She said, furrowing her brows.

'More loving you. Not more of this' he jangled the cuffs against the ironwork of the bed. 'Jenny just let me up and we can figure this out huh? I can help'.

She laughed. 'What is there to help? I'm not sick. I just want to have some more fun'. She bent down and caressed his neck with her lips, her mouth hovering over the artery in his neck, feeling the warmth and the fluttering of the heartbeat. She wanted to bite it; to feel his hot blood in her mouth and her teeth grazed his skin, waiting for the reaction. When he didn't move, she looked up, into his eyes.

'What's the matter lover? Don't I turn you on any more?' Jenny whisked away the towel from Starsky's middle and looked at the spreading bruise across his groin. She took hold of his cock and started to massage it back to life, but the damage he'd sustained over the past couple of days had taken its toll on him.

The brunette gritted his teeth as her hands became more and more insistent against his member and finally
she withdrew her hand and slapped his dick again, as he gasped and buried his head in the pillow. As she was about to repeat the maneuver, she heard a noise from outside and froze. Starsky heard it too and groaned in relief as her hands left his body and she got up from the bed, walking carefully to a cabinet in the corner. Jenny retrieved something and hid it behind her back as she heard the noise again.

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Dobey pulled up outside the address that Jenny had given and before the wheels had stopped turning, Hutch was out of the car and rushing to the front door. The house was a big old turn of the century pile, split into apartments and the front door opened into a short corridor. Quickly reading the address labels on the intercoms, Hutch identified a room on the ground floor as belonging to the woman and he knocked hard on the door. There was no reply and he knocked again, shouting Jenny’s name through the wood. Again there was no response and in an act of desperation, the blond took a step backwards, kicking out his long legs twice until the door gave way and burst in on itself.

Both men rushed into the room, searching the small space. They each took the bathroom, bedroom and kitchen, but there was no-one there and frantically, Hutch looked around again.

He went back out into the corridor and cast around, finally seeing another door set beneath the stairs steps. Whilst Dobey drew his gun, Hutch opened the door gently and started down the steps, eyes growing accustomed to the dimmer light as he descended.

As he got to the bottom of the stairs, his breath caught in his throat. In front of him, spread eagled and naked on the bed, his partner's body was shackled to an ornate bedstead. Starsky's face turned to his partner, mute appeal in his eyes and for a moment Hutch was going to ask what was going on...until he saw that the pretty woman sat at the brunette's side was holding a knife to Starsky's genitals, his dick and sac neatly draped over the large wicked looking blade as the curly haired cop held his breath. He'd seen what Jenny was capable of and didn't want to make any move or sound that would rob him of the prospect of little Starskys any time in the future.

Carefully Hutch stepped off the final step and into the room and at the sudden stilted movement, Dobey, who was at the top of the steps halted, waiting.

'Jenny, what're you doing?' the blond asked very carefully, seeing the patina of sweat across his partner's body, making the large bruises shine in the dim light.

'You're not having him. He's mine' the woman raged as the hand holding the knife shuddered. Starsky let out a feeble moan and closed his eyes, the muscles in his arms cording with the effort to keep still and quiet.

'You know he's a cop Jenny. You can't do this. Just give me the knife huh?' Hutch took another slow deliberate step forward, holding out his hands as his eyes remained locked on hers, willing her to see sense.

'If he doesn't want me, no-ones having him' she said slowly. 'I'll see to it no woman ever wants him again' and she lifted the knife and it's precious cargo up an centimeter, eliciting another gasp from the brunette.

'Jenny, don't do this....I.....I love you' Starsky rasped, trying to get through to the caring woman he knew was trapped in the body of this demon.

'No you don't. You're just like all the others. You don't love me. You just want to enjoy yourself and then leave me. But I'm not going to let you go. You're not going anywhere this time, do you hear?' the woman was ranting now, her hand still trembling against the brunette's bound body, but he tried again.

'C'mere. I want to kiss you' he said, making eye contact with his partner. If this works buddy, you'd better be
She looked uncertainly at her captive and he tried again.

'Jenny....honey.....I love you. Just kiss me huh?' he looked into her eyes, hoping his indigo orbs showed no trace of the fear her felt.

Very slowly, she took the knife away from his testicles and leaned forward to kiss him. As her lips neared his, he saw, over her shoulder a movement and before she knew what was happening, Hutch had his injured arm around her neck, his left hand holding hers as she tried to brandish the knife at him. She was screaming and crying in anger and at the commotion, Dobey bolted down the stairs gasping at the sight. Quickly he took the struggling woman from Hutch's hands and dragged her to the side of the room as Hutch started to untied his partner's ankles from the bed. Quickly looking around, he saw the keys to the handcuffs on the cabinet by the wall and unfastened the handcuffs too.

Starsky had been led in the same position for so long that at first he couldn't move his arms or legs, and very gently Hutch reached up to ease the numbed limbs, rubbing with his left, uninjured hand at the brunette's shoulders.

Starsky's eyes were closed, the last few moments of nerve wracking tension having sapped his remaining energy. He groaned as the blond moved his arms and opened his eyes at the soothing rubbing, seeing the splint on Hutch's right arm.

'Are you ok?' he rasped with a voice raw with emotion and pain.

'M'fine dummy. How're you? You look like shit' Hutch replied fondly.

'M'good now she's gone' the brunette said with feeling. His body was an ocean of pain and he wanted nothing more than to curl up and sleep. 'Can we help her?' he asked, looking at the sobbing girl that Dobey was now handcuffing.

'Help her? She nearly turned you into a eunuch buddy'.

'I know. But se's sick Hutch. She needs help an' some lovin'

The blond turned away, sickened. How could his partner still have feelings for the woman after she'd taken him and hurt him? Was now the right time to confess that he knew Jenny was a man eater, who hit on every man at the precinct? Looking at the hurt, disheveled and weary man on the bed, he decided information like that could wait. He turned away.

'Cap, we need to get Starsky to the hospital. He needs to get checked out and he needs his final shot. We only have your car an' I don't want to leave it longer than necessary'.

Dobey looked at the girl and then the brunette, making his decision. He saw the telephone on the wall and hurriedly made a call asking for a black and white to swing by and pick up Jenny McAllister, giving her location in the cellar. Then he released one of the woman's wrists and cuffed one hand to the hot water pipes running around the basement wall before helping Hutch wrap a towel round Starsky's waist and get his weak and disorientated partner out to the car.

--------Chapter 15--------

Once Starsky was ensconced in the back of the car he started to feel a little better.

'Hey ....don't wanna go to the hospital' he complained as he laid on the back seat staring up at the car roof.
'You're pretty banged around buddy. You need to get checked out. Apart from anything else you're erm....pretty swollen' Hutch said worriedly.

'That's why I don't wanna go. I've had enough folks messin' with little Davey for a while. It's just bruisin'. If its not gone down in a couple'a days, I promise I'll get checked. An' apart from that, I aint goin' nowhere dressed in a tiny towel' he complained. 'I just need to go home an' sleep Hutch....please?'

The blond dry wiped his face. He knew his partner well enough to know that even if he was forced to go to the ER he wouldn't co-operate. And, he reasoned, he had the antivenom at home. He could do the shot. He looked at Dobey.

'What d'you think Cap? Shall we take Valentino here home?'

The black man smiled. 'I suppose if he's no better tomorrow he can go to the ER then. I know I wouldn't like to have someone messing with my tackle after what he's been through'.

There was a tired and muffled 'Thanks Cap' from the back seat as the curly haired cop slowly drifted into an exhausted sleep, and when the car drew up outside his apartment, it took Dobey and Hutch a while to bring him round enough to manage to limp between them up the steps and into his house. With an effort they got Starsky to his bedroom and onto the bed and with a loud groan, he managed to get his legs up onto the bed. Starsky tried to curl over on his side, but his swollen gonad wouldn't permit the position and he rolled over onto his back with a final grunt and fell asleep again. He didn't even notice when Hutch plunged the needle into the top of his leg, and finally the blond pulled the covers up over his partner and sat at the side of the bed. He pulled the chair up close to the bed and put his feet up on the mattress, giving Starsky space, but within easy reach if needs be.

Dobey peeped into the room, seeing both his officers asleep, one in the bed, one by the side and chuckled. Inseparable! He tiptoed out of the room and back out to the car, heading back down town to the office to question Jenny McAllister.

Hours later, hutch was roused from his sleep by the telephone ringing. He groaned and rubbed at the back of his neck, trying to ease out the cramped muscle and slowly dropped his feet to the floor. He padded out into the brunette's living room and answered the phone. It was Dobey.

'Hey Cap. How goes it? I really needed to talk to you'. He dropped his voice to a whisper so that Starsky wouldn't wake or overhear. 'You know Jenny and Starsky were kinda dating? Well I saw McAllister just after their first night out. She was flirting with one of the guys....well, not flirting so much as throwing herself at him. I hadn't the heart to tell him then, but now she's done all this to him. An' he still wants to help her. I just don't know how to tell him....or maybe whether I should' Hutch stopped to try and get his thoughts in order, but Dobey stopped him.

'She's dead' he said.

'What? How? She was fine when we left her' hutch said, stunned at the news.

'We didn't realise she could still reach the knife from where we'd cuffed her. She managed to use it to slit her wrists. By the time the black and white had arrived, she was all but dead, but she written on the wall in her own blood before she passed out'.

Hutch's heart broke for his partner and he took a shaky breath' What did she write?' he asked, closing his eyes against the stark truth'.

'By the time they'd gotten there, she was slumped against the wall. She'd lost too much blood for them to
save her, but she's smeared blood on the wall. Just two words. "SHE'S GONE". Do you want me to come by and tell Starsky?"

Hutch sighed. 'No...I'll tell him. He's sleeping now. I'll wait till he wakes up. Thanks Cap'. He put the phone down and looked through the shelving at his still sleeping partner. Sighing Hutch went to the fridge and got himself a beer. Popping the top, he went back to the bedroom and continued to watch Starsky sleep.

It wasn't for another four hours that the brunette finally woke up. Hutch had put the small light on in the corner of the room and it cast a comforting light into his bedroom, making it feel warm and cozy. For a moment he wondered what had happened and tried to turn over on his side. Only the pain lancing through the centre of his body and side reminded him that the past few days had not been just a bad dream. He rested his head back against the pillow and looked at Hutch.

'Hey partner' he said, noticing again the splint on the right arm.

'Hey yourself' Hutch said softly. 'D'ya want a drink?' He handed Starsky a glass of orange juice and waited till the brunette had finished it. Starsky lay back down with a sigh.

'How're ya feeling Gordo?'

Starsky snickered. 'Like I got kneed in the balls! I think I'm gonna be walking like I lost my horse for a day or two. Is Jenny OK? Did Dobey take her statement. God I hope he was gentle with her. She was sick you know. I think she had that double personality thing. When I'm feeling like walking again I'm gonna.....What?' he stopped.

'What what?' hutch asked slowly.

'What ...like I've seen that look in your eyes before Blintz. There's something you want to tell me?'

'There's no easy way Starsk, so I'll just say it. Jenny's dead. She slit her own wrists while she was waiting for the black and whites'. He saw the brunette's face crumple and Starsky put his arm over his eyes, blotting out the news.

'She was sick Hutch. I know she hurt me, but she was sick' he whispered.

'She left a note of sorts. She wrote on the wall in her own blood SHE'S GONE'. What does that mean?' Hutch asked gently.

'It means she finally found her peace. She told me it was like having two people in her head; one good an' one evil and she said she couldn't live like that. Oh God, I could've helped her. Shit!'

Hutch reached over and put his hand on his partner's arm. 'She died as she wanted to live Starsk. Just one mind in one body. I guess she got what she wanted'.

But the brunette turned away and Hutch watched the strong shoulders shake as his partner cried for the girl who'd beaten him and betrayed him, but who ultimately stole his heart.

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

It was raining and unseasonably cold when they laid Jenny McAllister to rest in the cemetery to the west of Bay City. Her family were gathered around the coffin, seated around the hole in the ground that was destined to be her final resting place. The Captain from her previous precinct gave a short address and then the plain wooden box was lowered into the ground and the people got up and walked sadly away.
It had been a week since she'd taken her own life and stood a little way away from the main funeral party, Starsky stood leaning against his partner. His injuries hidden by his clothing, there was nothing to set him aside from any of the other mourners, his saddened eyes hidden behind dark glasses.

During the past week, he'd not spoke about Jenny, and Hutch hadn't pushed it. It wasn't until the previous evening that the brunette had asked Hutch to go with him to the funeral as moral support.

For the past week, the secret that Hutch had born had been eating away at him and he needed to confess; needed to come clean with his partner. They never kept secrets from each other, but he couldn't find the words or the courage to finally tell Starsky about Jenny's behavior.

Now, as the funeral party dispersed, Starsky took a deep breath and turned away, limping slowly back to the car. The words burned in Hutch's throat, but he knew he had to say something. He couldn't bear to see his partner so wrung out over such a shallow woman. He walked slowly at the side of the brunette, accommodating Starsky's painful gait.

'Starsk, there's something I have to tell you, an' you're not gonna want to hear it buddy. Jenny was erm....she was....she was trying to see other guys. I'm sorry, but I saw her and I can't stand seeing you so cut up about her. I'm sorry, but I had to tell you'.

Very slowly, he turned his indigo eyes on his friend and smiled a sad smile. 'I know. But Hutch, I still loved her'.