"Life's a box of chocolates...you never know what..." WHOOPS, sorry. It's a fluffy love story for those with a sweet tooth. Starsky finds out the hard way

**Categories:** Slash

**Genre:** Me and Thee Archive

**Warnings:** No Warnings Needed

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Painted Angel

by Vedette Ciel

"...All for your sweetheart, so don't forget your Cadbury Tin of Roses, a tradition since 1938, full of Dairy Milk Chocolate!"

Hutch stretched and yawned. It was time to hit the hay for another day that had been full of chases and reports. Starsky got up to turn the television off right after ogling his favorite chocolate company in a new commercial.

"You see that, Hutch? A tin of Roses! In chocolate, my favorite kind!"

Hutch rubbed his own neck, smiling, shaking his head. "How do you know it's your favorite? You like anything sweet."

Starsky grimaced. "Well, okay, true. But candy roses, now that's decadent!"

Hutch stood up and scooped Starsky's waist to his own as he waltzed by. "Why do I get the feeling there's another holiday coming up?"

"Not just any holiday! This is the most special holiday--for two people in love."

Hutch picked up the bottles and snack bowls and deposited them on the counter. "Hmm, and which two people are you talking about?" Hutch so enjoyed riling him up.

Starsky threw away the paper towels he had been using to clean his camera lenses, and stacked his photography materials onto one side of the table so there would be room for tomorrow's breakfast. "Hutch, don't you want to celebrate Valentine's Day? Our first?"

"I didn't realize it meant so much to you." He winked and walked towards the bedroom, as Starsky followed like a kid who wanted something for his birthday.

"Hey, I've spent way too many alone for the romantic that I am."

"Maybe that's because you're a hopeless romantic."
Starsky put his hand to his chest in pride. "Yeah, well, I'll have you know I was the bard of Ramez Middle School. I collected more valentines than Valentino." Hutch grinned. "How 'bout you? You think you're up for the challenge of Cupid's arrow?"

"I think I already got that in the ass, didn't I?"

"Crude, Hutchinson. Not sure if you're ready for wine, roses and thou."

"Why didn't thou bring up chocolate?"

"Because I know you don't like chocolate. But I hope that doesn't mean I have to go without."

"You want me to buy you a silly red box full."

"Yeah, I do. I think it would be nice to get one for a change. I'd be flattered."

"You'd be fatter."

"Hutch, you're not going to ruin this holiday too, are you?" Starsky undressed and started to turn down the sheets. Hutch noticed he looked a little panicked.

Hutch took his shirt off. "Hey, we had a nice Christmas. It was my first attempt at meeting you halfway. Let me get my feet wet here." He gave him a genuine smile, to smooth out the rough edges.

"Okay, I'll give ya a handicap for being an amateur. Just don't forget, okay? 'Love means never having to say you're sorry,' but it's easier with chocolate." They climbed into bed.

Hutch shook his head. That doesn't even make sense. Still, he cuddled up to his partner and spooned. As Starsky snuggled up to him, Hutch gave him a little neck kiss. He actually looked forward to indulging in a day set aside just to honor love.

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Hutch placed his items on the counter and smiled graciously at the delicate young clerk. She took the expensive heart shaped box and embarrassingly looked up at him. "You have a very special sweetheart, don't you?"

"Schweeheart, indeed, the way Starsky always imitated Humphrey Bogart."

"She's a very lucky woman," the clerk continued. "I haven't sold any as fancy as this so early."

Hutch could feel his face turning the color of a cheap Valentine card. The next sentence would demand a pronoun, sometimes that caught in his throat.

"Well, this is a special holiday this time. Our first--together."

"Is she really pretty?"
"Uhh, boy. Maybe he should have chosen less items. "Some say that, yes."

"How pretty?" she teased.

"Oh, pretty funny. Pretty smart. Pretty amazing...all kinds of pretty."

She gleefully giggled. "Oh, that is so cute! That'll be $21.89."

Hutch paid quickly and waved goodbye. He couldn't help but snicker to himself, how crazy he was for his partner, that it made him weak at the knees, spend like a fool, and reduce him to a bumbling idiot with words.

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He made it home in plenty of time to conceal his present. The question was, where do you hide anything to do with gifts and not have it foraged for like a San Francisco mine in '49? He was sure that when Starsky was hungry, and that was constantly, that he could smell chocolate through lead walls. Stashing it behind Vanessa's silver service set in the highest cupboard, covered in plastic, he grinned at his handiwork. Who would use that mallemuck. There's no finer deceiver than a detective, except, well, a set of detectives, he surmised. He took the rest of the items out of the bags, including his diversionary device--a can of hot cocoa mix that he would 'accidentally' leave partially open so the scent could permeate on the second shelf of the cupboard. He nodded to himself at his cunning. Ahh, Starsk, you've met your match this time.

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Starsky slept in cozily after Hutch went to work to meet with the Assistant District Attorney. He wouldn't be needed until noon, and then he could join Hutch for lunch. By ten o'clock, however, the noise from the jack hammers one street over was too constant to ignore. He got up famished, and reheated the cold coffee leftovers that were in the pot.

Burrowing for anything sweet to go with it, he came upon that strong scent of chocolate for the second time in two days. He was cold with just his robe on, barefoot, and suddenly, coffee didn't seem as appealing as hot cocoa made with milk. He scooted to reach for the cocoa can, but stubbed his toe on the lower cupboard drawers. A clumsy recovery still didn't save the stumbling tin, or the powdery brown substance it contained, that now covered the entire area.

"Phooey!" Starsky said aloud. Instinctively, he started to gather the cocoa dust in a pile with his hands. Further clean up meant using a chair and working on the second shelf. That country boy, he must have been raised in a barn, he always leaves stuff half open.

Once he brought himself to the shelf's edge, the mastery of Hutch's plan was quickly foiled. Not by sight, but by aroma. A true chocoholic is not only adept in their preoccupation, but has a penchant for its scent like a wine's fine bouquet.

"There's something else up here, Starsky mused. He rumbled through the cupboard's second shelf contents with an upward curving smile. Third shelf. Suddenly he spied the dust misplacement of some gaudy silver dishes, and locked his eyes across a very large plastic bag. Bingo.
He came down from his perch and considered the situation. That sentimental blond Blintz, he actually did it. Starsky’s heart pattered like a school kid's. He leaned against the counter, while he wet his fingers and scooped up chocolate powder. *Nah, I shouldn't. I should wait. Don't want to spoil his surprise.* But as he tried to convince himself he should be good, the cocoa was just not satiating his addiction. He tussled with his willpower, until a sip of the tepid coffee hit his mouth. Within a minute, he'd mentally injected himself assuredly with the idea that one or two little samples wouldn't hurt. *I love him so much, what a guy, but you know what they say, 'they'll never know.'* Up he went, after his prize.

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It is said that every good deed can by no possibility escape its reward, and so Starsky had set himself up for the opposite. Upon the shock he received from the size and quality of the arrangement of such fine chocolates, he reduced his famish down to just trying one, attempting to foster the air of a connoisseur. He chose a hard caramel because he knew he could savor it longer. He replaced the box as identically as he could while chomping on his choice.

By the time he returned the gift to its silver Amory, he was gleefully biting down ferociously. Two seconds later, he nearly fell off the chair, when violent pain met him as he grabbed his jaw. He yelped attempting to get the caramel to let go of his filling, but it was too late. Spitting out the scrumptious evil doer, he recovered a chipped tooth and a large piece of metal among the confection.

He slumped wondering how he was going to explain this. But he would have to be honest, because a trip to the dentist was unavoidable, and Hutch would have to know. He retrieved the pieces of his dental work from the caramel and looked at the time. He'd have to get going or he'd be late. He popped the rest of the candy in his mouth, after all he still had one side of his teeth undamaged, he chagrinned. He sped himself up to get ready for his day, and try to come up with a way to tell Hutch something, something that in all fairness, had to be the truth. *I wonder if they sell heart shaped lumps of coal for Valentine's Day.* He was worried Hutch would consider it after this rout.

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Meeting Hutch at a small diner was a treat they usually didn't have time for. Starsky ordered the open faced turkey sandwich to avoid having to chew too much.

"Hey, what happened to a burger with the works today, or a chopped sirloin plate?"

"Uh, actually that's what I wanted to talk to you about, when I told you in the car."

"What, you mean where do bovines come from? What is a vegetarian? Is manure good for the environment?" A lunch with Starsky was always a conversationalist's dream.

"Boy, am I glad the food's not here yet. Can we avoid talking about manure?"

Hutch had to giggle. "Sorry, buddy, just missed you this morning, that's all. And how was your morning at home?"
"Well, not so good. I think I'm up to my ears in cow shit."

"What happened?" Hutch was serious now.

"I kinda ruined your surprise..."

"Starsky! You didn't sneak around did you?"

"Not sneak, no, it was more that my nose found it. Then my mouth couldn't say no, and then my tooth kinda said oh, hell no." The platters came and the waitress walked away.

"What?"

Starsky explained his toe stub, his cocoa spill, and his chocolate heart robbery, finishing with the tale of the cold hard caramel. Hutch's fork stayed in the air midway between his potatoes and Starsky's face throughout. Starsky put on his best grimace, hoping cuteness would score him a reprieve.

Hutch ate what was on his fork, and then began to use it to point. "Thank goodness that's not all I had planned, or you'd be in big trouble, Mister."

Starsky felt awful. "Am I grounded?"

Hutch grinned maddeningly. "No, but I might suggest to the dentist he should grind down a few more just to teach you a lesson."

"Would you mind not mentioning the dentist? I'm already feeling the drill in my jaw." He held his face.

Hutch softened, amused. "Okay, buddy, I apologize. Sorry I hit a nerve. Let's get this daily grind over with so we can brace ourselves to call your fang carpenter. Hurry up, finish your coffee. Spit out and rinse."

"Hutch!"

~*~

"Whadda you mean, 'root canal?'" Starsky's eyeballs were bulging like a bullfrog's.

Hutch covered his mouth and tried to suppress a miniature chuckle. Starsky gave him a dirty look.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Starsky, but it looks like you'll have to be scheduled immediately for the initial process. We should be able to get a temporary filling in there tomorrow, but you'll have to stay on a soft food diet until we can arrange for the final appointment."

"In other words, no more caramels for awhile, Starsky," Hutch enjoyed adding.

"I guess I'll have to stick to MandMs for Valentine's Day, they melt in your mouth."
The dental assistant gave him a dirty look. "How's eleven o'clock tomorrow?" she inquired.

Starsky made his arrangements, and exited to the hallway. Hutch followed still shaking his head hiding a smirk. Starsky turned to him with the face of ultimate doom. Hutch couldn't resist anymore. He walked beside his partner, squeezed his shoulder, stopped him and gave him a little cuddle. "It's okay," he whispered. "You and your holidays. Don't worry, you won't get gypped out of our love day, okay?"

_Those baby blue eyes, he does feel sorry for me._ Starsky returned the hug, he didn't care if anyone saw them. "Yeah, okay. Guess we'll have to be creative. Don't think I'll be up for much mouth action, if you know what I mean."

Hutch burst out laughing. "Oh, Starsk, you goof. We'll have a great time, you'll see!"

Another tug at the shoulders and they went back to the Torino, for their afternoon shift.

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They drove their beat quietly, while Hutch was preoccupied with finding another idea for Valentine's Day and Starsky was commiserating over his unavoidable dentist visit.

"Zebra three, zebra three, your assistance is needed for a 211 on 12th and Hudson...see Officer Holbrook..."

"Zebra Three, we are responding..." They were within four blocks from the site. "That's near the bus station, Starsk."

"I'll park on the side street, it's busy down there." He slowed the car down, and Hutch exited when he saw Holbrook and his partner near two black and whites.

Starsky met up with the other three after they had entered the bus terminal quickly. A screaming woman and a man with a gun were surrounded and the thief was talked down and arrested. The officers were relieved it went so well, with no bystanders injured.

Starsky and Hutch left the terminal by the front doors. Starsky turned towards his car, stepping off the curb holding the side of his mouth, because his tooth was aching due to the air conditioned cold of the terminal. A young driver, bending to tune in his radio while driving too fast up the Boulevard, attempted to come to a stop to avoid a passing taxi, and headed right for the dark haired cop.

"STARSKY, WATCH OUT!" Hutch screamed, as he lurched for his partner's waist, dumping both of them onto the sidewalk. Starsky's neck fell onto a grate between the curbstone and the road, knocking him out cold. Hutch reached for his head. _Oh, No. Babe..._

The car halted and the teenager jumped out, frightened to pieces. "God, is he okay? I'm sorry! I didn't mean..."

"Call an ambulance! Officer hurt!" Hutch yelled. Several people ran for a phone.
"Officer??" the teen said.

Jameson, Holbrook's partner, came running out and began to handle the situation. "Is Starsky alright?" he asked.

Starsky regained consciousness and looked up shakily at Hutch. "It's okay, Starsk, I'm right here. Stay calm, don't budge." Hutch held his head but didn't want to move it. "I need to take him in, can you guys handle the rest of this?" Hutch kept his eyes locked onto Starsky's.

"Sure, I'll call for assistance. Don't worry about it."

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"There they are..." Anita alerted Huggy, as the two detectives entered The Pits and took a booth.

The black man walked over briskly. "How did it go at the hospital? Will the Curly One live?" He already had two beers on the table.

"I'm okay, Hug, just a small concussion. Docs say I just need to rest up the next few days and take it easy. I think my partner, though, needs valium to ward off the shakes."

Hutch took his beer and sipped it quickly. "I can't help it, Starsk. It's too close to Cupid's Day to replace a good find like you."

"Listen to you two lovebirds. Pretty soon you'll be flapping your wings and singing in harmony."

They all laughed. "I guess this is the only place we can let it all hang out, Hug." Hutch lamented. "You're the only one we can tell."

"And I assure you I am flattered to peaches! If I may be of any assistance in the planning of your amorous escapades, the Bear has the flair for any enchanted affair!"

"Do you cook, too? What's the special this evening?" Starsky pined.

"Order for me, Starsk. I gotta hit the john."

Starsky shook his head. "Man, he's been a nervous wreck ever since the incident. And since I ruined his Valentine's candy idea."

"That wasn't your finest moment this week."

Starsky felt bad. "Yeah, I know...hey, while he's gone, can you help me figure out what I can give the Blintz for his holiday? I really want to make this special for him, he cares so much. And I owe him."

"I'll go rustle you up some grub from the 'chef.' I have some ideas for you, if you'll call me tomorrow for more details." Starsky waited for Huggy to return, then began telling his story about what the dentist said.
Hutch washed his face in the bathroom, then leaned his back against the tile wall. Sometimes, life throws you a reminder that taking things for granted is too easy to do. He closed his eyes and thought how unimportant it was that Starsky had unraveled his candy idea, seeing he might not have been home for the holiday, but in a hospital room instead. He was grateful it turned out no worse. Still muddling, he didn't have a replacement surprise, but he'd keep working on it. He wanted to come up with something original, that had his own signature. There was a warm anticipation in trying to outsmart the little devil he was falling in love with more every day.

He left the bathroom to return to the table. He stopped to overhear Starsky complaining about his tooth. "It looks like I won't be enjoying anything sugary or sweet for Valentine's this year. This tooth is so sensitive now, I can imagine how I'll feel after the dentist. I know it's childish, but I just wanted the whole chocolate and roses thing for once. Especially with him, he's the most important love I've ever known, I've never, ever been this happy. I can't even explain it to him."

Hutch tried to scuttle in casually without a blush to worry about. He pulled it off by going to the jukebox, first to let Starsky change the subject and to cool off his face. Something intrigued him about the "sweets" idea. He'd have to think about that. A quarter later, his three selections started with Elvis' *Burning Love*. Huggy rolled his eyes and walked to the kitchen.

Starsky watched him sit down. "Hey, did you fall in in there? Any soap left?"

"Hutch gave him a beaming sop of a look anyways. "Did I ever tell you how much I value our friendship, Starsk, right from when I saw you for the first time so many years ago?"

"Huggy doesn't use fruity red detergent in the dispensers in there, does he? Jeez, Blondie, save some for Love Day!"

Huggy came back with two orders shaking his head. "You two still at it? My glory, there's smoke coming from the fire!" They both chuckled loudly while Huggy dumped the plates and spun away.

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Hutch always felt better after he spent a little while in the organic food stores. His favorite, *Full O'Life Natural Food and Drug Store*, was diverse. He wandered in and out of the aisles looking for products or ideas to enhance his day with Starsky. He came upon a recipe trading area and began to read about confections you could make with organic products.

A warm rose colored index card met his eyes that said, "Body Tastes for Lovers." He read the intriguing page, that listed natural edible oils that could be mixed with stevia and honey to sweeten, and then used as a "body spread". He smiled to himself as he read the recipes in the back, that included cacao mint, strawberry and rum butter. Finally, he grinned, here was an idea Starsky would never outdo. And with his tooth problem, this had promise.

He hurriedly began to gather potions and products he could use to make these concoctions, and found himself delightfully amused with what he could do with his inventions. By the time he got to the checkout, he had come up with his own flavors he knew would make his partner crazy. The clerk began to tell him she had tried the recipes herself, and showed him an area of the store
that had an edible "glitter", that he could use as a base. It was very similar, she said, to flavored
lip gloss. He enjoyed the conversation with her, and thanked her kindly. Driving home, he patted
himself on the back. Imagine, I don't even have to find a place to hide the box, because I am the
box! He chuckled in his car all the way down the street.

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Starsky had survived the day at the dentist for the insertion of a temporary filling. After two
days, the area didn't hurt at all, and the bruising inside his mouth he had received with his fall
was healing. The dentist wanted to see him for a quick check up on February 14th at eleven in the
morning, the day their three day weekend would begin. Starsky was less than thrilled about
the idea, but Hutch encouraged it, so he could get rid of him to prepare his surprise. Still
brooding, Hutch scooted him out the door with a promise that something special would be
waiting for him when he got back.

Hutch spread out his potions and foodstuffs and began mixing and tasting as he went along. He
easily made a cherry, strawberry, pineapple and peach mixture, each separated in small dishes
with fragrant oil flavoring, honey and stevia. He combined white chocolate and cacao liquor with
peppermint, then with spearmint and then with coconut and butter rum. Then he created what he
knew was Starsky's favorite, a sweet but tart lemon, that smelled just like the lemon squares he
would always insist Hutch picked up at the bakery in the Italian district when there.

The beauty of all the flavorings was that they were fairly colorless. When he was satisfied with
his inventions, he wiped his hands on his kitchen towel and covered the little dishes with waxed
paper. Now, Hutchinson, you must prepare the pretty carton, he chagrinned. Off to the bathtub
he went, for a thorough soak and scrub down, careful not to use any strong smelling soaps or
aftershaves.

When he returned, he opened up the glitter gloss that the clerk had suggested. He put some on his
arm, first in a circle, then instantly had the inspiration to create a two inch 'heart shape.'
Suddenly, he smiled at his idea. Each little gloss spot would be like a different 'chocolate,' like
the heart shaped tin Starsky had mentioned. Inside every glittery outline, he added a scented
foundation of chocolate or cacao, and then covered it with a different flavor. He made sure to
vary the tastes of fruit and mint so that no two were side by side, as he placed hearts on his chest,
legs, calves, shoulders, neck, and yes, in salacious places as well.

When finished, he cleaned up his bowls and walked to the mirror to see his handiwork. His
appearance made him blush for a moment. Suddenly shy, he thought about what Starsky would
think. Maybe this was too silly. He closed his eyes and opened them up again, and tried to look
at himself from a more youthful time. Surely his generation of flower children in the summer of
'69 would have had no qualms to attempt this. He puckered his lips a little as he applied the last
of the gloss onto them. He left the room remembering Starsky was always game for innovation,
and delighted when Hutch stepped out of the ordinary and banal.

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It was almost two hours since Starsky was due to return. Hutch was not only getting restless
laying on the bed, but he was pretty much pacing avoiding sitting down on anything while
completely nude. His sleep pattern the last few nights was still interrupted by his concern about Starsky's close call, and so he found himself easily tired. After spending some time watering his plants in the greenhouse, he concluded he could lay down on the wooden benches by putting a few sheets on them. Once supine, however, the anticipation and fatigue dropped him into a deep slumber, as he waited patiently for his lover to come home.

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Starsky's delay at the dentist was due to an unexpected emergency with another patient that had to precede him, and his errands after talking to Huggy. He entered the apartment quietly, a little anxious, hoping he wasn't going to miss anything Hutch had planned. When he came in, he found everything silent, and didn't notice any special preparations. There was also no Hutch.

He walked into the bedroom, thinking he might have gone in for a nap. When he tried the greenhouse as his last resort, he stopped dead in his tracks. Never in his life had he seen a scene, picture or painting to ever match what he fell upon. The sun was coming in the windows in speckling rays, bouncing off several crystals Hutch liked to hang in the light. A bevy of rainbows and colorful facets were dancing in the room. The plush greenery enhanced the hue of the walls, and scented the air with earthy aroma. And there, in variegated illumination, lay the most resplendently stunning figure Starsky had ever seen in his life.

Backing out of the doorway, he pinched his lips to hold in little choppy gasps. All he could do was stare at his love, his life companion, aglow with prismatic brilliance, his fair skin appearing almost celestial, as if he had stepped into a Greek fable, where gods and mortals dare to mingle. Oh, Hutch, you look like an angel, an archangel. The bright white sheets were delicately tattered and wrinkled exquisitely, beneath him on both sides of his arms, and imitated long feathers, like wings. He was partially covered between the legs, creating an intense allure to evince his abundant loins. Starsky's attraction to him was fierce, but he always had the 'eye' of a photographer when he came upon something unusual, and how exquisite was this. He felt unworthy to sidle into this venerable niche. He remembered his camera was ready on the table from cleaning it the other night. Before he disturbed his mate's natural symmetry, he had to take the opportunity to capture this enchantment, like spotting a gorgeous, fleeting creature that may never unveil itself or be discovered again.

Quickly, he prepared his Nikon with his 70mm zoom lens, and set the camera to take manual shots, not wanting the whir of the automatic winding to wake his partner up. He returned and began taking wide area pictures of his entire body length, every moment the light changing, with the rainbow effects of the sun and sparkling lead crystal hangers.

He was drawn in by his lavish, iridescent model. As he began to zoom to specific close ups, he gazed more closely into the aperture. He discovered that his silky skin had its own faceted shine, as if he was covered in mica, shimmying as Hutch took peaceful breaths. He zoomed in the lens to its 200mm maximum, and took in his own breath. Oh, my beautiful blond, what have you done to yourself? It was apparent the golden skin tone, with its rose tan highlights, was overlaid with luminous isinglass-like luster, and glittering with aurora borealis shaped hearts, drawn on his form from his neck to his feet.
Starsky was so fascinated and overtaken, he could barely continue to complete the task of
photographing. He managed to gather his emotions and accomplished a change in film twice,
ensuring at least seventy pictures from different lengths and detail, still captivated by the ever
changing luminance, and the mystical meaning of the gleaming flicker in the little heart patterns.

Putting his camera back in the kitchen, he changed his shirt, leaving all but the last buttons open.
He returned to the greenhouse, and gingerly crept closer, unwilling to startle his opulent
enchanter. He knelt languidly, feeling almost faint by the tension of being near such perfection.
Hutch sensed his presence, the way they always connected telepathically when this close, and
opened his eyes slightly, while tilting his head towards him. A bashful, drowsy smile flourished.
Starsky's eyes filled with tenderhearted tears.

"Hey, you're home."

"No, I can't be. I must be in heaven. Darling..."

Hutch raised his head. "Darl--"

"Oh, please, Babe, don't move! Yes, you are my Darling, my beloved Valentine!"

"Oh, Starsk, that's beautiful. How long have you been here?"

"Long enough to cherish how your enticing body gleams in the light."

Hutch warmed within. "Why didn't you wake me?"

Starsky attentively took Hutch's closest hand, brought the fingers to his lips and kissed them.
"How does one disturb the slumber of a sleeping angel?"

"Aw, Starsk." Hutch lifted his arm to caress the curls framing his lover's elated face.

They gazed at each other in quiet timelessness, as a minute passed, or more. Starsky felt his eyes
well.

Hutch, so patient and sleepy, looked his face over with such affection. Starsky gently whispered,
"Did you do this, all for me?"

Hutch touched his brow, his cheek. "I am, only for you, all for you."

Starsky shivered. He wasn't used to this kind of love, that continued to deepen until it made his
heart struggle to find a place for it. He felt he could never get enough room for all that Hutch
created. "You look so magical, I'm afraid to kiss you. Like Sleeping Beauty. You make me feel
like a frog."

Hutch shook his head slightly. "Don't say that. You're everything I need, everything I desire. I
want to please you. An-nd I need you, to love me, to touch me."

Starsky leaned closer. "Oh, prince, may I? Kiss you?"
Hutch arched his neck as his answer, and Starsky fell trance-like, ensnared upon the margins of his beloved's mouth into a delicate vanilla kiss. What is this, my love? He drew back, struck with wonder, wrinkling his eyes in merriment. Hutch beckoned him again, arching further, making Starsky return, kneading their lips, pressing them open, and came upon a taste of wintergreen that mixed with the initial flavor. Both combined to take him down into a fevering embrace, using his fingertips on Hutch's cheeks to shape their kiss in the dance of their hungry, enfolding tongues. Neither could disengage until their lungs demanded attention.

"Hutch, what have you done, your lips, your body, they're covered with --twinkle! And you taste so sweet!"

"I'm your Valentine, Starsk. You can eat me and never get a toothache."

Suddenly, Starsky understood. His lover had made himself into a confection. He broke into the largest smile his mouth could achieve. He took Hutch's arm with his two hands and brought it close, and saw randomly sized heart shapes placed there. He pressed his lips to the one by his wrist and was met with the tinge of a peach sorbet. He licked gently, then divisively. He growled a throaty sound, then let out an evil giggle. He raised the arm further and lapped him to the elbow, confronted by a peppermint patty and a cherry jubilee. He stopped and licked his own lips, taking his fingers and barely stroking his partner's chest in a swirling pattern, all the way to his navel. One look at the sheets that lay covering his groin, made obvious Hutch was aroused to his fullest. "Babe," he whispered, "if I indulge in you any more here, I'll turn these wooden benches into toothpicks that'll splinter us both in some delicate places!"

Amused, Hutch agreed. "Okay, I'll meet you in our bed, where you can have all the candy you want."

"Should I bring a spoon?"

"No, but I have a special beer I bought for us in the fridge. You'll need something to cleanse your palette," Hutch needled.

Starsky gave him his hand and helped him up. I'll meet you there, but go in front of me."

"Why?"

"I want to see if there's a layer on the back side, too."

Hutch scurried away trying to hide his behind. "No peeking at the ingredient label!" Starsky jovially chased him out of the doorway unable to catch him. Suddenly, he felt like he needed a quick shower, so he went towards the bathroom. Less than ten minutes later, he entered the bedroom with two exotic beers Hutch must have bought at a specialty shop. He placed them on the nightstand and lay beside his love. They faced each other smiling, eager but tranquil.

"If I had only known, Hutch, what a blessing it was, having your body to love, I would have begged to be near you long ago."
"I guess we both wasted a lot of time chasing what we were taught to believe." They shared a tiny, feathery kiss.

"I had no idea, of course, you'd enslave me with my own weaknesses!"

"What, sugar and spice?"

"And the sex is very, very nice...hey, do I have to guess if you have all the hotspots 'covered'?"

"Guess you'll have to find out, cocoa boy..."

"Oooh, that does it! You're going to get lapped, sucked and fucked from St. Valentine's to St. Patrick's, Mr. Whitman!" Hutch had no time for a comeback because Starsky turned into a kissing tiger, lashing his cat-like tongue into his collar bone, behind his neck, and under his ticklish earlobe, wrapping his legs around Hutch's torso, grooping and grazing every inch he could canvas. Hutch's hairline smelled like citrus and berries, while his shoulders had a wisp of spearmint, but his own musky heat was prevalent, and made Starsky lightheaded. He lifted up and reached for the beer, took a large swallow, then another. He shared the rich brew mouth to mouth as he poised himself atop of his seducer.

Their eyes met. Seeing Hutch's reaction, Starsky slowed his pace as the alcohol cooled him. He wanted to savor this as a magnificent bounty, for he knew he would never feel this exactly the same way again. He felt his age come across his thoughts and wondered why it takes a lifetime for such a fleeting, paramount moment to occur, to find passion so true it defies being of this world. He lowered his head and succulently took Hutch's nipple in his mouth. Coaxing it to bob and flit, he drank, falling into a vat of butter and cinnamon. Starsky began to comprehend how his partner knew this taste belonged right in this spot, and lunged at the other teat, meeting an inkling of rum and pumpkin. You always go crazy when I suck on you, but I think you've got us both there now, Babe. His balls were on fire already, ablaze with desire.

Hutch reeled under the assault in a dreamy daze, feeling his cock engorge, pulsing edaciously. He loved to be devoured, and he knew Starsky would show him no mercy this time. He groaned, suffering his own sweet torture, as every invisible hair on his chest raised. Oh, Starsk, nurse me good. His breathing was an effort, racing underneath Starsky's weight and tantalizing seduction, but the dizzy reaction that clouded his mind was better than any high he could ever feel, the pleasure of not being able to think more powerful than any need for air.

Hutch's arms were caressing Starsky's back and ample ass cheeks, rubbing and squeezing the muscle and flesh, pulling the globes apart and scratching the exposed skin. Nothing enticed Starsky more than those big hands all over his nakedness, taking rather than asking. Starsky raised himself from his breast feast, and claimed Hutch's mouth vigorously. He moved away, grabbed the beer again, and shared another mouthful, as Hutch gulped the heat of the kiss and the incursion of yeast and spice.

Starsky mounted him again, how he loved to conquer him, and placed himself harshly over his body, then succumbed to him as if he was the felled stallion. Hutch wished never to be free. Starsky's mouth and hands circled the areas he had yet to sample, becoming an expert tester, from chest to rib to hip. Being lavished to his feet, Starsky nipped and kissed every sleek curve.
The blond was losing his composure, under the advances of this insatiable torment. "Oh, Starsk, I'm ready for you, you don't know how! I want to be pounded, take me!" His heartbeat throbbed through his arching phallus.

But Starsky was no where near finished savoring his treat. "You put a lot of thought into this, Babe, like you always do. I want to know what you cooked up for me to relish right here..." as the curly head fell to Hutch's scrotum, "and here..." as he lapped the side of his shaft, "...and, oh God, Hutch, here...", taking his fingers and lifting the crown to his drooling mouth, pushing on the foreskin, engulfing the swollen head. The piquancy of Hutch's tangy scent combined with a tart citron essence. Starsky was overwhelmed. Ahh, Blondie, you knew this was my absolute favorite. Greedily, Starsky gulped, suckled and swabbed his tongue across Hutch's bulged and ready cock. He didn't know if he'd be able to stop the tingling rush that filled his own shaft, undulating against his lover's knee.

Hutch rocked his head violently, out of control, begging yes, then no, then yes, until a scream came to bear that would rumble through his entire core. Starsky separated just to tantalize him. "Oh, yeah, Babe, lose yourself. Give it all to me." He dunked down again briskly. Starsky prepared to swallow every drop of what the enlarged head would emit. Not disappointed, Hutch's tremors prompted, and made for a slow and ample release, as Starsky aspired to drown in a mouthful of lemon cream. Hutch's convulsions abounded, to produce the most stupendous pleasure he had ever felt in this act.

Hutch's shaking frame quivered so much, Starsky knew he had to calm him down. He crawled up to his lover's side and nuzzled his neck with his nose, blowing a breath into his dampened hair. "Oh Starsk, oh Starsk, I'm finished, I'm floating somewhere...that was so powerful..."

"It's okay, Lover, relax. I'm here with you, so full and happy, find your breath." Hutch's lungs shook but were settling, as he reached for Starsky's face with the back of his arm. "I take it you found your favorite..."

Starsky took his hand. "Oh, yeah, Lemon Cream Blondie." Slightly startled, Hutch hadn't thought about that mixture, of his white thickness with the fruit. But he'd keep that a secret, and smiled devilishly.

They shared an intermissive kiss. "You okay now?"

Hutch was returning to normal. "I still didn't satisfy you."

"Oh, I know a way to settle that. But let me clear my 'palette' first," he joshed, getting up to open the second beer and let Hutch have some. Starsky took a generous helping while he groped for the lube in the drawer.

Hutch watched him with expecting delight. "Don't worry, Blintz, I intend to make you understand what a pounding can feel like, you still up for it?"

Hutch was already beginning to thicken, as Starsky climbed between his legs. He opened the tube and covered his fingers amply. He used his tongue to open Hutch's thighs and expose his special place, that only Starsky was allowed to go. This always made him feel omnipotent, like
his purpose was to love this man into eternity. His cock had never ached so much, it was firm as concrete, weeping heavily. He was glad he hadn't come.

Starsky propped pillows under his mate as he scooted forward. He prepared the opening, first with his tongue, and found more tangy sweetness. He entered his tightness with a prodding finger that Hutch nudged inside him quickly. He was fervid and insistent, their desire for each other heightened more with every passing moment. Starsky had another finger join the first, pushing and scissoring until he found Hutch's prostrate. Between the jolts of delight from a third finger's entrance, and Starsky's tender kisses on his inner thigh, Hutch was in full-bore, impaling himself with fervor. "Oh, oh, Starsk, now, take me, I want you!"

The dark curls drew up, hands lubricated the circumcised head, and a swollen barrel encroached at full length. Hutch took in an abundant breath as their hands entwined forcibly. Oh, yes, yes. Verily, they both so enjoyed this purely masculine moment, when one towered over the other, entering, for it was this event that had solidified their unification long ago. This one rush, they savored as male upon male, animalistic and electrifying, something they shared exclusively, monogamously, like nothing else in their lives. No other lovemaking ever came close to this definition.

Starsky pulled away, slightly, then swayed inward, further. Adjusting, their bodies merged into one fruition, one purpose. They were so ready for this ambrosial climax. Long, slow strokes surged and retreated. Muscles protruded and extended. Starsky pumped and plunged, as his lover elevated and encouraged his cock to drive in and out, their rhythm accelerating with every thrust. Their palms were wet, their backs dripped with sweat. The force of their combined strength turned into a sexual immersion neither could control. Heaving, joyous, every stroke so delicious, their groans amplified and made a song between them so lovely. Starsky's ability to prolong and build up passion was his forte. The blond cherished every amative lunge. Hutch felt the expediency of another explosion about to happen, as Starsky's pace escalated. "I'm so close, oh God, please, it's huge, come with me..."

Hutch panted, "I'm there, I'm there, oh, oh, Starsk-- STARSKY!" The roar and flood of fluid and rush filled their veins, and brought them both to near collapse.

Starsky slid quickly to his side to help Hutch recover. If they had rocketed any higher, they would have needed an oxygen tent. Together, they folded into the middle of the bed cuddling cheek to cheek, half laughing, half gzuzzling the cool breeze. Hutch managed to strangle the sheets to cover them partially, as they embraced with limp arms and shivering spasms. He asked, "Are you going to live, Gordo?"

"My God, Big Hunk, that was worth a Hundred Grand. Your Mounds are Good n Plenty, I had a big Almond Joy with your Milky Way..."

Hutch couldn't believe there was still energy left for his partner to be cute. He cuddled closer whispering, "Starsky. I love you. Now come down from chocolate overdose and shut up."

Snickers, then sleep.

~*~
When morning came, it was Starsky's turn to spoil his mate. He'd been up over an hour, hustling around the apartment quietly. He crept towards the bed and went to Hutch's side. "Wake up, Candy boy, I've got plans for you! We're going on a little trip!" Starsky nuzzled his cold nose in Hutch's neckline.

"Trip? I don't think I'm up for one of your greasy breakfast emporiums this morning," Hutch teased.

"Hey, look at me." Hutch opened one eye trying to stifle a smile. "Really, this is my gift to you, a real bonafide mini vacation. Romantic to the hilt."

"Really?" Starsky nodded and beckoned a loving kiss. Hutch parted his lips and accepted perfection. Now the smile awakened. "Do I have to figure out what to wear?"

"No need. Already have you packed. All in the trunk." Starsky gave him a little peck on the lips. "Come on, I'll answer all your questions, and even feed you, on the way."

Hutch was ready within an hour, and locked the apartment. Opening the car door to his waiting partner, he found a little tin waiting for him on his seat. Starsky was beside himself with excitement. "Just because I can't have sugar doesn't mean you can't!" he crooned, "besides, I had quite the assortment last night!" The car spurred to life.

Hutch lifted the cover and grinned brightly. "Wow, how did you know?" He smelled the fruity, dried apricots and picked one.

"Because I know you, goose," Starsky chuckled. The car took off.

The three hour trip to San Diego by car gave them both time to reflect and relax. Holding hands, Starsky told Hutch all about the cabins that catered to gays that he'd found with Huggy's help, and how he'd heard about the free concert in the park sponsored by the city. "Twice a year they hold these concerts, where two or three famous singers join up to sing their hits. I know you'll love it, it's all folk music."

Things were changing in California, and San Diego was one of the areas opening up to alternate lifestyles. Starsky explained he had inquired at a bookstore about places that couples liked to travel to and visit. Hutch was so full of devotion his eyes were curled in a heart shaped way, like the night they played Monopoly when they opened Terry's presents. Starsky's soul filled with a puddle of warmth at seeing that face once more, this time through a lover's eyes. He knew he would never wish to be with anyone else ever again.

The pair carried their basket to the far left side of the park, which had hills and valleys and semi private little spaces. The bands began right after dusk, with Art Garfunkel playing Scarborough Fair. The outside concert allowed people to huddle on blankets and have their own picnic items, and alcoholic beverages were allowed. Starsky had packed them wine, crackers and cheese that he had help picking at a store local to them, and could tell Hutch appreciated the choices he had made. They leaned on their elbows with their legs outstretched. The darker it became, the more comfortable they were with sitting closer together.
During *Bridge Over Troubled Water*, Hutch put his fingers on Starsky's face, which made him turn his head, just in time for Hutch to catch his lips for a tender kiss. "I'm so glad you took me here, Babe, so I could hear that song, and touch you like this." He kissed him fully this time. Starsky's melted into his gaze. The crowd cheered when the song ended, and clapped with glee when Joni Mitchell appeared to accompany the band to play *Feelin' Groovy*. By the evening's end, her own songs had electrified the air and cast a spell on the audience for their brilliance.

Starsky watched his partner's timidly happy face. He knew Hutch was amused. "You know, Starsky, coming here was such a great idea. You really keep me on my toes, with your cunning."

Starsky glowed from the compliment. Only Hutch could make him feel that way. "I'm so glad you like my surprise. But I ain't done yet."

"No?"

"There's still tonight at the cabin. And tomorrow we can come back here and walk the park, have lunch at that little bistro."

"Bistro. That sounds so nice. And the best part is we're free to be close. I love that the most."

"Wait until I get you in bed again so I can tie you down. You'll be so close, you won't be too free," Starsky teased. But he knew it was Hutch's turn to have the upper hand.

Hutch shivered at that suggestion. "It just keeps getting better, doesn't it? Still, let's sit here a little while longer, 'kay? I really treasure this..."

Starsky and Hutch stayed until after most of the crowd had gone, just enjoying the chance to relax together in the moonlight embraced, the back of the curls huddled against Hutch's chest, while the blond cradled his shoulders, resting his chin against Starsky's cheek, his golden mane moving delicately in the gentle wind. Two people intoxicated by love couldn't wish for anything more.

In the cabin that night, Hutch took his lover deep into his reign; spreading him, fondling him, riding him, filling him. They produced a sensual euphoria amid musical moans that mirrored the lyrics their minds recanted.

~*~

Hutch kept looking up at the cloudless horizon because he kept seeing Starsky doing it. "So, you said there was another surprise? Is it tomorrow?"

Starsky hadn't taken his eyes off the sky. "I sure hope not, because we won't be here by then."

You mean *here* here?"

Yeah, right here, soon--I'm having something, delivered."

"Starsk, I think Santa takes his vacation around this time. He did a lot of overtime already."
"Very funny."

Hutch kept looking up. "Can I ask what you're looking at, or for?"

Then suddenly there it was. The little biplane was coming into view, with its signature sputtering sound. "There he is!" Starsky jumped.

There he--who is...?

"The Black Baron! Remember? Quick, watch him, watch what he's got!" Starsky was as excited as a bunny.

"It's a sign. M-E A-N-D T-H-E. Me and The?"

Starsky frowned right away. "Hey, that's messed up! He messed it up!"

Hutch watched the plane as it puttered and spewed. He exuberated a great beaming smile. "Aww, Starsk, it's just beautiful!"

"Didn't the Black Baron say he's 'always prepared'? Jeez, who takes off without checking his sign?"

"Maybe it fell off somewhere..."

"You mean it's draped on someone's lawn or on some Charlie Brown kite eating tree? I mean, Crimey, who goes around losing an 'E'?"

"Starsk, Starsk, please stop." Hutch couldn't contain his laughter, "You making me belch up my beer, you're cracking me up."

They both fell backwards on the grass and looked up at the disappearing plane.

Despite the comedy and tragedy of life's tomfoolery, Starsky always bounced back. "Hutch, I've decided I love Valentine's Day."

"Ahh, buddy. I've had the best one I've ever had." They both laid there cuddling with their eyes. "I'm sorry about your tooth."

"I already forgot about that, this has been so nice coming here with you, being free like this, even if it is just for a while.' They held hands because they could. They didn't have to let go. "This has been great, just like you said it would be. And I'll never forget it... I never had a flavored angel before. A Painted Angel."

Hutch looked at him with all the love in the world. "I love you, too, Starsk." They ventured a kiss. "Always. Me and The." They both roared.

FINIS
Sixteen Springs and sixteen Summers gone now,
Cartwheels turn to car wheels through the town
And they tell him, take your time, it won't be long now,
Till you drag your feet to slow the circles down
And the seasons, they go round and round,
And the painted ponies go up and down,
We're captive on the carousel of time
We can't return, we can only look behind from where we came,
And go round and round and round in the circle game

--The Circle Game, Joni Mitchell, 1974