

Independence Day

by

ksstarfire

Summary: Hutch makes a decision
Starsky almost blows it
Fireworks everywhere.

Story Notes: I used a song David Soul co-wrote "Miss So Much" in this story. I don't own the song or David, although I would bid on him if he were listed on Ebay!! PMG as well. *starts counting the change in my piggy bank*.

Categories: Slash

Genre: Romance

Warnings: Author Chooses Not to Use Archive Warnings

It was ten in the morning of the 4th of July.

"What'r ya doing tonight for the 4th, Starsk?" Hutch kept his face turned away from his partner's as he asked the question. He didn't know if he was looking forward to the answer or dreading it. When Starsky didn't answer right away Hutch turned to look at him.

Starsky had a dreamy look on his face with a slightly crooked smile in place. "Oh buddy, I hope to be "doing" Ashley. She's finally agreed to go out with me. I'm gonna meet her at her house around noon. We're gonna eat, and go watch the fireworks on the beach later. But between lunch and fireworks, I'm hopin' that she 'n me'll make some fireworks of our own! Ya know what I'm saying?" His smile couldn't be any bigger.

Hutch pasted on a smile and said, "Good to hear, partner. Sounds like a great time." Hutch quickly turned his back as he walked out the door into his greenhouse.

Starsky had seen the brief look of disappointment on Hutch's face before Hutch could mask it. And that smile was faker than any Hutch had ever given him before. "You got plans Hutch? You wanna see if you can get a date and we can double? I'm sure Ash won't mind." He couldn't figure out what was wrong, but he knew something was. He absently rubbed his chest over his heart. For some reason there was a kind of pain there.

"Nah. Thanks but I think I'll stay home and watch the fireworks from out here. Should be a great night to watch, no moon or clouds. I'll stay here, drink a couple of beers and probably turn in early." He faked a yawn. "I'm pretty tired. It's been a long week."

"Hutch..."

"Have a good time buddy. Ashley's a real beauty. What she sees in you is beyond me, but I guess there's no accounting for taste, huh?"

Starsky dismissed his thoughts that something was wrong with his partner and turned to leave. "See ya later this weekend. Unless Ash wants to make it a marathon of food and sex and fireworks!"

"Have a great time Starsk."

Hutch watched his partner turn and leave. He closed his eyes and dropped his head letting out the breath he had been holding. It was going to be time to make a decision soon. He couldn't put it off very much longer. Not if he wanted to stay sane. Could he continue being Starsky's partner or was it time for a change?

(((((((O)))))))))

All the way back to his apartment Starsky thought about what had bothered him about Hutch's actions. He parked the Torino and ran up the steps. As he showered and got dressed his mind was torn between Ashley and Hutch. He shrugged and realized Hutch would talk to him when he was ready. He was whistling as he locked his door and ran down the steps to his car. He put his partner out of his mind as he drove to Ashley's and what he hoped would be a long night of hot sex.

(((((((O)))))))))

"Happy Independence Day Hutchinson." Hutch lifted the beer bottle to his lips and took a deep drink. He'd made up his mind about what he should do earlier in the day and had written out a note. He'd taken the note to Metro and put it in the middle of Captain Dobey's desk. He made a stop at a liquor store for more beer on his way home. He also bought a bottle of champagne that he planned to toast with at midnight... when his life would change forever.

He walked into his greenhouse and watered all his plants. He fussed over this one and that. He made promises to them that he would be sure they were taken care of.

He finished his first beer and went back inside for another. With it in hand he sat on the couch and grabbed his guitar. He put the beer on the coffee table and started strumming his guitar humming along to the sad melody he was playing.

Finding a tune he liked he grabbed a notebook off the coffee table and began to write it down. The words would come later. For now he just wanted to get the music on paper. When he had the tune tweaked the way he wanted it, he finished the second beer and put his guitar aside to grab a third.

As he walked back to the couch he wondered how Starsky was making out. He gave a sad chuckle at his choice of words. He lifted his bottle into the air in a toast to his partner. "Here's

hoping she's all you want... and more Starsk." He took a deep swallow and exchanged the beer for the guitar again, intending to work on lyrics.

He began to write...

"There have been times
When it's been rainin'
When Lord I swear
I've never been touched
Don't get me wrong
I'm not complaining, it's just
That I always seem to miss so much."

(((((O))))))

Starsky was with a gorgeous woman. She was hot by any definition of the word. And she seemed to be digging him. Lunch had been full of 'getting to know each other' laughter and conversation. They were now on her couch and beginning to make out. It was clear to him that they would very shortly be in the bedroom.

So why was he having so much trouble getting into the mood?

Hutch.

Something wasn't right there. He couldn't get that look of disappointment out of his mind. Hutch had been a lot quieter for the last month or so too, now that he thought about it. Couldn't be a woman because he hadn't heard him talk about one. He couldn't remember the last time Hutch had talked about any woman or a date. Was he sick? No, he would have told me... wouldn't he have?

"Dave?"

Maybe he should ask Dobey if he knew if Hutch was sick? Would Dobey tell him?

"Dave?"

What if it was something bad? Something... terminal?

"Dave!"

"Wha?"

Ashley was leaning back, looking a question at him. "Dave, what's wrong? Do you not want this... me... now?"

"Oh no Ash. I... I... uh, my partner wasn't feeling good when I left him this morning. I'm worried. Would you mind if I called him? Just to make sure he's ok?" He gave her his best smile.

"Sure, Dave. Phone's over by the piano. I'm going to get us another drink."

(((((((O)))))))))

Hutch grabbed another beer and sat back down on the couch. He picked up the paper he had written the first stanza on and began to hum the melody while he wrote furiously on the second.

"There have been times
When I've been searchin'
Searchin' in the darkness
For someone to touch
Don't get me wrong
I'm not hurtin', it's just
That I always seem to miss so much."

He picked up the guitar and played and sang what he had written. He heard the phone ringing but didn't want to stop to answer it. It wouldn't be the only person he wanted to talk to anyway. When it stopped ringing he got up and took the receiver off the hook.

(((((((O)))))))))

Starsky let the phone ring ten times before he pressed down to disconnect the call. He kept his finger on the button, gripping the receiver in his other hand. Where was he? Had he decided to go out after all?

"Did you get him Dave?" Ashley had brought in a tray with cheese and crackers on it, along with their fresh drinks.

"Uh, no. He didn't answer."

Starsky hung up the phone and walked back over to sit down by Ashley. He tried to put his unease out of his mind. "Where were we?" He gave her a smile and wink.

She moved closer to him and put her arms around his neck. She pulled his mouth down to hers. "I think we were... here." She kissed him with everything she had.

(((((((O)))))))))

"When looking up
I find
I'm one step ahead
And two behind
When looking down
I see
One small shadow
It looks a lot like me."

He closed his eyes and put the paper down. "Another beer. I need another beer."

The kitchen seemed a long ways away, but he got up and made his way to the refrigerator and another beer. He stood looking out the kitchen window for a bit while he drank down the beer. It wasn't even beginning to get dark yet. He wondered at himself for drinking so much so early. "It's not every day you make a decision like I've made today." He snorted. "I'm allowed to celebrate."

He grabbed two more beers and returned to the couch and his unfinished song.

(((((O))))))

Starsky tried.

He really did try.

He had a HOT woman in his arms. They were in her bedroom. On her bed. Getting ready to strip each other.

"Ashley... wait... Ashley... I can't."

"What?! What do you mean you 'can't'? What kind of game are you playing Dave?"

Starsky leaned his forehead against her's, then realized that's what he did with Hutch so often, and sat back. "I don't know how to explain it, Ash. I just know something's wrong with my partner. I can't explain it. I just know there is. I need to go check on him. I'm sorry. I'll make this up to you, I promise." He smiled at her as he slid off the bed, reaching for his shoes.

"Dave. Don't make promises we both know you probably won't keep."

"Ash..."

"Just go Dave. I hope he's alright."

He didn't even try to give her a kiss on her forehead. He grabbed his shoes and pulled them on as he made his way out to his car.

(((((O))))))

Hutch's writing was getting a little sloppy. And his fingers were slipping off the frets in an annoying way. He started over on the song. Strumming and singing what he had written so far. He paused, thinking, then grabbed the paper and pen again.

"There will come a time
When it's all over
When my good-byes
Become a must
No I won't cry
Because I'm sorry, it's just
That I always seem to miss so much

I'm one step ahead
And two behind."

He snorted. He sure was a step ahead of his partner. And he was also two behind him. "And ne're the twain shall meet." He underlined "When my goodbyes become a must" and sat the tablet back on the coffee table.

He drank the last of the beer and set the bottle on the table with all the other empties. He looked at the beer bottles covering the coffee table and shook his head. It wasn't even five in the evening and he was drunk. Good thing he'd gone to Metro earlier or he'd probably have been arrested on a DUI charge.

His head was already hurting so he pulled out the drawer of the end table and grabbed the two bottles in it. He looked at the first bottle, "Lortab, huh, didn't remember I still had these." There were two left in the bottle. He glanced at the number of beer bottles and decided taking the Lortab probably wasn't a great idea. The second bottle was aspirin. He shook out three and downed them with the last of the beer. He tossed the aspirin back in the drawer and the Lortab bottle on the table intending to throw it away.

He got to his feet shakily. Bed. He needed to lie down for a while. He walked over and locked his door. Then he thought about his key and opened the door to grab it off the lintel. He doubted he would have seen Starsky until it was time for them to go to work Monday, but he wasn't feeling up to facing him right now. Re-locking the door he went into his bedroom and fell onto his bed. He was asleep before the bed stopped bouncing.

(((((((O)))))))))

Starsky was cursing his partner and himself as he drove toward Hutch's place. But there was a small part of him that was relieved. He didn't understand it. It's not like he couldn't have performed. Just because he hadn't been erect yet didn't mean he wouldn't have been when the time was right. Did it?

"Damn Hutch, you'd better be okay!"

"Zebra three. Zebra three. Hold for patch through from Captain Dobey."

He didn't even realize he had turned the radio on. He picked up the mike. "Zebra three here, go ahead."

"Starsky, what's going on with Hutchinson? I tried to call his place and there was no answer. So I tried your number."

A feeling of dread washed over Starsky. "Whataya' mean, Captain?"

"I had to come down here to get a present I forgot for Edith. I found a note on my desk from Hutch. All it says is: 'I quit. Effective midnight tonight. Sorry Cap'n. Hutch'. What the hell is going on?"

"I'm on my way over to his house Cap. I don't know what's going on, but I'm damn sure gonna find out!"

"Let me know if you or Hutch need help son."

"Will do. And thank you Captain."

He put the mike down and grabbed the MARS light, putting it on the roof of the car. He hit the siren at the same time his foot mashed the accelerator pedal to the floor.

"Damn Hutch, what the hell IS going on?"

He pulled up to Hutch's relieved to see Hutch's beat up LTD there. He turned the lights and sirens off then turned the Torino off and ran up the stairs. When he tried to open the door, he found it locked. He reached up to the lintel feeling for the key. It wasn't there. A frown crossed his forehead as he knocked on the door. "Hutch. Open up." He pressed his ear to the door but couldn't hear anything.

He pounded harder on the door. "Hutch!"

"Guess he forgot that I have a key." He took the key out of his pocket and opened the door. "Hutch? Hey, you here?" He walked into the living room and saw all the beer bottles on the coffee table. "Damn babe."

He saw the pill bottle then. He picked it up, "Lortab?" He opened it. Two pills. He looked at the label and saw the script was written for 30. His heart dropped to his stomach. "H... H... Hutch?"

Then he saw the paper with Hutch's scrawl on it on the table. He picked up the tablet and read through what he had written. "When my goodbyes become a must"?? He threw the tablet on the table and ran out in the greenhouse. "HUUUTCHHHH!"

When he didn't find his partner out there he quickly ran back into the apartment and into Hutch's bedroom. He saw Hutch face down on the bed. He didn't seem to be breathing. Starsky felt a cold fear grab his heart. "HUTCH! What the hell!?" He grabbed him by the shoulders and turned him over and shook him. "Hutch! Talk to me! Did you take something? Hutch!"

(((((((O)))))))))

Hutch came awake suddenly. Feeling someone shaking him and screaming at him his first reaction was to swing a fist which caught the person on the chin, knocking him to the floor. He tried to shake the beers out of his head so he could figure out what was going on. He jumped off the bed and staggered against the wall. When the person on the floor got to his knees and looked up at him he blinked his eyes. "Starsk?"

"How many did you take?! Why the hell are you trying to kill yourself? Why didn't you talk to me?"

Hutch interrupted him. "What the hell are you talking about?"

"The pills, Hutch. The Lortab. You know you shouldn't take narcotics when you're also drinking. How many did you take? C'mon, I'm taking you to ER." Starsky got off the floor, grabbed Hutch's arm and tried to drag him out of the bedroom.

Hutch jerked his arm away from Starsk's grasp. "And what the hell are you doing here? I thought you had a hot date with Ashley?" He realized the buzz he had had from the beers was fading.

"I did. I... I... was worried about you. So I wanted to come 'n check on you. Then Dobeey called me and said you left a note on his desk about quitting. "Look, we gotta go get your stomach pumped." He grabbed his partner's arm again. But it was like trying to move the rock of Gibraltar. "Come on buddy, let's go. How long ago did you take them?" Starsky glanced at his watch.

"I took aspirin, Starsk. I know better than to take narcs with alcohol. Now what's this all about?" He turned to walk out to his living room. He heard Starsky follow him.

He picked up the Lortab bottle and several beer bottles. He dropped them in the trash. He went back and gathered the rest of the beer bottles and put them in the trash too.

He walked back into living room to find Starsky on his couch, head tipped back and rubbing his eyes. He sat in the chair on the other side of his now empty coffee table. He closed his eyes trying to figure out how to answer the questions he was about to get from his partner.

"What's going on Hutch?"

"What are you talking about?"

"C'mon babe. Talk to me. Tell me why you want to quit."

"I don't 'want to quit' Starsk. I HAVE quit." Hutch interlaced his fingers on his lap and gripped them tightly. Hopefully his partner wouldn't notice how white the knuckles were.

Starsky blew out an exasperated breath. He saw how white Hutch's knuckles were. He knew Hutch was putting up barriers and didn't want to answer his questions. He bit his lower lip and closed his eyes. When he opened them again they were fixed with a laser's intensity to Hutch's. "Why? What's been going on for the last several months? Talk to me buddy."

"I... I... uh... just need a change." Hutch unclenched his fingers and put his hands on the arms of the chair trying to look more relaxed. He knew it wouldn't fool Starsky. They knew each other too well.

"Not good enough babe. Spill it."

The "babe" hit Hutch dead on in his heart. He flinched slightly. God, Starsky, why do you have to call me that when you don't mean it? He hated to lie to his partner but what could he say that wouldn't drive them apart. At least this way, MAYBE they could remain friends and see each other now and then?

"Are you sick, Hutch? Are you"... Starsky had to brace himself before asking... "are you dying? Do you have cancer or something?"

"NO! No... oh no Starsky. I'm not sick or dying. It's just something I can't talk about right now."

"Why not? We're best friends, partners, we've never lied to each other. We trust each other with our lives! What're you afraid to tell me? Why are you shuttin' me out, Hutch? I don't understand. Have I done something to hurt you, to make you want to stop being my partner?"

Each question drove a spike of pain through Hutch's heart. He had hoped to be gone before Starsky found out what he had done. He took a deep shaky breath. He could feel his eyes start to water. He turned his head to look toward his greenhouse to give himself a minute to compose himself.

Starsky saw the glint of tears in his eyes before Hutch turned his face away. He moved quickly and knelt on the floor in front of Hutch. "Hutch? What is it? Just tell me! We can work it out. Talk to me."

There was nowhere for Hutch to withdraw to. Starsky was kneeling between his legs so, unless he stood on the seat of the chair and leapt over the arm, he wasn't going to be able to avoid being so close to his partner. It ripped his heart out to be so close and yet so far.

"Hutch... please?" Starsky reached up and put his hand on Hutch's cheek, turning his face back toward him.

Hutch reached up and took Starsky's hand in his. He moved both hands to his lap. He left Starsky's hand on his thigh as he reached out and ran his hand over his partner's cheek. He ran his fingers through Starsky's curls, committing each of his features to memory, ending up with dropping his hand back to the chair arm.

Seeing his partner hurting so much was killing him. Maybe he did owe him the truth? He took a deep breath and said, "I love you Starsk."

"I know Hutch. I love you too."

"No. I mean... I love you."

Starsky frowned. I know. And I love you."

Hutch let out a weak chuckle and a tear escaped to roll down his cheek. He knew what he said next would change things forever. Would sever his other half from him. He tipped his head back as he felt more tears forming. He pressed his lips together to keep from sobbing. When he felt he had his emotions under control, he looked at Starsky.

Any hope he had of keeping himself under control vanished as he saw the brightness of Starsk's eyes. He let out a deep breath and licked his lips.

"I love YOU Starsky. I love you the way a man loves a woman. I want you. Also the way a man wants a woman. I have for a long time. I just couldn't do it anymore. Being with you so much.

Every day. Loving you so much and not being able to tell you. Not being able to touch you the way I wanted to. That's why I quit. I was gonna move back home this weekend before you got back or came over. I... I ... thought it would be better, knowing I could maybe visit now and then to knowing I might not ever see you again... if you knew."

Hutch watched Starsky's face. Seeing the confusion dawn, then the knowledge... then his eyes shuttering as he took his hand off Hutch's leg and quickly stood up, moving away from him.

Hutch closed his eyes, feeling the tears run down his cheeks. He bit the inside of his lip. He stood and walked into the kitchen, grabbing himself another beer. He opened it and stood, looking out the window, his back to Starsky. He waited to hear the sound of his front door closing. He took a drink from the bottle and waited.

(((((((O)))))))))

Starsky was stunned. The hand he had on Hutch's thigh suddenly felt hot. He lifted his hand. He realized he was kneeling between his thighs. He stood up and walked away from him. He swallowed the huge lump in his throat.

He didn't know what to think. Hutch wanted him? Wanted to make love to him? Hutch was... gay? He shuddered.

Then he tried to understand why it wasn't a shudder of disgust, but rather a shudder of... pleasure? NO! It couldn't be... could it?

He suddenly realized he was hard.

His cock was erect and straining at the front of his jeans.

He turned to see Hutch standing at the window, his back to him, waiting to hear him leave.

(((((((O)))))))))

Hutch jumped when he felt the arms come around his waist from the back. He shuddered when he felt that beloved head of curls come to rest between his shoulder blades. But his breath left him in a rush when he heard Starsky say, "I love you too, Hutch. This is gonna take me a bit to get used to. But, I want you too."

Hutch turned in the circle of Starsky's arms and put his arms around him. "You're sure? You're not just saying this to keep me from quitting?"

"No. I mean, yes I'm sure and no, I'm not just sayin' this. I've felt something was changing for some time now, I couldn't figure out what it was. But this explains a lot." He chuckled.

"What do you mean?"

"Ashley. This afternoon. She was so hot and beautiful. And little Starsky didn't seem to be interested at all. But you tell me you want to make love to me and he's standing at attention and then some!"

"Really?"

He moved closer to Hutch and rubbed his erection against Hutch's groin. "What do you think? It surely wasn't there for Ash."

Hutch could feel his own cock stir and swell. He closed his eyes and leaned down to kiss his love on his cheek. Starsky turned his head up suddenly, making Hutch's lips land on his own. It didn't take long for both mouths to open and tongues to begin a slow, then faster exploration of new territory.

They both drew back. Stunned. "I... I... 'm not sure how this is gonna work blondie, but I'm sure lookin' forward to learnin'!"

"Me too babe. Me too." Hutch whispered as he leaned down to capture his mouth again in a long slow kiss.

(((((((O)))))))))

The first BOOM jolted them apart.

They looked out the window to see red, white and blue sparkles over the ocean, trailing down from the sky. They had been so involved in their talk and then the kisses to realize it had gotten dark.

Hutch gently pushed Starsky away from him and walked to the refrigerator. He grabbed the bottle of champagne and a couple of glasses from the cupboard. "C'mon babe, let's take this party to the bedroom."

Starsky followed him into the bedroom. He saw the suitcases sitting in the bottom of the closet and realized how close he had come to losing the most important person in his life. He stopped and swallowed hard.

"Second thoughts Starsk?" Hutch put the glasses and champagne down on the bedside table.

Starsky saw his partner standing very still, watching him. "No, babe. Just realized how slow I've been on understanding. I could have lost you... this... us. I would have never known why. Or realized I felt the same way." He looked at Hutch with all the love he could put into his eyes. "I love you Hutch and this is what I want. Have wanted without even realizing it." He walked over to stand by Hutch and kiss him.

They started undressing each other. Each was very careful with the zippers in the jeans as both were strained tightly. Each piece of clothing was removed with accompanying kisses and strokes and moans and gasps.

When they were both naked they moved into each other's arms and kissed. Running hands over shoulders and backs. Hutch pushed Starsky back and dropped to his knees in front of him. He took the rigid cock in front of him into his hands and brought it to his mouth. He slowly licked up the bottom along the thick vein there. He ran his tongue around the crown and slowly sucked it into his mouth.

"HUTCH!" Starsky shuddered from the pleasure, both from his cock and from looking down and seeing his tall strong partner on his knees in front of him, giving him such indescribable pleasure. He cupped Hutch's face and stopped him. "Not like this babe. The first time we should do it together."

Hutch pulled free of Starsky and climbed on the bed lying down. Starsky followed him, lying down facing the opposite direction. They locked eyes and both knew the other was ready for this.

They each took the hard cock presented to them and began licking and stroking and sucking. Both knew they wouldn't last long this first time. Each did for the other what they themselves liked. And it was apparently very much alike.

"Hutch... I'm close... " Starsky pulled his mouth off Hutch's cock to warn him.

"Me too babe." It's ok. Let go!"

Each started again. The thought that the other was close spurring them on. Both came at the same time with moans and silent shouts. They slowly released each other. Starsky moved up the bed to lie next to Hutch, in the circle of his arms. He rested his head against Hutch's chest and listened to his rapid heartbeat.

"Damn babe. You about killed me."

Hutch raised one hand to ruffle the dark curls and press the precious head closer. It took him a few more seconds to reclaim his voice. "I think you DID kill me."

They both jumped as a particularly loud boom sounded out over the ocean. They looked out the window at the brightly colored streamers falling into the ocean.

"C'mon lover, let's go out on the deck." Hutch stood and tossed a robe at Starsky and grabbed another for him to put on. Starsky stood and kissed Hutch deeply.

After the kiss Hutch opened the bottle of champagne. He poured them each a glass and raised his glass to Starsky.

"To you Starsky for always surprising me. For being the one person I trust most in the world. For letting me love you and for loving me back." He clicked his glass against Starsky's. Both took a sip of the very fine vintage champagne.

"To you Hutch for surprising me too. For making me realize what I didn't know I was missing. For loving me enough to let me go, even though I didn't want to be let go." They clicked glasses again and sipped again.

They both thought of the women who had come and gone in their lives. They looked at each other and laughed. They knew neither would ever leave the other.

"Happy Independence Day love"

"Same to you babe."

They quickly drained their glasses. Hutch just as quickly refilled them.

"To my best friend."

"To Me and Thee."

"To us."

The Beginning