A constant satellite of your blazing sun

by sirona

Summary

When a case from Danny's past comes back to haunt him, Steve can't begrudge any help they can get to put it to rest. If only said help didn't have to come in the shape of a too-handsome FBI agent that Danny seems all too familiar with...

Notes

Written for the Steve/Danny After Holidays Prompt Fest, for prompt #25: An old buddy from Jersey visits - and he and Danny act for all the world like former boyfriends who are ready and willing to pick up where they left off. Steve, naturally, is not happy. First-time. I've tried to stick to the prompt as much as possible, even when this started growing like the monster it is. All my love to zolac_no_miko, SuperBeta extraordinaire, who's worth her weight in gold. Title from Vienna Teng's "Gravity".

Disclaimer: Hawaii Five-0 belongs to CBS.

It was supposed to be a routine investigation, inasmuch as potentially bloody gang warfare can ever be routine. With Frank Salvo out of the picture, there’s still a vacuum in the illegal gambling circuit in Hawai‘i just waiting to be filled; and unlike the Jersey export Steve knows all too well, other Jersey residents are apparently not so opposed to mixing a little work with their holiday in the sun.

“Joseph Morennio, Jesus fucking Christ. As if this day could possibly get any worse,” Danny spits,
furious, disgusted, and ever so faintly worried under the bluster.

“I take it you’re familiar with him?” Steve says, putting his back into pulling the rope that anchors their screaming source just past the edge the cliff. Waves break violently underneath; their suspect should at least be nice and cool when he gets him back up. Steve kinda envies him a little -- the heat of midday in August is stifling, even for him.

“Damn straight.” Danny gives up finally, hours after Steve had started his campaign to prevent him getting heatstroke, pulls the knot of his tie loose and undoes a couple of the tiny buttons at the neck of his shirt. “He’s head of the second biggest Jersey crime family. I worked a case on him a few years back -- the slimy bastard had the wheels so well oiled, nothing we found would stick. Even the FBI came up empty. First time I worked with them on an investigation, and I don’t mind telling you, I was grateful for their help. Of course, nothing cuts through red tape quite as well as you, my friend, don’t go getting underappreciated there, but I don’t think even you will manage to get enough for an arrest.”

Steve drags the shaking guy away from the cliff and dumps him on the ground. He was right -- the guy is soaked to the skin, and he clutches dirt with both fists trying to ground himself. “I’m gonna sue you for police brutality!” he quivers, sweat mixing with the salty spray of the raging surf in rivulets down his face.

“If you’re working for Morennio, we’re the least of your worries,” Danny mutters distractedly, looking off into the distance. Steve’s getting a little worried here -- Danny hasn’t yelled at him once since he heard the name come out of the guy’s mouth, and he was really gathering steam before.

“Come on,” Steve says, heading for the car. Danny follows silently, still with the thousand yard stare. Steve is getting antsy for information, but Danny will talk when he’s ready, that much they both know.

They drive in silence for a while; they’re almost back on the highway before Danny finally takes a deep breath and turns away from the window. Steve throws him a glance, feigning patience.

“Okay. I never told you how many partners I had back on the mainland, did I?”

Steve just shakes his head, not wanting to break the mood.

“We got the Morennio case a year after I made detective,” Danny tells the windshield, not looking at Steve. “I was still the rookie in the department, right, so I was working with this guy, John Phelps. He was a veteran cop, twenty-odd years on the force, seen a lot of fucked-up shit in his time. He taught me everything I know about working homicide.

“So one day this vic turns up, name of Jenkins. Jesus, the guy was mangled, shot through both kneecaps, shoulder joints, spine broken in three places -- bullets everywhere, it was a miracle he lived as long as he did, since all injuries were premortem. His body washed ashore in Newark Bay, a fishing trawler got it tangled in its nets. It was pure chance anyone found it at all; apparently the ocean currents changed direction for a few hours during the night and he got dragged inland.

“Anyway, we worked his case for months. Leads evaporated, sources clammed up at the first mention of the vic. Eventually Phelps managed to trace it back to the Morennio family, at which point someone decided Phelps got too close for comfort.” Danny stops, swallows heavily. He’s been speaking so quietly, Steve’s been straining to hear him over the sound of peak hour traffic.

“He didn’t have any children, and his parents were long dead, so they went after his wife, and still
he wouldn’t stop -- he was that kind of guy, the job was everything for him, he used it as an escape, so he just dug in deeper once his wife was gone. And then one day I walk into work and everyone’s looking at me with these sad eyes, and I knew, I just knew what I’d hear when the captain called me into his office.

“That’s when the Feds took over. There was this one agent, Donovan -- we got quite close by the end, he’s a hell of a detective -- but at the start, I guess he saw what I was thinking, so he got me taken off the case. I’ll be honest, I was furious at the time, but it was probably a good thing he did, or I’d have likely gotten myself killed, too -- I was completely blinded by this, this need to get to the fuckers who did that. The case ended up fizzling out with no evidence to keep it going. Just -- we gotta handle this carefully, is what I’m saying. These guys don’t mess about.”

Steve digests this, so many pieces of the puzzle that is his partner falling into place. The way Danny says Donovan’s name sets off something in Steve’s mind--but it gets buried under the avalanche of realization. If Danny’s heart got any bigger, it would displace the world--and maybe, just maybe, there might be a tiny little space left in it for Steve, too.

It goes against everything he knows, but--“Do you think we should get the FBI in on this again?” he asks, swallowing his instinctive distaste at the thought. The more resources they have, the better, and Danny seems to think it might be a good idea.

Danny thinks about that for a moment, making a face. Steve remembers their most recent encounter with the Bureau and cringes inwardly, but doesn’t say anything -- they’d dealt with the fallout as best they could, and Five-0 is more or less back on civil terms with the Feds. Besides, they’d look good, asking for assistance after that last disaster -- a show of goodwill.

“Let’s see where we get to first. We can always call them in later,” Danny decides. Steve nods, bowing to Danny’s judgement.

---

Where they get to is damn well nowhere. All they can find out is that Morennio is scheduled to arrive in a week, but they can find no connection to any of the local gangs, no matter how many trees they shake or suspects they interrogate. Even Steve’s methods don’t yield results, and Steve watches Danny get more and more frustrated by the day. Their 100% solve rate is starting to mock them now, every time another lead falls through. Chin’s lips thin from frustration where he’s checking through yet another database that won’t give them anything new, and they don’t dare ask Newark PD for assistance in case Morennio has feelers out there and gets spooked.

Their latest person of interest walks out the door smugly, hips swinging and long dreadlocks bouncing over her shoulder. Danny watches her go with such a scowl on his face that Steve is half-tempted to tell him to take the rest of the day, but he doesn’t really fancy dealing with the resulting explosion, so he wisely keeps his mouth shut and waits him out. Kono taps her foot across the room, looking about ready to go dig out another suspect to drag in here to take the woman’s place. They’re all getting fed up with the lack of progress on this case.

Danny stares at the floor for a moment before turning to Steve and looking him in the eye, resolve written over every expressive feature. “Make the call,” Danny says, voice steady.

“You sure?” Steve asks, even though he can see the toll this case is taking on him already.

“We have six days to figure out how to take the bastard down, McGarrett, and we’re getting nowhere,” Danny says tiredly. “Maybe the Feds will have more in the way of information. Look, I don’t like it either, but we’re out of options.”
Kono looks at them cautiously, but doesn’t argue.

“He’s right, brah,” Chin says from their tablescreen, shutting down another window with a frustrated sigh. “For such a small state, the perps are surprisingly tight-lipped. We’ve had no new leads for over a day. It’s time to bring the big guns in -- beggars can’t be choosers.”

Steve doesn’t disagree, per se. The tightness in his partner’s shoulders is weighing on him, too -- Danny hasn’t cracked a smile or a wise-ass remark in longer than Steve could have thought possible. And he trusts his team’s instincts, especially when it has to do with a case this convoluted.

“Okay,” he concedes, and goes to do just that. He only hopes it doesn’t come back to bite him on the ass.

---

Steve dislikes Agent Donovan on sight. If he’s being fair, it probably has something to do with the way Danny’s entire face lights up when the guy walks through Five-0’s doors, in a way that Steve has only previously associated with Grace, or a cold beer after a long day, or a well-cooked steak -- or, sometimes (and just thinking about those times makes Steve’s heart leap in his chest in a way that thoroughly contradicts any sort of anatomy lessons he’s ever sat through), when Steve does or says something particularly inspired. Steve’s newfound goal in life is to figure out all of what makes Danny get that look on his face, and endeavour to do it all the time -- only here’s this person, receiving Danny’s beam without having to do anything to earn it, and Steve can’t remember the last time he resented anyone this much.

So he doesn’t feel like being fair, so sue him. Donovan is tall, with chestnut brown hair cropped not too close to his head and piercing green eyes that crinkle in the corners the moment they fall on Danny. His features are classical -- elegant nose, strong jaw, a generous mouth that Steve has an irrational desire to smash in.

“Danny Williams,” Donovan says -- his voice is deep, resonant, warm with something unidentifiable that effortlessly gets Steve’s hackles up.

“James Donovan,” Danny says right back, smiling widely as he jumps up from behind his desk and hurries over, hand already outstretched. “What the hell are you doing here, my friend?” He grabs Donovan’s hand in both of his, holding on for what Steve thinks is an inappropriately long time.

“Well, you called, I came. Or should I say, a Lt Commander Steve McGarrett called--” Donovan lets go of Danny’s hand at last and looks around, feigning puzzlement.

“Oh! Yeah, he’s right over there--Steve, come meet Agent Donovan! James -- Steve McGarrett, my partner and the bane of my existence, now that Rachel and I are pretty much on speaking terms again.”

Steve shakes hands with the man, noting the firm, warm grip of his fingers. Donovan smiles at him amiably, not a trace of anything hidden in his eyes. Steve tries to soften the baring of his own teeth into something at least resembling a friendly smile. He can feel Danny’s searching eyes on his face; it doesn’t make this any easier. He grudgingly thinks that this might be what Danny felt like when Bullfrog turned up three months ago, only Steve doubts that Danny’s reasons were quite as personal as his are now.

“Great to meet you!” Donovan says, shaking him out of his thoughts -- he means it too, Steve realises. Who is this guy?
“You too,” Steve forces out, trying for neutral and only just making it above a growl. He can’t take his eyes off the way Danny looks at the newcomer, the unquestionable friendliness, the pleasure of seeing him again. It makes Steve’s stomach clench tightly -- has he ever seen Danny direct a look like that at him? Well, has he?

“Come on and meet the rest of the team, then we’ll brief you,” Danny says, turning a little, inviting Donovan to fall into step with him. Donovan throws Steve a look as he turns, but Steve hardly notices -- all his attention is riveted on Danny’s easy smile, his open posture, no frantic handwaving in sight.

Chin walks over after he’s been introduced, leaving Donovan and Danny chatting to Kono.

“Whoa,” Chin says, eyeing the look on Steve’s face. “Now you decide to make your move? Brah, no offense, but your timing sucks.”

Steve doesn’t even have it in him to pretend he doesn’t know what Chin’s talking about. Chin looks between Steve and Danny a couple more times then shakes his head in despair of the pair of them, mutters something that Steve doesn’t try too hard to catch and walks over to set up the files on the tablescreen.

Steve hides in his office until Donovan and Danny decide to stop flirting already and get to work. He doesn’t really get anything done, but it’s better than standing out there and staring at the two of them like some kind of crazy stalker. When Kono comes to get him, she takes one look at him and her eyes soften, whatever she’d meant to say dying on the tip of her tongue as she watches him pretend to be busy. What with all the ass-kicking, Steve sometimes forgets just how insightful their rookie is turning out to be. She has instincts some cops spend decades developing already built-in; you disregarded them at your own cost.

“We’re ready, boss,” she says, much kinder than Steve suspects she set out to be in the first place.

Steve takes a deep breath, dons his ‘briefing’ expression and walks to the table in Kono’s wake. He takes the back seat, lets Danny talk to his heart’s content; instead, he catalogues how much calmer Danny is, discussing the case with Donovan; how the only time he gets near to his usual level of agitation is when he talks about what Steve had ferreted out of recalcitrant suspects. It’s like a knife twisting through his insides. Is this what Danny would normally be like, what he used to be like before he met Steve? Calm, collected, serene almost, quiet? Steve feels so confused; this version of Danny unsettles him deeply, but he can’t work out whether this is what the real Danny’s like, and it’s just him that brings out the other, wilder version of his partner, the one Steve revels in, the one he loves to antagonise until Danny is on fire, alive in a way Steve rarely sees anyone let themselves be, until he’s this shining thing that lights Steve’s way when he’s close to losing himself.

The one thing he has never questioned, not once since he picked Danny to be his partner, is that they make a brilliant team together. They bounce off each other, push and pull and prod until they unravel the case bit by bit, until they get to the truth buried somewhere in the darkness and drag it out, blinking and shading its eyes from the sunlight. But seeing this consummate professional now -- not that Danny isn’t professional all the time, just a different, Steve-induced brand of professional -- he has to wonder whether Danny would be better off as this version of himself. Certainly he’d be calmer, less likely to get a coronary at the age of forty. And had Steve ever really asked him what he wanted before commandeering him over to his task force? His head hurts. He never used to think about stuff like that before Captain America showed up and Danny changed back into an earlier version of himself -- like a reset.

The fact that Steve can barely imagine his existence without Danny any more is beside the point --
that Danny might actually be unhappy working with him isn’t.

He barely hears the meeting wrap up -- he’s not strung two words together since about half-way when Danny had slipped into a rant about Steve’s methods to a fascinated-looking Donovan. He vaguely catches Danny and Donovan making plans to meet for a beer, but he’s already got one foot out of the door by that point, hell-bent on getting away from uncomfortable realisations and painful thoughts. He wonders when his priorities changed so much, from “You don’t have to like me, but there’s no one else who can do this job” to this--this desperation for Danny’s approval, to know that Danny does like him. His head’s a mess, so he does the only thing that has half a chance of getting it sorted out -- he goes home, shucks his clothes where they fall, and dives into the ocean. He doesn’t surface until the burn in his lungs gets unbearable, and then only to take another deep breath and sink back under.

---

He should know better than to think he’d be getting away that easily.

“Oh, Jesus,” he mutters to himself when he crawls, exhausted, out of the water to be faced with Chin Ho Kelly, relaxing gracefully over one of the deck chairs, one of Steve’s beers dangling half-finished from his long fingers.

“I’m guessing you don’t feel any better, then?” Chin says mildly, sharp eyes taking in every piece of what Steve’s having trouble hiding.

Steve grunts, drops to sprawl inelegantly in the other chair. He takes the beer Chin offers him, twists the cap off and downs half of it in one swallow. “Fuck,” he croaks when the gas makes his eyes sting, grateful for the distraction.

Chin doesn’t say a word, just sits there, at ease with the world. Steve expects the silence to grate, but it’s more soothing than annoying -- for the first time since Donovan poked his freakishly handsome head in their HQ, Steve can breathe without feeling like there’s steely fingers squeezing the air from his chest. Chin waits him out. Steve knows what he’s doing, he’s done it often enough himself, but he trusts Chin as much as he trusts any of the Five-0s; and if he doesn’t talk about this, he has a feeling he might explode from the mess of emotions chasing each other’s tails inside him. So he opens his mouth, and words start coming out, and he finds that once he’s started he can’t stop. Everything comes out in a rush -- and all of it has a constant refrain of Danny, Danny, Danny.

Chin listens patiently, taking a pull out of his beer every now and again, manfully holding in whatever thoughts he’s having until Steve runs out of words and closes his eyes, drained, head hanging back against the chair, breathing in the falling night.

“…You know, brah, there’s this saying. I don’t know how much sense it makes to Navy folks, but I think right now you can’t see the wood for the trees,” Chin says slowly at last, looking up at the sky. “I know this case is hard on all of us, especially on Danny. I can’t possibly know the shit he went through back when Morennio first surfaced, but I can see he’s got some unfinished business with the guy. I think Donovan’s a throwback to his old days, back when Danny was a rookie himself, before he’d come into his own -- before he worked out how he felt about things, how to handle the stress of the job. Maybe it was a simple time; I don’t know. All I know is, you can’t let it affect your relationship with Danny now. Steve, seriously. You can’t not see that he’s happy. I don’t care how much he bitches at you, or how hard you pull his pigtails; the two of you just work.”

Steve lets his head roll to the side, heart heavy. “Look, I appreciate what you’re saying, Chin, but I
saw him today. I’ve never seen him look so serene.”

“I’ve never seen him look so bored, and that includes four days of doing nothing but paperwork.” Chin tells him, draining his beer and sitting up. “Okay, here’s the thing. Do I think the two of you bicker and fight like an old married couple? Absolutely. Do I think Danny would be happier back at HPD? No, I don’t. From all I’ve heard, Danny did well enough at the precinct, but everyone, Steve, everyone I’ve spoken to thinks that he’s much better off here at Five-0. They say there was more life in him in that moment when he punched you outside Duran’s house on the first day you two met than during the whole six months he spent at HPD put together. Something to think about, I think.”

He pushes off the chair and stretches a little before throwing Steve a kind look and saying goodnight. Steve listens to him leave, watching the waves break on the shore, and tries not to think.

---

The case goes a hell of a lot faster with all of the Bureau’s resources open to them, even if it does mean the Five-0’s HQ gets swamped by agents in varying shades of grey and black. Turns out that the Samoans are neck-deep in it again, having another go at trying to oust the Yakuza from the illegal gambling circuit with the help of Jersey’s finest crime families. Once they know where to look, Kamekona comes through with a name that finally gets them somewhere.

“What do you know, apparently Hawai’ians do vacation in New Jersey, if you count a flight manifest that puts a dozen of them flying in and out of Newark the last couple months.” Danny’s smile is small, but it’s there. Steve feels something painful unclench a little inside him.

“There’s no accounting for taste,” he mutters loud enough for Danny to hear him while he watches Kono pull the names up on the screen.

“Clever bastards,” Danny grunts back, “taking the planning stage out to Jersey so we don’t get wind of it.”

“Not clever enough,” Steve says, baring his teeth. He feels the thrill of the chase get his blood pumping. However messy the rest of his life might get, at least he can rely on this, always.

They set up a meet with Jonah, another of the Kelly/Kalakaua gaggle of cousins and a bona fide police informant to boot. He gets them the drop on the scheduled visit, and hints at how they can get it taped via laser audio surveillance from next door’s garage that looks straight into the library of the house the Samoans are using, so Marennio doesn’t get spooked by finding any bugs. The catch -- it might take a couple of days until they can get enough on tape to get an arrest warrant, since it looks like Marennio is taking the opportunity to get in a bit of R&R while he’s out here, and he’s in no hurry to leave -- so the meetings might drag out.

“Okay, we’ll go,” Danny says later, when they’re back at Five-0 HQ, waving a hand to include Steve and him.

“I’m gonna have to be in on this, too, if we have a chance of coordinating all the units,” Donovan says with an apologetic smile at Steve. Steve wonders what the hell that’s about, but he doesn’t get a chance to ask in the ensuing mess of agents and HPD officers and surveillance equipment and an arsenal to fell a medium-sized army.

“What’s all this for? We’re not getting into a firefight, alright, McGarrett, are you reading me?” Danny says, arms waving all over the place. He looks about a hundred times more animated than
the past few days; it’s a sight that warms Steve’s heart. Maybe Chin was onto something there.

“Come on, Danno, we need this, have you seen their security plans?” he says, trying to hide his grin and failing.

“Don’t you ‘Danno’ me, Steven, it’s still not necessary to take in a whole case of grenades, Jesus, what were you thinking--no, wait, don’t answer that, forgot who I was talking to for a moment there. You see, James? You see what I have to put up with?” he beseeches, pointing at said innocent case with both hands. Steve can hear Kono snigger from somewhere nearby--oh, how he’s missed this.

One half of Donovan’s mouth is curled up in an amused little smirk, and he shares a look with Steve that’s so commiserating, Steve feels a sense of camaraderie with the man that he would not have thought possible five minutes ago.

“It’s just a few grenades, Danny,” Donovan says. Danny and Steve gape in unison.

“A few--a few grenades? What the hell? SuperSEAL rubbing off on you or something? Not that I don’t know his crazy is contagious, I mean, I caught it, so I can’t blame you overmuch--McGarrett, what did you do to poor Donovan? He wasn’t nearly as batshit insane six years ago!”

Steve airs his best ‘who, me?’ expression. Danny’s yelling at him, and there’s that amused twinkle in his eyes that speaks volumes about a few other things besides. All is well in the world.

Donovan watches them, a full-blown smile creeping over his face; he sends Steve a wink when Danny’s not looking. Steve considers choking for a minute, but manages to get himself in hand before he does anything too embarrassing. Danny throws up his hands and wanders off to check on something else.

Donovan ambles up to the space Danny’s windmilling arms left free, and stands at Steve’s shoulder for a companionable moment, both of them watching Danny walk away.

“I feel like I should congratulate you,” Donovan says mildly, still looking at Danny’s back. “He’s so much happier than a year ago when I last saw him.”

“He is?” Steve blurts, turning to look at him. He realises with a start that Donovan is shorter than him. He’d been so focused on this man usurping Steve’s place in Danny’s life that he’d seemed like a giant, something insurmountable.

“Yeah, definitely,” Donovan tells him, turning as well. He looks at Steve for a long moment; Steve fights to meet his eyes. “He’s been through so much crap -- first Phelps, then Rachel, moving out here, leaving everything he knew behind -- I’m so glad he’s found someone to anchor him to the world.”

Steve stares at him, speechless. Him, anchoring Danny? But--but it’s the other way round -- it’s Danny who anchors him. He just... presses Danny’s buttons and riles him up, makes sure he’s not taking things too seriously.

Donovan’s lips twitch. “It’s been a long time since I’ve seen Danny so comfortable in his own skin, not since the early years when he met Rachel and Grace was born. Your team is great for him; and you, you’re all he talks about, and you know how he can talk.” He offers Steve his hand; Steve takes it in a daze. “Thanks,” Donovan says quietly, shaking it once before he walks away.

Steve just stands there, with what he suspects Danny would call a ‘goofy smile’ on his face, until Chin pads up behind him. “See?” Chin says kindly, clapping him on the back. “Now get your ass
over there and tell these fine HPD officers about the game plan.”

---

So there they are; Steve, Danny, Chin, Donovan, and Connors, Donovan’s second-in-command -- a tall, slim African-American lady with a roundhouse kick second only to Kono’s, as Steve found out a couple days ago when a suspect had been dumb enough to resist arrest. Kono’s out there, taking one for the team again, this time in a skimpy gold dress with tassels aplenty and a pair of heels that had made Steve wince just by looking at them. She’s on the arm of a Samoan HPD officer, another rookie from her class at the Academy. They can hear them loud and clear as they describe the house’s layout in laughing, bubbly voices. The sounds of the party around them filter through the mike, a fast, pumping rhythm that only makes the rest of them more wired.

When Steve takes a break from watching the camera footage, Donovan and Connors have their heads together, muttering to each other over a map of the location, and Chin is stuck to the monitors like his life depends on it, adjusting the laser antenna to a better angle yet again. It’s almost like the time they went after Salvo -- and yet, different in all the ways that matter.

Steve’s in the corner, checking his weapon for the tenth time, antsy to get this show on the road, when Danny ambles over. Steve would resent the way his entire body stands to attention from Danny’s closeness if it didn’t feel so damn good, a hell of an adrenaline rush with not a wave in sight.

“You okay?” Danny says, aiming for nonchalant, but the way he’s eyeing Steve from under his lashes spoils the impression.

“Yeah, sure, why wouldn’t I be?” Steve says, too quickly, trying to talk his body down from the high.

“Well, because you’ve been avoiding me for the past couple of days, for one -- don’t think I haven’t noticed,” Danny murmurs, looking away from Steve, as if he’s giving too much away by simply standing next to him.

Steve knows he has, but he hadn’t thought Danny had noticed, what with spending every spare moment with Donovan. “You’ve been busy,” he hedges. Danny shoots him a sharp look.

“I didn’t mean I’d been on one, I meant--you know what, never mind, why are we talking about dates? I’m asking a legitimate question here, don’t try to dodge me. You gonna tell me what’s going on with you?” The back of Danny’s hand comes to rest against the bulletproof vest over Steve’s stomach; Steve wishes for a dizzying moment that he hadn’t bothered to put it on yet. He can’t feel the warmth of Danny’s hand through that many layers, and it’s making him twitchy, touch-starved.

“I didn’t mean I’d been on one, I meant--you know what, never mind, why are we talking about dates? I’m asking a legitimate question here, don’t try to dodge me. You gonna tell me what’s going on with you?” The back of Danny’s hand comes to rest against the bulletproof vest over Steve’s stomach; Steve wishes for a dizzying moment that he hadn’t bothered to put it on yet. He can’t feel the warmth of Danny’s hand through that many layers, and it’s making him twitchy, touch-starved.

“Danny, nothing’s going on with me. I thought you’d want to catch up with your friend, so I gave you some space.” He sounds irritated, even though he’s anything but -- all he wants is to stand here talking to Danny for the next week. He’s missed him, Steve realises, and if that makes him a goof, so be it.
Danny stares at him, clearly not buying it. Steve looks back, impassive. It’s the truth, even if it’s only part of it. He doesn’t know what Danny’s looking for in his face, but he obviously doesn’t find it, because he huffs out a disappointed sigh. “Alright, fine, I’m just gonna--” he jerks a thumb over his shoulder, avoiding Steve’s eyes.

Steve panics. All that training, all those missions, and this is the thing that cracks his composure. It figures it would be because of Danny.

“No, wait, Danny--” he starts, and Danny must hear something in his voice, because he turns back, and even though his eyes are still guarded, he looks strangely hopeful--

“We got ears, guys,” Chin’s voice breaks through whatever moment they’re having.

Steve closes his eyes briefly, pulling himself back together with an effort, muttering a soft curse under his breath. Danny doesn’t fare any better, if his sudden too-frequent blinking is any indication. They rush to the monitors a moment after Donovan and Connors, crowding around the speaker.

“--quite the party you have going here. It remains to be seen whether you can pull in the punters, of course.”

“That’s Morennio, alright,” Danny says roughly, tensing. Steve shifts a little closer, touching their shoulders together in a show of silent support. To his pleased surprise, Danny leans into him a little, and some of the tension drains out of his body.

“I assure you, Mr Morennio, that we can, and will, deliver.”

“That’s Momoi, the head of the Samoans since after we busted Tuone and his crew,” Chin supplies.

“Keep your assurances, Mr Momoi. I intend to set up shop on this island, and I wanna see for myself what you can do. Tomorrow night, none of this party shit. I want the serious stuff. Five blackjack tables, two roulette tables, hell, maybe even a poker game. I’m not pouring money into your operation just so you can shaft it to the Japs. I wanna see results before we talk about any kind of deal.”

“Fine, you got it,” Momoi says, sounding a little pissed.

“Oh, don’t sulk. If tomorrow goes well, we’ll shake hands for an eight figure sum then and there. This is far too lucrative a market to lose out on.”

“Christ, the guy’s a bastard. You think Momoi’s gonna go for this?” Connors says, looking to Donovan.

“He has no choice. If he doesn’t, he can’t compete with the Yakuza, and Morennio’s determined enough to get in on the market here that he’ll go to one of the other gangs if Momoi passes. That would be the end for the Samoans,” Chin says, checking the recording.

“--of course, Mr Morennio,” Momoi is saying, and there’s a rustling sound, like they’re standing up. “Enjoy the party tonight; we’ll be ready to do business tomorrow.”

“Got them,” Donovan says smugly. “We’ll do the takedown tomorrow, when all the perps are present and correct. Nice work, gentlemen!”

Chin calls HPD to let them know to stand down for the night, and Danny lets Kono know that she
can take off, too. They leave the surveillance equipment as it is, hidden behind a tarp so it’s ready for tomorrow night if need be. The only thing that gets taken down is the antenna, and only because it might get noticed during the day.

Steve loiters until everyone’s done and heads off, Chin on his motorcycle that they’d reeled inside earlier, Donovan and Connors in a borrowed HPD SUV -- and then it’s finally time for him and Danny to leave. Steve climbs in the passenger seat without argument; Danny looks surprised, but doesn’t question it. They’re silent for most of the trip to Steve’s house, but Steve feels his insides churn all the way. That look that Danny gave him earlier -- the disappointment, it’s unbearable. He’s gonna have to man up and give Danny what he needs, whatever that is. Hell, for all Steve knows, Danny might want his blessing to shack up with Donovan. The thought makes him want to shoot something, but if it’s what Danny needs...

“You’re doing it again,” Danny comments, after throwing Steve a sideways look or two.

“What?” Steve crosses his arms in front of his chest before he can help it.

“Avoiding me. How you’re managing to do it while I’m sitting right next to you is a mystery to me; it must be one of those things they teach in SEAL school. Whatever it is you’re brooding about, just ask me, okay? Just, I can’t take this silent treatment from you, it’s making me uncomfortable.” Danny sniffs and looks out the side window.

“I’m not the one who talks all the time.”

“Point stands.”

Steve takes a deep breath, lets it out. They’re still at least fifteen minutes from his house, so he can’t wait this out until they’re inside, it’s going to piss Danny off even more.

“Look. You know you can tell me anything, right? If Donovan and you... If you’re... er. Just. You can tell me, okay? I won’t freak out or anything,” he finishes miserably, wishing he’d never opened his damned mouth.

This time it’s Danny who’s silent, processing. “You think Donovan and I had a thing.”

“Had?”

“Never mind the tense here. Is that what you think?”

“Well. Yeah, kinda. What, you mean you didn’t--don’t--you know?”

“Jesus,” Danny sighs. Shakes his head. Looks at Steve for a moment before he looks back at the road. “When I first met Donovan, me and Rachel had just got together. She and Donovan both pulled me out of that hole I dug for myself after Phelps died. I still don’t know how either of them put up with me, to be honest, but they did. You should ask Rachel about Donovan sometime.

“My point is, no. We didn’t have a thing. He was a friend when I needed one. Besides,” he stops and looks at Steve again, a small smile curving the lips that Steve keeps waking up thinking about. Danny waits until he’s pulled into Steve’s driveway and switched off the engine before turning back to Steve. “Apparently he wasn’t crazy enough for me.”

Steve watches him for a long moment, heart thumping in his ribcage. Is Danny saying what he thinks--

“Crazy enough?” he asks cautiously.
“Yeah, McGarrett, crazy, insane, demented, won’t take no for an answer, thinks he’s always right despite all evidence to the contrary, thinks he’s Batman while we’re at it, thinks he’s invincible, is the most annoying, irritating—”

Danny tastes of coffee, of talking too much and touching too little, of need; there’s faint traces of sugar on the corner of his lips from the malasada he sneaked just before they left, and Steve chases it hungrily. Danny groans quietly and opens his mouth; Steve slips his tongue inside triumphantly, crowns him against the back of the driver’s seat and kisses him with all the want and frustration and desperation of the past few days, when he thought he’d have to give him up. Danny’s hands catch at the back of Steve’s shirt when Danny tugs it out of his pants and slips warm hands underneath, one chasing up his spine and one dipping lower, teasing a single fingertip under the waistline of his cargo pants. Steve makes an embarrassingly needy sound, clutches at Danny’s hair while he grabs at the bottom of Danny’s shirt and yanks, until he can touch skin and hair and feel the muscles in Danny’s stomach twitch against his palm.

“--can hold his breath for far longer than mere mortals,” Danny gasps when he breaks the kiss, gulping air in great lungfuls. “You big freak,” he adds fondly, tilting his head back when Steve starts trailing kisses along his jawline to that place behind his ear that makes his hips jerk. “Do you think we could maybe move this inside and out of sight of your long-suffering neighbours?”

“Sure,” Steve says, magnanimous in victory. “As long as I don’t have to stop touching you.”

Danny huffs a pleased laugh. “Well, you’re gonna have to, but I promise it’ll only be for as long as it takes us to get out of the car.”

Steve narrows his eyes in consideration. As soon as Danny opens the door and climbs out, he twists over the gear stick and follows out right behind him.

“Oh my god, what am I going to do with you?” Danny laments, but he’s smiling and reaching for Steve’s hand, letting Steve drag him up the driveway.

Steve fumbles with the keys, trying to unlock the door one-handed while still holding on to Danny with the other. “Fuck,” he mutters when he drops them.

“Whoever told you you were smooth was lying, lying, I tell you. Give’em here, Smooth Dog, ” Danny says, taking the keys Steve picks up, guiding Steve’s hands to his hips so he can let go and open the damned door already.

Steve happily burrows both hands under Danny’s shirt, buries his nose in Danny’s hair and inhales the strawberry shampoo that Gracie must have left behind last time she stayed over. He plastered himself to Danny’s back, relishing the heat of his body through the thin barrier of their shirts. Danny wrestles the door open at last, quickly punching in the alarm code without being prompted. The sight does something funny to Steve’s chest, even after everything that’s happened this week. He wonders vaguely if the way he feels about Danny will ever stop surprising him; happily concludes a moment later that no, it probably won’t -- and anyway, he wouldn’t want it to.

He steers Danny to the sofa, falling down on his back and pulling Danny on top of him. Danny goes with a grunt of escaping air, laughing a little as he tugs Steve’s shirt up and away over his head before Steve even realises what he’s doing.

“Sneaky,” Steve says approvingly.

“Well, since subtlety goes right over your head, my friend, I figured it was time for drastic action if I ever wanted to make a few things clear.”
Steve stills under him.

“Oh, what now,” Danny grumbles, pulling away to undo his tie and drape it around his neck while he unbuttons his shirt. “Seriously, McGarrett, you’ve been running hot and cold all damn week. D’you want me to stop?” he’s trying for bravado, but Steve can hear the uncertainty beneath the bluster.

His arms tighten around Danny before he’s even thought about it, pure reflex.

“Oh, okay, then, that’s a resounding ‘no’,” Danny says happily, squirming as Steve pushes his shirt and tie off his shoulders.

“Danny, are you sure about this?” Steve has to ask, he has to, even though he can feel Danny’s cock digging into the top of his thigh; because if Danny isn’t sure, he’d rather never do this thing at all than risk it and lose him.

Danny looks at Steve from where he’s sitting astride his hips, golden skin and golden hair and blue, blue eyes crinkling fondly at the corners as he smiles down at him. Danny’s hands are never still, though; he strokes hot palms over Steve’s arms, up and down Steve’s stomach, lets clever fingers tangle in the curl of Steve’s happy trail, rubs a callused thumb over his tight lower belly.

He shakes his head in amusement. “Who do you think you’re talking to here, huh? You think I haven’t thought about this, over and over again? That I haven’t weighed every possible scenario?” his voice goes dark and low with want as he rocks his hips forward in place of punctuation, teasing Steve with the hint of pressure, the promise of white sparks and explosions that Steve’s never been able to resist, impossible when it comes to Danny. “Yes, Steven. I’m sure.”

Watching Danny’s lips curl around his name makes Steve shiver, snaps the tenuous hold he’s barely keeping on his reigns and makes him wild with the need to take Danny, make him his, mark him so everyone on this island would know Danny’s spoken for.

“Jesus, Danny,” he groans, pulling him down so he can get at his mouth. Danny bends willingly, shapes himself to fit Steve’s body, fills the empty spaces Steve’s left for him without a second thought, instinctively. Steve can’t get enough of him, can’t stop pulling him closer even though there’s nowhere further he can go, not with their pants still on.

Danny kisses him like he does everything else -- with intent, demanding, dedicated to making Steve pay attention. Their skin slides together easily, the wisps of hair over Danny’s chest teasing Steve’s nipples, stomachs and abdomens rubbing, Danny’s hips twitching forward until Steve’s panting underneath him, into his mouth. Danny nips at his lips, a hint of teeth, the wetness of a teasing tongue; and Steve’s undone, pushing up desperately into the heat of Danny’s body, hands clenching on Danny’s shoulders, pulling him down so he can rub their cocks together harder.

“Come on, come on,” Danny mutters into his mouth, ripping at the button of his cargo pants, yanking the zip down, taking him out with an eager hand that closes around him just right. Steve’s eyes roll into the back of his head as he fights to hang on, for this to not be over already. He tries to distract himself by reaching for Danny, opening his pants and reaching inside to pull him out, but the feel of him hot and heavy already across his palm just winds him up tighter. Danny grunts his surprise against Steve’s lips, and what, did he think Steve was just going to lie there and take it? The idea has merit, certainly, but not this first time, not when it’s urgent and frantic and pleasegodyes, not when he can barely keep his head together enough to slide his other hand down Danny’s back and inside his pants, part his cheeks and rub an insistent finger against his entrance, which squeezes hard at the touch, as if he’s already pushing inside.
He comes like this, sharing breath with Danny as their lips rub spitslick together, with Danny’s
hand on his cock and Danny’s name in his mouth, as Danny pushes into his hand, rhythm scattered
to hell and back, saying his name, Jesus fuck, but Steve wishes he could come again, because that
would be enough, his name breathed from Danny’s lips as he milks the last drops out of him.

Danny drops like a rock, smeared mess between them disregarded as unimportant, pushes his nose
into Steve’s neck and pants against sweat-damp skin, stirring small hairs with his exhales. Steve
takes advantage of the delicious skin that’s right there, like he could pass on that, kisses and sucks
and licks and worries at it softly with his teeth until an unmistakable bruise takes shape under his
lips, right on the edge of where Danny’s shirt collar would still cover it, but there’d be just an edge
of it that shirt and tie won’t be able to conceal, peeping out like a secret, their secret. Steve smiles
against the reddened skin and resettles Danny more comfortably. Danny grumbles but allows it,
splayed over Steve like he’s his favourite pillow. Steve closes his eyes and drowns in contentment,
Danny’s scent in his lungs, Danny’s weight pressing him down, Danny’s pleased little murmurs
and huffs and snuffles floating past his ear, filling his entire world.

---

The takedown is almost anticlimactic after all the crap the case has dished. It goes as smooth as
can be expected; the only downside is a few GSWs that Morennio’s men sustain while trying to get
him out of the house. The wannabe gamblers get evacuated safely from the start, and all of
Momoi’s men get arrested alongside their Jersey visitors.

Steve doesn’t tell Danny to ‘book ‘em’, because that’s HPD’s job this time round, and the Feds are
pulling jurisdiction to get to prosecute Morennio themselves -- or something, Steve isn’t really
listening past the point where they got them all arrested, with enough evidence to make sure they
get sent away for a bunch of crimes apiece. He does see Donovan say goodbye to Danny and send
him a jaunty wave before heading for the airport, though. He gives him a half-assed two-finger
salute in response; Donovan laughs as he gets in the car and drives off. Danny shakes his head at
Steve from across the road, resigned. Steve grins back smugly, sticks his hands in his pockets and
rocks back onto his heels. Danny’s lips twitch before he turns away.

Early morning finds them back at their now blissfully empty HQ, finishing up paperwork and
settling down after the end of the case from hell. They’re all exhausted, but none of them seems to
be able to unwind enough to go home and sleep it off -- that’s what half-days are for, no one’s
gonna turn up to work tomorrow before noon. Finally, Steve breaks out the beer, which manages to
 lure Danny out of his office at last. He’s loosened his tie and undone the top two buttons of his
shirt; it gapes open at his neck, and there it is, right where Steve left it last night -- the purpled
patch of skin that Danny’s been pressing at regular intervals during the day, as if wanting to remind
himself it’s still there, that last night really happened. Every time Steve’s seen him do it, his mouth
has gone dry, and he’d had to fight not to get hard in the middle of the office, or the garage, or the
goddammed bust, even.

He’s unaware he’s staring until Danny walks past him and pointedly kicks his foot, at which point
he realises that while he’s been staring at Danny’s neck, Chin and Kono have been staring at him.
Kono looks fascinated, dark eyes focused on the very same patch of skin Steve’s been tracking; her
full lips curve into a delighted smile. Chin, on the other hand, looks resigned, like they’re all a
bunch of teenagers that can’t behave. He does wink at Steve, though, when Danny’s not looking, so
Steve knows he’s not nearly as disapproving as he makes out to be.

“You’re not subtle,” Danny mutters at Steve when he slides in the chair next to him, knocking his
elbow accidentally-on-purpose.
Steve grins into his beer. “I’ve been told it’s not my strong suit. Apparently it goes straight over my head.”

“Whoever told you that was a smart, smart guy,” Danny tells him, clicking the neck of his beer bottle to the one Chin offers.

“Seriously, the two of you,” Kono says, looking amused. “Do either of you even know the meaning of the word?”

“Hey, I’m not that bad!” Danny protests, but Steve can tell he’s mostly doing it for sport, even when he kicks Kono under the table.

She kicks him right back, and it all deteriorates into four-way under-the-table footsie that should not feel as amazing as it does. But Danny’s sprawling warm and loose at his side, and the voices of his happy team ring sweetly in his ears. And in the end, Steve supposes, that’s family for you.

-----

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!