Two Truths & A Lie
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Summary

"It was 1985 for God's sake, Stan reasoned. People went to bars; there was no crime in that. Bars that were almost exclusively peopled by young men of a certain persuasion. Regardless, it really just came down to the fact that Stan didn't know if Ford was alive or dead and God damn it, did he need to blow off some steam. He drained the last of his beer then turned in his stool to get up and leave but his eyes landed on a man he hadn't seen earlier in the night. Their eyes locked for a second before Stan turned away."

Notes

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Part 1

It wasn't as if Rick ever had a plan. Not unless it affected him directly and most of those were strictly on the fly concoctions. Really no one planned to be a drifter. It kind of went against the job description.

Rick would say that he went through phases of drifting. Something might catch his attention and he would focus upon it for weeks or months but once he was satisfied, or more often than not bored, with it, Rick would abruptly wander away without any immediate purpose.

The phases of drifting often times were far longer than the phases of interest.

Rick was hitchhiking along US-26 this time. While his spaceship was operational (he had stashed it somewhere in New Mexico last he checked) and he always had his portal gun, there was something satisfying about getting into an unmarked car with a total stranger. It made Rick feel like he was actually aware of all of the creatures crawling along the surface of the earth in their chrome exoskeletons. It was only occasionally interesting the people you met on the road.

A more poetic man might have mused upon the idea that each had their own places to be and lives to live that we're each individually important to them and Rick was but a blip on the cosmic radar of their stories. Rick was aware of this fact but it made little impact on him. He knew that he did not matter to anyone who pulled over to give him a lift as they did not matter to him. Not beyond whether they did it out of the kindness of their hearts, which was not often, or if they were looking for one of the open road's three legal tenders: cash, grass or ass.

It was somewhere along the western half of Roadkill county that Rick had gotten a tip from a, particularly chatty lumber truck driver about a nearby watering hole that might have been of some interest to Rick.

He said that just outside of the Warm Springs area was a roadhouse by the name of Palmer's Peak. While it wasn't really a place for locals and more of a spot for truckers to get just below the legal limit before braving Wapinitia Pass and the Pacific Crest Trail, if you were there at the right time you could see bears and chicken hawks and all other manner of wildlife come right out of the woods. Reading between the lines, Rick gathered that while Palmer's Peak wasn't a gay bar...it wasn't not a gay bar.

Rick was almost insulted that this dude who didn't know him from a hole in the ground just assumed Rick was queer. Granted, he wasn't technically wrong. Rick preferred to think of himself as not picky, sexually. Extremely not picky. But if someone looked at Rick, a man in his early forties, bumming rides on the side of the road while wearing jeans tight enough to show nearly all the fruit in the basket, and saw a queer who was Rick to judge?

Weighing the options for the rest of the ride, Rick decided to give it a shot. The worst case scenario was that this was some kind of stupid joke and Rick would find himself in a fist fight with a bunch of homo-hating, red state, good ole boys before the night was out, which honestly would be at the very least something interesting.

Jumping down from the cabin of the truck, Rick did not look back or thank the driver but just made his way across the parking lot, road sand and snow crunching under the soles of his pointed biker boots. He hefted his dirty duffle bag up and searched in a pocket a moment before retrieving a well worn orange bandanna. Rick figured in for a dime, in for a dollar as he tucked the handkerchief halfway into his left pocket. He shouldered the bag and pushed in through the heavy wood and
Palmer's Peak was a large room affair with a high pointed ceiling. From the doorway, Rick could see booths made of polished wood the color of dark honey and upholstered with cracked and faded vinyl in the most garish shade of green Rick had ever laid eyes on ringing a massive hardwood dancefloor. A wraparound second-floor balcony with presumably more booths and stools stood above so that those on the second floor could look down at the dancefloor below.

To Rick's left was a set of stairs that lead to the second floor and to his right a pair of metal doors that were once powder blue but now carried a roadmap of dents and scratched rust. The one on the left said 'Bucks' and the right said 'Does'.

Rick went into the restroom marked Bucks and stepped into the stall to take a piss. One benefit of portal travel was never having to hold your water for an extended period of time. He scanned the walls of the stall as he went, taking in the graffiti as a bored art patron would peruse a lifeless exhibit. At about waist height someone had cut a crude circle into the adjoining stall's wall. Two different colors of duct tape had been overlapped around the edges and the legend in black sharpie above read "Glory Glory! Hallelujah!" A different artist had used red ink to add a drawing of a penis wearing an army helmet beside it. It saluted and chomped a cigar in its large square teeth.

Rick chuckled acerbically. Maybe he was in the right place.

Rick stepped out of the men's room and entered the roadhouse proper. A bar the width of the room stood before Rick at the far side of the dancefloor. Several neon signs for Olymipa and Rainier beer hung and cast glaring reflections in the spotty mirrors behind the bar. Far above, what few windows were in the heights of the peaked walls let in pale winter moonlight. It fought the electric light from the wood-paneled fixtures over each booth. Cigarette smoke twined lazily through the air.

Rick ordered a Wild Turkey straight then wandered over to the nearest empty booth. He tossed the duffle bag unceremoniously into the booth and then fell in himself. He planted his boots up on the table and watched the room silently from over his bourbon.

Stanley Pines sat at the bar and stared down into his beer bottle.

"This was a bad idea," he grumbled to himself. It had been three years since Ford had been sucked into that weird portal thing and Stan hadn't been able to figure any of it out. To top it all off, this Gravity Falls place was weird.

At first, Stan had thought his brother was losing his mind when he first looked through the book. Then he had found little men digging through his trash and something in the woods that was clearly watching him with many giant eyes. That's when he started to believe. But belief didn't make it easier to understand Ford's journals or any of his research notes.

As of late the staff at the Mystery Shack had a higher turn over than usual and Stan was guessing his bad attitude was the problem. He was frustrated as hell and felt like just some dumbass screw up high school drop out trying to figure out his genius brother's machine. All he had figured out so far was that it was a portal to another dimension, which still sounded crazy to him but with the stuff he'd seen so far it sounded more plausible every day.

Stan was also lonely. When he had gotten that postcard from Ford he thought it would be the two of them together again. He had been sorely mistaken. And now he was alone and his whole life was the Shack and the portal. He should have known there would be a boiling point.
It had happened a week ago when he was checking out a tourist in the gift shop. He was a dark
haired handsome young man with very tight jeans stretched over a beautiful ass. Stanley had
thought he was being covert with his stares but the next thing he knew the man was smirking at
him. Mr. Mystery thought this was it. He was going to be outed in a small backwoods town and
he’d have to sneak out in the middle of the night before the people assembled with torches and
pitchforks.

The young tourist just swaggered up to the counter and leaned on it, winking at Stan. He then told
him about a fun bar about an hour's drive from there and that he and his four friends would all be
there later tonight and that Stan should come join them. The young tourist drew Stan a crude map
while looking the older man up and down surreptitiously. He left shortly after with his friends but
not before smirking and blowing a kiss Stan's way.

He had almost gone too. It was 1985 for God's sake, he reasoned. People went to bars, there was
no crime in that. Bars that were almost exclusively peopled by young men of a certain persuasion.
Regardless, it really just came down to the fact that Stan didn't know if Ford was alive or dead and
God damn it, did he need to blow off some steam.

He had chickened out in the end. All dressed up and sitting in the Diablo he just couldn't do it. He
hit the steering wheel a few times before getting out and slamming the car door hard behind him.
He stomped back into the Shack and drank himself into a stupor.

Stanley had closed the Mystery Shack for the winter months and he had found the courage to come
here but now he was regretting it. He didn't know how to be gay in public. The extent of his
experience had been his short-lived romance with Ford and a few chance encounters through the
years. This was sensory overload.

Stan ran his hands through the short hair at the nape of his neck, having gotten rid of the mullet
when he changed the name of the Murder Hut to the Mystery Shack. He drained the last of his beer
then turned in his stool about to get up and leave but his eyes landed on a man he hadn't seen
earlier in the night. Blue-gray hair, slim as a rail and tall as hell. It was hard not to notice him.
Their eyes locked for a second before Stan turned away.

He should leave. He should leave right now and never think about this place again, he told
himself. He looked back one more time and made up his mind.

"Hey, I'll take a bottle of what that guy's drinking and a glass." Stan told the bartender, inclining his
head towards the man in the booth. The bartender looked over to where Stan was indicating then
smiled at Stan.

"Sure thing, brother." he said before going to complete the order. The con man dusted off his white
shirt and looked himself over. Stan had squeezed himself into the jeans he was wearing, trying to
look young and cool even though he was already in his thirties. He had cuffed the bottoms after he
had put on his black boots. It added a bit of his old greaser look from younger times. He had left
his glasses at home. As if he didn't feel old enough in this place, showing up in Poindexter glasses
wouldn't have helped the look.

When the bottle came he paid for his drinks and took a deep breath. He grabbed his denim jacket
from the back of his seat, slung it over his shoulder, then turned and walked to the man in the
booth. He put on his most charming smile. He knew it was charming because it had gotten him laid
more times than he could count.

"You want some company?" he asked shaking the bottle as he stood before the tall man.
Perhaps it was the fact that "Glory Days" was playing on the jukebox, but this guy reminded Rick of Bruce Springsteen. A little more solid than The Boss but the resemblance was there. Perhaps if he turned around Rick might notice a ball cap tucked into his back pocket like the cover of "Born In The USA". Rick kept it cool and smiled ever so slightly He motioned across the table with his glass in a perfect showing of nonchalant invitation. He did not take his feet down from the table nor show any other signs of overt urgency. However, Rick's eyes followed Stanley as he moved. He was nervous; the sheen of sweat on his forehead in the relatively chilly room belied his calm demeanor.

Stan slid into the booth still smiling and trying his best to act charming as the devil himself. He tossed his jacket on the seat next to him. His mind was racing though. He'd dealt with the strong silent type before but this guy looked like he could be snapped like a twig. The con man reminded himself that didn't mean this man wasn't strong though. There was too much of a glint in his eye. That told Stanley that this guy wasn't dumb. Smart and silent wasn't a bad combo. Smart and strong on the other hand, that could be trouble.

The stocky man did feel more at ease in the privacy of the booth and with a man that looked to be closer to his own age. He wondered when he had gotten so old that these twenty-year-olds looked like kids to him. This man was definitely his age if not a bit older.

He poured himself a couple of fingers of bourbon and blinked a moment when Rick thrust his tumbler in Stan's direction silently. Stan refreshed his new companion's drink. He leaned back in his seat and dipped his drink.

"So you ever been here before?" Stan asked. It was a good neutral line. The same connotations as "you come here often" without sounding cliché and better than "what's a nice guy like you doing in a place like this" which went out of fashion sometime in 1955.

The bourbon warmed Rick but didn't touch his brain yet. As drunk as Rick always was, it most times took a considerable effort to get him feeling it.

"Not much of an opener there, Stud. A for effort but I'm sure you can do better." Rick told him not unkindly "I don't know what you expect me to say. 'I'm new here, you're new here? Oh cool, we should hang out!'" Rick seesawed his free hand at eye level.

"It's just- it's just constructive criticism, is what I'm saying. Not trying to throw cold water on you or anything."

Stan barked a laugh and relaxed visibly. He took a swing of his drink and extended one arm across the top of the seat, puffing up a bit and smiling crookedly.

"Didn't know you spoke fluent asshole. My fault trying to talk to you like one of those little shits out there when you're clearly not some kid." he laughed. "Glad you're not trying to discourage me though."

Rick returned a snide smile of his own and took his feet down from the table. He drained his drink and extended his hand.

"Rick Sanchez." he offered around the grimace of the bourbon's warm wonderful sting. Stanley's brain stuttered for a second. When you've had several aliases in ten years sometimes your brain didn't know if it should lie or tell the truth. He stalled for a second by knocking back a healthy mouthful of bourbon. He kept his eyes on Rick's though. He was finally getting a good read on this guy. You couldn't show weakness and lying was probably off the table too. This Rick guy was really pulling him in. He leaned forward and took Rick's hand in his. He gave a firm handshake and
"Stanford Pines. Stan is fine. Nice ta meetcha, Rick."

"Same to you, Stan." Rick scanned the room as he slid his empty glass across to Stan in a casual way. He pushed the sagging sleeve of his leather jacket back up his arm.

"Quite the place you got here." He remarked "Shit, here I am with the cliche lines now. I swear, ya think you want to have a decent conversation with someone and-and-and you always go and spit out the stupidest people pleasing bullshit. Humans, we just want to fill the air I think."

His tone was jovial. Rick was aware that he could come on strong but he felt no need to censor it. If he was too much for this guy or anyone else to handle, best to scare them off early. If they couldn't keep up, Rick believed, they weren't worth it. Sometimes Rick's need to get laid was only outmatched by his need for cerebral validation.

Stan thought that this guy was a bit weird but there were worse things than weird, he decided. He finished off his drink then poured them both another measure.

"Not really my place. Not even my neck of the woods, really. " Stan commented. In his years as a con man, he'd run into a few men like this. Lies were easily uncovered things. Half-truths were safer. He was Stanford Pines since he'd 'killed' Stanley Pines and this wasn't Gravity Falls. "Found out about this place from a tourist at a rest stop. Thought I'd check it out."

He leaned back again and got comfortable looking out at the bar like Rick. "Humans are a shit show. Just how we are I guess. I mean look at this place. It's a fuckin meat market. The best thing to do is find someone who doesn't make you cringe everytime they say something and have a good time."

Rick laughed at that and clinked his glass against Stan's.

"You said it, brother. Talk about a universal truth. I mean it. Been all over the universe and seen a lot- I mean a lot - of garbage people. I can tell ya this: if they don't know how to party, don't waste your time. Live fast, die young; that- that's all wrong. For me it's live fast, live faster, keep fucking living fast until - y'know - you're an old man and you outlived everybody else who stupid enough to die young."

Stanley smiled. "All over the universe, huh? I almost believe you." he took a sip of his drink. "I've been all around too. You're right. It's the same crap. Everyone wants to fight you or fuck you, but that's life. Personally, I prefer to do the fucking, but you gotta take what you can get."

Stan chuckled into his glass. He was definitely getting drunk. This was the first time drunk had been fun in a long time. He slowed down on the liquor a bit. He was going to need his wits if he was going to take on this guy.

It was funny how no one ever took Rick's matter of fact approach to his travel habits seriously. But there was something about Stan; something in the set of his jaw and his stance that told Rick that the 'almost' in his "almost believe you" was not as strict as he let on. The jukebox switched over and the synthesized moody opening of "Money For Nothing" began to play. Most people might call it 'spacey'. Rick knew that in reality space was a vacuum and devoid of sound but he could appreciate the comparison. Rick rolled his head to the side to look at Stan again. If he looked hungry, he didn't care.

Stan's pallor was a little flushed from the alcohol or perhaps, Rick noted, it was from the way he
was watching the men on the dancefloor. Two, he noted not too far from the booth, a pair who
couldn't have had a collective age much higher than thirty-five, were swaying together as the
drums rolled and the synthesizer's tones came toward a climactic crescendo. The one in the mesh
t-shirt had his arm draped over one shoulder of the other. His partner placed a cowboy-booted foot
between the other man's legs and pulled him in close. They looked into each other's faces with
dreamy lust. Rick flicked his eyes back to Stan

"So, how long were you in the closet?" He asked. The main guitar riff peeled across the room in
robust tinny distortion. A hard drum beat thudded beneath. The stocky man choked on his drink.
Once he cleared his windpipe he looked incredulously at Rick.

"You don't beat around the bush, do you?" he put down the glass and looked out at the dance floor
for a minute before answering. He knew lying would get him nowhere with Rick and he kinda
liked the guy.

"Still there I guess. Never really got out." he looked sideways at his companion. "Had a boyfriend
when I was a teenager. If my dad found out he would've beaten the crap out of me." he laughed
mirthlessly. "Doesn't matter. I fucked it up and he went off to college. Been traveling around since.
I like girls too. Don't know what that makes me." he looked back at the tall man. "How about
you?"

"That's where you and I differ. Coming out was never really a thing for me. I like what I like and
that's pretty much anything I'm in the mood for. Male, female; I dated a collective hive mind entity
once. Hoo, that was something else, let me tell you. Had a wife." Rick took a swallow of his drink,
nodding his head contemplatively. "s'pose I still do." Rick shrugged one shoulder in a non-
committal motion. "Doesn't matter. So this is your first time in a gay bar, isn't it?"

Stan huffed a laugh and offered a half smile. "That obvious? Well if tonight goes well maybe I'll
come back. " he swirled the liquor around in his glass before taking another sip. "Word of advice.
Get the divorce. It's worth it. And what the fuck's a hive mind? You say some weird stuff, Rick."

Rick chuckled into his drink and emptied it for the second time that night. He gave a taxed frown
at the gratifying, strong flavor. He was definitely feeling it now.

"It's only obvious cause this place is crawling with sexy young things that'd be tripping over their
own nuts if you winked at them and you make a beeline for the only guy here older than you. You
thought I was a safe bet. Has it really been since high school since you got your dick wet with
another guy?"

Stan ran his thick fingers through his hair and he smirked as he cocked his head back a bit.

"There have been...understandings. A look. A nod. Ya meet in an ally; the back of a car. Quick and
dirty, then you go on with your life. This is different. Ya gotta talk. Ya gotta be part of it. Ya have
to admit it's what you want." he poured himself a good amount of bourbon. "It's really flattering
that a sexy bastard like you thinks these kids would look twice at a fat old guy like me but you got
one thing wrong." he swallowed a mouthful of bourbon and grimaced slightly at the burn. "I picked
you cause you've seen some shit. I came over cause you looked like a badass son of a bitch who
could give me a challenge. Stan Pines doesn't take the easy mark." he leaned forward against the
table and smiled that heartbreaker smile. "You ain't the only one who can read someone from
across the room." he was drunk. And it felt pretty good. This was either going to get him laid or
punched and at this point, he would take either option.

Rick's eyebrows shot up at that, his poker face temporarily dissolved by his new drinking buddy's
smooth talk. A lazy smile that didn't come with teeth replaced the look of mild surprise a moment
later. This night had gotten much more interesting all of a sudden. What could've started out as an avenue to a quick fuck with whatever boring pretty face Rick could put up with had instead led to a middle-aged closet queen with a silver tongue and a weird, WEIRD allure. He'd never stepped foot in a gay bar and was looking for a challenge, no less? Rick could admire that and if Stan wanted a challenge, he couldn't have found a better one than Rick Sanchez.

Rick grabbed the Wild Turkey bottle and freshened his drink. The bottle was becoming increasingly light, increasingly quick.

"Well, on that note, I'm officially drunk enough to dance." He intoned pragmatically and pulled himself out of the booth somewhat awkwardly with his drink still in hand. The glass hung clasped precariously between Rick's thumb, ring and pinkie fingers like a toy in the claw of an arcade prize machine. It was the habitual grip of a smoker, Stan recognized. The type of someone who simultaneously drank and smoked often and wanted to keep his other hand free. For what, Stan could only imagine.

Rick took a sip and turned away from Stan, presenting the man with a pair of scrawny hips and ass below the shape of his oversized leather jacket.

"Y'dance, don't ya?" He asked before taking a few steps out onto the dance floor proper. The soles of his boots slid comfortably on the scuffed, well-traveled hardwood and he nodded his head to the beat of Dire Straights. The motion continued down into his shoulders experimentally, searching for a groove.

"Damn right I do." Stan slid out of the booth and followed Rick. It occurred to him this would not be like dancing at the Juke Joint but looking around he saw that the dancing here would be much easier. His body slid into the rhythm as he caught up to Rick.

The music was louder out here than over in the booth and it washed over him. He had always loved to dance. The alcohol gave him the courage to let his hand trail over Rick's waist, pulling the other a bit closer to him. He smiled up at the tall man and thought to himself how odd it felt to dance with someone who had at least one or two inches on him. One of his hands rested softly on the other man's hip as they swayed together.

Rick let himself be pulled in closer. He all but placed his body flush against Stan and slipped an arm around his neck to card his long fingers through the hair at the nape of the other man's neck. He took another swig of his drink and sang along to the song in a gravely melodic voice that was low but not unpolished. There was a snide kind of triumph in his tone.

"That little faggot's got his own jet airplane, yeah, that little faggot is a millionaire...".

Rick had always dug that line. It had a little backhanded attitude that vindicated Rick. Fuck yeah, that little faggot was doing alright for himself. Rick lifted his drink in a half toast as he followed Stan's rhythm with gusto. Stan chuckled and wrapped his arm tighter around Rick. He marveled at how much muscle there was in the thin frame. He leaned close to the taller man's ear.

"Didn't peg you for a singer. Guess I'm losing my touch in my old age." he chuckled again. His other hand came up and rested on the top of Rick's ass pulling him that last little bit closer. They were pressed as tightly together as they could be. He could smell the tall man. Bourbon, cigarettes, road dust and maybe even a bit of marijuana. Under it all, he could smell something that he could only subscribe as ozone. Chemicals. It made Stan think of the portal room but more acidic.

Rick hummed his approval as their bodies settled into each other. He looked sidelong at Stan, his smile rippling into a full toothy grin.
"Yeah, I mean I was in a band once, no big deal. We did it all. Dead Kennedys, blue oyster cult, Floyd. Our original stuff was total trash but I find when you're playing Black Sabbath eight light-years away from anyone who heard of Ozzy Osborne...what I'm saying is you can get away with stealing a lot of shit." Rick paused as if he was considering something "Except Zeppelin. For some reason, even aliens know Zeppelin."

Stan pulled back a bit to get a better look at Rick's face. He slowed down their movements a bit as he searched the expression on the other man.

"You're really serious about this alien stuff? " he said. It was said as a question but he already knew the answer. Rick looked down at with Stan with a look that could've been pitiful affection or perhaps conceited justification.

"Never said I wasn't. I get that a lot. But I figure you can guess that. Look, I-I-I don't want to make this weird for you. You came here to party, I came here to party. Just cause you're in a 'Man Who Fell To Earth' situation right now, that shouldn't put a damper on the night." Rick read Stan's incredulous expression. He paused, confused. "You know? 'Man who fell to Earth'? David Bowie? Alien touches down, looking for water, falls for a girl. Not that I'm an alien; I'm not. It's a good flick. You get to see Bowie's dick. I mean it's not a close up and there's a strobe light going but - Y'know what, y'know what? Nevermind."

Rick guided Stan back into the dance. His glass sat against Stan's waist and the alcohol inside swished gently. Sting was plaintively chanting from his back up vocals position that he wanted his MTV.

"You said you had to talk in a place like this? Gotta be a part of it? Well, let's talk. A little get to know you? I could tell you my whole stupid life story or we could keep it fun." Rick offered. He fished into his coat pocket for something without losing the beat. "Ya ever play two truths and a lie?"

The thought that maybe The Falls had infected him to attract weirdness passed through Stan's mind. That, in a place like that, once you finally see the weird, it followed you no matter where you went. Or maybe it was like finally waking up. That strange little town opened your eyes to the world and wouldn't let you close them again no matter how much you wanted to.

It would be Stan's luck to pick up an alien in a bar. He'd always been attracted to the unattainable. Here he was, drunk and half hard in his jeans pressed up against a man who he was very aroused by and actually found interesting. He wasn't going to throw it away because of the strangeness that had followed him here. If this was part of his life now he better just accept it and move on. He tightened his hold on Rick.

"I've heard of it. Ya tell two truths and a lie and the other person has to guess what's what." His hand slid down to cup Rick's ass and give it a gentle squeeze before adding "If ya are an alien at least I picked one with a nice ass."

"Mmhmm. How about this? Let's play a few rounds right here, right now. If you can't find the lie, you get one of these.'" Rick pulled a crumpled plastic baggie from his jacket. Inside there were maybe three dozen pills of different neon colors. Some were smooth while others were alarmingly angular. Those ones looked like they might be difficult to swallow. A few of the capsules were clear and filled with what Stan could only describe as zero gravity glitter.

"What are those?" Stan asked cautiously.

"Space candies." Rick answered in a taunting voice "They aren't very strong but they sure do take
Stan had tried drugs before. Hadn't been a big deal really. Even thought about steroids near the end of his boxing career but these pills looked insane. The song changed to something slower. Piano into guitar riffs. In the back of Stan's head, he remembered one of the kids that worked at the Shack talking about this song when it was on the radio. "Head Over Heels". That was the name of the song. Is that what would happen if he took one of those pills?

He swung his hips a bit slower and slid the hand up under Rick's jacket, thick fingers gently running over the base of the other man's spine.

"Live fast, die old." he mumbled as he locked eyes with Rick. "Okay. Let's play."

Rick was incredibly pleased that Stan was willing to play along. He had noticed how excited Stan was getting and he'd be lying if he said his own blood wasn't boiling a few fair degrees hotter.

"Ok alright. I'll go first. I play both guitar and bass, I've met the president and I actually am an alien." Rick did not break eye contact, challenging Stan with his poker face. Stan cursed to himself as he put together that he was drunk and this was essentially a con job. He had learned a lesson in Tallahassee about drinking before a con, but now he could only take it bit by bit. Who hadn't met Ronald Reagan? The guy had been a movie star before becoming president.

"You're no alien..." Stan said, not sure if he was actually right but hoping he was.

"Oh no," Rick said in a deadpan version of mock disappointment "You figured out exactly what I said not five minutes ago. Shocker. How will I ever go on?"

Rick fished a pill from the baggie in his pocket. It was one of the ones with the yellow pointed spines. He swallowed it dry.

"And for your information, the whole 'we have chosen a form pleasing to your human eye' thing? Yeah, no, aliens do not do that. Like at all. I have seen some ugly looking testicle monsters out there, trust me." He added. "So it's your turn. Go on, see if- see if you can stump me there, Stud."

"Hmm...alright." Stan thought for a moment "I was a semi-pro boxer. I'm a traveling salesman. I spent some time in jail." he smiled at Rick and hummed along to the music as they danced, unbothered by if Rick guessed correctly or not or he was at least acting that way. Rick sized Stan up and took another sip of his drink. His hand traveled down Stan's arm and squeezed his bicep. After a moment he said

"Only thing you're trying to sell is that bullshit story. Traveling salesman, my ass."

Stan laughed. "Goddamn it. I must look like a real ex con. And after I've been such a good guy these last few years." he tilted his head up and looked at Rick. "You gonna give me one?"

Rick nodded and pulled out a half orange, half aquamarine capsule.

"Time to take your-" Rick faltered and belched in the back of his throat. Had his pill burst in his stomach already? "Yur medicine there, Champ."

Rick pressed the pill into Stan's mouth, letting his thumb linger on Stan's lower lip none too subtly. He then pressed the glass to Stan's lips and tipped it for him to drink. The grind of their dancing sloshed some bourbon over Stan's chin and Rick laughed and pitched his body back suddenly to avoid the splash. He overcorrected the angle of his hand and bourbon sloshed over his wrist. He didn't pull himself from Stan's grasp completely and continued to dance. Instead, he licked some of
the booze off his gloved hand, tasting the imitation leather through the burn of the liquor and continued unhindered.

"Fuck being a good guy. Nobody likes a hero, Stan." He told the other man "Okay so one all so far, here we go. I've crashed about a dozen weddings but only been kicked out of two, I've broken both wrists and both ankles and I've been arrested but never put in jail."

"Jesus, you're a fucking mess!" Stan laughed. He wiped the bourbon off his chin but never let Rick too far from his grasp. He pulled him back in and wondered how long until this pill kicked in. "Hmm, let's see..."

He looked over Rick in a salacious manner. One arm was kept firmly around Rick's waist, the other hand he threaded their fingers together. He brought Rick's wrist up for inspection. After his analysis, he placed the hand back on his shoulder. "I think you've been kicked out of more than two weddings. Especially if you spill shit on people regularly." he chuckled. A sudden feeling of calm swept over him. When he looked past Rick all the lights had a rainbow halo around them. "Holy shit..." he mumbled.

"S'nice huh?" Rick put his glass softly against the back of Stan's head so he could pull him in close and pressed his cheek against Stan's temple. He breathed in the scents of Aqua Velva and cigars clinging to his companion. He pulled a third pill from his pocket and held it between his thumb and forefinger. His other fingers tapped out a rhythm along Stan's forearm impatiently. The last pill Rick took must've been an upper because he was feeling jumpy and impatient in the best way possible. A restlessness that put him on pins and needles.

"Mine's kicking in too. Well you picked out the lie, but-but it's cause I've never been kicked out of a wedding. I'm the life of the party. You know that. So, right lie but wrong reason. Does that mean I get this little guy?" Rick asked. He held the pill up and inspected it. Chalky green tablet. It had dimples like that of a golf ball all over it. Stan kept getting distracted by the lights.

"What's it do?" he asked pressing his face closer to the other man's. It felt good to be touched. Had it always felt this good? He felt a bit like he was floating as the music played on. The ethereal voice singing la la la-la la over and over again buzzed in his brain.

"That....is a very good question. I kinda got these in a grab bag sorta situation. Took a fistful from a punch bowl." Rick said as if that explained it "Well, only one way to find out."

Rick put the pill between his teeth and took Stan by the chin. He deftly worked his thumb into Stan's mouth, opening it just so and tipped his head close enough to feel Stan's breath on his face. Rick smartly bit into the pill. It split roughly in half, one half falling into Stan's mouth. Rick worked the pill in his mouth and swallowed hard on the crumbling bits of his half then brushed his free hand away and down the front of Stan's chest.

The half of the pill dissolved almost instantly on Stan's tongue. There was a distinct bitterness and tang like rotting oranges and it left a numbness in his mouth like novocaine. Even with the feeling of calm from the first pill, his heart was pounding on his chest.

"Fucking tease," he growled. Stan had always liked to kiss but he had a feeling that wasn't going to happen with Rick. "...Guess it's my turn again. I've never been out of the country. I speak fluent Spanish. I was a dancer."

The music shifted to an infectious bass line with a hard one-two beat. After a moment or two Rick's eyes lit up.
"Shit goddamn! Golden Earring, mother fucker, I love this song!" Rick exclaimed frantically. He bolted the last of his drink and dropped the glass. It landed with a thud but did not break and Rick quickly swept it out of the way with his boot. Rick gripped Stan's hips and lead him back into a faster tempo. His fingers danced up Stan's back and back over his arms.

If dancing was what the two of them were doing before, this was a mating ritual. A classic rock answer to the lambada, oozing sexual tension. Rick was feeling drunk and high and horny and overall better than he had felt in weeks and by God, the night just kept getting better. Rick pulled away from Stan long enough to pull a smart turn on his boot heel before taking Stan by the wrist and crushing their bodies together again. He half sang half mouthed along with the words and reveled in the beat droning his head.

"Help me I'm falling into the twilight zone, This place is a madhouse, feels like I've been cloned..."

Rick had, in fact, been cloned before and if it felt anything like the dizzying heights Rick was experiencing right now, he was ready to split up into thirds and fourths. The more, the fucking merrier. Rick ran his fingers through his hair and then wrapped his hands around the back of Stan's neck.

"I still gotta guess? I don't know. Fuckin' me llamo Sanchez and I can barely speak Spanish. That's my guess. My turn." Rick said. The guitar solo entered like a femme fatale into a gumshoe's film noir office: dangerous and with purpose. Rick took Stan's face in his hands and pressed their foreheads together.

"Two truths and a lie, Here we go. I wanna fuck, I wanna fuck you and at this rate, I can wait all night. What do you say to that?" He panted.

"Yo hable Espanol, hijo de puta." Stan said breathlessly. His whole world was spinning and he was loving it. Whatever that last pill was made him feel invincible. He grabbed the lapel of Rick's jacket and kissed him hard. Before the tall man could protest he grabbed his wrist and dragged him over to the booth just long enough to grab the duffle bag.

"My car's right outside and I've got a room ten minutes away." he told Rick as he made his way to the door.

"Wait! Fuckin' wait!" Rick shouted before making a quick u-turn, grabbing the Wild Turkey bottle then running out of Palmer's Peak, gloved hand in Stan's bare one, and into the night as if the devil himself were following them. Stan laughed and did his best to keep up with Rick's longer strides. They pushed through the door and Stan steered them to the right side of the building.

"The maroon Diablo, over there." he said as they went down the steps. They were almost to the car when the shorter man felt himself slip on a patch of ice. "Shit! Fuck!" Stan yelled, almost regaining his balance. Sadly it wasn't enough and he went down and dragged Rick with him. The two men landed in a heap amongst dirty snow and half frozen sludge.

"Fuck me." Stan groaned. He shook the some of the sludge off and pulled himself up. "Shit, I'm sorry Rick." he looked down at the other man and laughed. It was hard to look like a badass from a puddle. "Come on. Let me help you." he offered the other man his hand.

"Only if you say please." Rick muttered taking Stan's hand and hauling himself up. He had mud and road salt plastered in his hair and one side of his face. The cold seeped through into his brain but did nothing to ruin his buzz. He looked himself over and frowned to see a big warped scratch in the elbow of his faux leather jacket. He continued even though Stan had said nothing. "You said "fuck me", only if you say- whatever, trying to be sexy, moment's passed. The car, the car, get in
Rick grabbed the fallen bottle and tipped it back, draining it down his throat before throwing it into a snow bank and hurrying around to the passenger's side door. He grabbed his bag from Stan as he passed. Rick was on a mission. Quickly Stan rushed to the car and unlocked the door. He climbed in and leaned over to unlock the passenger side door.

"Get in." he called as he slid the key into the ignition and turned it. As soon as Rick was in the car with the door shut, Stan threw the car into reverse and peeled out of the parking lot like he had just robbed the place.
The motel was a green L-shaped building with a main office at one end. There were a few cars in the parking lot but as the red neon lights read, they definitely had vacancies.

Stan had seen the little beat up motel as he had driven to Palmer’s Peak. Mr. Mystery was always keeping an eye on any roadside attraction. He had gotten a room thinking that, best case scenario, he didn't want to bring some random guy back to the Mystery Shack and at worst, he wouldn't have to drive a whole hour when he struck out and got drunk at the bar. He had finagled himself a room down at the other end of the complex, paying close attention to the keys hung on the wall. Stan had wanted a bit of privacy no matter how the night went. Now in the dark, the blinking of the vacancy sign cast an ugly red light on this corner of the parking lot and Stan's room from its high perch out on the road but it didn't matter. Stan parked the Diablo in front of the farthest room down. He turned off the car and smiled at Rick.

"Told ya it wasn't far." Stan reached into the back of the car and grabbed the bug-out-bag he always kept there. A holdover from his life on the road when he wasn't sure if someone was going to be at the door, either with a badge or a baseball bat. It had a couple changes of clothes and a few toiletries. He knew it was unlikely he would need it in his new life but it was better safe than sorry.

He climbed out of the car and stepped up on the porch. From his pocket, he fished out the key with the large plastic keychain bearing the number twelve on it.

Rick exited the car then at once got back in to grab his bag from the back seat. He felt the harsh chill of the night air as it bit into the damp dirty denim of his pale acid wash jeans. Rick had haphazardly run a hand over his face to clean the slush and sand from his eye but all it had succeeded in doing was smearing the gritty filth down his neck and onto his glove. Semi clean finger marks had come off over his eye and eyebrow making him look like a manic native in a black and white jungle picture. The mud had already begun to freeze in his hair.

Rick approached as Stan worked the key in the lock. He pawed at Stan from behind, bits of mud coming off on the cleaner parts of Stan's white shirt. Stan's forearms, which he had braced himself with in their fall, were half dried with slush and Rick's touch made long tracts on the man's filthy skin. Rick dully noticed that Stan had no coat on. Must've left it at the roadhouse in his hurry to leave.

The door opened with a creak and the two stumbled inside. It was by no stretch the nastiest hotel room that either of them had been in before. That being said, one might describe the room as being ‘serviceable’ and that would come across as a compliment. Two queen sized beds with a nightstand between, a dresser with a small tv and at the far end a counter with a sink and mirror built into the wall. Round frosted light bulbs hung above like soap bubbles suspended in time. A door beside the sink presumably led to the bathroom. The color palette of the decor was in the coral and burnt orange that was all the fashion ten years ago and the wood paneling that seemed to be a prerequisite of every hotel room in the Pacific Northwest was not to be forgotten. A truly horrendous painting of an amateurish mountain range dominated the wall over the beds.

Rick kicked the door closed hard, shrugged his duffle bag off his shoulder and shoved Stan down to sit on one of the beds. He rested his hands on the bed on either side of Stan's hips, adding two handprints to the muddy ass print Rick was sure was staining the gold and brown flowers of the...
bedspread. The pulsing light of the vacancy sign through the window was the only light, bringing the pair in and out of focus in the darkness.

Rick kissed Stan's neck and ear roughly, teeth scraping over sweat salted skin. Rick fumbled with his belt buckle and zipper and began to climb on top of Stan. Stan pulled off his shirt as Rick climbed into his lap. Bits of semi-dry sludge littered the bed. His gold necklace thumped back against his chest as his shirt slid free of his body. The filthy shirt landed on the floor and Stan grabbed Rick's ass and pulled him in closer. One hand was full of grit as the handkerchief in the other man's pants slipped out and fell on the floor.

"Fuck. We're gross." Stan laughed as he rocked his hips against Rick's. He shook the dirt off his hand and pulled off his companion's jacket. Rick sighed his enjoyment as his package rubbed against the confines of his tight jeans.

"Fuck yeah we are." He growled approvingly. Rick lurched his coat off then pulled on the fingers of his gloves with his teeth, knowing and reveling in Stan's gaze upon him. As it came free, Rick let the cheap leather gloves hang from his teeth, in a seductive grin, before spitting it off to the side. He tasted salt and sand in his mouth but didn't care. Rick removed his other glove and ran his fingers hungrily over Stan's exposed flesh. He brushed along the length of Stan's chain, enjoying the ridges of the links as they passed under his fingertips.

"Well, this grit isn't going anywhere near my tender parts." Stan slid both arms under Rick's ass and picked him up. He walked them both to the bathroom. "Stop pouting and take off your shirt." Stan said laughing and keeping Rick's long legs around his waist.

"I wasn't pouting. That's the face I always make when I'm about to pound a massive pussy. Dirt don't hurt." Rick griped, good-naturedly. He pulled his tank top from his jeans. His open belt buckle clanked as his shirt came untucked. Rick struggled his shirt over his head with one hand, his other hand behind Stan's neck for stability. "You gonna shit a pearl if you get a grain of sand up your ass? How-how much can I get for it?"

"Grumpy prick..." Stan chuckled. He was really enjoying the dumb snarky banter between the two of them. He stepped into the bathroom and pressed Rick against the wall. "Didn't say the party was gonna stop just cause we gotta get cleaned up."

He looked up at Rick with a crooked smile before leaning forward to kiss over the other man's skinny chest. Rick's skin rippled as it came in contact with the cold salmon colored tile and the warm lips on his collarbone. He ran his fingers through Stan's meticulously combed hair and rolled his hips against Stan so hard he nearly bucked off the wall. Stan groaned and gripped Rick tighter.

"Fuck. Mmm..." he growled and licked over Rick's collarbone before placing him down. "Get your pants off."

Stan worked on his own belt as he moved to the shower and turned it on, hoping it would warm up fast. It felt to Stan like he could do anything. He felt unstoppable. He kicked off his boots and yanked off his socks before pushing his pants down. He was mildly surprised how easy it was to get naked in front of what was essentially a stranger. Stanley had always felt inadequate. His intellect, His body; It was never what it could be, but the pills he had been fed in the bar made him feel like the world wasn't looking at him so closely for once. His tough guy, showman's bluster wasn't needed as a safety net. He sighed softly as the steamy air touched his hard arousal.

Rick kicked his boots off and struggled with his threadbare socks. His duffle bag had a melange of different things; drugs, weapons and an assortment of other intergalactic paraphernalia but clean socks were not among them. His drug-addled brain spun as he bent over. He braced himself against
the wall, jeans bunched down around his knees, and erection bobbing against his lower stomach. The spinning sensation pulled a long rolling laugh from Rick. The laughter made Stan turn quickly and he moved to Rick to keep him from falling.

"Don't keel over on me now, Sanchez." he intoned playfully as he braced the other man against the wall. Rick waved his hand dismissively and smiled at Stan in an unfocused way.

"...'mfine. Just a head rush." He assured the other man. He did his best to step out of the tight legged pants. "Now get your pretty ass in the shower."

Rick stepped over the lip of the tub after Stan, his head passing unheeded through the spray of the shower. What felt like a million hot and boneless fingers played descending scales down his shoulders and spine and took grey drops of road sand from his hair with them. He pressed Stan up against the wall, taking his thick wrists in hand and pinning them to the wet tile on either side of Stan's head. He kissed and bit at Stan's shoulder, neck and jawline. The rough beginnings of five o'clock shadow felt wonderful under his lips.

"On a scale of 'quick and dirty' to 'high school sweetheart', how queer is this?" Rick asked in a low sensuous voice. There was an edge of dry humor there. Stan moaned softly at the feel of Rick's lips on him. He thrust his hips forward and felt his cock rub against the other man's thigh. He pushed the thought of Ford away when he came to mind. Sure, he had imagined some of those nameless men as Ford but Rick didn't deserve that.

"It's all pretty queer, isn't it?" Stan quipped back as he rolled his head to the side. He pulled weakly against the tall man's long fingers but didn't try to release himself. He smiled roguishly and rubbed himself harder against Rick. In response to Stan's ministrations, Rick suddenly pressed himself full against Stan hard enough to make their wet skin slap loudly in the echo of the bathroom. The gasp it earned him made Rick grin from ear to ear. The wirey feel of sodden pubic hair against his inner thigh put a wildness in Rick he had only ever found in sex with another man. Women were soft and smooth. Men were something else. Something primal. The water ran hot enough over Rick's back to turn the flesh there red but Rick didn't mind. Rick stared deeply into Stan's eyes.

"I like to think queer is pretty relative. I'm pretty damn sure you haven't spoken aloud a fraction of the freaky stuff I've gotten up to. I just wonder what could've brought a timid little homo like you out of the closet and to, of all people in the multiverse, me. I'm not exactly a catch." His tone suggested he was not ashamed of that statement.

The word 'multiverse' registered in the small part of Stan's brain that wasn't drugged up and feeling amazing but he pushed it aside for the feeling of the naked body pressed against his. He moaned and shuddered. Stan looked into Rick's eyes as the water poured down on them.

"I already told ya, you knucklehead. I want you cause ya ain't some easy lay. I like smart sarcastic men and you ain't some kid who hasn't lived. I think the only reason you don't think you're a catch is cause you haven't met anybody you would want to catch you."

Stan leaned forward quickly and kissed Rick. It was not like the quick kiss in the bar. This was passionate and wanting. Rick breathed in sharply through his nose. He let go of Stan's wrists and took hold of Stan's face, tipping it to deepen the kiss. His tongue dove into Stan's mouth, tasting bourbon and bitter oranges. When he finally pulled away, his mouth remained a breath away from his companion's. Water droplets rolled down his pointed nose and clung to his lips.

"Stanford Pines, I am uncatchable. You, my wife and the Galactic Federation may think otherwise, but that's where you're wrong." The smugness in Rick's words was almost as thick as the steam in the air. Rick's hands ran wet trails down Stan's throat and rested tensely on his shoulders.
"You're also wrong about something else..." He added. Stanley was panting from the intensity of the kiss. The way Rick was looking at him made him wonder if he said the wrong thing. That last pill must be wearing off but Stan had to know. The attraction and the mystery were more than he could turn from.

"And what's that?"

"I'm a really easy lay." Rick said. His hand, which had slowly worked its way down and between the two men, took Stan's length. Stan groaned at the touch. He returned the favor and wrapped a hand around Rick's erection. He tilted his head back against the wall and moaned louder as Rick touched him. His other hand gripped the skinny man's ass cheek.

"Fuck. You haven't exactly made this easy so far." Stan's breath caught in his throat as his companion rubbed over the head of his member.

"Says the guy who insisted I rinse off before he fucks me." Rick chuckled. He leaned his head back into the spray of the shower, rinsing the last of the mud from his hair. He made an appreciative noise in his throat as Stan continued to touch him. When he was finished, Rick leaned back in toward Stan, wet locks of hair falling into his face. He gave Stan's member a few more deliberate pumps.

"You ready?" He purred simply.

"More than ready." Stan groaned. He kissed Rick again, giving his ass a good squeeze and teasingly running his thick fingers over the tall man's asshole. With that, Stan pulled away and quickly rinsed off under the hot stream of water. After he cut off the water and pushed the old shower curtain out of the way as he stepped out and grabbed one of the scratchy hotel towels from the bar. He toweled himself off as he walked back to the bedroom.

"Don't mean to hurt your ego or anything, honeypants," Stan said as he paused in the doorway, his towel draped around his broad shoulders as he dried his hair on one side. "Stanford Pines ain't trying to catch you."

With that, he walked into the other room. Rick's face screwed up into an exasperated unimpressed expression.

"Honeypants...?" He muttered. Rick slicked his hair back, ringing the excess water from the ends, before stepping out of the tub. Rick grabbed a towel, paused long enough to dry off his genitals and under his arms, then strode back into the bedroom proper dropping the towel on the floor haphazardly behind him. Stepping out of the steam filled bathroom, the cold air bit at Rick's wet skin. Stan had pulled back all the blankets on the bed closest to the bathroom and tossed them on the floor. He now sat on the white sheet with his back up against the headboard, his hands behind his messy towel dried hair. He smirked at Rick.

"Come here." he said lazily. Rick crossed the room and snatched up his jacket. He snatched the baggie full of space candies out and, perhaps because he had nowhere to put it, slipped the jacket over his shoulders. Rick picked idly through the pills. He fished out half a dozen of the clear, glitter filled capsules and tossed the baggie on the bedside table. As he approached the bed, Rick held one up and examined it by the mingled lights of the bathroom ahead of him and the red neon of the hotel's roadside sign through the curtains behind him. The blinking red cast Rick's silhouette in sharp relief to the mostly dark room every few seconds.

"I think these things are time released." He mused. The violet, cobalt and copper colors inside the pills swirled and played but never mixed, spiraling like the contents of a lava lamp.
Rick climbed into the bed and straddled Stan's lap. Stan's erection rubbed against Rick's ass. The scents of Rick's skin and the cheap, faux leather coat filled Stan's senses. Rick favored Stan with a sly look and put the pills in his mouth. He placed Stan's hands on his hips and ran his now free hands up Stan's bare chest. He laced his fingers behind the nape of Stan's head.

Rick bit down with a crunch and the pills shattered as if they were made of thin sugar. The liquid the brittle capsules were holding spilled into his mouth, filling it with a strong flavor. Something reminiscent of molasses, dark and powerful. The effect was immediate. Rick's brain felt like it was being flooded with pure oxygen, making him dizzy. It was as if it were breathing itself, swelling in and out, and galaxy-like color exploded behind his eyes.

Rick dipped his head down and kissed Stan in an open-mouthed, sloppy way. He painted the inside of the other man's mouth with the sparkling contents of his own. Rick's senses were heightened and he could feel every ridge of every tooth in Stan's head with near molecular awareness as his tongue passed over each one. Their lips slid together, lubricated with the viscous purple stardust.

Rick was the one to break the deep wanting kiss. He tilted his head to the side and sighed in a heady masculine way. He gazed down through half lidded eyes at Stan. A rivulet of the glittering drug dribbled down his chin.

For Stan, it was like taking a punch right between the eyes but with no actual impact. The world expanded and the room slipped away so it was just he and Rick in infinite space. The flesh under his fingers was so soft and warm and perfect. He ran his hands up the lean chest and teased over the nipples there. The sounds Rick made were like music. Stan wanted him to make more sounds like that.

He wrapped his arms around the slim waist of the man in his lap, sliding his hands up under the jacket, feeling every notch and ridge of the other man's spine. Stanley sat up straighter with his chest pressed against the other man's, Rick's arousal pressed between them. Stan moved one hand up to cradle the back of Rick's head. The blue-gray hair felt so soft as it slid between his fingers. He licked the glitter off Rick's chin and slid his tongue into the other man's mouth and kissed him as colors flashed behind his eyelids. When he pulled away every nerve was tingling.

"Please." Stan moaned against Rick's lips. He had never begged in bed but he was so desperate. "I need you so fucking badly."

Rick exhaled shakily and it was like every individual atom of his breath caressed his throat and mouth on the way up. What might've been a slow controlled high if the pills had been taken properly, the kind you might want for a rock concert or a prolonged trip to the planetarium, was coming on strong and fast and Rick was absolutely on board for the new results. Experimentation, that's what being a scientist was all about.

What Rick had wanted to say had been more in the vein of something dominant and sexy at the sound of Stan's mewling but all Rick managed a stupefied "uh-huh, y-yeah...".

Rick stuck his first three fingers in his mouth and worked them against his tongue a moment. He finished by licking his palm and as he removed them, a strand of saliva ran from his mouth to his lubricated digits. It and the wetness of Rick's hand was shot through with the swirling drug.

Rick reached back and pressed two of his fingers into himself at once. He had done it all and seen it all and it certainly wasn't his first time. He distantly noted that the drugs must've had some topical applications as the tingling feeling spread wherever his slickened fingers touched. Rick scissored his fingers and groaned, biting his lip. Readying himself hadn't felt this intense in a long time. At last, he slipped his third finger in and stretched himself agonizingly slow. The sensations
were maddening and Rick was fighting the frantic need to go too quick and instead rode it out, enjoying every second.

Soon Rick couldn't stand it any longer and removed his fingers. He took Stan's member in his slick hand and pumped him once, twice, three times. A quick shuffle of his body and Rick was poised over Stan's length. He pressed the head to his hole and pushed down, smooth as silk. Rick snapped his head back and gave a strangled gasp of bliss.

Everyone one of Stan's nerve endings was burning. The moment Rick slid down onto his erection his back arched and he slammed his shoulders back against the headboard. It banged noisily against the wall as Stan's hand's came down and gripped the skinny hips tight enough to bruise. His hips bucked automatically trying to force himself as deep inside as he could. He thrust up hard twice before slowing himself down. He moaned as his brain focused solely on the pleasure. He didn't want this to ever stop. He wanted this to go on for hours, forever. He slid down a bit further on the bed so he could look up at Rick. The man looked absolutely otherworldly, godlike, as Stan slowly rolled his hips up and made him moan again.

Rick pitched forward and braced himself with both hands on the headboard. His brain sloshed in his head, awash in a brine of booze and assorted pills and Rick couldn't fight the half moan half laugh that rippled through his body. He pushed back into Stan's thrusts and could feel stars exploding inside of him. Thermonuclear supernovae in every strand of his nervous system going off in rapid succession.

"Jesus-fucking-christ, Stan..." He hushed. Stan's hips thrust a little faster. His eyes shut in pure bliss.

"Come on. Ride me, Sanchez." he groaned. He could feel the sweat building on his forehead. He looked up at the other man then, Stan's cock twitching inside Rick, as he saw the pleasure on his face. "I saw how you dance. Come on, babe."

Rick sat up, changing the angle and gave an inarticulate moan of gratification when the head of Stan's cock hit Rick's prostate straight on. He tossed his head back and ran his hands through his hair, holding on and tugging at the roots a moment before letting his arms drop to his sides. His coat fell off his shoulders and pooled around him, hanging at the elbows. Rick panted raggedly as he rolled his hips with Stan's motions. Stan watched the blinking red light bounce hypnotically off the curve of each of Rick's defined ribs.

Rick was usually more of a handful as a bottom. No one was just going to fuck Rick Sanchez without an earful of dirty talk to remind them who was boss. But those pills were doing an absolute number on him and Rick found it difficult to do more than stare through hazy eyes, mouth hanging open, at the stucco ceiling and greedily piston his body in the search of more pleasure.

"Think...think you can tell me what to do? We gotta... fucking big man over here. Big... fucking man." Rick managed in a gravelly purr. He looked down at Stan with a Cheshire cat grin on his lips. A growl bubbled up from Stan's throat that was little more than primal. His higher mind was hanging on by the skin of its teeth.

"Yeah, I am a big man." he growled. Stan sat up and wrapped one arm tight around Rick's waist, pinning Rick's arms to his sides. His other hand went into Rick's hair. He yanked hard exposing the long slim neck. Stan held Rick still as he licked and bit his neck. "I am gonna tell you what to do cause I'm the big man fucking you."

With that, he flipped them both over. There was something satisfying about slamming a smart ass loud mouth like Rick into the bed. The hand around the slim man's waist moved to take a firm but
not too tight hold around Rick's throat. Stan thrust hard and fast making the headboard bang against the wall rhythmically. He groaned as he pounded into the slim body beneath him. Rick arched into the touch of the hand on his throat. Through gritted teeth, he gave a long drawn out moan and wrapped his legs around Stan's middle, ankles locking in a strange mockery of a wrestling grapple.

"That's the stuff!" He encouraged starring up into Stan's face. Rick stretched his arms above his head and pressed his hands to the headboard to use as leverage, pushing back into Stan's thrusts. "Not such a timid little homo now, huh? Needed...needed a little strange?"

Stan tightened his hold on Rick's throat as he leaned down and growled in Rick's ear.

"I needed a challenge like you to make me let loose." he slowed his thrusts down but put all his weight behind each one. "I told you in the bar, I don't do the easy marks. You may spread your legs pretty fucking easy for some but you still made me work for it. That's what's got me so hot for you. Playing games, Asshole banter. It was always gonna go one of two ways in that big smart head of yours." he let go of Rick's hair and slid his now free hand between their bodies and teased over Rick's cock. "We were either gonna fight or fuck. Anything to turn that brain off cause you don't know how. So here's my challenge. Fucking you till you're a screaming brainless mess."

Rick was somewhat taken aback by that. How'd this guy pin him so precisely? Stan had to be smarter than even he himself gave him credit. Perhaps Stan wasn't the only one who had been given a challenge tonight.

Rick reached up and hooked his fingers into the gold chain around Stan's neck. He didn't pull but rather just held on as if it and Stan were an anchor keeping Rick from tumbling into a black hole. Something about that touch made Stan stop and they locked eyes, caught in a moment of palpable tension. The room shifted and spun around them and the soft flashes of dark color danced in Rick's periphery. Rick looked at Stan with an expression that was both predatory and somehow apprehensive. He swallowed thickly and let the words fall out of his lips, in a calm and even yet explicit command:

"Then do it."

Before he could stop himself Stan kissed Rick. It was deep and needy and passionate. Stan's eyes closed as he took in the flavor of Rick and stardust. He moved his hands to the skinny thighs wrapped around him. With a little pressure he got Rick to unlock his legs and he slid his thick arms under the other man's knees.

Stan braced his hands against the bed on either side of Rick's ribs opening the other man wider and almost folding him in half. He pulled away from the light haired man with a bite to his lower lip. Rick's long torso made it easy for Stan to bend his neck and lick over one on his nipples. He smirked at Rick before slamming inside him, searching for that spot Stan knew would undo him, and biting down hard on a nipple.

Rick hissed pain and pleasure and involuntarily yanked on Stan's chain. It did not break but wrenched against the skin, leaving a red mark that would remain on the side of Stan's neck for the rest of the weekend. Rick's toes curled and he savored the dueling sensations of the ecstatic pleasure of Stan's touch and the cramped discomfort of the angle at which he was being bent.

Stan grunted as he felt the chain bite into his skin. He licked sensually over the skin he had just bit, his thrusts measured and searching. He thought to himself that if Rick was going to leave marks on him he should be allowed to leave some marks of his own. He kissed up Rick's chest and moaned into his ear. He licked and sucked under the other man's sharp jaw, little marks blossoming everywhere his lips went. He thrust harder and groaned deep in his chest.
Rick answered the lusty moans with those of his own, creating a harmonizing baritone to Stan's full basso profundo. He wrapped his arms around Stan's back, palms gliding along the sweaty skin. Rick's breathing came harder and he could feel the beginnings of orgasm on the horizon. He fought it back, partly because he knew that's what Stan wanted and partly because he just didn't want this incredible fuck to end. But all the pills and booze and goddamn sexual tension were stacking up and it was beginning to get the better of him. Rick held on harder, short nails digging into Stan's shoulder blades.

"That's it. Oh, fuck." Stan growled as he felt Rick's nails dig into him. His thrusts became more aggressive. In this position he could fuck Rick deeper but he still hadn't hit that perfect spot yet. The bigger man arched his back and changed angles. "Louder...scream. Let go."

"You - ugh - fuckin' first!" Rick panted in Stan's ear. This whole damn night Rick had had to listen to Stan talking about how he was looking for an outlet; how he needed to let loose and all of a sudden Stan was going on about how it was now he, Rick, needed to let go? Bullshit. Rick Sanchez didn't need to turn his brain off. That was what the drugs were for. That didn't stop Rick from moaning louder and bucking his hips up spasmodically. Looking at Rick, Stan smiled.

"Mmm, such a gentleman." he panted. He closed his eyes and slammed as hard as he could inside Rick. He growled loudly as he ground his cock into the tight hole. Stan moaned as he proceeded to pound into Rick with all he had in him, his cock throbbing as he threw his head back. He was so close.

"You feel so fucking good! Yes! Yes! *Fuck*...!" Stan howled. Rick's whole frame started to shake under Stan's relentless pounding. Stan's submission to him in that small way gave Rick the permission he was looking for, contrary as it was, and Rick began to wail his satisfaction.

"God-fucking-dammit!! Don't you dare fucking stha-aahp! Like that, like that! Oh yeah!" He barked. Rick tangled his fingers into Stan's hair and held on as if Stan were a bronco trying to buck him off though it was Rick who was squirming and twisting.

"Aah, fuck!" Stan cursed. He felt his sweat sliding down his back as he hammered away. Sliding his arms free of Rick's legs, Stan leaned forward, his forehead almost touching the other man's. With a touch of apprehension, Stan wrapped his hand around Rick's cock and stroked him hard and fast.

"Look at me..." he groaned when he saw Rick's eyes shut. Any second now Stan was going to tumble over the edge and he wanted the other man to remember who made him feel like this. When Stan touched him, Rick's lip curled and his teeth flashed in the sparse light. He keened, tossing his head and planted his boney knees into Stan's hips to keep his legs up and his body at the angle which Stan had him. At last, as if Stan's words had only then made it to him, Rick opened his eyes and stared into Stan's own. If Rick had been correct (and Rick was always correct) those time released pills couldn't have lasted too long cracked open and in all probability they were currently seeping out of their pores with each drop of sweat. Perhaps that was the reason why looking at Stan at that moment was absolutely sobering.

Leaning that little bit closer so their lips were almost touching, Stan threaded his free hand through the soft blue hair.

"Rick.... Come... I'm almost..." he said through gritted teeth. Rick didn't need to be told twice. He wailed until he thought he would go hoarse and clung to Stan. Every fiber of his being curled around itself then finally let go as Rick came undone.

Stan roared as he came. The feeling of Rick tightening around him and the warm liquid spilling
over his fingers was more than he could handle. His back arched and his vision failed momentarily. As his orgasm crested he kissed Rick hard then pulled away. He panted and shook and tried not to completely collapse on top of the other man.

The room was silent except for the labored breathing of the two men. Rick's whole body relaxed at once and he grunted softly when Stan gave up the ghost and fell down on top of him. Stan rested his head on the mattress beside Rick. Rick brushed a few errant locks of hair from his sweaty forehead.

"This might be a bad time to tell you I cum super glue..." Rick said weakly. There was a soft smile on his lips. Stan snorted with laughter. He slowly pushed himself up and pulled out of Rick with a little groan.

"Just be glad I don't." he joked as he flopped back onto the bed next to his companion. Stan groaned as he stretched down to the floor and grabbed his discarded towel from earlier. He wiped off his hand and between his legs before offering the towel to Rick.

Rick sat up and took the towel. He wiped himself down and tossed it aside haphazardly. An expression of some kind of mild epiphany crossed Rick's face and he reached into the breast pocket of his rumpled coat. He pulled out a condom and appraised it temperately.

"Well, there's that. Thought I forgot something..." He noted. He looked to Stan for his reaction. Stan looked sheepish.

"Yeah, I guess we probably should have but we were both kinda fucked up earlier. If it's any consolation I don't have anything."

Rick gave a shrug and dropped the condom on the bed.

"Yeah, said every dude with AIDS, like ever." Rick replied. The look on Stan's face made Rick roll his eyes. He put up his hands in a show of surrender. He chuckled. "I've made riskier moves, is what I'm saying. I mean AIDS is one fucker of a thing and I'm cautious but I'm not letting the CIA keep me from having anonymous sex whenever I want. That's unamerican."

Rick shrugged off his coat and stretched out luxuriously on the bed.

"Ok, what does the CIA have to do with us fucking?" Stan turned his head to look at Rick. "And all that alien crap you've been talking about all night. You an astronaut or something?" Stanley kinda liked the idea that he had just fucked an astronaut.

"Look, I don't have it in me to explain how the US government couldn't handle a little germ warfare right now. And I'm not an astronaut." Rick scoffed. "I'm more like a scientist slash part-time bum slash semi semi-functioning alcoholic..."

Wide brown eyes stared at Rick. Stan sat halfway up and just looked at the other man incredulously.

"A scientist?" he said quietly then he laughed. Stan laughed so hard he almost fell out of the bed. "Jesus Christ, I do have a type." Stan held his side. "Oh God. If I don't laugh I'll cry."

Rick raised an eyebrow and rolled onto his side. He rested on his elbow and laid his head in one hand as he watched Stan laugh.

"What, you fuck a lot of scientists? Or just a lot of drunks?" He asked mildly. Stan wheezed a bit as he got his laughter under control. God, he wished he had a cigar or even a cigarette but those were
in the car and he didn't think his legs would support him if he stood up.

"My ex from high school was a scientist. Too damn smart for his own good." he looked thoughtfully at Rick. "He'd get so caught up in whatever he was working on he'd forget to eat and sleep. But I was there to take care of him." Turning his attention to the ceiling, Stan mused. "He couldn't turn his brain off either. Wonder if he'd have ended up like you if he didn't have me around. I knew how to get him to shut down that big noggin of his and enjoy life. Good food, walks on the beach...waking up next to someone." he sighed resting one hand on his stomach and one behind his head. "I'm just a big dummy but at least I'm good at something." he winked at Rick. "Never thought I had a type till now. Smart and skinny. Perfect for a fat dumb guy like me." he laughed again but only for a moment.

Rick tamped down a sour feeling at Stan's use of the phrase 'ended up like you'. He might've said something if it wasn't for the damnedable look of forlorn nostalgia on Stan's face. Instead, he watched Stan with a muted fascination. Afterglow had a way of making Rick compliant.

"He, uhhh...he really fucked you up there, didn't he?" He observed. Stan nodded as he stared up at the ceiling. God, he needed a smoke. He turned on his side after a moment to face Rick and his heart ached. This position felt too familiar with the thought of Ford so close.

"Ya know what's really fucked up? I've been trying for the last three years to get him back and now I think I'm probably too late but no matter how badly he treated me I'd take him back in a second." Stan huffed a self-deprecating laugh. "Shit. You don't happen to have a cigarette in that magical coat of vices, do you?"

Rick groped behind him for his coat then began to dip into the inside pockets. He gave it a shake when he didn't get what he was looking for as if the pack would fall out of his empty pockets if coerced properly. At last, Rick dropped the jacket on the floor and hefted himself to his feet with a labored grunt. He crossed to his duffle bag and lifted it with some effort onto the foot of the bed. He unzipped it and began to root around.

"Ok, let's see what's in the ol' prize bin." He mused as he sifted "Nope... How'd that get there? I got space coke, regular coke, New Coke. You can never be too careful."

Rick tossed a can to Stan and plucked one out of his own. With his other hand, he retrieved a new pack of cigarettes and a battered plastic lighter. He hit the box against his bare hip as he approached Stan, packing the cigarettes inside. Rick sat down heavily beside Stan. He placed the coke can between his legs, resting it on his thigh while he removed the cellophane from the pack. The coldness of the winter night had kept the can cool and a crop of goosebumps came up as the metal touched his skin. Rick opened the pack and fished out two cigarettes with his teeth. He lit them both and offered Stan one as he took a deep drag on his own.

"Thanks." Stan murmured as he sat up on the bed and took the cigarette. He took a deep drag and blew the smoke out his nose. The smoke felt good in his lungs and he took another drag as he appreciated Rick's body. The comfort in which the tall man walked around naked was incredibly sexy to Stan. He looked at the soda can in his hand. "You actually like New Coke?"

Rick reached down to his jacket one last time. He easily found a flask in the inner breast pocket. The dexterity with which he worked, popping the tab on his soda can with one hand and unscrewing the flask with the fingers of the other, spoke perhaps to familiarity with construction or engineering. The precision pour of flask into can was less that of a bartender and more akin to a chemist. Rick's cigarette bobbed in his mouth as he spoke.

"Like' is a strong word. It's too sugary. In fact, it's kind of flat nasty crap but it's not going to be
around long once the whole marketing strategy implodes and they bring back the original formula. Still, don't know if it's just a cash grab or if they're using it to ID mutant traits in the human genome. My research says one, but my faith in American consumerism says another."

Rick took a deep swig and them shuffled himself down into a half laying position, his chin dipped against his chest and his long legs stretched out in front of him. To Stan, it looked cramped and uncomfortable but it must have not bothered Rick as he grabbed the glass ashtray from the bedside table, rested it in his chest and did not reposition. He ashed his cigarette into it and looked back over to Stan.

"You think you lost your chance with Mr. Wonderful, so you came out for some strange?" Rick asked him "You're obviously crazy about him. Came out looking for him really. Found me instead. Damn..."

Stan knocked the ash off his cigarette with a little laugh.

"You scientists always gotta ask questions." he took another drag and held the cigarette between two fingers as he opened his soda. "I knew I wasn't gonna find him at the bar. Just sick of being the good guy. Running a business and paying a mortgage while waking up alone every damn morning is exhausting." he took a sip and made a face. "Ugh, this is awful." he took another sip anyway. "Yeah. I loved that dork. Still do and always will, I guess. For all I know he's dead." he pulled up one leg and rested his arm on his knee as he took another drag and ashed his cigarette.

"Wasn't a bad find tonight though, all things considered." he winked at Rick.

"Your flattery is still a little on the nose there, Stud." Rick replied not unkindly. For once Stan felt relaxed. He slipped his drink, wishing it was a beer, and leaned his head back against the headboard and closed his eyes.

"Hey, it was a good fuck and you maybe an asshole, but you're a fun asshole. So what other traumatic stuff about my past you wanna know about?" Stan's mind drifted. "How about my dad kicking me out of the house before I could finish high school? My ex was there too. Watched the whole thing happen." he took another drag and blew the smoke out towards the ceiling. "He stood right there and just watched it happen from our window. He turned away and let me drive off. Some fucking brother he was."

Stan's heart thudded hard in his chest and he looked at Rick guilty and humiliated. Silence held in the room a moment when Rick heard that. He put the ashtray on the mattress between them so he could turn on his side to face Stan. Rick fought a belch through the start of his sentence.

"Fur...Forgive me if I blacked out and missed a whole chunk of the conversation, I've been known to do that, but did I just hear right when you said this high school sweetheart was your brother?" There was no judgment in Rick's tone, just honest level curiosity. Stan sat there, stunned. He couldn't believe what he'd just done.

"I... I... It was." Stan sat up and prepared for the fallout. There was no point in trying to go back now. "Yeah... He's my brother."

Stan swallowed hard and ground out his cigarette in case Rick started swinging at him. Rick seemed to weigh the information in his mind a moment.

"Well, that's a new one." He finally said and took a sip of his drink. He swished it thoughtfully, making a carbonated froth in his mouth. He swallowed, took a drag and spoke through the cloud of smoke he exhaled "Can't say I'm surprised your old man threw you out but whatever, s'not my
place to judge. Probably not his either. Scientifically speaking, the taboo of incest is a safeguard
against inbreeding. It's a social norm that keeps us from coming out with buck teeth in our dicks. If
you can't breed with em, what does it matter if you're fucking them?"

His tone was matter of fact and somehow irritable, though the frustration seemed not directed at
Stan but rather the idea of social norms in general. He was holding his soda can in that claw
machine grip again and waved it for emphasis as he spoke.

"It's all...Freudian bullshit. Fuck your brother, marry your dad, whatever. I've seen stuff, believe
me, that-that'd make your summer lovin', flowers in the attic shit look tame." He added. Stan was
fascinated by Rick's perspective. Never in his life did he think he'd ever be able to admit this to
anyone and not be instantly shunned. There was another silence but Rick couldn't help himself:

"So, what part of Alabama you from?"

Stan plucked the soda can out of Rick's hand and, with his foot firmly but gently pushed him off
the bed. "I'm from New Jersey, asshole." he leaned over the space between the two beds and
peered down at his companion. "And Pop didn't kick me out cause we got caught. We were always
careful."

Rick only had time to sputter something that sounded like "hey-he-wup?" before he went rolling
off the bed with a thunk. His legs remained slug over the mattress at an awkward angle. Rick
laughed hard, heedless of his cigarette stub which sat quietly smoldering on the carpet. He laughed
so hard he began to cough wetly. Only then did he pick up the cigarette, take a soothing drag and
once the coughing was under control, he continued laughing great clouds like an amused dragon.
He put the butt out into the red-orange carpet, leaving a tiny singe mark.

"Jesus, you are a mess" Stan laughed. He handed Rick his drink. "Didn't break you, did I?" he
asked with a cheeky grin.

Rick took the drink but didn't get up. He hiccupped as he wound down and took a sip from his
awkward angle. A trickle of soda dripped down his cheek. He looked up into Stan's face with a
strange smile crawling up crookedly on his own.

"I like you, you asshole." Rick told Stan simply. Stan was happy it was dark in the room because
he was blushing.

"Well...I kinda like you too." he said. He placed his drink on the bedside table and stood up. He
came around the side of the bed and offered Rick a hand. "Come on. Let's get you off the floor."

Rick took the offered hand and found his way to his feet. He didn't let go of Stan's hand.

"Don't get confused. Don't start making a wedding registry or anything." He told him in a playful
kind of ridicule. He squeezed Stan's hand in a way that was both measured and strangely intimate.
Stan could only compare it to the last time he had hugged his wife before it had all gone to Hell.
Before he could think deeper on it, Rick pulled away.

"Wouldn't want your brother to pop me in the nose." Rick's retreating back told him. Rick stepped
into the bathroom and a moment later the shower came on with a hiss. Rick muttered something
about there being no hot water left.

"That's what you get." Stan called into the bathroom. He smiled as he turned back to the bed. He
could see from the clock on the bedside table that it was almost three thirty in the morning. Good
Guy Stan would have been sleeping in the basement after working on the portal half the night. This
was better. He chuckled to himself as he climbed into bed. Yeah, this was much better.

Rick came out of the bathroom in his pants and boots. His towel was on his head and he rubbed it vigorously against his hair. He searched the ground until he saw his tank top where it was in the corner. He traded the towel for the shirt, pulling it on but not bothering to tuck it into his jeans. Rick's hair, which had started the night slicked back and pristine, stood at absurd angles. He crossed the room, grabbing one glove and then the other. As he pulled them on he grabbed his flask, the greatly diminished bag of space candies and his coat. He tossed the flask and pills into his duffle bag and zipped it shut.

"Well, it's been fun, and informative." He said pulling his coat on. The cooled sweat in the folds of fabric washed unpleasantly on his bare arms. "If I'm ever in town again, I... will have no clue how to look you up cause you're not local either. So there's that."

Rick spied his handkerchief on the ground and, working his boot toe beneath it, kicked it up high enough to catch.

"You're leaving?" Stan sat up in the bed about to argue with Rick but stopped himself. Too much flattery and attention didn't seem to work on the other man. Stan relaxed and shrugged nonchalantly.

"You could go but it's below freezing and by the time you get to the main road it'll be almost four. No trucker will be on the road till six at least so I hope ya find someone to pick you up before then. It looked like it might've started snowing when we left the bar. So good luck with that." he ran his thick fingers through his messy hair "Or you could get undressed and get in this warm bed with me, a person who doesn't make you cringe, and we could spend the next few days fucking and getting fucked up." he smiled sleepily and slid back down into the bed. "But I'm not gonna tell you what to do. It's your life."

Stan turned on his side with his back to Rick and waited. God, he didn't want that man to go. Of course, Rick wanted to stay, for any and all of the reasons Stan had just mentioned. He wasn't stupid and any port in a snowstorm he reasoned, was a good one but also, logically speaking, Rick knew it was usually best if he left after encounters like this. First timers to the one night stand scene, Rick knew, had a pretty high chance of getting gooey and strange if you stayed the night with them like this. Nine times out of ten, they wanted you to leave anyway, no matter what they said. Transaction over and they didn't have to sleep in the wet spot. Rick had enjoyed the perks of sexual squatter's rights himself on occasion. And it was this guy's hotel room so Rick was the one shit out of luck this time.

Rick's grasp on his duffle bag strap tightened. There was always the portal gun. It was a factor that made Stan's offer effectively useless. Bad weather and no ride regardless, Rick could go literally anywhere once he was out that door. Rick admittedly was bad at giving himself token excuses to engage in something akin to going soft. But Rick would be damned if there wasn't something about this guy. He was fucked up, certainly, but interesting and interesting very rarely happened to Rick anymore.

"I snore." Rick offered to Stan's turned figure in a tone that said he couldn't care less but regretted how utterly vulnerable it sounded to his own ears. He made a face and covered his eyes with his hand a moment, silently berating himself. He quietly turned his hand into a fist and pounded himself in the forehead in an international symbol of 'stupid, stupid, stupid'. Stan turned and looked over his scarred shoulder at Rick. Rick's hand snapped down and he hoped Stan hadn't seen his self-flagellation.
"So do I." Stan said. "If we wake each other up with the snoring we'll just fuck again." he rolled over to face Rick. His face and tone were both honest. "Please stay. I'm gonna feel shitty if I read in the paper that they found a skinny ass drifter frozen in the snow."

That word. The word 'please' was all he needed to make Rick feel like it wasn't his fault for staying; that he was the one being begged and not begging. Rick pulled off his clothes, knowing dully that Stan was staring but not bothering to make it a sexual act. He didn't remove his socks. He got into the bed and rolled over.

"Nobody likes a hero, Stan." He said. Stan fought back a chuckle and turned over. He smiled as he closed his eyes. It had been a long time since he had shared a bed with anyone and he forgot how nice it felt.

Chapter End Notes

If you'd like updates on the newest stories in the "Two Truths & A Lie" series or would like to share them, links are posted on my tumblr. please follow and reblog at Allmyshipsareproblematic.tumblr.com
Consciousness slowly surrounded Stanley and he was aware of a few things. Firstly, his bladder was full which was what had woken him up. Secondly, he had a mild hangover and lastly there was someone quietly snoring behind him. Slowly, his eyes opened and he turned over to look at the man with the messy blue hair sleeping there and smiled. Stan would have been happy to fall back to sleep but his bladder wasn't going to have that. With practiced ease, the con man slipped from the bed and went into the bathroom.

After he was done he washed his hands and almost scared himself with his own reflection in the mirror of the sink. He ran some water through his hair with his fingers before coming back into the room and grabbing his bag. Back in the bathroom, he searched it for aspirin and came up empty. Well, he was awake and this hangover headache wasn't going away. He was going to need coffee so he pulled clothes out of his bag and dressed. Unfortunately, he had packed the bag in the spring and there wasn't much warm in there. Dark brown slacks, a white tank top and a Hawaiian shirt of cream flowers on dusty red. It was still better than the dirty clothes from the night before and at least there was fresh socks and underwear.

He grabbed his wallet out of his pants from the night before and snuck back into the room, placing his bag next to Rick's duffle bag on the right-hand bed. He pulled on his boots and scooped up his car keys from where they had been dropped the night before.

Stan opened the door then swore quietly and shut it. Damn, it was cold! He groaned as he realized he left his coat in the bar as they made their hasty exit last night. His eyes landed on Rick's leather jacket. The thing was huge on Rick's slim frame. Stan grabbed it and tried it on. It just barely fit and probably wouldn't zip but it was better than nothing. As quietly as he could, he slipped out of the room as Rick slept on.

By the time Stan had returned, Rick had not made it far from bed. When he had woke with a snort, Rick had looked around through bleary eyes and tried to make sense of where he was, as he had many mornings before.

Rick was still naked, with the exception of his socks, sitting at the edge of the bed. His hair was combed back from his brow, perhaps without the aid of a mirror as Stan noticed a plastic comb with broken and stretched teeth sitting nearby. Rick was smoking, holding the ashtray in one hand, and a small plastic bottle in the other. His cigarette dangled between his index and middle finger and the smoke carved lines into the air as Rick put it into the ashtray and then brought the bottle to his lips to sip. It was the travel mouthwash from the bathroom, Stan noted. Rick would swish, seemingly as an afterthought before swallowing the green liquid then follow with a drag on the cigarette, appearing to be focused on nothing. There was what Stan could only describe as a hollow look in Rick's eyes. Something not too far removed from grief. Stan stood there silently and watched Rick. It wasn't until the frigid breeze blew past Stan and into the room, making Rick's hair flutter and his naked frame shiver did Stan realize what he was doing and he toed the door shut.

When the cold air hit him and he heard the door close, Rick seemed to awake from his thoughts and gave Stan a look like one a student might make upon seeing his parents enter the principal's office after a schoolyard fistfight he was not so secretly proud of winning.

"Breakfast?" He offered, holding the cigarette out to Stan. Stan smiled widely as he came in the
room with two styrofoam cups in hand and a couple of plastic bags hanging from his arm. He came over to Rick, placed the cups on the dresser. He took the other man's wrist in his hand and brought the hand holding the cigarette up to his lips to take a drag. He released Rick's hand and dropped the bags on the bed.

"Got something better." he said blowing out smoke. He rooted through the bag and pulled out the aspirin bottle. "Donuts are in there with sugar and milk. Didn't know how you took your coffee."

"Irish." Rick replied. He pitched the empty mouthwash bottle into a nearby wastebasket. He crossed the room, ashtray still in hand to retrieve his flask from the duffle bag. Stan shrugged off the coat, carefully not to damage it since it was small on him.

"You sleep long?" he asked as he opened the medicine bottle. He shook out a couple of pills into his large palm and picked up his coffee. Rick crossed to Stan and poured a measure of booze into his own cup as he spoke.

"Depends, is it spring yet? Cause if not, not long enough..."

Rick traded the ashtray for the cup. Without asking, he poured a healthy amount from his flask into Stan's cup and knocked them together in a toast.

"The Sanchez Blue Plate Special." Rick saluted Stan with his coffee and the cigarette held between his first two fingers before taking a deep gulp of the black coffee.

"So I'm guessing the only thing you haven't done in bed is get eight hours of sleep." Stan chuckled, tossing the aspirin into his mouth and washing them down with the spiked coffee. The broader man slipped an arm around Rick's waist and pulled him in close. Stan was starting to gauge Rick's mood swings and the other man seemed to be in a good mood. He nibbled over the exposed collarbone and hummed happily.

"Not once in my goddamned life." Rick said softly. The cool brush of Stan's clothing on his bare skin made Rick break out in gooseflesh. "I'll sleep when I'm dead."

Rick closed his eyes and leaned into Stan's lips. Stan placed his coffee on the dresser and got a bit more aggressive with his kisses. His now free hand slid down Rick's flat stomach and teased at the base of his companion's dick.

"Mmm... s'been a while since I lived that kinda life. Guess I've gone soft." he murmured between kisses. His big hand wrapped around the slowly hardening erection.

"...There's a joke in there about going hard, but, yeah, I got nothing." Rick murmured. He arched into the touch. An abrupt sting bit into Rick's hand and he dropped the cup of coffee as the cigarette butt ashed onto his skin.

"Mother fucker!" He spat.

"Fuck!" Stan yelled as coffee went everywhere and he jumped back, away from Rick. Luckily it hadn't been too hot and it was mostly startling. Most of it splashed onto the dresser and carpet.

"I'm not getting away with any clean clothes around you, am I?" he joked but stopped when he saw what had made Rick drop his coffee. "Shit...come here." he sat Rick on the right side bed then grabbed his bag and started digging through it, looking for the small first aid kit he knew was in there.

"Jesus Christ, I'm fine." Rick grumbled "Quit it, Florence Nightingale. Just a little cherry burn..."
Rick drank from the flask still in his hand, irritably. He sucked on his knuckle where the burn was and beneath the flavors of coffee and booze and cigarette ash, Rick could taste the coppery tang of the injured flesh. It was probably going to blister.

"Natural reaction." Stan grumbled, pulling out the small pack. "I was never the squeamish type so I was the surgeon when things went wrong." He knelt next to Rick and pulled his hand away from his mouth. He quickly opened the pack and started cleaning the burn and bandaging it. "You'd be outta luck now if ya needed stitches though."

Rick looked down at Stan and studied him the way one might look at a mix of chemicals waiting for the reaction. He looked at the plastic band-aid on his finger, with a mix of suspicion and what might have been annoyance.

"You take care of everybody like this? Or just guys you've fucked? Cause I don't respond well to babying..." He told Stan. Stan sighed. Rick was very hot and cold and he was still trying to figure him out.

"I'm not babying you. I use to be a con man. You kinda remind me of some of my old partners and when someone got hurt, I cleaned them up. Does that make you feel better, Lover Boy?" he smirked and ran a hand up Rick's bare thigh. Rick leaned back, spreading his legs slightly. He looked at Stan indulgently.

"Used to be? I don't think anyone ever stops being a con man, especially if that's the term they use to describe it." He said. A pause. "And when you said 'partners' did you mean...?"

"Most of them were just partners on jobs. Not like there were a lot of them. Worked alone more often than not." Stan rested one hand against Rick's hip and slid between those long lean legs. His other hand returned to the action of slowly stroking Rick's cock to hardness. "And I guess you're right. Once a con man, always a con man. I'm just a little more...legit now."

"Beating off a stranger in a hotel room is legit?" Rick sighed at the touch. The light touch of calloused fingertips on his length was delicious, teasing at stronger feelings yet to come. Rick licked his lips in anticipation.

"I'm a scam artist, not a hooker. This ain't work." Stan laughed. He leaned forward and kissed over the slim chest as he ran his blunt thumbnail over the head of Rick's arousal. A little pain seemed to really work for Rick. "You still think we're strangers? We had a bit of a 'get ta know ya' last night."

"I'm a scam artist, not a hooker. This ain't work." Stan laughed. He leaned forward and kissed over the slim chest as he ran his blunt thumbnail over the head of Rick's arousal. A little pain seemed to really work for Rick. "You still think we're strangers? We had a bit of a 'get ta know ya' last night."

Rick shuttered appreciatively at the roughness. Rick was a guy who had been with pretty much every type of man in his time. They were all the same really but something that Rick had not come by often was someone like Stan, who wouldn't let his smart remarks go. Someone who had a rapid fire answer for everything thrown at him. Rick admired that enthusiasm. Rick placed his hand on Stan's shoulder and felt his fingers twitch on the Hawaiian print fabric. The band-aid scraped against itself.

Stan slowly moved his mouth downward, nipping a bit here and there and raising small red marks on Rick's light skin. He made a deep appreciative rumble sound as his hand held the base of Rick's cock and he slid his mouth over the head. Stan had always enjoyed this act. As a young man, it felt like an act of defiance to what the world expected him to be. As he grew older and did this with other men who weren't the brother he loved more than he thought he should, it was about control. The way he made them moan and squirm was almost as good as when they reciprocated.

Rick let his head fall back as the wet heat enveloped his cock. He bit his lip, sighing through his nose. His hand gripped tighter on Stan's shoulder as Stan's tongue danced on the underside of his
length. He could smell the spilled coffee and Stan's sex still clinging to his skin after the events of last night. Strangers or no, Rick thought, this guy seemed to know just what to do to drive Rick wild.

"Let me just say... You suck dick like a champ. You sure you've never been a pro?" Rick panted. He was pretty pleased that Stan's mouth was preoccupied and Rick could get the last word. Rick slipped his fingers through Stan's hair and rested them at the crown of Stan's head.

Stan raised an eyebrow in a nonplussed way. He didn't like being out talked but his mouth was a bit busy at the moment. Even getting his dick sucked Rick, had a snotty comment to make. Well, he'd shut this smart ass up. As he pulled his mouth back he used just a bit of teeth. Stan's hand moved from Rick's hip to his testicles. He opened his throat as he slid his mouth back down Rick's cock. It had been a while but he still remembered all the tricks. Rick jumped and couldn't help the satisfied "Ah.." that escaped his mouth when Stan cupped his balls, massaging them gently in his hand. Rick's hands held onto Stan's hair tightly, wanting to push Stan's already overtaxed mouth all the way down on him but fighting the urge.

Stan moaned as he felt Rick's pubic hair brush his nose and the tight grip of Rick's hand in his hair. He pulled a bit harder at the other man's balls and sucked hard as he pulled back to the head with his tongue pressed to the underside. Stan's free hand went between his own legs and palmed his erection through his pants.

The muscles in Rick's thighs tensed. Stan's rumbling groan sent vibrations down Rick's cock and through his pelvis and he felt the gooseflesh rise on his bare skin. Looking through half-lidded eyes, he watched Stan's head bobbing in his lap, his big hands pawing at the bulge straining against the fabric of his slacks. It was a drop dead gorgeous sight. Rick hissed through his teeth as Stan sucked harder. Rick took Stan by both shoulders, gathering fistfuls of his shirt and gave a long drawn out moan.

Rick's cock throbbed on Stan's tongue and he could feel Rick's balls tightening up in his hand. The moan that came from Rick almost had Stan ready to cum in his pants. He sucked and ran his tongue over the hard cock in his mouth. When he felt Rick about to cum he pulled back. He cupped the back of Rick's head and pulled him in for a passionate kiss, letting Rick taste himself in his mouth.

"You wanna cum in my mouth or you wanna fuck me?" he growled between hungry kisses. Rick pulled Stan's open button down off roughly and kissed back bruisingly hard.

"Hands, knees, now!" Rick demanded, not having the patience to say more before he dove in to kiss Stan again. Stan had barely stood and gotten his slacks opened before Rick pulled him down onto the bed. Both Stan's bug out bag and Rick's duffle toppled over the side on to the floor with a thunk and jingle of zippers. Rick pulled Stan's slacks and boxers down to the tops of his knees and placed his hands on the globes of Stan's round buttocks. He spread them and leaned in to tongue Stan's puckered hole with gusto.

"Yes! Fuck!" Stan groaned at the rough handling. The feeling of Rick's tongue on his asshole was very new but so damn good. He balled his fists in the sheets and groaned. Stan rocked his hips and pressed his sweaty forehead against the mattress. "Oh, Rick. Fuck me! Oh God..."

Rick reared up on to his knees. He ran his first two fingers over his tongue then, only waiting a moment to rub his saliva coated fingertips over Stan's tightness, pressed them into Stan. Rick worked his fingers in Stan, readying him for what was to come. He leaned around Stan, half draped over him, to speak in his ear.
"You like that, huh?" Stan could hear the leering smirk in Rick's voice. Stan gritted his teeth. He loved it but he'd be damned if he was going to give Rick this much power over him.

"Almost as much as you liked my mouth." He smirked, giving Rick back the attitude as good as he got it. It didn't come out as tough as he wanted when Rick hit that sweet spot inside him and he moaned, arching his back.

"Fuck yeah. Your mouth has yet to disappoint." Rick told him. Rick put himself into position behind Stan and, taking his length in his hand, guided himself into Stan, smooth as silk. He groaned at the tightness surrounding his cock and once he was fully seated inside him, Rick took Stan's hips, long fingers digging into the dips of the hip bones.

"Ah fuck!" Stan pushed back against Rick. He was usually the one doing the fucking. Most guys saw Stan and assumed he wasn't the type to get fucked but in reality, he loved either position. But he always lost himself like this. "Don't stop." he groaned.

"Oh, I'm just getting started, Stud." Rick growled. He rolled his hips, not bothering to go slow. The need was too strong. Rick had almost cum before but the few minutes it took to reposition had given Rick the chance you step back from the edge of orgasm and he had found his second wind. That, coupled with the surprising ease at which he had slipped into Stan, had emboldened Rick and he couldn't help but fuck Stan hard.

The zipper of Stan's slacks, tangled halfway down his legs, dug into one of Rick's knees as he kneeled on it, but Rick ignored it. Rick slipped one hand up the small of Stan's back and just pressed his palm there possessively.

"Harder! God, Rick!" Stan reached back and grabbed Rick by one thigh, trying to pull him deeper, closer; Something! He needed it. He had found it so erotic that Rick was able to toss him around and position him the way he had. The hidden strength in that lithe frame was sexy as hell to a big guy who had been with only a few men who could manhandle him like that.

"Yeah... That's what you want..." Rick grunted as he moved hard and deliberate. He slipped his hand up Stan's back, under his tank top and twisted his fingers in the fabric at Stan's shoulder blades, bunching it in his fist and pulled as he moved like a rider might pull on the reins of an unbroken horse. The neckband of the wife beater wrenched into the base of Stan's throat as Rick yanked it.

Rick's eyes devoured the sight before him, enjoying every inch of debauchery he saw. A mark on Stan's shoulder caught his interest as it was revealed from under his shirt. A tattoo, black ink over oddly raised skin. Scar tissue, Rick could tell. It looked sloppy, perhaps homemade or a prison tat and less than five years old at that. It was all arrows and circles, an amalgamation of astrological or alchemic symbols and shapes. Copper, or perhaps Venus; iron and diamond and other shapes Rick could not immediately place. It spoke disjointedly of the cosmos and perhaps even the multidimensional spectrum but either because he was too taxed with desire to think clearly or if the tattoo was something more than just plain ancient science, Rick couldn't put two and two together on what it was. It was like trying to grasp sand even as it was running through your fingers. And yet, it nagged at him.

"What's... What's this?" Rick panted. He ran his thumb over the tattoo, feeling the hills and valleys of the raised sweating skin. It came out as not as a simple curiosity but more of a bad cop interrogation. As Rick pulled on his top Stan lifted his head to keep from choking. It was everything he wanted. Rough and hard but still with a surprising amount of finesse. He was so caught up in his own pleasure he almost missed what Rick said. That thumb running over the scar brought Stan back.
"A mistake" he groaned. "Mmm...or an accident" he ground back against Rick's pounding.

"Those aren't the same thing." Rick told Stan. That was a shitty, brush off answer and Rick's officiousness did not appreciate it, regardless of the situation. He pounded into Stan and spoke through a tight jaw. "Accidents are something that you never have control over. Accidents happen easier than mistakes; they happen to you. Mistakes are poor choices with poor results. You lost a bet or fucked something up if that thing is a mistake."

Stan laughed then moaned. "Nail on the head, babe. Ooh, A mistake and an accident. Mmm...fuck!"

Stan reached down and stroked his cock. He was too far gone to answer Rick to his satisfaction and quite frankly Rick was too gone himself to chase that particular rabbit at the moment.

"Fuck it," Rick huffed and curled over Stan's back. He once again reached under Stan's wife beater and slid his palms up Stan's chest from beneath. Both hands hooked over Stan's shoulders, changing the angle at which Rick was thrusting and Rick used the new leverage to pull Stan back onto his cock. With each thrust, Rick grunted his satisfaction. The ribbed material of Stan's top rubbed Rick's overheated cheek. He puffed hot breath over the clammy skin of Stan's tattoo. Stan groaned and his eyes rolled back in his head. Rick was slamming into him at just the right angle.

"Oh yes! Ah, right there!" he moaned loudly. His cock throbbed in his own hand and he knew he was getting close. And Rick just felt so good. Stan's body was clenching around Rick's cock now and Rick pistoned fast like a runner trying to outpace the wall that inevitably came with complete physical exhaustion. What with the head start Stan's mouth had provided, Rick was certain he was going to come any second now but, tooth and nail, Rick was fighting it.

Usually, Stan would fight to not be first but he didn't care at this point. A deep, loud, guttural noise ripped its way out of Stanley's throat as he came, his thighs shaking hard as he covered his hand with his ejaculate, hot and dripping from his fingers into the bed. Rick's thrusts came jerky and he couldn't hold back any longer. He came hard, slamming Stan back on to his cock with his final hard thrusts. Each one was punctuated with a sharp shout of hard pleasure. His last cry was a long drawn out hoarse sound that petered out into hard breathing. His chest heaved against Stan's back.

Stan collapsed, face down, onto the bed under Rick's weight. He panted and twitched as he came down. After a moment he turned his eyes to look back at Rick with a cheeky smile.

"Thank God you don't come super glue." he panted. Rick laughed weakly then after a moment longer of rest, pulled himself up and out of Stan. He shivered when his sensitive member pulled free. He sat up for just a second then collapsed back on the bed and over Stan's legs with a loud exhausted sigh. The heels of Stan's shoes dug into Rick's back but he didn't care.

"Christ jumped up on a cross!" He exclaimed breathlessly. He laughed as he spoke, "Who the fuck are you?"

Stanley laughed. "Who the fuck you think I am? I'm not really anyone. Now get off my legs before you rip my pants." He playfully pushed at Rick's legs. Rick did as he was told, crossing the room to get a towel from the bathroom. Their supply was already beginning to dwindle, he suspected. He stepped in the now cold coffee as he passed. Rick grumbled something as he felt the cold wetness seep through the sole of his sock and peeled it off, dropping it carelessly. He snatched a towel off the bar and wiped himself down. He returned to offer the towel to Stan.

Stan had turned around and was sitting on the edge of the bed when Rick came back in. One hand was covered with cum and held out to the side. The other was holding a donut with a large bite
taken out of it. The donut box open on the other bed. His pants were still bunched below his knees, his shirt still rucked up under his pectorals with his belly sticking out.

"Two questions. Is there any point in me getting dressed? And what'd you mean when you asked me who I was?"

Rick stared at the disheveled mess of a man before him and despite having just cum possibly harder than he ever had in his life, he felt a flame of lust spring to life in him. He shook his mind free and placed the towel over Stan's cum covered hand. Rick removed the donut from his other hand, sat across from Stan and began to chew on it thoughtfully. He shrugged noncommittally.

"I meant what I said. Ex-con brother fucker with a semi-cosmic clusterfuck tattooed on his back who can get a leg over like the world's ending tomorrow. Not something you pick up in a bar everyday..."

Stan wiped his hand off and tossed the towel on the edge of the bed.

"Never really thought of myself like that." He shrugged and pulled his shirt down. Rick might have been comfortable walking around naked but he still had a few hang ups. "I'm just a big dumb guy who scams tourists for a living." He stood and pulled up his pants. "It's flattering you think of me so fondly, Lover Boy."

Stan leaned down and kissed Rick's cheek playfully as he grabbed another donut. The kiss sent a strange warmth through Rick and the whole situation hit him with a kind-of-out of body clarity. It was getting too comfortable. The snow had kept Rick in last night and as it always happened in these situations, things were normal anonymous. Rick stood and snatched his jeans from the floor. He pulled them on and shoved his feet into his boots, giving no mind to the fact that he was only wearing one sock.

"Thanks for the laughs, but I shouldn't outstay my welcome. Roads should be clear by now..."

"Woah! What the hell?" Stan stood there stunned, still holding the donut. "You haven't outstayed nothin. Hey! Stop!" Stan grabbed the other end of Rick's shirt as the tall man picked it up off the floor. "What'd I do?"

Rick looked up at Stan incredulously. His mouth hung open slightly. The bizarre look of hurt on the other man's face was the last thing Rick had expected. Anyone else might have been lucky to receive a sneer and nothing more before Rick left without looking back, but Rick had never been faced with someone as inexplicable as Stan Pines. Frankly, the whole thing was making Rick feel like a scared rabbit, scrambling for shelter for there was absolutely no way that he wouldn't be eaten if he remained in the open like this.

"You didn't..." Rick began softly. He subconsciously tugged on his shirt, bringing Stan that much closer. "Look, uh, you're free? I release you? You are no longer a timid little homopillar. Fly free. Like, I dub thee big...fucking power top, switch hitter butterfly now, I guess? Look, this metaphor is getting away from me here. I just don't...What do you want from me?"

Stan pulled gently back on the shirt to get Rick just a bit closer.

"I want you to stay." Stan reached out his other hand to touch Rick's arm but realized he hadn't put down his donut. He irritably tossed it back towards the open box on the bed then turned back to Rick. He gently touched the long slim arm of the other man. "I like you. I didn't ask you to come back here to prove something. You're sexy and funny and fucked up and weird and smart. I ain't tryin ta keep ya forever, just a bit longer." he swallowed hard and held his breath.
Rick was not accustomed to intimacy like this and he couldn't remember the last time anyone, not even his wife, had said anything to hint that Rick mattered. Not that Rick believed he deserved such praise. The universe had looked Rick in the face on several occasions and proved in the grand scheme of things that Rick did not matter and what difference did the opinion of a stranger he had very recently fucked make? Rick ran his hand idly down his neck in the closest thing to self-conscious that most people ever saw from him.

"Hoo boy, this...this is going to sound bad." He told Stan. He took a pause as if collecting his thoughts and when he spoke again his tone was something similar to a man confessing his infidelity to his wife: stilted and guilty. "Do you know what happened when I woke up alone? I thought... you had left. When you came in I was thinking about....about how you begged me to stay just so you could be the one to step out first. And that you stole my coat." He added with a wry half smile "I'll be honest. Felt kind of shitty..."

A thrum of pain passed through Stan's chest. He hated that he was right about Rick. That when their eyes had locked across the room in that bar Stan knew the look of someone who'd been left behind by everyone he thought would stay. It was the same look he saw in his own face in the mirror most days. He tightened his grip on Rick's arm just slightly, coming just a bit closer. He dropped his end of Rick's shirt and rested the other hand on Rick's hip.

"The first thing I did when I walked out that door this morning, freezing with a hangover and dying for a cup of coffee, was go pay for the room for another day cause I needed more time with you. I wasn't ready to leave." There it was. He was laid bare for Rick to see everything.

"Besides, you're a skinny bastard. That jacket might be big on you but it's small on me. I'd be an idiot to steal it." He gave a weak sheepish smile. Hiding behind a little humor made Stan feel a bit more at ease. Stan didn't really know Rick and perhaps that was for the best. Anyone who really got to know Rick was in for a rude awakening when they found out what an unlikeable waste of life he was. But maybe that's why Rick sided against his better judgment.

He kissed Stan. It was not romantic, one could even say it was unpracticed. Rick was no stranger to kissing, this was true, but expressing anything beyond lust was tough for Rick. Rick regretted it as soon as he did it but at that moment Rick didn't care what the universe at large or his own bitter machismo told him was the logical thing to do. All that mattered was that he was with someone who, in their own bizarre, fucked up way, cared.

The kiss was an absolute surprise for Stan. He stood there with eyes wide for a moment being kissed and blinking. He smiled when his brain put two and two together. His big meaty arms wrapped around Rick's skinny waist and, Stan would never admit later, pushed up onto his tiptoes to kiss back. Stan hadn't felt this young in years. Rick held his fists at his sides, not knowing what to do with his hands, his tank top dangling in his balled up grip. It was strange with how much kissing had been happening between the two of them, how this felt like new and untested territory. Rick was the one to pull away first, if only a breath away.

"Shit, this is what happens when I'm sober..." Rick said in a breathless, ashamed croak. He didn't open his eyes. Stan pushed down the giddy smile he felt trying to break out.

"Yeah. I guess I'd feel the same way if I kissed someone with as ugly a mug as mine." he joked, trying to lighten the mood. He pulled back, his hands barely touching Rick's hips. Rick, at last, looked at him.

"Oh Christ," Rick chuckled bitterly, trying to ease back into the relative comfort of snide commentary "My heart bleeds for you, Stud..."
Stan rolled his eyes but smiled all the same. There was a beat of silence then Stan began, cautiously
"Well, we got the place for one more night. It's barely past noon. We don't have to stay sober. I
grabbed beer at the little mom and pop shop I got the donuts and stuff at. Was planning on going
back out to the car to get it but I got a bit distracted."

"Did you now?" Rick asked knowingly. The excuse to get away from the dirty nasty emotions that
were rearing their ugly heads was a welcome one for Rick. He stepped past Stan and laid back on
the bed, crossing his ankles. "Then maybe you, me and my, what did you call it, my bag of vices
over there?" he nodded in the direction where his duffle bag lay "...should make the most of the
afternoon."

Stan smirked. "Sounds good to me. I'll get the beer. Hopefully, it hasn't frozen." He snagged Rick's
coat. "I ain't stealing it, just borrowing to go out to the car." he teased, slipping it on. "I'm down a
coat cause I couldn't wait to fuck you last night, remember?"

Stan winked at Rick and slipped out the door.

Chapter End Notes

If you'd like updates on the newest stories in the "Two Truths & A Lie" series or
would like to share them, links are posted on my tumblr. please follow and reblog at
Allmyshipsareproblematic.tumblr.com
Part 4

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

What followed was the maddest fourteen consecutive hours Rick had taken part in in quite a long time. Half of the case of Meister Brau had frozen in their cans, turning the whole affair into a Russian roulette of exploding fizz and unwilling chugging over the bathroom sink. It had devolved into hoots, hollers and cheers of encouragement, suds dripping down to bare elbows and being cleaned by eager tongues.

The sex on the sink had been wonderful and dizzying. It was certainly not the first time Rick had been fucked over or on a counter and certainly not the last. Drunk as he was, Rick was not one to downplay the utterly savage sexiness of Stan behind him, reflected in the mirror, bright vanity lights casting Stan's straining face in shadow. One of Stan's thick hands was pressed to the mirror for stability and left a defined handprint when Stan had removed it to flip Rick over and sit him on the counter to fuck him at a different angle. Rick didn't care about the faucet jamming into his lower back. He pushed back against Rick's thrusts, adding to the smudges on the mirror behind him.

Sex had felt different from the first two times. It was not intimate or romantic but there was a certain amount of mental freedom now that both of them had agreed that this arrangement had no expiration date from the time of any particular orgasm. Something close to one of Rick's phases of interest had crept into his mind and Rick had wondered how many days or weeks two men could stay holed up in a hotel room in a perpetual state of debauched bliss.

The coke had come not long after that. Although Rick considered cocaine the drug du jour of 1985, he hadn't considered whether Stan would be on board or not when he had first brought the baggie out. He was colored surprised when Stan had gently snatched it away and pulled out his own ID (a fake under the name of Hal Forrester) to cut downright masterful lines on the sink they had not an hour before been having frantic sex on.

The look on Rick's face was amusing to Stan as he did a few lines in quick succession. He leaned back against the wall and thought of the last time he had access to this much coke. He told Rick about an amazing two days of excess with a beautiful senorita who, unfortunately, turned out to be the daughter of a local drug lord. That woman and the coke had almost been worth the time in a Colombian jail. He still wondered sometimes if there was a little Stan running around a cartel compound in Latin America.

The coke brought a feeling of power and dominance that ran through Stan as his brain buzzed. He had scooped Rick up and kissed him hard before Rick had barely stood up from his own lines. Stan bit hard on Rick's lower lip as he carried the other man to the bed. He sat down hard on the end of the left side bed next to the half-empty donut box. It hadn't been long since he had cum inside Rick but Stan was already getting hard again. Stan had spit in his palm, wrapped his large hand around both their dicks and stroked them together. Rick's mouth barely stopped as he spewed perverted dirty talk between moans. The only thing that had stilled the ever-flowing words from the thin man was the hot hungry kisses the two shared as Stanley growled and panted. They couldn't have lasted long at that rate and came together, shouting their satisfaction.

The pair chain smoked through lunch, eating donuts and bags of toffee peanuts and pretzels Stan had bought to accompany the beer. It felt like a sexual halftime, a comfortable reprieve where neither of them was posturing or trying to feel out the other.
Rick told Stan what little he was willing to offer on his life. That he had a daughter who, if Rick was honest, was a little psychopath. At Stan's insistence that Rick was overreacting, Rick only gave a wry smile and told Stan he'd spare him the gory details. Rick did not mention anything more of his domestic life, choosing rather to give his weekend partner the highlights of some of his favorite intergalactic scrapes.

Stan told Rick about the wild forty-eight hours he had spent married to Marilyn. How he had, before he found out she was just trying to steal Stan's car, really truly thought she was the one. He gave Rick the travelogue of his various cross country exploits and, without mentioning the details, Stan confided in Rick about the postcard from his brother that had sent Stan running to Oregon only to be greeted not by the loving reunion he had hoped for but another relentless heartbreak.

Rick had decided that the only way to lighten the mood was to split a tab of LSD and lay in bed, jerking each other off. Accepting that suggestion had brought an end to halftime.

The afternoon continued into the evening and Rick had brought out a veritable sampler pack of illegal odds and ends. Each one had varying effects and Rick knew exactly how much of each one to administer to enjoy the dose but not let it overstay its welcome. Stan had been receptive to everything Rick had thrown at him.

Somewhere between the kilaxian crystals and a second round of coke, Rick found himself pressing Stan against the wall, buried balls deep in the other man. Through the grunts and shouts, the pair heard a muffled voice from the next room telling them to keep it down. Rick didn't let up on his hard thrusts and responded by banging the wall with his fist and shouting "Get bent, asshole!". He was delighted by Stan's hard labored laugh and when he started pounding on the wall as well.

Even after they had finished, Rick spent the following hour pounding on the wall any time their neighbors made the smallest amount of noise. Stan smoked cigarettes and laughed at the behavior. There was something really entertaining about a naked Rick vindictively yelling obscenities through the wall. At one point Rick turned on the TV and sang loudly along with the wordless theme to Berrenger's, a series of aimless, rambling 'yah-da-dahs' to rival the television's already high volume.

When the phone rang, Rick had put up his hands in a way that said 'I'm not dealing with it' and walked into the bathroom. With a roll of his eyes, Stan answered the phone as Hal Forester and proceeded to loudly apologize for his 'girlfriend, Deborah' who was a passionate woman and assured the front desk clerk that he would certainly try to keep her on a shorter leash. He flipped Rick the bird as he said this. The tall man stood red-faced in the bathroom doorway, smiling ear to ear. Stan hung up the phone and wasn't really surprised to be tackled by one hundred and sixty pounds of blue haired scientist.

There had been a small skirmish on the bed as Rick bitched Stan out and Stan laughed and said "Debbie, baby! Calm down!"

Rick was strong but Stan had a few pounds on him and even though he had let himself go from his boxing years, it was still mostly muscle. With a bit of maneuvering, Stan had Rick pinned to the bed, one hand wrapped around Rick's wrists, holding them above his head, the other one wrapped around Rick's throat.

Sitting on those slim hips, Stan had a beautiful vantage point. Rick wasn't going to make it easy for him though. He bucked and twisted like a caught eel but to no end. When Stan got sick of the struggles he squeezed tighter on Rick's throat. There was something so sexy about Rick red-faced and out of breath under him. Their sexes lay against each other half hard and it made Stan chuckle. He ground his hips against Rick's and played with the pressure on the other man's throat, never
quite cutting off his air supply completely.

It was a slow build. Stan rutted against Rick as he felt Rick's arousal twitch and leak against his, weak moans wheezing out of the thin man as he worked him into a frenzy. Their other couplings had been fast and rough but Stan drew this out for what felt like forever. Once Rick was gripping the sheets above his head so hard he might have ripped them, Stan let go of his wrists with the promise of stopping the slow burn if Rick didn't keep them there. Rick complied, glaring daggers at Stanley. The look was softened by the lust the tall man was feeling though and Stan had no doubt there would be retribution he'd happily pay later.

In moments Stan was inside Rick again, slowly thrusting as he choked Rick and growling obscenities into his ear. He refused to speed up even when the other man bucked his hips and swore at him. Stan would just squeeze tighter on Rick's throat and still his hips until Rick calmed. For what felt like hours the two men stayed like that, sweating and moaning and gasping as the passion burned through them until it was too much. Stan wrapped both hands around Rick's throat and pounded into him, adopting that now familiar, animalistic fucking. He choked Rick completely when he came and Rick's eyes rolled back in his head and his whole body convulsed as he ejaculated between the two of them.

Stan collapsed on top of Rick, his hands moving from Rick's throat to his hands above his head. He touched their fingers together as he kissed Rick. The other man's mouth tastes like cigarettes and those brightly colored bitter pills from earlier. It was Rick's flavor.

He silently counted Rick's fingers for the third time before pulling out and rolling over to lay next to his companion.

"Damn, Debbie..." he panted which earned him a smack but it was worth it.

The two had finally begun to wind down as night gave way to early morning. Mister Mister was ending Saturday Night Live with a truly soulful performance of 'Broken Wings'. Rick could distantly tell that meant it was some time after one. He sat on the floor, back against the mattress. He took a deep hit on the roach between his fingers and passed it up to Stan, who laid on the bed. He groped in the closest cardboard box and grabbed a slice from the pizza that had been ordered somewhere in the haze of the evening, long since gone cold. He dully looked at the plastic band-aid on his knuckle as he snacked.

Stan took the roach and took a hit. Marijuana was never Stan's thing really. It made his brain wander into unwanted territory. He held the smoke and watched Rick look at his hand. He was beating himself up over counting his fingers earlier. Rick wasn't Ford and it wasn't fair to Rick to think about his brother right now. He expelled the smoke, his arm hanging off the bed to offer the roach back to Rick.

"You ok?" he asked as the cast of Saturday Night Live waved goodnight to the audience. Rick seemed to come out of his reverie at that. He dropped the pizza slice and turned at the waist to look Stan hard in the eye. "Have you ever been to space, Stan?" he asked suspiciously. Stan huffed a laugh and rolled over on his stomach. "Yeah. They always want big dumb guys to join the space program." he placed the roach in the half full ashtray and pillowed his head on his arms. He looked at Rick quizzically. He had to admit he was a bit smitten with the older man and there was a little part of him that wondered how long he could get Rick to stay with him. Damn. There were those wandering thoughts. He was done with pot. "What made you think I had? Was it the weed?"
Rick's face set into serious thoughtful lines that made him look his forty some odd years for the first time all weekend. He looked down at the carpet, focusing on nothing for a moment. At last, he looked up into Stan's face.

"Then let's go." He said firmly. Stan laughed.

"Rick, you're so high! Shit. I'm not touching any more of that stuff." he smiled at Rick but the smile slowly faded as his eyes searched the other man's face. He pushed up on his elbows "You really mean that." he said quietly. Rick jumped to his feet.

"Of course I mean it!" He said. He started to pace, gesticulating feverishly "Let's go, let's do it. Just-just get in your car and-and-and drive to New Mexico."

"New Mexico? Are the aliens gonna come pick us up in Roswell?" Stan asked, not being able to reign in his smart mouth. Rick stopped and gave Stan a dubious, confused look.

"What? No!" Rick told Stan as if nothing were strange about the conversation "My spaceship is in New Mexico."

Rick knelt next to the bed to speak closely to Stan. He held his hands out before him in an uncharacteristic sign of pleading.

"Stan, there's more planets, more-more worlds than you can possibly imagine. I've seen them. And I-I can show you. This weekend doesn't have to end. You don't have to go back. You don't have to be Good Guy Stan. Can you really tell me that there is anything left on this shithole planet for you?"

Stan sat up on the bed, his legs hanging over the edge, Rick kneeling in front of him, his heart tearing in half.

There was the mortgage to pay. If he lost the Shack who knows what they'd do with the portal. Probably disassemble it and he was having a hard enough time getting it to work in one piece. It was the winter months and he always closed at this time of year to do maintenance on the shack because of the low amount of tourists until spring but that was only a couple of months from now. What happened after that? If he ran off with Rick would he ever want to come back? Stan knew the answer was no.

Here was a man as smart as Ford but as crass as himself asking Stanley to come along. Not saying he was leaving and Stan better come visit him. He actually wanted him to come along and Stan wanted more than anything to go with him.

The man of mystery almost took Rick's hands. Almost said "There's nothing for me here. Show me everything." but instead he took Rick's face in his hands and he kissed him. Not like any kiss they had shared yet. He kissed Rick the way he'd kissed his ex-wife and Carla McCorkle and Ford. He kissed the other man like that because part of him was in love and part of him wanted to scare Rick away so he wouldn't have to make this decision.

This was the kiss that Rick had tried to do before. Before this one night stand had become a bender and then an excuse to not be alone. Rick wasn't surprised that he hadn't had the skill to pull it off. Not like this. Rick rested his hands on Stan's knees and let himself be kissed, honestly concerned that if he kissed back too strongly he would fuck up whatever tenderness Stan was trying to give him. At last, Stan pulled away and Rick fought the urge to pull him back in before the soft feelings could retreat back into the cold winter darkness.
"Get dressed," Rick said, standing and turning to search for his clothes in the trashed hotel room. "If we leave now, we can be across the state line by morning. Ever see a sunrise in Nevada?"

"No. And I won't get to." Stan stayed sitting on the bed. His big hand came up to cover his eyes as his other hand clenched in a fist. "I can't go, Rick. God, I want to but I can't." his voice cracked as he said it. He didn't want to break down. Not here. Not in front of him.

Rick stopped in his tracks, turning at the waist. His mouth was slightly ajar, his brow knit in concern. He rushed over, kneeling again to look into Stan's face for some kind of answer.

"Whu-ewha-what do you mean? What are you talking about? Of course you can." Rick's sounded frenzied and confused. Stan moved his hand away from his face but he couldn't look at Rick.

"I can't. There's something I gotta do but I don't know if I'll ever be able to do it." he had wanted Rick to stay but now all he wanted was for Rick to leave.

"What the hell does that mean?!" There was anger mixed into Rick's voice now. He stood and threaded his fingers through his hair, pulling gently in frustration. "The hell do have to do that's more important than seeing the whole of the universe?!"

"I have to fix the portal, Rick!" Stan looked up at Rick with frantic eyes. He felt unhinged and exhausted. He thought he must have looked how Ford did the last time Stan saw him. "My brother invented a-" Stan's brain tripped over the words "-an interdimensional portal."

Stan huffed an exhausted sigh and stood from the bed. He ran his fingers through his hair. He felt frantic but spoke calmly. "When I showed up, we fought and I pushed him through the portal by accident. I have to know if he's ok. I've gotta get him back before I can move on."

Stan's eyes were pleading with Rick to understand. Rick looked back at him for what seemed like a long time, his expression stony and unreadable. At last, Rick turned and grabbed Stan's shirt from the bed. He threw it at him, muttering "Get dressed..." and turned to do the same.

It wasn't the reaction Stan had expected. Was this the end? Was this goodbye? He pulled on his shirt then grabbed his boxers and pants off the floor. He pulled them on, at once feeling odd after being naked for so long and needing to have clothes on as some odd form of emotional armor. This Rick wasn't something he'd seen. "Rick... What are we doing?"

Rick had pulled on most of his clothes and was searching the room for anything he had left on the various flat surfaces of the room and shoving them into his bag as he went.

"Just...just hurry up." He said, exasperated. Stan watched Rick zoom around the room and followed suit. He tossed his dirty clothes in his bag and pulled out a fresh pair of socks. He grabbed Rick by the arm as he went past.

"Here," he said, pressing the balled up socks into the other man's hand. "Before you start, I'm not babying you. Those socks you have are gross. I can't believe I let you into bed with me with those things on." he let go of Rick's arm and busied himself with his bag and his own socks and shoes, refusing to make eye contact. Rick said nothing, just looked at the socks like he knew they were plotting something, then sat on the edge of the bed, and pulled them and his shoes on. He pulled on his coat and shouldered his bag. He snatched up Stan's car keys as he passed the dresser where Stan had tossed them. He only glanced at them, noting the plastic key tag that read 'What IS The Mystery Shack?', and headed out the door, not looking back to see if Stan was following him.

"Hey. Hey!" Stan yelled as he chased Rick out the door. He slammed it behind him and swore as
the cold bit into him. "Give me back my keys!" Stan was willing to put up with a lot but the Stanley mobile had been his one constant. He wasn't having it stolen now. "Rick! I told you I can't go with you! What are you doing?"

In the red neon-tinted light of the parking lot, Rick opened the driver's side door and tossed his duffle bag into the back seat. He leaned across the seat and unlocked the passenger's side door. He put the keys into the ignition, turned it on and turned on the heater to warm up. Without missing a beat he crossed in front of the Diablo's headlights, casting himself in sharp silhouetted shadows a moment then got into the passenger's seat and slammed the door. He waited.

Stan stood in the headlights and looked at Rick as he sat in the car as the wind blew through his hair. Stan slowly and deliberately walked to the car. He tossed his bag in the back seat and climbed into the car. He shut the door, placed his hands on the wheel and looked at Rick.

"Ok...Where are we going?"

Rick didn't return Stan's look, instead choosing to keep staring out the windshield ahead.

"Well, I don't know where this portal is, so you tell me." Rick would not deny the snottiness that was sneaking into his tone. He adjusted the heater's blower to hit him at a little better and crossed his arms.

Stan's heart thunked and he was having a hard time breathing. Rick was a scientist. How stupid could he be that he forgot that? Rick had even said something about dimensions the first night. He turned back to the steering wheel and put the car into gear with a small smile on his face.

"Gravity Falls, here we come." He said as he backed up and drove away.

The car came to a stop in front of the looming building. Rick stepped out into the night, snow crunching under his boots. The winter cold seemed to suck all sound from woods around him and the moon's silver halo on the clearing only added to the frigid atmosphere around him. The light of the moon and the sickly yellow of the Diablo's headlights were the only things keeping Rick and Stan from total darkness. Rick followed the beam's light on to the porch of the Mystery Shack.

The building was creaky and looked to Rick like it was entirely made out of splinters. Perhaps in the light of day, the wooden structure might look rustic or something akin to a traditional native sweat lodge but here and now it looked far more menacing. The yawning pointed roof looked like a tooth hanging from the mouth of an angry animal, trying to tear into the sky. The weather vane poked up into the darkness and Rick was reminded of Stan's tattoo for some unknown reason. The eyes of a totem pole watched Rick like silent stacked conspirators just outside the circle of light. All was still except for the gentle clouds of breath Rick expelled into the night. Stan turned off the car and got out. Rick placed a hand on the roof of the car and turned to Stan.

"You're kidding, right?" He asked dubiously.

"Welcome to the Mystery Shack." Stan said wryly. The ride had been long and quiet and it hadn't done anything to calm Stan's nerves. There had actually been a moment when he almost thought fuck it all and turned the car south but his guilt and family loyalty had kept him heading towards the falls.

"It was his lab before I pushed him through the portal." He spoke as he walked up the steps of the
front porch to the main gallery. "Needed to make some money and tourists are always easy to scam. Thus the Mystery Shack was born." Stan struck his Mr. Mystery pose. Rick didn't seem too enthusiastic so he stopped and shoved his hands in his pockets, hunching his shoulders against the cold.

"It's a good money maker." he mumbled as he turned to the door. Rick followed up the steps, careful not to slip on the snow drifts on each one.

"Sure, sure. Just try not to murder me and cut my face off, would ya, cause this place one hundred percent looks like a serial killer wet dream. It'd be a real downer end to the weekend." He shouldered the heft of his duffle bag as he joined Stan on the porch. Stan shook out the key to the door as he rolled his eyes.

"I choke you while pounding your ass in a dirty motel and you trust me but you think I'm a serial killer the minute I bring you home. Typical." He opened the door and stepped aside to let Rick in. "Don't freak out when you see the taxidermy."

"Things a serial killer definitely says for a thousand, Alex." Rick said, not without humor as he strode into the shack.

The inside of the shack was not much better in the dark. If he thought he was being watched outside, Rick had no idea what had awaited him inside. Bizarre stitched together creatures and stained glass depictions of eye shapes in the rafters.

"Yeesh..." He muttered, dispassionately.

Stan clicked on the lights as he shut the door. "Jeez, that weed made you paranoid. Come on. It's through the gift shop." he smiled a little. Maybe this would work out if Rick was making jokes. "And watch out for the corn-i-corn. It keeps falling apart on me. I think I need stronger wire."

Rick made an uncomfortable face as he ducked past the corn cob sculpture of a unicorn, feeling a shiver run through him but other than that, the lights had taken the mystique out of most of the displays, reducing them to the cheap novelties they were. He passed each oddity, pointing them out as he went.

"That's bullshit, bullshit, bullshit," He paused briefly to observe a display that Stan had been calling 'The Head of the Dreaded Vampire Fish' before moving on "That's real. But that's bullshit..."

"No wonder no one likes that part of the tour. No one likes anything real. They just want fluff." Stan pushed through the gallery into the gift shop. He was very proud of his vending machine door. He punched in the code and grabbed the lantern by the door. "Let's head down to the dungeon. I mean basement." Stan joked as he started down the stairs.

"A lantern? Are you serious? Jeez, nice knowing you, face. Hope you enjoy being a lampshade." Rick didn't miss a step as he followed Stan down.

"My stupid brother designed all this. The light switch is at the bottom of the stairs. Probably thought he'd look cool coming down the stairs like this." Stan flicked on the light and hung the lantern on a nearby hook. The room was small with an elevator inside.

"The portal is on the lowest level." he explained as he called the elevator and stepped inside. "You coming along or you still think I'm gonna slice off that pretty face of yours?" he held the door for Rick and gave him a half smile.

"Against my better judgment." Rick said. He stepped in and crossed his arms, placing his weight
on one hip. The elevator moved quickly downward. When the doors opened again the two men
stepped out into a dimly lit control room. Most of the controls lay dormant but there were a few
slowly pulsing lights and closed-circuit TVs glowing along the walls. Stan walked forward and
paused at the main control panel.

"There it is. My brother's interdimensional portal." He looked through the window mournfully.
Beyond the shatterproof glass stood a giant inverted triangle. Two giant wells flanked the triangle's
sides on the floor with two parallel wells embedded in the ceiling. Where the floor of the control
panel was standard bare concrete, it gave way to dirt in the portal room. Boulders and support
beams reminded the room's inhabitants how deeply below ground they were buried. A deep and
total quiet filled the space but there was an uneasiness about it. Like coming across a sleeping bear.
For now, there was safety and calm but it could all be torn away in an instant if the sleeping beast
stirred.

"Stan, holy shit..." Rick breathed, ducking his head to look through the window at the massive
structure. When he spoke again it was through his teeth, doubtful "This is not what I envisioned."

"Portals don't usually look like this?" Stan asked genuinely interested. He looked at Rick and
smiled at the surprise he saw on the other man's face. Stan was never an academic but after a few
years of being forced to be one he actually found this all kind of interesting. He sometimes
wondered if had been encouraged rather than just being called "the dumb brother" would he have
been able to catch up with Ford intellectually?

"This is just a little... substantial, is all." Rick told him. His tone implied synonyms like
'cumbersome' or 'bulky'. Rick shrugged and took a seat at the console beneath the window,
dropping his bag beside him. He clapped his hands together with a leather muted slap and rubbed
them vigorously.

"Alright then. Let's take a look under her skirt." He announced. He surveyed the control panel and
his face fell as he saw not a single readable label on it. His brow wrinkled in concern. The language
of the panel was strange and foreign to Rick. He looked at Stan.

"The hell is all this?" He asked. "It isn't any alien alphabet I've ever seen and it sure as shit ain't
English..."

Stan grabbed the first journal from the shelf he kept it on. "Your guess is as good as mine." He said
as he handed it to Rick. "This has some info but Poindexter split up his research into these journals
to keep it secret. Can you say paranoid?"

Rick took the book and opened to the page Stan had presumably bookmarked with an empty packet
of toffee peanuts. Lines and precision markings covered the page and more of that unreadable
cipher. As far as Rick was concerned, it was more gibberish.

"I can't work with this..." Rick grumbled, flicking through the pages. That wasn't entirely true. If
Rick were to move into the basement and work on it day and night, Rick could most likely figure
out how to reverse engineer the portal into some kind of life. The thought was strangely tempting.
It was a new project that could take weeks or months to see progress. Rick did not underestimate
his intelligence but it was not entirely far-fetched to think this research could even take long,
comfortable, sex-filled years. The closest thing that Rick had to altruism said that that wouldn't be
so bad. He had been chained down to one life before. He could do it again, at least for a time. But a
bigger part of Rick, an admittedly selfish part, wanted to have his cake and eat it too. Instead of
doing a bunch of shitty needless work, Rick just wanted to jump ship with Stan and not look back.
Rick looked from the book to the portal. "This is only a fraction of the blueprint..."
Stan looked crestfallen. "Damn." he looked from Rick to the portal. His eyes held such sad longing and regret. "I think my brother got caught up in something bad. There are pages ripped out and burned." he sighed. "There's nothing you can figure out?"

"There's nothing I can't figure out!" Rick snapped. What he could begin to make sense of in the journal was only half right as far as he knew. This wasn't pure science, but some kind of bastardized amalgamation of engineering, quantum theory and what Rick could only assume was pure insanity. Something paranormal that the author of these pages believed in wholeheartedly. This was not portal technology as Rick knew it and the bandying about of mystical pseudo-science was really starting to grind on Rick's nerves.

The urge of offering to stay came stronger. Rick fought it.

"You have dimensional coordinates? An idea of what dimension he went to? Just a vague elevator pitch, y'know? You tell me where to go and I can get you there, but not with that!" Rick jabbed an accusatory finger in the direction of the portal.

"Well, you only just saw it. Maybe you could figure it out if you stayed a while." Stan could feel the blush creeping over his face. He moved to the door of the portal room unable to look Rick in the face. "I got the space and I make good money. You fix the thing and I'll find him."

He cautiously turned to face Rick. His palms were sweating as he waited for Rick's answer. He knew the whole thing was a long shot but he could at least try. Rick didn't like the thought of staying due to his own weakness but he hated the idea of doing it because he was told to.

"Or you could just come with me, like I said." Rick's voice was not without condescension. "You said it yourself. Did Doc Brown do thing one for you the whole time you were apart? What could you possibly owe him?!"

Rick stood and tossed the book onto the console. He approached Stan and clasped him by the arms. Rick could feel the basement's coldness clinging to Stan's bare skin even through his gloves. His voice was matter of fact, but not intentionally hurtful.

"You can't tame the cosmos for a brother who broke your heart and cussed you out. No one's gonna thank you for it. I've been telling you all weekend, nobody likes a hero, Stanford! Save yourself some grief and live your life."

Stanford. He had never told Rick his real name. Stanley's stomach dropped. That hurt worse than a punch to the gut. Anger bubbled up inside the burly man. Underneath it all, resentment and guilt clawed at him. How dare Rick think that he would abandon Ford and how dare Stanley bring this man into Ford's space. He could hear his dad in his head telling him how stupid and worthless he was. Another glorious fuck up brought to you by yours truly, Stanley Pines.

"Family isn't about reward. Family doesn't owe you anything." Stan said coldly. His eyes like ice and his jaw set, Stan looked like a force to be reckoned with. There had been only a few opponents who had received that kind of look from Stanley in the ring. One in particular had sucker punched Ford during sparing practice. Stanley denied that he had slipped a set of brass knuckles into his gloves but the kid's broken jaw spoke for itself. "Rick, I ain't going with you. I'm not leaving him behind."

He shook off Rick's hands and stepped further into the portal room. Rick's expression was at first genuinely surprised but then he smiled, giving a laugh that seemed as if it came both from a place of awkwardness and suddenly getting the joke.
"You don't mean that." He said in a cautious affable way. He stared into Stan's face and confusion overtook the humor. "Stan... Stan, you can't be serious."

"I'm serious, Rick. He's my brother. I can't just walk away. And I -" Stan's self-assuredness faltered. The look on Rick's face wasn't something Stan was expecting. He wanted Rick to rail at him, to cajole and convince him but that look of confusion wasn't what he expected at all.

"I love him. It's fucked up and it's not the kind of love I should feel for him but I can't deny it." he ran a hand through his hair and sighed. "If I go with ya now, Rick, you're takin' a haunted man with ya. The fact that I left my brother God knows where is gonna follow me no matter what crazy planet we go to." He reached out and gingerly took Rick's hand in his. "But if you stay and help me fix this, I know he ain't gonna want me when he comes back. He's made that clear. When I know he's safe and home I'll go anywhere with you."

Rick snatched his hand back. All this talk was top grade bullshit. Stan was knee deep in it and Rick felt tricked to think Stan was any different from anyone he had been stupid enough to let get close. He was just another sentimental human who felt too much.

"The literal universe calls you and you choose to kick yourself in the teeth? Fur-fur-for what, love? Family? Those aren't real things, you know that? They don't exist. Families are a social contract that breeds unearned loyalty for people who did nothing to deserve it except live in the same group with you." Rick spat. His gaze held Stan hard and Rick dared him to look away. "And, of all people, you should know better. You let yourself get your heart broken. You let this guy, your actual brother, step on your heart like a bug and one little postcard ten. Years. Later. And not only do you go running back just to let him crush you again. You-you-you...you stay, carrying your torch, whipping yourself bloody, hoping and praying that you can give Mr. Wonderful the privilege of doing it one more time! And best of all you want me to hang around and help him do it?"

"You cynical fucking bastard." Stan laughed humorlessly. "It's just like I said before. You don't get caught cause you haven't let anyone catch you. For cripes sake, who the hell hurt you? Is it that big fucking brain that makes you push everyone away or your big fucking ego? What's so wrong with being a normal person, Rick?" Stan balled up his fists, wanting to hit Rick. Wanting to hurt the other man the way he had hurt Stan.

"Oh the great Rick Sanchez the scientist!" Stan continued mocking sarcastically. "He's gotta make sure everyone knows he's fucked aliens but he can't feel a human emotion. Doing all these drugs and acting like a badass but don't hold his hand or tell him you care or he'll go running. Thinks he's so different but he's just another stuck up jerk." Stanley's face was red with rage. "Well fuck that. Fuck your condescending bullshit. No wonder I fucking like you. You're as bad as my brother."

Rick was not hurt by Stan's assumptions on his character. People Rick had liked more had said worse but his blood was burning in a way that Rick, with all his knowledge, could not describe. Maybe it was his pride or the look on Stan's face or maybe shitty half formed envy for a man he had never met, but Rick wanted to put his teeth into Stan and not let go.

"You know who hurt me?" He said sharply "Everybody hurt me. Because that's what people do. And I don't just smile and let them do it again. Let's be honest, all of this, this, this bullshit, this big man power play weekend is not you, Stan. You are living your quiet soft little life, stewing in your oh so beautiful tragedy and loving every second of your own mediocrity."

Rick turned away then almost at once rounded on Stan again as the thought occurred to him.

"And you know what? I'm not like your brother. If I was maybe you'd want me. But it's not me you like. It's not me or adventure or an escape from this sorry life you want. It's flowers and, and
fucking... matching wedding suits. A perfect little picket fence life, getting buttfucked by your fucking fag brother. Happy goddamn family! I did that way back when and not once did I stop to give a second thought about leaving them behind because I knew that I stagnate in mediocrity, unlike you."

"How could anyone hurt you when you won't let them fucking in? Rick, you chose this life. You're gonna die alone is some filthy hotel room cause you think so much of yourself." Stan shoved Rick as hard as he could. Rick stumbled back, almost toppling over but caught himself. He was not deterred though and he stepped back to Stan. He stood deliberately close, invading the other man's personal space. Rick stared down at Stan, looming.

"You're not saying anything I don't already know. We're born alone and we die alone. You really think I don't already understand that? I do. It's you who doesn't. And maybe you're right and maybe I did choose this but at least I made a choice. Because in a cold and unfeeling universe, making the choice to not care is better than blindly taking part a species that's objectively useless in the grand scheme of things. We don't contribute, Stan. We are the same decaying organic matter that makes up everything else and none of us matter. Not me, not you and sure as shit not your goddamn brother."

Rick had seemed to run out of steam and stood there in fuming silence waiting for Stan to respond.

Out of all the times Rick had surprised Stan their last couple days, not getting punched in the head after shoving Rick was the prize winner. Stan wasn't an angry man by nature. In fact, he knew he forgave far too easily. When he did hold a grudge it was through childish insolence rather than malice. How anyone could possibly see the world as so dark and lonely was a mystery to him. There was always hope even in the darkest times. There was a phrase his mother said to him and Ford on the awful days, when bullies tortured them or Pop was in a particularly bad mood. "A righteous man falls down seven times and gets up eight."

Stanley looked up into Rick's face and saw the anger there and his heart broke. Not for himself but for Rick. If this smart man had really wanted to hurt Stanley he could have, with his words or his fists, and he chose not to even when he knew he could. Because there was hope. Hope that Stan would take his hand and bring him back to the car and they'd drive off together. Hope that when he woke up next that Stanley would be laying beside him and Rick wasn't going to leave until Stan destroyed that hope.

"Two truths and a lie." Stanley said his mouth felt dry and his heart pounded because he knew he had to win this round. "One. I really like you. Probably more than is healthy but I do. I want to go with you more than I can say and it's killing me not to run off with you right now so we can fuck our way across the universe. Two. I pity you. I pity you for seeing so much but caring about so little. You got the universe in the palm of your hand but nothing to hold onto. Three. My name is Stanford Pines and I want you off my property right now." his eyes were cold. His voice low and free of any affection or familiarity. "I don't want you to come back here. I made a mistake picking you up at that bar and I should've let you leave after we fucked the first time." he turned and walked closer to the inactive portal. "Get out of here, Rick."

Rick wanted to sucker punch the man. A swift one to the kidneys while his back was turned and then a steel boot toe up into Stan's self-righteous little face once he had hit the ground. It would have been cheap and petty, Rick knew, and that would be amazing. Pettiness was sometimes one of the only things Rick really let himself enjoy. He wanted to hurt the man. Wanted to lie about how he could fix the damn portal in a heartbeat but didn't only because Stan was killing himself for a dude that hated him. Wouldn't that change things? Rick would be the big fuckin hero then, wouldn't he?
But more than anything else, Rick wanted to make Stan understand. Rick knew when the universe chews you up and spits you out, that apathy is the only recourse against total cosmic madness and Stan seemed to think that inspiring words and greeting card platitudes counted for anything.

Rick approached Stan. He stood there, staring daggers into the back of Stan's neck and for once in his life, Rick was at a loss of what to do. His body was thrumming with unspent frustration and he lifted his hand, still not sure what he was going to do. It hovered there shamefully. At last, he balled it up into a fist and slammed it against his own thigh. Rick stomped over to his duffle bag. He hoisted it up and reached into the outside pocket where he always kept his portal gun. He had jokingly referred to it as his quickdraw pocket in the past but now it felt like Rick was drawing a weapon.

He outstretched his arm to its full length and jammed his thumb on the button without checking the coordinates. The whooshing sound of negative pressure echoed into the room. The portal flashed into life, rustling Rick's clothes and hair and the room was bathed in sickly pulses of green light. Stan turned as the neon light filled the room. He jumped back in fear when he saw the portal. He stood there in awe. It was the wrong color but it was a portal for sure.

"Rick...How did you...But..." Stan looked at the giant portal behind him then back to the scientist. "How did you do that?"

Rick discreetly put the gun back in his bag and approached the swirling vortex. He stopped before it then turned to look back at Stan. The light flickered off the hollows of his face.

"Ask your brother." He said indifferently. Rick stepped into the portal and it winked out of existence just behind his heels.

"No! Wait!" Stan yelled. He ran to the wall and touched where the portal has been, futilely.

"Damn it..." He whispered. He balled up his fist and slammed it against the wall. "You bastard!" he growled through gritted teeth.

Tears spilled down Stan's face as his knees gave out under him. He sobbed and leaned his forehead against the wall. Stanley stayed like that for a while, crying uncontrollably. Stanley Pines had been knocked down more times than he could count but he had always gotten back up. He used the wall to pull himself up and wiped his face on his arm.

Stanley pines hadn't ever gotten to play the hero but he was a righteous man.

Stanley walked into the other room and sat at the console. He opened the journal and read through it, looking for any clues and trying to think about anything but Rick Sanchez.

Chapter End Notes

If you'd like updates on the newest stories in the "Two Truths & A Lie" series or would like to share them, links are posted on my tumblr. please follow and reblog at Allmyshipsareproblematic.tumblr.com

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