Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered

by 4thofFive

Summary

Danny Williams and his daughter Grace move to Hawaii to start a new life. After renting the house at 2727 Piikoi Street they find there is another resident in the home, one who will change their lives forever.

Based on the prompt Lost Valentine by Spikesire
Check out her artwork here: http://archiveofourown.org/works/928769?view_adult=true

Notes

The prompt is from Spikesire's artwork but I couldn't figure out a way to put in a lost valentine so I did my own thing. I hope it still works. Thank you Spikesire for the great idea. This is the first prompt I've ever taken up!

The title is from the song Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered by Lorenz Hart. Listen to the Ella Fitzgerald version if you want to hear it.
Chapter 1

Danny Williams pushed open the door of the beachfront home and stood aside to let his eight-year-old daughter enter the house before him. She walked slowly in to the living room and looked around. The darkened room was filled with pokey 70’s furniture and a cloud of dust was swirling sluggishly in a ray of sunlight coming through a chink in the heavy, satin curtains.

“It’s dusty.”

Danny put down his and Grace’s suitcases and their overnight bags and stood up straight glancing around as well.

“Yeah, it is. I thought the rental company was going to have it cleaned but it looks like they didn’t bother.”

Grace began moving about the room checking out the long-neglected furniture, picking up and examining a few pieces of bric a brac and tipping her head to read the titles on the spines of the books in the bookcase.

“How long has it been empty?”

“A bout a year and a half according to the rental company,” Danny replied leaving the living room to check out the kitchen. It too was covered in a layer of dust but otherwise was neat and well kept. The appliances looked old but seemed to be in good working order.

“That’s sad,” Grace offered as she trailed in behind her father. “The house looks kinda lonely.”

Danny couldn’t help but smile down at his soft-hearted daughter.

“Well it won’t be lonely anymore now that we’re living here.”

The slight, brown haired girl nodded and moved over to the grubby sliding glass doors that led out onto the lanai and the beach beyond.

“Can we go out there, Danno?” she asked, her voice rising in interest.

Danny blew out a tired breath. He wasn’t thrilled about living this close to the ocean but the rent on the property was such a steal he couldn’t pass it up.

“Let’s get our stuff put away first then we can go out, ok?”

Grace made a face but nodded her head.

“Okay, but I want to build a sandcastle before bedtime.”

Danny nodded seriously.

“Yes ma’am,” he gestured towards the stairs off the front room. “Now come on, let’s get unpacked and see if the showers work in this house. Then we can go shopping for some stuff for a picnic and eat it on the beach.”

“OK,” Grace replied happily before darting into the living room to grab her bags.

Danny couldn’t help but smile. Since her mother – Danny’s ex-wife Rachel – and step-father had
been killed in a car accident in New Jersey four months ago, Grace had become withdrawn and
depressed. Desperate for a change of scene for both of them, Danny had sent out feelers to police
departments around the nation to see if anyone was looking for an experienced detective. He’d
been shocked when he’d received a call just over a month ago from a Captain Fryer in Honolulu
who said he wanted to hire Danny for a special task force the Governor of Hawaii was creating to
handle the most high priority crimes. Danny was particularly surprised at the call since he’d never
applied for anything in Hawaii. Captain Fryer explained that a friend of Danny’s who was a cop on
the LAPD had heard Danny was looking and recommended him to Fryer.

The New Jersey native’s first inclination was to turn down the offer – flattering though it was – as
he had no desire to live on a volcanic island in the middle of the Pacific. But after initially saying
no, he’d called back the next day to say yes. Grace had been thrilled at the prospect of living in
Hawaii, and Danny...well he couldn’t really say what had changed his mind since he hated the
ocean and the beach. Maybe it was the hopeful look on Grace’s face for the first time in months.
Maybe it was the feeling that Hawaii might offer a new start for both of them. In any case, here
they were moving into a dust-covered beach house that had stood empty for over a year and living
on an island that could get washed away in a tsunami at any moment. Danny shook his head in
disgust at himself as he went back into the living room to pick up the heavy suitcases.

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“What do you think?” Danny asked as he stood at the bottom of the steps leading up to the Sacred
Heart Academy, Grace’s new school. The little girl stood beside him holding his hand tightly and
staring nervously around at the children who were looking at her with mixtures of curiosity and
mild hostility.

“It’s ok I guess.”

Danny looked down at his daughter. The little girl had always been so outgoing and fearless but
now she was tentative and worried about every little thing. The therapist in Newark had assured
Danny that she would overcome her fears, but the detective was starting to wonder if that was true.

“It’s supposed to be a really good school,” Danny coaxed, giving her hand a little shake. “They
have lots of different sports you can play and they take cool field drips – sometimes even to the
other islands.”

Grace looked up at him, her big brown eyes crinkled with worry.

“Will I be in the same grade that I was in Newark?”

Danny shrugged slightly.

“I don’t see why not. You got good grades there. I’m sure they’ll put you into the third grade here
too.”

Grace chewed her lip worriedly as she returned to glancing around at the other students who were
streaming into the school ready to start their day.

“I’ve already missed a month of school here. What if I can’t catch up? What if everyone thinks I’m
dumb? What if...”

“Monkey,” Danny interrupted gently as he knelt down beside his daughter and placed his hands on
her shoulders. “Everything’s going to be ok, I promise. You’re not dumb and no one is going to
think you are. Soon you’re going to make friends and you’ll fit right in.”
Grace pressed her lips together and blinked back tears.

“I’m scared, Danno,” she whispered in a quivering voice. “I don’t know anyone.”

Danny gripped her shoulders a bit more firmly and leaned forward until their foreheads were touching and they could look directly into each other’s eyes.

“Can I tell you a secret?”

Grace nodded gently against his head.

“I’m a bit scared too. “

Danny fought down a smile when he saw her eyes widen.

“Oh yes I am. I have to go to a new job with people I don’t know in a place I don’t know. I’m scared people won’t like me either. Grown-ups get scared of exactly the same thing.”

Grace tipped her head thoughtfully.

“Maybe we should just go home then. You can home school me or something.”

Danny chuckled as he moved slightly away from her and shook his head.

“No can do, Monkey. I have to earn a living to keep us here and you need friends your own age. Besides, if I home schooled you you would fail science spectacularly and then you’d never become a marine biologist.”

“I think I want to be a ballet dancer now.”

Danny nodded at that. The child changed her mind regularly. Last week she was going to be a cowboy.

“Anyway,” Danny continued. “We’re both always going to be in situations that scare us in life. We have to learn to handle them and not run away.”

Grace looked doubtful as she dropped her eyes to the ground. Danny’s heart broke for his baby and he pulled her into a hug.

“It will be ok, Monkey, I promise. The first few days are always the worst, but it will get easier and you’ll make friends and you’ll forget that you were ever scared.”

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Danny pushed open the heavy glass door the guard in the lobby had assured him was the entrance to the new Five-0 headquarters, and entered what could only be described as a scene of controlled chaos. Boxes, furniture and electronic equipment was piled everywhere. A variety of people scurried around while two guys on a ladder carefully removed a ceiling panel and pulled a fist full of wires from the ceiling and began examining them intently.

In the middle of the storm, seemingly untroubled by the uproar, stood one of the handsomest men Danny had seen in a long time. The Asian man had high cheekbones, a well-muscled body and
enviable hair. He was probably only a couple of inches taller than Danny but he quietly dominated
the room. The man was sliding his hands across the glass of a large table that appeared to be some
kind of computer.

Danny approached the man, who he estimated to be a few years older than himself, and cleared his
throat pointedly.

The Asian man looked up and raised his eyebrows questioningly.

“Can I help you?”

“Yeah, I’m Danny Williams. I’m supposed to meet Captain Fryer here this morning.”

The Asian man’s face lit up as he smiled broadly. He took two steps over to Danny and stuck his
hand out for the blonde detective to shake.

“Oh yeah, you’re the haole cop from New Jersey. Fryer mentioned you’d be starting today. I’m
Chin Ho Kelly.”

Danny shook the older man’s hand and nodded. He had no idea what haole meant but it didn’t
sound rude coming from Kelly.

“Hi, nice to meet you. Are you a cop too?”

Something like pain flashed over Kelly’s face and he turned back to his table-top computer and
used his thumb to gesture over his shoulder to an office on the other side of the room.

“Captain Fryer is back there if you want to report into him.”

Danny nodded. He worried that he’d somehow offended the older man but didn’t know how. He
swallowed heavily. Great way to start his new job.

“Thanks.”

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“You have a hell of an arrest record, Williams,” the burly, slightly balding, 50-something Captain
Fryer growled as he paged through Danny’s NPD record on his computer.

“Thank you, sir,” Danny replied quietly.

“One of the youngest detectives in Newark PD history,” Fryer continued, his voice tinged with no
small amount of respect.

Danny nodded and glanced away. He was proud of his service and his record but he wasn’t about
to sit there crowing over it.

Fryer turned away from the computer monitor and swiveled in his chair to face Danny.

“Do you have arrangements set up for your daughter? I’ll do my best to be flexible with your time,
but you know this job isn’t 9 to 5.”

Danny nodded as he shifted in his seat.

“Yes, sir. The school she goes to has an after school program and the lady you recommended to
watch her if I can’t get home, Mrs. Kala…” Danny struggled to pronounce the Hawaiian name.
“Kalakaua,” Fryer prompted.

“Right. Mrs. Kalakaua seems very nice. She’ll pick Grace up when I can’t and keep her either at her house or mine until I can get home. Thank you for the recommendation by the way.”

Fyer nodded once as he rested his elbows on the desk top.

“She’s a fine woman. She’s also the mother of Kono, one of the officers I’ve got working here at Five-0. You’ll meet her in a little while.”

“I’ve already met Chin Ho Kelly. Will I be reporting to him or directly to you?”

Fryer folded his lips together tightly and looked down at the desk for a moment. An emotion Danny couldn’t identify flashed across his face. The captain looked up at the Jersey native again.

“You’ll report directly to me as my second in command.”

Danny’s eyes widened in surprise.

“Oh, I just assumed that Detective Kelly….”

Fryer shook his head as he pushed out from behind his desk and stood to begin pacing his office.

“Kelly is not currently a serving member of HPD. He’s been deputized to work for Five-0, but because of his status as more of a civilian member of the team, you will be second-in-command and he and Kono will report to you in my absence.”

Danny blew out a sigh and rubbed the back of his neck. He had a feeling an outsider from the mainland being given such a plum position right off the bat was not going to go over well with the other HPD members who probably wanted the job for themselves. He only hoped that Kelly would be ok with it.

“Yes sir,” he responded doubtfully.

“Kelly is a good man,” Fryer stated firmly, as if Danny was questioning his choice. “He’s an experienced cop but he…he had some issues with HPD a couple of years ago and had to resign. When the Governor gave me Five-0 I asked for Chin to join me. We’re old friends and I trust him completely.”

Danny looked up at Fryer and nodded hoping he looked like he had no concerns.

“That’s all I need to know, Cap. I’m sure Kelly will be a valuable addition to the team. What’s Kalakaua’s story?”

“She’s fresh out of the academy.”

Danny’s mouth dropped open in shock. A rookie in a job like this? What kind of organization was Five-0 anyway?

“I know it’s unusual,” Fryer rushed to add. “Normally I would want someone more street-wise and experienced, but Kono is smart as hell. She graduated at the top of her class in the academy and she has valuable computer skills. I see her being a great undercover operative.”

Danny nodded slowly. There wasn’t much he could say. He wasn’t in charge.

“OK. It’s your team. You know these people and I don’t so if you’re confident in them I’m sure I
will be too.”

Fryer cocked his head towards the office door.

“Let’s go meet them officially.”

As the two men left Fryer’s office and entered the open room again, Danny noticed a beautiful young Hawaiian woman standing next to Chin.

“Chin Ho Kelly and Kono Kalakaua, this is Danny, Detective Sergeant Danny Williams,”

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Hawaii was weird. That was the only way to describe it. People considered board shorts and flip flops (“slippahs, brah”) to be acceptable work wear, they all spoke some bizarre language called pidgin and they put pineapple on…Danny had to swallow hard to force back the bile rising in his throat…on pizza. It was enough to make a man lose his mind.

Then, as if God or Buddha or whoever hadn’t had enough fun jerking Danny’s life around, weird things started happening at home. Maybe Danny was losing his mind. At first they were easily ignored: the back door being closed when Danny was sure he’d left it open; his framed photo of the Brooklyn Bridge dropping off the wall one night and smashing.

Danny shrugged off most of these things. There was obviously some simple explanation for them – minor seismic activity or some such. But then the weirdness ramped up. Danny would come downstairs in the morning and find his food cupboards had been rearranged. Or the towels he swore he’d put in the right hand cabinet in the bathroom suddenly were in the left. Even his shoes, which he’d kick off in the living room on his way up to bed after a late night, would be found the next day lined up neatly by the front door.

At first Danny thought Grace had done these things but she swore up and down she didn’t and besides, the food cupboard was too high up for her to reach safely. Danny even asked Mrs. Kalakaua if perhaps she’d been doing some reorganizing but she just gave him a strange look and shook her head muttering something about lolo haoles.

It was all a bit disturbing and a lot annoying. If Danny had been alone on the island he probably would have taken it as a sign he should hightail it back to New Jersey. But he wasn’t alone, Grace was here with him and the change in her made all the weirdness bearable.

Danny didn’t quite know when Grace started to turn the corner emotionally. Maybe the move to Hawaii had been the smart choice after all because after a few weeks living on the island she went from a withdrawn, often emotional child to a little girl who smiled more often and even laughed out loud occasionally.

She still missed her mother of course, she always would, but she seemed better able to deal with the loss as time went by. Danny wasn’t sure how instrumental he had been in the change but he was grateful to see it anyway.

It was around this time that Grace started talking about someone named Steve and the Jersey native was glad his daughter had finally made a friend – even if the friend was a boy.

This Steve seemed to know a lot about Hawaii’s history and customs and his guidance was helping Grace fit in better with her classmates. Steve had apparently lost his mother at a young age too – Danny didn’t quite get how young since the boy couldn’t have been much older than Grace – and he had apparently become a good sounding board for Grace.
“Steve says we should go to the top of Diamond Head on the weekend. Danno. He says it’s the best place to see all of Honolulu.”

Danny who was at the stove stirring the tomato sauce turned to look at his daughter where she sat at the table working on her homework.

“Yeah sure. That sounds nice.”

“Steve says the zoo is also really awesome.”

Danny sighed as he turned back to attend to the tomato sauce. Steve often suggested places that cost money to enter. Maybe Steve’s father was doing well financially but after the divorce and the move, Grace’s father couldn’t boast the same thing.

“Well, we’ll put that on our list of things to do.”

The two remained quiet for a moment as Grace once more turned her attention to her text book as Danny put the pasta on to boil.

Grace looked up again after several seconds.

“What’s a SEAL, Danno?”

Her father drew his eyebrows together shooting her a confused look.

“You know what a seal is Grace, It’s an aquatic mammal.”

The little girl rolled her eyes and huffed out an exaggerated sigh of annoyance.

“Not that kind of seal. A SEAL. Like with all big letters.

Danny turned to look at his daughter in confusion.

“I’m no expert but the SEALs are a part of the US Navy. I think they have special skills and they are sent on small but really important missions all over the world.”

“Oh,” the child replied turning her attention back to her text book.

“Why are you asking about SEALs?”

“Steve says he was one but he doesn’t remember a whole lot about it.”

Danny felt his stomach clench.

“What? I thought Steve was a boy in your class?”

Grace shook her head as she continued to read through her text book.

“Uh uh.”

Danny licked his lips nervously and walked over to the table to sit in the chair across from his daughter. Why the hell was a grown man hanging out with his daughter, and why hadn’t he known this was going on?

“Grace.”

The child lifted her head at her father’s suddenly serious tone.
“Who is Steve? How do you know him?”

Grace’s cheeks flushed and she chewed her bottom lip anxiously.

“He…I…he’s my friend.”

“OK, but how do you know him?”

Grace shrugged as she fiddled with her pencil, her eyes averted from her father’s.

“He’s just kind of…around.”

“Around school?”

The child shook her head.

“Around home?” Danny pressed, his voice rising in pitch and his chest suddenly tightening in fear.

Grace nodded.

Danny fisted his hands on his lap. He was going to beat the shit out of this Steve guy the moment he laid eyes on him.

“Does he come into the back yard or into the house?” Danny demanded angrily.

Grace looked up at her father, her little face bright with sincerity.

“He’s not a bad man, Danno. He doesn’t hurt me and he doesn’t do bad things. He just talks to me…”

“Grace!” Danny snapped with more force than he intended. “No grown up is going to be friends with a small child. Grown up people should have grown up friends. Why is he hanging around with a little girl like you?”

“Cause he’s stuck here!” Grace replied angrily her voice wobbly and her bottom lip quivering as her eyes filled with tears.

Danny took a moment to compose himself, he didn’t want to upset his daughter more than necessary. She’d already been upset too much in the last months.

“Baby, what do you mean ‘he’s stuck’?”

She shrugged her shoulders again and sniffled.

“I don’t know exactly. He says he’s stuck in the house and the yard. He can’t leave and he doesn’t know why.”

Danny sat back in his chair and observed his daughter for a moment. She’d never had an imaginary friend before. Was that what this Steve was?

“So…when do you see Steve?”

“Usually when I’m outside playing on the beach. After we moved here I was outside and I was sad thinking about mommy and Steve appeared and started talking to me about his mommy.”

“What do you mean he appeared?”
“I don’t know. He just kind of showed up in front of me.”

“What, like in a puff of smoke?” Danny asked in a gently kidding voice trying to diffuse the situation.

“No, Danno!” Grace harrumphed as if her father was a fool for making the suggestion. “He just sort of…appeared.”

Danny shifted in his chair uncomfortably. He was entering potentially dangerous territory if this Steve was a figment of his daughter’s imagination. He didn’t want to dismiss what the child was saying or make her feel bad if this fictional character was part of her coping mechanism.

“Is Steve scary at all? Doesn’t it scare you when he appears?”

Grace once again shook her head firmly.

“The first time he surprised me, but he’s really nice and he doesn’t try to scare me or be mean.”

“What does he look like?”

“He’s really tall and he’s got big arms with tattoos. He’s got short brown hair and he’s very handsome.”

Danny raised his eyebrows in surprise at the kind of detail his daughter’s imagination had provided for Steve – he sounded like the kind of guy Danny would go for. Just his luck that a person he would be attracted to didn’t actually exist at all.

“Huh,” Danny mused as he began to rise from the chair. “OK, but if Steve ever scares you or asks you to do something bad I want you to tell me right away, ok?”

Grace made a dismissive sound with her teeth.

“Danno, he’s really nice. He’s just lonely that’s all. He says that this is his house but he doesn’t think he’s supposed to be here. That’s why he keeps moving that stuff…”

Danny’s head jerked up in surprise and he sat down again with a thump. He stared open-mouthed at his daughter.

“…he says you’re putting stuff in the wrong place and you’re being inefficient. He says he has to fix it for you.”

Danny blinked at Grace several times. This Steve person didn’t sound much like an imaginary friend. He sounded like a poltergeist. Danny shivered slightly then gave himself a mental shake. There was no such thing as ghosts. He was starting to see where Grace got her vivid imagination. It was obvious he’d been wrong and it was Grace moving the items in the house…he just couldn’t figure out how.

The detective stood up and turned back to the stove where his tomato sauce was now bubbling too rapidly. He turned the heat down and picked up the wooden spoon again.

“Steve sounds like a bit of a control freak. You tell him to leave stuff alone. I’ll put things wherever I like, ok?”

Grace nodded and picked up her text book again.

“OK, but Steve says you should organize the cupboards better and take shorter showers.”
Danny smirked and shook his head hopelessly.

“Definitely a control freak.”
Chapter 2

Danny sighed happily as he snuggled down under the blankets. He’d had a nice evening on his own for the first time in months. Grace was spending the night at Kono’s mom’s house with one of Kono’s little cousins and Danny finally had a bit of ‘me’ time. That’s not to say he didn’t love having his baby girl around because he did – he adored her and loved spending time with her – but sometimes it was nice to just veg on the couch in his underwear watching a game and enjoying a pizza and a couple of beers. It also allowed him to enjoy…other aspects of his privacy that he felt uncomfortable engaging in when his daughter was around.

Having just spent a pleasurable 20 minutes with his trusty right hand, Danny was now drowsy and loose-limbed ready to sleep as long as he wanted. It was Friday night and so far Five-0 didn’t have a case the next day. He planned to sleep in until at least 9 a.m., go for a run, have breakfast and then pick up Grace so they could spend the day together. Maybe they’d go and visit the zoo Grace’s invisible friend Steve had supposedly told her about.

Danny was in that lovely drifting phase half way between sleep and waking when his bedroom door flew open then slammed shut again. Danny rocketed out of the bed, his heart jammed in his throat. As he crouched on the floor one hand felt blindly on the bedside table for his gun which he realized with a sinking heart, he’d already put away in his gun safe downstairs.

“You don’t need your gun,” came a deep voice from across the room.

Danny’s eyes scanned the room wildly trying to locate the intruder but could see nothing. He stood slowly as his wildly beating heart started to slow. He must have been dreaming. The detective scratched his fingers through his hair and blew out a shaky breath. Jesus. He’d never had such a vivid dream in his life. He chuckled at his own ridiculous behaviour.

As he began climbing back into bed the voice came again.

“I figured it’s time we talked.”

Danny leapt away from the bed and backed up to the wall crouching down into an attack stance.

“Who the fuck is that?” he shouted.

Something seemed to shimmer in the corner of the room and slowly a man began to materialize. The tall, dark-haired stranger was wearing camouflage pants and a dark tee shirt. Danny could see tattoos peeking out from under the sleeves. The detective straightened up slowly and stared open-mouthed at the other man…ghost?

“St-eve?” he whispered, his voice rough with shock.

“Yeah, it’s me, the mythical Steve. The one you told your mother on the phone was a figment of your daughter’s imagination.”

The apparition glared at Danny.

“I’m no child’s imaginary best friend, got that?”

Danny opened and closed his mouth several times. A million questions were fighting to be uttered first.
“But you…how did you…why… I don’t understand.”

The apparition shrugged and shifted from one foot to the other impatiently.

“Me either. I don’t know what’s going on.”

“But why are you in this house?” Danny demanded.

“I don’t know,” Steve replied bitterly.

The detective threw his still-shaking hands in the air in frustration.

“You don’t know? You’re haunting my house and scaring the crap out of my daughter and…”

“Hey!” Steve shouted storming over to stand only a foot away from Danny.

If Danny were a lesser man he would be intimidated at the sight of an angry ghost looming over him. Fortunately he wasn’t a lesser man – at least not yet.

“I’m not scaring your daughter, ok? I would never do that. I saw her crying on the beach and I decided to talk to her. I made sure not to scare her. What kind of an asshole do you think I am anyway?”

Danny felt his initial fear being replaced by anger. He leaned closer to Steve so that their faces were inches apart. It was only this close that he realized he could see right through the taller man.

“I don’t know what kind of an asshole you are because I don’t know who you are or why you’re in this house!” Danny shouted back.

Steve glared at Danny for a moment then seemed to deflate. He stepped back and ran one hand down his face.

“Ok, fair point. But look, I don’t want to be here any more than you want me to be, ok? You think I like hanging around the house of strangers? If I could leave I would!”

Danny’s shoulders slumped as the fight went out of him. He was standing in his bedroom at 11:30 at night wearing sleep pants and talking to a ghost. This was apparently the way his life was going to go from now on.

“OK… let’s try and figure this out alright?” Danny suggested evenly. “Grace said you’re stuck here. What did she mean?”

Steve licked his lips distractedly drawing Danny’s eyes to his full mouth with its pouting lips. The detective shook his head. He had to focus damn it!

“I…I’m not sure. I just know I can only move around the house and the beach. I can’t go any farther than that. If I try something holds me back.”

“Alright,” Danny replied moving around behind the apparition to sit gingerly on the end of the bed.

“How long have you been haunting this house?”

Steve spun around to glare at Danny once again.

“I’m not haunting this house, ok? I’m… inhabiting it.”

Danny rolled his eyes and nodded.
“Yeah, ok. How long have you been ‘inhabiting’ the house?”

Steve considered the question for a moment all the while moving quietly about the room.

“My memory isn’t great but I think I started a couple of days after you and Grace moved in.”

Danny shivered involuntarily. The whole thing was creepy.

“You mean you’ve been watching us all this time? Seeing all our private moments?” Danny blushed as he thought about the private moment he had been having on his bed an hour or so ago.

“No, I…” Steve shook his head and put up both hands as if to halt the direction Danny’s thoughts were taking. “I haven’t. Sometimes I would be with you when you watched TV or…ok, sometimes I stood in the hall and watched when you read Grace a bedtime story, but nothing more than that alright? Mostly I stay on the beach or in the spare room. When it’s dark I roam the house.”

Danny felt his heart break at that. That’s right. He was feeling sorry for the ghost haunting – correction – inhabiting his house.

“Where were you before?”

Steve shook his head sadly.

“I don’t know.”

“Ok,” Danny replied as he climbed to his feet and walked closer to Steve. “Do you have any idea why you’re…inhabiting this particular house?”

Steve swallowed hard and averted his eyes from Danny’s.

“I think I grew up in this house. I have a few vague memories of being a kid and playing on the beach or making cookies with a tall woman – I think she was my mother. She died when I was a kid.”

“What about later? When you were an adult?”

Steve shrugged.

“I know I was a SEAL but I don’t know much more than that or really what that means.”

“Hmmm.” Danny considered the response. Maybe Steve had suffered some sort of brain injury when he died and that’s why he couldn’t remember.

“What about…well…how you died? Do you remember anything about that?”

Steve turned away slightly. His voice was rough when he spoke.

“Fire. I remember fire.”

Danny felt his heart twist in sympathy.

“So you died in a fire?” he probed gently.

Steve looked back at him with sad eyes.

“I don’t know.”
Danny turned onto Piikoi Street and glanced in the rearview mirror at Grace who had been chattering happily for the last 15 minutes about her sleepover with Nohea. He’d left early to pick up his daughter from her sleepover so that they could discuss the Steve situation.

A block from their house Danny pulled the Camaro to the side of the road and stopped. He switched off the engine and turned in his seat to look at his daughter.

“Aren’t we going home, Danno?” the little girl asked, confused why her father had stopped so far from the house.

“Yeah baby, we are but I need to talk to you about something first.”

The child looked up wide-eyed at her father.

“Did I do something wrong.”

Danny smiled and reached over the seat to take one of Grace’s hands in his.

“No, baby, this has nothing to do with you, it’s about Steve.”

Grace smiled at the mention of her friend’s name.

“Sweetie I…I met Steve last night. He…appeared in front of me,” Danny explained unable to think of a better explanation for the ghost of the man bursting into his room in the middle of the night.

“Cool!” squealed Grace excitedly. “He’s nice isn’t he?”

Danny gave his daughter a small smile.

“Yeah, baby, he’s nice. But I wanted to talk to you about this…situation.”

Grace’s face fell.

“Does Steve have to go away?”

“No monkey he doesn’t have to go away. We’ll do what we can to help him I just…” Danny squeezed his daughter’s hand and gave her an uneven smile. “I just wanted to apologize to you. I thought you were making Steve up – that he was part of your imagination. I didn’t believe you when you said he was real and I’m sorry for that.”

Grace gave her father a huge, relieved smile.

“That’s ok, Danno. I know you didn’t believe me, but you didn’t make me feel silly about it either so I’m not mad.”

Danny returned his precious baby’s smile.

“Thank you, sweetie. I love you.”

“I love you too, Danno.”

With one final squeeze of her hand, Danny turned around in his seat again and started the car. As he pulled away from the curb he could feel Grace looking at him intently.
“How are we going to help Steve, Danno?”

The detective chewed thoughtfully on his bottom lip.

“I’m not entirely sure, but I guess the first step would be finding out who he is.”

**********

“Look I’m not asking for their god damned bank account information, I simple want to know who owns the house I rent.”

An exasperated Danny had spent several minutes on the phone with a Mr. Stevenson from Hawaiian Sunset Properties, the company that was the leasing agent for Danny’s rented home. Stevenson should really have considered going into the CIA, he was the epitome of a tight-lipped tight-ass.

“There is no reason for foul language, Mr. Williams. As I’ve already explained to you, our clients hire us to handle the rentals of their properties because they wish to maintain their anonymity. If you are having an issue with the property we would be happy to discuss it with you.”

Danny sighed and leaned back in his office chair and ran a hand over his head. He could feel the makings of a headache niggling in his temples.

“I’m not having an issue, Mr. Stevenson, the property is fine. I just wanted to know who owns it.”

“And as I said…”

“Can you at least tell me if the owners also lived in the house at one time?”

“Mr. Williams I cannot…”

Danny sat up in his chair and waved a hand in exasperation.

“Ok, ok I know, you can’t tell me anything. Thank you for your time Mr. Stevenson.”

Danny hung up the phone and sighed in frustration. He could go through the property tax rolls but that information was confidential and he’d have to come up with a hell of a good excuse to ask the city of Honolulu for that kind of access.

The detective looked up to see Kono working busily at the computer table. Fryer said she had impressive computer skills. Maybe he could put those to the test.

Danny exited his office and came over to lean casually on the computer table. Kono looked up at him briefly and smiled before turning her attention back to the files she was sorting through.

“Kono, how would I find out who owns the house I rent?”

The young woman looked up at him with furrowed brows.

“You don’t rent from the owners?”

Danny shook his head.

“No. The monthly rent goes to a property management company and they won’t tell me anything. I know I could probably find the information in the municipal tax records but I can’t access them without having a good reason.”
Danny waggled his fingers at the computer table that was largely a mystery to him.

“Do you think you could find anything on this thing?”

Kono grinned happily.

“Try me. What’s the address?”

“2727 Piikoi Street.”

Kono’s hands flew across the keyboard and several images of documents flashed up on the screen, were examined quickly then swept away by Kono. Danny watched in awe as her hands danced like those of a concert pianist, the computer obeying her every command instantly.

“OK, here it is,” Kono announced moments later as what appeared to be an old bill from the gas company came up on the screen. Danny wasn’t about to ask how she got that.


Danny looked over at the young woman and raised his eyebrows expectantly.

“What? You know the name?”

Kono looked over and nodded.

“I’m familiar with it but if memory serves, Chin knows it best of all.”

“What do you mean?”

Kono jerked her head towards Chin’s office then strode toward it, Danny hot on her heels. The young officer pushed open her cousin’s office door unceremoniously and came to stand on the other side of his desk.

“Chin, what was your training officer’s name?”

The Hawaiian man looked up at his young cousin in confusion.

“John McGarrett, why?”

Danny’s heart sank at the information. If John was the owner of the house, who was Steve?

“Do you remember where he lived?” Danny piped up before the young woman could answer.

Chin sat back in his chair and considered the question for a moment.

“I was only there once to pick him up. I think it was Piikoi Street.”

Danny felt his heart speed up in his chest.

“Where is John McGarrett now?” Danny pressed.

Chin’s face fell and he dropped his eyes to his desk.

“He was killed a year or so ago in a car accident.”

Danny pressed on.
“What about his wife?”

“She died maybe 20 years ago.”

Danny’s shoulders slumped.

“Oh.”

Chin looked up again at the Jersey native.

“Why are you asking about John?”

Danny crossed his arms loosely on his chest while he thought of an answer. He couldn’t exactly tell his new partners he was trying to discover the last name of a ghost.

“I was just wondering. I think I’m living in his house and I was just curious who owned it.”

“Really? Small world isn’t it?”

Danny nodded and turned to leave the office. A sudden thought hit him and he turned back to the older man.

“Did John have any children?”

Chin nodded.

“Yeah, a boy and a girl. Mary Ann and Steve.”

Danny felt the breath whoosh out of him as he hurried back over to Chin’s desk, eyes now bright with excitement.

“Steve? What happened to Steve? Do you know anything about him?” the Detective demanded, his words tumbling out.

Chin shared a confused glance with his cousin then looked back at Danny.

“He followed a few years behind me in high school. Quarterback on the football team – broke all of my records. Ended up going to Annapolis then becoming a Navy SEAL.”

“Where is he now?”

Chin’s stared at Danny appraisingly for a few seconds.

“Why all these questions about Steve, Danny?”

The detective held out his hands in a pleading gesture.

“It’s…Grace found some of Steve’s things in the house and she was asking me about him. Do you know where he is?”

Chin sighed heavily.

“He’s dead. Died from injuries he got when his convoy hit a roadside bomb in Afghanistan. Happened just a couple of days before John was killed in the car accident.”

Danny felt a knot of emotion rise in his throat and he had to blink several times to clear his suddenly tear-filled eyes. He dreaded having to tell Steve the truth about what had happened to him.
“Do you,” the detective began hoarsely then had to clear his throat. “Do you know where he is… his body?”

Chin shook his head as he folded his hands on top of his desk.

“No. I never heard another thing about it after John died. I’d heard that Steve had been hurt in Afghanistan, then John died on the way to the airport to fly out and see him. Then someone mentioned Steve had also died in hospital in Germany. It was a hell of a tragic situation.”

“What about Mary Ann? What happened to her?”

Chin pushed out his bottom lip thoughtfully.

“She’d lost touch with her Dad a few years before he died. I tried to find her after her father passed but couldn’t track her down. As far as I know she lives on the mainland. That’s all I know.”

Danny nodded slowly then flashed Chin a brief, sad smile.

“OK. Thanks Chin.”
Danny surfed the net for any mention of Steven McGarrett. He’d found several old articles from Steve’s days as a star quarterback for the Kukui High football team and one glowing article from when the young man was accepted into Annapolis. The detective took a moment to examine the newspaper image of a fresh-faced, 18-year-old Steve. He was a handsome young man but Danny thought that he was better looking now. Age and experience had added some small lines around his eyes which Danny thought gave Steve a more rugged look.

The detective made a disgusted sound in the back of his throat. He was lusting over a dead man. Jesus. How pathetic could he get?

A high pitched giggle came from Grace’s room and Danny couldn’t help smile fondly as he glanced up the stairs. As bizarre as the situation was, Grace had asked Steve to read her a bedtime story and Danny had allowed it although Grace had to turn the pages of the book. It seemed Steve wasn’t as powerful a ghost as they first thought since he could apparently only manipulate objects if he was angry or emotional.

Steve, Danny and Grace had spent the day together on the beach and later watched a movie. The whole situation had been weird and bizarre and yet somehow perfect. True, Danny had had a bit of a silent freak out when Steve moved across the beach without making any foot impressions in the sand, but aside from the fact that Steve was a little bit, well, transparent, the day ended up feeling fairly normal. What that said about the state of Danny’s life the detective wasn’t about to examine. God Hawaii was weird.

Danny turned his attention back to his computer screen and book marked the newspaper pages so that he could tell Steve about them later. He pushed the computer aside for a moment and gazed out through the living room window into the dark Hawaiian night. There must be some information about what had happened to Steve – or at least his body – but he hadn’t wanted to ask Kono to do any more digging for fear of arousing her suspicions.

He turned his attention once more to his laptop and Googled the term ‘veterans cemeteries’ and found a link for the US Department of Veterans Affairs. He clicked into the site and found the Nationwide Gravesite Locator.

Finally! Some progress.

Danny typed the name Steven McGarrett and Hawaii into the search engine then stared quizzically at the results on the screen. It showed a Steven McGarrett as one of the men who died on the Arizona during the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. Could their Steve be this Steve and not the young man described in the earlier newspaper articles? The blonde man shook his head. It seemed unlikely. For one thing why would their Steve show up in this house again after 72 years? For another his Steve…er… the apparition Steve seemed more modern somehow.

“That’s my grandfather.”
Danny could help but cry out as he lunged up from the couch and corkscrewed around almost dropping the laptop from his shaking hands. He glared at Steve who was hovering behind the couch and had obviously been looking over his shoulder.

“Jesus, will you stop sneaking up on me like that!” Danny hissed not wanting to wake Grace. “You take a year off my life every time you do that!”

Steve shrugged and held his hands out to his side, palms up.

“Sorry, Danno. I can’t exactly stomp down the stairs.”

“Well then clear your throat or something before I have a heart attack.”

Danny shakily flopped back down on the couch and closed his eyes trying to even out his breathing. Then he remembered what Steve said. He opened his eyes again to find Steve sitting next to him – or an approximation of sitting anyway – on the couch.

“Wait. What did you say? You know this man?”

Steve nodded as he peered once more at the computer screen.

“Yeah, I remember. My grandfather Steven L. McGarrett died on the Arizona on December 7, 1941. I was named after him.”

Danny couldn’t help but grin happily.

“That’s good, babe…but that your grandfather died but that you remember.”

Steve shook his head sadly.

“How could I forget something like that? We used to go to the Arizona Memorial every December 7 when I was a kid.”

“I don’t know babe, but try not to worry about it. Maybe more will come back,” Danny replied softly reaching out to grasp Steve’s arm before realizing it was impossible. Steve watched him pull his hand back, an unreadable expression on his face.

The two stared at each other for a moment before Steve spoke again.

“You were looking at the grave registrations from the DVA, does that mean I really am dead?”

Danny licked his lips and dropped his eyes to the floor unable to meet Steve’s gaze.

“According to a guy I work with who knew your family…” Danny swallowed hard then forced himself to look up at Steve again. “You were killed by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan about 18 months ago.”

Danny had decided earlier not to tell Steve about his father’s death unless he asked. Steve had enough to deal with without having to hear that news.

Steve let out a shaky sigh then nodded. He sat lost in thought or a moment before looking back at Danny and gesturing at the computer.

“Does it say where my body is buried?”

Danny shook his head and drew his eyebrows together in consternation as he turned the computer screen for Steve to see.
“No. It’s strange but the only Steven McGarrett listed on the site is your grandfather, showing his body entombed on the Arizona.”

Steve stood up and began to silently pace the room.

“But how can that be? Surely they would have repatriated my body. I must be buried somewhere.”

Danny carefully closed the lid of the laptop, stood and walked over to Steve who stopped his pacing to gaze down at the blonde detective.

“I don’t know, babe. It’s very strange but I haven’t given up yet. Tomorrow if I have a chance I’ll go to Pearl Harbor/Hickam and see if they can tell me anything about what happened to you.”

Steve nodded distractedly, his mind obviously working through the possibilities.

“I still don’t get why I’m here, Danny. When I died why didn’t I go to…wherever it is people go when they die?”

Danny shook his head and shrugged sadly.

“I don’t know, Steve. I don’t have a lot of experience with this sort of thing,” he gave the other man a wry smile. “But I will do my best to find out.”

Steve pulled his lips in between his teeth as he gazed at Danny for a moment. Something was obviously on his mind and Danny waited patiently for him to voice it.

“Do you think when you find out where my body is buried I’ll have to leave? I won’t…I won’t see you and Grace anymore?”

Danny swallowed thickly and looked away. Suddenly the idea of not seeing Steve anymore caused his heart to skip a beat.

“I don’t know, babe.”

**********

“I’m still not sure I understand why you are interested in this Steven McGarrett,” the young sergeant on the other end of the phone queried. She was polite but not overly forthcoming and Danny thought that was a skill drilled into her by the military.

The case load of Five-0 had been too jammed for Danny to take a swing by Pearl Harbor/Hickam so he decided to call. After being transferred to a variety of people and departments, he’d finally been connected with Sergeant Tamika Henderson in personnel records.

“As I said, my eight-year-old daughter and I are living in the house of his late father. When Grace found out about Steve and that he had been a Navy SEAL when he died, she decided she wanted to do a class report on him. I know you can’t tell me anything about his missions or anything too personal, but if I could get even a general idea of his service records, and some information about where his body was interred, that would help my daughter with her report.”

Danny listened to the Sergeant breath softly on the other end of the phone. She was probably trying to decide if he was a nut or not. Fortunately the fact that he was a police officer seemed to impress her enough that she hadn’t shrugged him off – yet.

“Very well,” she replied finally. “We’re quite busy around here but I’ll do some digging and see
what I can find out and what I can tell you. If Steven McGarrett was born and raised here as you said, it’s possible some people on the base will know him. I’ll ask around.”

Danny blew out a relieved breath. He looked forward to being able to fill in some of the gaps in his friend’s memory.

“Thank you, Sergeant. I appreciate it.”

“You’re welcome detective. I’ll get back to you in a couple of days.”

**********

“Steve?”

Grace sat on the sand making a sand castle while Steve hovered nearby trying to offer useful advice on defensive fortifications.

“Yes, sweetie?”

The little girl looked up at the almost transparent man and squinted against the sunlight streaming through him.

“Are you a ghost?”

Steve stared down at the little girl as he chewed his bottom lip worriedly. He was pretty sure he hadn’t had a lot of experience talking to 8 year olds, and he had no idea how to discuss this subject with a child.

“I’m not sure. I suppose I am.”

Grace shook her head firmly as she went back to patting the sand around one of the turrets of her castle.

“I don’t think you are.”

“You don’t?”

“No, cause if you are a ghost that means you’re…” she glanced up worriedly at Steve then looked away, “…not alive and I don’t think you’re not alive.”

“Really?” Steve responded hopefully. Was it possible a child saw something he and Danny couldn’t? “Why do you say that?”

“Cause…”

Steve looked down on the little girl and saw her tiny body tremble.

“Cause I don’t want you to be not alive,” she sniffled.

Steve crouched down near the little girl and reached out to her before remembering he couldn’t pull her into his arms. He cast his mind about desperately trying to think of something to say to make the little girl feel better.

“Well…how about this?” he offered tentatively. “Maybe I’m your guardian angel. Maybe I was sent here to watch over you and make sure you’re happy in Hawaii.”
Grace lifted her tear-streaked face to Steve and stared at him as if considering his words carefully. A slow smile spread across her face.

“Yeah. That makes sense. Maybe Mommy sent you. Maybe like, she couldn’t get across the ocean so she asked you to look after me.”

Steve froze and blinked wordlessly at the child. Was this a healthy thing for her to believe? Maybe in his effort to help he was causing more trouble. Maybe he shouldn’t have appeared to this heart-broken little family at all.

“I…I don’t know about that honey, but I guess anything is possible. But I’m pretty sure your mom is watching over you all the time – whether I’m here or not – and I know she loves you.

**********

Danny watched Ho’ola’i Kalakaua from his front step as the older woman climbed into the car, started the engine and began backing away from the house. He felt bad about keeping her here so late with Grace but he’d spent the last few hours in the hospital having his cuts and bruises attended to and had only just been able to talk the doctor into releasing him.

The detective flinched as he gently probed his cracked ribs on his right side. The drug bust hadn’t exactly gone down as planned and he’d ended up rolling around on the floor with a large, muscular young man who took exception to being arrested. The whole bust had been a bit of a mess and Danny had begun to see that Captain Fryer was more gifted in doing paperwork than he was in planning raids.

Danny turned and walked back into the darkened house. He stopped short when he saw Steve standing in the entrance between the living room and kitchen. The kitchen light coming from behind him seemed to give him an other-worldly glow and Danny couldn’t help but gaze in awe at the beautiful sight.

“You’re late tonight,” Steve murmured quietly, startling Danny from his reverie.

The detective smiled as he walked past Steve and into the kitchen.

“Yeah. The drug raid ended up being a bit of a screw up and it took longer than I thought.”

Steve still hovered in the kitchen doorway as Danny dug in the fridge for a cold beer.

“Did you find any evidence that the gang is linked to the Yakuza like you thought?”

Danny couldn’t help but smile as he twisted off the beer cap and took a long pull from the bottle. He’d started discussing some of his cases with Steve as they spent time together in the evenings either in the living room or on the beach. The taller man had some good insights into the cases and Danny appreciated his unique perspective.

“Nothing yet, but we’ve found some PCs and laptops and Chin and Kono will be going through them with a fine-toothed comb.”

Danny leaned over the counter to drop the beer cap in the garbage then turned back to face Steve for the first time. The taller man’s eyes widened and his mouth dropped open in horror at the sight
of his battered friend. He crossed the room in an instant to examine Danny’s bruised and battered face.

“What the fuck, Danny?” the dark-haired man growled. “What happened to you?”

Danny shrugged then winced at the pain that caused his cracked ribs.

“One of the guys I arrested got a little rough. He gave me a few good hits but I took him down in the end.”

Danny gave a proud but crooked smile around his fattened lip. He felt his heart do a little flip as he watched the expression of concern flit over Steve’s face.

“I wish I’d been there,” Steve whispered softly. “I would have protected you.”

Danny gave Steve a fond smile.

“I know you would have, babe.”

Danny felt his heart pounding in his chest as Steve lifted a hand as if to caress Danny’s cheek. The blonde man closed his eyes and tried to imagine what it would feel like to have those big, calloused hands touching his body.

Danny gasped and his eyes flew open as a feeling, almost like a puff of air, crossed his face. Steve was running his thumb over Danny’s right cheek.

“I felt that,” Danny croaked in disbelief. “I can feel you touching me.”

Steve smiled, thrilled that it worked.

“I’ve wanted to do this since I first saw you, Danny. I’ve wanted to touch you.”

Danny licked his lips and felt a shiver climb his spine.

“Do it again…please.”

Steve ran his thumb over Danny’s cheekbone and the detective gasped once more.

“I can feel it…Jesus, I can feel that.”

Steve’s eyes filled with wonder as he gazed down on Danny.

“I think I can too.”

The two men stared at one another for a moment until Danny turned and placed his half-finished beer bottle on the cupboard. He turned back to Steve and examined the other man’s face for a moment as he mulled over what he was about to suggest. He tipped his chin towards the staircase.

“C’mon,” he whispered.

Steve grinned down at him and Danny felt his cock twitch in his pants as he left the kitchen and led the way upstairs. He hesitated on the first landing suddenly overwhelmed with doubt.

This was wrong. It was all wrong. Steve was dead. They had no future. Even if Steve stayed in this house forever he could hardly have a relationship with a ghost. What would that do to his daughter? What would that do to him?
He turned back ready to ask Steve to walk away but one look at those glowing hazel eyes and he knew he was lost.

A tentative smile flicked over Danny’s face and he climbed the rest of the stairs to his bedroom. He shut the door behind them carefully and looked up into Steve’s face again.

“I’m not sure what to….”

“Get undressed,” Steve demanded firmly. “I want to see you.”

Danny shuddered and began to slowly unbutton his shirt. He pulled it off and tried to mask the wince the action caused. He unzipped his khaki’s and his boxers and dropped them to the floor then kicked them away from around his feet. He stood momentarily frozen as Steve’s eyes glided up and down his body.

“God, Danny,” Steve said hoarsely, “So beautiful.”

Danny smiled up at the taller man.

“What do you want?”

“Get on the bed,” Steve commanded, something that Danny was quickly learning to enjoy.

Danny turned and carefully climbed on the bed lying flat on his back so that his already engorged cock lay hard and leaking on his abdomen.

He watched fascinated as Steve gazed at him, his eyes hungrily roaming up and down Danny’s body.

Steve reached out with both hands and began gliding his hands over Danny’s body. The detective moaned and arched into the touch that felt like a whisper of satin over his hot skin.

“Steve…fuck…” he groaned.

“I’ve got you, Danny,” the taller man soothed. “Can you feel me? Can you feel me touching you?”

Danny swallowed hard and nodded.

“Yeah…it’s…I can’t describe it just don’t stop.”

Danny stifled a cry as Steve’s fingers glided over his erect, sensitive nipples.

“Danny, I wish I could…” Steve began, his voice cracking as his hands continued to ghost over the blonde man’s body.

Danny shook his head and reached out to touch Steve, his hand passing through the other man’s body like a mist.

“You’re here with me. We’re together. That’s all that matters right now.”

Steve smiled down at Danny and the blonde man shuddered as the dim light of the room seemed to stream through Steve’s pupils.

“So beautiful,” Danny whispered in wonder.

“Touch yourself, Danny. I want to see you touch yourself.”
Danny closed his eyes and bit his bottom lip as he slid his hand down his body and grasped his almost painfully hard, twitching cock.

“Fuck yourself into your hand, Danny,” Steve commanded, his voice dry and hoarse, “tell me how it feels.”

Danny moaned again as he began thrusting into his own hand.

“Feels so good. Feels…feels like you’re touching me.”

“Open your eyes, Danny.”

The detective’s eyes fluttered open and he gasped as he watched Steve lean over his body and take the tip of Danny’s cock into his mouth. He could see his own cock through Steve’s transparent face. Steve lay one hand over Danny’s as the blonde man stroked himself while the other ghosted over Danny’s balls.

“Oh fuck…Steve…fuck!” Danny hissed feeling an almost electric sensation shooting up and down his cock. He felt his vision begin to grey around the edges as his orgasm pooled in his belly.

Steve pulled off for a moment and the feral look in his eyes almost had Danny shooting his load right then and there.

“Come for me, Danny,” Steve demanded his eyes locked onto Danny’s face as he returned his lips to wrap like a feather around the head of Danny’s cock.

The blonde man arched off the bed and cried out as his orgasm overtook him. He was barely able to open his eyes enough to watch his own sperm shoot rhythmically through Steve’s incandescent body and onto his own belly. It was the most extraordinary sight he’d ever seen.

When he was spent, Danny flopped back down on the bed, his strength dissolving while his heart and breathing began to slow. It was several moments before he could open his eyes again to see Steve sitting weightlessly on the bed gazing down at him. Danny felt his breath hitch in his throat at the lost, heart-broken expression in Steve’s eyes.

“Danny, I wish…” Steve shook his head and looked away, his eyes filling with tears. Danny felt a ghostly touch envelop his hand as his own throat closed with rising emotion.

“Oh, babe,” Danny whispered brokenly.
Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

I think just one more chapter after this. But then I thought that one chapter ago.

Danny’s phone began skittering across the desk as it vibrated to an incoming call. The detective, who had spent the last three hours on paperwork, snatched it up, grateful for a break in the monotony.

“Williams,” he announced into the phone as he pushed his chair away from his desk and arched backward to stretch out the kink in his back.

“Detective Williams?” the female voice on the other end of the phone inquired.

“Yes?”

“This is Sergeant Henderson at Pearl/Hickam personnel records.”

Danny jerked upright immediately.

“Yes, Sergeant. Thank you for getting back to me. Were you able to find out anything about the death of Steve McGarrett?”

Henderson huffed into the other end of the phone surprising Danny with the oddly dismissive sound.

“Yes, I was able to find out many things about Lt. Commander McGarrett…”

Lieutenant Commander; Danny repeated the title to himself with a smile feeling inordinately proud of Steve for achieving that rank.

“…the first thing I found out is that you’ve been given some wrong information, detective.”

Danny drew his eyebrows together in confusion as he leaned his elbows on his desk.

“Oh? What do you mean?”

“Well first of all, Lt. Commander McGarrett did not die in Afghanistan.”

Danny rubbed a hand over his face.

“Oh yeah, that’s right, he died in Germany at the military hospital there…”

“No, detective you’re not understanding me,” Henderson interrupted. “I’m saying Lt. Commander McGarrett did not die at all. He’s alive.”

Danny pulled the phone away from his ear and stared at it as if it had dropped from outer space. He could hear the tinny sound of the Sergeant’s voice coming through the receiver.

“Detective? Are you still there?”
Danny put the phone back against his ear, his hand shaking so hard he could hardly hold it in place.

“Yeah I…Sergeant, are you sure?”

“Positive,” the Sergeant replied briskly. “I’ve checked and double checked.”

“But…” Danny’s voice was barely audible and his breath came in gasps. He cleared his throat and tried again. “But where is he?”

He heard the sound of typing on a computer keyboard then the Sergeant spoke again.

“According to my records he was badly injured in Afghanistan. He was stabilize and then transferred to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany where he remained for just over a month. When he was considered strong enough to fly he was transferred back here to the Tripler Army Medical Center where he remains to this day.”

Danny took several shuddering breaths, still shocked as hell by this turn of events. If Steve was alive then why was his ghost, or spirit or whatever, still haunting his childhood home?

“He’s been in the hospital for over a year?”

“Yes, according to the records.

“What’s wrong with him?”

Henderson sighed softly on the other end of the phone.

“I’m sorry, detective, I don’t have access to that information and even if I did I couldn’t release it to you as you are not a member of the family.”

Danny wanted to argue that Steve was certainly a member of his family now but that would take a bit of explaining…and then the Sergeant would probably send a psychiatrist to cart him away.

“Sergeant I, I don’t know how to thank you. This news is amazing. Thank you so much for telling me.”

Danny could almost feel the woman smiling on the other end of the phone.

“You’re welcome, detective. I’m glad it worked out so well.”

********

Danny sat fidgeting in one of the hard plastic chairs in the administrative waiting area of Tripler Army Medical Center. The heel of one foot beat an irregular tattoo on the linoleum floor as he waited impatiently for Steve’s doctor to show up.

After hanging up with Sergeant Henderson, Danny had shot out of his office and driven like a bat out of hell to the sprawling pink medical center where the man he was quickly falling in love with had been living for over a year without anyone’s knowledge.

After talking his way through several receptionists and one very skeptical-looking head nurse, Danny had been asked to wait in the administration’s outer offices until Captain O’Malley, Steve’s primary doctor, could come and speak to him.

Danny jumped to his feet and all but ran over to the heavy double doors that led into the administrative area when a tall man in his early 30s and wearing a white lab coat pushed one of the
doors open and looked expectantly at Danny. The man had a mop of red hair and a scattering of freckles on his nose and could only be someone named O’Malley.

“Detective Williams?” the man questioned almost taking a step backwards as Danny bore down upon him.

“Yes! Doctor O’Malley? How is Steve, er, Lt. Commander McGarrett? How badly was he hurt? Why has he been in the hospital so long? Can I...?”

O’Malley put up one hand to stop the explosion of Danny’s words and shook his head firmly.

“Detective, hang on. Before I answer your questions we need to sit down and talk.”

Danny huffed out an annoyed breath as the doctor gestured towards the chairs. But he forced himself to calm down and take a seat, the doctor sitting beside him.

“Before I answer your questions I want you to answer mine.” O’Malley started a look of disgust on his face. “If you’re a friend of Commander McGarrett’s, why haven’t you visited him before this? In fact, why hasn’t anyone visited him? I understood the Commander grew up in Hawaii, that’s why he was brought back here, but no one has darkened the door of his hospital room since his sister visited about 14 months ago, stayed 10 minutes and left never to return.”

At first Danny had been offended by the doctor’s demanding tone but he realized the young man was upset that Steve had been alone all of this time. Danny couldn’t blame him.

“Doc, I’m afraid there’s been a terrible misunderstanding. Steve’s friends had been told he died in Germany, that’s why no one ever visited. And I...well I’ve never met Steve personally but we’ve had a lot of... conversations and this is the first I knew that he wasn’t dead. I just moved to Hawaii you see.”

The doctor’s face softened and he nodded slowly.

“I see. That explains it.” He gave Danny a rueful smile. “I’m sorry I spouted off at you like that but it’s difficult for me to know that Commander McGarrett has been here alone with no one to visit him. The staff has been taking turns coming to see him for an hour or two on their days off just to talk to him and let him know he’s not alone.”

Danny’s eyes pricked with tears and he had to turn away for a moment to collect himself. The thought of Steve being alone here day after day, month after month...

Danny sat up straight and swiveled back to look at the doctor.

“Why didn’t Steve have you contact his friends? Is he not able to communicate?” Danny asked worriedly.

The doctor shook his head slowly and gave Danny a sympathetic look.

“Detective Williams, among other injuries from the blast, the Commander received a severe closed head injury. While he’s fully recovered from his other wounds I’m afraid he’s been in a coma since he was hurt.”

Danny felt his heart stutter in his chest.

“Jesus...” he whispered in horror. “For a year and a half? Is he...is he on life support or?”
The doctor shook his head.

“Not as such. He breathes on his own but of course he’s being fed through a stomach tube.”

Danny sat against the back of the plastic chair heavily as he considered the situation. He looked up to the doctor once more.

“What are his chances? Will he wake up?”

The doctor tipped his head to the side as he considered the question.

“Well, miracles do happen. You hear of people waking from a coma after many years so it’s not impossible but…well it isn’t very likely.”

Danny swallowed hard at that information.

“How long can he live in a coma?”

The doctor gave Danny a sad look.

“Decades I’m afraid.”

**********

Danny silently pushed open the door to hospital room 315. After his discussion with Dr. O’Malley, Danny had no idea what situation he would face in this room. Was Steve a shrunken shell of a man? Were his limbs twisted into the fetal position? Would seeing him permanently break Danny’s heart?

The blonde man stepped into the room which was bright with the mid-afternoon sun but was almost funerally quiet. He stopped and gazed for a moment at the figure on the bed.

Steve was propped on his left side with pillows at his back to hold him in place. While the SEAL was pale and certainly thin, he was not as emaciated as Danny expected and he looked peaceful lying in a stream of sunlight. Danny moved closer to the bed stopping only a foot away.

“Hi Steve,” he began hoarsely having to clear his throat and start again. “Hi it’s me…Danny.” The detective snorted derisively at himself. Steve, this Steve, didn’t have the first clue who Danny was.

“I’m Danny Williams and I rent your parents old house with my daughter Grace. You’ve been, or your spirit I guess you’d say, has been visiting with us for some time now. I know you probably think I’m a weirdo but it’s true. Maybe when you wake up you’ll remember huh?”

“The doctor says he isn’t sure if you will wake up but the Steve I’ve come to know is a pretty strong guy so I think you will.”

Danny became more comfortable speaking to this silent man so he moved closer to the bed and took one of Steve’s hands in his. It was warm but lax. Danny marveled at how well his hand fit within Steve’s.

“The thing is, and I know this sounds crazy, but I think your spirit or your essence, or whatever you want to call it, is in the house because you want help. You’re trying to wake up and you need to know you have someone or something to wake up for.”

Danny ran his tongue over his bottom lip and looked out the hospital window for a moment before turning back to Steve.
“I just want to tell you that you do have something to wake up for babe, in fact you have two things – Grace and I. I know that when you wake up you might not know who we are but that’s ok cause we already love you and I think, if you give it time, you’ll learn to love us too.”

Danny blushed and looked down at the bed.

“We don’t have to…well you and I don’t have to have any kind of relationship beyond friendship when you wake up, but I sure hope we will be friends.”

Danny looked back up at Steve and squeezed his hand.

“I’m sorry you’ve been here alone so long, babe. No one knew you were here or I’m sure you would have had dozens of people visiting you regularly. But they’ll come now, I promise. Grace and I will come regularly and I know Chin will get the word out to all of your friends.”

Danny blinked rapidly and had to swallow several times to get rid of the lump in his throat.

“You’re home now, babe, and everyone is waiting for you. I know there won’t be any miracle waking and when you do you’ll have a lot of hard work to do to get your strength back but Grace and I will be with you every step of the way, I promise. Just…please just wake up ok?”

Danny cleared his throat loudly and passed his free hand over his face to catch the couple of tears that had escaped his eyes.

“So umm, I have to go now but I’ll be back to see you very soon and I’ll bring Grace with me. Take care. babe and…well…just, start fighting to come back, ok? Just…”

Danny shook his head and gently laid Steve’s hand back on the bed and turned to hurry out of the room. While he feared being emotionally torn apart seeing Steve in this condition, he found himself feeling oddly calm instead. Something inside him, maybe it was stupid, but something made him believe Steve would come back to them. Of course that could mean a brain damaged Steve, or one who had severe physical problems but right now, Danny would take any Steve he could get.

*********

The hot sand oozed through Danny’s bare toes as he walked along Ewa beach his pant legs rolled up and his shoes in his hands. He had called Fryer to let him know he wouldn’t be coming back to work for the rest of the day and now he was walking aimlessly trying to decide how to handle this mind blowing turn of events.

His first inclination when he left the hospital had been to race to the school and get Grace then speed home to tell Steve that he was still alive and in the TAMC. But as he drove away from the hospital he started to question that idea. He needed some time to work through the thoughts tumbling around in his head, hence the visit to the beach.

Danny wished like hell he had someone to talk to about this. He was wracked with indecision. On the one hand, Steve deserved to know everything about his condition; it was his life after all. Then again, what good would it be to tell Steve that his body was lying a few miles away trapped in a coma? Steve couldn’t leave the house, he’d tried on many occasions. Wouldn’t it just torture him to know his physical form was in the hospital while his soul was stuck in his family home? And even if Steve could get back to his body, would that be enough to start the waking process or… Danny had to stop and close his eyes tightly against the thought…would that be the final step in
Steve’s life. With body and soul reunited, would Steve die?

The detective sat down and buried his toes in the sand. He was a cop and a failed Catholic; these weren’t issues he was trained to deal with. He chuckled humourlessly to himself. Was anyone equipped to deal with a soul separated from its own body? Maybe Stephen King.

Danny put his hand up to shield his eyes from the glare as he watched the surfers out in the rolling water. Up until a few weeks ago Danny had hated Hawaii, hated the sun and the sand and the slow way of life. Oh sure, he’d tried to hide that from Grace who had taken to island life like a native, but Danny missed living in the big city and he missed the east coast and its changing seasons. But ever since meeting Steve, Hawaii had taken on a new meaning for Danny and he was coming to love the place as Steve obviously loved it – despite the Commander’s spotty memory.

But if Danny told Steve about where his body was located and Steve died, the detective wasn’t sure he could stay in Hawaii after that. Foolish as it was, Danny knew he’d fallen in love with Steve and without the other man around – in whatever form – the Jersey native knew he could never find peace or happiness in Hawaii.

So the question was should Danny be selfish and keep this information – and thereby keep Steve – all to himself, or should he tell the other man the truth and let whatever is supposed to happen, happen?

*********

“Hey, babe, how are you?” Steve grinned over at him from where he was standing in front of the kitchen window, the late afternoon light giving him a soft, umber glow.

Danny smiled as Steve moved over to stand in front of him, one hand gently cupping his face. The detective closed his eyes and reveled in the feeling. It was how he imagined it would feel to hold a newborn bird against his cheek.

“Did you have a good day?” Steve asked as one thumb stroked over Danny’s cheekbone.

“Quiet,” Danny replied softly. “Mostly did paperwork.”

“Have you heard anything from that Sergeant in Pearl/Hickam personnel?”

Danny swallowed hard and opened his eyes to look up at Steve.

“Ah, no, not yet. She did say it would take a few days.”

Steve drew his eyebrows together and made a face.

“I don’t remember much about my time in the military but I don’t recall them being quite this slow.”

A strained smile flicked over Danny’s face and he took a step back and gestured towards the stairs.

“I’m going to have a shower, ok? Why don’t we have a picnic on the beach tonight?”

Steve smiled and shrugged.

“Sure…I can watch you guys eat.”

Danny’s face fell and he stepped close to Steve again.
“Oh, babe, I’m sorry. I was being insensitive. It must be torture for you to watch us eat. God I should have…”

“Danny!” Steve interrupted sharply, a fond smile spreading over his face. “It doesn’t matter babe. It doesn’t bother me. It’s not like I’m hungry or anything.”

**********

As soon as Chin found out Steve was alive he and Kono had headed over to TAMC to visit him then set up a rotating shift of friends and acquaintances to do the same. In the coming days the bright but blank hospital room was filled with Hawaiian flowers, music and cards. Surfing posters adorned the walls.

Danny, who hadn’t yet told either Grace or spirit Steve the truth, found reasons to sneak out of the house to visit comatose Steve regularly, usually finding a passel of people in the room laughing and chatting happily.

The TAMC staff all smiled indulgently at the quiet form of Steve on the bed while an uproar of loving friends swirled around him. Part of Danny, the selfish part, kind of wished he still had Steve only to himself, but he knew that this action was what Steve needed – including a giant man named Kamekona holding a plate of garlic shrimp under Steve’s nose urging him to wake up so he could enjoy the best food on the island. If anything would bring Steve out of his coma it would be knowing so many people missed him and wanted him back.

At home spirit Steve continued to become a more intrinsic part of the fabric of Danny and Grace’s lives. Where before Steve would appear for awhile then disappear for hours, sometimes a day, he now spent most of this time with father and daughter. Often Danny would wake in the night to see Steve lying on the bed beside him just gazing at him. The presence of the dark-haired man, even in ghost form, was strangely comforting to Danny and he felt safer and more content with Steve around.

At first Danny used to chide himself for that feeling since Steve could hardly keep them safe having no corporal form. That was until the day he got a call at work from HPD telling him someone had attempted to break into his home. Danny raced home thanking god that Grace had been at school and all but skidded to a stop on the front walk as he viewed the sight of the would-be thief lying on the front steps unconscious, one of Steve’s mom’s old silver candlestick laying on the ground beside him. A man-sized hole in the screen door made it clear the guy had been unceremoniously thrown from the house.

“Not sure what happened here,” the young female officer who was handcuffing the insensible perp told Danny. “How he could knock himself out with a candlestick then fall through a door I don’t know, but there’s no one else around.”

Danny stifled a grin as he saw a still pissed off Steve standing behind the officer, hands clenched into fists and looking like he wanted a few more minutes with the thief.

“Well, you know how stupid most of these guys are,” Danny told the officer. He looked up at Steve and smiled warmly at him. “But he most definitely picked the wrong house to break into.”

**********

Danny slid down the wall of the shower spent and shuddering as he recovered from his orgasm. Steve stood above him, his body seeming to sparkle from the flowing water, a smug smile on his face.
“Jesus, babe,” Danny gasped as he worked to slow his breathing. “Were you this good at giving hand jobs when you were…well…you had the use of your body?”

Steve smiled and sat down in the corner of the shower as Danny climbed to his feet and finished cleaning himself up.

“No, Danno, I was so much better.”

Danny smiled down at the other man then felt his eyes inexplicably fill with tears. He shoved his face under the spray hoping Steve didn’t see the sudden wave of emotion that had overwhelmed him. Of course he was wrong.

“Danno?” Steve asked worriedly, standing up and gliding one hand up Danny’s back causing little sparks on his skin. “What’s the matter babe?”

“I’m fine,” Danny croaked out as he turned off the water and busied himself climbing out of the shower stall and drying himself with a towel.

“Don’t do that, ok?” Steve demanded in annoyance as he passed through the shower doors into the bathroom. “I know you too well Danny. I know when something is bothering you so just tell me alright?”

Danny stared at Steve, swallowing convulsively for a moment before dropping down heavily to sit slumped on the lid of the toilet.

“Oh babe I…I don’t know what to do. I don’t know if I should…I’m scared that if I tell you…”

Danny shook his head rapidly as tears began to roll down his cheeks. Steve knelt down in front of him, his hands brushing feather-light over Danny’s knees.

“Danny what is it? Please just tell me.”

Steve looked scared and Danny knew he had to do what was right, no matter what the consequences.

“Babe,” he began softly, unable to meet Steve’s eyes. “I-there’s something I should have told you, something I’ve been keeping from you. I hope you’ll forgive me but I just didn’t know who to…and I was scared and…”

“Danny!” Steve interrupted gently. “Just tell me, ok? We’ll work it out together.”

Danny raised tear-filled eyes to Steve’s face.

“You’re alive, babe,” he whispered brokenly. “You didn’t die in Afghanistan. You’re alive and in a coma at Tripler Army Medical Center. You’ve been there since you were brought back to the states over a year ago.”

Steve knelt frozen in front of Danny, mouth open and eyes wide with shock.

“But…I don’t…I’m alive?”

Danny nodded unable to speak again.

Steve rose slowly to his feet and turned to walk across the bathroom. He stood facing away from Danny for several long moments before finally turning back.
“How long have you known?” he demanded, his voice tight with anger.

“Two weeks,” Danny responded nervously. He stood and stretched one hand out towards the other man. “Steve I…I thought I was doing the right thing…”

“The right thing?” Steve barked, “How dare you keep this from me? How dare you lie to me like this?”

“Babe,” Danny choked out. “Please, I know it was wrong but I was scared…”

“Why would you do this to me, Danny?”

The detective sniffed loudly and ran the heel of his hand over his eyes before answering.

“I was scared,” he whispered brokenly. “I was scared if I told you you’d disappear, that I would lose you. Maybe your body would die and Grace and I would lose you forever.”

“So, what?” Steve demanded harshly, “You decided it would be better to keep me trapped in his form, in this house, so I could stay around to amuse you while you went on with your life outside?”

Danny took several steps forward and Steve put up his hands to stop him. Danny stopped and let his hands drop heavily to his side.

“Babe, please, it wasn’t like that,” Danny pleaded as he wept openly now. “Don’t you think I want you whole and back in your body? Don’t you think I want you to have your life back? I do but I was afraid if I told you, if the pieces finally came together in your mind, you’d return to your body and I’d lose you forever. That you’d die and I couldn’t handle that.”

“You had no right, Danny,” Steve growled low and dangerous. “You had no right to play god with my life.” Steve turned and passed through the bathroom door. Danny lunged towards it and flung it open watching Steve walk towards the bedroom door.

“Babe wait, where are you going?” he cried out.

“I’m going to get my life back, Danny,” Steve tossed the words over his shoulder as he left the room. “Whether you like it or not I’m going to get my life back.”
That night was one of the longest of Danny’s life.

The detective split his time between pacing his bedroom and wandering around the house quietly calling Steve’s name. Since the man could make himself invisible at will, Danny realized Steve could be standing behind him and he would never know.

Just before dawn, Danny had decided to at least lie down on the bed and close his eyes for a while. Grace would be getting up for school in a couple of hours and he had to at least try to pretend that everything was ok.

As Danny reached up to pull the curtains closed over the bed something outside caught his eye. He moved closer to the window and there, just next to the beach chairs, he could see a faint outline of a man seemingly glittering in the light of the rising sun.

Danny blew out a relieved breath, pulled on a tee shirt and padded down the stairs and outside to the beach. He approached quietly and sat down next to Steve in the sand pulling his legs up and wrapping his arms around his knees. He glanced over at the other man and felt his stomach clench at the look of devastation on Steve’s face.

“Babe…?”

“I couldn’t do it,” Steve muttered quietly almost as if he were talking to himself. “I tried to leave the house and the beach but I couldn’t. Something keeps holding me back. I can’t free myself.”

Danny pressed his lips together afraid that if he spoke Steve would disappear again.

“Why am I here, Danny? Why am I trapped in this existence? Why can’t I go back to my life? I’m useless here. I serve no purpose.”

“Oh no!” Danny hissed through his teeth as he bolted to his knees and scurried across the sand to sit directly in front of Steve. “You do not get to do that!”

The taller man looked at him in confusion.

“Danny, what…?”

“You can be mad at me for not telling you the truth, you can be upset that you are trapped in this existence, I get that and you have every right, but you do NOT get to say you are useless because that just isn’t true!”

Steve made a face and looked away from his friend.

“Oh really? What would you call someone whose spirit hangs around day after day doing nothing while everyone around him lives their lives?”
“What would I call him?” Danny snapped back, “I would call him the most important person in our world!”

Steve snorted at that.

“Your world? I can’t even take you in my arms. I can’t hug Gracie or take her surfing. I can’t make love to you. I can’t…” Steve’s voice broke and he dropped his head so that Danny couldn’t see his eyes.

“Babe, look at me,” Danny demanded feeling his ire rise when he got no response. “Steven! Look at me!”

Steve slowly raised his head and forced himself to look into Danny’s eyes.

“Steve, before you came into our lives Grace and I were lonely and miserable. Grace had just lost her mother and was so devastated that she could barely speak. I had nothing and no one to talk to. Then you showed up and gave Grace the support and love she needed to repair her world. And you gave me the love and companionship I needed to build a happy life here for my daughter.”

Steve opened his mouth to respond but Danny shook his head and held up his hand.

“No. I’m not finished. I know this situation is shitty for you. I know you hate being like this and you want your life back. I know you’re upset at me and I don’t blame you. But don’t you for one minute think you have no value or purpose because you have tremendous value to Grace and I. We love you babe. I love you.”

Steve stared at Danny for a long time as if searching for some sign of deception. He must have been happy with what he saw in the other man’s face because his body relaxed visibly and the corners of his mouth twitched into a small smile.

“I love you too, Danno,” he replied roughly.

Danny licked his lips nervously and shifted closer to the other man.

“Enough to forgive me?”

Steve paused for a moment then nodded his head slowly.

“I understand what you did. It was wrong, but I get why you did it. But Danny, you need to understand that I will never stop trying to get back to my life…even if that means my death. OK?”

Danny released a shaky sigh and nodded.

“I know, babe. Whatever happens was meant to happen I guess I just…I don’t want to lose you.”

Steve reached out and touched Danny on the side of the face sending small sparks though the smaller man’s skin.

“I’ll do my best to stay with you, Danno.”

**********

Grace sat on Steve’s hospital bed reading to the comatose man from one of her Harry Potter books. She had already read every one of them but brought them to the hospital thinking that Steve would
also enjoy them.

Danny smiled at the two then turned to look out the window again. It had been several weeks since Danny had discovered that Steve was alive and living in the hospital. Coming here almost every day, sometimes with Grace and sometimes alone, was something Danny was determined to keep up even if...he shook his head as if to rid himself of the thought but it lingered anyway...even if he was starting to lose hope that Steve would ever wake.

His Steve at home, although still wonderful to Grace and loving to Danny, was starting to disappear more and had become less communicative. Danny knew that Steve forgave him for lying but he also knew that Steve was restless and wanted this half-life of existence to come to some sort of conclusion, one way or another. That thought scared the shit out of Danny and, while he tried to prepare for any eventuality, he knew that if Steve died, it would break him.

“Danno?” Grace’s sweet voice interrupted his dark thoughts and he plastered a smile on his face before turning his attention to his daughter.

“Yes, baby?”

“Do you think Steve can hear me?”

Danny pursed his lips together as he considered the question.

“I’m not sure but...yes I think somewhere deep inside his mind he can hear you.”

Grace put a bookmark on the page she had been reading from, closed the book and set it aside.

“Then why doesn’t he wake up? I want the Steve at home and the Steve here to be together again and wake up so we can do stuff.”

Danny walked around the bed and up to where Grace was sitting cross-legged beside Steve. He reached out to stroke her hair lovingly.

“I want that too, baby, and I hope that happens, but just remember what we talked about. It’s possible that if Steve wakes up he won’t be the person we know and it’s also possible, very possible, that he won’t know us.”

Grace shook her head decidedly and picked up the book once more. Danny knew she was as stubborn as he was when she wanted something.

“No. He’ll know us. He’ll recognize us and he’ll know we love him. Then we’ll be a family.”

Danny looked down worriedly at his daughter as she began to read once more. If Steve didn’t wake up or god forbid, if he died, he didn’t know what effect that would have on his baby girl. She’d already suffered enough trauma in her life.

**********

Danny looked up and smiled as Chin diffidently pushed open his office door and stuck his head in the room.

“Danny? Got a sec?”

The detective put down his pen and sat upright in his chair.

“Yeah, Chin, of course. I always have time for you.”
The older man gave a relieved smile as he entered the office closing the door behind him. He sat down on one of the office chairs looking nervous and uncomfortable.

Danny drew his eyebrows together in concern.

“What is it, Chin? Something wrong?”

Chin blew out a gust of air and nodded his head slowly. He folded his hands on his lap but Danny could see his fingers twitching nervously.

“Yes it’s…this is difficult for me.”

Danny stood up from his chair and came around the desk to sit in one of the visitor’s chairs next to his friend.

“Ok, take your time. Nothing’s wrong is it? Problems with Malia?”

The older man shook his head firmly.

“No, nothing like that. It’s…it’s Vince.”

“Captain Fryer?”

Chin swallowed and nodded.

“Yeah…Danny you know Vince and I are old friends. He was one of my earliest partners after John McGarrett. I learned a lot from him and I…god this is hard.” Chin ran his hand through his hair impatiently.

Danny leaned forward and rested a hand on Chin’s shoulder.

“Chin, relax babe. Just say what you need to say.”

Chin looked up, his face creased with pain.

“Danny…I don’t think Vince is the right person to head Five-0.”

The blonde detective sighed and pulled his hand slowly from Chin’s shoulder and sat back in his chair with a thump.

“I know it’s disrespectful for me to say this and god knows I hate having to do it but, Vince isn’t cut out for this kind of work. He’s good at the administrative stuff and at research but planning ops, doing take downs…?” Chin seemed to sag in his chair. “…the only reason one of us hasn’t been killed is because you and I are handling that stuff, making sure everything is ready to go, watching out for each other.”

Danny gnawed his bottom lip worriedly as he listened to Chin talk.

“I know you know this too Danny, even if you haven’t said anything. We need someone else to lead Five-0. Someone with some ops planning experience. Someone who’s not afraid to get the job done.”

Chin paused for a moment and Danny looked up at him expectantly.

“We need you, Danny.”
The blonde detective made a dismissive sound and climbed to his feet to walk around his desk again. He sat down heavily in his chair.

“No, no way.”

“Danny…”

“Chin!” Danny interrupted firmly. “I don’t disagree with you about Fryer and to be honest I think Fryer even knows he’s not right for the job. But I’m not the person to take over. I don’t want it.”

Chin climbed to his feet and placed his hands on his hips.

“You’re a hell of a good cop and a good leader,” Chin insisted.

The blonde man smiled up at him gratefully.

“Thank you for saying that but no, I don’t want the job Chin. I have a daughter who just lost her mother seven months ago. I need to spend what little free time I have with her. Running this task force, even if that were a possibility, would leave me no time for that. Grace comes first Chin, you know that.”

The older man’s shoulders sagged and he nodded.

“Yeah, I know that. And I don’t blame you.”

“Besides,” Danny continued, “If anyone should run this task force it’s you.”

Chin snorted derisively and shook his head.

“That will never happen, you know that. It’s hard enough to get anyone at HPD to listen to me now let alone if I was in charge of Five-0.”

Danny knew the older man was right. It was bullshit and totally unfair but, although Chin was qualified to take over the task force, they would never get any support from HPD if he did. Danny looked up at his friend again.

“Chin look, we’ll keep an extra eye on Fryer. Make sure we double check all of his plans before we head out in the field. If things get too dangerous we’ll go as a team and talk to the Governor.”

“But…”

Danny stood up from his chair once again.

“Chin, let’s be honest. Even if we could convince Fryer to step down or convince the Governor to remove him, there’s no one else who could do the job effectively. There are a lot of great cops on HPD but no one with the set of skills this job requires.”

Chin dropped his eyes and nodded once, all argument drained out of him.

“We’ll keep our eyes open and continue to watch each other’s backs, ok?” Danny continued trying to sound optimistic.

“And hope no one gets killed in the meantime,” Chin muttered.
Danny grinned up at Steve where the man sat in top of Gracie’s dresser. The SEAL had taken to sitting in bizarre places to amuse the little girl. Danny would never forget the ear piercing shriek when Grace opened the fridge one day to find Steve sitting inside it, the glass shelves and all of their contents seeming to pass through his body. Hide-and-go-seek took on a whole new meaning for Grace with Steve in the house.

Danny shook his head in mock displeasure as Grace pulled her blanket up to cover her mouth as she giggled.

“Danno, should call you Monkey Steve,” she laughed.

“I should call him fool,” Danny grumbled as Steve dropped silently from the dresser. “You’re an animal, Steven.”

The dark-haired man smiled lasciviously and leaned close to Danny, his mouth next to the blonde man’s ear.

“And you love it, Danno,” he growled.

Danny shivered but waved his hand around his ear as if to get rid of a fly.

“Can you please stop bothering me long enough to finish reading to my daughter?”

Steve took a step back and seemed to slouch against the dresser although nothing was holding him up.

“Sure thing babe,” he grinned mischievously.

Danny rolled his eyes and turned back to look at Grace, ready to complain about Neanderthal’s and spooky ninja’s when he noticed his baby was asleep. He couldn’t help but smile fondly down at her as he stood up then bent over her to kiss her forehead. He pulled the blankets up to just under her chin and took a moment to admire his perfect, wonderful child.

Danny straightened up and turned to look over at Steve, a contented smile on his face. The smile dropped away immediately when he caught sight of the look of fear and confusion on his lover’s face. Steve was hunched over, one hand pressed to the side of his head.

“Steve?” he demanded quietly stepping closer to the taller man.

Steve looked up at him and Danny could see him shivering.

“Danny I…something’s wrong,” he whispered fearfully.

“Babe?” Danny took a deep breath and tried to slow his racing heart. “Ok…let’s go to my room. We’ll figure it out, ok?”

Steve had only just entered the hallway when he moaned and collapsed to his knees. Danny shut Grace’s door hurriedly then dropped to his own knees beside Steve. He reached out unconsciously, his hands passing uselessly through Steve’s body.

“Steve, what is it?” Danny demanded fearfully, “What’s happening?”

Steve shook his head and Danny watched him shudder again.
“I-don’t…I feel like…I’m falling or…” the taller man stuttered.

“Steve,” Danny choked feeling overwhelmed with helplessness. He couldn’t call an ambulance. He couldn’t wrap his arms around his lover. He could only watch uselessly.

As Danny looked on in horror Steve seemed to flicker like a sputtering candle.

“Danny I,” Steve gasped as he reached out a shaking hand towards the blonde man. “I’m sorry I can’t st-stop it.”

Danny sobbed loudly, his hands scrabbling for Steve but finding only air.

“Steve no, please…”

“I’m…” Steve gasped as he collapsed to the floor.

“Steve!” Danny cried out desperately tears now streaming down his face. He watched in horror as Steve’s body flickered once more then vanished.

“Steve!” Danny sobbed feeling around the carpeting as if to find some last trace of the man.

Finally Danny climbed unsteadily to his feet and stumbled his way to his bedroom, his hands stretched out to keep from crashing into the walls. Danny shut the bedroom door firmly behind him. He sagged back against the door and sank bonelessly to the floor.

He pulled his knees up to his chest and sank his forehead against them to muffle the sound as his body was wracked with sobs. Steve must have died in the hospital and now his spirit was gone from their lives. It was over so quickly. He and Grace were alone again.

**********

Danny jerked awake at the ringing of his cell phone. He looked around in confusion for a moment wondering why he was curled up on his bedroom carpet until reality crashed over him again. Steve was gone. He was gone.

The detective felt his dry, sore throat tighten again and he blinked hard to keep the tears at bay. It was probably someone from Five-0 calling about a new case. He had to answer. He had no choice. Danny climbed unsteadily to his feet and staggered over to the bedside table and snatched up his phone before sinking heavily to the bed, his forehead dropping into his free hand.

Somehow, after telling Grace that her beloved Uncle had died and she had lost another person she loved, Danny would have to go to work this morning and do his job with his guts ripped out of him. What could he tell people? He needed bereavement leave because the ghost living in his house had gone? Or because the comatose man he’d been visiting but didn’t really know had died?

Danny shut his dry, burning eyes tightly and thumbed the answer button on his phone.

“Williams,” he croaked his voice barely audible.

“Oh, Detective Williams, I’m glad I caught you.”

Danny recognized Dr. O’Malley’s voice immediately and took in a shaky breath as he prepared himself for the confirmation of the event he’d been dreading for months.

“Yeah, Doctor, I know it’s…it’s Steve isn’t it?”
“Yes,” O’Malley replied quickly, “I was sure you’d want to be the first to know.”

“I know he’s…” Danny choked on the words and had to clear his throat loudly. “He’s gone?”

There was a long pause then Dr. O’Malley shocked the hell out of Danny by actually laughing.

“Gone? No detective he’s not gone, he’s awake!”

Danny sat frozen for a moment, his sluggish brain unable to grasp what the doctor was saying.

“What?”

“He’s waking up! It’s a god damned miracle. He’s opened his eyes and he’s been able to lightly squeeze my fingers in response to my commands.”

The doctor laughed heartily again as Danny sat unable to move, his mouth open in shock and disbelief. His heart was pounding so loudly in his chest he could barely hear the doctor’s words.

“I swear to god he even tried to say something this morning although I’m not sure it was a word. It sounded like ‘dunno’ or something. My god never in my entire career have I experienced…”

Whatever the doctor was saying was lost to Danny who had thrown the phone to the ground, wrenched open the bedroom door and was now racing down the hallway to Grace’s room.

**********

Epilogue

Danny sighed happily as he snuggled back against Steve’s chest. Ever since Steve had come home, after four months in a rehabilitation hospital, Danny still woke with a tendril of fear in his heart that he’d been dreaming; that Steve was actually dead and the months he and Grace had spent with Steve’s soul were just a shared illusion.

Then he’d feel Steve arms wrap around him a little tighter and his warm breath tickle at his neck and he knew it was real. Steve was alive and gaining strength and they were together again.

“Hmmm,” Steve hummed softly as he buried his face in Danny’s neck contentedly. “I could stay this way forever.”

Danny snorted and turned over so that they were face to face.

“No you couldn’t. You’d enjoy it for a while but then you’d be itching to go for a swim or a run or climb a mountain.”

Steve smiled brightly as he tipped his head forward to give Danny a gentle kiss on the nose.

“Mountain climbing is out for a while until I get stronger but the swim sounds good. Wanna go with me?”

Danny rolled his eyes even as he shimmied closer to Steve’s warm body.

“Steven, we’ve had this discussion before. I do not like oceans. I do not like beaches. I don’t not like…”
“Pineapple on pizza,” the SEAL finished the thought with a laugh. “Yes, Danno, I’ve heard that before.” He grinned happily at the other man. “What do you like?”

Danny smiled and waggled his eyebrows.

“I like that thing you do with your tongue.”

Steve grinned like a loon then slowly slid under the covers out of sight. Danny rolled on his back and sighed contentedly as he felt Steve’s hot mouth kiss its way down to Danny’s already thickening cock.

**********

The Governor stood and put out his hand for Steve to shake as the SEAL walked into his office. The Commander had been confused at receiving the phone call from the Governor’s office this morning asking him to appear at 2 p.m. for a meeting. Danny hadn’t seemed very surprised that Steve had received the call and that confused him even more.

“Commander McGarrett, good to meet you. I’ve heard a great deal about you and let me say your strength in coming back from being in a coma for so long is truly inspiring.”

Steve blushed but nodded.

“Thank you, sir.”

Denning gestured for Steve to sit in one of the guest chairs in the room while he sat down once more in his own leather desk chair. Denning folded his hands on top of the desk and regarded Steve intently for a moment.

“Commander I’ll come right to the point, I want you to take over the running of Five-0.”

Steve sat stunned for a moment blinking owlishly at Denning.

“Sir?”

“I’ve seen your record, Commander. You were a hell of a SEAL and one of the best intelligence officers the Navy ever had. I think you’re the perfect person to run Five-0. I’m tired of the drugs and the gangs and I want you and the team to clean up my island. You’ll have full means and immunity.”

“But…” Steve began in confusion. “Captain Fryer…”

Denning waved a dismissive hand.

“Captain Fryer and I have talked about it. He has asked to return to head the HPD’s detective’s division and after looking into your record and talking to Williams, Kelly and Kalakaua, I believe you are the perfect man to run my task force.”

Steve chewed his bottom lip contemplatively for a moment. It was a hell of an offer and he had a feeling he’d love the job – especially working with Danny and the rest of the team.

“Sir, I…I’m honoured, but you should know that I’m not at 100% yet. My muscles had atrophied after being in bed so long and I’m still working to regain my strength.”

Denning stood and came around his desk. He perched one hip on the edge then crossed his arms and looked down at Steve intently.
“I understand that, Commander, and I know you’re still recovering. I have no problem with you running Five-0 from behind a desk for a while if that’s what you need. But I need you. Your skills and training and experience are exactly what’s required to make an even greater success of this task force.”

Steve watched Denning’s face carefully.

“Sir, you know that Detective Williams and I are in a relationship. We’re living together and raising his daughter. I love him and I love Grace and they will always be first with me. If you have any problem with that or…”

“Commander,” the Governor interrupted briskly. “I’m aware of your relationship with Detective Williams – hell the whole island is – and I have no problem with it. As long as you and Detective Williams can work together as professionals and keep your private life out of your job, I am perfectly happy to have him stay on the team.”

Steve took a moment to consider the offer. The truth was that he’d been longing for some new opportunity to come along. It was doubtful that he’d be able to return to the Navy – at least not for several months – and he wasn’t sure he wanted to anyway. He didn’t want to do anything to separate him from Danny and Grace more than necessary but he also thought he’d go mad if he stayed home any longer.

Steve stood up and smiled happily at the Governor.

“Sir, I’d be pleased to accept your offer. Thank you.”

Denning grinned and climbed to his feet as well taking Steve’s hand in a firm shake.

“That’s wonderful, Commander. I’m very pleased. I’ll have my assistant draw up the necessary forms and you can start on Monday if you like. Until then Five-0 is off duty for the next four days.”

**********

Steve shut the front door behind him and drew his eyebrows together in confusion at the empty, quiet house. He’d called Danny an hour ago and asked him to pick up Grace and meet him at home for a surprise. He’d obviously underestimated the amount of time it would take his boyfriend to get home.

Steve put the bouquet of flowers he’d bought for Grace down on the coffee table then walked into the kitchen and grabbed a beer. He wandered out to the lanai happy to wait in the sun until Danny and Grace showed up. Steve almost dropped the beer bottle when he opened the screen door and everyone he loved shouted “surprise!”

He barely had time to put the bottle down on the arm of a nearby chair when Grace ran to him and threw herself in his arms. He picked her up, hugged her tightly then shifted her to his hip as Danny walked up and stood on his tip toes to kiss him firmly on the lips.

“What’s all this?” Steve laughed as he watched Kono, Chin, Max and Charlie unpacking a cooked chicken and a variety of pre-made salads from a grocery bag.

“It’s all for you, babe, to celebrate your new job!” Danny replied happily.

Steve looked down at his lover in shock.
“How did you know? The Governor only asked me an hour ago.”

Danny grinned smugly as Steve lowered Grace to the ground so that she could help with the meal preparations.

“The Governor asked us last week what we would think of the idea so when he called you this morning we figured he’d finally made up his mind.”

Steve pulled Danny tight against him and leaned down to kiss his lover on the forehead.

“Thanks, Danno.”

The two men looked up when Chin and Kono approached with a cold beer for each of them. The four stood in a loose circle and grinned at each other foolishly for a moment before Kono raised her beer.

“Welcome home, boss.”

The four drank to the toast then Danny tightened his arm around Steve’s waist and buried his face in his boyfriend’s shirt for a moment.

“Welcome home, babe,” he whispered.

The end.

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