**The Marriage of Heaven and Hell**

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**Summary**

Part 9 of All Thy Heart.

*William Blake, The Argument, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*

'Meet me for lunch?'

'Lunch? Sorry, Hutch. I'm meeting an old friend for lunch today.'

'That's okay,' Hutch said, quickly. Maybe too quickly?

Starsky was pouring coffee, and didn't seem to notice the too-quickly nature of Hutch's reply.

Hutch was never jealous. He had never been jealous. He didn't want to be jealous. Starsky was his best friend. His lover. His former partner. He didn't own Starsky. He didn't want to own Starsky. What would be the point of owning Starsky? He and Starsky had lunch together most days of the week. They had dinner together. They were currently having breakfast together. They slept together every night, for fuck's sake. There was nothing wrong with Starsky having lunch with an
old friend. It was a good idea, actually. They should spend some time apart, once in a while.

Starsky was buttering toast, and didn't seem to notice Hutch's internal monologue on the folly of his non-existent jealousy.

The thing was, he told himself, you spend too much time together. Well, you used to spend too much time together. Almost all day, and quite a few hours of the night. For years. Day in and day out. He never noticed the depth of your feelings for him, because we were drowning in the ocean of our unity. We became accustomed to living in each other's back pockets. Close to our desire. Close, but not too close. Warm, but not hot. Burning at a steady rate. Now, you're in his pants, all the time. Maybe too close. Hot, hot, hot. Maybe too hot. Burning at both....

'Hutch? You with me?'

'Uh... yeah, Starsky. I'm with you.'

'Good. Like you to be with me. Right with me... or a little ahead... or not too far behind.'

'What are you babbling about, Starsk?'

'Jeez, if you don't know.... Look, what are you doing for the morning? Gonna be doing any driving?'

'Don't think so. I'll be in my office, most of the morning. Why?'

'Mind if I drive you to work, then use the car for the morning? I'll go have lunch with my old pal, then drop it off at Metro. The Torino, I mean. How's that?'

'Course, Starsky. It's your car. But, I can drive myself, if you like. In my own car.'

'No way! Not until you buy yourself a decent car. Hutch, I keep tellin' ya. You're a Lieutenant, now. We can afford it, and you need a car with class.'

'I've been too busy to go car hunting,' said Hutch.

'I know you been too busy. I can look for you, if you like.'

'No way. Don't trust you. I'll look this weekend.'

'Okay. But I'm coming with you,' said Starsky. 'Gonna make sure you get something classy, but hot. Something dignified, in dark blue.'

'Like your eyes,' said Hutch.

'Like your soul,' said Starsky.

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'Hutchinson? Got a minute?'

'Dobey! Sure. What's up?'

'Just checking on how things are going,' said Dobey. He stepped into Hutch's office, and shut the door.

'Actually, we're moving along,' said Hutch. 'Tons of evidence, made up of little details that don't mean much, taken by themselves, but which add up to an interesting picture. Then, I talked to an
actual witness the other day. She gave me some information I'm working on.'

'Good. Good,' said Dobey. He looked as if he wanted to say more, but wasn't sure how his words would be received.

'Was there something you wanted to tell me, Captain?' asked Hutch. 'Is the Task Force about to be shut down, just as we're getting somewhere? If so, I'm mad as Hell, but not surprised. Been expecting it, in fact.'

'Huh? No, Hutch. The Task Force is still on. The brass are happy with your work, so far. No, I just thought I should warn you to be careful, that's all.'

'Careful? In what way, Dobey? Am I stepping on someone's toes? I'm only doing my job.'

'It's not the job, Hutch. It's well... your private life. There are rumours.'

'Rumours? About my private life? People around here need more to do, I think. There's plenty of crime out there they could be fighting.'

'I agree,' said Dobey. 'But there are those around here, that see you as a threat. You've been promoted, for one thing.'

'Yeah, and it's not like I've earned it,' said Hutch.

Dobey laughed. 'There are people,' he said. 'Who never see anyone as earning what they get. And then, there's Starsky.'

'Oh, yeah?' asked Hutch. 'What about Starsky?'

'When you moved in together, a few eyebrows were raised around here.'

'Good,' said Hutch. 'Probably the most exercise some of them have had in years.'

'Yeah, well. Like I said, they see you living with Starsky, as a threat to the social order. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with it.'

'Good,' said Hutch again. 'Because there is nothing wrong with it. And if anyone suggests to me, or to Starsky, that there is something wrong with it, I will become a threat.'

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'David Starsky.'

'Michael Armstrong.'

They clinked coke bottles, and drank.

'It's been a while,' said Armstrong, looking around at the children playing in the park. He took a reflective bite of his hamburger.

Starsky was chewing on his hot-dog. He mumbled something in reply.

'I know,' said Armstrong. 'People grow apart. But I got the feeling sometimes that you resented me.'

Starsky spit out a mouthful of hot-dog. 'Resented you?' he asked. 'No. Didn't resent you. It got to be too much, was all. The feeling that you were looking for a way to repay me. You know, Spike,
that's worse than feeling a guy is waiting for you to repay him. You don't owe me anything. You owe me nothing.'

'I owe you everything,' said Armstrong. 'And I always will. But, since you looked me up, maybe you've found a way for me to pay back some of it?'

'Maybe,' said Starsky. 'That remains to be seen.'

Hutchinson headed for the garage. Starsky was bringing the Torino around, then he was going to take a cab to the film set for the afternoon. It was nonsense, thought Hutch. Starsky was spending money on cabs -- okay, it was coming out of his expense account, but still -- and all the time, Hutch had a perfectly viable car of his own. He should have just gone out the door, climbed into it, and driven himself to work. What was he doing, letting Starsky take over his life like this? He was threatening to make Hutch buy a Mercedes, for God's sake. Hutch yawned. Wasn't getting enough sleep, lately. And whose fault was that?

He passed the front desk. Perkins was there, chatting with some cops in uniform. He nodded pleasantly, as Hutch passed. 'Hutchinson,' he said.

'Perkins,' said Hutch, with icy politeness. The other cops nodded, too, and smiled. Eerie, thought Hutch. Like they were all robots, or something.

Starsky wasn't in the garage, when Hutch arrived. Nor was the Torino waiting for him. Starsky was late. That was fine. People got held up in traffic. It didn't mean that Starsky's old friend was of the female persuasion, and they had spent their lunch time wrapped in naked, sweaty passion in some No Tell Motel.

Where had that come from, Hutch wondered? Starsky wouldn't treat him like that. There was no need to, for one thing. Hutch had told Starsky many times, that when he wanted to break off the sex part of their relationship, Hutch would understand, and nothing else would change. God! He hoped he would be able to bear it when it happened.

The Torino pulled into the garage, and Starsky bounced out, smiling cheerfully.

'Here ya go, Hutch. Treat her nice. I'm gonna call a cab. Pick me up after work?'

'Sure, but I can drive you there, as well.'

'Nah. The cab is fine. It's all on my expense account, I keep tellin' you. If I don't use it, they get suspicious. Wonder what I'm up to. Hey! You take it easy, okay?'

'Okay,' said Hutch. 'See you tonight?'

'Ya sure will,' said Starsky, with a secret little smile, that calmed Hutch's fears. He went off to call a cab, and Hutch climbed into the Torino. It smelled smoky. Cigars, thought Hutch. Ladies don't usually smoke cigars. Not the kind of ladies Starsky dated. Starsky's old friend was a man then, which was reassuring. Unless.... No, Hutch told himself. Quit it, Hutchinson. Sometimes a cigar is only a cigar.

'What's the matter?'

'Nothing's the matter.'
'Don't give me that, Hutch. Something's the matter.'

'Do you ever want to, you know, make love with other people?'

'Other people? You mean, women people?'

'Yeah, I guess that's what I mean.'

Starsky lay on his back, staring at the ceiling. 'I saw a pretty lady today. She pulled at me, you know? I imagined her and me, kissing, doing other things. Her boy friend showed up. He's got several inches on me, and about twenty pounds.'

'Yeah?'

'Yeah. You see, Hutch, even if I wanted someone else, wouldn't mean I'd get them. All this is pure speculation. Doesn't mean shit. We're real.' He turned to look at Hutch. 'What is all this crap? Thought I'd cured you of it.'

'I don't know,' said Hutch. 'I guess I'm scared.'

'Of your dick?'

'My what?'

'Remember? You were scared of your dick. And I cured you of that. Stroked it a lot. Kissed it a lot. What're you scared of this time?'

Hutch looked into Starsky's eyes. What was he scared of, this time? 'My heart,' he said, at last. 'I guess I'm scared of my heart. Trusting anyone with it, so completely.'

'Hmm,' said Starsky. 'How do I cure you of that?' He sat up, and looked down at Hutch. 'This is gonna take a while, but you have to start somewhere. Why don't I show you I belong to you? Go on. I'm at your mercy. Do anything you like.'

'Can I... can I suck your toes?'

'My toes?' Starsky roared with laughter.

'No, I'm serious. I want to suck your toes.'

'Sure, Babe. Whatever you want. And when you're finished with my toes, you can move on up.'

'Yeah,' said Hutch. 'I can.'

*** The End ***

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