The Big Sleep

by Maverick

Summary

Chandler was right about a lot of things. Just not this.

Notes

For the Quote's Challenge. I chose -- *A really good detective never gets married* - Raymond Chandler.

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Some say that the hardest thing about stakeouts is staying awake. That’s never really been a problem for Donald. He’s always been able to stay alert -- keeping his eyes on the prize and his mind sharp with thoughts of other cases, chores around the house, or other things to make sure he stayed awake. He purposely never lets himself think about Timmy when he’s out freezing his ass off waiting for his quarry to arrive because thoughts of Timmy at home, warm in their bed can make him forget even his own name.

He figures that’s why Raymond Chandler always said a good detective never gets married. Donald’s always been a fan of Chandler. He identifies with Philip Marlowe more than any other detective ever written. He’s has a depth of character and a complexity that Donald hopes he shares. He’s also developed Marlowe’s ideal of not accepting payment for something he finds ethically wrong due in part to Timmy’s influence. Before he met Timmy, he would take any case, he really didn’t have a choice if he wanted to make rent and eat more than peanut butter and jelly sandwiches every night. But now, he can be more discriminate and Timmy encourages him in this. Donald views those occasions as ways to keep his hands clean and his heart open. He wants
to be the man that Tim Callahan deserves and not letting himself get bamboozled by a big pay out
is one way he can do that.

Which means that some months, Timmy ends up paying all the bills. In the early days of their
relationship, this would eat away at Donald and he’d inevitably pick a fight with Timmy because
he felt guilty and he’d end up sleeping at his office or in his car for a few days until he
remembered that somewhere along the line, Tim Callahan became as fundamental to him as the air
he breathes.

He never meant it to be that way. He’s always been the self-sufficient type. Even as a kid, he was
kind of a loner. Both his parents worked long hours, so he learned how to cook a mean mac n
cheese and how to be alone. He always envied those kids in school with the big families, but he
would never ever admit it to them.

Donald joined the Army thinking he would find his home among his comrades, that he would be a
part of something bigger than himself. He wanted to lose himself in the routine, in the
brotherhood, to go from a *man* to a *soldier*. Along the way he found out who he really was.
He became a man just like the Army promised, just not the type of man the Army wanted among
their ranks.

So in the end, he found himself even more alone.

He figured he was better off that way. No emotions to complicate his life, no one waiting up to
make sure he was safe, no one offering an ice pack to soothe his broken nose. But what they
never tell you in the novels or the movies is that no complications is just a nicer way to say lonely
as hell.

And he learned the hard way that lonely doesn’t make you a better detective. It just makes you
more willing to take stupid chances that can get you killed.

Donald stopped taking those chances when Tim Callahan entered his life.

~*~*~*~*~

Sliding under the covers, Donald tried his best not to wake Timmy, but he should have known
better than to even make the effort.

Timmy’s arms were around him pulling him close almost the moment his backside hit the bed.
“You’re freezing.” Timmy rubbed his hands up and down Donald’s arms and pulled him flush
against him.

“Yes, I am. I’d be a whole lot happier, not to mention warmer, if blackmailers would learn to
make their deals during the day time.”

Timmy kissed the top of Donald’s head. “Yes, it *is* very inconsiderate of them to make you go
out and catch them on such cold nights. Maybe you can bring it up at the next blackmailers ’r us
meeting.”

Donald laughed and nuzzled Timmy’s jaw. “Hmm, have you always been this funny or am I just
sleep deprived?”

Rubbing warming circles across Donald’s back, Timmy chuckled. “Probably a bit of both. Did
you get your guy?”
Donald nodded his head against Timmy’s chest. “Yep. Turned him over to Bub and came home.”

“And for once, you don’t look worse for wear.”

Donald reached up and stroked his thumb along Timmy’s jaw. “Nope, other than a cold ass and frozen toes, this one went down without a hitch.”

Timmy covered Donald’s feet with his own, letting his warmth leach the coldness away. “Kenny’ll be so disappointed. You know how he loves to fuss over your manly wounds.”

Donald laughed again. “Well as you’re the only one I want fussing over me, he’ll have to learn to live with the disappointment.”

“As well he should,” Timmy said moving his hands to settle on Donald’s ass. “I’m quite sure we’ll come up with a way to warm you up right once you get some sleep.”

Lifting his head, Donald kissed Timmy behind the ear. “I’m gonna hold you to that.”

Timmy wrapped himself even tighter around Donald, pulling the comforter up around both of them. “I know you will. Sleep now, darling. I’ll be here in the morning.”

As Donald drifted off to sleep -- his hand on Timmy’s heart -- he thought of Chandler and how he got the marriage thing dead wrong. Maybe fictional gumshoes could go it alone, but in real life, a detective’s greatest asset was someone to come home to at the end of the night.

At least if that person was Timmy Callahan.

—FIN—

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