

# Go Figure

*By Linda B.*

Friends.

Go figure. Sometimes you want to yell at them. Sometimes you want to ring their necks. Sometimes you want to hug them.

About an hour ago, I returned from Minnesota. It had been a quick trip, but a long weekend. I'd gotten the call Friday afternoon that my mom had entered the hospital unexpectedly. She'd collapsed at a women's club meeting, and they'd taken her to the hospital by ambulance. My father, CEO and all around stoic guy, was lost. He didn't know what to do with himself, what to do for her.

So, at Starsky's suggestion, I asked Captain Dobey for Monday off and headed out. Starsky wanted to come, I know, to see if he could help or offer support by just being by my side. But he didn't have any days left to take off. And he didn't want to ask Dobey. We both knew what the answer would be. Even *his* kindness had limits.

Starsky had returned to work not long ago. In fact, I still have nightmares about that night in Giovanni's. It was the night I almost lost my best friend to a bullet wound in the back. Dobey had given him, and me, recovery time.

So, I reassured Starsky that I'd be fine, as I hurriedly packed my duffel bag, and I avoided his eyes. Those eyes. They could charm the girls. They could scare a hardened criminal into a confession. They even suckered in the doctors. How could I forget the reservation I'd seen in the doctor's eyes two days earlier, when he'd reluctantly signed the release allowing Starsky to go back to work. But I had seen my partner work his charm. That big sappy grin. The charming, light-hearted banter. The lowered eyelids, which covered deep blue eyes and hid the still present pain.

Those eyes wouldn't work any charms on me--not if I avoided looking deeply into them. Instead, I told him, "Remember to get lots of rest this weekend. The doc gave you the okay for going back to work, but it's only because you convinced him you're fine. You haven't convinced me. You definitely aren't ready to take on the world yet."

So Starsky waited patiently, if not reluctantly, while I ran around the apartment like a madman, tossing things here and there, trying to remember everything. He even shook his head and sighed. "Your apartment is beginning to look like the back seat of your car." After a quick glance around the room, I had to agree with him. But there was no time.

He drove me to the airport and even handed me twenty dollars because I came up short when it was time to pay for the ticket. As I ran down the gateway, I turned around and

yelled out, "Get some rest!" I saw him laugh and wave--with his right hand. Then, I'd taken the flight by myself, worried about my mother up ahead, worried about my partner left behind.

I'm home now. I caught an earlier return flight than I had originally planned. My mom had been released from the hospital. The doctors had explained she'd been hit with a really bad case of the flu and, since she hadn't been taking care of herself, had become dehydrated. After giving her some fluids intravenously, they kept her overnight and then released her. I made sure she was comfortable at home and my dad was back in control. I suddenly realized how much I dreaded what would happen to him if my mother died first.

I decided to take an earlier flight, but I hadn't bothered to call Starsky, because I didn't want to wake my still sleeping partner. Instead, I grabbed a taxi at the airport.

When I arrived at my apartment, I was speechless. I set my bag on the floor and walked around. The place was spotless. There wasn't a thing out of place. No dirty clothes were hung haphazardly about, no dirty dishes in the sink, no bed unmade. I walked around, lightly touching the newly polished tables, the watered plants, and newly hung clean towels in the bathroom.

On the table there was a bottle of champagne and a note. All it said was "Welcome Home."

I picked up the phone and dialed.

A sleepy voice answered. "Hello."

"Why--?" Was all I could get out before he replied.

"Because I felt like it."

I could almost see the shrug of his shoulders.

"Thanks," came my reply. "Go back to sleep. I took the red-eye home. I'll call you later, after we both get some much needed sleep."

The soft grunt on the other end told me my partner was already rolling over to go back to sleep.

I smiled.

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*The End*