

How The Legend Began

By The Blintz

It was just another day at the Academy, and they were just two more cadets. There was nothing extraordinary about them. Nothing that anyone could point to later and say, “I knew there was something special about those two.” Just your average, run-of-the-mill cadets.

Rumor had it that the tall, athletic blonde was from somewhere in the Midwest. He was quiet, aloof - kept himself separated from the other police officer wannabes. He had built a solid wall around himself; carefully constructed it brick by brick to protect the tender soul inside. If one looked closely enough, it was obvious the wounds ran deep, and there were many of them. But, of course, no one could ever look that closely. That was the whole purpose of the wall, and the man had spent an agonizingly long time constructing it. He had done his best to make sure no one could penetrate his defenses.

The shorter man, with the mop of dark, curly hair, was a different story. He was so active—energized by some unseen force. Yet he, too, was strangely alone. Not in the quiet, withdrawn way of the blonde. This man was the life of the party, always good for a laugh. He had a smile that lit up the room, but that smile was too quick in coming, too quick to leave. No one ever really knew the scared, vulnerable child behind the facade. This man had encased himself in an impenetrable suit of armor, carefully shutting out a world that had left him hurting one too many times.

On that particular day, the inevitable happened. The Academy gym was alive with activity. The blonde was working out with the free weights when, suddenly, he felt a presence. It was familiar and yet unsettling at the same time. He stood and turned around just in time to see the dark haired one enter the room. At that exact moment in time, their eyes met. Deep sapphire blue eyes met azure blue eyes, and, for those two average, run-of-the-mill cadets, time stood still. All activity in the gym seemed to cease. Their entire universe narrowed down to two pairs of eyes locked together. And somehow, they knew. Each man knew in his own way that his entire life had been narrowed down to this one moment. Somehow they had been drawn to this place, at this exact time, for this event. Instantaneously, each man knew that this was the beginning of what his life was meant to be.



Kenneth Hutchinson walked out of his room and headed for the great outdoors. The past week at the Academy had been grueling, and he was ready for some relaxation. It was Friday afternoon, and classes would not resume until Monday morning. He planned to spend the weekend communing with nature and catching up on some much needed rest.

He walked out of the front doors and automatically headed for the park nearby. He'd only been at the Academy for a week, but he had found the park on his first day and spent as much time there as possible. Watching the birds and squirrels playing in the trees always gave him a lift. He knew the other cadets saw him as being stuck up and snobbish, but he really didn't care. It was easier that way - no one to ridicule him or hurt him with their snide remarks. He had had plenty of that from his own family, and he sure didn't need it from a bunch of strangers. Keeping people at arm's length was his specialty. Sure, it got lonely at times, but to him, having friends and caring about people wasn't worth the risk.

As he made his way down the jogging path, his mind drifted again to two days ago in the gym. He had made eye contact with a dark-haired man. Period. No big deal.

At first he had felt as if he were naked in front of the stranger, as if the man could see all his hidden secrets. Strangely enough, Kenneth had to admit he had not felt threatened by this. In fact, he almost welcomed the scrutiny, and for one split second he actually thought he was going to run over to the man and unburden himself of all of the pain and humiliation he had nurtured for so long. But something in those eyes had stopped him. And, if he was honest with himself, he had to admit that what he had seen in those eyes had touched him deeply in a place he thought he had buried a long time ago.

Suddenly, he had seen all of the grief and anguish the dark-haired man was holding inside, and the intensity of it took his breath away. As the full force of the man's pain had hit him, a group of cadets had come between them, severing the contact and breaking the spell. When they had finally moved out of the way, the man was gone, swallowed up in the crowd.

Kenneth had left the gym that day determined to find out more about the stranger. He had discovered that the man's name was David Michael Starsky, and that he was from New York. They were the same age and from what he had heard through the rumor mill, the two men were as opposite as night and day. There was no reason for him to pursue his inquiries any further. He was convinced that the 'connection' he had felt in the gym was just the product of his overactive imagination.



David Michael Starsky tilted his head back and felt the warmth of the afternoon sun caress his face. It was a beautiful day, and he had gone to the park to try out his new 35mm camera, complete with the latest zoom lens. He loved to watch people when they didn't know they were being watched, loved to capture the unguarded truth that shone out of their faces. Quite frankly, people fascinated him, and photography was his way of studying the human race.

He had only been at the park a short time when he saw the blonde Mr. America from the Academy. He, too, had done his homework, and had learned the man's name was

Kenneth Richard Hutchinson. Information concerning this one was very sparse on the grapevine. None of the other cadets seemed to know much about the man but the general consensus was that he was a stuck up, spoiled, rich kid who thought he was too good for the rest of civilization. So, David had used his irresistible charm to sweet talk one of the clerks in admissions. She had let him take a peek at Hutchinson's file and there he had learned the mysterious blonde was from Duluth, Minnesota, he was married, and his family was apparently pretty well to do.

During the upcoming week, the cadets were supposed to pick out their training partners and without exception, everyone that David talked to agreed that Mr. Hutchinson was going to be very lonely indeed. On the surface, David tended to agree with them. Hutchinson apparently never tried to get to know any of his fellow cadets. He hadn't been to any of the social functions - David had never even seen him at the local watering hole after class. He went straight to his dorm room after classes and was not seen again until he arrived bright and early for the next day's sessions.

But the other cadets had never been captured by the intensity of those azure blue eyes. When David had entered the gym that day, he was surprised to find his gaze hypnotically drawn to the eyes of the other man. At first, David saw only the hurt and anger dwelling in that soul. As he had stood and stared, transfixed, into those eyes, he had actually felt the pain radiating off the other man in waves. He wondered briefly what could have happened in the blonde's life to hurt him so badly and was very surprised to find out that he really cared. He really wanted to make some of that hurt go away. But that was impossible. David had stopped caring about anyone a long time ago. If you didn't love someone, they couldn't hurt you when they went away. It was the safest place for him to be.

Then, ever so subtly, the focus of the scrutiny had changed. David had felt as if he were an open book in front of the man, as if the stranger could read his every thought and feeling as plainly as if they had been written on his forehead. For one brief moment, he saw refuge in those eyes. A haven. A place where he could run for comfort and security. Then the throng of people had come between them, breaking the spell, and David had run panic-stricken from the room. He was convinced he would have spilled his guts to the tall stranger if he had spent one more second under the influence of that crystal blue gaze. And that was definitely not going to happen.



David jolted out of his reverie in time to see Hutchinson coming around the bend of the jogging path. He quickly made up his mind that today, in this park, he was going to speak to this man and dispel his wistful fantasies of the other day in the gym. He figured that when he talked with the man and found out he really was a stuck up snob, he could forget the illusions of strength and healing he had seen in those eyes. He could go on with his life, become a cop, and keep things as simple as possible. That was the way he

liked things - simple and uncomplicated. Somehow, however, the thought made him sad and left him feeling strangely empty inside.

By this time, the blonde had started in on his next lap, so David decided to wait until the next round. So he waited. And waited. And then he waited some more. But the man did not reappear. Waiting had never been one of David's strong suits, so he started to go the other way on the path to see what was taking Hutchinson so long. Something deep in the pit of his stomach told him there must be something wrong, and the feeling caught him by surprise. Sure, he had had feelings like this before, but they were always connected to someone he was close to. Hutchinson was a stranger to him, an unknown entity. He tried to explain away the growing sense of unease, yet he couldn't deny the feeling that was taking control over his body, and he involuntarily stepped up the pace. Within seconds, he realized he was running at full speed, camera slamming against his chest with every step.

David flew around the bend in the path but stopped dead in his tracks at the scene that was playing out about twenty yards ahead of him. His first impression was one of confusion. A young girl, about 18 or 19 years old and dressed in the timeless costume of the common streetwalker was half-lying, half-sitting on the ground with her hand pressed to her bleeding lip. Not three feet away, Hutchinson had a man pinned up against a tree, his right arm against the man's windpipe, his left tangled in the man's greasy black hair.

David could not hear what was being said, but one look at the blonde's face told him all he needed to know. He had never seen such barely controlled rage on a person's face and was immediately grateful all of the anger was not directed at him. Cold blue fire shot from Hutchinson's eyes as he stared unblinking into the eyes of the other man. His arms were steel bands of righteous indignation, and the tendons in his hands stood out in stark relief against skin that was stretched tautly over finely toned muscles. As David watched, fascinated by the strength and power that seemed to ooze from the pores of the blonde cadet, Hutchinson released the stranger and gave him a vicious shove away from the young girl. He stood immobile, hands on hips, until he was sure that the man would not return and then turned to help the young girl.

David could not believe his eyes. He watched mesmerized as the blonde reached down and helped the girl to her feet, gently wiping away the tears from her eyes. Those same hands that had been so powerful and menacing toward the greasy stranger had magically been transformed into tender, nurturing instruments of healing. One touch from those hands, and David could see the fear and tension begin to leave the stricken girl's face. Hutchinson handled the girl with such care, his fingers gently caressing her jawline as he cupped her chin in his palm. His simple touch seemed to rejuvenate the girl, and as David walked closer to the pair, he saw gratitude and hope replace the fear and mistrust that had been etched in the girl's features just moments before.

Suddenly, the girl began to smile through her tears. "I don't know how to thank you, mister," she said hesitantly. "I don't know what I would have done if you hadn't come along."

"No problem," Hutchinson smiled. "Who was that guy and why did he want to hurt you?"

"Oh, he was just some trick I know. I used to feel sorry for him and give him a freebie now and then, but then he got all weird and possessive on me - thought he owned me or somethin'. Anyhow, he wanted me to go off with him but I'm a working girl, and I need to make some money tonight. A girl's gotta eat, ya know!"

"So, when was the last time you had a decent meal?"

"Uhm...well...I get by ok. I don't have a pimp, ya know, so I have to fend for myself. But I'm a lot better off on my own. Don't worry about me, I'll manage."

At that point, to David's utter astonishment, Hutchinson reached into his back pocket, pulled out a twenty-dollar bill and pressed it into the girl's hand. "Here," he said, his eyes glowing with compassion. "Your next hot meal's on me!"

The girl stared silently at the money in her hand. She looked puzzled, almost as if she didn't know how to react. "So, what do ya want from me, mister? Am I supposed to work off this twenty with ya?"

"Oh...no!" said Hutchinson emphatically, his face beginning to redden. "That's a gift, from me to you. Who knows? One day I may need your help and you can repay the favor."

"How could someone like me ever hope to help someone like you? I don't even know your name!"

"My name is Hutchinson, Kenneth Hutchinson. And you are....?"

"Alice. Sweet Alice. At least that's what all my customers call me. You can call me that, too, if ya want."

Kenneth smiled down at the girl once again. For a brief moment their eyes met, then Alice looked away when a movement beside them caught her attention. Kenneth followed her line of sight and saw David Starsky standing not five feet away from them.

"Well," said Alice. "I guess I'd better get going so I can get somethin' to eat. I'll never forget ya for this, mister!"

David watched the subtle play of emotions on Hutchinson's face as he watched the girl sashay down the path. He saw compassion mixed with what appeared to be a tinge of sadness etched into the other man's features. As he reflected on what he saw there, the blonde cadet turned suddenly and David found himself face-to-face with the man from the gym.



Kenneth looked closely into the face of David Starsky, noting the astonishment there. "You'd better close your mouth," he said dryly. "You're gonna catch a fly."

"Oh...uh...sorry. I didn't realize my mouth was hangin' open," he replied flashing a lop-sided grin. "So, what happened back there? You know that girl?"

"Not until a few minutes ago. I was out here jogging, tryin' to clear my head when I came upon those two, just in time to see him hit her. I didn't like it."

"So I gathered. But, that guy must have outweighed you by at least 30 pounds! How'd you get the best of him?"

"Well," Kenneth replied thoughtfully. "I guess I was just madder than he was."

"Remind me never to let you get mad at me like that!" David replied with a chuckle. He was rewarded with a smile from the other man. "Say, is your name really Kenneth Hutchinson?"

"Yeah. At least that's what's on my birth certificate."

"Well, I can't walk around all the time callin' you Kenneth Hutchinson. It's way too stuffy, too formal. Can I call you Kenny?" David asked, eyebrows crawling toward his hairline.

"Not if you want me to answer!"

"Ok. How about Hutchinson? Nah, that's way too complicated for me. Too many syllables." David shifted his gaze skyward, scratching his head as if deep in thought. Kenneth found himself looking up at the trees, wondering what was so fascinating up there. Suddenly, David came out of his reverie and snapped his fingers. "I got it!" he exclaimed enthusiastically. "I'm gonna call you Hutch. That's much better!"

Kenneth again studied the face of David Starsky. He saw those eyes glow with satisfaction, as if Starsky had just discovered the cure for the common cold or something

"Ok," he said agreeably. "Hutch it is." Although he would never admit it, inwardly he was very pleased by his new nickname. He felt as if it signified the beginning of a new

chapter in his life. He wondered briefly if this man would be responsible for a great deal of that new chapter. “So. As long as we are debating monikers, what exactly should I call you?”

“I’m Starsky. Dave....” Before he could go any further, the two men were interrupted by a little girl running toward them sobbing loudly and screaming for help. She couldn’t have been more than nine or ten years old and tears were streaming down her face.

In a tone that bordered on hysteria, she begged them for help. “Please, you gotta help me! My kitten has climbed up a tree over there and can’t get back down. I tried to get her myself but I can’t reach the branches. Please, please can you get her for me?”

Hutch looked at the little girl with her pleading face and big puppy-dog eyes. He glanced up at Starsky, and their eyes met in silent understanding. “Sure we’ll help you, sweetheart,” he said, putting his arm around the sobbing child. “Just show us the tree and we’ll take care of it.”

The little girl took off down the jogging path, and the two cadets followed. Hutch was surprised at how natural it felt to be walking beside the other man, how easily he had read the thoughts mirrored in those sapphire blue eyes. He was sure that something special was happening here, but his train of thought was cut short as they arrived at their destination.

The trio approached the tree, and Starsky and Hutch assessed the situation. The tree was huge, its uppermost branches towering 75 feet above the earth. And there, sitting about 50 feet up, was a tiny calico kitten, mewing pitifully. Hutch felt his heart go out to the little creature and to the little girl who was standing beside him, her features puckered into a worried frown.

“Well,” said Starsky, taking a deep breath and stretching his arms. “Looks like I’m in for a little climb. Tell ya what, Hutch. You stay down here with our little friend and I’ll see if I can’t get that poor kitty out of her predicament.”

The words were barely out of his mouth when Starsky started up the tree. It was Hutch’s turn to be astonished as he watched the fluid, seemingly effortless movements of the man as he swung from limb to limb. Every muscle in his body moved in smooth coordination and although he couldn’t really see from where he was standing, he was pretty sure Starsky was not even breaking a sweat. It was like watching art in motion; Hutch couldn’t remember when he had seen such a graceful display of strength and power. Every move the man made was swift and sure; he never faltered or even hesitated as he easily reached his goal.

With infinite care, Starsky plucked the kitten from her perch and started his descent. Hutch could see that getting down was going to be a little trickier than getting up there had been because now Starsky had only one hand to work with. He watched with

growing concern as the dark-haired man carefully climbed down, guarding his little rescuee. Everything was going well until one of his carefully chosen handholds broke off in his hand. Starsky swayed back and forth a couple of times and then to Hutch's horror, he pitched forward off his precarious perch. Before Hutch could even think to react, Starsky managed to latch onto a limb about 30 feet off the ground and he hung there, suspended between heaven and earth.

Thinking quickly, Starsky took his little bundle and shoved it down inside his shirt, immediately freeing his other hand. Then, in a move that would be the envy of the world's greatest acrobat, he deftly swung back and forth until he achieved enough momentum to swing himself back onto the limb he had been frantically hanging from just moments before. He took a few minutes to regain his composure, then easily completed his descent to the ground, grinning broadly.

Hutch breathed a sigh of relief as Starsky's feet hit the ground. The man was amazing! 'He must be part monkey/part Tarzan or something,' Hutch thought to himself. He watched as Starsky knelt down in front of the little girl and handed her the frightened kitten. Starsky patted the girl's cheek reassuringly and began to talk to her about her kitten and where she went to school and what she wanted to be when she grew up. Hutch smiled to himself as he watched the little girl warm up to the dark-haired man and begin to talk animatedly with him.

Suddenly, a strong gust of wind blew through the park and Hutch heard a strange splintering sound overhead. The branch that Starsky had fallen against must have been dead or weak and now the wind loosened it. Starsky and his new friend were so engrossed in their conversation they did not even notice when another gust of wind blew and the tree branch plunged toward the ground, headed straight for the pair. There was no time for Hutch to shout a warning, so he did the only thing he could do. Without a moment's hesitation, he lunged at Starsky and the girl, pushing them out of the way. A sharp pain exploded in the back of his head and he knew nothing more.



Starsky had no idea what had happened. One minute he and his little friend had been talking about this and that and the next minute he had been bowled over by what he could only describe as a blonde tornado. He sat up and rubbed his right elbow where it had made painful contact with a rather large rock. His first thought was for the young girl and he was relieved to see her safe in the loving embrace of a woman whom he assumed was her mother.

His next thought was to find out what the heck Hutch thought he was doing. "Hey, Hutch," he said, with more than just a hint of annoyance. "What's gotten into you? Are you crazy?" He turned around, determined to get an explanation for this strange behavior, only to find that Hutch was lying immobile in the grass. A large tree branch partially

concealed the still form and Starsky gasped when he realized that both were lying where he and the girl had been just moments before.

“Hutch?” he asked anxiously, moving to kneel beside the still form. “Hutch! Are you ok? Huh? Come on, man, wake up! Hutch?”

Starsky carefully moved the tree branch off the injured man then gently probed the back of his head looking for injuries. There, to his dismay, he found a large lump, sticky with blood. He reached into his back pocket and drew out his handkerchief, pressing it against the oozing wound.

By this time, a small crowd had gathered and a young woman stepped forward to kneel down beside Starsky.

“I’m a nurse,” she said reassuringly. “Why don’t we roll him over and get a better look at him?”

After carefully assessing the wound on the back of Hutch’s head, she and Starsky gently rolled the blonde onto his back. Although he was pale and still unconscious, his pulse was strong and steady and his respirations were normal. Someone in the crowd had thought to wet a towel in a nearby fountain and pressed it into Starsky’s hand.

“C’mon, Hutch” he said in a low, even voice as he gently wiped the man’s brow. “Time to wake up now. Nap time’s over.”

To Starsky’s immense relief, Hutch began to stir and opened his eyes. He looked bewildered at first, then understanding dawned on his face. “Hey,” he said in a voice that was weak and shaky. “You and the girl ok, Starsky?”

Starsky could not believe his ears. “Don’t ya got that a little mixed up there, Blondie? I’m supposed to be asking you if you’re ok. You’re the one that’s layin’ on the ground bleeding all over my hankie.”

“Listen,” interjected the nurse who had all but been forgotten. “We need to get him to a hospital to be checked out. He may have a concussion.”

“No way!” Hutch’s tone left no room for argument. “I am NOT going to a hospital. Just help me get up and I’ll go back to my room and take a couple aspirins. I’ll be fine.”

“Hold on a minute, Hutch. If this nurse thinks you should be checked out, then maybe you should go. It may not be such a bad idea.”

“The only thing they can do for me at a hospital is put me in a room where people I don’t even know can come by and wake me up every hour to see if I need a sleeping pill. No thank you. Just help me back to my room, would ya?”

“Just stay where ya are, Hutch. I’m going to talk to Florence Nightingale here and see what we can do.”

Starsky stood up and pulled the nurse to her feet. They moved several feet away to a spot where they could talk privately. Starsky kept a close watch on Hutch and was relieved when another young woman took over the job of wiping his face with the wet towel.

“So,” Starsky began, “Is what he’s saying true? I mean, is there any other reason for him to go to the hospital other than for someone to watch him?”

“Well, they may want to take an x-ray or two to see if anything is broken, but I doubt it.”

“Ok then. It’s settled. If he doesn’t want to go to the hospital he doesn’t have to. I’ll stay with him for the next 24 hours and keep an eye on him. Is there anything in particular I should watch for?”

“Yes. If he starts vomiting or has a high temperature or if he loses consciousness again, you will need to get him to the hospital right away. Otherwise, just put some ice on his head, keep his head elevated and try to get him to rest as much as possible. He may be wobbly for awhile and I’m sure he’ll have a splitting headache, but that’s to be expected. Are you sure you’re up for this?”

“Absolutely!” Starsky replied with a confidence he really didn’t feel.

“Ok then. I’ll leave him in your capable hands.” With that final remark, the nurse made her way back to the group of friends she had left behind.

As he watched her take off down the path, Starsky abruptly realized he was so concerned with Hutch’s injury he had neglected to get the nurse’s name or phone number. ‘Boy,’ he thought to himself with a wry grin. ‘I must really be slipping!’

“Ok, Hutch, here’s the deal,” Starsky said as he returned to kneel once again at Hutch’s side. “I’m gonna take you back to your room, tuck you in and then I’m gonna baby-sit ya for the next 24 hours or so. Whatta ya think?”

“I don’t need a baby sitter, Starsky, thank you very much! If you’ll just help me up, I think I can manage from there.”

Starsky decided not to argue. Instead, he reached down and pulled Hutch to his feet, steadying him as he regained his balance. He watched in alarm as all the color drained out of the blonde’s face. “Hey Hutch? What say we sit down and rest a minute before we go back to the Academy? I’m kinda tired.” Hutch gratefully took his cue and sank to the ground, unable to take even one step on his own.

“Hutch,” Starsky began hesitantly. He instinctively knew better than to push the issue but he also knew someone had to keep an eye on this man. “Look at me.” Hutch slowly raised his head. Starsky could see the pain and fear harbored deep in those eyes and his heart went out to him. He could understand the pain; getting bonked in the head with a tree had to hurt. But where was the fear coming from? He decided the only way to find out was to ask.

“What’s wrong Hutch? What are you afraid of?”

Hutch tore his gaze away from Starsky’s face. “Nothing,” he said matter-of-factly. “I just have a headache, that’s all.”

Starsky sighed in exasperation. This was not going to be easy. Maybe if he could get Hutch back to his room, they would have time to talk about things then. All he had to do was get him back there somehow.

“I have a great idea! Why don’t we get you back to your room and then I’ll go get us some food. How does that sound?” Starsky had no intentions of leaving Hutch alone for the rest of the day but he figured, one step at a time. If he could get Hutch to agree to this, he would take it from there. ‘Blondie may be stubborn,’ he thought to himself, ‘but I’m sneaky!’

“I have to admit that lying down for a while sounds like a good idea,” Hutch said reluctantly. “Let’s give it a shot, shall we?”

Starsky once again reached down and pulled Hutch to his feet. This time, however, he put Hutch’s arm around his shoulder and they made their unsteady way back to the Academy.



Hutch was getting a bit annoyed. They had been back in his room for over four hours now and Starsky kept finding reasons to stay there. He had left briefly to get them some food but then he had happily planted himself on the spare bed and refused to leave. He had minutely scrutinized every book, plant, and article of clothing Hutch owned and Hutch thought that surely he would soon get bored and move on. But no such luck.

“Hey, Hutch!” Starsky exclaimed enthusiastically. “Would ya look at this?” In his hands he held Hutch’s most prized possession, his guitar. By the look of wonderment on Starsky’s face, one would think he had never seen one before. “Do you know how to play this thing?”

“Yeah, I play a little,” Hutch replied modestly. “But only for my own amusement, never in front of anyone.”

“Why not? Shoot, if I could play the guitar I’d play it for anyone who would listen! Do you sing too?”

“Look,” Hutch replied, his patience wearing thin. He took the guitar from Starsky’s outstretched hand and gently returned it to the shelf. “I really don’t want to talk about this anymore. My head is killing me and I’d like to try to get some rest.”

Immediately the expression on Starsky’s face changed into one of concern. “Hey man, I’m sorry. Why don’t you lay down and try to get some sleep? I’ll just hang out and maybe read a book or something.”

“Starsky,” Hutch began, his irritation growing, “Why are you still here? I’ve told you I’m fine. Why don’t you go back to your room or go out on the town or something? I promise to be good.”

“No way!” Starsky said with finality. “I’m not leaving you until your 24 hours are up. In case you’ve forgotten, I’m the reason you hurt yourself in the first place.”

“So that’s why you’re still here? Out of some misguided sense of guilt? I don’t need your charity, Starsky. I’m a big boy now and I can take care of myself.” Hutch realized that he was nearly shouting. “Go on! Just leave!”

“OK!” Starsky shouted back. “But first you’re going to answer one question for me, pal. Why did you do it?”

Hutch looked at the other man and felt the anger drain out of him as he saw the hurt and confusion in those deep blue eyes. He decided it was time to come clean and tell Starsky the truth. He had never been so scared in his life.

“I’m sorry, Starsky. I..I didn’t mean to yell. Please, sit down over there and I’ll try to answer your question as honestly as I can.”

Starsky took the offered seat and looked up at Hutch expectantly. Hutch began pacing restlessly around the room wondering how he was going to answer that question. He stopped to stare out the window and gather his thoughts. After a deep breath, he began to speak.

“The simple explanation, I guess, would be to tell you that I was just trying to save the little girl and you got in the way. But that’s not exactly true.” Hutch studiously avoided the other man’s eyes. “When I saw that tree branch headed straight for you, something inside of me just reacted. It was almost like I was meant to be there to protect you. It was weird, almost like the feeling I got when...” Hutch’s voice trailed off.

“When what?” Starsky asked softly.

Taking another deep breath, Hutch continued. “When I saw you for the first time in the gym.” There. He had said it. That one incident had been weighing on his mind for the last two days and it was good to finally get it out in the open. ‘He’ll probably think I’m a lunatic!’ Hutch thought to himself, but he gathered his courage and turned to look at Starsky’s face.

Once again, Hutch was caught up in the intensity of those eyes. But this time, instead of pain and fear, Hutch saw only understanding and acceptance mingled with relief. He knew for certain now, that whatever had happened to him in the gym that day had happened to Starsky also.

Suddenly Starsky’s face broke out into a high wattage smile only this time, the smile reached his eyes. “It’s ok, Hutch,” he said reassuringly. “I felt it, too.”



The next couple of hours flew by for the two men as they got better acquainted. Brick-by-brick, the wall came down as piece-by-piece the armor was removed. They talked about everything, and for the first time, they let their guards down enough to let someone else in. Somehow they knew they would never regret it.

Starsky once again looked into the face of the man who was becoming so important to him. He marveled at how easy it was to talk to him, how, for the first time in his life, he felt like he could be himself. Whenever the conversation had been difficult, Hutch had merely reached out his hand and gently squeezed Starsky’s shoulder. Starsky was amazed by how that simple touch could calm him and encourage him to go on. He knew he had found a rare gift.

Starsky broke out of his reverie to see Hutch once again pacing the floor. “Hey, buddy. What’s on your mind?”

Hutch turned around to face him. “Starsky,” he began, “I have a problem.”

It didn’t take long for Starsky to figure out what part of the problem was. They had been talking for so long that Hutch’s injury had been forgotten and Starsky could see the pain etched into the lines on a face that was way too pale. Hutch swayed for a moment and would have fallen if Starsky hadn’t caught him and eased him down onto the bed. He spent the next few minutes fluffing pillows and fetching aspirins, water, and ice until he was satisfied Hutch was comfortable. “Look,” he said. “Why don’t we take a time out so you can get a little sleep. You don’t look so good.”

“I’m ok, really,” Hutch replied, trying to sound confident and failing miserably. “I just really need your help with something.”

“Name it, pal, and it’s yours.”

“Will you please promise me that no one else will find out about my little mishap in the park? I’m afraid if the higher-ups around here get wind of it they won’t let me finish. And I’m in enough trouble as it is.”

“You! In trouble?” Starsky asked incredulously. “I can’t believe it! But, if it will ease your mind, I promise not to let anyone know what happened if you promise to tell me if you start feeling any worse so we can get you looked at. Deal?”

“You drive a hard bargain, but ...ok. Deal!”

Starsky was relieved to see some of the tension slowly leave Hutch’s face. “Now, Blondie, why don’t you tell me what kind of trouble you’re in so we can fix that too.”

Hutch heaved a huge sigh. “I...uh...well, I don’t have a training partner. You know we were supposed to choose someone and turn it in by 1600 hours today, and I didn’t. Fact is, I don’t think any of the other cadets want me as their partner. Do you think they’ll kick me out of the Academy?”

Starsky allowed himself a small grin of satisfaction. “Not to worry, Hutch. I already took care of it.”

“You did what?” Hutch asked, sitting straight up in bed. “What do you mean you took care of it?”

“I already signed us up,” Starsky replied, grinning broadly.

“When?”

“Two days ago.”

“Two days ago?” Hutch’s face was a study of puzzlement. “You didn’t even know my name two days ago! How in the...what were....why? Why did you do that two days ago before you even knew me?”

“Oh, let’s just say I had this feeling...” Starsky was positively beaming at his new friend. “Partners?” he asked, sticking out his hand.

Hutch gladly accepted the offered hand and gave it a hearty squeeze. “Partners!” he agreed.



Who knows what forces brought us here,
And only time will show

The depth of friendship that we'll share,
How close our hearts will grow.

I saw you standing there, alone,
And then your eyes met mine;
For one brief moment, time stood still
As our souls somehow combined.

Nothing could have helped me before I saw you there,
No one could reach out to me, no other person cared.
You came to me and touched my heart, your love has made me whole,
Until there was a 'Me and Thee' I was only half a soul.

The End