

A Day At The Market

By The Blintz

Detective Dave Starsky was sound asleep on a Saturday morning when the ringing of the telephone awakened him abruptly. He rolled and fumbled and fought with his sheets for a few minutes before finally snagging the elusive receiver. "H'lo?" he mumbled sleepily.

"Starsk!" came an urgent familiar voice on the other end of the line. "I need your help. I got a situation here and...uhm...I need ya, buddy."

Starsky was instantly awake, the cold fist of fear already squeezing at his heart. "Hutch? What's wrong? Where are you? What's goin' on, man?"

"Starsk, I'm at Jameson's Market and I'm...well...uhm...I'm in trouble. Will you come? Please?"

The desperation in his partner's voice urged Starsky into action. With a quick "Be there in five minutes, buddy. Just hang on, ok?" he ran around the room throwing on a pair of jeans and a shirt. His mind was whirling, wondering what on earth his partner had gotten himself into this time. But it didn't matter. He needed Starsky, and Starsky would be there for him. Always.

In record breaking time, Starsky flew out the front door of his apartment. Buckling on his shoulder holster, he ran for the Torino. He jumped into the driver's seat and floored the accelerator, urging the car to go faster than it ever had. And, true to his word, he squealed to a halt in front of Jameson's Market exactly five minutes after he had hung up the phone. He glanced around quickly, locating his partner standing at the side of the building in the alley. Racing over to where Hutch stood, he put a reassuring hand on his shoulder.

"I'm here buddy, what's goin' on? Is it a robbery or somethin'? You haven't been hurt or anything, have ya? Do I need to call an ambulance?" Even as he spoke, his eyes were roving over Hutch's body looking for any telltale signs of injury.

"No, Starsk, it's nothing like that. I just need your help with something..." Hutch was obviously very nervous, glancing up and down the alley every couple of seconds, shifting his weight from one foot to the other. And he seemed very reluctant to make eye contact with his partner.

Starsky had been here before, waiting for Hutch to come out and say what was on his mind. So, to speed up the process a bit, he placed himself squarely in front of Hutch, grabbed him by the arm and used his free hand to turn Hutch's face to his. "Hey, buddy." He began gently, almost crooning to his agitated partner. "What's goin' on, hmm? You

said you were in trouble, and I'm here now. You know I'd do anything for ya, right? So why don't you tell ol' Starsk what the problem is, and let's see if we can work through this, ok?" Starsky looked expectantly into Hutch's face, and was surprised to see it redden in response.

"Do you mean that, Starsk? You'd do anything?" Hutch's eyes were pleading now, begging for reassurance.

"Sure, buddy. Me and Thee. Just name it."

"So you would even go into the market and buy something for me if I asked you to?"

By now Starsky was thoroughly perplexed. Buy something for him? What in the... "What are you talkin' about Hutch? Do you need money or somethin'? What do you want me to buy?"

It took a long time for Hutch to answer that question. He stared morosely down at his shoes before finally pulling himself together enough to look Starsky in the eye. "Would you mind going in there and buying me some...uhm...you know...female things?" Hutch's face was by now a very impressive shade of deep red.

"WHAT?" Starsky answered so loudly that Hutch actually jumped. "You drag me out of bed first thing on a Saturday morning and ask me to go into the store to buy you FEMALE THINGS? ARE YOU CRAZY?" He was literally shaking Hutch now, his hands gripping the lapels of the blonde's jacket. "What's wrong with you?"

"Calm down, Starsk!" Hutch replied, extricating himself from his partner's grip. "You're going to wake up the neighborhood!"

"CALM DOWN? YOU WANT ME TO CALM DOWN? Of all the idiotic, moronic, asinine stunts you've pulled, Hutchinson, this has got to be the worst! Do you realize what time it is? Geez, Hutch, ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND?"

"Starsk, please! C'mon, man. You know I never would have called you unless it was an emergency. I stood outside that stupid phone booth for 20 minutes before I could even think about dialing your number. But, I...I...uhm...I just needed some help, and.....please, Starsk, try not to be mad, ok? I can explain everything!"

"Well, then, Blondie, perhaps you'd better start at the beginning. And I'm warning you, this had better be good. Real good."

Hutch took a deep breath and began studying his shoes once more. "You know Cindy?" At a brief nod from his partner Hutch continued. "Well, she spent the night with me last night and this morning she got up and headed straight for the bathroom. I was making coffee when she hollered for me through the door and asked me to come down here and buy her some...female things. And here I am." He looked up to see a smile forming on

his friend's face. "Look, Starsk, this isn't funny! I've been in that store three times already and can't even bring myself to walk down the aisle they're on, much less pick them up. They must think I'm casing the joint or somethin' by this time. So, I thought maybe you...you know...maybe you've done this sort of thing before and could help me out. Please Starsk? I'll owe you the biggest pizza with the works they make. Please?"

One look into the pleading eyes of his friend, and Starsky doubled over laughing. After several minutes, and several unsuccessful attempts to get himself under control, Starsky finally looked up and saw the miserable look on his friend's face. With a quick swipe at his eyes, Starsky reached out a hand to placate Hutch. "Ok pal, sure. I'll help you out. But you gotta go in there with me so you can tell me what to get."

"What do you mean, what to get? You mean there's more than one kind?" Hutch's eyes were as round as saucers.

"Hutch, please tell me you asked her what she needed. Surely you didn't come all the way down here without knowing what..." Starsky's optimism was short-lived as he looked at the blank expression on Hutch's face. "Well, haven't you ever seen what she uses?"

"How in the world would I see something like that?" Hutch was positively horrified.

"Haven't you ever looked in her purse and seen anything in there?"

"Looked in her purse? Now who's crazy? Unlike you, Starsky, I do not have a habit of searching my dates' personal belongings. Are you nuts?"

"Well, maybe you should start," Starsky said defensively. "You can learn all sorts of interesting things about women by what they carry in there. AND, if you did, we would not be standing outside the market right now having this ridiculous conversation! Now come on. Let's get in there and see what we can do." He grabbed Hutch's arm and steered him toward the front door of the market.

"Remind me never to go out with you," Hutch muttered under his breath.

"Don't worry, sweetheart, I'd never ask you."

"Why not?" Hutch asked.

"Cause, dummy, you don't carry a purse!"



It took Starsky forever to get Hutch into the store, and even longer to get him to the right aisle. But, finally, there they were, and Hutch was studying all of the packages with a look of utter bewilderment on his face. "What do we get, Starsk? There must be twenty different things, sizes, scents...scents? Who'd want to smell one of these things? That's

really gross!” Much to Starsky’s amusement, Hutch did an exaggerated full-body shiver before he continued. “So, which one?”

“How the heck am I supposed to know, Hutch. She’s your girlfriend.”

“Well, we gotta get somethin’. I thought you’d done this sort of thing before.”

“Are you completely nuts, Hutchinson? This is not one of my off duty hobbies, if you must know. I’ve never bought any of this crap. Why in the world would I? Besides, you’re the one with the sister. What did she use? We’ll just take our chances and get Cindy the same stuff. How does that sound? Hutch?” When there was no answer, Starsky turned to see his partner staring at him with that same horrified look on his face.

“What kind of a question is that?” Hutch asked, his mouth actually hanging open. “Why would I know what my sister used? Think for just a minute, Gordo. Could you actually see the Hutchinson family gathered around the dinner table calmly discussing the use of feminine hygiene products?”

Starsky felt the familiar pull of a smile at the corners of his mouth. For one brief moment he actually had a flash of the entire Hutchinson clan gathered around listening intently as Mr. Hutchinson pontificated on the various pros and cons of certain brands and products. He quickly pulled himself back together when he realized that he and Hutch had been standing there for over ten minutes, staring at the display before them. “Ah, Hutch? I really think we need to just choose something and get the heck outta here. People are beginning to stare at us like we’re perverts or somethin’.”

“Ok, ok. Here.” Hutch replied, pulling a couple of different boxes down off the shelf. “Let’s just get these, and if they’re not right, she can go get the right thing later. I’m with you, pal. Let’s get outta here!”

They walked quickly to the front of the store, and Starsky had to choke back yet another laugh as he watched Hutch try to hide what he was carrying by covering it with his shirttail. Just before they made it to the check out, however, Hutch grabbed him by the arm and pulled him into an empty aisle. “Starsk?” he asked hesitantly. “I don’t suppose you’d...uhm...actually go through the line with these, would ya? I...uhm...I just don’t think I can bring myself to do it.”

“Aw, c’mon Hutch. A big, strong, tough guy like you afraid of a little cashier? Hmmm? What’s the big deal? People buy this stuff all the time; otherwise they wouldn’t sell it. So just act natural, chin up, and act like nothin’s unusual. No sweat.”

“Just act natural.” Hutch said. “Like I do this all the time. Calm, cool, collected. Ok, Starsk, you win. Here I go.” Taking a deep breath, Hutch started for the line only to trip over a cereal box someone had dropped on the floor. Every head in the store turned to stare as he calmly got up off the floor, picked up his purchases, and took his place in line,

his face flushing a deep red. Starsky wisely chose that moment to duck into a side aisle where Hutch couldn't see him convulsing with laughter.

Sometimes it was worth it to get up early on a Saturday morning.

The End