

“Desperate Measures”

By TibbieB

Epilogue

Captain Dobey held the door open as Starsky maneuvered the wheelchair into the control tower booth. Hutch was kind of enjoying being chauffeured around; even though the chair was lightweight enough he could have easily handled it himself. He was wearing his ‘lucky’ fishing cap, in his lap was a gigantic basket laden with exotic fruits, gourmet cheeses, a variety of nuts, and hand-dipped candies.

Seth Carter and John McGinness both turned and looked up as the trio entered their workspace. They hadn’t the slightest idea who these guys were, but they had never seen a gift basket of that proportion before, so their interest was immediately piqued.

Dobey took the initiative and introduced himself. “I’m Captain Harold Dobey with the LAPD. Are you two Carter and McGinness?”

That’s right,” Seth answered. “I’m Carter and he’s McGinness.”

A smile passed between the two detectives, both thinking how many times they had introduced themselves in a similar fashion.

“Yeah, well, I’m Starsky and he’s Hutch.” Starsky couldn’t resist.

Smiles wreathed the faces of both air traffic controllers. They recognized these names immediately. “Man, are we glad to see you guys alive,” Carter said, while extending his hand to greet the three policemen. McGinness followed suit.

“I brought my detectives here to thank you personally,” Dobey said seriously.

“I don’t think ‘thanks’ is adequate for what you two did for us,” Hutch said earnestly. “We know you were responsible for initiating a search for our plane. Otherwise, we probably would have died before anyone even missed us.”

“Just doing our jobs,” Seth said, modestly.

“And doin’ ‘em damn good, too!” Starsky added with enthusiasm. “Hutch is right. You don’t have any idea the shape we were in by the time they found us. My partner here was about eight hours from gangrene in that leg. If we hadn’t been picked up when we were, he would have lost his leg, or maybe even his life. I wanna thank you for pushin’ the panic button.”

“You both look like you’ve been to Hell and back,” McGinness joked, although in reality, he thought it was a pretty apt description. Both men were bruised and scraped up like they’d been rumbling somewhere in a back alley, and Hutchinson’s leg was in a cast from ankle to upper thigh. “We’re just glad you both made it.”

“We wish we could have gotten to you before the pilot died,” Carter said, his voice tinged with remorse.

Hutch could see the man inexplicably felt guilty about Carl’s death. “Listen, Carter, our pilot died on impact. My partner checked him out before he even dug me out of the rubble. No one could have saved him.” Hutch could see his words seemed to relieve some of the hurt in Seth Carter’s eyes.

“He’s tellin’ it like it is,” Starsky added. “He went through the front of the cockpit, Carter. No sign of a pulse. I think maybe his neck was broken when he hit the

glass. The autopsy results haven't been released yet, but I've seen a lotta traffic accidents, and that's what it reminded me of."

A hush fell over the small group for a few seconds, then Dobey steered the conversation back to a happier topic.

"These two are a pain in the ass sometimes, but they're still the best detectives in my precinct, so I came along to thank you too, for going the extra mile. I've talked to your supervisor, and cleared it for you both to be off tomorrow afternoon. We're having a little awards ceremony in your honor for the part you played in locating these two renegades."

The two air traffic controllers were stunned. Both of them felt that they had only done what was right. It had taken a lot of persuasion, but they'd convinced the authorities that a plane had gone down, in spite of the fact that they were going on pretty sketchy evidence; and they had plotted out a surprisingly accurate location of the area to search.

"By the way," Starsky poked Hutch's shoulder, "are you gonna give 'em the basket, Blondie?"

"Oh, yeah...uh...this is from Starsk and me. We didn't really know what you'd like, so we told them to put a little of everything in here."

Seth Carter blushed brightly as he and John thanked them both and took the huge basket off Hutch's lap. After visiting another few minutes, the two controllers had to return to their stations and Dobey, Starsky, and Hutch headed back to LA.

As Starsky fired up the engine of the Torino, Dobey helped Hutch get settled in the back of the car, then climbed into the passenger seat up front.

"Starsky, I'm going to sit up here so we can discuss *in detail*, this so-called sweepstakes trip of yours. I want to know where the hell you won that prize! And why no one knew where you were going! Furthermore, how did you get stuck with that relic of an airplane?"

Starsky looked in the rear view mirror in time to see Hutch duck his head to conceal his laughter. With an "I think I'm gonna be sick look" on his face, Starsky swallowed hard and said, "Now, Cap, I can explain all that—"

"Well, that's good. Because I'm all ears and we've got about two hundred miles worth of explaining time available! But if you think I'm going to buy some lame...."

The End