

Too Good To Be True

by TibbieB

Chapter 4

When the trunk lid popped open, Starsky's eyes were assaulted by bright sunlight. He squinted up at the figure towering over him, and felt a massive hand grab him by the shirt front and roughly haul him out of the car. After a few seconds, his eyes adjusted, and Starsky recognized the Neanderthal figure of Angela's Uncle Demetrius.

"Hey, careful!" Starsky complained, as he felt the backs of his denim covered thighs scrape across the trunk latch. "Ya don't have to be so rough!"

That comment earned him a brutal landing on the ground at the other's feet. Demetrius rolled his prisoner onto his stomach, then reached down with a pocket knife and cut the rope binding Starsky's ankles.

"Get up!"

His legs, asleep from lying in the trunk with the ropes cutting off the blood flow, didn't want to cooperate. When Starsky didn't immediately comply, the point of Demetrius's size fifteen boot landed squarely in his stomach, knocking the wind out of him. "I said GET UP!"

Starsky tried to rise to his knees, but was still gasping for air. He watched helplessly as the boot came crashing against his jaw." Now he saw stars as he struggled to obey, and avoid another attack.

"That's enough for now, Demetrius. Save the rest for later...for when we do the photos for Hutchinson."

With that, Demetrius reached down and snagged the back of Starsky's jacket and lifted him partially off the ground. He dragged the semi-conscious man up the gravel drive, ignoring the damage the sharp rocks inflicted on his baggage. With a grunt, he lumbered toward a house which was set back from the road another hundred feet.

Starsky's thoughts were a jumble. What the hell was happening here? How could things have become so mixed up so quickly? Was that really Angela's voice he'd just heard? Why was she doing this? What pictures?

Angela hurried ahead and held the door open for Demetrius, who unceremoniously dumped his dazed prisoner on the floor just inside the door. Again, Starsky tried to regain his equilibrium and rise to his knees. Demetrius's big, booted foot came down on his shoulders, forcing his face down against the cold, hardwood floor.

“I didn’t say you could get up, Policeman,” Demetrius bellowed, his speech distorted by a heavy accent.

“What the hell’s goin’ on here?” Starsky’s words came out slurred and barely audible. “I don’t know what ya want from me.”

Angela reached down and snarled her hand in the dark, curly locks, snapping Starsky’s head back savagely. “You really should keep your mouth shut, *darling*. I don’t know how long I can keep Demetrius from beginning the fun and games. So be a dear, and shut up,” she drawled in a syrupy, insincere voice, before shoving his head back against the floor.

“Demetrius, bring a chair from the kitchen. Sit him up in it and tie him in tightly. I don’t want him trying to escape once you begin working on him.”

Starsky’s cloudy brain registered her cruel words, but refused to contemplate on their meaning. *Hutch. Where are ya, partner? I need you....*



Hutch lay awake, staring at the ceiling. Two more trips to Starsky’s apartment that evening had yielded disappointing results. The last time, he’d even left a note pinned on the door, asking his partner to call him when he got in. Still, no word.

Unable to sleep, and unable to shake this uneasy feeling, Hutch lay there playing out all sorts of crazy scenarios in his mind, realizing as he did so, he was probably over-reacting. He hadn’t had a peaceful moment since their argument on the phone. Tomorrow morning, he’d just find out where Angela lived, and go there to talk things out with his partner.

He knew this disagreement between Starsky and himself couldn’t be allowed to fester. It wasn’t right. When two lives were entwined like theirs—literally depending on one another for their survival—there should be no harsh words left hanging between them...no unspoken apologies. There had been too many close calls, too many times when all they could count on was each other.

Tomorrow. Tomorrow, he’d make it right...



Starsky lifted his head slowly, trying to pry open his swollen, bloodshot eyes. He’d taken quite a beating from Demetrius, and still had no idea why. Angela—his beautiful, ‘too good to be true’ Angela—had stood by silently watching. Starsky hadn’t given either of them the satisfaction of crying out, or asking for mercy. But he had asked more than once, why they were doing this to him, only to be met by stony silence.

Managing to crack one eyelid to a slit, he looked around the room of the cabin—if you could call it a cabin. It was a contrast of rustic and ritzy. The floors were white pine, but contrarily dotted here and there with thick piled Persian rugs. Unlike the upright, hard, wooden chair he was tied to, the rest of the furniture in the room was made of supple, overstuffed leather in soft, muted earth tones. The log-cabin interior walls were tastefully adorned with original oils, mostly abstract in design. Obviously, money had not been a concern for the individual who'd decorated the retreat. Somehow, seeing the plain and the opulent side-by-side gave the whole place an unnatural appearance.

On the mantle above the fireplace were several picture frames, displaying what appeared to be family photos, chronicling the life of a handsome, young, dark-haired man whose most appealing feature was a captivating smile. Many of the photos depicted him excelling in sports, almost always clutching a trophy or pennant of some sort. But the one that drew Starsky's attention was of the young man with his arm wrapped possessively around a beautiful girl's shoulders. They were posed beside a large, federal blue sail boat with the name "Angelique" emblazoned on the starboard in gleaming white letters. Starsky was struck by the resemblance the girl held to Angela. With the exception of her shoulder length, black hair that glistened in the sunlight, she had Angela's features, her smile, and her build. Both people in the picture wore sunglasses and sailing regalia.

Letting his mind slowly take in his surroundings, it occurred to Starsky that the fact he wasn't blindfolded didn't bode well. Usually kidnap victims were kept in the dark regarding their whereabouts if the criminals planned to release them once the ransom was paid. He knew from his own experience as a detective, kidnappers didn't take such precautions if they intended to kill the victim once the deal was concluded. There had been no mention of ransom, nor demands of any sort, for that matter—just the senseless, silent beatings.

Starsky could see from the front window that it was dark outside. Whether the wee hours of the morning, or early evening, he didn't know. Drifting in and out of consciousness had obliterated his sense of time. He lifted his head and tried to present his best "face of defiance" when Angela entered the room from the back of the house.

"So, you're awake, darling. I was afraid Demetrius had gone a little too far."

"Angela, what's this all about? You gonna tell me what I'm doin' here? Huh? Or are you just gonna let *Igor* beat up on me till he finally finishes me off?"

"In due time, I'll tell you what you want to know. It won't matter in the end anyway." She walked over and slowly bent forward, softly touching her lips to Starsky's bruised, bleeding ones. He drew back sharply. The physical response due in part to the pain the gentle pressure had caused, and in part to his revulsion to her touch.

A bright light suddenly flashed, momentarily blinding him. When his one working eye finally refocused, he saw the source of the unwelcome light was a camera flash.

“Terrific,” he drawled, “I always wanted to be featured in Playgirl. Does this mean I’m Mr. January?” The flash went off again, the camera making a whirring sound as the Polaroid spit out the first shot.

“This isn’t the first set of photos. You’ve just been unconscious until now. Don’t you want to smile for the camera, David?” Angela grabbed Starsky’s chin and jerked it cruelly toward Demetrius. “One more,” she ordered.

The lumbering giant did as he was told, then stepped away and placed the camera on the coffee table in front of them.

“Now, Angelique?” he asked, a demented grin twisting his mouth.

“Yes.” She released the prisoner’s chin and stepped away.

Before Starsky had time to think about what was happening, Demetrius delivered another punishing blow to the detective’s face, causing blood to spew from his nose. And he soon realized that was only the beginning. The giant went about his work as though beating another human being to death was routine.

Finally, it stopped. But just as Starsky thought he was to be spared any further abuse, he felt a punishing blow to his solar plexus, forcing the wind from his body, causing him to gasp for one saving gulp of air. Then once again he surrendered to the kind relief of unconsciousness.

Starsky’s next lucid moment was another camera flash going off in his face. Dazed by the intense pain racking his body, he was unaware of the cardboard placard propped against his chest, bearing the message, “AN EYE FOR AN EYE”.

“See that these get to Hutchinson,” she said matter-of-factly. Starsky was struck by the lack of emotion in her voice. “I want him to know how it feels. And I want to drag this out until he’s insane with worry and guilt.”

Demetrius simply grunted his understanding before swiping his big hand across the table and gathering up the photos of Starsky. Angelique had taken them at various times over the past twenty-four hours, recording the progression of punishment the cop had undergone so far.

Slumped forward in the chair, Starsky heard the door close quietly behind his tormentor.



End of Chapter 4