

**Summary:** Starsky was a happy man--homicide lieutenant, nice house, dog, cat, and fifteen years of domesticity with the person he loved who loved him back. Yes, Starsky was a happy man, if only his perfect partner wasn't so aggravating!

**Sequel to** [\*Why I Live at the Best Western.\*](#)

**Categories:** Slash

**Genre:** Series, Zinefic

**Warnings:** Author Chooses Not to Use Archive Warnings

## Bathrooms I Have Known

by Mary Louise Fisher

Your stomach may rule your head, but your dick makes all the major decisions in your life.

I came home because I was starving and pot roast was on the menu. But he offered me his mouth and my cock jumped right in. We ended up in the bedroom with me hot, horny and hard. I had the big blond on his back and I was about to score a bull's-eye, when he went all literary on me. He said the "B" word. Yeah, 'book.' It wasn't going to be a novel, oh no, it was going to be non-fiction. My ears couldn't believe what they were hearing. My dick did, though. And it shriveled up just like an over-boiled wiener, all soft and lifeless and sad.

This wasn't my idea of a "Welcome back, baby, I missed ya" 3-D technicolor reunion. Being stuck in the bathroom, I mean. Well, not stuck exactly, more like locking myself in and not being sure how to exit with my dignity still intact. Since I only had a towel wrapped around me, it wasn't going to be easy.

"There's a movie on Cinemax you said you were dying to see," a voice said outside the door. "Are you coming out or should I tape it?"

"I came out fifteen years ago. Tape it," I snarled.

"You know this can happen to anyone, Starsk."

"Not to me it don't...doesn't."

"It happened to me before, you know that."

"This is different."

"Why?"

I couldn't think of why it was. But it was. "It just fucking is."

"Fine, suit yourself." I heard him walk away, leaving me alone and water logged. I'd been in here long enough to take a bubble bath, brush my teeth, shave, do a facial, condition my hair, trim my toenails, drink six glasses of water, and pee. Plus I'd already read all the magazines. I was drop dead gorgeous with no one to impress and really bored. It was all his fault.

I mean, after being homeless at the Best Western for a whole week... Okay, it I was more like four days, make that three nights, and three and a half days -- and wouldn't ex-Sergeant "Make the report as specific as you can" Hutchinson be proud of me? -- but it felt like a year. After leaving my home, my family (Lady, our Golden Retriever; Diego Garcia, our sometimes cat -- sometimes he's here, sometimes he's not; and the guinea pigs, Mutt and Jeff; not to mention that four-eyed asshole I call my partner)...after sleeping on motel sheets that felt like they starch them just to give you bedsores...after eating food that wasn't really food, but alternating bouts of heartburn and indigestion courtesy of The Ming Noodle and Tony's Pizza...after watching bad porn on the Adult Cable Channel (for twenty-five bucks I got to see some bleached blond guy with zits on his back do some scaggy-looking over the hill working girls every which way but good)...I come back to *this*?

"I'm making a great big bowl of popcorn on the stove," a voice called to me. "Real popcorn, not that microwave stuff you hate. And I'm melting a pound of butter to pour on it. Plus, I promise to over salt it. It will raise your cholesterol level just smelling it. Interested?"

I hate microwave popcorn. No matter how buttery it's supposed to be, it always reminds me of styrofoam peanuts. Hutch makes great popcorn, goes way back to his grandfather having a farm and growing corn. My mouth was watering like the traitor that it was. "No," I made it say.

"Whatever..." The voice moved off.

Did I mention that I missed the World Championship All World Pro-Am Dragster/Funny Car Competition because the BesWes, which is what we call it around here, doesn't have TTSNFSH?

Which, if you don't already know, is the new, expanded, what used to be Sports Highlights and Fishing but is now The Total Sports Network for Sports Hogs. I pay \$17.50 a month extra on the cable bill, just to have twenty-four-hour-anywhere-in-the-whole-entire-world sports coverage at my fingertips. And did he tape it for me? Don't ask. He was too busy outlining The Great American Novel.

Excuse me, The Great American Time Crime Book. Which is what Hemingway tells me, while I'm trying to get some, which is when my dick shrank, and why I am stuck in here planning what to do with the rest of my single life.

Because I can see it all now: It'll be a best seller. He'll be Oprah's Pick of the Week. Number One on her Top Ten Books You Gotta Read Because I Said So.

Yeah him, Oprah, and Martha Stewart can all sit around together drinking mint tea, talking about the sex lives they wish they had, if they only weren't such ball bustin' bitches. Maybe they can have a live show and interview me and ask me why live in the bathroom.

"Lady says she misses you. Come on out."

"Tell her to fax me." That was a cheap shot using our dog as a pawn, I thought. Nice move, though.

Like I ever really had a choice, right? He was so good-looking, so cultured, so clean, so perfect. I know better now. Perfect is as perfect does, like my bubbee said. Meaning, looks ain't everything. Only he was as good as he looked, only better. And I had to get to know him. I couldn't help myself. The minute I saw him, I knew he was gonna be a part of my life. I just knew. You know how you know things sometimes? Well, I knew this great big blond goy was going to be mine. I just wasn't sure at the time what I was defining as "mine."

I wasn't out. This was the late 60's. I was just starting training at the Los Angeles Police Academy. I was planning on being a cop. And I didn't like boys. Okay, so I had a few BJ's from a working guy in Bangkok, when I did my tour of duty. (I've always wondered if they made that name up because it was a great place for buying sex?) And I've butt-fucked a couple working girls in my time too. (Hey, you pay, they play.) I liked sex; I liked sex with women. I wasn't looking for anything or anybody. I just wanted to make it through the Academy, be a cop, maybe get my own beat. Maybe get married, have kids, who knew?

But there he was, sitting there all blond, blue-eyed, and beautiful when I came into Orientation late. Nothing

like making an entrance, right? And who's up there talking but some mean-looking cop, who I found out was called Iron Mike. He happened to hate anyone being late for anything, which made me number one on his hit list, and I do mean hit.

And see, they had these long tables set up in sort of a square, with the orangutan instructor at the front. Our names were written on big white cards in front of where they wanted us to sit. I saw my name on a seat along the back wall. But when an ugly voice said, "Will you sit down?" I did. Which turned out to be where he was planning to sit, after he made his threatening speech to us about life, liberty, and our asses being in a sling if we tried to have either of these while we were in the Academy.

So I plop down in the seat, which just happens to have a padded cushion that sounds like I'm passing gas when I sit down on it, which causes the class to laugh, which makes the big gorilla even redder in the face

"What's your name, recruit?"

"Starsky, sir." And I jumped to my feet. I'd been, in the army, and if ever a "sir" and a salute was called for, now was the time.

You have trouble telling time?"

"No, sir."

"Maybe you have a note from your mommy explaining why you were late?"

"No, sir."

"Would you care to inform Capt. Ryan, these recruits and me why you were late?"

I had to think fast; I was making a total schmuck out of myself. They were probably going to give me my walking papers and a boot in the ass. All eyes were on me. I wondered if fainting was an option. When all of a sudden I hear a voice say, "He was helping me, sir."

I look up, and over across the room is blond and beautiful getting out of his chair.

"Recruit Hutchison, is it?" asked Iron Mike.

"Hutchinson, sir," the blond says, standing there tall and brave.

"It says Hutchison on the name card, recruit."

"It's misspelled, sir."

"Are you saying that the person who made out the card can't spell?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you know who made out those cards, recruit?"

"You, sir?" he asked, all innocent blue-eyed boy. The room roared.

"Sit down, the both of you!" We did. I tried not to make the chair fart while I was doing it.

I wanted to thank him for standing up for me like that. We finally got a lunch break after all the speeches

and "Welcome, Recruit" stuff. But he left by the other door. I went down the hall to where a soda machine was and stood in line while a bunch of other guys used it. This was getting to be an awful lot like the army, let me tell you. When I finally got my turn, I was the last one. It's really kind of spooky to be the last guy at the soda machine, and have everyone else walking down the hall away from you. I was afraid I'd be late again. I threw some money in the machine, hit the Coke button, waited and nothing happened. I tried pressing the coin return button. Nothing. I tried hitting the coin return button. Still nothing.

Since that was my last dime -- literally -- I tried tilting the machine to get some action. I used to be really good with pinball machines, when I was a kid. I usually got a free game that way as long as Danny or Vinnie DeCarlo didn't see me doing it. I gave the soda machine a good shake and the only thing that happened was the Coke poured out, but without the cup. Then I lost my temper. (I used to have a real temper back then. I'm a lot calmer now.)

I punched the machine. That's when I heard somebody behind me laughing. And wouldn't you know it, it was my hero, the big blond WASP.

"Having trouble with the pop machine?" he said. I'm thinking, *Pop, what's pop?* Maybe that's what they call soda in Wisconsin or wherever it is they grow them so tall. "Did you lose your money?"

Me, I'm standing there tongue-tied and stupid. Now that I'm face to face with him, I see he's even better looking close up. Kind of like an ad for Why I Drink Milk, which he did, I came to find out. What's worse, it was goat's milk, when he could get it. Why anyone would drink that stuff voluntarily is beyond me. I have to say something witty, so that he'll be impressed, so I say, Yeah."

So we're standing there, with me feeling like a real jerk, when he says, "Can I buy you a drink?"

"Shit, I sure could use one," I say. Then I realize he means a soda, not booze.

But he laughed. He had a nice laugh. "What'll it be?"

"I was trying to get a Coke."

"Coming right up." And he puts the money in and out the cup comes and the Coke pours down into it like it's doing him a special favor. "Here you go," he says and hands me the cup. It's lukewarm and watery, but it gives me something to do while we stand there.

"That was my last dime," I told him. I don't know why I tell him, but he just has that look that says 'I understand.' "I mean, until we get paid." And he kept looking at me. Then I saw him take it all in, the way I was dressed: the second-hand sport coat, the old dress shoes I borrowed off my cousin Ed, my out-of-style tie.

"We don't get paid for a month, Starsky."

"I thought we got paid for training?"

"We do, in a month."

"Jesus," I said. Then I thought, *There I go offending Christians again.* So I said, "Excuse me."

"Why?"

"You know, for swearing."

"What do I look like, a boy scout?"

"Well, yeah."

He laughed again. Then he took out his wallet and handed me a twenty. "Look, old man, consider this a loan. You settle with me on payday, okay?"

Then he turned around and walked down the hall, leaving me rescued again and owing him twenty bucks.

"Give me twenty!"

"Excuse me?"

You heard me, Hutchinson. Twenty push-ups, now!" I guess lunch didn't sit too well on Iron Mike's stomach, or he wasn't the forgive-and-forget type. Because the minute we all got back to class and he closed both doors one by one with these real ugly clicks, he started in on Hutch. Plus I noticed all the dignitaries had blown the joint. So we were pretty much in his power.

"May I take off my jacket first, sir?"

"By all means."

So blondie proceeds to take his blue suit coat off and underneath is a shiny white long-sleeved dress shirt with French cuffs. (I found out later that's what they're called. I'm wearing my Uncle Al's next-to-newest short-sleeved dress shirt, and I'm hoping to God no one asks me to take my sport coat off, because the shirt is more yellow than white.) And then, he has the nerve to ask, "Do you mind if I roll up my sleeves, sir? These cufflinks were a gift from my Dad when I graduated from college."

"Oh, we went to college did we?" Iron Mike asks all sarcastic-sweet

"I don't know if you did, sir, but I did, which, since you used the plural "we," seems to suggest you did."

"Okay, college boy, enough with the lip, gimme twenty." The blond stands there a second. I can tell that he's thinking. Then, he does something really great, he starts removing the cufflinks one by one, real slow. And Iron Mike is standing there, snorting steam out of his nose, his whole authority at stake here in front of all the new recruits.

"Don't let us rush you," he snarls.

"No, sir." And then Hutchinson does this sort of slow striptease, taking off his tie, not just loosening and pulling it over his head, but taking it off. Then he unbuttons that white dress shirt and takes it off. Underneath is a really really clean-looking undershirt, and underneath that are muscles. You can tell by his forearms that he's built. He's not beefy, but toned and in condition. Then he walks real tall and dignified out into the middle of the room, gets down on the floor and starts doing pushups.

He does fifteen real fast, while Iron Mike counts out loud. Then he slows down and the counting gorilla looks real happy. He gets to twenty, finally. And I'm thinking, 'Shit, even I can do twenty without falling apart.' When all of a sudden, he starts going fast again, and does ten more before Iron Mike knows what hit him. And then he keeps going.

When he got to forty-five, we were counting out loud. When he got to eighty-five, Iron Mike was looking up at the ceiling and was either praying or looking for an escape hatch. When he passed one hundred, we were all getting excited. (Now you know why Hutch was voted class president, on the first ballot, unanimous.)

To this day, every cop who ever knew the late Captain "Iron Mike" Ferguson, or was trained by him, remembers his run-in with Hutch. Because up until Hutch, Iron Mike was undefeated in the intimidation game. That's how he got his name. His mistake was in underestimating Hutch.

(That was the mistake people usually made with Hutch. They saw the blond hair, the blue eyes, the nice clothes, heard his cultured soft-spoken voice, and they'd think 'pushover.' I can't tell you how many times we used that to our advantage in an interrogation. He looked so 'good cop' that we played it to the hilt. Making me close to a homicidal maniac against his calm and quiet ways. But he was steel through and through. Stainless steel in a white velvet glove. You were so busy noticing the pretty package, you never knew what hit you.)

Finally, he bangs his hand on the desk and says, "Enough's enough! Stop already, you're making me look like a real putz." Or words to that effect. Too bad. I was personally interested in seeing just how many pushups the blond could do. Iron Mike looks like he's been running a 440 with an elephant on his back and Hutch isn't even breathing hard.

He dusted off his knees and his hands. And when he stretched, I could see sweat stains under his arms. I don't know why, but I liked seeing that sweat. It made him real, and not some hero I made up. Plus, there was something else about seeing him sweat that went deeper, but I wasn't even thinking about him that way. Not really. Not then.

His short hair looked damp from the exercise. I found out later he's a head-sweater. He starts perspiring at the top of his body. I'm the opposite. (Between me sweating below the waist, and him sweating above the waist, when we get together we get soaked!).

And what this has to do with the time of day, my shrunken dick, and why I live in my bathroom, is because I associate Hutch with bathrooms. Not just weird-but wonderful experiences in airport restrooms while he was on the consulting merry-go-round and my life was an endless round trip from LAX to home and back again. My time with Hutch, over twenty years, has been both public and private. And bathrooms are places you do private things publicly.

Iron Mike droned on and on about what was expected of us. He kept going on and on about being on time. All I could think about was how bad I had to pee. I really had to go. And there was no way I was asking that Nazi instructor if I could go make.

So as soon as he said 'break,' I shot out of that room like it was on fire. I find the men's room, race to the urinal, yank my zipper down, whip it out and start going. When who should come in but Mr. GQ? He steps up next to me, says hi, unzips, pulls it out and my stream stops in its tracks. That hurt.

I'm standing there with my dick in my hand and nothing's coming out and he's pissing like a race horse. "Ferguson's something else, isn't he?"

Yeah," I say, pretending to go.

"He means well."

"You think so?"

"Sure, in his own sick, sadistic way." Then he finished, shook it off, and tucked it back in. It was hanging to the left. I don't know why I noticed that. When he went over to the sink, I started going again. What a relief.

I zipped up and went over to where he was washing his face and hands. "I'm all sticky," he said. *I'll bet you are*, I thought (Now, why did I think that?)

"Thanks," I said.

"For what?"

You know, for standing up for me like that and for..."

"Don't mention it. We've got to stick together."

'We'? Did he mean me and him, or all us poor recruits going off to the slaughter? I don't know why, but I thought he meant me and him somehow. "Can I ask you something, Hutchinson?"

"Hutch."

"What?"

"Call me Hutch. That's what my friends call me."

I liked the sound of that, his name and being considered a friend. "So, Hutch, what were you going to tell that gorilla, anyway? About what I was helping you with, I mean?"

"Oh, I would have thought of something. I'm a practiced liar. That should come in handy, when we're undercover." 'We'? There it was again. Now I knew not every recruit was about to want to go undercover, so maybe he was including me in his plans.

"Well, you know, thanks again for helping me."

And he turns to me real serious, and says, "Starsky, you look like you need all the help you can get." I think that's when I became his needy cause.

Then something real strange happened. We both remember it happening, even today. '

I wanted to keep him there talking and I said the first brilliant thing that came into my head. "What's the 'K' for?"

"Ken," he says.

And this is what happened. "Dave Starsky," I say. And I put my hand out to shake. He puts his hand out to meet mine. And when he does and our hands touch, *Zing!* There was like a spark. Like a zap and an energy and a heat, like a tiny burning pain. We both pulled away real quick. We both felt it. It was real.

I guess you could say it was static electricity, or wet hands, or something. But I know better. It was a meant to be from the start.

"I need to use the John," said the voice outside my door.

"Use the other one."

"It's out of order."

"Tough."

"C'mon, Starsk. Do a guy a favor. I gotta go."

"You gotta make a one or a two?"

"A three!"

"There's a bucket under the kitchen sink. Feel free." I heard a sigh and then the voice walked off. I liked that needy bit a lot, it was real touching. But no way, Jose.

Like I used to have trouble having a BM with a crowd around. Yeah, well, I got used to it pretty quick in the army, but they weren't satisfying dumps. I'll never forget the first time Hutch dumped around me. Yeah, I know; weird memory. It was after me and Colby and Hutch were hanging around together. We were waiting for John for some reason or other. And Hutch says, "I gotta go to the men's room."

I don't know why, but I followed him. Back then, I was like his faithful dog or something, always following after him, waiting to be told 'good boy.' *Like it's so different today?* And he just went into a stall without even locking it, took his uniform pants down and dropped a bomber. I know maybe I shouldn't have been sort of listening, but I was. The door was kind of open, anyway. No grunting, no groaning. Just easy as can be. Me, I liked going in and sitting and reading for awhile.

I never saw anybody get it done so efficiently. It figures. He's nothing but efficient. Used to drive me nuts, all that organization. I used to like to piss him off and move something so that he temporarily couldn't find it. When I think back, it was really juvenile, but sometimes you just gotta be less perfect. Know what I mean?

Right before he had what we think was probably a breakdown or something, he was re-doing reports five and six times just to get them perfect. It was that control thing you do, when your life is turning to shit. I wasn't as educated as I am now in those things. At the time, I was just getting pissed off and thinking he was trying to make me look bad because I couldn't write reports like his. And your report has a lot to do with a conviction, so it made sense to do it right. But he was getting obsessive about it, doing them over and over.

Which is the problem with this being a writer thing he has. He has to make it perfect. I keep saying to him, "Give the editor something to do." But does he listen? I should live so long.

Then he flushes, comes out of the stall, and washes his hands. Then he washes his face. Then, he combs the hair and checks to see if he has any spinach or junk stuck between his front teeth. I never saw such a guy for looking in the mirror. Not like he was conceited. It was more like he had an obligation to the rest of us poor slobs to look good. Only with him it didn't take much work. Sort of like a purebred cat that only needs to fix up every so often.

Years later, when I found him in that alley after what Forest (may his soul rot in hell and the crows feed on his guts for eternity) did to him, I was sick. I had to look at him twice to be sure it was Hutch. It wasn't just the physical beating they gave him. It was how he smelled, like he'd been in a fucking sewer, stinking of piss and puke. Not clean anymore. And me feeling like somehow it was my fault. Like I brought him down to the sewer, you know, in my own way. I'm really starting to depress myself now. I'd rather go back and think of how natural he was with all his body functions. And what a healthnik! He ate more grain than a cow.

He's still with the nighttime bowl of cereal. He usually comes in with some kind of multi-grain, unsweetened except for honey (which, if you want the truth, he pours on pretty thick, especially on those Swedish oats he got from his cousin back home in Minnesota. The stuff looks like a horse would love it!) bowl of loud cereal while I'm trying to watch the final wrap-up of all the sports that day. He says I keep the TV too loud. So who can hear over all that crunching? He always offers me a great big spoonful and I choke it down just to be polite.

"Good, huh?" he always says. *Yeah, just like straw.* I smile at him. And go back to trying to hear what the Yankees did over all that noise.

There was a knock on the bathroom door. You have a phone call," a voice said.

"Take a message."

"It's Ed McMahan. He says you've just won over a million dollars, but he has to talk to you personally. Open the door and I'll hand you the cordless."

I almost fell for it. But then I figured you have to enter to win and I forgot to mail mine in. So there's no way Ed would be calling me. "Tell him to e-mail me."

"Shit," the voice said and stomped off.

I'll never forget the first time I saw him with all his clothes off. Man, was he hung. (He still is.) We were all showering after the first Iron Mike endurance/physical torture session. As a trainer, Sgt. Ferguson liked to either see you screaming for mercy or puking your guts out. That was the first week. It got worse. He had a reason for it all, I came to find out, but that was later.

Anyway, we all dragged ass into the locker room and hit the showers. They had separate stalls, but no curtains. Go figure. Would some plastic curtains have cost that much? At least we didn't have to shower in one big room. I know this is weird, but whenever I had to shower in a group like that, I'd think Auschwitz. You know? Maybe it's a good thing to always remember, anyway. Only it seemed to come to me at odd times.

But here at least we had our own stalls. I finished up. It was one of those lukewarm showers you get in locker rooms, when what you really need is a hot shower. I was saving enough for my own place, had a room at the Y. Believe me, I liked the showers at the Academy way better, even if they weren't all that hot. I wrapped a towel around me and went out to my locker to dry off. I was sitting on the bench in front of it when who should come around the corner but Hutch, all six feet one inch of him, with a towel around his neck.

The first thing I noticed was that he was a real blond. The second thing I noticed was he must have stood in line twice when God was handing out dicks. Was he hung? And he was heading my way. There I am, sitting there looking wet and stupid, when he came over to me. He takes the towel off, puts it on the bench and sits down not exactly next to me, but close by.

"Tough drill," he says

"Yeah."

"Do you think he's trying to kill us or get us in shape?"

"I figure, if we die during training, he'll just say the force was better off without us."

He laughed. I like feeling clever around him, so I try to come up with another witty remark, when he says, "I like to air dry." I look at him like maybe he's from Mars or something (and after knowing him all these years, sometimes I think he is). And he tells me, like he's sharing something special with me, which in a way he is, "I'm prone to jock itch; air-drying seems to help."

Which explained why this well-hung, good-looking blond was sitting on a bench, naked, next to me with his legs spread. Okay, open. "At home, I use a fan," he tells me. "It cracks my wife up."

*Married? He's married?* I try to check out the left hand. Sure enough, there's a gold band. I felt letdown, disappointed. Why I don't know. *What's it to me, if he's got a wife?* "Yeah, jock itch is bad," I say to say something.

"No kidding. I had it once so bad it went all the way up my crack."

"Really?"

"I get athlete's foot, too." He was standing up with one leg on the bench, drying between his toes. I could see all of his equipment. He not only had moxie, he was hung like a horse. "How are you making out?"

"Huh?"

He was putting powder between his toes. And I was sort of hoping I was going to see him powder his balls. *I bet he lets his wife do that for him at home in bed.* (Now why did I think that?) "Between pays," he asks.

"Okay. Fine." I say and look away. (*Terrific. Now he knows I've been staring at him. Maybe wants me to stare at him?* I just know I like looking at him. *Maybe he likes having me look at him?* I'm not sure.) But there was something about him that got to me in ways I didn't want to try and understand.

"Let me know," he says. And he walks off to his locker: Leaving me somewhere between confusion and an erection. He told me later that he always made his first appearance in a locker room with the towel around the neck just to ward off any comments about his build. He says he's a big guy, that's all. He hates hearing people talk about how well-endowed he is. Though he wasn't above using it for a quick pick-up line when he was horny, as in "I'm hung like a horse; interested?" Of course, he was picking up ladies at the time.

The next time we showered up, he came out with the towel around his waist. And, like he told me way later, everybody that wanted to see it had already seen it, and that was that. Except for me, because...just because.

So, yeah, I associate Hutch with bathrooms. I used to love the one I'm stuck in. Now that I'm living in it, I'm not so sure. It's the master bath. We remodeled it when we bought this house. We paid for a plumber this time. We didn't pay for a plumber in our little fixer-upper. I figured we could do the work ourselves back then.

All right, all right, so maybe the toilet flushed all by itself in the middle of the night and you couldn't get a drink of water at the same time that someone was taking a shower. But that time we were wedged together under the kitchen sink putting in that pipe stands out as an all-time erotic event. It was one of those times you go from being pissed off at each other to turned on in no time.

The pipe wasn't going in as easy as the book said it would: I needed Hutch to come and hold it while I got it in the right position. I mean the pipe. He was writing notes for his thesis and was already pretty fed up with having to take sponge baths because the shower was still not working. I hollered for him. And he finally heard me. I was halfway under the sink, so maybe he wasn't just pretending to not hear me.

"What?" he sticks his head under the sink and asks me. Which sounds more like 'Why the hell are you bothering me, you stupid asshole, I told you we shoulda got a plumber in the first place...' He can say a lot with one word; it's one of the things I like about him...usually.

"I need help with the pipe," I tell him.

"So?"

"So, get the hell under here and hold it for me." It was kind of cramped under there already, so it was gonna be a tight squeeze.

"There's no room," he tells me.

"There's room, there's room," I tell him. And he wiggles his way up my body until were face to face under the kitchen sink with our lower bodies pressed together.

"Now what?" he wants to know. And he doesn't sound like he's noticed what I'm feeling.

"Hold the pipe, so I can get it in straight."

"Fine." I get the martyred saint sigh, but don't say anything. Part of me wants to just finish the job, part of me wants to give up the wrench and call a plumber, and part of me wants to rub off on him. "Can't we just call someone who knows that they're doing?" he wants to know as he reaches up to take hold of the damn pipe.

"NO!"

"Whatever," he says. I hate when he says that. That's another one of his one word sentences that means something like. 'Whatever, you dumb fuck, a lot you know, I have to put up with your stupid ideas because you live with me and I once told you I'd never leave you' or something like that.

"Just hold the fucking thing straight," I tell him through gritted teeth.

"I am!"

"No you're not, it's crooked."

"Maybe it's bent," he says.

"You're bent," I say.

"Get bent," he says. Then we start to laugh. Then he starts to notice that we're wedged pretty tight against each other and that I've sort of got a hard-on. Then he presses his hips into me and I notice he's definitely getting hard. "My shoulder hurts; I can't hold the pipe the way you want it."

"That's okay. Maybe I should call a plumber."

"Only if you want to." Which means, 'Thank God, he's come to his senses, Lincoln's freed the slaves and I can go back to being a literary genius.'

But neither of us was moving away or breaking the contact. And I know it seems really weird, but it was a real turn-on to be sort of stuck there pressed real tight against each other and not being able to use our hands because he has the pipe and I have the wrench. "So, what do you think?"

"I'm getting claustrophobic."

"Okay. Let me put the wrench down. Now, hand me the pipe." Now our hands were free. I put a lip lock on him, and grabbed his ass with one hand. He reached around and grabbed mine and we made out and rubbed against each other.

Then he comes up for air and says, "Didn't you say you saw a roach under here the other day?" Talk about a mood killer...almost. He backed down me and out. And then I exited Roachville. We finished up on the kitchen floor. I ended my career as a plumber with a bang.

In this bathroom, where I now live, we had a dual shower put in and added a Jacuzzi in the corner. It's got redwood trim around it and a stained glass window Hutch and I made. He drew a picture of a seashore and then I took a stained glass class and made it. It's really peaceful to sit and soak and look at that window. My towels are all dark blue, his are all white. Right now, I'm sitting bareassed on one of his white face towels-- that'll show him!

We put in these really expensive tiles that an artist made for us from more of Hutch's sketches. Most of the regular tiles are a blue/white. Then, every so often there are white ones with different kinds of boats or seascapes. All kind of dreamy looking, just sort of suggesting the sea and water. A lot of the scenes are places from Minnesota Hutch had in his sketch books. The one of the lighthouse is probably my favorite. Except maybe for the one he did of us making love. It's one of his so-called 'naughty' drawings. You really can't tell for sure what it is. It could be dolphins or something. But it's us doing sixty-nine. Only you can't tell it's us because our faces are hidden...no joke. Who can see your face, when it's buried in your partner's lap?

I guess I could be happy living in here. I'll stay clean and never be thirsty. Huggy used the can in here one time, when we were having our housewarming party. He picked up on the sixty-nine tile right away. I made him swear not to tell Hutch he saw it, since it was my idea to have that one made. You know, lying here, I'm noticing that a couple of these other tiles look more like people getting it on than ships. That one right over the tub looks like two guys butt-fucking. One guy is trying to prove his undying love for the other one and also get a great piece of ass; the other one is talking about his next book.

No, I'm wrong, it's a sketch of a sinking ship. Plus, the tub needs to be re-caulked. The ceiling could use painting, too.

You know how you have those times in your life when the light bulb goes on over your head, and you get it? I had one of those in a bathroom once. It was in '79, after I got shot. Well, what happened in the bathroom just confirmed it. The light bulb came on before the bathroom.

I was coming out of the coma. And what I noticed first was hearing things. I couldn't get my eyes to work right; it was like they were glued shut. Then I remember smelling things. I knew I was in the hospital because it was that Lysol smell they all have. And under that was the smell of what the Lysol is trying to cover up.

What I remember next is hearing a soft voice that seemed to be next to me and inside of me, too. It was

telling me I was 'going to be all right.' I wasn't going to die. That he was 'there' with me. The other thing I remember was that the voice smelled good. It reminded me of sunshine and fresh air with peppermint in it. It smelled warm and alive and real. Like a perfume that you should get a whiff of every single day, just to stay alive.

And there was soft hair on my face and the touch of his hand and his voice in my ear. Telling me that he was still there. That he wasn't going anywhere. That's when I knew that no matter how many numbers I had in my little black book, I only needed his. That no matter what I used to tell myself about wanting a family, he was already all the family I needed. Love was *being there*.

How could anyone who came later be what he was to me now? How could I even start to tell someone who I was and what I'd been through in my life, when he not only knew it all, he'd lived it with me? And just so you don't think it was all hearts and violins, there was also the fact that he touched my dick.

Okay, it's usually like this. Most of the time, I think of it as my dick. 'Penis' is fine, when you have to make nice, but day to day, it's my dick. If it's soft and he's starting to suck on it, it's my dick. Soon as it's been in his mouth for awhile, it turns into my cock. My dick may start rubbing off on his crack in the morning, but my cock finishes up either wetting his back or, if we have time, inside of him. And while my dick has made most of the important decisions in my life, good and bad, I have the most luck with him when I let my cock do the talking.

Anyway, it used to do the talking. I don't know what a lifeless sausage has to say to him or anyone now.

Back to the dick and the light bulb. Since I was peeing at the time in question, I'd say it was my dick. And since I wasn't relating to him in a sexual way -- okay, an openly sexual way -- it was my dick. But the way it felt, I think it was my cock.

I was having all this pain urinating because of the catheter they had jammed up me when I was so out of it. And now the end of my dick hurt. And of all the problems I was having, post-surgery, that bothered me the most. Maybe it had the most to do with me personally. I don't know. But I was really hurting -- or, like they try to whitewash in the hospital, I had discomfort. It felt more like pain, why mince words.

I must have been going on and on about it, I don't know. I know I was upset about being shot. Maybe it was a way to focus on something that I could understand. Massive injuries, heart failure, and a coma were maybe more than I could get a grip on at the time. The head of my dick was another thing.

We go into the bathroom for me to pee. I'm feeling like I'm making progress, since I've graduated from the bedpan to sitting on the toilet. He says, "Does it burn?"

I say, "Like fire."

He says, "I'll be right back." He slips out the door and comes right back with a glass of water. "Here," he says, "pour this on it." So I pour the ice water on it. I felt like sticking it right in the glass it felt so good.

"Better?"

"Yeah."

"Let it air dry," he says. "And, uh, leave it out." I let it dry. And I leave it out. Then he helps me up so that I'm standing. And I'm standing there with my dick out. And he starts saying how the end of my dick -- but

he says penis -- has like a cut lip and the urine is like vinegar. Which isn't news to me, since that's what it feels like. Then he keeps talking and explaining what a catheter sometimes does, while he's putting vaseline on the slit and all around the tip of it. It felt so damn good I could have died happy. "That was purely medicinal, Starsk," he tells me while he washes his hands. "Now, tuck it back in."

I do. He helps me back into bed. My dick is happier, so I'm happier. It was more than first aid, no matter what he said. He could have had me put it on myself. No, he cared. He cared about me and my dick. I knew the three of us could be very happy together.

*Wham!* Something just hit the bathroom door. It sounded like a fist. "Open the fucking door. Now! Or I'm going to break it down," a macho cop voice told me. Which was a joke, considering he was probably standing out there in his bare feet, wearing his ratty old plaid writing robe and reading glasses. Intimidating he was not.

"Come and get me, copper," I told him. And he started laughing. I got up off the floor and went to him. Now we were face to face except for a locked door.

"Sweetheart, my door-breaking days are over. Let me in."

"Make nice."

"Please."

"Entice me."

"I'll give you something good to eat."

"What? Leftover brisket?"

"No, a meal at Pierre's. My treat."

My mouth was starting to water. Pierre's just happens to be my favorite French restaurant. It was small, intimate, and expensive as hell. "They're booked up for months," I said.

"I'll blow the maitre d' to get us in."

"I'll duct tape that mouth of yours before I let you do that."

"I could pull a few strings."

"Yeah?" I thought about it. "And the Dom?"

"As much as you can hold."

"And Death by Chocolate cheesecake at Molly's?"

"Whatever you want."

"Then you suck me till I'm rock hard and sit on it."

"Wait a minute!"

"That's the deal. Take it or leave it." He was out there thinking, I could tell. Maybe sitting on it wasn't

romantic enough for him. Fuck it! He owed me. Then I heard the famous Hutchinson exhale, so I knew I had him.

"All right. Open the door, and let's shake." I opened the door and we shook. Which is really stupid -- we actually stand there and shake our bodies like we're pitching a fit. But it's funny. So we do it. Then I notice he isn't wearing anything but a smile. "Take me now," he said.

"I'm not taking you anywhere. My dick's dead." And I go sit on the edge of the tub.

"No it isn't, silly. You just need some encouragement."

"So, encourage me."

"I really need you."

I looked down. Nothing was happening. "You're gonna have to do better than that," I tell him. "Try begging me."

"I'm desperate."

I thought I felt something in the groin area, so I say, "Really beg me." I got the one-eyebrow-lifted look with that one, so maybe I was pushing it. "Okay, sort of beg me."

"Please."

"You can do better than that."

"Pretty please."

"It ain't working," I said. "Maybe you should try getting down on your knees and wiggling your ass." Maybe I shouldn't have said that because he stalked over to me and whipped out his arm. I ducked, thinking he was going to clobber me. But all he was doing was reaching for the bottle of baby oil that was behind me.

"Who needs *you*?" he says. He opens the bottle and pours some in his hands. Then he starts rubbing it all over his belly, his balls, his tits. He starts stroking his dick and it's growing. He's standing there in front of me with his eyes closed, all shiny and oily and hard.

"Who are you thinking of?" I want to know his fantasy and I kind of start touching myself.

"Frederix, the Maitre d' at Pierre's," he tells me. "Ee ees 'ung like thee horse."

"How the hell do you know?"

"Remember that really good table we had last time we were there? he wants to know while he's pulling on his left nipple and making it hard.

Yeah?" I'm touching my balls. They feel warm and alive.

"I was meaning to tell you..." Now he was pulling on the right nipple and it was starting to perk up and stand at attention.

"What?"

"Well, I had to go down on all fours and bark like a dog for him."

"So?"

"Well I had my pants down at the time." He was circling his belly with his hand. It looked like he wanted to put his thumb in his navel. It's a trade secret, but he really has a sensitive stomach. The first time I ever got him off, all I did was stick my finger in his bellybutton.

"And?"

"And one thing led to another." There he goes, he's just circling his belly button with his thumb. I'm noticing my balls feel really heavy in my hand.

"And?"

"And, well..."

"Yeah, yeah?"

"I, uh, happened to be up on the bar at the time. So, the patrons were very entertained."

"Then what happened?"

"Oh, I did him in front of the kitchen staff."

"Where was I?"

"In the restroom?" There went the thumb. He was getting even harder. And so was I.

"No, I wasn't. I saw the whole thing."

"You did?"

"Yeah, and I noticed you don't know how to do it right."

"I don't?"

"Huh-uh. I think you need to be shown the difference between a fuck and a screw."

"I do?"

"Yeah, there's a big difference between them." Which is true. Before I got hold of him, he didn't know there was a difference.

"Is there, really?" he says, playing along. He's still got his eyes closed and doesn't notice my dick is feeling better about him and things in general. "Do you want to show me?"

"Yeah, turn around, bend over and I'll show you." I figure if I talk dirty to him, we'll really get hotter. But he goes and does it! And, Bingo! Lazarus rose up. I couldn't believe it. Then he stopped playing with himself, reached back and spread his cheeks with both hands. I saw pink and the rocket to fucking Mars was ready.

"Well," he said. "I'm waiting for my lesson."

"Okay," I said. And I stuck two fingers up his ass real fast, twisted them and said, "This is a screw." Then I moved them in and out and told him, "This is a fuck." Good thing that baby oil was all over him, now that I think about it.

"Take it easy," he hissed.

"Yeah?" But I screwed them in a little bit more and then fucked him until he was dancing on my fingers making noises somewhere between "ooh" and "ow."

I thought maybe I was being too rough, so I stopped and started pulling out. I was just about to say 'sorry', when he stood up, turned around and said, "Your turn. Wash your hand." I did. Then he proceeded to oil me down like I was a rare piece of antique furniture, and he was my caretaker. "I really missed you."

He picked up the white towel I had been sitting on, and I figured I was in for a lecture about not using his stuff, when he went and ran water on it. Then he washed the oil off his cock. And while he was doing mine he said, "Pick a number."

"Sixty-nine."

"How about seventy-one?"

"Even better." And we got down on the floor into position. We seventy-oned for a while, which is sixty-nine with two fingers up your ass. I thought we were gonna shoot together down our throats, but he pulled out of my mouth.

"Turn over," he tells me.

"Why?"

"I'm going to show you the difference between a screw and a fuck."

"Maybe later."

"Now, Starsky." And he's grabbing my legs and spreading them. Did I mention he used to wrestle in college? He knows some definitely serious moves to take down an opponent and get what he wants. Not that I mind.

"I hope you're planning on using the KY," I tell him. I know he is, because nothing's happened yet, but he was being so forceful I thought a reminder wouldn't hurt.

I feel him right at the opening and I'm hoping he isn't going to be in too big a hurry because I really want it. He starts pushing in slow. I try to relax and get past the pain you feel at first, when he stops and says, "Let's talk." *Is he nuts? Talk! I've got a cock stopped just at the entrance of the tunnel, and he wants to talk?!*

"You have to understand something, David. I'm a writer." *Jesus, not with the literary stuff again. I'm gonna get off on an inch and a half of meat here, if he doesn't shut up.* "I was a writer before I met you."

"Yeah, yeah. Gimme a little more, will ya?" *Can't he talk and push at the same time?*

"I will. But I want to explain something while I have your attention."

He had my attention all right. That and my asshole stuck on the end of his dick. "Later. Tell me later," I moaned.

"No, we have to talk now."

"Talk? I want to give you a great piece of ass and you want to talk?"

"I want you to understand." He pushed in a little more and I felt the throbbing pinch stop and the pleasure

start.

"I understand, I understand." I felt the lower part of my spine start loosening and my ass opening up to take him in.

"Do you?" And he held himself there with me wanting more.

"Believe me, I un-der-stand!" If he didn't start with the pushing soon, I was going over the top without him.

"I was wrong."

"Me, too. Gimme some more." He finally stopped being so stingy and gave me what I was needing...

"You're more important than my writing." He was starting to sound out of breath. I was hoping that might shut him up. "But sometimes you are too much of a distraction and I can't work." *Yeah, work it. Work it, baby.* "You know?"

"Yeah, now shut up and do me." He shuts up and starts doing me. *Finally.* I'm thinking, is this a fuck or a screw? It doesn't feel like either of them, when all of a sudden it hits me. *It's intercourse! Let your cock talk, babe.*

Next thing I know he's pulling me down on it. He has me by the hips and I'm sitting on it, whether I want to or not. Fantastic. He's throbbing in me, getting ready to hose down the fire inside.

"I love you," I tell him. I don't hear anything back, so I say it again. "I love you."

"Fax me," he says and thrusts up and pulls me down at the same time. It feels like a guided missile got shoved up my ass. Slam, bam, thank you, ma'am, and the lights went out in Georgia. He exploded. I came all over my belly, my chest, the bathroom. I just kept coming and coming. "I love you, I love you, I love you," he said, until he ran out of words.

"That was the all-time best ever," I tell him after I regain consciousness.

"You tell me that every time," he smiles.

"No, this was different. You were really *here* with me. You really meant it." (I might not walk right for a week, he meant it that much.)

And the thing is, he wasn't going to change. And I didn't want to live in the bathroom.

"Just promise me one thing, okay?" He nodded, waiting. "You're a writer. I accept that. But keep it out of bed with us. No more plot development while my dick is up your ass. Or vice versa."

He grinned and we shook again.

"Do I get the dedication?"

"Of course." We're drying off, after soaking in the Jacuzzi for about a year. I notice he's using my towels and I'm using his, which is nice.

"Do I get thanked in a big way, too?"

"Yes. Dry my back." I dry his back and think about bankrupting him when I get done ordering at Pierre's.  
"You're going to be in the book, Gordo."

"I am?"

"It's about the vampire killer. It's our case."

I like the sound of that, until I think maybe he's planning to make me look bad or something. "You're not going to make me look like an idiot, are you?"

"Of course not, darling," he camped. "Do you want to powder me?"

I powder him. "What am I going to be like in the book?"

"Oh, strong, virile, sexy, macho, intelligent, brave, and a good dancer." I was feeling relieved. That sounded exactly like me. "Plus, you can help me with the deep research."

"Yeah? Anything you say, big boy." And I rub against him.

"Good! I'm downloading case histories of twenty-five or thirty vampire-type killers. You can write detailed reviews for me."

"What?"

"Oh, and there's Gardner's book on necrophilia and blood fetishism. I need you to read that." Then I get a kiss on the forehead and a pat on the ass as he pushes away from me. "Take copious notes, okay? I'm going to outline Chapter Two."

And off he goes, leaving me there to contemplate detailed reviews, copious notes, writer's cramp, and copulation with corpses, possibly his.