

(Author's note: Story number six in my Pennsylvania series. This comes right after "Panic." I think this story is about...nothing. There is only a little bit of "R" sex-love. I put in some little slices of life stuff, fun details, which I like to do, but otherwise it's mainly laughter and angst.)

## STILL FALLS THE RAIN

by

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*Where we have all fallen  
at the end of some dream...*

Vinnie woke suddenly, arms coming up, lashing out at something, hand impacting with solid flesh. Within a split second he realized Sonny was straddling him. Sonny was hitting him.

"Hey!" Easily, he grabbed Sonny's flailing arms. Sonny was in a kind of stupor. He could see in the dimness the glazed eyes. He wasn't hitting Vinnie hard at all, so it was simple to hold his arms still. Sonny wasn't even aware.

Vinnie pushed him over, got on top of him and held his wrists down on either side of his head. Weakly, Sonny kicked out. There was nothing there but the bed sheet Sonny had rumped at his feet.

Vinnie did not put all his weight on him...just enough to keep him confined. He said, "Sonny, wake up!"

Sonny replied, words a little garbled but still with a hiss, "Stay away from me!"

Vinnie tried again. "Sonny. C'mon babe. Wake up."

Sonny squirmed, moaned soft and low, the air catching in his throat. Then he let out a soft cry which startled Vinnie, gulped air and said, a little clearer, but almost a whisper, "Just go away. Far away. Somewhere where I don't have to see you."

"Come on." Now Vinnie let his hands stray to Sonny's shoulders. He grabbed him, jerked him up a couple inches, then down, but not hard. "Wake up. Come on."

Sonny's breathing quickened. He turned his head. Now he blinked. Now he looked back at Vinnie and finally there seemed to be recognition there.

"Do you know where you are?"

Sonny took a deep breath. Voice low, "In Pennsylvania. With you." His brows narrowed. He looked confused. His lips formed a hard line.

Vinnie nodded. "Good." He rolled his weight off him, giving him room. Sonny's head and gaze turned, following him. The eyes still looked confused.

Vinnie said, "Okay?" Sonny looked slim and vulnerable in low lamplight Vinnie had just turned on. He wore only black cotton stretch shorts, askew on his hips now. And it was cool in the room despite the fact that this time Vinnie had remembered to turn on the heat. Rain pattered the window.

Vinnie leaned down and pulled the covers back over him. He reached down, gently over Sonny's waist, feeling the naked flesh of his hip and down further. He grabbed the waistband of the shorts and pulled up, straightening them. "Oops," he said, giving a grin. "You almost lost those."

Sonny, half on his side now, didn't react. He just watched him. Vinnie looked at him, reached out and softly touched the side of Sonny's face, then withdrew his hand.

"What?"

"Vinnie." He just said his name. That was it.

Vinnie gave him a half-smile.

"You're so goddamn beautiful."

"Fuck, you're not quite awake yet, are you?"

Sonny's lips formed into a hesitant smile.

"Heh, made you smile," Vinnie said casually, but Sonny was squirming, moving into him now, arm going around his waist. He pressed himself into Vinnie and Vinnie let him, moving so he could embrace him. They lay there, very still, for a few minutes. Then Sonny moved his head up, looking at him again.

Vinnie waited.

Sonny started to speak but got a funny look, like his voice had gone. Vinnie tightened his arms, said, "Hey," as he watched him. But Sonny ignored him, said roughly, "Okay, you win. I'll see a doctor, then." His body shook once.

Vinnie said, “Hey, just shut up, okay? Don’t do anything you don’t want to. We’ll figure it out.”

Sonny blinked, closed his eyes tight. “Was I hitting you?”

“Uh, I don’t recall...”

“Vinnie...”

“Shut up. Go back to sleep.”

“But, well fuck, then...what’s wrong with me?”

Vinnie shrugged. “We’ll go to the library. We’ll get some books. We’ll figure it out. Together.”

Sonny’s eyes opened. They were glistening. He looked perplexed, and far far too vulnerable for Vinnie’s comfort. This was the man others had feared, who strutted down the boardwalk like a king. Who had other, meaner mobsters for breakfast. Awhile back he’d had the thought that he felt glad that prison hadn’t broken Sonny, only mellowed him. Now he realized he’d only been half right. It was true. Prison had not broken Sonny. It was before that. It was that night and day of pure hell they’d been through, the hell Vinnie had put him through, and then Sonny electrocuting himself. That had done it. Vinnie had done it. It just took its time catching up to them.

No. Sonny wasn’t mellower. Sonny *was*...well.... Something inside him was collapsed, shattered.... Still an open wound.

He ran his hands up Sonny’s back and clasped them on either side of his face. He said, “We’ll go tomorrow. Okay? To the library. We’ll figure it out.”

Sonny took a harsh breath.

“Okay?” Vinnie said again to distract him. “Okay?” Because Sonny looked like he was about to lose it. He did not like the look in his eyes one bit. Vinnie moved his hands down, clasping him harder around the shoulders, said, “We’ll go tomorrow. It’ll be fine. I’ll take you out for Chinese.” He pulled back a couple inches. Sonny’s bottom lip shivered, but his eyes stared into Vinnie’s, dark and filled with an even darker void. “Fuck,” Vinnie said softly, his hand brushing under his chin. “I’m not gonna ever let anything happen to you. You know that.”

Stiffly, Sonny nodded. “Sure.” The tone was flat.

“So now we got a plan. You trust me? You trust me?” The second repetition came out harsher, more demanding than he’d intended.

Sonny nodded again, then lay his head against Vinnie's shoulder.

"Okay then, let's get some sleep." He reached out and turned off the lamp.

Sonny lay still against him, arm over his waist, hand clutching a fistful of Vinnie's white tank in the back. Vinnie could feel Sonny's hot breath against his skin. Sonny's body seemed to jolt with every heartbeat.

Vinnie breathed slow, even, conscious not to make any move. Rain fell heavily on the roof. The water beat like a hush of drums. He waited. Waited to hear Sonny's breathing go back to normal. Waited to hear the more heavy sighs of sleep. And for the body to relax, soften, subside. It took the better part of an hour. Finally, he felt Sonny fall a little, relax, felt and heard the easier breathing. Only then did he allow himself to go back to sleep. Only then.

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Sonny pushed against Vinnie, waking him. Vinnie turned in the buttery morning light, smiling sleepily. It seemed the storm had passed. For now. "G'mornin'," he mumbled.

Sonny raised his head. Smiled softly. But there was still something hesitant, something shuttered behind those brown eyes.

Vinnie reached down under the covers, his big hands grabbing Sonny's hips, pulling him close. He felt Sonny's morning erection press his thigh. "Yikes," Vinnie said, grinning, reaching up, rubbing Sonny's already disheveled hair, then sat up, swinging his legs over the side of the bed. His own body was starting to respond. That simply would *not* do. It was a fact that both of them usually avoided making love in the mornings, although occasionally they just couldn't resist. It was just that the idea that the day awaited, that they might feel at all rushed or confined, that they couldn't go to sleep together afterwards with the night closing in, made things feel just plain frustrating. It was so much more peaceful at night, so much more private-seeming, and all-consuming, which was what they both craved.

"Only a Vinnie Terranova would say 'yikes'," Sonny muttered. "Like a fucking home grown all-American comic book."

Vinnie thrilled at those words. Oh yeah, that was more like it. That was his Sonny. That sounded *good*.

His body warmed. But it was morning. No time for dalliances now...

Not that they hadn't had *wonderful* day encounters...

Now Vinnie turned as he stood in his white shorts and tank, staring back down at the bed. Sonny looked...well...goddamn magnificent. "What if I'd said 'keen'?"

Sonny laughed. It was a joke with them. Their least favorite song in the whole world. And *that* word.

Sonny rolled his eyes and said sarcastically, “Oh Bennie she’s really keen...” drawling out the last word. “She’s got electric boots...” But he couldn’t finish; he was laughing again.

Vinnie recited, and Sonny joined in, both cracking up, “B...B...Bennie and the Jets.”

Sonny had kicked off the covers. He reclined, golden and perfect, lazing back on stark white sheets, the bulge in the front of his black, stretch shorts promising more than a handful.

“Ahgodammit,” Vinnie hissed, diving back onto the bed, nearly jiggling Sonny off the edge. He grabbed him, centered him, and kissed him hard on the mouth.

Sonny started laughing harder under the kiss, pushing against Vinnie’s chest with the flat palms of his hands. He turned his head, “Get *off* me!” But he was still laughing as he said it. And Vinnie was boldly pulling down his shorts, grabbing at him with no preliminaries whatsoever.

Sonny said, “Hey! Hey!” Then he stopped as Vinnie started gently stroking him. Softer, he said, “Hey-ey-ey... Ahgod.” His head flopped back.

It was a quickie. But all right, still. Things were good between them. Even a quick mutual jerk-off session made Sonny squirm, cuss, reward Vinnie’s hand with liquid warmth in minutes flat. When Sonny touched him back it didn’t take long; Vinnie came like a volcano with Sonny’s lips pressed to his, murmuring, “There you go,” then Sonny chuckling again, devouring his mouth.

The thrill of the whirlwind that was Sonny, the attention, hell just the nearness of his fiery energy, the press of him, the way Sonny’s mouth merged with his was intoxicating, like nothing else he’d known. He could climax just *thinking* about it.

How could it be that Sonny made him feel like no one else ever had?

And Sonny seemed so much like himself now after a bad night. It was a huge relief.

Next, it was into the shower with them.

They dressed, then changed the sheets and took the bundle to the washing machine downstairs. Sonny started the wash cycle while Vinnie went into the kitchen and started scrambling eggs.

With few exceptions, it was, all in all, a pretty perfect routine.

With few exceptions. One of them being the small detail of Sonny's encroaching anxiety attacks or post traumatic flashbacks or whatever they were. For the past week, the attacks had happened almost every other night, all minor, all short-term.

By the mornings, Sonny always seemed normal. But Vinnie still worried, although he did not let it show.

He heard Sonny go outside for the paper, then come back in, shouting, "Fuck it's cold!"

Everything seemed fine now. Sonny sat down, put on his reading glasses, and started in on the paper. Vinnie grabbed hot toast from the toaster, tossed it on a plate with fresh scrambled eggs and put it in front of him. Then he grabbed his own plate, the pitcher of orange juice, and sat down, pouring two glasses of bright orange liquid. Sometimes they had bacon, but neither was overly fond of it, so most of the time it was eggs and toast, sometimes French toast.

They shared the paper and ate ravenously. Vinnie made a sandwich out of his toast and eggs and stuffed his face as he read the news.

"Hey," he said. "Look." He turned the page toward Sonny. The headline on the article read: "**Gay Pride Parade in Pittsburgh Slated to Attract Thousands.**"

Sonny looked at him over the tops of his reading glasses, eyebrows drawn in question. It seemed he flushed just a little...or maybe it was Vinnie's imagination.

Vinnie suppressed a grin. "Wanna go?"

Sonny tilted his head. "They got a Vinnie parade?"

"Huh?"

The brown eyes closed as Sonny sighed dramatically. Then he opened them. He had a funny look. He said, "Pal, I'm not into your gender. I'm into you. When they have a parade for you, I'll be there."

Vinnie felt himself smile. It was just like Sonny to miss the point that this actually did kind of pertain to them, to their rights. But he didn't push it. "I kinda figured that out awhile ago, but I just wanted to see your reaction."

"Yeah, well." Sonny brushed at the air with his fist. "You go if you want."

"Alone? With my wandering ways? I couldn't trust myself."

Sonny smirked. "Thought so."

Later, dishes in the dishwasher and sheets in the dryer, Vinnie glanced at the door and their jackets. Sonny was still at the table filling in the daily crossword with his own variations of what should be instead of what was right. Vinnie walked up to him, leaning over his shoulder. “That should be ‘eddy’ not ‘river,’” he said. “You don’t even have a space for the other ‘r.’”

Sonny said, “I hate the word ‘eddy.’” He’d taken the ‘v’ in river and formed another wrong word from there, ‘verse’ for ‘drama’. Secretly, Vinnie loved what he thought of as Sonny’s nonsensical crossword collages. It was like a strange kind of art that made no sense but was so completely ‘Sonny.’

Vinnie ruffled his hair, which he knew Sonny hated. “C’mon. Let’s go out.”

Sonny didn’t move. “You go without me.”

“That’s not the deal,” Vinnie said quietly.

“It’s cold,” Sonny complained, still staring at the crossword.

“There’s heat in the car.”

Sonny sighed. “You’re no fun.”

“Hey, I’m fun. I said I’d take you for Chinese. We can see a movie maybe, too.”

“Damn, I never get to finish these,” Sonny muttered, but he stood, throwing down his pen. Vinnie loved that Sonny always did crosswords with a pen and never crossed anything out. When he came to the tiny words, he made up abbreviations. HFD was a slang abbreviation, he’d told him once, for ‘hell, fuck and damn.’ It was actually quite comical. And Vinnie liked Sonny’s versions better than the professional ones anyway.

Dragging his feet, Sonny approached the door. He took his coat and scarf as Vinnie handed them to him. He said, “Maybe we should wait until tomorrow when it might be warmer.”

Vinnie shook his head, smiling.

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When they got to the library, Vinnie headed straight for the psychology section. Sonny hung back, but Vinnie didn’t force him to go with him. It was ironic, actually. Sonny had read a bunch of pop psychology books in prison. He’d even talked about some of what he’d read. But now that he faced a real problem, something that really scared him, he closed off.

Okay, Vinnie thought. Let Sonny look at the novels or the magazine rack or the science fiction. He didn't mind. He didn't want to push Sonny. That might be the problem in the first place, pushing a man who didn't take well to pushing but had, somewhere, some place, some time, given in. Sonny was still that spoiled prince, that much was true, but Vinnie loved even that aspect about him, feeling an urge himself to spoil the man who had seemed to own the world and then lost it all, the man who had taken him under his wing, favored him, trusted him, wanted him. Wanted *him*. Wanted Vinnie Terranova who had come to break his world, Vinnie who was nobody, really, just a cop who thought he was doing a good job, a guy from the NYC burbs whose ambition to please others first had overtaken his own soul, blinding him to the things he might've wanted for himself. Until Sonny came along. Until Sonny showed him how to let loose a little, how to really have fun.

Turning slightly, he watched Sonny head for "A" for "Asimov" and grinned to himself as he headed down the far aisle.

Vinnie checked out the limit...five books. Sonny had no library card so signed up for one, and checked out a couple novels. Vinnie made no comment.

In the car, Sonny turned to him. "I'm sorry."

"Huh?" Vinnie looked at him as he started the car.

"I read some psych books in prison. I'll read those books, too. I will. I just didn't want to...go down that aisle today."

Vinnie smiled. Sonny had always acted less intelligent than he really was. Vinnie knew he'd read an arsenal of books in prison. He was a very fast reader. "You went with me. That's all I asked."

Sonny grimaced.

He said gently, "You could pummel a guy all day in the ring at the gym, take hit after hit, but you can't walk down the psychology section of the library. Makes perfect sense to me." And he pulled out of the parking space and headed for the street.

Sonny stared at him. Vinnie's smile turned to a grin. "Now let's go knock off a 7/11."

Sonny clamped down on his lips, but a smile formed anyway.

*Heh, made you smile*, Vinnie thought.

Grinning now, Sonny let his head fall back onto the headrest.

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Instead of a movie, they decided to go to a nearby mall, which was a mistake because shopping with Sonny was like shopping with a kid. He wanted everything he saw and all of it expensive, and when he was done he was done. If Vinnie was still shopping, Sonny would haunt his back, bouncing on his toes, and heavily sigh, "Aren't we done yet?"

Before Pennsylvania, they had only gone shopping together a few times, and then it was for clothes. Suits, mainly. And tuxes for Sonny's bachelor party. Those times had been different because they weren't aimless, and they were both getting the same things. It had been quite enjoyable for Vinnie, though, having Sonny admire him in fine wools and silks. It was all very heady back then.

Now, after spending hundreds of dollars on stuff they really didn't need, and all of it the most expensive and lavish of choices including towels, clothes they'd probably never wear, colognes they'd probably never use, wine glasses that would probably never touch their lips, and nifty key chains with little flashlights they *would* use, they hungrily ate a late lunch at a nearby Chinese place.

They had fun. They laughed a lot. They kept on-purpose-accidentally bumping into each other which was an extraordinary pleasure just in itself, such as the time Sonny tried to steer Vinnie to the store exit by placing his body in the way of every turn Vinnie wanted to make down another aisle. To Vinnie it was endearing, but he vowed never to tell him that.

One cashier, observing them with a smile, asked if they were brothers. Sonny replied casually, surprising Vinnie with his nonchalance. "Yeah, that's almost right." It was a great day.

On the way home, they did a little grocery shopping. The whole time Sonny was in a fine mood. And Vinnie thought contentedly: *What a pair we make.*

Out in the parking lot, some kid got away from its mom, screaming, and ran right into Sonny's legs. The child was fairly small and a car was coming, so Sonny swung her up quickly saying, "Hey, what's going on, huh?"

Suddenly, the kid started laughing as the mother ran up and claimed her.

Vinnie watched him gently hand the kid over, wondering what life might've been like if Sonny had actually married Theresa. He had already decided that Sonny's life would have been short. Even if he'd managed to have kids, he probably wouldn't have been around long enough to be with them, watch them grow up. But still Vinnie wondered. Sonny had asked him, that day they'd gotten drunk on vodka and made love all day during a storm, if Vinnie had ever wanted a family. It was on both their minds, of course, wondering if the other had thoughts about it. Vinnie didn't really see himself with kids, and didn't care one way or the other, truth be told. His mom would've had a fit if he'd ever voiced his indifference, so he never really thought about it, figuring he might have

children for his mom to spoil some day because, well, didn't everyone eventually get married?

Now all that was changed forever, and he was not unhappy about it.

But Sonny? He'd never really asked him the question in return.

In the car he turned to him. "I think you might've actually made a good father."

Sonny frowned at him, then shrugged.

A twinge of guilt knifed through Vinnie's gut, then was gone. Sonny seemed completely unruffled. As Vinnie pulled out, Sonny started humming a tune. It sounded like some BeeGee's thing, but not being a fan of them at all, he couldn't be sure.

The kid who'd run into Sonny was long gone. And any thoughts of kids in their future were shut out. Vinnie had no regrets about that at all, but he wasn't so sure about Sonny.

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Vinnie had started reading some of the books he borrowed but they were really no help. However, there were two things he could do for Sonny: keep their household on a relatively low stress level. And just be patient with Sonny's "episodes." The first was easy. Neither of them worked at the moment. They had money. They were free to just hang out, to just be... For both of them this was a first. Vinnie had always been either in school or working, and Sonny had always worked since the age of sixteen. With low stress, Vinnie feared boredom. But so far, that had not come along.

The second thing: patience. For now that was also fairly easy for Vinnie except for the occasional pangs of guilt he felt for what Sonny had gone through, and then he would start to get a bit defensive. Vinnie had never fully realized, until after that stint at the Rialto, how much his job had required him to destroy people...destroy human beings. He had not thought of it that way in training, or even when he'd first met Sonny. He had been taught that the targets of agents had made their beds. They had chosen their lives. The repercussions of those choices were not anyone's fault but the targets'. But that logic no longer worked on Vinnie. Terrorizing someone into giving in, giving up, threatening them with the death penalty...those were things he could not justify doing to a guy who had never harmed him, who had only ever treated him like gold, and who had completely captured his heart back in Atlantic City. Yeah, Sonny had made his choices, some of them bad. But Vinnie was not the judge or the jury. And he found he never could be. The dividing line between what the OCB was doing and what Sonny did was not all that clear. The world did not behave the way Vinnie had been taught it should.

Therefore, the guilt Vinnie felt was still, on occasion, a problem.

Like one early evening in November when Vinnie came down the stairs to find Sonny standing rock still in front of the first step as if in a trance. Sonny was staring off at something.

Vinnie said, “Hey, Sonny...” stopping only when he realized something was “off.” Slowly, he came down, stood next to the unresponsive man, and followed his gaze. The front door stood wide open.

Vinnie started to say, “Why’s the door open...” Then he remembered. He’d come in in a hurry, unloaded an armful of groceries in the kitchen, then gone upstairs forgetting he’d left the door open. Sonny must’ve wandered into the room and seen the open door. And Vinnie knew Sonny had a “thing” about that door ever since it had been broken down by the local cops. They’d replaced it with a pretty red door that had a beveled glass window at the top. Sonny was always checking it to make sure it was locked. It was just a little habit, something Vinnie noticed. And he never said anything about it. But now... That door stood wide open and Sonny was frozen.

Quickly, Vinnie rounded the other man and went to the door, closing it, locking it. He turned. “Hey, it’s closed now. Sorry, I forgot...”

Sonny looked actually sick.

Vinnie went to him. He touched him lightly on the shoulder. “Sonny. It’s okay. I left it open by accident.”

At that, Sonny took a deep, shaky breath and Vinnie realized he must’ve been holding his breath all this time, and seeing something Vinnie could not see.

The guilt pangs started, like indigestion, in his stomach. He tried not to sound defensive when he said, “Come on. It’s just the door. I left it for only about five minutes. It’s no big deal.”

Sonny avoided his gaze, took a light step back. He said nothing, but took another gasping breath.

Sonny’s non-response irritated Vinnie.

“So it was just the stupid open door that set you off?” Vinnie regretted his words as soon as they were out. They sounded so accusing. He wanted to say, *It’s not my fault!* But that sounded even worse. He shut his mouth.

Sonny turned away, hands curled into fists. Then without a word he walked into the kitchen. Vinnie followed.

Still breathing funny, Sonny went to the fridge, got out the vodka, poured it into a glass. Medicating yourself with alcohol...another thing the books said was wrong. Vinnie started to speak again. "You shouldn't..."

Ignoring him, Sonny slammed the fridge door, took the drink and turned toward the living room.

Vinnie watched him, then grabbed another glass and the bottle. Then he opened the fridge and stuck the plastic bottle of orange juice under his arm. He went into the living room, saw Sonny sitting down in front of the TV and turn it on with the remote. Silently, he sat down beside him, set down his glass, the bottle and the orange juice. He added juice to Sonny's glass, which Sonny did not acknowledge, then made a drink of his own.

Into their second drink, with the TV talking to itself, Sonny finally turned and stared at him. His eyes looked flat, tired.

Vinnie looked down. He was still thinking, not really watching the TV, trying to rationalize it all away. It was just a door. A stupid fucking door. This was not real. It couldn't be. Sonny was fine. Everything was fine.

Interrupting his thoughts, Sonny said quietly, "Know what it's like to feel utterly destroyed, helpless...?"

*Fuck!* All his rationalizing vanished. Something burned in Vinnie's chest. Sonny could stop this if he wanted to, Vinnie thought. And yet Sonny kept going back there, back in time... Wasn't it all over? Over and done, dammit! In the past!

Vinnie did not know how to respond. He took another sip from his drink, feeling it burn nicely down his throat. *My fault*, he thought. Then, *Not my fault!* All he wanted to do was move on, move away, far away from this moment.

Finally, Vinnie said, voice a little gruff, "This is good stuff," and held up his glass.

Sonny kept staring at him.

Vinnie looked at the TV.

"That overload of feeling, of being destroyed," Sonny started quietly. "I don't remember, but it must've been too much, why I...why I tried to kill..."

"Don't!" Vinnie interrupted harshly. *Am I yelling at him?* The books all said, "Get the subject to talk." Talking was good. Good! But all Vinnie wanted was for him to stop.

Sonny said, "I must've lost my mind. I must've just..."

Vinnie's vision went white. "SHUT UP! SHUT UP!" Vinnie spilled his glass onto the floor, grabbed him then, pushing him into the couch cushion. He found he was suddenly breathing very hard, pushing Sonny's shoulders down, gripping him bruisingly tight.

Sonny didn't even flinch, or flex one muscle. He simply stared up at him placidly, a half-smile curving one side of his mouth. His tongue made a "tsk" sound. "Vincenzo," he said softly, shaking his head.

Vinnie blinked as Sonny came back into focus.

Sonny let out a small hum of a sigh. "Always trying to save me."

Vinnie frowned, gasping.

"I do realize it was probably just as hard for you to watch me do it..."

"Shut up," Vinnie said again, trying not to see it, Sonny reaching out, Sonny touching the hot wire, the soul being shaken out of him. This time it was a whisper. "Please..." He loosened his clench on Sonny's shoulders, realized he was the one shaking, not Sonny. *My god, am I hurting him?* "Just... Christ, Sonny..." For a long moment it was all he could see, Sonny's body jerking from electricity pulsing through him, then Sonny falling, Sonny dying. Over and over. He let his breath expel fast.

Sonny wasn't the only one with... *stress*...about the past. He knew that, but he thought he had better control.

One of Sonny's hands reached up, brushing the side of Vinnie's head. "Hey, pal. Next time," he said softly, "could you please just remember to close the door?"

When he most needed him to, it was uncanny how Sonny could read his mind.

Vinnie let out a grunt, all the pent up frustration leaving him at once, leaving him limp, and he leaned his weight into Sonny, his head ducking until his face pressed against the other man's chest. He didn't know if he should sob or laugh. He said, dryly, "You got it."

Sonny pushed at him, then, until Vinnie sat back up. Except for the minutes Vinnie spent cleaning up the mess his drink had made on the floor, Sonny kept his hand on his arm the rest of the evening, which just made Vinnie want to grab him again, only nicer now. But he didn't.

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Later, when they got into bed, Sonny reached over Vinnie and grasped him warmly, pleasantly. His body was so solid, so welcome, and Vinnie's body instantly, naturally attuned to it.

Sonny said low, "It's just you and me. Nothing else is real."

Vinnie turned his head, staring into those autumn-brown eyes.

Sonny continued, soft, his voice almost humming. "When it's all over, when it's all said and done, you and me, Vinnie, we're gonna still be together, bouncing off walls of light and stars...careening into infinity, taking it over."

Amazed at the unusual sentiment, at Sonny himself, Vinnie just lay there feeling his chest warm, his throat thicken.

"That's all that matters. You are the only real thing in my life, Vinnie. You know that." He took a breath. "You know that."

Vinnie felt a small smile tug his lips even as his eyes blurred a little.

"What we have...it doesn't measure in years, in words. I got...I got nothing to compare." He came up on his elbow a little, stroking Vinnie's shoulder. "This world is...is nothing but a...a bunch of beliefs and a buncha ghosts acting them out, but you and me, we went above that, through it. It's not about anything else. Just that, just us...breaking free." Then he hesitated and added, "Right?"

Vinnie was so touched he'd momentarily lost his voice. Finally he found it. He reached over and clasped Sonny's chin. "You've been reading my Castaneda books, haven't you?"

Sonny smiled. "Well I'm right, aren't I?"

"You goddamn well better be right." Vinnie lifted up on his own elbow, meeting Sonny on his level. He leaned in. "Because if that's not the way things work for us, I'm a fucking hopeless case." He moved his hand from Sonny's chin to the back of his neck, stroking the soft hair, and kissed him lightly.

Times like these, there never was a mob or an OCB. In the dimness of their bedroom, he couldn't tell their voices apart. He couldn't tell anymore who was the cop and who was the mob king, or if they were ever really those people at all.

"Fucking energy entwined," Sonny whispered as they sank back into their pillows.

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