

(6300 words of more Sonny/Vinnie. And yes, I was a bit drunk when I wrote part of this, but ironically not the first part.)

TRUST

by

Natasha Solten

“Oh troubler of my midnight dreams ...”

- Meng Hao-jan

Sonny was pretty damned drunk and, truly, he could *not* walk. Vinnie noticed in the past hour that Sonny had grown attached to *thinking* he could walk. But the reality was a different story. He'd already fallen twice. Once on his way to the men's room. Vinnie was about to leave the bar stool to go assist him, but somehow Sonny stood, made it to the door with the little cartoon boy on it, then made it back to his own bar stool where he sat, then promptly fell again...off the stool. Vinnie gave him a hand up. Sonny was laughing in a glazy, silly, inward way and seemed not even to notice that **a:** he had fallen, and **b:** Vinnie literally lifted him, hand under his upper arm, from the floor.

Sonny was usually more careful, more circumspect. Even if he played hard at night, even if he was showing his surprisingly real emotional and vulnerable side, he still never gave up his control. He was cautious that way. Mobster paranoia and all that. So to see him this drunk was new, unusual, uncharacteristic.

Well, part of his job description was looking out for Sonny, so that was what he would do, what he wanted to do.

Sonny made it very difficult not to like him. Vinnie found he actually wanted to see things go Sonny's way. Forgetting at times that he was a cop, an informant, he would discover an actual defensiveness where Sonny was concerned. To Frank: "Eh, he's not all bad, Frank, you should see the huge checks he makes out to battered women's shelters and the Girl Scouts." Or, "It's hard to dis a guy who puts your mother up in the best private room the hospital has, then foots the entire, enormous bill." Then Frank would

get all cynical on him and patronizing and reply, “Is he buying his way into your heart, kid?” Vinnie would shake his head, thinking, *No, not buying. Sonny actually cares.* But he never said that part out loud.

Truthfully, Vinnie didn’t care about gifts or money. Sonny cared about those things, though. And those gestures, the Rolaxes (two) and suits (six) were not really about bribing him. It had never been about that, never even felt like that. It was just Sonny’s way of showing his approval. You passed the test. You were “in.” And with Vinnie it was even more...a strange show of kindness Vinnie had not expected. A kindness that seemed intrinsic to Sonny’s heart and totally at odds with his job position. And there was affection, too, unhidden, open. Sonny was an affectionate sort of guy, not fake about it or pretending, but honestly generous.

Of course that side of Sonny disappeared if you fucked with him, if you were Sidney Royce or Paul Patrice or any other number of assholes who tried to play Sonny, who tried to diminish his light. Then a coldness would come over him, a dark-eyed gleam you truly did not want to ever see aimed in your direction.

The more Vinnie studied him the more Vinnie understood him. That, of course, made his job harder. Because when you understood another person on their terms, when you just “got” them, there was no stopping your own affection from rising up to greet their eyes. Those were the times Vinnie and Sonny meshed like no one’s business, like they’d always known each other since they were kids. Like they were in on some private joke oblivious to the rest of the world.

Vinnie was still careful around him, though.

Now he said, quietly, “I think we’re done for the night.”

Sonny turned and looked at him with a soft, hazy stare that went up and down his body as if he was assessing him like he’d done that very first day they’d met, height, weight, could he take him. And maybe, just maybe, he was assessing something more. Vinnie wasn’t sure. But because it was Sonny, even that last unknown didn’t bother him. Maybe it should have. Maybe it should’ve crept him out, made his hackles rise. This was, after all, the bad guy, right? Gangster. Kingpin. Tough guy.

Instead, it made him grin. “Sonny,” he said, putting one hand under his elbow, “you are so fucking drunk I’m gonna have to carry you home in a bag.”

Sonny slurred, “I could walk on the sky.”

“Yeah, I believe you, but I think it might be a bit dangerous. So I’m just gonna drive you home.”

Vinnie knew Sonny was really out of it when he didn’t even argue but simply said, “Kay, babe.”

The endearments always increased when Sonny was drunk.

Somehow he got him to the car. Sonny was laughing again in that weird slow way as Vinnie dumped him in the passenger seat. Vinnie had supported most of his weight through the parking lot, but Sonny's legs had moved. That helped. A lot.

He got into the driver's side of the Porsche and started it up. He looked over at Sonny. The dim dash lights made his profile golden, young. Sonny glanced at him. "What?" he asked. "Did I do something wrong? Am I falling again?"

"No. You're sitting. You're doing fine. Just tell me if you need to puke."

Sonny's lips curved downward. "Hey, smart guy, I don't do that."

"Uh huh, yeah, there's always a first time."

"Yeah, baby, the first time." Sonny laughed lightly again, tiredly. He rubbed his eyes and leaned back. Vinnie took them home.

Sonny was fairly silent. Once in awhile he'd laugh again, saying something like, "Yeah." But he behaved.

When they got to the private parking in the garage, Vinnie went around to Sonny's door, opened it. Sonny was ready to get out but his legs gave way. He almost fell. Vinnie caught him easily. Sonny wore roomy clothes and layers under his suits, but he was actually very slim underneath them. His weight was not a problem for Vinnie to support.

Sonny tried to stand on his own, failed, tried again.

Vinnie said, "Just lean into me, will ya?"

"I can *walk* though," came the reply.

"Sure you can. It's just the standing that's the hard part, right?" Vinnie had been in an agreeable mood all night. Sonny's denial didn't faze him.

Sonny leaned lightly against him, warm and solid. Vinnie's arm slid around his waist. Through the silk jacket, the shirt, the undershirt, Sonny was tight and slender and without thinking Vinnie's palm caressed his hip for a moment, only a moment. His action surprised him, and yet it didn't. This was another human being he was touching. And it was Sonny. Everything about Sonny was, well, thrilling. That's just the way it was.

Sonny said, "Wow, Vincenzo," and Vinnie's heart lurched until he realized Sonny was probably commenting on the garage spinning, or blackness threatening the corners of

his vision. He was probably far too drunk to feel anything, even a two by four hitting him on the head, let alone Vinnie's gentle, momentary, straying hand.

"C'mon," Vinnie said softly, leading him to the elevator.

Vinnie pushed the code for the penthouse. Only a few people knew the code, or had a key.

Sonny blinked, leaning harder against him, said, "I wanna go doooooown."

Vinnie turned to peer into his face, which was right at Vinnie's shoulder, pressing. "No. We're going up."

"But let's go look at the darkside in the basement. That'd be fun, right?"

"Why? What's down there?"

Sonny shrugged. "Buncha stuff. Old slot machines. Tables, chairs, housecreeping."

"You mean housekeeping?"

"That, too."

"Another day," Vinnie said. The elevator started with a lurch.

Sonny grabbed him by the front of his shirt as if to hang on, then said, "You're a good sport, kid. Smart. And you're good to me. I like that."

Vinnie felt suddenly sheepish. "Yeah..."

"Yeah." Sonny leaned closer, looking up at him now. "Pretty, too, but that's not why..." He let the thought trail, then leaned up and kissed Vinnie very very softly on the lips. He pulled back a couple seconds later, looking lazily up at the elevator ceiling where there were mirrors.

Caught off guard, Vinnie stiffened. But those lips had been so soft, so affectionate. And Sonny smelled like "yes." Then he looked at Sonny's dazed eyes and smiled. Okay, he could deal with this. He would just say nothing.

Sonny glanced to the side, said, "How come you didn't punch me? How come you're smiling?"

"Because," Vinnie said, still smiling, "you're not gonna remember one bit of this in the morning, so I feel pretty safe about smiling."

A little slurred, "I like your smile."

“Yeh. Thanks.”

Sonny leaned into him again, put his head on Vinnie’s shoulder. “I like you.”

Vinnie took a deep breath, patted him on the back. And he had the thought that this might’ve been so much more interesting had Sonny been sober. It didn’t shock him like he thought it might that he wasn’t completely adverse to the idea of kissing Sonny. Or more.

The elevator doors opened onto Sonny’s penthouse.

Sonny made a little bit of a fuss in the bedroom. He wanted a shower. Vinnie said, “You’ll drown.”

Sonny sat with his jacket in his hands on the edge of his bed saying, “But babe, I always like a shower before bed.”

Vinnie softened at the endearment. Sonny drunk was completely unguarded and loose about all the “babes,” and “babys.” Once, earlier in the night, he’d even called him “sweetheart.”

He reached out, again without thinking, and tousled Sonny’s hair. “You can take a shower in the morning.”

“Room’s spinning,” Sonny commented. Then he reached up, stronger than Vinnie realized, and pulled him to him. To keep from falling on top of him, Vinnie knelt on the bed beside him. Sonny’s hand went into his hair pulling his head close and he kissed him again, not sloppy like most drunks might, but gentle, sweet, the lips trembling ever so slightly.

When Sonny finally let go of him he wound his hands in the jacket on his lap and stared at them. He said nothing.

Vinnie’s heart was hammering. That second kiss was like nothing...nothing he could describe. Quietly, he said, “You need to sleep.”

Sonny kept his head bowed. Voice almost a whisper, “I’m sorry, baby, I just get *thoughts*. That’s all.”

Vinnie’s hand went to Sonny’s jacket. “It’s okay, Sonny.” He took the jacket, which Sonny was almost trying to rip now, from his hands. “I’ll hang this up.”

When he came back from the closet, Sonny was lying on his back, one leg bent, splayed. His eyes were closed. He breathed shallowly.

Vinnie took off the leather shoes. Then he untied Sonny's aqua silk tie, slipped it from around his neck, folded it and put it on the nightstand. Sonny never moved. He pulled the covers up, then reached down and let his fingertips slide over Sonny's cheek, rest for a moment against the warm skin. They brushed lower against the light stubble of Sonny's jaw before, finally, he turned away, flicked off the light and headed back to his own room.

*

He was tired but he found it difficult to sleep. He kept dozing off and finding himself in some amorphous reality with Sonny's arms around him again, that slender golden body pushing against him, invisible Sonny-lips against his. He'd turn over to get more comfortable and the sensations and images returned. Half-asleep, half-awake, he lay in the darkness trying not to think at all. He was grateful when the sun finally rose lightening against his windows. He got up early. Showered for a long time under hot, soothing water. It helped.

*

Sonny was late for work. Sonny was *never* late for work. Vinnie found things to occupy his time in the garage. Then he went back upstairs to Sonny's empty office. Just when he thought maybe it would be prudent to check on him (was he really *that* drunk?) Sonny walked in.

Sonny did not look at him. Instead, he went to his desk and rifled through the mail without sitting down. He looked wonderful, flashy in a gray suit, his dark hair neat with just a smattering of bangs. But his face was tight, drawn. He slapped some letter down on his desk, cursed under his breath, then turned to look out the window.

Vinnie said, smiling, "So what's up for today?"

Sonny didn't answer for a moment. Then he turned toward his desk still looking down, said, rather clipped, "Sorry 'bout last night. It won't happen again."

Vinnie's smile dropped at the dangerous tone. "No big deal." He spoke carefully.

Then Sonny started talking flatly about a couple of guys and the guys owed him and they were gonna pay. He sent Vinnie off on a long errand with lots of details that Vinnie barely heard in a tone that pissed Vinnie off. It wasn't something Sonny usually did, send him away like that. Working at the Marine was different. That was a gift. But this was like Sonny was getting rid of him for the day. It was an easy no-brainer errand. It was a long drive. So he used the extra time to meet Frank and that conversation went surly, too, so all in all the day turned into drudge bordering on irritating. And all because he was just trying to be a friend to a crazy guy. Or maybe it was more.

What the fuck was happening? Sonny was supposed to be the enemy anyway!

Deep inside, Vinnie knew why this was happening. He knew Sonny was upset, embarrassed, maybe even ashamed at his behavior the night before. And there was nothing he could do about it, nothing he could say, because anything he thought of would only make matters worse. If Sonny was freaking out, then Sonny was freaking out. Not even a nuclear blast could change that fact.

And the fact that Vinnie had done nothing, or maybe because he hadn't done *something*, didn't matter. Whatever it was, he was in the wrong light right now. It was a feeling like itching powder that wouldn't wash off.

When he returned to the Diamond it was late. Sonny was nowhere to be found. So Vinnie turned in and watched TV on his couch for the rest of the evening.

Again he couldn't sleep. He was worried and he was frustrated. He was the kind of guy who smoothed things over, made things work. He was quick on his feet, a thinker, a doer. But now, whatever this game was becoming, he didn't know how to play. He was in the dark which made him feel stupid because he thought he should be able to fix this, should be able to work it out. He was good at winning people, good at making them like him. Then why couldn't he feel confident about putting Sonny at ease? Why did everything he thought of doing or saying seem wrong? It was as if by just breathing, just existing, he was making matters worse.

He thought about asking Sonny for vacation time. But that would just make it look like he was running *from* Sonny. How stupid would that be? He thought about pretending nothing was different, but then he realized that might make Sonny think he wasn't okay with what happened, that he was bothered when really he wasn't. He thought about telling the truth, that he'd liked Sonny's affectionate flirting, including even the kissing. But then he decided that would be just as bad if Sonny was freaking because then Sonny might feel backed into a corner and anything more said at that point could never be unsaid, or taken back.

It was as if everything between them was ruined by one drunken night and Vinnie hadn't even done a thing wrong.

He punched his pillow. Dammit. It just wasn't fair!

He tossed and turned all night, wrestling with the bed, the pillows, finding himself too hot or too cold. Finally he slept and when he woke the sun was just coming up. It was early but he was wide awake. He got up, dressed in sweats and went down to the hotel gym.

He had spent about fifteen minutes punching randomly at a bag when he looked up and saw Sonny walk in. Their eyes met briefly. Sonny looked away first. Neither one said even a "hello" which Vinnie thought was utterly moronic and childish. Two days ago they had been so easy with one another, so right.

Deciding to take the more mature road, Vinnie stopped what he was doing and approached. “Mornin’, Sonny.”

Sonny, in blue sweat pants and a black tank, sat down on a bench and re-tied his shoes. “Yeah, it’s morning all right.” He did not look up.

Then Vinnie had an idea. “Wanna get in the ring?”

At that, Sonny looked up. They hadn’t traded punches in awhile. Something in Sonny’s face changed slightly and his answer gave Vinnie a glimmer of hope. “Yeah, okay.”

They got their helmets and gloves on, then climbed over the ropes. For awhile they were pretty evenly matched, trading equal jabs, dancing around the ring. Vinnie felt himself break into a light sweat. It felt good, natural to be in here, to be doing this with Sonny as his opponent.

Maybe things could work out if they could spend a little of their pent-up energy here. Just maybe.

But as they danced and jabbed, Sonny faltered. Vinnie got in a real good jab and he fell down, hard. Vinnie stood back, waiting. Sonny was up again in a split-second, and Vinnie hit him again. This time Sonny fell cursing against the ropes, then came back at him like quickfire, jabbing, jabbing, not even obeying the rules now, just all over him.

Vinnie jumped back. “Hey!”

But Sonny jabbed him harder, everywhere, as Vinnie turned to the side to protect himself.

“Hey!” he yelled again, pushing Sonny back.

Sonny hit him in the face. The helmet protected him but he felt the blow knock him back. He was up against the ropes now and Sonny hit him again and again. Vinnie yelled out, “I give!” But Sonny didn’t stop. Vinnie said it again. “I give!” Another punch, a jab. “I give, dammit!!!”

At that point he jumped over the ropes and out of ring to the floor. Sonny stood against the ropes, gloves up, looking down at him with that strange dark gleam Vinnie never wanted to see. Vinnie shook his head, took off his helmet, tore off his gloves, mumbled, “Fuck,” and walked away toward the elevators.

So what had started off as a good idea had turned bad pretty fast. Well, it was Sonny’s move now, he told himself. *I’m not gonna worry about it.*

But of course he worried.

They avoided each other the rest of the day. For half a day Vinnie worked at the Marine. In the afternoon he dressed in his favorite cobalt blue suit and lingered in the garage waiting for a call, for a job, anything.

Finally at five o'clock he went upstairs.

He didn't knock. He just went into Sonny's office like it was his. "Can I talk to you?"

Sonny sat at his desk, the late afternoon sun from the windows turning his dark hair gold, and glanced up briefly. "You're already talking."

Vinnie knew Sonny respected the fact that he spoke his mind, that he faced Sonny down and didn't just play "yes-man" to every little move Sonny made. So he took a deep breath, confronted him, and said, "What have I done wrong?"

Sonny stood abruptly, reached down and straightened some papers. It was as if he didn't hear Vinnie at all.

Vinnie spoke again. "Sonny! I'm askin'. What the fuck have I done wrong?"

At that, Sonny looked up with a glare and said coldly, "Maybe it's that you smiled when you should've punched me."

It was the last thing Vinnie expected him to say and he was not at all prepared. The words stabbed into him like knives, like panic. "Wh...what?"

Sonny's glare was unwavering.

Suddenly Vinnie felt like he couldn't breathe. His face became instantly hot and there was nothing he could do to control it. Everything in his mind seemed to be falling. Failing. A pins and needles sensation ran up and down his arms and legs. He wanted to grab something, grab *onto* something, but there was nothing within reach. His fingers curled into fists. His eyes heated, his vision blurred. He took a deep, steadying breath. Found the last of his inner strength. Then consciously keeping his voice as soft as possible, he said, "Fuck you for saying that. I'm outta here."

He turned and walked out of Sonny's office. He wanted to slam the door but he didn't.

He barely remembered getting on the elevator, getting to his suite.

He tore off his suit jacket and threw it at the couch. Then he went into his bedroom. At the dresser he froze, looking into the mirror above it. He stood staring for awhile, then took off his Rolex and ring and placed them in a dish by the other jewelry Sonny had given him.

To his reflection, he said, "Jesus Christ, Vincent, what are ya gonna do now?"

He could've taken Sonny's words as an almost threat. But that wasn't what concerned him, what was bugging him. It felt more personal than that. And strangely more damaging. As if Sonny was trying to find his most sensitive spot, then attack. It was, frankly, behavior more worthy of Pat the Cat, or Sid. Not Sonny. Not *his* Sonny.

At those thoughts, he found himself needing to catch his breath again. Who did he think he was anyway, feeling like this, when he himself was the betrayer? It made no sense. But then Sonny wasn't making sense, either. Neither of them *owned* the other. But the closeness that had grown between them made Vinnie protective. He knew it changed his thinking, which in turn changed the job. But he'd not said one word about it to Frank. He'd been lying to himself. And why not? He'd lied to everyone else. He was damn good at it.

Maybe now Sonny was facing the same issues.

He jerked the knot on his tie, slipped it over his head and threw it at the bed. Then he undid the crisp white shirt and slid it off his shoulders. He stared back at the mirror again; the silk blue trousers looked like dark water against his tan skin. He'd gotten used to wearing clothes like these, but now he was thinking maybe he would just put on the clothes he'd arrived in all those months ago and leave. Take nothing with him. Go home.

But where was home? His mother's house didn't feel like home to him...not in a long time. Frank would take him in but that also didn't feel right. The OCB had safe houses all along the coast. He could use one of them for awhile, access his salary, look for an apartment. But then what? As he stood in front of his dresser and mirror he heard a noise. Something moved behind him.

He turned. Sonny stood in the doorway.

Startled, Vinnie jerked back against the dresser, stomach suddenly tight, muscles tense. "Sonny? What're you doing?"

"What are you doing?" Sonny asked as if this was just an ordinary conversation.

Vinnie swallowed hard. "What does it look like? I'm changing my clothes."

"Oh." Then Sonny gave him that look again, not the dark and dangerous one Vinnie never wanted to see, but the up-down assessment look, the height, weight, can I take you look, and maybe more.

This was what had gotten Vinnie into trouble in the first place. And now all he had on were his pants. He felt utterly, completely, stupidly unprepared. He said, shakily, "So you're just sneaking up on me or what?"

Sonny looked back up at his face. There was nothing dark there now. It was just Sonny again, kind of sharply wide-eyed and maybe a little too friendly for Vinnie's own good, and he said, "I just came to apologize."

Vinnie frowned, feeling himself turn inward. It was hard to trust that look now, after seeing Sonny turn so fast. Hard to know what to do. *Issues*. So he just said, keeping his voice even, "Yeah?"

"Yeah."

Vinnie stood there dumbly.

Then Sonny said, "I'm sorry I hurt you."

And that was when Vinnie realized he had been feeling just that. Hurt. And it was so incongruous, so ridiculous, that he blurted out, "What do you want, Sonny?"

Sonny gave him an almost helpless look, shoved his hands deep into his trouser pockets and turned slightly away, facing the door-frame. He shrugged. "Maybe I don't know what I want."

Vinnie crossed his arms, realized he was shaking just a little, and took a deep breath. This was dangerous. So very dangerous. "Maybe you'll wanna get drunk again, find out."

Sonny's head slowly came up; he stared at him again but he wasn't angry. He didn't react to Vinnie's challenge. He tilted his head. "I didn't mean to hurt you. That's it."

Vinnie couldn't look at him anymore. He didn't trust that look. He just didn't. "Yeah, let's just go. Out. You can get drunk again, fall all over me and yell at me for it the next day. Okay?" He pressed his arms tighter across his chest, still trembling. If he was going to bury himself, he might as well go all the way.

Sonny took two steps into the room. He was mumbling, soft, and strangely he kept saying those damned words. "Sorry...sorry I hurt you."

Vinnie took one step back but Sonny took two more, and he kept saying it. "I'm sorry. Do you hear me, Vinnie? Do you even hear me?" Sonny was close enough now to reach out, touch Vinnie on his forearm where it folded tight across his chest.

Vinnie moved his arm, pushing against Sonny's hand, pushing him back. "Shit. Stop it."

"Babe, I didn't mean to hurt you," and Sonny grabbed Vinnie's hand hard and as Vinnie tried to pull it away Sonny wove his fingers tight into Vinnie's, stepping further into his space.

Vinnie realized he was breathing hard. He couldn't see. Through gritted teeth, he hissed, "Don't. Fuck. With. Me."

"I'm not. I'm not." Came the answer. "Vinnie, baby, I'm sorry." And he leaned forward, clutching tightly at Vinnie's hand, and kissed him softly on the cheek.

Vinnie could not relax. And he couldn't believe Sonny's behavior. He just couldn't. This was a side of Sonny he admittedly loved, but that other side... "Am I supposed to punch you now?"

Sonny whispered, "If you want."

"You bastard." Vinnie hissed. "What am I supposed to do?" He realized as he said that second sentence his voice sounded less strained, automatically softer. His body had responded crazily to that light, chaste kiss, tingling, flushing. It pissed him off even more that he felt this way and that seemingly he could not control it.

"Nothing you don't wanna do."

Vinnie let out a sharp sound, something like a laugh mixed with a groan.

Sonny's free hand went around Vinnie's back, touching him skin to skin. "Hush. I'm just saying I'm sorry, okay? I'm sorry," and then he kissed him on the mouth.

Vinnie felt those lips just like before, warm, soft, tight...sweet. Sonny's hand gripped his, and his other hand pressed smooth against Vinnie's ribs then moved up, up until fingers combed through the hair at the nape of his neck.

It was wonderful. It was what he'd been wanting, he now realized. Yet still he felt himself holding back, body stiffening. He didn't want to be played with. He didn't want to be someone's toy. And where Sonny was concerned, what might tomorrow bring?

Sonny pulled back. "Come on, babe..."

"Sonny, I..."

"Shh! I know what you're thinking."

"No you don't!" Vinnie whispered harshly.

"Yeah, I do," and Sonny gave him that tired, patient smile of his that always managed to melt Vinnie. "I'm sorry I hurt you and now you can't trust me. I know that. I'm an expert at being an asshole, you know. You're the sensitive type. So you don't trust me now. And I don't blame you."

Vinnie looked at him helplessly. This man...this man was different from anybody he'd ever met. Most guys, and women, too, would be long gone. But Sonny pushed. Sonny wanted what he wanted and that was that. He brushed at Vinnie's hair again, put his hand against the side of Vinnie's face, gripped his other hand tightly. He looked at him so innocently and said, "Vinnie, you're the best. You're everything. That's why I freaked out. I thought maybe, well, you'd hate me or something..."

Vinnie felt his eyes get warm. "You're a lunatic. You know that, don't you?"

He looked down, whispering, "That mean you hate me?"

Vinnie shook his head. He said in a small, soft voice, "Don't fuck with me."

Sonny's hand went down from Vinnie's face, over his shoulder to his back again. "I love it," he breathed. "You're so perfect. Especially when you say stuff like that."

"I mean it, Sonny!" But he felt himself relent a little. Sonny flattering him was too much. Yeah, he was sensitive and Sonny knew it. Sonny knew exactly what to say, too.

Sonny smiled. "I know you do, babe."

"Stop it. Stop calling me that," but now Vinnie felt himself give. There was a relief in his hot eyes now, on his quivering lips.

"Sure, babe, I'll do whatever you want." And he leaned forward and kissed him again. Vinnie scowled against that kiss even though he didn't push Sonny away. Then Sonny was pulling him forward to the bed where the sheets were already rumpled from his last two bad nights, where the covers were askew and strangely personal, wrinkled with his sweat.

He tripped, then followed Sonny, wanting to hold back, wanting to pull away. But he followed. Dammit, he followed.

Sonny pushed him into the soft mattress. He smelled musky and sweet, poisonous and rich. It encompassed him. Made him feel unusually lonely and bereft.

Sonny said it again, "Baby, I'm sorry." Then stroked his hair back into the pillow.

Vinnie just gave him a disgusted look; there was no semblance of control. He was still pissed. At the same time he felt that sexual tingle he got whenever he was attracted to someone. For Vinnie that was rare. He wasn't the one-night-stand type.

Everything was whirling, the room, his thoughts, Sonny. It was as if he was drunk now. Yet he hadn't touched a drop. His head felt heavy. And his limbs. He was limp and hard at the same time, and his heart hammered, raging, outraged, looking for an alcove or a dark space.

Sonny leaned down and Vinnie said “dammit!” into the kiss.

Sonny pressed harder, licking him lightly, then pulled back. “Did you know you’re gorgeous when you’re pissed?”

“Fuck... You...”

Sonny kissed him silent.

Vinnie felt hands run up and down his naked arms. Sonny chuckled. “So sensitive. Vincent. Vincenzo.” And he kissed him again.

Vinnie groaned into that kiss. It was just that hot. But he simply could not forget how pissed he was, how affronted.

His head fell back onto the pillow.

That warm slim body pushing against him now, Sonny’s hands, Sonny’s mouth. Vinnie was lost.

This wasn’t a play. He wasn’t playing anymore. When, finally, he parted his lips and kissed Sonny back he knew it was over. All of it. Everything.

He scowled and turned his head to the side. He puffed air like a madman.

Sonny ran his hand down his chest. Sonny mumbled, “Those trousers look so fine on you, but damn, kid, they’re in the way.” And he went for the button and the zipper.

Vinnie pushed his hand away once, unsuccessfully and probably only half-heartedly. Sonny had the fly undone and was pushing, pushing, and before he knew it his trousers were down around his ankles, kicked off and plopping to the floor...those beautiful watery silk blue trousers.

Sonny ran his hand up his thigh to his hip and rested it there. “Fuck. Christ. You’re fucking beautiful.”

Vinnie huffed and turned his head into the pillow.

“Are you still pissed?” His hand strayed very carefully toward Vinnie’s groin.

Vinnie felt himself wince and exhale and pout all at the same time. “You’re evil.” But it came out soft, breathy.

“But Vinnie, you want me.” He caressed his hip making him harder. “I can make you want me.”

All Vinnie could do was groan. He was done for. He was collapsed. He was a goner.

“I can make you want me,” Sonny said again, leaning down and kissing him soft, then hard, then soft again with tongue just teasing against Vinnie’s closed lips, against Vinnie’s complete and total (but now former) convictions.

Black and white. Good and evil. His mind spun. He heard Sonny say in his mind, “*But I can walk on the sky.*”

Dangerous. Too dangerous.

Can I even exist now? Can I even be me? he asked himself.

Sonny’s hand was on his chest stroking lightly. “This is supposed to be fun, baby.” He leaned down and kissed him between the pecks. “Where’s that smile now?”

Vinnie rolled his eyes, lost when Sonny’s hand strayed lower toward his belly, his bellybutton, lower still.

His groans sounded like sobs to his own ears.

And Sonny was saying, “I know I can make you smile.” His hands were moving everywhere now, down, down... “You’re so sweet.”

Vinnie thought he heard a whimper and prayed to every saint and god he knew that it wasn’t coming from his own throat.

It’s a new day, his mind thought. Then, *No, not yet.*

Sonny’s body, still dressed, was all angles and muscle and grey silk, and Sonny’s kisses were like his punches...they made you reel. Vinnie was gasping now.

Sonny’s hands did things. *Things.* And he smelled like lilacs.

He squirmed. He thought about kicking.

Then Sonny moved his mouth down Vinnie’s chest, kissing, licking.

Vinnie held his breath to keep from sobbing. He had an errant thought. *Frank’s gonna be real pissed.* Then he abruptly forgot about Frank as Sonny licked his hip, then his thigh, then his...

“Oh god!”

Sonny looked up at him as Vinnie glanced down. “Still pissed?” Sonny asked with a lazy smile.

He couldn’t help it. He frowned.

Then Sonny covered him with his mouth and all thought was gone. His head fell back onto the soft down pillow and everything swam and spun and circled and then focused on that one act, that one area, that one fucking damned wonderful aching get-you-into-trouble male appendage.

He couldn’t think. He couldn’t even be.

Sonny went down on him like golden ecstasy. There was just no way he was gonna come out of this the same man he’d always been. Just. No. Way.

Sonny grasped his balls. Vinnie’s body didn’t just tingle, it rang. It gonged. It pealed. His legs were splayed open. He was naked and exposed and there were stars and things he didn’t even know existed until now.

Sonny was pulling off him at times, saying things, but he didn’t hear. Well, maybe he heard a couple words. “Beautiful.” And “Comeinmymouth.”

Yeah, that last one was one nasty word. It was the word “permission.” It was the word, “Iminonthedeal.”

Vinnie felt himself break apart. That part was familiar, normal, but then it happened again, and again, and then it became unfamiliar and kept happening, and happening and happening.

I’m dreaming.

Slowly, Sonny moved up his body, petting, caressing. “Trust me now?”

Vinnie gasped, groaned like he was grief-stricken, his throat all closed up. “I can’t be what you want.”

“Shh. You’re everything I want.”

And he was being kissed and kissed and there was no more air and no more Vinnie-the-cop. He was just himself.

And Sonny said, “...make you smile...” as Vinnie groaned again, his arms claspingsonny’s shoulders as if to push him away, saying, “don’t fuck with me, don’t fuck with me...”

“I’m not...baby...I’m not...”

Sonny kissed him between the eyes, then on the lips again. “Tell me you love me.”

Vinnie’s head lolled. “Goddamn you, I hate you.”

“Ah, close but not quite what I asked...”

Vinnie, when he caught his breath, said it again. “Don’t fuck with me, Sonny. Because that was just so...so...”

Sonny’s laugh was lazy, affectionate. He kissed Vinnie on the chest, looked up at him and said, “Trust me, I’m never letting you go.”

“*Trust* you?”

Sonny laughed as he moved forward, as he buried his lips in Vinnie’s hair. “I promise,” he said. “I won’t ever hurt you again. I won’t.”

Slowly, Vinnie’s arms came around him.

Sonny gave a heavy sigh. “Finally!”

Vinnie gripped him tighter.

Sonny said hotly in his ear, “Yeah, Vinnie. I know you love me.”

Vinnie held him tight to his chest but turned his head away.

Sonny: “I know you do.”

Vinnie sighed, body molten, liquid. Voice barely a whisper: “Yeah, Sonny. So what about it?”

“Nothing,” Sonny said. “Just...nothing.” But he was grinning now and pressed up against him all hard and wanting.

Vinnie leaned further back into the feather pillows and started to weakly laugh.

*