

## AFTERMATH - ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK A NEW BEGINNING

Crazy Cat

He moved stiffly, leg throbbing now, the tape in his hands rendered useless. There were shouts behind him, pounding feet on the concrete, and he was abruptly surrounded by men with guns. Some in black-Hauk's men; some in suits-Presidential guards. He lifted his hands, turned his back to the wall, a nasty smile on his face. The tape dangling from one hand, ribbon caught over his fingers. One of the suits came closer than the rest, gun barrel shoved into his face.

"You're history, Plissken," he spat, finger tightening on the trigger.

Hauk barreled his way past the other men and shoved the suit aside.

"Hold it, Cronenberg!" he snapped. He turned his attention to the battered man, hands braced either side of his head, studying him intently, blocking the others.

Snake was beyond caring whether they shot him or not. He was aware of Hauk, moving in, blocking the rest from him. His mind orchestrated taking the bastard hostage, but his body was too weary to comply.

Hauk untangled the tape from his fingers and passed it behind him without looking back, his eyes on Plissken.

"Where's the real tape?" he asked softly.

Snake's gaze snapped to his face, fury at being read so easily replaced by resignation. "Hip pocket," he answered in a muted snarl. His body already tensed, anticipated being spun roughly around and frisked.

Hauk surprised him again, hands catching Plissken, pulling him forward until he leaned against the older man. The grip on his waist glided lower, around to his hips, searching his pockets. Hauk found the tape and extracted it, arm sliding around Snake, holding him up, holding him against his side. He shoved the tape in the direction of the bristling agent without looking around, all his attention on the fair-haired, younger man. Plissken leaned into the warmth Hauk offered, his incredulous reaction surfacing slowly to the forefront of his mind. He moved obediently at Hauk's urging, half supported by the dark-garbed man.

"Hold it!" Cronenberg yelled, "I say we off the fucker now, and solve the whole problem...."

"Too late," Hauk didn't stop moving, "He's mine."

"I happen to know you're up to full strength already, never mind the ethics of hiring the son of a bitch...."

Hauk paused, half turning.

Plissken tensed, unsure of what to expect.

"Easy, kid," Hauk murmured. He scowled across at Cronenberg. "I got a full squad of subordinates," he agreed. "The open slot is for my partner."

Snake looked up sharply. There was a babble of reaction from the other men on the roof but Hauk paid them no heed. His eyes met the blond's, looking for a long moment. It was all too much for Snake to take in. He sagged, reserves that had kept him going almost exhausted.

Hauk knew it, his grip altering. It was an effort but he lifted Snake bodily, disdaining any help. Reduced to audience, the rest watched as he strode away.

Some deep rooted instinct in Plissken trusted Hauk instinctively, a gut reaction that had nothing to do with logic and disregarded his treatment up to now. The solitude that had carried him through for so long, the determined loner that was sure survival lay in going solo, fought with that instinct until





he didn't know what he wanted. Nightmares clawed at him as they treated his leg, Hauk using the time to wind up the paperwork.

Snake woke briefly as he was transferred from the medical center to a transporter cabin. The cabin was one of a long string towed by a train, using tracks that had been laid for centuries—new technology wedded to old. He saw Hauk among other faces, then the rest were gone and there was only the cop that had sent him into New York.

"How you doing, kid?" Hauk asked.

"I don't need a partner," he snarled back, sleep claiming him again before he could judge the other man's reaction.

The next time he woke he felt a lot better, refreshed by the long rest, the pain faded to a dull stiffness. He nestled deeper into the warmth and the arms around him tightened reflexively. Startled by awareness that the sense of comfort and security came from another person, he sighed, already knowing who it was. His reluctance to move was countered by a swift anger at Hauk for sliding inside his defenses. An arm moved, hand tousled his hair gently.

"You hungry?" Hauk asked.

The sensation came with the words. He pulled free and sat up, scanning the cabin interior swiftly. He knew about the cabins, but he had never travelled in one before. It contained all the amenities they were likely to need, luxuriously appointed, sealing them off from the rest of the train. The countryside was green, passing in a blur.

"Where the fuck are we goin'?" he demanded, sliding off the bed. His leg was stiff but not sore. The wound was already healing, a sure sign of first class med treatment.

"Mid West. Take a day or so to get there." Hauk folded his hands behind his head and watched Plissken open the refrigerator.

The scrutiny made him aware of his total lack of covering. Refusing to let it rattle him, he grabbed a bottle of orange juice and gulped from it, snagging the first item of food that caught his eye. It was a huge ham and pineapple pizza, and he shoved it into the microwave with his free hand, flipped the dial to heat and punched the button. The machine hummed quietly.

"Why?" He rasped, dropping the bottle back into the rack and snatching up an apple. As he bit he bestowed a glare on the older man, as though wishing it was a throat his teeth tore into.

"We'll know when we get there," Hauk answered, unruffled. Snake shot a scowl at him and headed for the little bathroom, taking the apple with him.

There was a full length mirror on the back of the door and he stared at his reflection, the bruises and old scars an indication of his profession. His body was hard, compact and muscular and the tattoo which gave him his nickname was a mixture of blue and green. Sighing, he turned away from the mirror.

Wrapped in a robe, he emerged with the smell of the food sharpening his hunger. Hauk watched as he pulled the plastic plate from the oven, gaze sweeping the cabin for somewhere to sit. There was only a breakfast bar and the bed. He moved back to the bed and sat, dumping the plate on the sheets. Biting into a slice of the hot pizza, he stared at the window. Hauk reached over to the plate and Snake's gaze snapped around to watch him pick up a slice.

"How do you figure to keep me in line this time?" he demanded around a mouthful. "Another fuckin' implant while I was out of it?"

Hauk swallowed pizza. "Would you believe me if I said all we did was patch you up?"

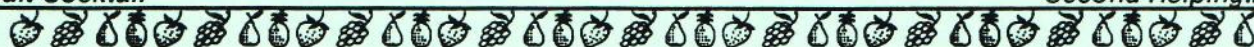
"For the next job," he answered caustically.

"You got something else to do?" Hauk asked mildly.

Plissken glared, reading the unspoken meaning. He had gone right to the edge before they caught him, disillusioned by the country that left him for dead, stealing the cash that should have bought a better way of life. Except that what he was searching for could not be bought, might not even exist. When they told him he was destined for the prison, he didn't care enough to try a plea for leniency. He could easily have died a hundred times in the recent past, in or out of the war zone. He wouldn't have cared a whole lot if he had. No one else would have cared either. There was a clue there he didn't want. He was a loner, he'd learned the hard way that it was too dangerous to care. To trust.







So what the hell had he been looking for? He snarled a curse, rising, pacing to the window as the train slowed to navigate an upward twisting slope.

A closet caught his eye and he opened the door to find it well stocked with clothing, mostly brand new. His leather jacket was there. Discarding the robe, he donned jeans and a black T-shirt swiftly, pivoting to face Hauk once more.

The older man had lifted a newspaper and was reading calmly.

He glided back to the bed and sat down again, picking up another slice of the pizza. When it was all gone, he tossed the plastic plate into the sink and grabbed a second apple from the fridge.

"What if I decide to get off at the next stop?" he demanded, biting into the fruit, wandering back to the bed.

Hauk didn't answer. Angered, Snake snatched the paper, tossing it aside.

Hauk looked up at him with a slight frown.

"Answer the fuckin' question! What's stopping me getting off this damned train?"

"Nothing," Hauk said softly. His gaze hardened. "Except maybe me."

"Maybe!" Snake sneered. "You think you can take me?" he challenged. "One to one?"

"First I have to decide if I want to try," Hauk answered.

The unexpectedness of it threw him. He paused, considering it from Hauk's angle. "Right. You'd have to be crazy to want to keep me around!" he said bitterly.

"Then maybe I'm crazy." Hauk caught his wrist and drew it close enough to take a bite of his forgotten apple.

Snake sagged, reeling at the put-down and pickup, the touch of strong fingers on his skin. "I don't need a partner," he repeated, no fire to it now. Especially he didn't need one that played games with his mind.

"What do you want?" Hauk countered quietly.

He hadn't thought about that in a long time. Hadn't wanted to. "I'm tired of being screwed around by you." Snake retorted. "Quit fucking with me."

Hauk's laughter startled him. He began to withdraw, was caught by the hand on his shoulder. "Won't do it without you."

Snake smiled ruefully at the double meaning, one eyebrow lifting at the implication. "Me and you?" he scoffed.

Hauk nodded. "We'll get to it, kid," he said, the absolute certainty unnerving.

"Want me to stay then?" he bantered without thought. His gaze caught Hauk's and held as the older man nodded.

"Count on that."

Snake shook his head. "Slow down, will ya? You've got me in a tailspin already."

Hauk caught his arm and pulled him closer, wrapping him in a hug. "Easy, kid. No hurry. Last thing I'm gonna do is hurt you now," he murmured into the fair hair.

Snake sagged against him, eyes closing. It was all too much to take in right now, all he registered was the feeling of security, a little voice warning that it was dangerously addictive. If he really wanted it, if he agreed to the partnership and all it involved, there would be a whole new set of dangers to contend with, and he didn't know if he could handle that. He could get hurt too easily.

"Kid?"

"No guarantees. I gotta think," he managed, allowing his body the luxury of relaxing, closeheld and safe.

"Okay." The older man reached for cigarettes on the nightstand, lighting two and handing him one. "Take your time."

That night, while Hauk slept, he ran. Dropping from the train as it slowed for a curve, he rolled down a slope, a pack on his shoulders, the leather jacket zipped to the throat. He walked to the nearby town and found a cheap motel, bought sandwiches, cigarettes and a bottle of Irish whisky and settled in to do some serious thinking. He had to be free to decide his own future, to work out whether being alone would be easier than hooking up with Hauk, whether ending the loneliness outweighed the danger of allowing himself to care. He sat by the window, bathed in bright sunlight, and let his thoughts drift.







Eighteen hours later, Hauk found him.

He opened the door half-expecting the manager demanding his fee for a second night's stay. He stared at the older man, then stepped back, admitting him silently.

"Why," Hauk demanded, closing the door and putting his back to it. "Why'd you have to run? I told you I wouldn't rush you."

"Had some thinking to do. I couldn't while you were crowding me."

"Crowding you! I wasn't—"

"Just being with you screws up my head," he said wearily, reaching for the bottle and taking a long swallow, dropping down to sprawl on the bed.

"Does it?" Hauk revealed nothing, but Snake sensed the hurt. It prompted him to try and explain.

"I don't know if I can trust you," he said softly.

"Well, I guess that's understandable, considering...."

"I don't mean that," he dismissed New York for now. "You did what you figured you had to."

"You're not making sense, kid. What the hell do you mean?"

"It wouldn't be hard for me to let you close. I just ain't sure I want to. Every time I been that route, I ended up the loser."

Hauk watched him intently. "They let you down?" he asked.

Plissken shrugged. "Mostly they died." And the agony had taken a long time to fade. He wasn't sure he wanted to go through it again, no matter what the rewards might be.

"Ah!" Hauk understood. "That's it?" he said, moving over to the bed and sitting down. He rested one hand lightly on Snake's jean-clad thigh. "Is that it? Because I can guarantee we go out together."

Snake stared at him. "It's an old tune, and I heard it before," he said slowly, the hope in his gaze fighting the words. His hand reached out and covered Hauk's as he spoke.

"This will. Capsules keyed to an implant in me instead of a timer. Locked to my heartbeat, so that if I die, you go too," he explained, watching Snake's indignant expression fade away as he absorbed it. He sat up, shifting closer, fair hair blond from the hours in the sun, slung a casual arm around him, waiting.

"Okay, I'll buy that," Snake said finally. He pulled away enough to meet Hauk's eyes. "When?"

"Maybe after we pull this one off. Maybe they can do it before, if there's a headquarters nearby."

"Don't you know?"

"Nope. I only know what I need to, and the network isn't in the habit of issuing maps to their local HQ's."

"Special Forces or the Company?"

"Some of each. Special Reserve Unit."

"And you don't know the mission?"

"Not until we get there."

Which was standard insurance in case they didn't arrive. Another thought occurred to him. "What about the prison?"

"That's my cover."

"Figures. Cronenberg knew?"

"Yeah. I run my own squad for big jobs, but I haven't had a partner for a long time."

"And you want me." Snake shook his head, frowning at the older man.

"Yeah. I want you." Hauk affirmed lazily, taking the whisky bottle from Snake. He swallowed from the neck and then handed it back to Plissken. "We oughta move. I had the cabin put on an off line. The next train through can give us a hitch."

"We'll be late?"

"It'll keep."

Snake nodded. "Or they'd have flown us in," he said, completing the thought.

Hauk grinned. "Told you we'd make a good team," he said softly.







"I ain't arguing with that. I just ain't sure of the price tag yet." Snake met the watching eyes squarely as he made his choice. "Guess I'll find out. If we're gonna make that train, we'd better get moving."

"Right."

They slid from the bed. Snake capped the bottle of whisky and stowed it in his pack. He hooked it over one shoulder and his jacket over the other and followed Hauk out into the early evening.

The train came through that night, picking up their transporter enroute. As it jolted into motion, Hauk sealed the door and turned to where Snake sat on the bed, elbow resting across a drawn-up knee. He turned up the heat and moved to the microwave. He filled two cups with liquid and set them inside. Snake watched, a brief smile appearing as Hauk turned to look at him, folding his arms and resting against the sink. When the timer sounded he extracted the cups and handed Snake one of them.

"They expecting me along, or is this a solo run?" Snake asked, sipping the liquid cautiously and frowning. "What is this?"

"Hot chocolate. They'll know I got a partner by the time we get there."

"Bad news travels fast, huh?" He looked at Hauk, watching him wander the cabin slowly. "You gonna come over here or not?"

Hauk looked sharply at him. "Made up your mind?"

SNAKE laughed. "Shit, you ain't so smart. Thought you knew that."

Hauk crossed to the bed in a few strides, dark eyes intense. "Say it!" he said.

SNAKE stared at him. Setting his cup down, he rose smoothly, taking Hauk's mug and placing it in the holder beside his own. Hauk waited, scarcely breathing as Snake moved in so close their bodies touched, arms lifting and sliding around his neck.

"You got yourself a partner," he affirmed softly. Hauk's hands settled at his waist tentatively, as though he hardly believed it.

SNAKE swayed with the motion of the train, drawing back just far enough to look curiously at him. He inhaled swiftly, "You really didn't know?"

Hauk shook his head, lost for words, reeling SNAKE in to hug him fiercely. The blond responded, pressing their bodies together, nestling close. He sank down onto the bed, pulling Hauk with him.

He settled beside the kid, catching his face in both hands. "You're sure? Because, god help me, I couldn't let you go after we...."

SNAKE inched closer, a leg sliding between Hauk's, arms wrapping around him. "That's the whole idea, lover. Never let me go," he said huskily.

For answer Hauk kissed him, putting all the feelings he didn't know how to vocalize into it, spelling out his intention to bond them forever.

When he finally released the kid's mouth, Snake gave a shuddering sigh and burrowed into his arms. Hauk held him tightly.

"You okay, kid?" he asked softly after a while.

"Yeah. Just don't believe I'm doing this," Snake murmured.

Hauk kissed him again, a hand sliding into the blond hair, caressing his throat. His thumb stroked over the pulse spot and Snake met his eyes with a challenging look.

"I'm gonna hold you to that!" he warned in a low, savage tone.

"Soon as we can," Hauk assured him.

"I know," Snake said lazily, claiming his mouth. "You think we're gonna wait, you're crazy."

Hauk grinned back, sliding a hand under his T-shirt. Snake shifted cooperatively as Hauk eased the garment off and unsnapped his jeans. The blond lifted his hips, letting the older man strip him, watching his expression as he ran a hand over the tattoo. As Hauk's hands went to his own shirt Snake caught his wrists and took over the task.

He would have made it a wild and savage coupling, but somehow Hauk took control, and they made love with slow tenderness, spiralling into climax together, drifting back to earth closeheld and secure.

Most of the journey was spent in bed, sleeping briefly, waking to eat and make love until exhaustion claimed them again, learning each other inside out, loving every which way, sometimes





slow and gentle, sometimes hot and wild with passion. He learned to trust, surprising himself at how easy it was with this man.

As they approached their destination, Hauk dressed swiftly, watching Plissken do the same.

"Wish we had some weapons." The younger man lifted a foot to the bed and began to lace his combat boots.

"We do." Hauk circled the bed, unable to resist running his hands over the denim-clad form. The skin-tight jeans pulled taut as Snake did up the boots. He turned in Hauk's arms, grinning wickedly.

"Sure, but I meant the killing kind," he said in a low, husky tone.

Hauk laughed and let him go. "Got those, too," he answered, one hand catching the foot of the bed and lifting it. Beneath the mattress, hidden by the solid base support, were two black cases.

SNAKE shot a questioning look at him.

"Fetch 'em out," Hauk requested. When Snake had done so, he dropped the bed back in place and the blond set the cases on top of the rumpled sheets.

"We're keeping the trailer?" he asked, opening the case to scan the weapons there with a professional eye.

"Yeah. Should be a truck waiting to tote it." Hauk reached for a knife, slid it into his boot and picked up an ankle holster. Snake began to gather what he needed from the cache.

At the station they collected a rental car, leaving the mobile residence and its tow truck in the parking lot. Hauk called the compound and arranged to see the medics first as he had promised. Snake, cigarette in hand, leaned on the door jamb and listened in silence until the older man hung up. "The med section's expecting us first. Then we have to see Chief Vader to find out why we're here."

The security guard checked their names and waved them into the compound. The elevator was empty when they stepped inside. Hauk let his eyes travel over his partner, the fair hair spilling over the collar of the battered leather jacket, the jeans skintight over hips and thighs.

SNAKE caught the look and grinned, stepping closer to him. The elevator halted and he put one hand out to hold the doors closed, the other drawing Hauk close enough to kiss. Eventually, they stepped out to stares both men ignored, moving down the corridor in step.

At the medical section they were greeted cheerfully and ushered in to see the doctor within moments.

"Now then, I understand you want a tracer keyed to your heart-beat and a sensor in your partner's bloodstream so that if one of you dies the other goes down too?" He looked from Hauk to Plissken. "It's not very practical, if I might say so. You'll be tied together." He moved to a cabinet and extracted several pieces of equipment. "Of course, it can always be neutralized."

"That would defeat the purpose." Hauk pointed out levelly, glancing at Snake. The younger man watched him, saying nothing.

"All right. Take your coats off. I'll do the tracers first, then put in the sensors. Tracers on the right... Excuse me a moment..." He moved towards an inner office where an intercom beeped.

SNAKE glided to Hauk's side. "This better be for both of us," he warned in a low voice, still not sure that Hauk would really go through with it.

"It is." Hauk lifted a clenched fist in a mock punch, tapping Snake's jaw.

SNAKE's hand shot up and caught Hauk's wrist in a biting grip.

The older man sighed. "Don't see any reason I should live without you," he said, and used his free hand to unzip the kid's leather jacket.

"You're unbelievable," Snake muttered, dropping his wrist to shrug out of the jacket, one good eye still watching his face. "Really got you hooked, do I?" he bantered, only half allowing himself to believe it.

Hauk caught his shoulders, restraining the exasperated impulse to shake him. "It oughta cut both ways," he snapped.

Plissken nodded, mouth twitching wryly. "Things don't always work the way they oughta," he retorted. The muted conversation in the next room died and the doctor bustled back into the room.

The shots were administered in quick succession, Snake watching the whole procedure intently. Hauk, already committed, was relaxed and composed.



Minutes later they collected their coats, the doctor's receptionist giving them directions to Vader's office.

Back in the elevator, Hauk slung the sheepskin over his shoulder and leaned on the wall, very aware of Snake beside him, their bodies deliberately touching, other people opposite them.

Getting out on the 10th floor, Snake drew him into an empty ante-room.

"Figure they got cameras in here?"

Hauk frowned. "Don't see any."

"Give them a thrill, if they have." Snake reached for him, drew him into a fierce kiss. "I don't believe you went through with it," he murmured softly, nestling close, head dropping onto Hauk's shoulder.

Hauk hugged him tight, hands sliding over his body possessively. "It's a two-way street, lover. It has to be that way."

"You know I take crazy risks...."

"You'll have to be more careful." Hauk tossed the fair hair, smiling. He sobered as Snake looked up. "I wouldn't want to live without you, kid. If we gotta go, it might as well be together."

"I ain't arguing." Snake hugged him hard. "It's a hell of a gesture. Nobody...." he hesitated, met Hauk's questioning look with a shrug. "Never met anybody like you."

"Better not either," Hauk said firmly, ignoring the sudden grin. He pulled Snake close again. "You belong to me now."

"Noticed that," Snake teased, catching his face in both hands and kissing him again, slow and warm. "Let's just go back to the van, huh?"

Hauk grinned, shaking his head ruefully. "Soon as we talk to Vader." He stepped back reluctantly, opening the door. They moved down the corridor together.

Vader greeted them solemnly. "We expected you yesterday," he said in a grave tone, sitting behind his desk and gesturing them to a seat opposite him.

"If it was that urgent, you should have gotten a plane to bring us in. What's the problem?" Hauk returned bluntly.

"Cassidy." Vader replied.

Hauk sat back in his chair, frowning. Plissken glanced at him, frowning.

"Who?" he demanded.

Hauk grimaced. "Old... acquaintance."

"I hope it's more than that!" Vader said sharply.

"What's he done?" Hauk asked.

"We suspect he's taken a file containing the identities of our people working in the foreign sector."

"Spy profiles," Hauk said absently.

"We need you to get him to admit it, and tell us exactly what he's done. Maybe we can turn things around, use him to our advantage. This is what we know so far." Vader held out a sheaf of papers. Hauk took the bundle and Snake crossed the space between them to seat himself on the arm of Hauk's chair. The older man glanced up with a half-smile, shifting to rest an elbow on the blue-jeaned thigh, tilting the papers so that they could both read them.

An aide entered the room, moving swiftly to Vader and muttering something.

Vader shot to his feet. "Cassidy is cornered in a downtown cafe. He's taken civilian hostages."

An aircar took them to the scene. Hauk seated beside the blond, huddled into the sheepskin, his attention elsewhere, lost in his own thoughts.

They landed under cover of the buildings, beat cops herding the public away from the scene and setting up barriers, black clad men with assault rifles moving into position around the cafe where Cassidy was holed up, creeping stealthily closer. Others were on the roofs nearby. The aircar took off again to intercept a news chopper coming in. It was a familiar scene to both men, they had faced many slight variations of the same theme, many siege situations. There were no easy answers.

Snake nudged Hauk. "You okay?"

The older man focussed on him. "Yeah." He paused, gaze travelling over Snake, returning to his face. "I'll have to try and talk to him. Maybe he'll let me inside."





Snake scowled. "I'll cover you," he said firmly.

Hauk nodded assent, frowning at the risks they were suddenly forced to take. "Too damn soon for this," he muttered, lifting a balled fist to tap Snake's chin gently, "Be careful, kid." He strode forward, towards Vader, and Plissken claimed an assault rifle from an aide, going in the opposite direction to get behind the building.

Plissken heard the megaphon: First Vader telling Cassidy that Hauk was there, then his partner suggesting he join the group in the cafe. By the time Cassidy agreed, he was on the roof carefully prising open a skylight.

He waited on the upstairs landing, gauging the situation intently, angry at the bond between them and his lack of control over future events. As always, taking the risks himself was easy compared to watching someone else do it. Someone he cared for too much to live without. Someone he would die with, if it came to that. And if it did, he would rather go too, than be the one left behind, again. Death did not scare him, only the searing anguish of loss. He could face any pain except that.

Hauk goaded Cassidy away from the hostages. As the angry agent strode towards Hauk, gun up and aimed squarely at his face, finger tightening on the trigger, Plissken dropped on him from above. The single shot ploughed into the far wall as Hauk dived forward. The sound of the shot prompted Vader's men into assaulting the cafe as the blond pinned Cassidy, hauled him up, and covered him as Hauk frisked him, finding several concealed weapons. They turned him over to Vader as the hostages were ushered away by police.

Left in the cafe as Cassidy was borne away, screaming oaths, their eyes met and held. They covered the space between them in a few strides, a new awareness of just what the bond between them would cost driving him across to the other man.

Hauk wanted very badly to gather Plissken in and hold him close, and he saw from the unwavering gaze that Snake knew it, and understood. Holding his breath, Hauk reached out and pulled strands of blond hair free from under the collar of the kid's leather jacket.

"You okay?" he asked quietly.

"Sure." Snake returned his scrutiny, "You?"

"Yeah. Let's just get the hell out of here."

Back in their van once more, he gave the impulse full rein, wrapped his arms around Snake and pulled him close. The younger man hugged him back, a tight, rib-crushing hold.

"You were right, lover," he said softly, lips near Hauk's ear. "We're one hell of a team."

It was commitment and assurance, and Hauk revelled in it, maneuvering them both to the bed, wanting to affirm their bond the best way he knew how. "Yeah," he said softly, claiming a fierce kiss. "But I don't think I like the ball park."

"Now there's a surprise," Snake drawled.

"You knew it would be this way?" Surprise leashed his frantic need and he drew back to stare at the ex-mercenary.

"How many lovers you had, Hauk?" Snake answered obliquely.

"None I worked with."

"Figures." Plissken let an insolent gaze travel over his body. "What're you waiting for, lover?" he crooned, laughing as Hauk pounced on him, fully aware that Hauk was well and truly hooked now, that everything he felt was reciprocated. There was no other high like it, and he had tried many. Euphoria caught him, captured them both and took them soaring to the limit and he revelled in every moment of it, secure as he never had been before.

