**HARDCASTLE AND MCCORMICK**

(It was a warm day in malibu a suberb of santa monica for this time of year this weather was good. mark and milt were getting ready for there trip to the lake were they planned to spend two weeks with frank and claudia harper and cindy and dan allen they had all been healing up from the last case they closed frank and dan still had two weeks of medical leave to waste and mark was healing as well he had been shot and nearly died in the case the judge was healing from a dislocated shoulder when mark had shoved him to safty. and frank had been shot in the shoulder dureing the take down as dan had been hit in the leg but they would all heal. and this trip they had planed for the last week and were all looking forwerds to two weeks in the cabin at the lake mark and milt had bought a few years earlyer. they had wanted a place to spend time together with there friends and one another when they could get away. from the work they did. the next two weeks were gonna be good saturday was milt and marks anniversary they had worked together fifteen years now. ten more after marks perole had ended and mark was also no a lawyer as well thanks to milts help he was able to complete law school and had opened the nancy hardcastle law clinic. in the judges wifes honor and he still found time to be tonto to the judge as well. a year ago the judge had asked mark to become his son legally and he was so proud he had thought of the judge for a long time as his dad. sonny had finally bailed all the way on mark he was no longer in his life. mark had changed his name to mark m hardcastle the m was still for mccormick but the judge had insisted that he keep that cause he new it had been his moms last name. and what it ment to mark. they had rented a large SUV and a pull along trailer to carry all there stuff by 7 am they were on the way up to the lake. mark was thinking of what the doctors had told him before he had been release from the hospital and what the judge and the others still didn't now. the doctores had found a tumor in marks brain and took a biopsey of it and he had refused to let them tell the judge or the othes of the tumor saying he would deal with it. he didn't want anything to ruin this trip he would tell them after they got back the results of the biopsey would take that long anyway. he wanted this trip to be good for all of them that way it would have good memorys if he wound up leaving them mark kinda new in his hart what the tumor would turn out to be he had not told the doctors but he had been feeling the effects of the tumor for a few months now but he had told no one of it. now he new what the trouble was a tumor and it was growing. mark new deep down that this may very well be the last trip they would ever take together. they arrived at the lake and marks mind came back to the present and he helped unlaod things and they settled in just before dark for the evening mark had made his lasana which they all loved and tryed again to get the resciept out of them. but he still said no way. they all settled around the fire place for a nice evening of talking and just injoying one anothers company something mark injoyed a lot it was a good evening finally about 1am they all turned in except for mark he wanted to go outside for a while and watch the stars so the judge went to bed and mark told him he would be in later on. he stayed out there for a few hours just thinking he had a lot to do just in case things went how he felt they would. he had a special gift for the judge for there anniversary he had brought his gitar he had written a song for him one that not only said thank you for all he had given mark in helping him turn him life around. but also how he felt about the man who never failed to have his back. he wanted it to be among there closest friends when he gave it to him. he was haveing a hard time comeing to terms with the fact that this might be the last bit of time he would ever get to spend with all of them. new deep down inside that the out come would not be real good. for him. he was scared but new that he had to make the best of the time he had left that night he prayed that if the out come was that he would die that the others would some how find peace especially the judge he asked that god help them and guide them so that the pain wouldn't be so hard on them. after all he had it all a great life and a great family that had been a gift late in his life but he had that gift and charished it every single day. so if it was his time to leave the earth at least he had been the riches man possible in what really mattered family and friends. he went to bed finally. the judge hadn't fallen asleep untill mark was in and he felt everyone was safe and secure. the next thirteen days had been great they had had a lot of fun and relaxed at night by the camp fire toasted marshmellows and made smors. the last day finally came and while the girls went off to hike in the hills. while the men went fishing mark sat on a long lounge chair and drank some tea as he watched his friends messing around with one another. he had been feeling lousy so he desided to sit the fishing out and just injoy a book while he watched his friends. none of them new what he was really doing was trying to rest he had been haveing sever headacks again and was a bit dizzy. that night as they sat by the camp fire mark brought out his gitar and said) today is our anniversary judge fifteen years ago today I became a lucky man. cause you entered my life. and I have two gifts for you here is the first one. (to there shock mark had a beautifull singing voice the song) once in a life a man receives a special god given gift I now becuase I received that given gift. I was lucky enough when a man steped into my life one that was on the wrong path in life. and he graced that life with me. by givening me a chance to turn my life around he stood by me even when he wasn't sure I was right against all odds never questioning his desision. he has been a father and a best friend and turned my path to the right side. I looked up the deffinition of a father it said a father isn't just the one who makes you but a father is the one who is at your side when you most need them and who shelters you when you are in need of shelter. he guides you when you need guidence and who stands steadfast at your side when you need them to and who also protects you when needed. but most of all a father is someone who loves you unconditionally and who always has a place for you with them when you need it. that is a true father. and you are that father to me I am the richest man not in money for that is a worldly need but I am rich in a much better way for I am rich in the way of family and good friends and that is a richness you can take with you no matter were you go. and something you can hold unto even after you leave this world and I thank you for that great gift milt for that is what you gave to me. and still do as my adopted father and best friend. I thank you. (everyone wiped there eyes especially the judge then mark gave him the second gift. a watch ingraved the judge reads the ingraveing) to my father and best friend may you wear this with my love always your son mark. he looked up again wipeing his eyes as he said) I will charish both gifts for as long as I have in this world kid thank you for the greatest gift and here is yours kiddo. (the judge gave him a gold braclet ingraved also he read it.) to my son mark this is just a way to say I am proud of you son more then you will ever now may you always have the wealth of good friends and family with you for as long as you live. I now you will be a excellent lawyer. your father milt. this is beautifull thank you dad. your welcome son. (the others all smiled at them it had been a long time in comeing but all there new they had saved one another when they met. and still did every day for they gave one another a reason to go on. because of milt mark lived each day as if there were no tommorrow. (mark desided that it was time to come clean with them for tommorrow they would return to the world and the test results would be in. but they were injoying the evening so much he just couldn't ruin it there would be time when they got back if needed. so the rest of the night was injoyed with the others never nowing that this may be the last bit of time to spend with mark there most charished family member. the next day they packed up and headed back to gullsway for frank and dan they would be returned to duty for mark and milt they had cases waiting to be solved. it would be life as normall for them all. when mark got back there was a call on his answering machine it had been a birthday gift from the judge a few weeks ago. he played the message it was from the doctors office it was about his test results. he hears it) mr hardcastle this is to tell you your test is back please come by doctor caliers office at your earlest convenance. thank you. (mark swallowed hard and went to see the doctor he told milt he had to run a arrain. so he left gullsway. he arrived at the doctors office twenty min later. they talked) mark I have your biopsey results there not good. it's cancer isn't it. yes son I am afraid so and it is in stage three it is gonna be hard to counter act. it will mean a treatment plan that will call for sever levels of radiation and kemo to. it will be a very hard treatment regiment and we need to begin as soon as possible. and if I choose not to go through this treatment. then you may have a year I doubt if you would have any longer then that though. mark you must understand the longer we wait for treatment the chances there is for the treatment to work. will it work doctor. I can't garentee you that it will work but it is the only course we can take at this time. it may or may not save your life. thank you doctor I will let you now in the morning what my choice is. son it may be the only way to save your life. yea but like you said there are no garentees I need some time. ok then it is your choice. yea doc it is. (mark left the office he drove up to a area he often went to to think. as he watched the ocean from the cliffs he thought things through then he headed home he needed to talk to the judge and the rest of his choosen family this was not something he could deside on his own. he had thought about just vanishing that way if he died it wouldn't hurt them but he new they would find him because they loved him and would never give up on him so he felt he had to tell them the truth. he got home and seen dans and franks cars were there they often came for lunch they were by the pool and he joined them) hey guys. hey kid glad your back want some lunch. no guys we need to talk. sure kid go ahead. no this is something that needs the whole family frank call claudia and ask her to come and dan call cindy as well please I will be in the den when they get here. it sounds serious kiddo. it is judge beleave me I wouldn't ask if it wasn't. ok kid no problem we will call the girls right now they can be here in a short time. good I'll be inside. (they were all worryed about mark they could tell whatever he wanted to talk to them about was serious and was also hurting the kid. a half hour later they all went into the den the judge sat behind his desk as mark stood and talked) when I was in the hospital there was something that I asked the doctors not to tell you all. while I was there they found a tumor inside of my brain it is growing they took a biopsey today the test results came back. they are. hum give me a min. they are posotive for cancer and it is grade three in severity to combate it will require me to under go very hard and sever radiation and kemo and there are no garentees that this late they can save me even with the treatments. I can die with or with out them. my imune system will be taxed severly by the treatments with out them I may have a year at the most. before the tumor kills me. there may be sergical options as well but it is unlikely that they would work this late. son you have nown a while haven't you. yes I have had my suspisons for a few months now. the tests just confirmed it. why didn't you tell us. I didn't want to ruin the trip cause it may be my last bit of time with all of you. oh mark no baby we are gonna win this. son what do you want to do this has to be your choice. I don't now dad I am scared shitless. you have every right to be kiddo cancer is scarey if you wern't scared I would worry about you. hell kiddo I am scared for you we all are. what ever choice you make we will stand by you all the way kiddo. I now that right now I don't now what to do. (claudia) what does your hart tell you to do mark. I want to fight but this treatment will really tax me I will be weak for a while the doc said I will loose my hair and will need help to even go to the bathroom I can't put all of you through that being a burden to you all. (cindy) burden mark when you are a memeber of a family your never a burden we love you and that love means that we are there for you in good times as well as in bad times to. cause that is what a family is mark. I was thinking of just vanishing but well I now you guys would never stop untill you found me. you got that right kid. we wouldn't after all me and dan are cops. yea I just didn't want to put all of you through that espcially you judge. after all you lost your wife to cancer. yes son I did but there is no were I would rather be then there with you right now. and you can win this mark you have to go into this with a positive attitude my nancy never gave up right up to the day she died. and you are not giveing up either. now you call that doctor and tell him you want the treatments cuase win or lose you have to fight this and we will be there with you all the way. ok thank you all. hey we are family kiddo. yea that we are dan. (mark called the doc and that monday he checked into the hospital for his first treatment they wanted him into the hospital cause the first one can be hard on the human body. the judge stayed with him as they began the first of forteen treatments by the end mark was exhausted and sleeping he had throwen up guite a bit dureing the treatments and his body took the treatment hard as well. the doctors desided that for the first few days after each treatment mark had to stay in the hospital for his own sake. and he and the judge agreed. later that night the others came to be there with him. frank to milt as mark rests) how is he doing. not good it was really ruff on himm today frank he threw up all over he was so sick dureing the treatments the doctors have desided that for a few days after each treatment he has to be in the hospital he is warn out. I can imagine this is not gonna be real easy on him. no and the doctor also said he will get really weak dureing the treatments if he quits before the end then he will loose for sure he has to finish the treatments in full. the doctor says his imune system is gonna be really sepseptable to illness and even a cold at that could be series for him health he is gonna go through a really ruff time guys and his emotions will be hard as well. the pain is gonna be hard on him they are gonna give him the meds to get him through but you guys now as well as I do how he feels about meds. yea well we will all help with what ever he needs you now that we are with you guys all the way. I now that and so does he it's just watching him go through that I wanted to just hold him you now. yea we do he will get through this milt cause we are gonna be there to see that he does. thanks guys. look milt why don't you and I go get some supper dan and cindy will stay with him while we are gone they already ate. I don't now. milt you are gonna have to be strong for mark and that means staying in good health no food or rest in not good ok now come on me and claudia want to take you to get something to eat then we will take you home to rest dan and cindy will stay with mark for the night then in the morning I will bring you back here to be with him for the day rested and nurished ok. (a nother voice speaks) he's right judge I'll need you strong to get through this go home I will be find all I am gonna do for the rest of the night is rest you all need to go home I will be fine the doctors and nurses are here if anything happens they will call you guys I put you all as emergency contacts. so go home I promise to be here in the morning ok guys. if that is what you want. yes you all need sleep hell dan and frank worked all day. and I now claudia and cindy are tired and so are you dad go home and rest. please. ok kiddo I will be back in the morning and be with you. ok and guys thanks for takeing care of him for me. we are here for you to mark. frank takeing care of the judge is takeing care of me more then you will ever now. you get some rest ok kiddo. yea you to dad. it's getting easyer to say that. yea for me to guess that means it is right for us ha kiddo. yea you donkey it does. now your cooking. (they all laaughed hard at that exchange it was so normall for them it felt good to hear)