



Graphic by [Steph](#)

Rating: PG

Classification: vignette, angst

Spoilers: "We the People," "Persian Gulf"/"Take it Like a Man"

Disclaimer: Hmm, let me check. Mine yet? No? Okay, characters belong to DPB and company. Also, I borrowed the parallel with Uncle Matt from a friend's comment - you know who you are, so thanks.

Author's Notes: I'm apparently on a roll with making fic titles out of words from critical lines from the episode. I wanted to make this a flashfic, but couldn't cram it into 155 words ... or even 310. So I guess it's just a really, really short regular fic. Hope you don't feel too gyped.

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"Someone I love."

I still don't fully know what I meant by that statement. Clay's interpretation wasn't wrong, but it wasn't complete, either. And it worries me to think that eventually he'll realize that.

After all, he knows how complicated things are between Harm and me. He's had opportunities to observe the two of us off and on ever since we all met, back on Uncle Matt's case all those years ago. I'm sure that underneath all his posturing and mine, we're both wondering if I'll ever be able to truly move past Harm -- or if I want to.

It's not like I want to be fixating on this -- on him. I have enough other questions to deal with right now without trying to settle a years-old paradox. But I can't get that conversation in the bullpen out of my mind.

What I said about Sergei and Mattie was horribly cruel, and I knew it. I didn't believe it, even in the moment; even if he won't say it outright, he honestly loves Mattie, in the way I always suspected he could. I saw him race out of the office when she called to tell him she'd hurt her ankle at volleyball, and I saw how he carried her into the building when he returned. She'd looked thoroughly embarrassed but secure in his care, and I remember thinking that she probably didn't know how lucky she was.

Mattie's what I could have been, if Uncle Matt had come into my life just a couple of years earlier. That's the magnitude of what Harm is giving her ... though I doubt he realizes the parallels, or what a lofty role he's stepped into.

I never thought I could envy a fifteen-year-old girl so much, on so many levels. Maybe, in a bizarre way, that envy is what pushed me to lash out at him like that. I wanted to see if I still had the power to hurt him. I wanted him to fight back, and instead he walked away, bringing memories of a Paraguayan taxi stand into sharp relief. Is it possible that one word -- even *that* word -- spoken on that infamous night could do this much damage?

This time, I wanted to prove that there was still some life in our inexplicable relationship, and it shattered me to receive no such reassurance.

They say the opposite of love isn't hate, but indifference.

I'm starting to think that maybe I don't have it within me to move past Harm -- but for the first time, I wonder if he might be capable of moving past me.

And since I know for a certainty that I'd rather face Sadik every night in my dreams than allow that to happen, I guess that renders my earlier question academic.

\*\*\* THE END \*\*\*