

NOTHING IMPORTANT HAPPENED TODAY  
A SLASH STORY BY BIBLIO



At this time in the afternoon the street outside was quiet, too early for school runs or the return of the conquering commuter. Daniel could almost believe he and Jack were completely alone in the world, lingering naked in the drowsing heat.

"This bed is too damn small," Jack grumbled sleepily.

"You're welcome to get out of it," Daniel responded politely.

Jack lingeringly kissed Daniel's sweaty shoulder and slid rather closer, wrapping a long, muscular leg invitingly around him.

"I admire your resilience," Daniel commented pleasantly, making a fuss of Jack's appealingly tousled hair. "Weren't you the one bitching and moaning about the hideous mistake we were making?"

"Hey, you jumped me, remember? And I don't recall it being my resilience you were admiring at the time."

"It was your ass." Daniel gave this hard, exciting curve of Jack's a grateful pat. "I

wish you could've seen the look on your face when I pounced," he recalled with relish, planting a noisy smacker Jack's cheek.

"It was the shock of getting laid when I only came over for the Heineken," Jack insisted with a woeful attempt at wounded dignity.

"You came over to watch me sweat. I think I more than delivered."

"You don't have to sound so smug about it."

"Me getting this house - it's the worst thing that ever happened to you," Daniel said brightly.

"It's not the house," Jack responded gloomily. "It's the yard. Who knew owning one pathetic little patch of real estate would turn you into P. Allen Smith? In denim daisy dukes, no less," he added with a sense of grievance.

"The fraying occurred naturally at that level," Daniel explained unsympathetically. "And cut-offs are practical for yard work in this heat."

"So what you're saying is you didn't set out to trap me?" Jack inferred with some incredulity. "It just sorta, kinda happened? All that skin you had on show - that was mere coincidence? Naturally occurring, as it were? From the guy who's normally wrapped up tighter than a mummy?"

"Deck-lounging, beer-swilling critics notwithstanding, when I got up this morning all I had on my agenda was planting some herbs." Daniel brushed his lips warmly over Jack's, enjoying the simple pleasure of being close with him. "Nailing you was a bonus."

Jack heaved a sigh. "I was fine until you took the damned denims off," he moaned. "Right there in the kitchen. Right there in front of me. You. You and your very bare butt."

"Really? I thought you followed me into my bedroom to get my beer, not my butt."

"Where'd you get the nerve to come on to me like that?" Jack interrupted when Daniel started teasing him about his manly protests scaring the tourists all across town. "Seriously, Daniel."

"Seriously?" Daniel looked questioningly into dark, surprisingly contented eyes and decided if he could risk his ass, he could risk the truth. "When I kissed you, when I went that far - I knew it wasn't nearly far enough. Not for you."

"I'm not sure I follow."

"I didn't want you walking away from me," Daniel quickly supplied, wanting to answer the question for Jack but only in terms he was comfortable with. While he couldn't bring himself to regret the risk he'd taken today, he wasn't ready to come out and say he couldn't bear to lose Jack if it hadn't paid off.

"I got nailed because I didn't run away screaming?" Jack enquired a trifle coolly.

"I think you whimpered a little," Daniel offered helpfully.

"Your ass isn't that great," Jack sniffed.

"You were after the beer," Daniel consoled him. "It was the last one. I know it."

"So long as we're clear that's why I came into the bedroom."

Daniel reached down, between Jack's legs, rubbing at ready, responsive heat. Amazed he could do this, he was wanted, he brought his face close to Jack's. "That hideous mistake?" he whispered.

"Complicated," Jack firmly corrected, his cheeks flushing with slow, wanting heat. "I meant to say complicated."

"And not even necessarily a mistake?"

Daniel rolled on top of Jack, smiling and touched when the granite, angular body beneath his softened to offer comfort. Welcome. Jack had his back, in every way that counted.

"Want to make it again?"

This time when he kissed Jack, the metallic taste of fear was almost gone from his throat. His heart was hammering at his ribs but the feeling was mostly good. He thought it might be the way Jack was smiling at him as much as it was the way Jack was holding him, as if there was little doubt in his mind this was meant for them.

There was an honesty between them. The admission of feeling and wanting. Mostly good, Daniel thought again.

There was no question it *felt* good to be with Jack. They were curious, even pushy, establishing where hands or mouth needed to be, what worked for one or other of them. If there was a rhythm, an ease in sex, they weren't particularly finding it and they didn't particularly care. It was enough they were together. They were new to each other and sex for them took work in much the same way driving a stick-shift car through stuttering town traffic took work after cruising long roads in an easy automatic. The process seemed familiar at the same time it was a little off, a little

alien, clashing and unnervingly uncoordinated.

It wasn't so much about the sharing of feelings as maybe the staking of claims and in the meantime, neither one of them would be getting off any time soon.

The absurdity of all this fruitless territorial tussling struck Jack at much the same time it struck Daniel. Shaking with laughter, Jack rolled Daniel hard and pinned him to the bed with the whole of his body.

"What?" Jack demanded when Daniel failed to put up the expected fight, only staring up at him in wonderment. "You've got a weird look on your face."

"I never heard you laugh before, Jack. Not right out loud like that."

"Then we're even," Jack retorted. "Because I never heard you fart before. Can we talk noise discipline, here?"

Daniel snorted and it was Jack's turn to get weird on him. "What?" Daniel echoed him teasingly.

"I didn't know you *could*," Jack admitted frankly, just as surprised as Daniel had been a minute ago.

"Sorry," Daniel apologised dulcetly, wilfully misunderstanding. "It's those Mexican re-fried beans."

"Laugh, I mean," Jack grinned responsively. "You realise that makes three things we've never shared until today? Sex, laughter and uninhibited farting."

"This is getting...personal." Daniel blinked, a little disconcerted old, familiar walls and barriers were slipping away from them.

"We're making love." Jack gently brought their mouths together. "It doesn't get more personal."

"In eight years, neither of us has seen the other laugh," Daniel said stubbornly. "Not the way we just have. And we go from that to *this*?"

"What we're saying makes no sense," Jack argued just as stubbornly. "But this does." He hushed Daniel with a kiss, a hot and hungry kiss. "I get *this*."

Daniel put his arms around Jack. "Me too," he confided, stroking coveting hands down the length of Jack's strong back to hold his hips, digging demanding fingers into the gratifyingly tensing muscles of his ass. He had an effect on Jack; he had proof of it. "So let's get to it."

They both must have dreamed or imagined touching each other for them to be able to do it now, if not with the ease of fantasy then at least with a tingling edge of excitement. There was so much more to this than curiosity or pushing at the envelope of their signature combative contradictions. There was undeniable force in even the gentlest brush of fingers, more than pleasure expressed in hard, searching kisses.

They were talking the talk for sure; their bravado only failed them in touch. There was tenderness far beyond the burning away of physical frustration. Too wrapped up in each other to be wholly selfish, they wanted only to connect. Lips, teeth, tongues. Fingers, hands, arms, legs and feet. Face and chest, hip and thigh. Skin and bone. There were not enough ways for them to touch.

Daniel was shaken as much by happiness as the achingly deliberate grind of his cock over Jack's, the slow, hard slide of muscle and heat and skin that made his heart slam. He found he couldn't be quiet and that his soft, pleased moans drove Jack crazy. He couldn't be still and he couldn't stand the way Jack would take him deep in his mouth to go down on his tongue.

The taste and touch of Jack, the feel and the smell of him, pricked Daniel's skin with shivering sensation, a pulse of quickening pleasure that throbbed between his legs, clenched his thighs and his balls, drawing down, down, as he and Jack rocked and strained together.

He came not with a shout but a low, quivering sigh Jack swallowed in a deep, plunging kiss.

Giddy, panting and disoriented, Daniel followed blindly when Jack rolled off him, keeping hold of him. He smoothed the sweat from Jack's brow, soothing him down from their high.

Jack started to say something to him but it faded...



Daniel hesitated in the doorway, unable to resist the urge to stand for a while watching Jack sleep. It was rare for his friend to feel so secure he could let his guard down this way.

He could only relax when someone he trusted had his back.

Eyeing the beautiful back in question, Daniel was tempted to linger and appreciate the slant of dusty sunlight over tanned skin.

A growling stomach and the lure of cool water beat out perversion. Carrying his jeans and a fresh t-shirt, he ambled along to the kitchen to pull together a sandwich

for himself and for Jack when he woke. Nothing fancy; canned tuna, mayo and the delicious sourness of chilled dill pickle. Leaning against the kitchen counter, gulping down a tall glass of icy milk, he felt better.

He'd forgotten the intense physicality of sex, if that were possible. More than the tiredness, his muscle aches and the tremor in his legs spoke to him being with a man. Jack could be tender when he wanted, but he was also tough and he liked it when Daniel squared off with him.

In sex, Jack liked that a *lot*.

The bathroom floor was cold beneath Daniel's feet, the spray of water forceful and cooling. He soaped away sweat and semen, then stood with his face against the tile, the water beating down on his shoulders, surrendering at last to an overwhelming sense of unreality.

It took little effort of imagination for him to feel Jack's hands on him and he found himself tracing the same path down his torso from chest to belly to cock that had so fascinated Jack when they first tumbled into Daniel's bed.

Jack was right to question how they'd finally come together after all of this time, he thought.

Nine years.

Nine.

He didn't know how he'd had the nerve to take Jack's face in his hands and kiss him like that, or even where the imperative had come from. He hadn't felt a sense of having choice, let alone control. He'd *had* to do it, not knowing as he jumped if Jack could take this incalculable leap of faith with him, if he was capable of acting on an attraction neither had ever been able to acknowledge.

Daniel wasn't entirely certain this was a question Jack could answer even now, sleeping off their long afternoon of mutual predatory exertion.

Maybe reality was too much of a stretch for a man who'd just slept with his friend, his best friend of nine years.

The sheer number of times they'd butted heads, Daniel didn't need to be a genius to know Jack found him difficult, challenging and even contrary, on many levels. Sometimes, they seemed different in most every way that counted. Other times, they were so close they could almost read one another's minds.

Why should having sex with him let Jack buy any more of a clue to what made Daniel do or think or feel the things he did? Jack's perpetual need to figure out

what made Daniel tick was probably the reason he couldn't walk away when Daniel stripped in silent invitation into his bed.

A kick to the head, this was what Daniel believed Jack demanded of him. A shock to the system Jack could let no one else close enough to effect.

It was very good for Daniel to know he hadn't disappointed.

Steadier now, Daniel was able to dress and go downstairs to his study, feeling refreshed and ready to work. While he couldn't wholly regret Jack's promotion to general and the opportunities it brought him to engage in in-depth study as well as fieldwork, his ever-expanding responsibilities at the SGC were demanding in ways he wouldn't have willingly chosen to embrace.

Teaching and sharing knowledge had always been a corollary of his researches, a communicative process personally necessary to him. Challenging grad students - and even desk-bound Pentagon linguists - to get off their collegiate asses and think for themselves was far removed from training combat military personnel for on-the-fly field translation. Daniel's latest candidates were selected because test scores indicated they had a feel for language, not a love of it, and because they were highly motivated to exploit what they deemed a superior tactical advantage in off-world situations.

Jack's uncharacteristically enthusiastic support for the programme appeared to stem from his implacable resolve to keep Daniel from decamping to the Pegasus Galaxy and Atlantis over his dead body.

Belatedly realising sleeping with Jack might just be interpreted as encouragement of this agenda, Daniel logged on to his laptop ready to tackle some articles he'd been gathering on think-aloud protocols in process-oriented translation.

Before his candidates could learn how to communicate with aliens, he was going to have to teach them to communicate with him, because he was damned if he could figure out what they were thinking. While the research into think-aloud protocols failed to exhibit what Daniel was prepared to call a robust methodology, he wasn't exactly awash with options.

His trainee tactical linguists were stalled at the 'See Spot run. Run, Spot, run' stage and he was thinking the problem was they kept *looking* for Spot. Daniel didn't know if the failure was his or if it was theirs, but he was finding more and more that aptitude with human languages was no real indicator of ability to appropriate alien texts or transfer sense.

Proper names, cultural references, thematic coherence: success in translating these was dependent on the human condition; the shared history, experience, empathy and knowledge of mankind. Somehow, he had to get his students to see past that,

to embrace what was truly alien to them in order to achieve some measure of lexical cohesion.

In short, he had a horrible feeling he was going to have to whip up some sort of Ancient 101 for them. Without that common frame of human reference to draw on, alien history, philosophy, science and culture were all going to have to be taught, painfully, from first principles. *All* the alien histories.

Jack would be happy to hear it.

"Am I boring you?" Jack enquired with awful politeness from directly behind him.

Refusing to be startled by the sneaky sonovabitch, Daniel tilted back his head and glared more or less up Jack's nose. He found he was leaning against quite a lot of bare Jack and instantly wished he wasn't so overdressed for the occasion.

"Whatchadoin?" Jack punctuated this by starting a very distracting neck rub.

"It has to do with process-oriented translation and lexical cohesion."

Jack's nostrils flared.

"And this is better than having sex - how?" he demanded.

"I'm not even sure this is better than having root-canal," Daniel confessed glumly. "And it's your fault I'm stuck with it, so you'd better start thinking creatively about all the ways you're going to make it up to me."

"I can think of one really obvious way, and the good thing about it is you don't even have to haul your ass out of this chair."

Sex? "Again?" Daniel quirked an inquisitive look up at Jack to find him smiling disturbingly and looking to score.

"My turn," Jack said softly, rotating Daniel's chair to face him as he got down on his knees. Calmly, he reached out with both hands to snap open the button on Daniel's jeans and pull down the zipper.

Daniel felt a sharp pain in the pit of his stomach, a literal jolt of desire that left him red-faced and gasping as his cock was taken in a strong, sure clasp. Jack watched as Daniel hardened in his hand, then he watched Daniel's face as he pumped him.

The eroticism of it left Daniel breathless and a little afraid. To have Jack naked and unafraid, on his knees and yet in control - he'd had no idea how badly he wanted this until it was happening for him.

Daniel had taken the risks to bring them here. Now, it was as Jack said. It was his turn. That disturbing smile was back as he bent gracefully to run his tongue along the shaft of Daniel's cock. He saw Daniel's belly jump, felt the tremor in his thighs, heard him hastily stifle a whimper. The smile widened. Resting comfortably across Daniel's thighs, Jack explored his throbbing cock with mouth and tongue.

Then Jack let his lips slide over the head and took Daniel into his mouth. There was no stifling the choked noise Daniel made, not this time. Not with Jack swallowing him down, sliding him home inch by inch. Not with Jack's gorgeous mouth on him, gentle and expressive; not with a strong, warm tongue rasping over the head of his cock.

The tense, shivering pleasure in the pit of Daniel's belly seemed to resonate with the squeezing pressure on his cock. Light-headed and fighting for breath, he put his hands on Jack's shoulders, trying to centre himself and be still when he was literally shaking with the effort of not losing it and fucking Jack's mouth the way he desperately wanted to.

Adding telepathy to his tally of mind-blowing talents, Jack tightened his mouth around Daniel, slid him an inch deeper and pulled back with a delicate grate of his teeth. He did this again, and again, and then again, with maddening deliberation.

He was eating Daniel alive.

When Daniel gave in to it, he didn't think it was from Jack sucking him off. He thought he got lost when he opened to his eyes to *see* this happening to him, to see the elegant, rhythmic slide of Jack's head beneath his trembling hands, the tension in the powerful shoulders gripped tight between his thighs, the arch of Jack's back as he laboured. It was seeing Jack go down on him with single-minded passion every bit as much as it was feeling what Jack was doing for him.

It was in seeing what they were sharing, the trust Jack was willing to give, that Daniel was able to let go. He knew only the closeness, the incredible warmth and generosity, opening him up to rippling, tenderising heat centred on Jack's mouth.



Mashed flat against the back of the couch by an armful of aggravatingly amused general, Daniel was entertaining some dark suspicions about just where Jack had learned to do *that* to another guy. A fairly inoffensive guy, a supposed chum, who might never regain the use of his legs because his spine had fused during a protracted orgasm. One spaghetti leg was hooked loosely around Jack's hips; he was rubbing Daniel's thigh in a friendly way as they watched the evening news.

"You, er, you know I'm not experienced, right?" Daniel announced in a small, woodenly mortified voice. "Not with men."

Without taking his eyes off the TV, Jack reached around behind him and groped Daniel's ass reassuringly. "You're the quickest study I know."

"Based on new evidence, I'd have to say not as quick as you," Daniel retorted with a slight edge to his tone.

"You wouldn't believe what I've had to swallow in my time in Special Ops," Jack replied placidly.

"Jack?" Daniel gasped in horror, hugging him with instinctive protectiveness.

"Stuff you don't want nosy border guards to find," Jack explained with infuriating aplomb. "I swallowed a sword one time," he confided chattily. "Impressed the hell out of the guys I was stationed with. I made a mint off of the naïve and credulous."

The appropriate response to this subtly directed insult was not the goofy smile afflicting the naïve and incredulous Daniel.

"It's been a day of surprises," Jack noted philosophically when the expected retaliation failed to materialise. "You should've pushed me off the couch for that."

Daniel sighed.

"Stepford Daniel," Jack mused. "Gets laid, gets bored by the lexical whatsit, farts re-fried beans on me and watches crap on TV. All this normality is freaking me out," he announced decisively. "I want the real Daniel back."

"Is this a bad time to bring up the L-Word?"

Jack's head swivelled in Daniel's direction. He looked...scared.

"On TV."

"That's what I'm talking about," Jack argued, trying not to look relieved Daniel wasn't trying to Talk to him or anything. "Snark and ambush sarcasm, that's the real Daniel Jackson."

"Sorry." Daniel kissed the back of Jack's neck to make it better. "This whole thing is unreal."

"You're telling me! I almost had a heart-attack when you stripped off in the kitchen and did that come hither thing." Jack considered these exciting events. "Come to think of it, you looked so scared I thought *you* might have a heart-attack."

"I do recall you administering mouth-to-mouth with a certain driving energy and

enthusiasm," Daniel acknowledged charitably.

"That's what I'm saying," Jack agreed modestly. "I could've waited until you passed out from hyperventilating and stole back the beer."

"My hero."

"Just don't be nice to me, okay? It's weird."

"Weirder than molesting you in my kitchen?"

"You're thinking this through, aren't you?" Jack accused him.

"I wish. The whole thing defies logic or rational explanation. I can't tell you why I did what I did. I don't even know where to start."

"Welcome to *my* life," Jack grinned.

"It could have been a hideous mistake," Daniel persisted, horrified by hindsight. "I got *naked* on you."

"Gutsiest move I ever saw you make," Jack assured him, turning over unexpectedly to give him a hug he failed to fight on any level. "I've seen you do a lot, but this was way out there, Daniel."

"Are you sorry?" He held Jack more tightly. Held on.

"I'm only sorry we're out of beer."

Daniel felt better knowing he wasn't the only one in over his head. He wished he was stronger, that he wasn't glad this was a risk Jack had only ever taken for him. Being the only one worth this to Jack, the only man Jack saw this way, it mattered to him. It meant a lot to him Jack was willing to work to be with him, to step out blindly into the unknown with him.

"It would probably help if at least one of us didn't suck at relationships," Jack suggested with a definite twinkle.

"Or if either of us could communicate on a meaningfully emotional level," Daniel seconded.

"You can do that," Jack pointed out tactlessly. "At least, you can do it with everyone but me. All I get are grunts and eye rolls."

Daniel closed the small gap between them to kiss Jack; a soft, questioning stroke of lips. Jack invited him to taste, took him into his mouth to speak in tongues, wet

and deep and slow. They melted into one another, legs tangling, gripping, while sure hands reached to mirror the pulse of their mouths in languorous caresses.

There was a language here, one they could both understand. It was an unspoken language, maybe not overtly acknowledged, but it was always there beneath the surface of everything that happened between them. They felt more than they could admit to or ever begin to adequately express; silently sharing a bone-deep empathy, a union of minds, ideals and emotion no one else could touch. It had saved their lives, made them whole.

"I can't keep my hands off you," Jack groaned, urgently clutching Daniel to him. "And you're not helping. In fact, you seem to have more hands than me and they get around, if you know what I mean. Peel yourself off, will ya?"

Daniel bit Jack's chin, sucking on the salt-tasting skin there.

"You're evil," Jack growled, quivering.

"I just think if we do this enough times, I might start to believe it's happening," Daniel explained reasonably.

"What I'm starting to believe is your libido and my hormones are in cahoots to kill me."

"Until today, the existence of my libido was as much in question as my sense of humour." Daniel gave Jack a soft, nibbling kiss. "Enjoy."

"I'd give anything to know why you jumped me today," Jack admitted with unusual directness as Daniel whimsically applied himself to tufting his hair. "Why today? Why not yesterday or last week or last year? What was it about me today of all days that told you to go for it?"

"Now you're trying to think it through."

"And that doesn't happen often enough you can't afford not to humour me now," Jack retorted briskly.

"Then I guess it's because you came over to watch me do yard work," Daniel explained hesitantly, sensing the ground begin its shift under its feet. It happened to him so often he knew the signs. "I guess it's because I finally figured out you don't come over the way you do just to steal my beer and criticise, just to watch me busting my ass figuring out from books how to make my garden grow. You're not into watching me sweat, Jack."

Jack's face was curiously gentle, his dark eyes as soft as Daniel had ever seen them. He was cornered by this tender warmth into taking another leap of faith.

"You're into me," he whispered breathlessly.

Jack's smile was blinding. "Didn't I say you were a quick study?" he murmured caressingly.

"You could never be the one to take that risk, could you?" Daniel recognised with sudden, grateful insight. "Because you're in command and so long as you had any doubt what I might say to you, what I might feel, you risked abusing your rank and my trust."

"You might have spotted this trifling difficulty sooner if you actually believed I was the Man instead of only letting me believe I'm in charge, and then only when you want something."

"You make it sound like I *let* you take the promotion," Daniel argued, at something of a loss.

"Didn't you?" Jack asked interestedly.

"I know I said you'd take the advice of your friends..."

"Namely, you," Jack interrupted.

"But I wasn't serious."

Jack raised an extremely sceptical eyebrow.

"I wasn't completely serious," Daniel amended defensively. "Admit it, Jack," he challenged. "You'd be disappointed if I didn't at least try to take you on. You need me to kick your ass because no one else can. You won't let them affect you to that degree."

"Now you look pissed." Jack looked amused.

"I am!" Daniel snapped indignantly. "Tell me how it is I'm the one who bared his ass and his soul and you're the one who winds up getting what he wants?"

"Superior strategy."

Daniel muttered discontentedly.

"I'm telling you, don't put yourself down," Jack urged. "I hoped some day you'd buy a clue and when you do, you take ten years off my life with the shock of it. Is it any wonder I'm grey?" He reached up to tug at the offending strands. "It'll likely start falling out now," he grumbled.

It was going to take more than a couple of cheap compliments for Jack to get around Daniel. Jack had to work for it. Daniel hoped this showed.

"If it's any consolation," Jack offered in a tone that suggested he was after the opposite effect. "I don't annoy you half as much as you annoy me."

Daniel curled his lip.

Jack made with the coaxing neck rub. "Is this a good time to suggest we should go out and shop for a bigger bed for when I come over?" He grinned at Daniel's sudden flustered expression. "Hey, it's not just that the bed is small, ya know?" he explained with dignity. "What little there is of it, you hog."

"You're, er, you're expecting to come over?" Daniel asked weakly. "Here?"

"I figured," Jack drawled, eyeing Daniel with amused resignation. "When you're not at my place."

"You want to be with me? Not just with me, I mean, but - you know - *with* me. You. With *me*."

"I've got you hooked. Stands to reason I'd want to reel you in," Jack elaborated carefully, gathering that Daniel was paralysed with shock.

"We both suck at those," Daniel babbled. "At relationships. We suck big time."

"Daniel, you okay? You're starting to look like I feel."

"Sorry," Daniel apologised blankly. "I'm not used to life working out the way I want, that's all."

"Do you have any idea how often you sucker punch me with stuff like that?" Jack groaned.

"Do you have any idea why we work? Why this relationship, our friendship, is the only one either of us has gotten right?" Daniel asked intensely.

"Honestly, I try not to think about it," Jack admitted frankly. "Freaks me out."

"Things have changed for us, you know. It's going to be harder for me to kick your ass the way you deserve when I want to take a bite out of it."

Jack blinked at this.

"I might find myself being nice to you for no reason. Or at least for one kind of

obvious reason," Daniel corrected himself conscientiously.

"Just so long as you keep using me for sex, I'll be brave about the rest of it," Jack promised magnanimously.

"It's okay."

"What?"

"You can come over." Daniel swallowed hard. "I'm okay with you coming over."

"Being in the same building will probably work out for us when we feel like having sex," Jack noted agreeably.

"I wish I knew why I like you as much as I do," Daniel mourned when he couldn't find any kind of comeback to that.

"I've been asking myself the same question for years." Jack hugged Daniel until he squawked, then kissed him very hard on the mouth. "Now, either feed me, or get back to the part where you were talking about biting my ass."



Jack O'Neill had been addicted to Daniel Jackson for years. He hadn't developed an immunity so much as he liked to think he'd learned over time to be a functional junkie. So long as he got his regular fix, he let the rest of the world get by in one piece.

Unfortunately, this latest evolution of the Jackson - *happy* Daniel, the one whose big blue eyes followed Jack as if he were this totally hot, totally, magnetically amazing man, was hitting his system like a jolt of pure mainlined heroin.

Jack's fantasy of Daniel coming to his senses and being willing to quietly get it on with him wasn't working out quite as he'd intended. Keeping it low-key, keeping it real - in his mind, that translated to keeping them safe. It wasn't lack of feeling, not on his part; he just refused to be the latest in an unending line of hard kicks to the 'nads of Daniel's battered optimism.

Daniel's definition of what was safe with Jack scared the shit out of him. He had never expected to puncture Daniel's hard-won veneer of properly grown-up pragmatic cynicism and find the sweet, gentle, passionate kid he'd fallen for bubbling out to adore him.

Since it was a matter of honour for Daniel to not even let himself laugh at Jack's jokes in case that could be construed as encouragement or something, Jack could be forgiven for never suspecting Daniel's opinion of him was this high. From the

moment Daniel had kissed him as if he were every damned thing in the *world* to him, Jack felt as if he'd been clubbed in the heart as well as the head.

That edge of Daniel's rubbed right off and Jack was the one who was hooked.

Careful.

Low-key.

Safe.

Sure!

Didn't register in Jack's vocabulary, God help him, not when Daniel was 'okay' with him coming over to have sex and...stuff. From anyone else, this was a burning bush. This was walking barefoot over hot coals or broken glass.

Lingering out on the deck through a glorious sunset and a gargantuan dinner of hot dogs and French fries, Jack had to admit Daniel wasn't the only one feeling unreal here. Out of nowhere, they'd plummeted to nakedness-with-intent and couldn't shake the sense they were still falling.

Still, freefall or not, Jack was having a hoot.

"Want another root beer?" Daniel offered hospitably.

"Sure," Jack accepted easily.

"Get me a refill while you're at it, okay?" Smirking, Daniel closed his eyes and made a show of settling back contentedly on his lounger.

"Bite me," Jack invited, deciding he couldn't *be* too obvious where Daniel, now officially inexperienced with *both* genders, was concerned.

Daniel's face twitched.

"Ah, you're all talk," Jack bitched, collapsing on his own lounger.

"This feels good," Daniel murmured softly, lifting his face towards the last heat of the dying sun.

"Yeah, it does," Jack agreed complacently. "We probably should've hung out more before we started in on the whole sex thing."

"If we had, what would we have done together?"

"Stuff."

"Like what?"

"You know."

"I don't."

"Sure you do. Stuff. Guy stuff."

"The kind of stuff you're always complaining I don't like and won't do?"

"Exactly."

"Maybe you're right," Daniel admitted unexpectedly, showing scary signs of taking Jack seriously. "Because of the extreme experiences we've shared, we know each other better than maybe two people should, yet at the same time, by any normal societal standard, we don't know each other at all," he explained with frightening earnestness. "You know?"

"No."

Daniel swung around his legs and sat on the edge of his lounge, leaning forward until he was practically within kissing distance.

"I don't know!" Jack insisted vigorously as he leaned forward too.

"If we were two average guys working in an office, we'd know more about each other than we do," Daniel argued stubbornly. "You'd know stuff like my favourite sport."

"There's a sport you like?" Jack marvelled. "Damn. I feel like Santa just came down the chimney."

"Maybe I live for sports and I've just been snowing you for years because I *can*," Daniel retorted briskly. "My point is, if we were hooking up at the water cooler or hanging out in the lunch room every day, you'd *know*. What else would there be to talk about? Not life or death, not the fate of the planet or all mankind. If you nine-to-five it for a career, either you talk about the paperwork you push or you get into stuff like which team you support, what you watch on TV, the car you only wish you were driving, your favourite colour." Daniel's tone suggested the alternative to this was descent into madness. It was kind of fun he had this rich little vein of innocent prejudice to be mined.

"It wouldn't matter if you were hooking up at the water cooler in an office building downtown or on the peltak of a Goa'uld mother ship," Jack grinned, surrendering

without hesitation to ignoble impulse. "Trust me, some guy asks your favourite colour, he wants in your pants."

"That was just a random example," Daniel snapped irritably.

"What's yours?"

"My what?"

"Your favourite colour."

Daniel made the same sort of face Jack's mechanic did every time his truck got shot up.

"Mine's peridot," Jack explained helpfully.

"This is exactly what I'm talking about!" Daniel ruffled up. "It's impossible for us to have a normal, regular conversation without our essential personalities asserting themselves and dragging us off down these insane tangents."

"Usually at your instigation."

"You do your fair share of deflection and obfuscation," Daniel countered snippily.

"Daniel, you know less about what goes on in a downtown office building than you do about life on Mars."

"I've never been to Mars," Daniel objected.

"You've swung past it a couple of times, and that's more than you can say for the Colorado Springs business district."

Unwilling to concede this point, Daniel pissily scuffed his toes against Jack's.

"Ever notice how argumentative our essential smartass personalities are?" Jack enquired happily.

"My point is," Daniel firmly attempted to assert conversational control.

"Never thought you lost sight of it for a second."

"Maybe you don't know what sport or car or TV show I like, but I don't know what you read," Daniel said darkly, scowling at Jack. "I don't know if what you see on your TV or read in your newspaper moves you. I only know you obsess over a cartoon and make an ass of yourself with the cryptic crosswords."

"So what you're saying here is you think I have depths as well-concealed as your shallows?" Jack asked facetiously.

"That's exactly what I'm saying." Daniel fought it, but a smile got away from him. It was just Jack's manly charm getting the better of him again.

"Just so long as I get in your pants at the end of it," Jack warned emphatically. "You like those earth tones," he added, mostly because he could. "Old stuff."

"You know, you volunteered your favourite colour to Emmett Bregman." Daniel's eyes danced with sudden demure devilry. "Does that mean you wanted to get in his pants too?"

Daniel was more startled than Jack intended when he lunged in for a punishing kiss, pushing at Jack's shoulders to fend him off.

"Should you do that?" Daniel looked around nervously. "Out here?"

Jack looked around too. There was nothing visible from the street out front to indicate the house had two storeys, but the ground dropped away either side of the house and the deck made a large balcony outside of Daniel's bedroom. The yard below was levelled off, reached from the deck by a steep flight of stairs down. Daniel's jeep was parked in a wide gravelled bay at the foot of the garden. It wasn't a road connecting the houses either side so much as a track.

On one side, the garden was bordered by towering cypress trees, on the other, leafy bushes. The couple living on that side of Daniel could probably see something if they peered out their bedroom window looking for cheap gay thrills, but mostly, all you could see out here were mountains and sky.

It was a sweet spot.

Jack leaned in close. "I think we're okay," he said confidentially before grabbing Daniel and kissing him hard.

"I'm just trying to say you don't have to worry about me being discreet," Daniel persisted, looking slightly depressed. "And it's not only because of the Air Force. We have to live in this town." He stretched out a leg to rub between Jack's, wanting the intimacy. "Forget about Jaffa," he muttered. "We're surrounded by Soldiers of Christ." He looked at Jack. "Doesn't the irony of it strike you? The Air Force setting up Stargate Command, irrefutable proof of the existence of teeming extraterrestrial life, not in Roswell but in the heart of Evangelical Central?"

What Jack wanted to strike him wasn't irony. He figured the best response to living in Evangelical Central was to bare two butts and moon it. Sex. It was symbolic or something. Daniel let out a very satisfactory yelp when Jack yanked

him to his feet and hauled him bodily into the house.

"You've already poked around my underwear drawer," he said lightly, ruthlessly interrupting Daniel's distressingly verbose annihilation of his alleged alpha rutting instincts. "If you want, next time you come over, you can poke around my bookshelves." The responsive silence was magical. "I keep 'em in my bedroom, you know." Wide-eyed and speculative, Daniel followed him like a lamb.

"It's a short drive," Daniel commented persuasively, putting both hands on Jack's ass. "We could be there in fifteen, twenty minutes."

"More like half an hour, forty-five minutes," Jack corrected matter-of-factly, pulling Daniel into the promised land and steering him for the bed.

"Oh." Daniel tried without much success to drag his mind out of the library as Jack efficiently disposed of their t-shirts. "Sex again?"

"What gave it away?" Jack reached for Daniel's zipper. Their jeans were more or less around their ankles when Jack hesitated and took hold of Daniel's hips, rubbing his thumbs over the alluring points of bone. Daniel liked the feel of this and promptly tried it out on Jack. "I read National Geographic," Jack said flatly. "I watch C-SPAN. I care about what we do to the world and what we do to each other. I care about politics because I know what it takes to enforce peace and I know my enemies aren't always on what the TV news would call the other side. I care enough I'll fight. Okay?"

"Okay," Daniel said meekly. "I can actually play hockey and I like lifting weights. I veg out when the baseball is on, I'm addicted to ER, I have the X-Files on DVD and my hero is Stewie from Family Guy. And I read National Geographic too."

"Are you any good at hockey?"

"I'm better than you."

"Shut up and kiss me."

They didn't try for grace, landing on the bed with a perilous bounce that almost left them on the floor. Pinning Jack's shoulders, Daniel kissed him gladly; fierce, agile tongue pistoning deep, deliberately making Jack crazy. Daniel was rock hard and begging, legs clamped either side of Jack's, his hips bucking hungrily.

He was amazing.

Jack had never been with anyone more open, more honest in bed. Daniel knew nothing of games or power plays; he knew only that he liked Jack to touch him, he wanted Jack on him and he worked desperately hard to please when they made

love. Every part of Jack he could reach, he worshipped fearlessly with hands and hips, with cock, mouth and body.

Moaning his head off as they kissed deeply and wetly, touched everywhere at once with shaking, sweaty hands, shuddering bodies pounding together, Daniel had no idea how good he looked to Jack or how alive, how energised he made him feel. Jack just filled up his senses. Daniel was high on Jack, coming on Jack in a splash of heat and groaned, wordless emotion.

Exhausted and aching, he wanted to rest on Jack, brushing kisses across his throat and his face, stroking his arms and his flanks. His tired, satisfied face lit up when Jack captured his mouth tenderly and said what he needed to say in a velvet glide of tongues.

Daniel sighed, a pleasing sound of tensions seeping from him. He dropped his head, nuzzling into Jack's shoulder, happy to have Jack hold him. "Will you stay?" he asked drowsily, assuming Jack would.

"Will you tuck me in?"

"Read you a bedtime story?"

"Bite my ass?"

This got him a sleepy chuckle and a vengeful bite at his shoulder.

Jack would stay. He'd cut and run for years whenever he got too close or Daniel got too close. He was long past that. Waiting for Daniel - that was one of the reasons he stepped up and took promotion. The Man got to come home at night; he got to keep Daniel home.

He had no doubts about his value to the Stargate programme or what they'd give to keep him. If he was watched, if he was caught, he was sure expedience dictated the President and the Joint Chiefs would simply look away. Bottom line was, Jack delivered. By luck or by judgement, he gave the Pentagon more than other leader could. So long as he kept right on confounding their expectations, then worst-case scenario, he was looking at resigning from the Air Force and leading the SGC as a civilian. That was a breeze, that was *nothing*, so long as he had Daniel with him.

Daniel was courageous enough to depend on Jack, to let down his defences and show how he felt. Jack wasn't going to repay that hard-won trust by sneaking home in the early hours to cover his own ass. He wasn't ashamed of having who he wanted most. If Daniel was right about the need for discretion in this town, that was all the care Jack was prepared to take. He was willing to keep their lives private; he was not willing to lie or deny Daniel.

Jack rolled onto his side, sending Daniel slithering grumpily into the sheets. He radiated offence for at least two seconds before clamping happily onto Jack again.

The air was heavy with the smells of sex and hot skin. Jack was more than ready to just lie here and enjoy, take his time with Daniel. He suspected it might take his lifetime to figure out why only Daniel's body filled his cock. Strong, sleek and sculpted; muscular and erotically masculine, only Daniel could arouse him. Only this one man. And he had even less idea what it was about him that got Daniel so itchy in an only-Jack-could-scratch way.

Jack missed the boy in the handsome face he caressed. He missed the prettiness, the innocent charm that had first snared him. His attraction had been easier to deal with, easier to hide behind humour and protectiveness. He'd found the boy again today, given Daniel a new challenge to explore in living the good suburban life. Daniel's only true experience of intimacy, his only sexual relationship, was right out of the pages of a tragic sci-fi soap opera. Boy meets alien slave girl. Boy loses alien slave girl. Boy searches the heavens for alien slave girl and finally gets her back only to have her die in his arms. So, yeah. Maybe it was the worst kind of Harlequin romance cliché, but that didn't make it any less tragic.

It kind of fit their lives – those essential characters of theirs Daniel was so insistent on – that they sucked at every other relationship than this one. This was the only one that shouldn't work. Life being the contrary, killing bitch it was, of course it worked for *them*. It had to, because nothing else did.

Daniel was totally, utterly out of his depth and loving every second of it. He loved everything he needed answers for. He would learn Jack and learn sex, beat the maze of this new relationship of theirs the way he beat everything – with grit, determination, incessant talking and nagging persistence. Daniel never could just take what life dished out; he never quit until life was what he made it.

Life for him now had Jack in it, in every part of it. Daniel would tear down, make room, make sense, build up – and he'd be looking to Jack all the way, stand at Jack's shoulder because he could again admit this was where he needed to be.

"Think I could come over tomorrow night?" Jack asked lazily.

"Lounge on my deck?"

"Criticise."

"Jack?" Daniel slid closer to take wheedling, sinful advantage of Jack's mouth as the deal was struck. "If I lay off those re-fried beans, will you kiss my ass?"

FINIS