

Title: A Day's Rations

Author: Biblio

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Pairing: Jack and Daniel

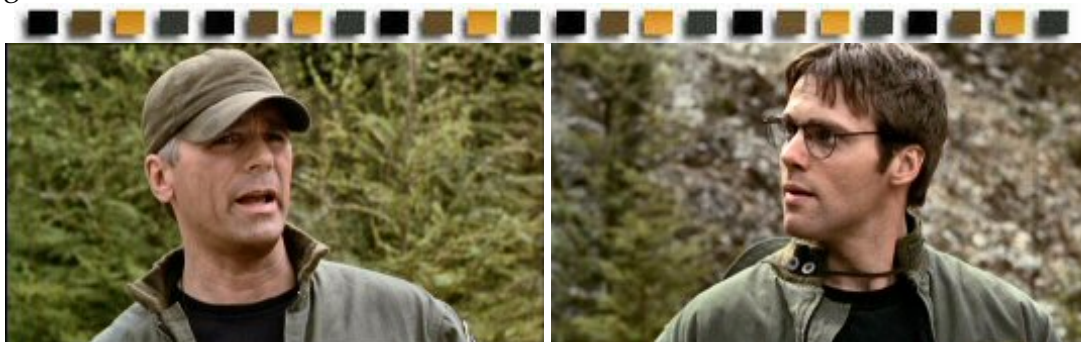
Category: Episode Related. First Time. Romance. Humour.

Series: Sunday Vignettes

Season/Spoilers: Season 3. Tag scene for Deadman's Switch.

Synopsis: Is Daniel worth a day's rations? Jack is given exactly one day to prove Daniel is worth a lifetime to him.

Warnings: None



## A Day's Rations

### A slash story by Biblio

#### JACK

"'We're sorry'? 'Is the deal still on the table?'" I enunciate with biting sarcasm. "Batting your eyes?"

It's amazing how knowing I'm being utterly unreasonable and unfair to the heart-stoppingly clueless man I'm passionately in love with just adds that extra cutting edge to my anger.

"Wh - what?" Daniel stammers. Then his lips tighten, huge blue eyes sparking fire at me. "Just, what, exactly, are you trying to imply, Jack?"

"You know what!" I rage. Pathological jealousy escalates the acrimony tremendously, no question.

"I don't. If I did, I wouldn't be asking you."

Daniel is being infuriatingly reasonable in the face of extreme provocation. He's driving me nuts. I raise my hands to high heaven. "Why do I bother? You don't listen to a goddamn word I say!" I howl, stalking over to lean against his table. A little further out of kissing - or smacking - range. "The sonovabitch was all over you from word one. Couldn't have been more frigging obvious. Three prisoners with military backgrounds,

and by extension, at the very least basic field medical training and what does Boch do? He asks you to mop his fevered brow!"

"He thought I was a doctor!" Daniel snaps.

I shake my head wearily at his tragic naïveté. "He knew you were an archaeologist. He thought you were hot stuff."

"H - h - hot?" Daniel is stuttering again. He gives me a wide-eyed, indignant 'what the hell are you talking about, Jack?' look.

I jump up, grasp him firmly by the shoulders and steer him over to stand in front of his bureau mirror. "Shit hot," I emphasise. The scholarly bewilderment cranks up just a tad. "Well - " I strive for suitable words to adequately describe how Daniel looks, " - drop-dead gorgeous," I snap. In point of fact, Daniel is the most beautiful man I've ever laid eyes on, and that's not something I'll admit outside the privacy of my own embarrassing sappiness.

Daniel's face softens all at once, and he reaches a hand up to gently clasp mine. "You're drunk," he says with unmistakable relief and not a little sympathy.

I'm not drunk. Not. And even if I was, he's got a goddamned nerve to call me on it. "Look who's talking! Two beers and you're anybody's."

"That's not fair!" Daniel snarls right back.

"All that crap Boch was spouting about a day's rations? And what do you do? 'There might be something we can offer for our freedom'. Why didn't you just throw yourself at him! Save the rest of the team the wear and tear."

Daniel gives me a pitying look that drives me straight through the roof. "He wasn't the least bit interested in me, Jack. I didn't see anything to suggest the kind of prurient motives you're implying," he explains kindly. "I would know if someone was, y'know? Interested. You're overreacting," his voice softens a little more. "It's sweet but unn -" he finishes on a startled yelp as I spin him around to face me.

"You would know?" I ask softly, "You would know when a guy was right in front of you, wanting to have sex with you?"

Confidence restored, Daniel smiles at me. "Of course. I'm not naïve, Jack, whatever you like to think," he says sunnily.

"Well, thanks for putting me straight on that, Daniel," I say calmly, "Guess I can just stop worrying if you can read the signals so unerringly. I apologise for doubting you." He gives me a sweet, forgiving, 'friends again?' look up from under his lashes. Oh-so-casually, I ask, "So, what do you see when you look at me?"

"My best friend," he answers promptly.

"And?"

"My team leader."

"I'm awed by your uncanny powers of perception, Daniel," I tell him humbly.

Daniel flushes a little. "There's no call for sarcasm, Jack. That wasn't a trick question," he says stiffly.

"It wasn't? Amazing. And here's me thinking your best friend and team leader has been wanting to have sex with you for months."

Not a glimmer of a clue. Simply does not compute. Jack and Daniel? Daniel and Jack? His mind won't go there.

Mine goes for the clinching argument. Literally. I reach out and cup his jaw, pull him to me and mould myself to his soft, perfectly kissable lips. Which, unfortunately, part beneath mine. Unfortunate for poor, unsuspecting Daniel, that is. My arms wrap tightly around him as I delicately touch my tongue to his. Despite the astonishment overwhelming the huge eyes riveted to my own, he doesn't retreat. I allow myself to fall further into his sweetness, stroking his tongue with my own, curling around to taste every part of him.

His hands rest at my shoulders, trapped between us. They hesitate for an agonisingly long moment, then slide slowly up, locking around my neck as his eyes close and he leans into the embrace to return my deepening kiss, allowing me to roam over every inch of moist, silken heat, tentatively thrusting back against my tongue.

My shaking hands slide down and curve around his buttocks, ease him closer. He gasps into my mouth as I rock my hips against him, the hardness brushing against his groin a sign even he can't misinterpret.

My lungs are burning when I can finally bear to part from him. Step back from him a little. Hope.

Daniel quirks his head to one side, eyes closed, a dreamy expression on his face as he languorously swipes his tongue over his lower lip, tasting me on his skin.

It's the most erotic thing I've ever seen. I find myself biting my own lip. I want him back where he belongs. In my arms. Clothing totally optional.

Daniel's eyes flutter open, slumberous with desire as he smiles at last, irresistibly shy, almost hesitant. He whispers something I don't catch, I eagerly close the distance between us once more, pull him back into my arms. "What?" I ask softly, already leaning in.

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## DANIEL

"I said 'bastard'," I answer just as softly, smiling shyly back at Jack.

Then I demonstrate my flawless grasp of a defensive move I learned in an emergency situation on my first student dig in Egypt and knee him smartly in the balls. Nowhere near as hard as I COULD, just enough to make the air 'whoof' from his lungs and drop him where he stands, groaning piteously and curling into a defensive ball around his injured - um - pride.

"Chri-ist," he moans, writhing at my feet.

"I'll get you some ice for that, shall I?" I snap, desperately trying to cover for how badly he just shocked me. I can't believe he did that. Kissed me! He kissed me and I kissed him BACK! Gawd.

"What the - you kissed me back!" Jack whines.

"That is beside the point," I inform him with icy dignity, shoving my hands into my pockets because they're shaking so badly. My knees are shaking too. Is it obvious? He kissed me! "My motives are not in question here. Yours are." I pause for a moment and then, when I'm assured of his full attention, let him have it. He couldn't kiss me because he wanted to? Not that I wanted him to, I mean...um...But jealousy? That's shitty even for Jack. "How dare you! How dare you kiss me because of some appallingly childish jealousy allied to outrageously 'dog in the manger' possessiveness? I have always amiably tolerated your deranged over-protectiveness but this is a step too far. I am not your personal property, to do with as you will, Jack O'Neill, and it's damned well time you learned that. I'm not your little Spacemonkey or your little Dannyboy."

I've crowded so many home truths into one reasonably pithy condemnation, Jack seems at a loss to know which to address first. He takes the path of least resistance. Ignores them all.

"You kissed me back!"

"You're obsessing about that. Kindly do not refer to it again. Stick to the matter at hand," I demand with cool precision. I really do think he can see my knees shaking and I don't want to give him any excuse to kiss me again! Thank God for years of lectures when I felt

sick with fright in front of two hundred students and had to be coherent answering questions about two guys fucking every time we hit Plato, in the sure and certain knowledge that for every bible-bashing bigot there was at least one gay rights activist and some humourless kid whose mother gave big fat cheques to the Institute, any of whom were happy to make my life a living hell for the rest of the semester.

Jack hauls himself painfully to his feet and glares at me reproachfully. "That is the matter at hand," he insists. "You enjoyed that kiss as much as I did. I could feel how much you enjoyed it," he adds meaningfully.

"That's the last time you'll feel it," I say meanly. I'm pathetically glad I'm not blushing. As if this wasn't bad enough.

He limps over to the couch and lowers himself with agonising caution, alternating between scowling and wincing. I have no sympathy. Well, not much. It was very funny.

"I'm in love with you. That's why I kissed you," he gives me a hateful look.

I can just feel the love from here.

"So the timing is sheer coincidence, is that correct? You've been feeling this way for months, and you barrelling in here to make unwarranted accusations of - of - " I still have no idea what I'm supposed to have done.

"Flirting," Jack supplies helpfully, "You were flirting. With Boch." He then compounds the offence by ostentatiously batting his eyes at me.

"I refute that allegation completely, and I refuse to wander from the point. Unadulterated Alpha Male territorialism prompted you to kiss me."

"Love," Jack says, far more quietly.

"If that's so, then why haven't you kissed me before this?" I ask simply, my heart beating sickeningly. L-love? Jack love me? Loves me? Me? Why?

"Because you SUCK, big time, at reading signals when they're about you. You've never shown the least hint you knew what I was feeling or, more importantly, you returned my feelings." He sighs. "I guess a knee to the groin is a clear enough signal even for me that you don't."

I hate myself for the heat blooming across my face. When I blush, I make a huge production job of it. Jack's suddenly arrested gaze has me hurriedly staring at the floor.

"Dan-iel?" His voice rises on a questioning note. A hopeful note.

"I don't know what I'm feeling," I say pettishly, "It's not like I had any warning. You just marched over and stuck your tongue down my throat."

Jack takes that unflattering description without a blink and gets up with more alacrity than he seemed physically capable of when sitting down. He walks back towards me, no sign of the cocksure stroll he normally treats us to. He freezes a few steps away from me, eyes scrutinising.

"Are you shocked I'm in love with you, or the fact I want to have sex with you?"

That's a disconcertingly perceptive question which I'm quite failing to answer.

Jack reaches out a cautious hand and takes mine in a strong clasp, and, when I don't flinch away, leads me, unresisting, to the couch.

He sits down gracefully, making me slightly regretful I didn't knee him harder when I had my one and only chance. By the time I realise what's happening he's pulled me down onto his lap and wrapped his arms around me.

"I'm not sitting on your lap!" I say indignantly.

"Yes, you are," he contradicts equably and unanswerably, eyes dancing.

For some unfathomable reason, my indignation doesn't lend itself to even a half-hearted attempt to escape. I simply subside, grumbling, making myself more – well – comfortable. I don't object when he twines his fingers with mine. Don't even object when the hand curved around my back slips up to allow curious, revelling fingers to play with my hair, although I know it's asking for trouble.

I've always grown my hair long to avoid the hairdresser, now I keep it short because the contact time is reduced so drastically. Little and often, in and out of the chair in five minutes flat with a trim. No question of being reduced to a boneless heap of sensual bliss, which is what happens every single time gentle, kneading fingers slip through my hair, as Jack's are doing now.

Oh God. Tell me I didn't moan! I didn't. I couldn't. I peek at Jack's glittering eyes. Oh no. No. I did! I moaned. I'm pretty sure there are other parts of a man's body supposed to be more sensitive to touch, apart from the obvious one, but I haven't found any on mine. How embarrassing. I'm SO embarrassed.

Jack refrains from comment about the moaning, confining himself to slipping the glasses from my face. I've got the distinct impression he's working up to another kiss.

"Can I kiss you again?"

Typical. Bloody typical. Instead of doing the decent thing and just pouncing again, so I can surreptitiously discover if the spine-melting quality of the first kiss was a fluke, Jack puts the onus on me. I'm sitting on his knee and moaning. Couldn't he just extrapolate for once?

"Daniel?"

Oh boy.

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## **JACK**

This is not going well. Not going at all the way I hoped. Fantasised. Whatever. Yelling at him, then kissing him, then telling him I'm in love with him? No wonder he looks terrified. Conflicted. I'm not making any assumptions about him kissing me back, or sitting cuddled up to me, OR about the moaning. Just hoping like hell he'll cut me slack I don't deserve.

After an eternity of confused silence, Daniel turns abruptly to face me. He's blushing furiously.

"I - I wouldn't strenuously object if - "

Oh yeah!

I cup his face and he meets me tentatively, half way, brushing his lips cautiously against mine. Like I'm going to bite him. I brush my lips against his just as gently, then he leans in and I assist him in a long, thoughtful exploration of taste, texture and touch.

When Daniel sits back I see the first smile since the one he greeted me with, as he says softly, "You're in love with me?"

"Fraid so."

"You want - er - you want to - um - "

"Make love?" I confirm, just as softly.

"You're the best friend I ever had and I do love you," Daniel says resolutely.

"But just as a friend." I can't disguise my disappointment.

Daniel shoots me another of those shy little looks that make me want to tumble him down and make him sweat. "Given I've just kissed you, we can safely assume not just as a friend. I'm not saying no, Jack, but - um - "

"You don't want to have sex with me," I finish resignedly.

"Not before I'm sure about what I'm feeling," Daniel says gravely.

He doesn't have to give me the song and dance on how if I really loved him, I'd wait. I do and I will, but I don't have to be happy about it.

"You can kiss me, though." After a short pause he says self-consciously, "Now, if you'd like."

I brighten up. "How about we get comfortable?"

"Er - okay."

It's closing in on thirty years since I was last restricted to necking but I do remember the basics. We're already on the couch so I just turn us and ease him down beneath me.

"Just kissing," I reassure.

"So what are you waiting for?" he grins up at me, eyes beginning to sparkle. "Get on with mmmph - "

Nothing tentative about this kiss. Having decided he quite likes the sensations, Daniel gives it some gas, nudging his way into my mouth for the first time. I enthusiastically support his efforts to suck my lungs out through my mouth, then we pause reluctantly to draw breath and regroup.

My turn. I slide my fingers into his hair again and exert the light kneading pressure that makes him moan and quiver so delightfully. My tongue pulses deep in his throat, a profoundly sensuous rhythm that seems to overwhelm him. He melts to pliancy beneath me, trembling in every limb as the tender kiss goes on and on. A few light kisses now and again to allow us to draw breath, then I sink back into an increasingly warm welcome.

Daniel opens to me. I know the moment when his hands stop clutching fearfully at my shoulders and slide up to tangle in my hair. When he exerts a little pressure to bring me back to him, every time I ease away to snatch a breath. The moment when his thighs part beneath me and his long, lissom legs wrap around mine.

Tenderness and reassurance blend seamlessly into real passion. I need so much more than this but he's trusting me implicitly not to take this further than he's chosen to go. I'm in dire straits here, but I won't betray his trust, or the increasing confidence of his responses.

I won't convince him this is about love if I let it be about sex. Even if an increasingly inviting hardness is brushing against my own. Especially -

Time to stop. In case I can't stop. Daniel moans with dismay as I release his lips and sit up.

"Jack? Wh - why? Did I - did I do s-something wrong?"

He has never looked more beautiful, soulful blue eyes clouded with confusion and desire, flawless skin glowing with his pleasure, and lush kiss-swollen lips. Utterly irresistible.

"House rules." I say dryly. I have got to go. Got to - there isn't a cold shower on the planet could see off this puppy. I promised. "You're doing everything a little too right, Daniel. The spirit is willing to wait but the flesh is having none of it."

"Stay," he says softly. "Stay with me."

"Did you listen to a word I just said?"

"Yes. I still want you to stay. Sleep with me."

Unfortunately, I know he means exactly that. Sleep. He wants to cuddle up in bed with me. Very sweet and very, very dangerous. Daniel wants to share his bed with over six feet of raging hormones wrapped up in one currently sex-crazed Special Ops trained colonel whose word of honour is frankly wavering when weighed against the worst hard-on said colonel has ever experienced in his life?

"Have you no sense of self-preservation at all?"  
trust you, Jack," Daniel issues a gentle reproof.

"That makes one of us," I snap.

"I've never shared this bed with anybody else. I want to share it with you."

Daniel's voice is - it's choirs of angels and all that. Visions of Daniel sprawled all over me or, even more compelling, sprawled beneath me - crap. Crap. I'm caving. Spinelessly caving. It's too much - He's too much for me. I nod weakly and he lights up, beaming at me.

"Just so we're absolutely clear on this?" I say sourly, "I want to have sex with you in that bed and I'm only goddamn human."

Daniel's eyes are wicked. "I'll take that as it comes."

I hope he fully realises he could be speaking literally. He bounds up and holds out his hand. I take it, scowling at him, and follow him into the bedroom.

I figure I should keep all my clothes on. Keeping my pants on is probably the only way I'm gonna be able to keep it IN my pants. I glance around his bedroom, curious. Never actually been in here before. It's as exquisitely arty, fragile and tasteful as the rest of his apartment. His furniture is eclectic, no two pieces in the apartment the same, but somehow it all goes. Modern is blended with the antique, minimalist chairs with hand-sewn throws. Wood and natural materials everywhere you look. An abundance of stairs, given this apartment is on one level. "Nice bed," I say weakly. Nice, BIG bed. So big you have to climb up stairs to reach it. A huge wooden bed set beneath a red brick wall. Comfortable. Sturdy. Inviting. Much like it's shy owner, who's expressing his hesitancy in - "Daniel!"

"What?" he looks up at me, all innocence.

"The bouncing thing. Don't. And that thing. No. Stop!" I yelp. He's writhing. All over the damn bed.

Daniel raises bewildered eyes to mine. "I was just getting comfortable."

"You're sprawling," I snap.

Daniel shoots me an odd look from under his lashes, then drops forward onto his stomach, propping his chin on his hands. He hooks his ankles together and swings them idly. Hypnotically. He has beautiful feet. Get real, O'Neill. He has beautiful everything.

"Ja-ack?"

I tear my eyes away from his feet. "Yeah?" I ask cautiously, recognising the wheedling tone in his voice.

"Would you mind very much taking all your clothes off?" Daniel asks hopefully, that odd look dancing in his eyes again.

"Whaa?" I wheeze. "Give a guy some warning!" Mister Happy almost cut out the middle man and took off on his own there.

"Please, Jack?" Daniel breathes, gently moistening his lip. And again, when he realises I'm riveted. "I'm going to give you a day, starting now. A day to convince me that I'm in love with you too and that making love with you is something I'll be glad I traded our friendship for."

"A day," I bleat. Still focused at lip height.

Daniel nods vigorously. "Starting now, and preferably naked, please, Jack" he says ingenuously. "I need to thoroughly review and assess all available evidence, in order to make the informed, rational choice."

“Preferably with me naked?” I clarify. That’s almost plausible. He’s being downright sneaky. He’s doing exactly what I would do in his position. I’m proud of him.

“Yes, please.”

“And you?”

“Not.”

“Oh.” I’ve identified that odd little look. It took me a while to place it, and longer to accept it, because this is Daniel after all, but I know it now. Daniel is being naughty. Extremely.

“Although,” Daniel’s eyes sparkle up at me, a smile dancing across his lips, “I think it might be fun for once to indulge this fantasy you have of me as your little Dannyboy. You can undress me and put me to bed. If you’d like?” he asks, adorably hesitant, wriggling his delectable body deprecatingly.

Jesus. I swallow hard. He’d tempt a saint to sin, and it seems he’s bound and determined to destruct test my libido and my self-control. This is a bad idea. This is a very bad idea.

“I’d like,” I manage to grind out between clenched teeth.

Bad on so many levels, only divine intervention will get him out of this bed still a virgin.

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## **DANIEL**

I eat my breakfast slowly and demurely, Jack’s eyes following every movement of the spoon from bowl to lips, with perhaps a little emphasis on the lips.

“You normally eat strawberries and cream for breakfast, Daniel?”

“Not normally, no. This is – well – it’s an indulgence day. A day where I have fun.”

“You do?” Jack marvels.

Sore loser. I know exactly what he had in mind last night, especially once he’d taken those pants off, and he’s only himself to blame for his current – um – state. I warned him no sex until I was ready, and I meant it.

“How was the shower?” I ask sweetly.

"Amazingly, that bottom setting got colder every time," Jack says sourly, pushing his eggs around his plate half-heartedly.

He can't take his eyes off of what he insists on referring to as my jammies. Thin navy sweats, pale grey T-shirt, short in the arms and shorter in the body. Jack's knuckles go white every time I move. The sight of my bare stomach seems to do a lot more for him than it ever has for anyone else.

"I let you undress me," I explain patiently, "during which you pushed the envelope of the agreement by touching me a hell of a lot more than I ever remember touching myself while undressing, and you didn't exactly rush to let me get into these." I tug up the T-shirt, baring a wide expanse of midriff. Wide-eyed, Jack drops his classic Regency Bead silver fork with an unearthly clatter on my Meissen plate. "Jack?" I murmur gently.

"Yeah?"

"About that plate?"

"They're all odd," Jack is slightly pitying.

"That's not coincidental. They're antique. That particular plate is Meissen, manufactured in 1751, and it's worth around five hundred dollars."

Jack rears back from the plate like it's going to explode in his face.

"So you've only yourself to blame if you got a tad carried away last night and I - um - didn't," I pick up my argument where I left it, calmly taking advantage of his porcelain-paranoia.

A tad carried away? I hung onto my virginity by a thread, particularly at the three am stage of the night, when Jack kissed me awake and had us both naked and adjacent before I knew what had hit me. I was perhaps a little harsh in dealing with the situation, but Jack was thoroughly out of hand and had far too much of me IN his hand by that point, so I think a look of absolute bewilderment and a stammered, hesitant, 'Jack, what are you doing in my bed?' was perfectly acceptable. Jack's language - once he'd realised I knew exactly why he was there and all his tender reassurances were completely unnecessary - was regrettably salty. I shouldn't have laughed. If I hadn't, he wouldn't have been so pointed about taking that second cold shower or sprawling vindictively all over me in his hypothermic state afterwards.

He started to snore too. Irregularly. I don't know how he managed that, but I was on tenterhooks for every agonising inhalation and the explosive, resonant release. He came close to death at around five am.

Jack SO deserves everything he has coming to him. If he was foolish enough to give me a day, without setting any ground rules, how can I possibly resist pushing him to his very limits, and hopefully beyond them? He'd do it to me. I lean back in my chair and smile at him gently, stretching luxuriously, baring a fair amount of midriff. Jack focuses immediately. Moth to the flame. Or is that fish in the barrel?

"Indulgence day?" Jack pulls himself together with visible effort. "Fun?" he asks hopefully.

"Fun," I agree solemnly.

"Define fun," Jack's native caution surfaces.

"Professor Rainier is giving a talk at the University on his dig in Shanshipampa in the Pimampiro district of northern highland Ecuador," I explain fluently. "I'm particularly interested in the petroglyphs." I'm guessing I lost Jack right after 'Professor' from the look of abject horror on his face. "Which will take us to lunch time. We don't have to stay for the reception if you don't want to," I offer kindly.

"I don't," Jack says instantly. "We?" he asks plaintively.

"You're on the clock. That's where I'm going." I shrug. "If you want to spend the day with me, you'll have to tag along."

"I get to pick where we have lunch? Betty Boop's? Gotta love those home fries," he grins hopefully.

"Of course. Just make sure you have me back at the Pikes Peak Arts Centre in time for the movie," I smile sweetly as Jack's grin slowly congeals.

"They have movies at the Arts Centre?"

Jack clearly wants to know what type of movies, but he's afraid to ask.

"It doesn't have subtitles," I reassure him earnestly. "It is in English." Jack might like it. His interest in my midriff notwithstanding, I think he'll be up for heaving bosoms, and you always get those with Jane Austen, and this version has excellent reviews. If necessary, I'll tell him Jane makes me horny. He's likely to be so desperate by then he'll take me at my word.

Jack is eyeing me somewhat anxiously. "This is going to be bad, right? Right? We're talking soft-focus, earnest exposition. Actors emoting. In frocks and big hair. No bodycount. No car chases. Nada."

There are heaving bosoms in a speeding carriage in this one, if that helps.

"I'm going to hit the shower," I say placidly, smirking just enough to freak him, I hope.

"Cool!" Jack brightens visibly.

"I."

"We."

"No."

"Oh."

Jack lets me get a safe distance from the table. "What are you planning on wearing?"

I turn warily and stare at him. "Why?"

"Can I pick?"

"You want to pick out what I'm wearing?" I ask incredulously. "Want to lace up my shoes for me too?"

"You got heels?" Jack asks hopefully, grinning like a loon.

I quit while I'm ahead.



I emerge from my shower, still towelling vigorously, into Jack's waiting arms.

"Allow me!"

Before I can stop him, Jack's fingers are in my hair. Kneading. Caressing. Stroking. Smoothing the damp tendrils.

"Prick," I snarl into a welcoming shoulder. Jack's magic fingers are massaging the nape of my neck, gliding up into my hair and drying my shivering skin with body heat. The other hand is describing lazy arcs all over my back. All over. It feels wonderful. All of it. Jack. Jack feels wonderful. I'm clinging shamelessly with the hand that isn't holding the towel up, and from Jack's occasional hisses of thwarted pleasure, possibly even wantonly, but that doesn't stop him throwing everything he's got at me, just enclosing me in all this warmth and solid comfort. He isn't even copping a feel. "The thrill has gone already," I complain, nuzzling a little deeper into his shoulder.

"I'd like to just ease you down over your desk, right where the sun streams in, and fuck you for a week and a half," Jack murmurs dreamily into my hair. "Long, and slow, and deep."

I totally embarrass myself with a blush that bottoms out somewhere around my ankles, along with the towel, which has just dropped from nerveless fingers. I feel Jack smiling against my hair.

"Pleasant fantasy?" he asks softly.

I'm glad he's not treating me like some dumb kid - not sugar coating his desire for me. He tells me he's in love with me, of course he wants to make love with me. I lean into him, both arms tight around his back, breathing hard as his hands slip down inexorably onto my bare ass. Like he owns it. The first skim of his calloused fingers, the first weight and heat of sensually cupping palms, the first rock of his hips, that throbbing denim-clad erection straining into me, the first touch of his lips against mine and I'm lost. Drowning. Never want to come up. I just see us right there, standing, striving, over my desk, loving slowly and surely, right where the late afternoon sun will stream in and warm our shivering, sweat-sleeked skin.

None of my studies of ancient cultures prepared me for an image like that, for the intimacy of that primal act, of penetration, surrendering your body up to another. For the first time I see beyond the mechanics of the purely physical to find the act of love. I see myself with Jack.

No sooner do I see it, than I want it.

I want Jack.

I have him. Large as life, stroking his tongue over and around and under mine, sweet and slow. Nipping at my lips. Flickering, teasing jabs at my teeth. Rough swipes over my palette. He grins when I cup his face, take the kiss into his mouth, take it deep. Groans when I hook my leg around him, grind insistently into that smooth, swaying pressure against my hips. He's huge; a long, lean expanse of exotic, alien planes and sharp angles, hard and hot and heavy against me.

I'm dazed when the spots in front of my eyes force us up for air. Jack looks as flushed and glazed as I feel.

"Good morning sunshine," he gloats.

"W-we sh-should g-go," I stammer feebly.

"Yeah," Jack says weakly. "Yeah," he manages with more conviction. "Get dressed."

"Um." I wriggle a little.

"Mmm."

"You'll have to let go," I prompt him.

"I can't."

I find myself grinning back when I have to peel him off me and hold him off long enough to leap out of range, and he still manages to goose me before I get away from him. Not far. He follows me into the bedroom. I feel a little shy, just walking around naked in front of him like this, but fair's fair. I made him strip for me last night, and I only hope I showed Jack the appreciation he's showing me.

He managed to get me naked last night too, but that was in the dark and under the covers, during an all out playful tussle over preserving my virginity. This is morning. This is the cold light of day, and Jack just keeps staring, like I'm the most amazing thing he's ever seen, and the only comment he can come up with is a softly bleated 'shit'. Over and over. I think he thinks he's seen the promised land, particularly the ass end.

With all that concentrated attention playing over my skin like a laser, it takes me a while to spot the selection of clothes spread out on the bed. Ratty sneakers. Beige pants. Blue and white checked shirt. I love the shirt but - "I can't go to the university dressed like that." I was going to wear my Tweed jacket and beige pants. Not those pants. Other beige pants.

"You're not. Put them on."

Jack refuses to elaborate as I dress, a little peevisly. It looks like we aren't going to make it to the university, and even with the promise of a little late afternoon desk action in store, I have to admit I really wanted to hear Professor Rainier's talk. It's not that I don't love Jack, it's just that I - I - I love Jack. Jack. Love. Love Jack. As in, In. Love. With. Jack.

Jack.

Oh. Um. No, looks like that's it. Oh. Oh is all I've got right now. Synapses currently shocked beyond the capacity for coherency. So far beyond it I meekly follow Jack's swaying denim-swathed ass right out of my apartment and down to his car. Like a little lost puppy. Tongue lolling on my chin. Panting. I love Jack and I want Jack. Terribly. I want Jack. Sex. With Jack. I want it so badly it distresses me when he gets into the Explorer and sits on his ass, but I take the edge off the pain with some quality time watching his big, capable talented hands and imagining them pretty much all over me. I find myself drifting pleurably into a little role reversal fantasy as we drive along, which begs a question. Hmm.

"Jack? I have a question. A personal question," I emphasise.

"Shoot," Jack says cheerfully, grinning at me.

"Have you ever been with a man?"

"This wasn't obvious?" Jack hoots. "Is that an insult or a compliment? Do I suck at face sucking?"

"No! I mean - no. I just - have you ever been with a man? You know?"

"Oh. 'Been'. As in let some studly monkey drill me up the ass? What do you think?" he challenges.

I turn in my seat to watch him. I've never thought of Jack in this context. I'm going to have to extrapolate. "You're a sensualist," I decide. That's a given. Jack likes to touch and taste and know. "I think you'll try anything once, just to know you've licked it."

Jack snorts with laughter. Oh. He's definitely done that, then. "I just have difficulty picturing you that open, Jack, making yourself that vulnerable to another person."

He gives me a long steady look as we wait for the lights to change. Strange. We're headed to the business district, not the university.

"So?" he prompts.

"So while I can accept Jack O'Neill may have done this in the past, I find it hard to imagine Colonel O'Neill - um - "

"Giving it up?" Jack suggests pleasantly. "Daniel, it entirely depends on the person I'd be giving it up to. For a smart guy you can be incredibly dumb sometimes."

"Thanks," I say softly. He means I'm the right person and he wants me too. That's amazing. That Jack would be willing to open up to me, let me closer physically than anyone has been in what I'm assuming is a very long time. Before his marriage. Such a gift of trust he's offering me.

"You're very welcome. Just don't make a habit of stupidity or this relationship could get crowded."

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## **JACK**

I'm taking this sudden curiosity about my willingness to take it up the ass as a positive step. From the flush on Daniel's cheeks and a very definitely sparkle in his eyes, his mind

is not only going there but having a blast if I'm any judge of my boy. This is good. This helps. This might stop him going postal when I get him into Dillard's and he realises the only reason he's wearing those skanky clothes is because he's never wearing them ever again. Or most of the rest of his wardrobe if I have anything to say about it. And I do. Daniel is attached to those plaid shirts, God knows he is, and a couple of subtle-ish grey checks might survive the search and destroy. Might. I'm open to osculation.

I can't believe the body he's got hidden away under T-shirts, shirts and jacket. Even on base he manages to get at least two layers of clothing between him and the outside world. Possibly this is some instinctual self-preservation. Carter has a hard time keeping ahead of Daniel's admirers as it is, without letting them lay eyes on actual skin. I have no illusions about Carter's reaction to this. I'm fairly certain Carter will cut my balls off the minute she finds out I'm going all out to seduce her darling Daniel.

"This is the mall!" Daniel accuses.

The Chapel Hill Mall, to be precise. I'm a little shabby in the looks department, what with the impact Daniel is having on my hair, but I look good. I dress well. This grey-green shirt looks right with these denims and this jacket. Daniel is drop-dead gorgeous and he dresses like a refugee from Goodwill. This stops and it stops now. He'll just have to learn to live with showing his ass, with stopping my heart and probably traffic every time he shows it in public.

"I hate malls!" he snaps indignantly.

I glance at his shirt and shudder. This is not news. I've got three wishes. Daniel out of those sneakers, those pants and that shirt. Enter his, you'll excuse the expression, Fairy Godmother.

"Daniel, you shall go to the mall."

Daniel is still whining about going to the mall when I drag him into the exclusive surroundings of Dillard's Men's Apparel. A distressed roar heralds the arrival of Fedor, the Fairy Godmother himself, clearly struck to the heart by Daniel's sartorial suffering. I retire to a chair in the private room Fedor has dragged Daniel into - shuddering convulsively every time he glimpses the existing ensemble, my work here pretty much done, except waving the magic MasterCard wand.

I while away the time thinking about at least half a dozen people I know who could get into Daniel's apartment, no questions asked, clean out his wardrobe. Right now.

The duds get a temporary stay of execution, because it's actually more fun to watch Daniel being measured within an inch of his life as Fedor ruthlessly strips him down to his underwear. The underwear is nice. Not as nice as what it's covering, not by a long shot. Daniel was well and truly blessed, and if Fedor wasn't a happily married man with three

gorgeous kids I'd be worried about the hand roaming all over Daniel's inner thigh. It's roamed all over mine too, but I don't look like Daniel.

Fedor is barking brisk orders at an assortment of minions, so I just settle back and enjoy the show. Daniel speechless is an experience to be savoured, so I ignore the heart-rending little glances pleading for help, and laugh out loud as it becomes obvious Daniel is not only speechless but helpless in the face of Fedor's onslaught. A dizzying array of clothes are tried, tested against Daniel's skin tone, eyes and golden brown hair and rejected out of hand.

After half an hour, Daniel has acquired some stonewashed spray-on denims and a shirt that matches exactly the blue of his eyes, hip-hugging black jeans and T-shirt that will probably get him arrested first time he ventures out in them, white jeans, silvery grey shirt and black jacket which I think only Daniel's ass could get away with, navy chinos and this amazing indigo shirt that made even Fedor look pensive, and the outfit he's currently gracing us with, skin tight cream pants and white T-shirt, and a long, eminently stroke-able cream sweater. The sneakers have been replaced with a variety of shoes, including the very nice tan ones on Daniel's feet at this moment.

It's entirely possible both my libido and my MasterCard will never recover from this experience.

Daniel stumbles over to me, still dazed, Fedor hovering at his side. "Wow," Daniel mutters weakly.

"A beginning," Fedor corrects, sniffing.

Daniel is flustered when I hold out my MasterCard but Fedor quells him with a hard look. "We have not yet begun to address tailoring. Or casual wear. You will return."

"I will?" Daniel whispers helplessly.

"You will."

"Oh."

He will. Me too. And looking at the rags to an embarrassment of riches sweater, which in no way disguises the swaying of Daniel's shapely ass, I can say with fullest confidence today is the day his prince will come.

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Keep it up pal, just Keep It Up, and you 'n me are gonna take a little walk in the alley out back and have a little talk. My fist has a lot to say to your teeth, so just keep it up. I glare inclusively around the function room.

Goddammit.

Does this happen every time? Every frigging time Daniel meets up with his so-called peers? Daniel was having fun in the Shampypampy lecture, so much fun I did this stupid-assed thing and got him to come into the reception. The plenary. What the fuck is a plenary? Apart from the chance for every Jackson-wannabe in here to line up and kick the verbal shit out the original. With cheese and wine.

"The presence of petroglyphs at Shanshipampa suggest possible evidence of trans-sierran connections," Daniel suggests fluently to the chief kicker, the one and only Professor – just call me Professor – Rainier. "Several of the motifs you showed – particularly the bicephalous reptilian glyph - are identical to those found on the pavement of La Mesa, excavated by Pedro Porres in the 70s and to rock art found in the Narina district in Southern Colombia and the Quijos region to the East."

I think Daniel is referring to the two headed snake dude.

"The iconography suggests to me that the residents of Shanshipampa participated in a widespread visual system potentially indicative of a shared interregional ideographic system, interaction sphere, or pan-regional information network," Daniel's seems unaware he's blithely casting his pearls before a swine. "The distribution of the petroglyphs, in conjunction with ethnographic information, suggests that they may have performed an ethnic boundary maintenance function as well. Have you been able to make a determination?"

"No."

Daniel waits. I wait. Eventually it becomes clear from Professor Rainier's gimlet eyes and tight lips he's nothing more to say on the matter.

I smile. The Professor steps back. "Not to worry," I say brightly. "Dr Jackson steers everybody out of their depth. Why don't you take a little time out, hit the reference books, and we'll pick it up in half an hour or so by the punch bowl." I incline my head graciously at him and start to steer Daniel away. We're almost out of earshot when I decide I can push it just a little farther. "About the pottery? Have you had time to –"

"Carbon date," Daniel hisses when I falter.

"Carbon date the shards? 'Cause I gotta tell ya, that pottery you were so damn excited about, the one that had never been recorded before? That one?" I wait until Rainier is writhing on my hook. "Looks army issue to me. Lotta Special Forces types roaming all

over those jungles. Keep an eye out. Some of those vintage Coke bottles are worth something." I nod briskly at Daniel. "Doctor?"

"Colonel," Daniel falls lamentably short of the mark, doctoral-dignity wise, kinda falling off somewhere around suppressed giggles.

"Just gettin' warmed up," I say smoothly, scanning the crowds and closing in on my next victim. "Ah. Dr Dick," I call jovially.

"Dr Richards," he snaps, wheeling round to glare at Daniel.

Looks like a Dick to me.

"I was fascinated by your spirited discussion of Dr Jackson's theory that the pyramids are far older than anyone believes, which you interpreted as 'aliens built the pyramids'," I say fluently. "I felt that his defence suffered somewhat since he was attempting to rationally debate what struck me as the simplistic and woefully inaccurate interpretation of a tabloid-reading terminally-closed mind. You were particularly scathing of Dr Jackson's choice of test sites, as I recall. I was particularly struck by your vehemence, given that you specialise in pot holes."

"Pot holes," Daniel chokes.

"Thank you, Dr Jackson. Pot or post, still holes, not Egyptology. Consequently, I have some questions about what constitutes a suitable archaeological test site. For example, is it true you just ask around?"

"Excuse me?" Dr Dick gasps incredulously.

"You got the indigenous types roaming all over these great finds on a daily basis. Before people like you find the great finds, the locals are finding 'em on a daily basis, walking their dogs on them and shit. Excuse me, forgetting my company here. Coprolite."

Dr Dick is sputtering. So is Daniel, but not for the same reason. I wink into anguished eyes and launch back in to Dick baiting. "So you just gotta ask around. Back packers, pot holers, students, people like that, though I'm probably stretching the 'people' when it comes to the students, but they do get there first too." I smile. Daniel smiles. Dr Dick doesn't. "Your choice of site is supposed to be determined by your research topic, correct?"

"Correct," Dr Dick confirms cautiously. He can see something coming but he's not sure what.

"And not on, for example, the climate, the proximity of sandy beaches, night clubs, and four star restaurants, whether or not the mall is up to snuff for your girlfriend or whether they stock Bud in the local taverna? Right?"

“Right?” Dr Dick is gasping and reeling, and interestingly, he’s now the same colour as the punch. Red and faintly luminous.

“Hmm,” I murmur sceptically. “Which brings us to the actual site, and field methodology. Excavation.” Daniel is clearly awed by my uncanny grasp of his field of expertise. I do actually listen to him. I don’t tune out every damn thing he says. “Excavation, also known as trowel and error. This is where you dig down or across - “

“Vertical or horizontal,” Daniel amends carefully. “Vertical allowing you to expose different layers, horizontal allowing you to expose wider areas of a single layer.”

“Thank you.” I step neatly in front of Dr Dick as he makes a break for it.

“Ah, no, no, thank you,” Daniel says cheerfully. “Do go on.”

“Basically you keep the methodology situationally flexible because you don’t actually have a clue what’s down there.”

“Ah, I hesitate to correct you, but there are methods, including ground penetrating radar, magnetometers - “ Daniel suggests.

“And all of this helps to prevent you finding too much? Finding nothing? Finding you’re digging in the wrong place?” I ask chattily.

“N-no,” Daniel admits reluctantly. “Not,” he glances eloquently at Dr Dick, “always.”

“Er - nothing personal, Dr Dick.”

“Richards,” he snarls.

“I do apologise. It kinda slipped my mind, there. I put you and post-holes together and failed to come up with you leading the Donner Party of pre-historic digs,” I apologise gravely as Daniel wheels away abruptly, shaking. “Maybe you shoulda just asked around first,” I suggest kindly.

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“Will you stop laughing?”

Daniel shakes his head feebly, still snorting. “I’ll never be able to go back there again. Never. Ever.”

"Well then, my work there is done," I grin, "and this day is just getting better and better. Welcome to Betty Boop's. Best damn home-fries in the state of Colorado." Daniel eyes a booth, but I drag him deep into the fray at the counter. "I like grill to mouth service." Betty's is wall to wall as always but I wasn't Special Ops for nothing. Looks like a domestic brewing ju-ust there, guy has his eye on that chica two stools over and his amiga is not amused. She's up, they're off, we're in. Too easy.

Daniel is swinging around on his red vinyl and chrome stool trying to see everything and everyone at once. "This is a cool diner," he enthuses. "Got the tacky tiled floor and the utilitarian griddle and - oh. Um. Hi."

"Can I help you?"

"Can I see the menu please?" Daniel asks carefully.

Betty steps aside.

The owner of this soul food diner never looks soulful. She's bigger than Teal'c and she'd make two of Daniel. I could eat shit and die for all she cares and I'm a regular. Daniel just insulted the joint and Betty is gazing into those big blue eyes and feeling no pain.

"BLT please."

"Boy, you look like a stiff breeze could blow you over. We'll add some French Fries and coleslaw to that, and you'll have the lemon cake. This bum you're hanging with gets the salad."

"Burger with cheese and mushrooms," I correct. "And the fries and the potato salad." I can steal Daniel's coleslaw.

"See? This is what the bum does," Betty bitches. "What does it say on the menu, hon?"

"Burger with cheese. Burger with mushrooms. Burger with jalapeno," Daniel reads out obediently.

"You see an 'and' anywhere in there?"

"No."

"So I gotta special order, special price - bum does this to me every damn time," Betty eyes me grimly.

I smile sweetly back.

"Come dessert, he'll want the pie AND the ice cream, and there ain't no 'and' there either. Want some joe, hon?"

"Yep, and keep it coming," I smirk.

"Was I talkin' ta you? You'll get yours, don't you worry about that."

"You come here a lot, Jack?" Daniel asks, that gleam back in his eye.

"All the time. Don't let Betty fool you. She worships the ground I walk on."

"I could tell."

"My money's no good here," I insist.

"Damn straight it's not," Betty slaps down two steaming cups of coffee and loads two bowls with fries. "His cheques bounce all the damn time."

"It was just that one time," I contradict. Mmm. The smell is driving me crazy. Must eat home fries. Must. Eat. I reach out brazenly.

"Don't mess with my fries, Jack."

"My fries," I glare Betty down.

"They're not yours 'til you've paid for them. In cash. Wait for your sandwich." She saunters off to the griddle. I twitch one shoulder suggestively towards my fries. "I saw that. Leave 'em alone," Betty calls without looking back.

"Yeah. You're a regular," Daniel decides. "That kind of dislike is only built up over time."

We both watch Betty constructing the sandwiches. Daniel's BLT looks like it needs scaffolding, the bun is kinda perched on top of the filling, and he has enough coleslaw for three, which means I can spare him some if he insists. My burger looks svelte by comparison, but Daniel's soft compliment to the potato salad earns me that essential extra scoop. Betty swaggers back over, places Daniel's plate carefully in front of him and slides mine at me, closely followed by the bowls of fries.

I investigate my burger, sneering. "Jeez, this is worse than the last one. A good vet could have this back on its feet."

Betty sneers right back, and having gauged Daniel's java habit, tops him up before tossing some scraps to the rest of the paying customers.

"Maybe I should ask for a chain saw," Daniel eyes his sandwich in disbelief. He has to take it apart and spread the salad around before he can manage to pick it up and take a bite.

"Stop eating my coleslaw," I protest when he turns his attentions to the rest of the goodies heaped high on his plate.

"I like coleslaw," Daniel protests.

"So do I."

"So get your own."

"I don't have to," I hit his slaw and run. "I've got yours. Hey! Get your fork outta my potato salad. That's mine," I snap, smacking his hand indignantly.

"And that would make my coleslaw what? Exactly?" Daniel queries coldly.

"Mine too." But of course.

"What's yours is yours and what's mine is yours. I see." Daniel eats his sandwich in thoughtful silence for a while. "I'm looking forward to the movie. I think you'll like this one," he murmurs dulcetly.

"I will?"

"Kate Winslett is in it."

I will.

"Sense and Sensibility."

I won't.

"I'm looking forward to seeing it."

And you will. As soon as the video comes out.

"It's the perfect way to spend an afternoon together."

Not as perfect as the way we're going to spend it, which is hopefully making love for the first time out there in all that sunshine and pine scented mountain air. I have the perfect spot, peaceful, private, well off the beaten track. All Daniel has to do is say the word.

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## DANIEL

"No."

"Daniel."

"Sneaky bastard."

"I did need new hiking boots. Honest," Jack coaxes.

"Honest?" I ask incredulously. Dammit. Two malls in one day. Chapel Hills and The Citadel. Two malls and no movie, and I can't ever show my face at the university ever again. In one day. This is JACK. When will I ever learn? "Try unscrupulous. Try presumptuous. Try libidinous."

"That's what I'm hoping, yes," Jack admits unrepentantly. "A little alfresco assignation."

"You're trying to seduce me," I accuse.

"I'm not," Jack bridles indignantly. "No way! Not until we get there. Now get walking." He puts a firm hand in the small of my back and propels me away from the jeep.

I can't believe I actually picked out the blanket he's going to use while he relieves me of my virginity, and he's making ME carry it! I can't believe I'm just tamely clambering up this picturesque trail to the scene of my own seduction, carrying everything because Jack is whining about his knees, which only seem to bother him when there's work to be done, like fetch, carry, pitch, dig, lift.

As for the scene of the seduction, I'm guessing privacy will not be an issue. This picturesque trail probably would get more traffic if it wasn't also precipitous. I hope Jack isn't planning on anything too athletic. If we do a lot of rolling around, there's a good chance we'll roll right off the mountain.

Okay. Okay. So the other thing I can't believe is that I'm actively colluding in my own seduction. I could have told him I loved him any time today, but I haven't. I could have told him and we could have gone home and tried out my desk. Something I've been thinking about all day, off and on. Mostly on.

I've been thinking about having sex with Jack, not just fantasising. I think I'm supposed to be weighing up the emotional impact of this profound alteration of my sexuality, and getting to know Jack in this new context. I know Jack. He's my best friend. I don't know anyone better, and nobody knows me better than he does. I didn't let myself see what was developing between us. It was all there, clear as day, the moment I reached for it. This

feeling isn't something new. It's just us. Jack and me. We were meant to be this way. There's no other explanation for how right, how easy this feels.

I think we're supposed to build up gradually to penetrative sex. I think I don't give a hoot because Jack built up to it years ago. I'm the virgin. I'm supposed to be the shy one, the one who needs to be coaxed and given the kid glove treatment. I don't feel shy. I feel adventurous. I feel dangerously horny and I'm glad Jack knows what he's doing because I can't come up with a single classy way to say 'Jack, I love you dearly, fuck me senseless'.

I'm a little vague on the mechanics, on the positions, but if asked for a preference, I don't particularly want to be sucking the blanket if I could be sucking Jack's lungs out instead.

"Are you listening to me?" Jack complains.

"Yes," I say instantly.

"Uh huh," Jack mutter sceptically. "What did I just say?"

We've come to a fork in the trail. It's fifty-fifty. If we go up, then we'll run into flat ground, but it will be on the vertical plane. It's not a private spot if climbers are hollering down for you to hold their rope. "We go right," I say confidently.

"We certainly do, but that's not what I said," Jack shakes his head at me. "I knew it. Panicking, huh?"

I scowl at him. "Panicking?" Only in case he has second thoughts and wants to just hold my hand or something equally sappy.

"I knew I should have tried to sneak it up on you."

"I saw it last night. You couldn't sneak that thing up on anybody," I leer.

"Daniel," Jack snorts. "Drag your mind out of my pants. I'm trying to talk, here."

"I'm not. I may be an archaeologist, but I'm also a guy and I've got better things to do with my mouth, so let's pick up the pace and get to them."

I plunge off down the right fork and after a few hundred yards find myself gradually descending into a small, secluded rock-strewn valley. You could probably spit from ridge to ridge, but there's all the privacy we need in the sheltered spot we're headed for. Just a small clearing glimpsed through the trees, by the tiny stream winding along the valley floor, but the air is warm and clear. This is a sweet spot.

I rifle through the pack I've been carrying, unfurl the blanket and spread it briskly. Then I peel off my sweater, fold it neatly and set it on the ground. Boots, socks and T-shirt join the growing pile.

"Er - Daniel?"

"Hmm?" Damn, this belt is stiff. I glance up at Jack, leaning casually against the nearest tree, watching me, quite fascinated. "I'm not doing the shy little virgin thing, Jack. I refuse to be such an obvious cliché."

"O-kaay," Jack drawls. "What thing are you doing? Just so we're clear."

"Horny alfresco fuck-fest. Starting as soon as I get these damned pants off!" I finally work the buckle loose and start on my zipper. "You're still dressed, Jack, don't think I haven't noticed. Don't make me come over there and hurt you."

"So you're now totally convinced that it's worth trading our friendship up for making love?" Jack catches my eye. "Excuse me. For a fuck-fest."

"Am I being too subtle?" I balance on my shoulders, hitch my butt in the air and shove down the pants. It takes a lot of wriggling, but eventually I get them down and off. I glance up. "You're still dressed and I wasn't kidding about the hurting part. Get your ass into gear and out of your gear."

"Aren't you forgetting the magic word?"

"Now!"

Jack chuckles and swaggers towards me.

"Need any help?" I ask hopefully.

"No. I work faster alone." Jack shucks his clothes with astonishing speed and minimal effort.

My gaze focuses at around hip height. Jack is already aroused, erection flushed and standing proud. I do a little more wriggling and spread myself out on the blanket, as naked as he. I'm quite flattered by the visibly swelling interest this provokes, and my own commitment to the upcoming event can't be doubted. Jack subsides gracefully onto the blanket and stretches out beside me, propped up on one elbow, his hand settling lightly on my stomach. I cover his hand with mine, turning a little to face him, smiling.

"Do you really want to do this, Daniel? Plenty of things we can do. Hot things. Fun things," he asks seriously.

"I'm pretty much decided on this thing. I do love you Jack, and I realised this morning I want to make love with you," I say tenderly.

"This morning? When?" Jack demands, scowling.

"When you were talking about us and that whole skin-desk interface. Suddenly I could see us together that way, and I wanted it."

"Now you tell me? You could have been having it ALL day!" Jack howls.

"I wanted to go to the lecture," I begin.

"Two hours of the Shampypampy is a bigger turn on than you, me and maple syrup?" Jack snaps.

"Shanshipampa, and don't tell me you wouldn't trade me up in a heartbeat for a tractor pull or something."

Jack looks staggered by this accusation. "I've never been to a tractor pull in my life! I'm from Chicago."

"I'm sorry," I say pacifically. "It's the lumberjack look you go for."

"Lumberjack? I'm not the one in the Monty Python shirts!"

"I'm in love with you!" I snap.

"And I'm in love with you!" Jack snaps back, eyes flinty.

"I want to make love with you," I snarl.

"Ditto," Jack growls to a boulder somewhere over my left shoulder.

"Aah, for cryin' out loud." I lean in and kiss him hard, then lean back and await developments, the main one seeming to be Jack shoving me flat on my back, rolling on top of me and making himself quite at home.

"It's about damn time. The service in this seduction is lousy," I gripe, parting my thighs and wrapping my legs around Jack's. "You're heavy." I wriggle. "And hard."

"That isn't in question."

"And hairy." I wriggle a little more, gasping when Jack's erection glides luxuriously over mine. "And hard. Did I mention you were hard? And hot. But mostly hard."

Jack takes pity on me at this point, lowers his head and kisses me. I wrap my arms around his shoulders and open to him eagerly. Not a gentle kiss this, not with Jack driving deep into my mouth and me trying to shove him forcefully back out again. This kiss is hot and passionate, teeth nipping at flickering, tormenting tongues. Rough swipes over sensitive

pallets. Lips shifting, striving, straining for more, deeper, harder. Hard thrusts of tongue on tongue.

Hands. Jack's hands and weight on me. Big, capable hands stroking every inch of my quivering, needing flesh, calluses rasping over tender nipples, making me arch into him, pleasure shocking through my groin. Jack's hands making strong sweeps of my back as we tumble onto our sides, firmly mapping every knot in my spine just as I map his. Down onto my butt. My hands on his butt, kneading, squeezing, revelling in the softness of skin and the strength and power of sleek, taut muscles.

Both of us sweating freely, hot and slick and heavy, slipping and sliding all over each other as we laugh and play, wrestle and roll around.

Jack is this huge, wild, wanting weight sprawled all over me, deliciously hard and hairy; hair every damn where. Soft as silk on his head. Bristle scrubbing cheek to cheek. Soft, fine hairs on arms and thighs. Crisp coarseness at his groin. All this weight and muscle and power bawdily heaving against me, pinning me flat, his gloating hands and lips and teeth every place I've got, wanting every part of me all at once. Greedy. Wilful. Pushy. Demanding. Lewd and crude and loud, cursing me as I stroke and squeeze his straining shaft, exulting in every twitch and throb, in the heat of him and the heady musk of shared arousal.

Jack.

I want it all. I want everything he can throw at me, every damn thing he's got to give, and I want it NOW.

"Jack," I whisper.

"Mmm."

"Jack," I fend him off, swipe the probing tongue from my ear, "Jack!" Have to push him off me again, snarling.

"What!" He eyes me sullenly, licking his lips and angling pointedly back for my ear again.

I shove him away. "I want - "

He drops his head and steals a searing kiss, biting my lips and tongue.

"Oh for - Jack - mmmph - "

In for the duration with this kiss, languidly stealing my breath and every thought in my head as he rocks and thrusts madly against my tongue until the breath is burning in my lungs. I'm younger and I talk more, so I get in while the gettin' is good. "For God's sake,

do I have to send you a memo? Virginity? Hello? Isn't that why we climbed every mountain, forded every stream?"

Jack is still wheezing painfully but he manages to roll away and delve into the pack, emerging triumphantly with a tube of Sunblock. He rolls back and opens the tube, squeezes out a generous amount and dabs it on my nose.

"Can't have you peeling," Jack teases.

I'd like to retaliate and put some on his butt, but I'm still not thrilled about the idea of doing it face down in the blanket. Right now I don't know who's going to be where or which way up we'll be when we get there. At Jack's urging I find myself lying flat on my stomach with my legs spread. I feel completely exposed and vulnerable like this, but before I have time to really think about how ridiculous I look, or, well, panic, Jack is parting my buttocks and - "Ohgodohgod!"

Ohmygodohmygodohgodohgod. Licking. Jack is - he's licking. Me. Oh. God. "Jack!"

"Mmm. Good?"

Ohmygodohmygodohgodohgod. Inside. Licking inside. Feels - incredible.

"Ready for a little more, Daniel?"

More? "Sure," I say, desperately casual. I feel a cool slickness smoothing me, then some delicate probing in a part of me only Janet Fraiser knows intimately and not only is her finger a hell of a lot smaller than Jack's she's never - "Ohgodohgodohgod. Fuck! Jack! Jaaack!!" I collapse, shaking violently, white hot flashes going off behind my eyes. "What the hell was that?" I croak when my voice works again.

"Meaning of life stuff, Daniel. A cosmic joke. God alone knows why He gave all guys a G-spot that can make us bark like a sea-lion and then stuck it on the inside," Jack says wryly. "You okay down there?"

I prop myself back up on my elbows and nod cautiously. Jack eases up and gently mouths the nape of my neck.

"No is always your choice, Daniel. I may be a pushy bastard but I do love you."

I have to smile. "I know that. I'm ready." I wriggle my butt hopefully and the next thing I know I'm tumbled flat on my face, shocked to the core and screaming Jack's name.

"I guess I don't have to worry about you letting me know what feels good," Jack chuckles, settling in to some serious nape kissing.

"I love that," I sigh. "I love when you do that."

"This? Cool. Feels great to me too. The nape of the neck is the sexiest part of the human body. I nearly died when yours was exposed to the world. I've had to fight every instinct I possess not to put you on point just so I can get off on it."

"Really?" I ask shyly. As shy as I can be with a man who has his finger in my butt.

"Absolutely. This is one seriously sexy nape."

Jack's attempts to prove this to my satisfaction have me shuddering helplessly under the onslaught and just as I'm catching my breath again he hits that sweet spot deep inside and has me whimpering and shivering helplessly into the blanket.

"Okay, nice and relaxed here," Jack croons. "Ready for a little more?"

"I'm going to be dead if I have to take much more."

"Can't rush this, Daniel. Not this time, not ever. If you want to let go, do. The more relaxed you are, the better this will be."

I'm not going to let go until we can let go together, and I manage to hold on through three fingers' worth of gentle stroking, massaging and stretching, and those wild stabs of pleasure exploding behind my eyes. I'm still quaking from the last tremors when Jack withdraws and his weight lifts.

"I don't want to make love in this position," I say clearly.

"It's easiest on your knees," Jack suggests.

"No." I curl up and roll over, catching my breath at the sight of Jack touching himself, slathering on more of the Sunblock. "I want to see you while we make love. I want to kiss you."

Jack looks at me steadily for a moment, then holds out his arms to me, smiling. "Come here, then. You can do the driving."

I kneel astride him, eager now. This is good, this is close. Jack lies flat, spreads his legs and rests his hands on my hips to steady me.

"Just relax. That's all you have to do. Relax and let me in," Jack coaxes as I position myself over him, guide him into me.

Ohgodohgod. Definitely not fingers. I ease down, my thighs burning and quivering as much as my ass. Relax. I have to relax. I take a deep breath and as I release it, I push out, sink down onto Jack's straining shaft.

"Okay?"

I nod, biting my lip. I'm not, but the stinging is bearable. I push down again, and again, breathing deep and pushing out, and suddenly everything gives and I can slide sweetly down. I gasp, not in pain, not really, just this astonishing sensation of being stretched and filled. Muscles unaccustomed to this burning and protesting as I ease down and down, slowly, getting used to Jack being just there, and then needing more of him, and easing down a little further.

I go slow because I want all of him, everything he has to give me, and if he hurts me, he'll stop this. I can see that he will. I see it in the taut stillness, every muscle trembling with the effort of holding back, of not thrusting when he wants to, needs to so badly. I see it in the grimace of pleasure tugging at his lips, in the blackness of his glittering eyes. I hear it in the soft coaxing, and the gasps of pleasure at how beautiful I am, how right this is. How tight I am, how good and rich I feel around him, how much he wants this, needs me. How much he loves me.

I know how hard, and rich, and deep he is inside me. I know how much I love him, and how magnificent he is to my eyes, how much I want him and need him. He's all the way inside me now, has all my weight resting on him. I have all of him. I lean forward, let those muscles gripping so tightly around Jack relax. Accustom. I don't move. I wait, breathing slowly and evenly, readying myself for Jack to love me. Wait, feeling every nerve end thrum and fire with sharp new sensations.

I said that penetration, the act of surrender was primal, and God, how right I was. I feel like Jack has plunged into my heart here. I love this. I'm losing myself in this newfound awareness of Jack, of all his power and strength focused deep inside me, of the sharing of our trust and our bodies in this act of love. It feels GOOD. I want this. I'm loving this, opening to Jack in ways I've never imagined opening to anyone. I'm loving this so much I can't separate the physical pleasure from my emotions, I have Jack shocking right through me.

"Kiss me," I ask, and Jack slowly sits, carefully shifts his weight until we're balanced, arms tight around one another. I smile and see his answering warmth in eyes and lips. His love. "I love you," I sigh, leaning in to swipe my tongue over his lips.

"I love you too," Jack cups my face roughly for a moment. "You've no idea how much I love you."

"So show me," I challenge and take the kiss he offers me. A perfectly wonderful kiss that seems to find a balance that lets us cling together, tongues caressing and gliding, slow and sweet, and on and on. I'm drowning in that kiss, senses swimming in Jack. Then he thrusts gently into me and I gasp into his mouth. Warm hands soothe my nape and down my back, then Jack thrusts again. A deepening of the tender kiss, and another thrust. Just what he promised me. Long, and slow, and deep.

Tender thrust after tender thrust, setting a steady pace so I know he's going to be there, thrusting just there, just then. This loving is blissful ease and languor. Sweet, heavy pleasure rippling through me as I rock my hips gently, Jack letting me lead, set the pace, letting me rock as he thrusts, barely there, just gentle, rhythmic insistence in counter point to my movements. Perfectly slow and deep, perfectly wonderful.

"Gonna be a little more," Jack warns, then he lunges back into my mouth, rocking, rasping, rolling our tongues together.

He thrusts up into me, driving deep, stabbing that sweet spot, igniting those flashes behind my eyes and the pleasure low and sweet in my groin becomes a sullen, needing ache. More, again. All of you, Jack, give me all of you. He drives deep again, lifting me as he arches his hips, arms tight around me as I collapse, quaking, onto his shoulder, sobbing as ecstasy sheets through my whole body.

"Aah, GOD, aah, YES, Daniel, YES," Jack exults, snatching me back to him, back to deep, delirious, drugging kisses, driving up into me over and over as I push down hard to meet him. Driving deep and hard, pace quickening as Jack grunts hard with the effort, face taut and strained as he wracks my whole body with pleasure I've never imagined, rapturous tremors pulsing around Jack so deep inside me, making him groan wrenchingly and shake all over.

"Love you, love you," he groans.

"I love you too."

Jack's thrusts become lunges, hard stabs against my sweet spot, then he throws back his head. "DAAAAANNY!" Jack howls, tensing, arching up, lifting us, exploding inside me, scalding heat pouring over my sweet spot, sending me screaming, half-fainting over the edge, whitening out as climax tears through me and I come all over him.

We sit clinging and shaking, just as we are, fighting for every labouring breath. Jack kisses me, a sweet, tender kiss, a benediction. We lean close, nuzzling, cheek to cheek. Every muscle aches and protests when Jack helps me to free myself and we tumble down side by side, shivering in the open air as drying sweat cools our skin faster than the sun can warm it.

"Good?" Jack teases.

"I'll bring a good book next time. Give me something to do," I say casually. I'm a little embarrassed by what were, to say the least, uninhibited responses.

"You're an annoying little prick," Jack says pleasantly, "but I love you anyway."

"I love you too," I sigh, snuggling in to a very warm welcome. "So?" I prompt drowsily. "Was I worth a day?"

“A day?” Jack muses, leaning in for another soul-stealing kiss. “Get back to me in a lifetime or so.”

**FINIS**