

The Rescue

By

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TITLE: The Rescue

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SUMMARY: Daniel Jackson's expedition with SG2 leads to his abduction by Apophis!

STATUS: Complete

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FEEDBACK: Most definitely!

The MALP had indicated that this planet appeared to be in some kind of Jurassic age, and it offered Jackson the opportunity to study pre-life terrain, something that he'd only touched on in college.

Jack O'Neill was at the Pentagon, Sam Carter had leave and was seeing her father, who had made the trip to Earth at a moment's notice, and Teal'c had finally got to get back and see his family... bar that was any major emergency occurring.

Daniel had prepared his samples kit meticulously, and had invited Doctor Robert Rothman along. Both had agreed that a Jack-free mission had it perks! As they walked among plant life that had long since been dead on Earth, Jackson felt a sense of freedom. Major Coburn had left him to his own devices and for that small mercy, he was grateful.

"It's interesting how these plants grow so big," Rothman noted, looking at what appeared to be a giant daisy.

"Yes, it is," Jackson concurred. "It's amazing how life can develop unhindered and grow..." His words trailed off.

Rothman looked around, and there standing in front of Daniel Jackson was Apophis.

Daniel looked into the eyes of the Goa'uld. "Bad timing," he muttered.

Major Coburn hadn't been able to raise Jackson on the radio when he had seen the death glider sweep above his team some five miles away and then disappear. Double timing it, as fast as his men could over the terrain, he arrived in time to see Jackson being taken aboard the vessel and Rothman running frantically towards him, waving his arms.

"He's taken Daniel. Oh, there was nothing I could do."

Coburn frowned. "God damn it," he snarled. "Back to base, we've got to let General Hammond know what's happened."

Jack O'Neill had flown a small jet back from Washington. He picked his car up at the US Air Force strip and raced towards the SGC. He had been in constant contact with Hammond by mobile phone since learning of Jackson's abduction. He was barely able to contain the sense of urgency and anger he felt as he drove down the freeway at speeds that he knew would earn him a ticket. He could handle the car, the cops, and anything else Earth had to throw at him, but one of his team being abducted, by what he considered as the most dangerous adversary he'd ever faced, was something else.

Sure enough, within ten miles of the base, the familiar blue and red lights appeared in his rear-view mirror. "Oh, for crying out loud!" he snapped. He knew his Mercedes sports car could easily outpace them, but he still pulled the vehicle over at the first opportunity.

O'Neill got out, slammed the door and approached the two police officers.

“What?” he asked, his impressive blue uniform festooned with ribbons, shades reflecting the two officers.

“Air Force?” one of the cops asked.

“Ya think?” O'Neill said, giving him one of his best sardonic looks.

“You were speeding. Gonna have to give you a ticket,” the second officer said.

“Yeah, well since I intend speeding again, why don't you follow me to Cheyenne Mountain and give me a bunch of them there,” O'Neill spat.

“You're not talking to one of your subordinates now, fly boy,” the officer replied.

“No, really?” O'Neill's tone sarcastic, clipped measured with anger. “Look, here's my ID, send the thing onto me. I don't have time for this!” With that, he turned and walked back to his car. “Jumped up damn civvy yahoos.”

The two police officers exchanged amazed looks, before jumping into their car to pursue the colonel.

As he reached Cheyenne Mountain, the checkpoints worked to his advantage; O'Neill offered a customary salute to the Sergeant-At-Post as he passed through

“Give the boys my regards,” he quipped.

Jack O'Neill raced through the base.

“General,” he said, greeting Hammond who waited for him on level 28 at the SGC. “Any further information, sir?” he asked, unbuttoning his jacket and unclipping his tie.

“No, Jack, I'm afraid not.”

Major Coburn and his unit awaited the General and Colonel O'Neill in the briefing room. O'Neill's face was masked with anger.

“Coburn. How many missions have you backed us up on now?” he snapped, face red with anger.

“Alright, Colonel, it was hardly Major Coburn's fault.”

“Oh, I disagree, sir. If he takes one of my team on a sightseeing trip, he ought to be watching their six.” His tone was intentionally scornful and condescending.

“I'm sorry, Colonel, we tried to raise him on the radio. But....”

“On the radio...” O'Neill snapped. “Just exactly how far away were you from watching out for the civilian contingent, Major?”

“Jack. That's enough now. It's not getting us anywhere.”

“No, sir, but it's making me feel a hell of a lot better,” O'Neill declared. “I'm gonna get changed, I take it a rescue mission is already being planned, sir?”

“Well, Colonel, since we have no way of knowing exactly where Apophis has taken him, rescue mission where?”

“Chulak?” Jack offered. “Or Abydos....”

“Colonel, get yourself changed and meet me in my office in ten minutes. Dismissed,” General Hammond ordered.

Jack turned for one last time to glare at the embarrassed Major before obeying the General's order.

Daniel sat on the floor of the cell Apophis had thrown him into. He had no idea where they were, only that they were aboard a Cheops vessel. He considered his options and why Apophis had evidently been able to locate him so easily. A spy? Maybe someone working for the Goa'uld at the SGC? He dismissed that thought almost the moment it entered his mind. “No,” he said. “It had to be by chance.”

The door to the cell opened and a woman stood there.

“Doctor Jackson, you will follow me.”

Daniel did as he was instructed, noting the two guards that stood behind her, and realising they were probably formerly in the employ of Sokar. As he entered the lavishly over decorated room, he noticed Apophis immediately. The Goa'uld was sitting on a bed of cushions, surrounded by minions.

“Come, Daniel,” he said. “I have had some food brought for you.”

Daniel was slightly taken aback by Apophis' apparent friendliness toward him. But his experiences told him to be wary of Greeks bearing gifts.

“I'm not really hungry, is there something in particular you want me for, Apophis?” he asked.

When the Goa'uld did not have him forced, he concluded that this was most definitely a trap of some kind, and decided it was in his best interests to play along.

“You know what, I am hungry,” he commented.

“Berating junior officers in front of their command isn't the done thing, Jack,” Hammond told O'Neill in the privacy of his office. “You know that. How many commands have you had?”

“A few, General. With all due respect, sir, I'd kind of like to get moving on doing something to rescue Daniel, if it's all the same to you.”

“I'm going to ignore your tone, Jack, because I know what Jackson means to you. Hell, you think I'm not concerned too?”

Jack raised his eyes heavenwards. He moved forward, rested both palms on General Hammond's desk and looked the general square in the eyes.

“Sir, Daniel's like a son, a brother, hell on a good day, a best friend to me. So forgive me, sir, if my tone, or attitude, or whatever the hell it is that might cause undue offence, but my gut feeling is the sooner the better,” O'Neill said, and everything in his eyes mirrored it perfectly.

“Okay Jack. I'm gonna let you go. We've attempted to locate Major Carter without success. Teal'c is on his way back as we speak.”

“Thank you, sir. I'd like SG3 to back us up on this one.”

“Unfortunately, SG3 is currently off world, Colonel, so it'll be SG2 and 4”

“Yes, sir,” O'Neill agreed.

“Is the food to your liking, Daniel?” Apophis asked.

Daniel nodded. He was still unsure of why Apophis was being so amiable and it bothered him greatly.

“So why exactly have you brought me here?” he asked.

“I want something from you. A trade,” Apophis told him.

“A trade, I see, and you'd like to trade what exactly?”

“Your life for the life of O'Neill.”

“Jack... what would you want with Jack?” Daniel asked, and it suddenly made sense to him. “Well, er, sorry to disappoint you, but Colonel O'Neill isn't going to turn himself over and I wouldn't ask him to.”

“Your stubbornness is foolish,” Apophis mocked. “I could easily torture you. You would reveal everything I want to know.”

Daniel threw down the food he had been eating, and looked at the Goa'uld defiantly. "Well then, I, er, guess you better get started," he challenged.

Apophis looked furious. "Jaffa, Kree!" he bellowed.

The Jaffa guard threw Jackson to one side and aimed his staff weapon at the archaeologist.

"You will tell me what I want to know, or I will kill you," Apophis warned.

Daniel looked reticent and a long sigh escaped his lips.

"Well, I guess," he murmured.

Jack O'Neill led the two SG teams through the Stargate, with Teal'c at his side. His eyes swept the immediate area and then the horizons.

"Okay, let's fan out," he ordered. "Teal'c you're with me. Radio checks at 30-minute intervals. Anyone gets anything, they hold position and signal me immediately is that clear?"

Major Coburn nodded. "Clear, sir."

Major Castleman affirmed with a similar response.

As they walked off O'Neill shook his head. "Why didn't old snaky just kill him," O'Neill pondered.

"I believe he is still seeking the Harsesis child."

O'Neill's eyes rolled. "Now isn't that special."

"O'Neill, it is most likely that the only way we will find Daniel Jackson is to be captured ourselves."

"Yeah, I thought of that, Teal'c," O'Neill agreed, "but then we're talking reckless, stupid, dereliction of duty. It gets messy. You don't want to hear the rest." O'Neill exhaled. "You know what, that's exactly what I'm gonna do," he stated. "No point in sitting on the fence."

Teal'c looked curiously at the colonel. "I do not see a fence, O'Neill," he declared.

"Teal'c, It's a cliché. You know, one of those good old Earth statements we make from time to time. It means to do nothing, to be undecided..."

Teal'c acknowledged this with a nod of his head. "When the time comes, I too shall be captured on the fence!"

Jack regarded him with mirth, his brow furrowing. "No, Teal'c, can't let you do that. Apophis would kill you for sure, me, it's just a maybe he could care less thing. I need you to head back to the Stargate and tell Hammond that I went off somewhere, and..." Jack looked seriously at

the Jaffa then. "Hell, tell him the truth. I'm feeling kind of invincible today, and I'm betting, somewhere on that ship, is a Tok'ra."

Teal'c's eyebrows knitted together. "I cannot allow you to do this, O'Neill," he told the colonel.

O'Neill stopped and turned round slowly. "You know, I kind of thought you might say that, Teal'c...." The Zat blast radiated the moment O'Neill turned. "Sorry."

The Jaffa registered shock, before falling slowly to his knees. Finally keeling over sideways, he lay unmoving. O'Neill cursed himself, checked Teal'c was still breathing and took off, as carefully as he could be about leaving a trail for the wily Jaffa to follow.

"Now, what's gonna get your attention," O'Neill said to himself. He depressed his radio speaker. "Daniel, this is Jack over." He waited, then continued with the message.

Daniel was badly beaten. The Jaffa took it in turns to punch, kick and use the energy prod, a task that appeared to give Apophis great delight.

A priest entered the chamber, carrying Daniel's radio. "My Lord, this device is speaking."

Apophis listened intently, a smile crossing his face. "O'Neill," he spat. "Find him, bring him to me," he ordered the Jaffa.

Daniel was left bleeding heavily from several cuts to the head, and a nasty gash in his right cheek. His entire body ached with spasms from the excruciating pain of the device they used on him. He thought he had heard Jack's voice, but then how could he. Finally, he passed out.

Jack saw the death glider swoop above him and waited.

Teal'c came to with Major Castleman bent over him.

"Teal'c, where's Colonel O'Neill?"

"I do not know," the Jaffa replied. "We must try and find him, before he is captured."

"There's no Goa'uld activity here, Teal'c, we've been looking for miles."

"Major Castleman, it is Colonel O'Neill's wish to be captured by Apophis," Teal'c informed them, as Coburn and his group joined SG4.

"Crazy son of a bitch," Castleman remarked. "No wonder he was trying to comm. Daniel with his radio. I thought that was a dumb move, now I know why it was dumb."

"We'd better go back and let General Hammond know," Coburn said.

“Negative, Major, we try and locate the colonel before that crazy bastard gets himself caught.”

The death glider flew overhead, opening fire on them. Each of them ran for cover with the exception of Teal'c. He watched the glider ascend high into the clouds.

“It is too late, Major,” Teal'c informed Castleman as he re-joined the Jaffa. “It would appear that O'Neill got his wish.”

“Great,” Castleman replied. “Hammond is gonna love this.”

“Hey, Pops,” Jack announced as he was brought before the Goa'uld. “We're gonna have to stop meeting like this.”

“Silence,” Apophis demanded, his piercing dark eyes glowing as he spoke.

Jack looked across at Daniel, who was still lying unconscious. “Well isn't that special,” Jack said. “Is he dead?”

Apophis shook his head. “No. But that can be arranged, unless you tell me where the Harsesis child is,” the Goa'uld threatened.

“You ever heard of diplomacy?” O'Neill asked sardonically. “It's a little thing, tends to get you...” The Jaffa's staff weapon struck O'Neill across the back of the knees. “For crying out loud,” he vociferated. “Thanks for making my point.”

“There will be no escape for you this time,” Apophis said, standing and walking closer to O'Neill, lifting the ribbon device that stretched across the palm of the host's right hand.

“Yeah, go ahead. Your company sucks anyway...” O'Neill stated defiantly. “Shame about old Heru'ur getting to the kid first though.” Apophis hand dropped.

“O'Neill, you are a fool.”

“Now see, Pops, that's where you're wrong. You didn't think I'd just let you capture me without a plan, did ya?” O'Neill looked directly at the Goa'uld.

Apophis surly smirk deepened on his brow, a sound almost a laugh. He looked directly at the colonel.

“Take them back,” he insisted. “But know this, it was not Daniel Jackson I wanted, O'Neill, you are the one.”

Jack O'Neill looked a little confused. “What, you miss me?” he asked.

“Know this,” Apophis said slowly, “I have amassed a force, and once we are back on Delmar I shall turn my armies on your world, and you will help!”

Jack's expression changed; a sombre look crossed his face. "Ya think," he said, without much faith in the words.

Teal'c sat quietly listening to the major explain to Hammond exactly what the Jaffa had told him about O'Neill.

"Teal'c?" Hammond questioned. "Is there any possibility that Apophis might keep Colonel O'Neill and Doctor Jackson alive?"

"If he believes he can extract knowledge from them, such as your codes, he will General Hammond."

"Then I think we'd better call the Tok'ra, see if they have any knowledge of Apophis' plans or whereabouts," Hammond said. He looked across then at Major Castleman and Coburn. "As far as your reports go, Colonel O'Neill has been captured by the enemy, is that clear?"

"Wouldn't write it any other way, sir," Coburn agreed. A nod of affirmation obtained from Major Castleman; Hammond was about to leave the debrief.

"Off world activation, I repeat, off world activation."

Hammond, Teal'c and the majors made their way quickly to the control room.

"Lieutenant Simmons, did we receive a code?" Hammond asked.

"Yes, sir, special signal one, sir. It's the Tok'ra," Simmons confirmed.

"Open the Iris," Hammond ordered, looking around at Teal'c. "Seems the Tok'ra might be well ahead of us." Teal'c nodded slowly.

Martouf, Korra and another Tok'ra appeared from the soft ripples of the wormhole.

Hammond and Teal'c met them in the embarkation room.

"General Hammond, Teal'c," Martouf acknowledged. Korra reached out his hand to Teal'c.

"It's good to see you, Teal'c, I have come to help pay that debt." Teal'c accepted the hand of the Tok'ra he had saved from Sokar.

"Martouf, do you have people on the inside of Apophis' operation?"

"We do, General, as soon as dispatches reached us from Delmar, we came as soon as possible."

In the briefing room, Martouf began to explain what his people had managed to feed to them.

“From what our spies tell us, both Colonel O'Neill and Daniel Jackson are alive. Unfortunately, Daniel has been tortured, but it appears that Colonel O'Neill has managed to convince Apophis that he has some kind of alliance with the Goa'uld system lord, Heru'ur.”

“Why would O'Neill do such a thing?” Teal'c asked.

“Of all the system lords, Heru'ur is by far the most dangerous to Apophis. Apophis coveted Ra's territory, needless to say, as the son of Ra, Heru'ur began a war, as well as your own assault, when Apophis attempted to destroy your world. Heru'ur, more than any other Goa'uld, has destroyed what little was left of Apophis' armies, this of course was before Apophis managed to take command of Sokar's forces.”

“So, Colonel O'Neill has managed to buy a little time,” Hammond said.

“Yes, but the threat of Heru'ur could only be continued if the information of Apophis' location were to be given to him.”

“You mean, give the information of the location that Apophis is currently holding Colonel O'Neill and Daniel Jackson to another Goa'uld?” Hammond looked surprised, confused by the strategy.

“Indeed, a clever plan,” Teal'c concurred.

“I can't agree, how does this help?” Hammond insisted.

“Simply that with Apophis and Heru'ur doing battle, it is more likely that we might be able to use that to free Colonel O'Neill and Daniel Jackson, and effect an escape,” Martouf explained.

“Sounds risky to me,” Hammond stated.

Martouf sighed heavily. “Indeed, General, but without the intervention of Heru'ur, I don't think we have much of a chance to free them either.”

“Hey, Danny,” Jack greeted, as at last the badly beaten archaeologist eyes flickered open. “Thought I'd got myself captured for nothing.”

Daniel blinked a couple of times. “Jack?” he questioned.

“In the flesh,” O'Neill responded. “How you feeling?”

Daniel managed to sit up. O'Neill's face twitched with a sympathetic smile. “You look like hell,” he noted.

“Where are we?”

“Oh,” O'Neill looked around him. “In a cell on Apophis' ship, heading slowly back to his new world. Staff weapon blow to the head, or did you still think we were in Kansas?” O'Neill quipped.

“Well.” Daniel rubbed his eyes; his glasses were gone, he remembered that much. “Um, whilst I was hoping for the latter, how, how did they catch you?”

“They didn't,” O'Neill told him. “I let them.”

His eyes swollen and sore, Jackson winced as they shot wide open at the remark. “Er, why, why would you do that?” he asked.

“Well, couldn't have you running off and having all the fun without me.”

“Are you crazy? Jack, there's no way out of this, what were you thinking?” Daniel lectured disapprovingly.

O'Neill raised a hand. “Whoa, back up, Danny boy. Those are usually my lines,” he said.

“Yes, and right now I can see why,” Daniel snapped. “And...” His voice trailed off. “You probably did it to save me... um, thanks.”

“For what, hey in case you haven't noticed, I haven't exactly saved you from anything, but I'm working on it.” O'Neill moved toward him then. “You'd better let me take a look at those wounds, some of 'em are pretty nasty,” he told Jackson.

Daniel raised his eyebrows gingerly. “Yeah, I know.”

“Fortunately, they didn't strip me of my medical supplies,” O'Neill said chirpily. “Which might just come in handy later.” He took a first aid kit from the pouch on his jacket.

“Why? Are we're going to wrap ourselves in bandages and pretend to be mummies?” Jackson responded dryly.

“Hey! Come to think of it. No,” O'Neill snapped. Concern crossed his brow, followed by a smile. “This might hurt.”

“Oh, really.”

“Daniel!” Jack groaned. “Will you cut the crap and just let me do the Mark Green thing here.”

“Who?”

“For crying out loud. Shut up!” O'Neill snapped.

Daniel raised his hands in surrender.

“Alright, um, try to be gentle?” he asked.

“Hey! Think happy thoughts,” O’Neill insisted.

“Does, that work?” Daniel asked.

O’Neill shook his head.

“Nope...”

Daniel flinched each time O’Neill attempted to treat the extensive cuts to his face.

“So, um, exactly how are we getting out of here?” Daniel enquired, once Jack had finished treating his wounds.

“Daniel, I have no idea! You’re alive, we’re here, I’ll... think of something!” Jack looked slightly sceptical of his own statement.

“Jack, remember that on a scale of really, er, stupid things discussion?” Daniel looked quite seriously at O’Neill now, studied and thoughtful.

“Yep, the ‘oops I couldn’t find anything that Jack was responsible for’ thing?” Jack offered.

Daniel’s momentary smile at Jack was replaced with a nod of the head and raised eyebrows. “Welcome to the club!” Daniel said.

“And what the hell is that supposed to mean?” Jack vociferated.

“Apophis didn’t want me,” Daniel told the colonel, having given it deep consideration.

“What?” Jack asked. “I think that knock to your head has loosened a few cells, Danny boy.”

“Nope....” A long heavy sigh. “Who has all the SGC codes? Who has, sorry had, all the knowledge of the Ancients, is a good friend of the, um, Asgard? Come on, Jack.”

“Oh, for crying out loud, Daniel, how could Apophis know those things?” Jack argued, getting up and walking around the room. He knew what Daniel said was true, Apophis had confirmed as much.

“Oh, um, and by the way, where’s your GDO transmitter?” Daniel asked, giving Jack a long searching look.

Jack looked away, slamming both fists against the wall.

“GDO’s no good without the codes, Daniel. Walls are solid. Ouch!” He shook his hands out. “Look, Daniel. Time to ‘fess up,” Jack said slowly.

“Okay.” He stood up. “What?” He leant up against the wall, looking at O’Neill, who inhaled deeply.

“You’re right. I’m, what was Carter’s word for it? Dense?”

“Ah, well, actually, Jack, no...” Daniel said. “Ass is my preferred term, but, look, Jack, all recriminations aside, thanks.”

“What, for adding one against?” Jack complained. “And, by the way, Apophis is planning another attack on Earth,” he imparted.

“Um, oh. He, er, told you that?” Daniel enquired.

“Yep! Couldn't wait, arrogant, jumped up, snakehead son of a bitch,” O'Neill replied.

“This is bad,” Daniel noted.

“Ya think?” O'Neill snapped. “Look Daniel, if we can't stop him, I want you to know something.”

Daniel looked at him.

O'Neill smiled. “Geek!” he said. “And I wouldn't want ya any other way.” A very warm smile was offered.

Daniel's eyes widened. “Constructive,” he said. “Touching, and right now not very helpful really.”

“Well, okay, not. So, what do we need?” O'Neill took another deep breath, attempting to focus.

“We need a plan, a, um, way out, and your GDO,” Daniel pointed out.

“Right,” Jack said, walking around now, trying to think of possible alternatives. “Okay, so we're headed for Delmar right? Tok'ra?”

Daniel tilted his head, thinking hard. “Possibly, but I'm not sure they'd be able to actually get us out.”

“Nope,” O'Neill concurred.

“But,” Daniel looked like he'd found the same light bulb. “If they know where we are...”

“So will Hammond, and I'm kind of hoping they'll know the plan,” Jack said, considering the options more quickly now. “We've got to delay Apophis as much as we can...”

Daniel walked across the room, contemplating the idea. “How, how do we do that?”

“I've got no idea,” Jack answered truthfully.

“Boy, we're getting far,” Daniel complained. “Great, Jack.”

“Well, I don't know...” Jack said, his tone raised and look of frustration crossing his face. “Why don't you use those smarts and think of something?”

“Oh, yeah, great, I could bore them to death with archaeological facts,” Daniel offered, led perfectly into an O'Neill sprung trap.

“Why not, works for me!”

Daniel's face contorted, his lips almost disappearing. “God! I knew we'd go there. See, you're, um, so damn transparent. Put it back on me, Jack, yeah that works!”

“Daniel, will you just shut up and let me think?” Jack snapped, walking up and down the back of the cell.

At that moment, both men were hurled forward into the wall.

Daniel rubbed his head, looking at Jack. “I, er, think we're here.”

“What,” O'Neill exclaimed, touching his nose to see if the impact with the wall had caused it to bleed, “was your first clue?”

“Are you sure?” Korra asked the Tok'ra that had just arrived at the SGC.

He conferred quickly with Martouf.

“General Hammond, we may have another problem,” he said, the alarm on his face enough to make Hammond frown deeply. “It appears that Apophis has taken Daniel Jackson as a ploy, our spies have just gotten a message back to the Tok'ra high council. Apophis' plan was to take Daniel Jackson, only in the hope of catching a much bigger prize.”

“The Harsesis child,” Teal'c offered.

“No, Teal'c, Colonel O'Neill.”

General Hammond looked concerned. “And why would he want the colonel?”

“Because he intends another assault on your world,” Martouf explained.

“But we have a treaty, the system lords will attempt to prevent that happening,” Hammond said.

“Yes, when they learn of it, they must. However, depending on how long it takes for them to mobilise their armies, it could be too late to stop Apophis, and with the colonel's knowledge.”

“Colonel O'Neill will reveal nothing to them!” Teal'c spat.

“Teal'c, I'm sure that Colonel O'Neill would rather die first, however Apophis will torture him, and he has a sarcophagus. He can continue this for as long as he wants.”

Teal'c's shoulders seemed to broaden. "Then we must get this message to the other Goa'ulds quickly," he said.

"What about the Asgard?" Korra asked. "You are allied with them, perhaps they might help."

"The Asgard are another option." Hammond said, not wanting to inform the Tok'ra that they were currently attempting to prevent the Replicators from destroying another Galaxy.

"We had better begin quickly," Korra said. "Apophis will most likely torture O'Neill on his way here to your world, rather than obtain the knowledge and then begin his assault."

"Yes," Martouf agreed. "We must act quickly. General Hammond, we will need to go back through the Stargate immediately."

Hammond nodded, his mind filled with the implications. "I'll need to inform the President," he said.

Daniel and Jack were led into another room. Daniel grimaced as he noticed the contents.

It was set up for torture; a large slab with restraining straps on it.

He looked at Jack, who raised his eyebrows.

"Guess this is gonna hurt," Jack noted.

Apophis entered, surrounded by a dozen Jaffa.

"O'Neill, it is time. Do you wish to tell me anything before we begin?" Apophis enquired.

"Ah... Nope," Jack replied.

Apophis signalled to his Jaffa, who moved forward.

Jack punched out, catching one squarely in the jaw; the Jaffa flinched. O'Neill winced, struggling against them as he was half dragged, half carried to the table.

"Apophis, he won't tell you anything," Daniel argued. "You're wasting your time."

"No time is wasted, I have my ships, we will proceed to Earth, and you Daniel Jackson will be able to watch as he suffers greatly, before he tells me everything I want to know. Your world will not escape this time."

Daniel looked across at O'Neill, his face creased with the impending pain he knew his friend was about to suffer. "Jack, hold on," he offered.

O'Neill looked across at him, a smile momentarily appearing on his lips. His shirt was cut open, and a priest applied the dagger to his chest, cutting slowly into his chest.

“Argh, God!” O'Neill cried out.

Daniel winced, his eyes fixed on his friend's, trying to help, and feeling helpless.

O'Neill could feel every inch of the skin that was being so carefully sliced. Another priest had joined in now too, using a hot iron, jabbing it into the wounds. O'Neill could feel the heat burning into his flesh, hear the sound it made, and the smell filled his nostrils. He tried to focus on something positive, tears ran from his eyes, he closed them, then opened them and saw Daniel, his own expression tortured.

“Stop,” Apophis ordered, walking slowly to allow O'Neill to see him. “Do you wish to tell me the codes to your Iris?” he asked.

Daniel's eyes flicked towards the closest Jaffa. He saw the Zat gun fastened loosely on the plate at his wrist. He took a deep breath, closed his eyes, then lunged, easily freeing the weapon, and pointed it at the Jaffa.

The Zat blast stopped him in his tracks; Apophis activated his personal shield, watching as two other Jaffa reached for their weapons. Daniel managed to get them both before another restrained him from behind, the pair struggling for what felt like an age before the Jaffa's superior strength overcame Jackson.

Apophis turned; his shield lowered. He looked at O'Neill.

“One of you will die, but you will tell me what I want to know,” he warned. “You will be a host, O'Neill, when I have finished watching you suffer!”

Daniel was thrown to the ground and two Jaffa stood over him, their weapons aimed directly into his face.

“Apophis,” Daniel said. “Aren't you forgetting something?”

The Goa'uld sneered at him. “You are weak, I will destroy the Tau'ri and make your world mine.”

“Cronos might have something to say about that,” Jackson snapped back. “Nirrti, Yu, Heru'ur.”

“They are weak,” Apophis snapped. “I will defeat them easily...”

Jack listened, through the searing pain, unable to offer words to back up Jackson's claim. His head rang with the sound of his laboured breath.

“My lord,” a priest said, “should I continue?”

“No. We will have time, we go now,” Apophis ordered. “Take them back to the cell. Let them consider their fate.”

Daniel did his best to try to treat the wounds. They had been supplied with drinking water and little else.

“Jack,” Daniel said, his tone heavy. “We're gonna get through this.”

“I know” O'Neill replied, his tone strained and weak. “Should have let the dog out, aah!” He grimaced. “God, that hurts.”

“I'm sorry, Jack, I'm, er, not exactly Mark Green either,” Daniel said apologetically.

Jack smiled. “I'd prefer... oh God!” He winced. “I'm gonna...” He passed out then.

Daniel shook his head. He stood, banging on the door. “Tell Apophis I want to see him,” he said.

Cronos slammed his fist down hard on the table.

“How did you learn of this?” he demanded of the Jaffa who brought him the news, regarding him cynically.

“My lord, from Jaffa we managed to capture. They claim Heru'ur has launched an attack on Apophis.”

“I will kill him myself. Do Yu and Nirrti know of this plan?”

“No, my lord.”

“Argh,” Cronos bellowed. “We must stop him or the Asgard will launch against us.”

O'Neill came round. No wounds, no pain. “Oh, great!” He sat up quickly, feeling his chest; nothing remained. “What the hell?”

Daniel sat opposite him.

“Hello, Jack,” he said gingerly. “Feeling better?”

Jack looked him up and down. “Daniel, I'm thinking the sarcophagus, right?” He looked dubious.

“Yeah, I convinced Apophis that you'd be no use to him dead,” Daniel admitted.

Jack look at him sceptically. “And, er, exactly how did you do that?”

“I told him I'd get the codes from you,” Daniel blurted out quickly.

“What?” O'Neill's face was as confused as the word. “Daniel?”

“Relax, Jack, I don't intend to get the codes. In fact, I, er, think he may have a little problem all of his own right now.”

“And that is?”

Daniel put his glasses on. “Managed to get these too.”

“Sweet!” O'Neill noted. “Are you gonna tell me?”

“Oh, yeah sorry. He's under attack. Whilst I was with you, well you were in the sarcophagus, I saw the ships approaching through the force shield. I think the system lords might be a bit upset.”

“Great,” Jack said, looking happier. “So, things are starting to look up then.”

“Well, let's hope, still doesn't exactly solve our problem,” Daniel added. “But it might stop the attack on Earth.”

Jack's head inclined forward. “Might?”

“Yeah, well, remember he's in charge of Sokar's forces here, Jack, the um, Tok'ra seemed pretty confident that he could take them on,” Daniel imparted.

“Well, isn't that special. Daniel?”

“Yes, Jack, I know, shut up.”

“Hey! It goes without saying we've got to get out of here.”

“Could you fly one of those death gliders?”

“I don't know,” O'Neill replied. “And besides, we'd probably end up in a battle with the system lords if I tried it.”

“So,” Daniel ventured. “We're close enough, we use the rings down to the planet?”

“Daniel,” Jack looked at him. “We're in a cell, it has a door,” O'Neill snapped, his most sarcastic tone utilised. “Unless the Tollan show up, this might be a problem, don't ya think?”

Daniel looked away. “Well, um, what then?”

“How does *I don't know* sound?” Jack replied.

“Negative!” Daniel said.

Jack smiled. “Yeah, I'm being a real pain in the ass, sorry,” he commented. “But this is your fault,” The grin that followed brought a smile to Daniel's face.

“Well, I guess we're stuck,” Daniel finally conceded.

“Not necessarily,” Jack countered. “If Heru'ur, Cronos and the gaggle of Goa'ulds win, old Apophis will be off licking his wounds, maybe the Tok'ra will manage a daring,” Jack's tone

was deliberately fantastical, “dawn raid, hey! You never know, ole Marty might show, he knows how I love surprises.”

“Face it, Jack, I think we're, um, at the Alamo,” Daniel responded. He crossed his legs, folded his arms over them, pulled his knees together, and rested his chin on the backs of his hands.

“Daniel, you give up too easily,” Jack told him. “Now, see I'm trying to coax you out of that with my constant surprise attacks, don't wanna play anymore?”

“Got some cards?” Daniel asked mischievously.

Jack sat back against the wall. “Nope, why?”

“Cause I haven't beaten you at cards yet,” Daniel remarked, his chin still thoughtfully resting on the nest of his hands.

“Well, I'll tell you what, when we get back,” Jack began. “You can come over. I'll cook, we'll play, you'll drink, you'll lose, and then you can redecorate my floor again. How's that sound?”

Daniel took a deep breath. “Right now, um, yeah, I could live with that.”

“Sweet, I play a mean game of I spy?” Jack suggested. “Let me think, nope, nothing in this room.”

“Well, there's the floor,” Daniel noted.

The door of the cell opened.

“Heads up,” Jack said.

“Quickly,” a female, quite breathtakingly exotic, spoke to them.

“Oh, yeah” O'Neill quipped. “Now that's what I'm talking about.”

Daniel stood up quickly, following Jack and the strange exotic woman.

“Where too?” Jack asked, as they walked carefully along the hallways.

“I am Mik'lara, I am Tok'ra,” she explained.

“Of course you are. Hey, Danny boy,” Jack said over his shoulder. “Got a pen?”

“No, why?” Daniel replied, taking O'Neill's comment seriously.

“Never mind.”

Mik'lara led them to the glider bays; Jack's eyebrows rose into his forehead.

“Okay. Now I can't fly one of those things,” he said.

“I will show you, it is the only way I can think to get you from this ship before it is destroyed, they are simple things,” she told them.

“Great, I get to experience Jack's all new flying lesson. Oh boy,” Daniel muttered to himself.

Jack shot him a look over his shoulder.

Mik'lara explained the controls to O'Neill. “I must go now, Apophis is leaving this ship, it is about to be destroyed, you must hurry,” she said.

“Hey, when you get back, come to Earth and look me up,” Jack said, a smile beaming all over his face.

“Well, this is, um, one way I suppose,” Daniel commented.

“Hey, will you just relax, have a little faith?” O'Neill said, pushing the button to seal the vessel. “Cool.”

Daniel raised his eyes heavenwards. “Are we going?” he asked.

“Oh yeah,” O'Neill replied, lowering the glider from the ship. “Well, let's see what this thing can do.” He thrust the controls forward and the glider shot out into space.

“Oh, boy,” Daniel said again, holding onto whatever he could.

“What?” O'Neill asked, spinning the glider as they made their way away from the ship. He found the communication device and threw it over his shoulder.

Daniel juggled it. “What's this?” he shouted.

“Attach it to the side of your face and I won't have to shout,” Jack shouted.

Daniel did as he was told, changing the positioning several times until he was comfortable.

“Whoa! This is cool,” Jack enthused.

“Er, Jack, look out.” Two gliders were descending on them.

“Whoa, Danny, use the weapons,” he said, as he tried to outmanoeuvre the chasing Jaffa.

“Weapons?” Daniel asked, lulling forward as Jack dove the glider. His hand inadvertently hit the console and sending two blasts into space, hitting another glider.

“Oh, yeah! Way to go, Daniel” Jack yelled, his boyish excitement at flying something so advanced evident in his eyes and his tone.

“Er, Jack, could we just get the hell out of here,” Daniel asked. Four more gliders approached.

“I'm gonna let them get on our six, break hard and fast to the left, okay?”

“Whatever.”

“Are we having fun or what?” Jack bellowed.

Daniel, eyes everywhere, and looking none too impressed, replied. “Um, I think, whatever.”

“Cool, it goes faster,” Jack said, discovering another control on the console.

“Must it?” Daniel protested, beginning to feel and look quite airsick. “Jack, over there,” Daniel shouted, seeing three more gliders advancing on them.

“Daniel, for crying out loud, you're behind me, what's the clock?”

“The what?”

The gliders closed, firing. As the blast struck and destroyed the glider, O'Neill and Daniel fell on their backsides. Jack looked round sharply.

“Thor! You old son of a gun!” he exclaimed.

Daniel sat on the floor for a moment, head between his knees. “Aah, I feel sick,” he complained.

“Hey, when'd you get here?”

“Greetings, O'Neill, Doctor Jackson. I have been here for some time, O'Neill, locating you was not so easy. The Goa'uld shields prevented me from locating you, once out of the shields, I was able to make the necessary adjustments.”

“Alright, Daniel, aren't you going to thank the man?” Jack evidently still on a high, dragged Daniel to his feet.

“Thank you.”

O'Neill's eyes were lit up like Christmas lights. “Whoa, what a ride, they can't see your ship?”

Thor nodded.

“Sweet,” O'Neill said, looking at Daniel, patting him hard on the back.

Daniel looked at Thor. “I'm sorry, did I thank you yet?” he asked. Thor did not respond.

“With your permission, O'Neill, I will take you back to Earth,” he said.

“No argument from me,” Jack replied.

“Or me,” Daniel agreed. “Jack, just one thing.”

“What?” O'Neill asked.

“Don't ever ask me to go flying with you!” Jack looked offended.

Thor's new ship headed back to Earth, leaving behind a battle still raging between Apophis and the system lords.

“Wonder if he'll survive this?” Daniel pondered.

Jack looked at Daniel and shrugged. He turned and looked for Thor.

“Hey Thor buddy, I'd really love to fly one of these babies.”

Daniel's eyes shot heavenwards, as he slid down the wall. “Oh boy!”

The End.

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