

Slaves

By

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SUMMARY: O'Neill and Jackson are abducted by a mythical race of women.

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ARCHIVE: The Fifth Race.

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FEEDBACK: Most definitely!

SLAVES - Part One

“P3X-4345 seems to be uninhabited and has a tropical, but accessible climate,” Doctor Daniel Jackson told the other members of SG1, gathered in the briefing room. “It also happens to show readings of Naqadah and Trinium. Which, from the percentage levels indicated, are probably even greater than that on the Salish home world.”

“So, I guess,” Colonel Jack O'Neill said. “We go, and short sleeves be the order of the day, sir.”

General Hammond nodded. “We've just sent the UAV through to see if we can detect any life forms further afield, Colonel. If we see nothing to indicate life forms of any kind, SG1 will have a go.”

Colonel O'Neill smiled. "Thank you, sir."

"Dismissed," General Hammond said. "And Colonel, you'll be joined on this trip by a member of SG11, Major Dempsey, from mineral research."

O'Neill frowned. "Another scientist, great." Then more cheerily added. "Thank you, sir."

In the locker room, O'Neill and Jackson kitted up. "So, how was the field trip?" O'Neill asked.

"Oh, the lecture, yes, we had a good time," Jackson responded. "It was very informative, and the buffet afterwards, followed of course with drinks, well, we enjoyed that too."

"We?" O'Neill enquired, giving Doctor Jackson his fullest attention.

Teal'c entered. "Colonel O'Neill, we have permission to go through the Stargate," he stated.

Daniel smiled to himself, collected his backpack, and headed off towards the embarkation room.

"Thank you, Teal'c," O'Neill snapped, warily allowing his eyes to follow Jackson from the room. "Shall we?"

Major Dempsey was deep in conversation with Major Samantha Carter. Fully kitted out, with probe equipment, Jackson joined them. "So, Lee, first mission with Jack O'Neill," he said.

"Yeah, looking forward to working with the Colonel," Dempsey replied.

"Oh, really. Why?" Jackson asked, knowing that O'Neill was now in earshot.

He glared hard at the archaeologist. "Daniel," he spat. "Are we ready to go?"

Jackson nodded, a glint of amusement sweeping across his face. "Ah, yes, we're already here. I was just telling Major Dempsey the very same thing."

"General," O'Neill barked, giving Daniel a sarcastic smile. "We're ready."

The Stargate spun into life, dialling the sequence; its activation illuminated the embarkation room.

O'Neill, Teal'c at his shoulder, was first through. "Man, it's hot," he complained. "Like the Amazon."

Dempsey and Carter followed; Jackson stepped through last.

"Area is clear," O'Neill snapped. "Let's get going."

The group moved off, Jackson staying with Dempsey and Carter, as O'Neill and Teal'c swept wider. "Should have brought my sun block," O'Neill complained. He moved into the dense undergrowth. "Make sure you stick close," he ordered.

Teal'c looked across at the other party. Something moved in the undergrowth, momentarily catching his attention. "O'Neill?" he alerted, waiting for the colonel to respond. When no answer came, he turned around quickly. Jack O'Neill was nowhere in sight.

"Major Carter," Teal'c called out.

Carter, who was observing a new form of plant, looked across at the Jaffa. "What?"

"Colonel O'Neill has disappeared, and where are Daniel Jackson and Major Dempsey?"

Carter spun round. "Daniel, Major Dempsey?" she called out. "Colonel?"

Teal'c moved towards the major. "We must search for them; they could not have gone far."

Carter looked around. "It's as dense as the Amazon here. We'd better stick close together."

General Hammond greeted the Jaffa and Major Carter at the bottom of the ramp. "Where are the rest of SG1?" he asked.

Carter exchanged looks with Teal'c. "Sir, they just disappeared. We searched for over two hours, sir, we couldn't find them. There was no trace."

Teal'c added. "Major Carter is correct, even the jungle itself was undisturbed."

Hammond looked shell-shocked. "Then we'd better assemble a team," he said.

Daniel Jackson was coming to, slowly, everything seemed blurred. He felt a sharp pain in his wrists and realised that they were bound tight. "Ouch," he moaned. "Jack?"

O'Neill groaned. "Yeah, I'm here. You okay?" he asked, his voice sounding low and strained.

"Well, my head hurts, I appear to have lost my glasses, and my hands are bound. Apart from that I'm, er, fine." Jackson managed to struggle around and sit up against the wall. "You?"

"I've got a small problem here," O'Neill confessed, the words peppered out through gritted teeth.

Daniel squinted, trying to make out O'Neill's form, finally focusing on the colonel. His right shoulder appeared to be darker on the pale t-shirt he wore.

"Jack, is that blood?" Daniel enquired; his tone laced with concern.

“Well, Daniel,” he groaned. “It’s not cranberry juice. Can you move?”

“I think so,” Daniel replied, bracing his feet against the floor, and slowly pushing himself up to stand. He made his way across to O'Neill, noting Dempsey's unconscious form in the far corner of what appeared to be a very small room. He was drawn momentarily to a carving on what he thought was the door; the image of a huntress. “Oh,” he said to himself.

“Oh?” O'Neill repeated. “What's oh?”

“Um, have you seen the image?” Daniel enquired.

O'Neill breathed in deeply. “Yeah, a couple of times,” the colonel replied. “Er, Daniel, could we be a little less interested in the culture aspect at this point?”

Daniel turned around. “Oh, yes, sorry,” he said, moving towards O'Neill, who was slumped against a damp wall directly opposite the door. He knelt down, looking at the wound, which appeared to have been made with a blade.

“Ouch, how did that happen?” he asked, his eyes flicking back to O'Neill's pained expression.

O'Neill looked at him, his eyes narrowing. “One of them did it, didn't like my tone,” O'Neill stressed.

“One of them? One of who?” Daniel asked quickly, his eyes switching back and forth from the wound to O'Neill's face.

“Oh, a tall gal, wearing a mini dress, looked like something out of 2000BC, and carrying a big knife,” O'Neill informed him. “Apart from the knife, she was okay, you know, apart from the fact that she wants men to be her slaves, speak when they're spoken to, that kind of thing.”

Daniel considered what O'Neill was saying. “Amazons?” he asked. “Of course! Jack, that's what the image on the door, is. It's an image of the huntress... of a female hunter.”

“Daniel, I get it. Now can we just... ooh, God, that hurts,” O'Neill moaned.

“Well, um, we have to get our hands free. How, how are we gonna do that?” Daniel asked.

O'Neill attempted to move, screaming out in pain. “Damn it. Just, try and get back to back with me, we can try and untie these damn ropes.”

“Okay. Wait, someone's coming,” Daniel told him.

The door opened and two women appeared, athletically built.

Daniel stared at them, noticing the clothing, fashioned from some kind of fabric, and the gold headbands that appeared almost embedded in their foreheads.

O'Neill's eyes rolled heavenwards. “Your turn,” he muttered.

The two women moved forward, grabbing Jackson by the arms and lifting him easily. "Wow!" he exclaimed. "Strong."

"And then some!" O'Neill's words followed him as he was half carried, half dragged from the room.

The temple he was brought to fascinated Daniel Jackson; his eyes shot from one artefact to the next as he was taken through and thrown roughly on the floor beneath what he deduced was the throne of the queen.

She stood, making her way down.

Daniel's eyes ran up and down her body, appreciating its perfection.

"Hello, I'm..."

"Silence," another woman roared. A whiplash fell across Daniel's cheeks, stinging. "Ouch," he muttered.

The queen walked around him. "This one, too, we will keep, he is not Achillian."

"Achillian?" Daniel asked, the bemusement turning to realisation. "Goa'uld? Do you mean Goa'uld?"

The whiplash fell once again across the face of Daniel Jackson, this time he made no sound.

Dempsey had managed to free himself and O'Neill, and was attempting some first aid on the colonel's shoulder.

"We're in some kind of cell, Colonel."

O'Neill's face contorted with pain; his eyes rolled upwards. "Ya think! Ow. Dammit, Major. I know you're not exactly Mark Green, but could you remember that wound is attached to my shoulder."

"Sir?" Dempsey asked, confused by the reference.

"Never mind, Major. How deep is it?"

"Pretty deep, sir, but it missed your artery."

O'Neill's eyes rolled again. "Scientists," he complained.

Jackson was returned to the room, two large whiplash marks clearly evident on his face.

“Oh, I see they liked you too,” O'Neill quipped, growling once more at Dempsey as the man haphazardly attempted first aid on the wound.

Jackson, whose bonds had been released, sat in front of O'Neill. “Er, Jack, we may have a problem here.”

O'Neill shook his head. “Gee, Daniel, ya think!”

Daniel raised his hand up to his face. “These women are Amazonians, Jack, it's from Greek mythology, from about 450BC.”

“You know, that's fascinating, Daniel, what does it tell us... exactly?” Jack asked, the pain adding to his impatience.

“Well, the Amazonians were a group of warrior women that in Greek mythology killed men... unless they wanted to procreate. They lived in Central Asia, were allied to the Trojans. I think they're going to use us to, er.”

“Oh, for crying out loud,” Jack vociferated. “That's all we need. Did you happen to notice any way out?”

“Er, well, actually.”

“I take it that means no? Great, I hate it when this happens. And after they've finished making us their love slaves?” Jack demanded.

“Well, actually, they have a tendency to, um,” Daniel began.

“Kill us?” Jack prompted, not looking too thrilled at the idea.

“Well, yes actually,” Daniel concurred.

Jack frowned heavily. “Well isn't that special,” he snapped. “So, we'd better make a plan, right?”

“A plan, yes, that would be good. Except with no weapons, and your injury, I doubt that we'll exactly be able to overpower them,” Daniel concluded.

“Daniel, they're just women, for crying out loud,” Jack told him.

“Women of legendary strength and fighting capabilities,” Daniel imparted, getting to his feet, and walking around the room.

O'Neill watched him, a heavy sigh. “Sweet. But still women all the same. Major, I trust you've had hand to hand training?”

“Yes, sir,” Dempsey replied.

“Good, then we should be able to do this. Okay, next time the door opens, we grab whoever comes in and get the hell out of here,” O'Neill ordered.

“Yes, sir,” Dempsey agreed.

“Jack, Sam and Teal'c are out there somewhere, maybe they'll be able to find us.”

O'Neill frowned. “Did you check your watch?” he asked Jackson.

“My watch? Why?” Jackson's expression bemused once more.

“Look at the date, Daniel, we've been here for two days, doesn't that tell you something?”

Daniel looked down at his watch, as instructed, his eyebrows knitting upwards, expression resigned. “Ah, yes.” He looked directly at O'Neill now, who was regarding him with his usual disdain. “Actually it does. I guess this could take a while.”

“They've taken all our stuff, sir,” Dempsey informed the colonel.

O'Neill, who was becoming more and more impatient at the constant throb in his shoulder, and the talent Dempsey appeared to have for stating the obvious, glared at the man.

“I knew that!” he snapped. “Which is why we're gonna have to find it! No stuff, no codes.”

“Jack?” Daniel said.

O'Neill looked up the Jackson, waiting for him to speak.

“I think we should go along with them for a while. One of us gets the chance, we get out and try to find the rescue party.”

O'Neill shook his head. “Now that isn't gonna happen,” he said.

“Why? If we try fighting our way out and lose, they might just kill us anyway. They don't exactly value men very highly in their society,” Daniel pointed out.

O'Neill managed to scramble to his feet with the help of Dempsey. “Let me ask you something?” He was directly in front of Jackson now, who regarded him quizzically. “Have either one of you had survival training in tropical conditions?”

“Well, no,” Daniel replied. O'Neill looked at Dempsey, who shook his head.

“Great. So, if either one of you escapes,” O'Neill began, leaning closer to Jackson with a bemused expression crossing his face. “You'll wander around, probably get stung, bitten or eaten by whatever wildlife you encounter, and screw up our chances of using numbers!”

Daniel took a deep breath, a resigned expression greeting that of O'Neill's. He looked at Dempsey.

“Still looking forward to it?” he asked.

Carter and Teal'c led the way through some dense vegetation. Ferreti and SG2 closely behind.

“Wait,” Teal'c said, halting the column. “I hear something.”

“Yeah, it's coming from over there,” Ferreti pointed out.

The group bent low, and moved towards a clearing. The sight of a massive group of Horus guards greeted the party.

Teal'c watched them closely. “They appear to be searching,” he imparted to his colleagues.

“Teal'c, you don't think they took the colonel?” Ferreti asked.

“Why would they have left us?” Carter observed. “No, maybe they lost something too.”

“I can understand that,” Ferreti commented, swatting what appeared to be a mosquito. “It's pretty damn dense in here.”

“Well, this changes things slightly,” Carter said.

“It would appear that we will have to avoid the Horus guards, as well as locate Colonel O'Neill and Daniel Jackson,” Teal'c agreed.

“Yeah, and we may need more men,” Carter told him.

Jack O'Neill listened intently to the sounds that filtered through to their small prison cell, trying to block out the constant ache of his shoulder.

“Jack, they said something about Achillian,” Daniel began, propping himself into a squatting position across from the colonel.

“As in?” O'Neill asked.

“Achilles, but I think this referred probably to the Goa'uld who brought them here. They said something like ‘he's not Achillian’, which must mean Goa'uld. Why else didn't they take Teal'c?”

O'Neill considered this. “You know, he's gonna start getting a complex about Junior!” he observed. “So, they don't like Goa'ulds. Great, maybe we can reason with them, tell ‘em we don't like ‘em either and they might let us go... Daniel, what's the point you're making?”

“Is that it, Jack? If in doubt fall back to sarcasm?”

Dempsey regarded the two men, surprised by the level of acrimony that he appeared to be witnessing.

“Well, what did you expect? When you're not going off on some goddamn cranky theory, you're giving me a headache with useless information,” O'Neill complained. “Which, by the

way, doesn't exactly help the situation.” He gestured at Daniel now with his good arm. “Does focusing on a problem ever enter into all that bookworm... stuff?”

“See, there you go again! Whatever happened to knowing the enemy, hah, Jack, no, of course not? That would mean actually having to use your brain,” Daniel snapped.

“Er, sirs?” Dempsey interrupted.

Both men in unison turned. “What?”

O'Neill exhaled. “Look, Dempsey, don't panic. Daniel and I just... do this from time to time,” he pointed out.

“From time to time?” Daniel enquired, a look of surprise crossing his boyish features.

“Well,” Jack conceded. “It's a tension breaker, and, right now I have a lot of...”

“Tension?” Daniel finished the statement for him. “Which I allow for, but you...! The same old salty, bad tempered insults! Do you have a little book somewhere to record them, Jack?”

O'Neill, seeing the point his beleaguered colleague was attempting to make, allowed himself to smile.

“No, actually,” he said, “They just kind of pop right in there!”

Jackson shook his head. “How's the shoulder?” he asked.

“Well,” O'Neill moved it slightly, wincing at the pain. “It hurts.”

“Someone's coming,” Dempsey pointed out.

O'Neill got to his feet, moving quickly towards the door. “Jack, maybe you should let Dempsey do that?” Daniel pointed out, gesturing towards the wound.

Dempsey swapped places with the colonel. As the door opened, both Jack and Daniel stood facing the two Amazons. “Hello,” Jack greeted.

One entered and Dempsey immediately struck, throwing her across the room. O'Neill, using his good arm to assist, knelt on the woman, his left hand clutching her throat.

“Now, we wanna get out of here. You can either help us, or,” O'Neill warned.

Daniel grimaced as the second Amazon threw Dempsey across the room; his body hit the wall with a deafening thud.

She approached O'Neill, who moved quickly, sweeping her feet from under her, knocking her out with a second blow from his good left arm. “Sweet,” he said. “How's he doing?”

Daniel was bent attending to Dempsey. “I think my arm's broken, sir,” Dempsey informed Jackson.

Daniel sighed heavily. "We'd better get out of this room before anymore of them come."

"Can you walk, Dempsey?" O'Neill asked.

The major nodded. "Just about, sir, hurts like hell."

O'Neill had no time for offering solace to the injured. "Well then, that makes two of us."

Daniel was now transfixed by the presence of a third Amazonian, the queen, Penthesilea, stood, toweringly athletic. "You fight well for a man," she told O'Neill, whose eyes went heavenwards.

"Great. I'll put it on my resume," he snapped back.

Two more Amazonians entered, clutching weapons they had never seen before.

"Damn. They look like..." O'Neill said, just as the weapon's beam struck him.

SLAVES - Part Two

The lighter surroundings stung Jack's eyes. Chiffon-like curtains hung at the windows, billowing softly in the gentle breeze that offered some air, if a little too warm to be completely comfortable. His shoulder felt fine; he sat up abruptly to check it and realised he was completely naked at the same time, his modesty covered only by a fine sheet-like cover. The wound had gone.

Two Amazonian women stood guard. O'Neill raised his eyes heavenwards contemplating that, due to the lack of men, he had possibly, definitely, been undressed by women.

He regarded the two women, wondering, with a feeling of embarrassed discomfort, if it had been those very women.

"Er, excuse me? Ladies?" he said. "Is there any chance of getting my clothes back?"

Another woman entered, smaller than those who ignored the colonel.

"I am Hippolyta," she announced.

Jack O'Neill couldn't even attempt that name! "Pleased to meet you. Well, I'm, er, naked and apparently a prisoner. But, um, thanks for the healing."

“You are here to provide us. I bring you the wine of Scythia. It will help you.”

“Oooh, I'll just bet it will,” O'Neill commented, feeling more compromised as the woman drew closer. “But I think I'll pass, had some, er... off world beverages before, didn't exactly agree with me, but thanks anyway.”

He gathered the sheet closer over his lower half. “But you go right ahead.” He gestured at the woman, who merely began pouring the wine into a golden cup.

“Oh, for crying out loud.” O'Neill groaned. “Don't these people ever take no for an answer.”

“You must drink this; it will help you. You must provide,” Hippolyta told him.

“Yeah, well,” O'Neill grimaced. “I'm having a bad day, and I'm really not up to, er... providing much of anything right now. Where are my friends?”

“Providing, like you.”

“Sweet. Girl on every planet,” he muttered to himself. “Well, look, ma'am. I'm not drinking that stuff. So, whatever.”

The two Amazon guards moved forward. “I'm not gonna like this, am I?” O'Neill asked, whilst being restrained. “Whoa, watch out for the covers,” he protested.

The woman tried to force his mouth open; O'Neill steadfastly resisted.

“Please, you will be brought before Penthesilea soon,” Hippolyta pleaded. “She will be displeased if you are not ready to provide, and she will kill you.”

O'Neill's eyes widened; his resistance maintained.

“Stop,” Hippolyta ordered. “Bring her here.”

O'Neill scrambled to remain modest, clutching the covers more tightly. “Great,” he muttered to himself. “Now what?”

Penthesilea entered the room. “Why do you not obey me?” she demanded.

“Don't get me wrong, Ma'am, I just have a little problem performing on demand, whilst being held prisoner,” O'Neill confessed. “Not that you're all not extremely attractive.”

Daniel woke in surroundings similar to those of O'Neill. Hippolyta was waiting for him to regain consciousness.

“You must not be as the other one,” she said.

Daniel looked at her, realising, with great unease, his state of nudity, and grateful for the meagre cover that prevented complete immodesty.

“Who? Jack?” Daniel asked.

“He will be punished severely,” she told Daniel.

The archaeologist sat bolt upright. “They're going to kill Jack, um...” Thoughts of the ancient Greek legends invaded his mind easily. “They, they can't do that, they mustn't kill Jack, he is a friend of Theseus!” Daniel spoke fast. “Son of Zeus and Hera.”

“This cannot be,” Hippolyta exclaimed. “Son of Zeus?”

“Yes, he is, and if Penthesilea murders him, Zeus will send Theseus and Pirithous to take revenge.”

The woman stood, running from the room.

“Oh, I hope I got that part right,” Daniel whispered to himself, climbing from the bed and searching for his clothes.

Daniel was led into the room where Jack, now clothed in his own uniform, sat under heavy guard. “Daniel,” he asked with scepticism. “What is it you told these people exactly?”

“I, er, told them that you were the son of Zeus, um, actually,” Daniel replied, looking distinctly uncomfortable.

Jack looked at him with a grimace. “Zeus?”

“Look, Jack, they were going to kill you. I had to tell them something,” Daniel explained.

“Zeus?” Jack said again. “Sweet. Which particular one, or is that a stupid question?”

“Well, I didn't go into specifics, I'm a little foggy here, I haven't read Greek mythology in a while... didn't want to mention too many names. Except that I know that Theseus was, in Greek mythology, responsible for the downfall of the Amazons, along with Achilles.”

“Greek mythology?” O'Neill questioned. “Sweet. Now what?”

“Well I told them that Zeus would send Theseus and Pirithous if they harmed you.”

“Well, since The-a-whatever, isn't likely to make a call, don't you think we might be in a little trouble here?” O'Neill remarked.

“What, more trouble than you being dead, you mean?”

“Okay, I get the subtle point you're making. So, now what?”

“I don't know?” Jackson conceded.

Jack waved his finger in Jackson's direction. “See, now I don't want to hear that... look out.”

The Amazonian queen's entrance stopped the colonel in mid-sentence.

“You will be given the rite of passage,” Penthesilea informed them. “If you are the son of Zeus, you will prevail.”

“Swell,” O'Neill smiled. “And this rite of passage is?” He looked at Daniel now, who was looking worried and avoiding his gaze. “Is obviously not good.”

“It's a test,” Daniel informed Jack, once they were alone.

“What kind of a test?” Jack enquired. “Did I mention that I might seriously harm you if we get out of this?”

“First, if my memory serves me correctly, it will be a test of skill and judgement, possibly against some formidable foe. Then a test of knowledge, and if you make it through that one.”

“Excuse me, *if* I make it through that one?” O'Neill questioned.

“Well the foe could be one of any number of mythological creatures,” Daniel pointed out. “Did you ever study any ancient mythology in school? No, of course you didn't. Stupid question.”

“Hey, as long as they don't have an Unas,” O'Neill told Daniel.

“Well, I think a Minotaur is probably worse, Jack.”

“And what's a Minotaur?”

“It's a half-human creature with the head of a bull, said to devour human flesh,” Daniel imparted.

Jack looked cynical. “Now, they can't have one of those, can they?” His expression changed to one of wonderment. “Right?”

“No, I'm sure it's nothing like that,” Daniel agreed, shaking his head and looking dubiously at his colleague.

The sound of a horn interrupted the conversation then.

The two looked at each other as the sounds of hurried feet approached.

“You will remain here. Achilles returns,” Hippolyta told them.

“Goa'ulds, Jack.” Daniel told him.

“Look Hippo,” Jack said. “Could we get our weapons? If Archie gets in here, he's gonna kill us too?”

She nodded. “Then you will need to defend yourself. Follow me.” She led them to a room where all their kit had been stored.

“Where's the other servant of Zeus's son?” Daniel asked.

Hippolyta led them to Dempsey. Jack threw his kit at him. “I hope your arm's better. We've got a little Goa'uld problem.”

“Yes, sir, my arms completely healed,” Dempsey said. “It's good to see you, sir. I was about to be, um...”

“Yeah. Sorry, but you'll have to provide later. Let's go. I don't think these women are up to dealing with Archie and his boys alone.”

“Achilles,” Daniel corrected.

“Whatever.”

Carter, Teal'c and SG2, now backed up by SG3, 7 and 9, had tracked the Horus guards through the dense jungle.

“I am certain, that wherever it is they are going, we might find Colonel O'Neill and Daniel Jackson,” Teal'c told Carter.

“Well I hope we get there soon. I'm getting eaten alive by these bugs... if the Colonel and Daniel are stranded out here?”

“Colonel O'Neill can survive these conditions, Sam. Did I ever tell you about our mission to Borneo?” Ferreti imparted. “Colonel saved my life. Course he was just a Captain then.”

“Were there Jaffa in this Borneo?” Teal'c asked.

Ferreti thought about that for a moment. “Nope! Just good old bandits, Colonel managed to get the entire unit out after we were ambushed. Took a bullet to the leg, and still managed it.”

“Yeah, but a bullet to the leg falls a little short of a staff weapon, Major,” Carter snapped.

“All I'm saying is the Colonel can look after himself, especially in these conditions.”

Teal'c raised an eyebrow. “There appears to be some kind of structure ahead, Major Carter.”

“Yeah, Teal'c, I know, I see it.”

“It would appear this is the place the Horus guards have been searching for,” Teal'c continued. “Perhaps Colonel O'Neill is there.”

“I hope so, Teal'c, we've only got another 24 hours before General Hammond calls off the search,” Carter agreed.

The SG teams made their way carefully behind the massed Horus guard.

O'Neill led his two companions out of the temple, into a large Trojan courtyard. Its columns reached far into the sky, topped with statues of their gods, all women.

“Daniel, you stay close to me,” O'Neill snapped. “And try not to have any good ideas!”

Jackson shook his head and took off after O'Neill.

The temple appeared to be deep in the seclusion of the jungle, and yet they could hear the massed ranks of Jaffa making their way.

“Wonder which snakehead this is,” O'Neill commented, climbing to a higher vantage point that offered them cover.

“Horus guards,” Daniel shouted. “Heru'ur.”

“Oh, not him again,” O'Neill moaned.

He led them to the farthest point that offered the best view of proceedings. The Horus guards had already begun to fight the ambushing Amazonians.

“Got to admire their spirit,” O'Neill commented, then loudly. “Major, cover our six.”

“Yes, sir.” Dempsey kept check behind him.

O'Neill, seeing two Horus guards about to blast an Amazonian with their staff weapons, opened fire with his MP5.

In the distance Carter and Teal'c heard the gun instantly. “That's Colonel O'Neill,” Ferreti confirmed.

“They must be in trouble,” Teal'c said, lifting his staff weapon and heading off in the direction of the sound.

Carter looked at Ferreti. “We've got to be careful here, Major,” Ferreti warned. “Or we'll get caught in a fire fight.”

“I know, Ferreti, we need to go around the flanks.”

Ferreti nodded. “Follow me.”

The entire force of the SG teams fell into single file, covering all sides as they double-timed it through the undergrowth.

Jack O'Neill capped off a couple more rounds into two Horus guards, relocating quickly before others could ascertain their position.

"There are hundreds of them, Jack," Daniel warned.

O'Neill looked round at him. "I can see that, Daniel. We need to get to the jungle, more cover, are you up for this?"

"Whatever you think, I'm no soldier," Daniel confirmed.

"Alright, Dempsey, stay close," O'Neill ordered, doubling over and racing off ahead. Daniel followed closely behind him, with Dempsey trailing in their wake.

The dense foliage offered the cover O'Neill required. "Well, alright, now we're playing a little more in my ballpark," he told Daniel. "CQB."

Daniel raised his eyebrows. "CQB?"

"Close quarters battle, Daniel. Didn't they teach you anything in school," he grinned at the archaeologist. "Oh, sorry, stupid question."

Daniel shook his head. A Zat blast from nowhere stuck O'Neill, knocking him over. The Horus guard was about to send the killing blast at the prostrate colonel, when Daniel leapt in front of the discharge, giving Dempsey the time to kill the guard.

Jack's amazed expression greeted Daniel as the pair lay on the ground. "Thanks," he said.

"Don't, ouch, mention it," Daniel replied.

"Colonel, we've got to move," Dempsey alerted.

As Jaffa seemed to descend from all areas, Teal'c, SG3, 7 and 9 opened fire.

"Colonel," Carter shouted. "Are you okay?"

"Not now, Carter, it's a long story," O'Neill snapped, looking around now at the forces he had under his control. "Odds are getting better. Ferreti, take your team and try to secure the buildings."

"I want SG3 and 7 taking the left flank and cutting off any escape route. SG9, secure this area, this will be our primary RV. Major Carter, you and Dempsey go with SG2, and watch out for the women."

"Teal'c, you and Daniel are with me." O'Neill ordered, leading the Jaffa and Daniel Jackson deep into the jungle. "They've got to have an RV point," O'Neill told his companions. "We're gonna take it out and cut off the escape route."

"Whatever you say, Jack," Daniel said, still feeling the tinge of the Zat blast in his system.

O'Neill looked around at Daniel. "You keep surprising me," he stated, smiling at the archaeologist. "Don't do that. I hate surprises," he added. "And, Daniel, keep your head down."

SLAVES - The conclusion

Ferreti held his position, watching the Horus guards, who now seemed to be amassing at the centre of the large monument that dominated the gardens of the temple.

"Sam?" he asked. "How many you think?"

Carter shook her head. "I don't know, several hundred, maybe."

"Major Carter!" It was O'Neill's voice booming from her earpiece. "Sit-rep."

"Sir, we've managed to hole up in the buildings, but we've got a fairly large force amassing here." she replied.

"Understood. O'Neill to Major Riker, SG9 command." The Colonel continued to ask for, and receive, situation reports from his teams.

"I want SG3 to offer tactical support to SG2, is that understood?" O'Neill barked, as he led Daniel and Teal'c through the ever thickening jungle foliage. His command acknowledged, O'Neill turned his attention to his colleagues.

"Daniel," he said. "I want you to stay close. Teal'c, fan out to the left and give me anything you see. The mothership, or whatever they came in, has to be around here somewhere."

"Jack, it's not that I mind trekking through the jungle or anything, but this is..." Daniel broke off, as Jack's hand shot up, forming a fist.

He knew the Colonel's signals well enough to recognise that this action demanded silence, and crouched low to avoid detection. To the left, Teal'c concealed himself in a similar fashion.

O'Neill indicated the three Horus guards, who seemed to be standing guard at an entrance to a clearing.

"Daniel," Jack whispered. "Stay here, I'm gonna see what's got their attention. On my signal, I want you to move to Teal'c's position."

Daniel nodded, keeping his eyes firmly on the Horus guards, flicking after O'Neill just momentarily to ensure he knew where the signal would be coming from. Rising up slightly, he failed to see the guards that now approached him.

O'Neill had turned and saw the two Jaffa almost as they reached Daniel. "Goddammit," he spat through gritted teeth. He looked for Teal'c; no sign of his friend

"Get down," O'Neill yelled, rushing towards Jackson's position, firing his MP5 into the two guards.

This action immediately revealed his position; O'Neill dived for cover as a staff weapon blast narrowly missed him. "Daniel?" he called out.

"Yeah, I'm okay," Daniel shouted back.

"Move this way, and keep low," O'Neill instructed.

Jack managed to hide himself behind a large tree, scrambling round to get an idea on Daniel's position, and that of the Horus guards.

"Carter, come in," O'Neill spoke quietly into his radio.

"Receiving, Colonel," Carter's voice came back.

"What's your status?" he asked, as Daniel joined him.

"We're under heavy fire, but holding our own. Major Ferreti has sent one of our team to the Stargate to ask for reinforcements, sir."

"Good, O'Neill out." He looked at Daniel. "Where'd Teal'c get to?"

"I don't know, one minute he was there," Daniel said. "The next, er, Jack, it sounds like they're getting closer," Jackson observed, changing tact in mid-sentence.

"I know that," O'Neill remarked.

Jackson crouched beside his colleague. "Well, running's a good idea," he said, taking off.

O'Neill watched him go. "For crying out loud," he snapped, leaping to his feet and doing likewise, catching up to Jackson easily.

"Are they chasing us?" Jackson asked.

A staff weapon blast whizzed past them.

"Ya think!" O'Neill yelled back, looking over his shoulder to get an idea of the distance between them. O'Neill tripped in the heavy undergrowth, sprawling and knocking Jackson

down with him. They were covered instantly in leaves and foliage and the Horus guards bypassed them quickly.

Daniel, his face barely visible for the foliage, looked at his colleague. "Good idea, Jack."

"I have them occasionally," O'Neill lied, looking slightly put out by the fall.

Jackson noticed what appeared to be the opening of a cave.

He got carefully to his feet. "Maybe we can hide in there," he suggested.

"We'll be pinned down," O'Neill pointed out, "if they find us."

"Well, um, if, being the operative word. We'll be found if we stay here!" Jackson remonstrated.

"Okay, relax, we're going," O'Neill replied.

The two men made their way quickly into the mouth of the cave.

Daniel slid, grabbing hold of O'Neill in an attempt to stay on his feet, and dragged the colonel down a hole that appeared to belong to a waterfall.

"Oh, crap," O'Neill yelled, as the two plunged feet first down a long sloping waterfall. They both disappeared under the surface of the river they landed in, appearing moments later.

O'Neill spat something out of his mouth in disgust. "Sweet," he said.

"Well," Daniel replied. "At least we lost the guards."

"Ya think," O'Neill moaned. "Daniel, the next time you have a good hiding place, let me go first."

"Why, you would have seen that in the dark, that it wasn't a cave, Jack?" Daniel demanded, attempting to clear the water from his glasses.

"Are we gonna stay here and argue, or would you prefer to do it in drier conditions?" O'Neill asked, and without waiting for an answer began to make his way towards the bank.

Daniel followed him. "Jack, the next time you decide to allocate assignments, don't do the 'Daniel, you're with me thing.' Okay?" Jackson complained, as he dragged himself up alongside O'Neill.

"Alright, fine, I'll do the 'Daniel, you stay with Carter thing', okay!" Jack replied. "And seeing how you always go off and do your own thing, resulting, many times in the 'Jack, help me' thing. I won't feel guilty when you end up caught or killed!"

"See, that's you, 'Mister I'm always right'," Daniel pointed out as he attempted to wring his clothing out.

Jack looked heavenwards. "And I usually am," he protested. "At least I don't go poking my nose in where it's not wanted, and end up," Jack thought hard. "Wet!" He raised his hands and slapped them down. "Thoroughly wet, which, by the way, was another result of you rushing off without thinking."

Daniel looked at O'Neill then, a grin spreading across his face. "Déjà vu," he said.

O'Neill looked away, trying not to smile. "Yeah, whatever!" He climbed to his feet. "How far up do you think that is?" he asked.

"I'm not sure. A long way, too far to climb," Daniel pointed out.

"Yeah, we should go that way," O'Neill said, pointing to his left. "And, where the hell is Teal'c?"

A loud splash alerted the two to something that had evidently trodden their path.

"Er," Daniel grinned. "I hope he can swim."

"Are you kidding? If he can't, Junior can," he responded, grabbing Daniel's collar and dragging him to his feet. "Thank you," Daniel noted.

Teal'c appeared from the river then, looking around, seeing both men offering grins and waving. "Come on, Teal'c, no time for a dip," O'Neill commented.

The Jaffa climbed onto the bank with the assistance of his colleagues.

He looked at one then the other, his left eyebrow raised. "This is indeed a curious way to avoid capture, O'Neill," he remarked.

"Daniel's idea," Jack confessed, amusement still adorning his features.

"It appears to have been successful, Daniel Jackson," Teal'c agreed.

O'Neill shook his head and walked off in the direction he had earlier indicated to Jackson.

"Ah, thank you, Teal'c. I'm thinking we should follow him."

"Colonel O'Neill, come in?" Carter's voice.

"Yeah, go ahead, Carter," O'Neill said.

"The hostiles appear to be bugging out, sir. What's your location?" she asked.

"Major, I have no idea. Daniel found us a whole new route back. Hold the fort and we'll be there as soon as we can, O'Neill out."

"So, Daniel?" Jack asked. "Where exactly did the female contingent go?"

"I have no idea," Daniel replied.

“Great. Remind me to give the UAV a swift kick when we get back,” Jack complained. “If the damn thing's not crashing hundreds of miles from the Gate, it's not detecting life forms either.” He stopped in mid track, fist raised; the others took cover. “Over there,” he whispered.

A line of retreating Horus guards appeared from the jungle, leading the bound Amazonian women in their wake.

“Jack,” Daniel said.

“Daniel, I don't want to hear this,” Jack remarked, giving him a look over his shoulder as he said it.

“We can't let them be taken by the Goa'uld as hosts, Jack,” Daniel argued.

Jack managed to keep himself concealed as he twisted round on his haunches.

“Daniel, there are too many of them. Even with the element of surprise, it's too risky.”

“Please, Jack, this is an ancient culture from Earth, thought to be only a myth. But they're here, existing in much the same way as they did thousands of years ago on Earth,” Daniel persisted.

Jack frowned, one of his milder expressions, then his eyes rolled heavenwards.

“Daniel, whilst I find the culture thing fascinating, we could end up dead, which is slightly less appealing,” Jack snapped. “And, by the way, we weren't doing the 'you're with me thing'.”

“But I am with you, Jack, and we have to help these people,” Daniel continued. “Jack?”

“For crying out loud, Daniel, why do I listen to you?” Jack announced. “Okay, okay. We'll do it,” he agreed, taking his sidearm from its holster and giving it to Teal'c.

“Thank you,” Daniel acknowledged.

O'Neill rolled his eyes heavenward. “Silencers. Okay, twelve guards,” he said.

“Yeah, I count twelve,” Daniel agreed.

Jack shot him a look. “We get around in front of them, Teal'c, you come from behind. Daniel...” He sighed a deep heavy sigh. “You're with me.” The colonel shook his head to underline his displeasure at voicing that particular command. “You take the two on the right.”

Daniel nodded. “Let's go!” Jack ordered.

The pair took off, using the cover of the jungle to quickly get around the Jaffa guards.

“Ready?” O'Neill asked.

“I guess.”

O'Neill raised his eyes heavenwards. “Whatever,” he said. “Teal'c, are you in position?”

“I am, O'Neill,” Teal'c replied.

“Go.” He stood, shooting the leader of the group, and the Jaffa closest to him. Teal'c did likewise from the rear. Daniel's Horus guards went down quickly as the archaeologist opened fire. O'Neill, ducking from a stuff weapon blast, capped three more.

The Amazonian women dived for cover, allowing Daniel a clear shot at the remaining guard.

“Well, alright, good shooting, Danny boy,” Jack announced. “Now, we've got to go.”

Daniel holstered his gun, moving forward quickly. “Come on,” he said to the women. “We've got to get out of here.”

The group of eight Amazonian women, which included the queen, Penthesilea, were quick to respond to Daniel's demands.

“This way,” she said, leading the group to Teal'c's position.

Jack caught up. “Ah, Daniel, this might be a good time to tell them that we don't intend to... er.”

“Oh, yes,” Daniel agreed. “Your, um, Majesty?” He now addressed the queen. “I think that the son of Zeus has proven himself.”

“He has,” Penthesilea agreed. “We shall hold a feast in his honour, and he shall provide as my mate.”

Jack looked perplexed. “Daniel, arrgh,” he snapped.

“Um.” Daniel gestured madly for Jack to shut up. “Well, whilst we would be honoured by your great show of honouring the son of Zeus, I'm afraid we have to return to Troy. Zeus has more tests for us.”

Teal'c followed the group, intrigued by the conversation. “O'Neill,” he asked. “Your father's name was Zeus? This is a curious name indeed.”

“It's a long story, Teal'c,” O'Neill told the Jaffa. “I'd be delighted to tell you, right after the swift kick to the UAV, and installing that damn sign on the ramp.”

“Sign, O'Neill?”

“Yeah. Gate travel can be hazardous to your health,” O'Neill said.

Back at the Amazonian temple, Carter greeted the party with a smile.

“Daniel?” she asked. “What exactly happened to you?”

Daniel looked at the Major, then back at Jack. “Oh, you wouldn't believe me if I told you.”

“Daniel,” Jack's tone was threatening. “Need to know.”

Carter looked intrigued. Daniel smiled, and whispered. “Don't worry, Sam, I'll tell you later.”

“The reinforcements?” O'Neill asked Ferreti.

“We got your message, Colonel, stood them down. Colonel?”

“What, Ferreti?”

“You're all wet, sir.”

“Ya think! Daniel here took us on a little water chute activity. It was fun, communing with nature, getting shot at by hostiles,” Jack concluded.

Penthesilea moved towards the Colonel. “Son of Zeus, you have our thanks. We will allow you to return to Troy, but will expect something of you first.”

Jack looked perplexed. “For crying out loud! Daniel,” he exclaimed. “What part of no doesn't this woman understand? Look, Penicillin, We have got to go back to, wherever now.”

Penthesilea looked towards Carter. “You are in charge of this man, son of Zeus?”

Carter was about to refute that when Daniel raised his hand. “Er, yes, she is a great queen. Play along, Sam.”

“Right. Um, Colonel, back to the Stargate.”

O'Neill regarded Carter for a moment, then turned to the queen. “Women can be so demanding.” he said, and moved off towards the Stargate.

The queen nodded at Carter. “He is most troublesome,” she reflected.

“Yes, he is,” Carter agreed.

“Carter!” O'Neill yelled.

“Well, goodbye,” Carter said, taking off at a run behind the colonel.

Daniel smiled at Penthesilea. “I would like to come back and learn more about your people and your culture,” he said.

“And you would be welcome,” Penthesilea agreed. “Will the son of Zeus return with you?”

Daniel smiled to himself. “I doubt that, Zeus has many tasks for him.”

Daniel turned and followed the SG teams back towards the Stargate, turning and taking one last look at the temple and its occupants.

Back at Stargate command, General Hammond greeted his teams. "Colonel O'Neill, debrief in one hour," he ordered.

"Yes, sir, I'd kind of like to head straight for the shower first," he observed, indicating his wet clothes to the general.

Carter looked at Daniel, both watching O'Neill exit. "Son of Zeus?"

"Er, yeah, I had to call him that to stop them from killing him when he wouldn't, um, provide," Daniel explained.

"Provide, provide what?" Carter was intrigued now.

"Well, Sam, did you notice any men anywhere?" he asked.

"Ooh!" Carter exclaimed.

In the locker room, Jack, refreshed from his shower, and in a new dry set of fatigues, sat deep in thought. Daniel entered, already showered, to put something in his locker.

"Daniel, about the briefing," Jack began. "None of this, stuff, needs to come up. Captured, escaped, and saved their world should cover it, don't ya think?"

"Sorry, Jack. Which stuff in particular did you want me to not bring up?" Daniel enquired, mischievously.

"You know, the providing thing, and the, er, Zeus thing," Jack said, hands gesturing as he spoke.

"Oh, that, well no, I guess not, we could leave that out," Daniel agreed.

"Good," Jack snapped, standing up.

"Good," Daniel agreed.

Jack paused in the doorway. "This, um, lecture thing, 'we'?" he asked.

"Ah, yes, we had a great time, did I tell you?" Daniel said, approaching him now and passing him, continuing down the corridor as he spoke. "Particularly enjoyed the buffet, did I, er, mention the Buffet?"

"Did I mention that I was going to harm you a couple of missions ago?" Jack reminded him. "What's with this we? Who exactly did you take to the lecture?"

"Um, well actually I, er, I took Sam," Daniel confessed.

Jack looked surprised. "Sam?" he asked, his eyebrows raised, making a very shocked expression. "Major Carter, Sam?"

"Yes, she wasn't doing anything, and she liked the idea of culture. So, I took Major Carter, Sam," Daniel said, obviously enjoying the rather uncomfortable look on O'Neill's face.

"Oh. Okay, good," O'Neill said, beginning to walk towards the elevator. Then he stopped. "You did not!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, I, er, I did Jack, why is there a problem?" Daniel asked, standing in front of Jack now, as both waited for the elevator.

"No, no problem. I'm just surprised she'd go anywhere with..." Jack began, regarding Daniel with a curious expression.

"With me?" Daniel finished the sentence for him. "Why?"

"No, not with you," O'Neill responded, stepping into the elevator now, followed by Daniel.

"Then with?" Daniel persisted.

"Without her generator," Jack snapped.

There was silence between the two then. The elevator reached level 28, and Jack strode out of it. Daniel waited a second, and followed.

"Jack!" he called out.

O'Neill stopped, turning to look at Jackson. "Daniel?"

"Why are you so uncomfortable with Sam going to a lecture with me?" he asked, "Am I treading on your toes?"

O'Neill looked horrified. "No, I just..." His face contorted with that confused expression. "Okay, I'll say it, you and Sam, it's not permitted, and now I'm gonna have to report it to General Hammond, and I didn't want to report it, that's all."

"Why, why do you have to report it? I'm not in the Air Force, Jack, so there are no restraints there. So..." Daniel asked.

"You're on the same team. Look, Daniel." He put his hand on Jackson's shoulder. "I know things have been tough for you since Sha're and everything, and I understand, but it's not gonna work with you on the same team."

"Why?" Jackson asked again.

"See now, you always do that," Jack complained. "I'm trying to tell you that getting yourself romantically involved with a colleague is dangerous, and I don't want to lose either one of you from my team." He shook his head. "As annoying as you can both be."

“I see. Well, actually, Jack, you don't need to tell General Hammond,” Daniel said.

“I don't need to tell General Hammond?” Jack replied.

“No, Jack, you really don't, he was there.” Daniel began to walk towards the briefing room. “So was Teal'c, shame you missed it, it was a great buffet.” He paused then and looked at a surprised Colonel O'Neill.

“Did I mention the buffet?”

General Hammond looked at his watch as Jackson entered. “Where's Colonel O'Neill?”

Daniel smiled. “He's on his way, sir.”

O'Neill appeared then, giving Jackson his best frown. “Great,” he said.

“Colonel?” Hammond asked expectantly.

“Oh, it's nothing, sir, I was just making a note of something in my little book.”

Hammond, Carter and Teal'c exchanged confused expressions.

“So, shall we get started?” O'Neill said, taking his seat. “Daniel can fascinate us all with his cultural knowledge of the Amazons. No, sir, before you protest? I could use the sleep!” he stated.

Jackson's face screwed up. “See, I knew you had that book.”

The End.

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