Without Principle

By

Jaclyn

Without Principle I

Jack O'Neill trailed just behind his colleagues, his features concentrated, attempting to ignore the persistent ramblings of Daniel 'the always enthusiastically vocal archaeologist'.
After almost forty-five minutes, he'd had enough, and threw his arms in the air in frustration.

"Daniel!" he exclaimed, and not for the first time that day. "For crying out loud! Will you just stop!" He paused now, in a thicket of bushes.

Daniel Jackson regarded the colonel with a look of surprised disgust. "Jack, I'm trying to help," he intoned. "Those markings maybe significant."

O'Neill shook his head. "Help?" he stated. "That's when you assist someone, Daniel, not when you bore them to death." He was gesticulating now, his right arm underlining his statement. "SG-12 is out here, somewhere. All the wall paintings in the world aren't going to help!"

Carter wanted to defend Daniel; his knowledge had assisted in the past, but she knew the colonel too well. The lives of another SGC unit were paramount to him, his focus on rescuing them from whatever peril they had fallen into would be total.

Jackson nodded slowly. "Okay," he said at length. "Fine, I'll, er, go with Teal'c."

O'Neill took his cap off and scratched his head before nodding in approval. "Good," he answered, his tone laced with the sarcastic edge he'd commandeered from years of practice.

"Good," Jackson repeated, walking in the direction of the Jaffa, who had been at point attempting find tracks, or any trace of Major Kelly's unit.

O'Neill watched him go, shaking his head softly, eyes closing and mumbling something incoherent under his breath. He turned to see Carter looking at him.

"What?" he snapped sharply.

Carter shook her head. "Nothing, sir," she insisted.

O'Neill looked at her, his expression askant, but said nothing more.

"Let's go. We're getting spread a little too thin," he pointed out.

His stride was purposeful; Carter just about managed to keep up.

"Er, sir," she risked. "Maybe there was some kind of clue in that structure we found."

"Carter, I didn't see any trace of Major Kelly, did you?" he responded, with emphasis on the question.

"Well, no, sir, but it was the only sign of anything we've seen, maybe we should?"

"No, Carter," O'Neill barked. His patience was wearing thin, being pulled off a two-day break for one of Daniel's lectures, at the insistence of General Hammond, only to learn of Kyle Kelly's apparent disappearance, had that effect on a guy.

Kelly had been in one of O'Neill's previous commands, a capable officer with a devotion to his vocation that O'Neill admired. He had a wife and three kids, and it was now to O'Neill's chagrin that he had recommended him to the SGC.

"With all due respect, sir," Carter persisted.

O'Neill stopped again and turned to look at the major, with a fury in his eyes that she'd never seen before. "Carter. Can it right now. That, Major, is an order!"

She looked at him, unsure of a response, shocked at his reaction. "Yes, sir," she replied, stepping off as quickly as she could.

O'Neill looked heavenwards. "Daniel," he yelled at the top of his lungs.

Both Jackson and Teal'c stopped; the Jaffa regarded the colonel with an air of concern.

"Jack?" Daniel responded, without needing to raise his tone too much.

"Carter, you and Teal'c continue to search. Make a wide arc east, and meet us back at the Stargate," O'Neill ordered. "Daniel, let's go."

O'Neill turned around and began retracing his previous path; Daniel ran the few steps necessary to catch up to him.

"Er, Jack, does this mean we're going back to the um, building?" he enquired, attempting not to sound too enthusiastic.

"Ya think!" O'Neill retorted and without looking at Jackson, he continued to beat a path back from the direction they'd travelled.

"Um, sometimes," Jackson said, more to himself then. "Um, Jack, you seem, er, a little bit testy, even for you, is something wrong?"

"Yes, Daniel, as a matter of fact." He stopped now, his arms resting on his trusty MP5. "Four members of the SGC are MIA."

O'Neill was loath to reveal his personal discomfort; Kelly was a friend, and Daniel didn't need to know that.

"Look, um, Jack, I want to find them as much as you, okay? And since that building is the only sign of civilisation we've found in two days of searching," Daniel paused, looking to see his colleague was listening. "You might, um, want to cut me some, er, slack!" he added, finally.

O'Neill regarded him with his usual air of confused disdain, yet he was not unmoved by the sincerity of Jackson's tone.

He shook his head, taking a deep breath. "Yeah, I know, Daniel, I'm just fed up with losing good men!" he admitted, his tone calmer now.

The pair walked for what seemed like hours without further comment. O'Neill made check calls with Carter and Teal'c every half hour or so, but apart from that he was silent.

Daniel had considered this a blessing; it allowed him time to consider what he'd seen from memory, added to the fact that O'Neill, in such a bullish mood, was ultimately capable of offering only his most caustic comments!

They approached the ruins of what was once a magnificent temple.

Daniel became a little more earnest as he drew closer, and headed for the one remaining building, a small shrine at the furthest point, that didn't appear aged.

"Alright," Jack sighed. "Don't be all day about it." His expression more a frown now, he added, "and Daniel, just the relevant parts, okay?"

"Yeah, um, which parts would they be?" Daniel enquired, lifting his glasses from his nose and attempting to clean the lenses.

Jack's grimace needed no words.

Jackson, satisfied that he'd accomplished his point, began to study the writing.

"It's not cuneiform, but it's, er, close," Daniel explained.

Jack sighed, a heavy prolonged sigh. "Daniel," his tone exaggerated as if greatly bored. "Don't tell me what it isn't, for crying out loud! Tell me what it is!"

"Well, it's dialect of some form, not Babylonian, it appears to be a makeup of two, no..." he continued more to himself. "Maybe, the earlier form of Sumerian. No, that's not it either."

Jack looked to the high heavens, the muscles in his face twitched as he ground his teeth. "Daniel," he said, in that low monotone he used to say the name. "You know I love it when we do this little team thing. Y'know, the *'Jack, you never listen'* thing."

"Yeah, I know," Daniel replied. "Look, Jack, all I need is a little time. It'll come, it's just like nothing I've ever seen on Earth, and..." he said, in that long drawn-out tone he often used when distracted. Looking at the colonel now, he said quickly. "And we're not on Earth so that would explain it."

Jack's eyes narrowed; his expression nonplussed; he stared at Jackson in disbelief.

"This is my fault," he mumbled to himself. "I did the 'Daniel, you're with me' thing." He wandered out of the building now, staring around, depressing the talk through on his radio. "Carter, come in?"

Silence. "Daniel!" Jack yelled.

Daniel looked up. "Jack?"

O'Neill shook his head quickly; Jackson had this habit of repeating his name, which was getting irritating.

He looked at Jackson, who had come outside of the shrine. "I can't raise Carter on the radio, try yours," he suggested.

Daniel stared at him for a moment, the dialect racing around his head.

"Now, Daniel!" Jack vociferated.

"Oh, yeah, yeah. Sam, this is Daniel, are you there?"

Jack stood there, looking amazed at Daniel's lack of radio protocol.

"Teal'c come in please, it's, er, Daniel."

"I can hear you, Daniel Jackson," Teal'c's voice came back.

Daniel and Jack looked at each other, relief sweeping over their faces.

"Teal'c? What's your situation?" O'Neill asked.

"We may have found something, Colonel O'Neill. Major Carter is inside some form of a cave," Teal'c continued.

"Sweet. Well, tell her to report in when she's done sightseeing. O'Neill out."

Daniel disappeared back inside; O'Neill raised both his eyebrows. "Great!" he snapped.

Something moved then, in the corner of his eye line. He spun round quickly, eyes darting left to right. Maybe it was an animal he reasoned, but his senses were now honing, something wasn't right with the planet, or else SG12 wouldn't be overdue. He backed towards the building; in the open, he was a sitting duck, one particular animal he had never ascribed to being!

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Carter shone the torch into the darkest recesses of the cave. "Hello?" she called out.

"Hello?" a voice came back.

Carter readied her MP-5; from the shadows Major Kyle Kelly emerged, his clothing appeared torn. In the terse light, Carter could barely make out what appeared to be some form of wounds on his face, and his right arm, which he seemed to favour slightly.

"Kyle, what happened?" Carter asked.

Kelly and the two other men who had appeared from nowhere looked almost delirious. "Oh my God, how did you get here? Weren't they out there?" Kelly asked, his voice seemed weak and shaky.

"Who?" Carter asked, still shining her torch on Kelly.

"Not who, Major," Lieutenant Simon Baker said, "what... those things got Price, they're everywhere." He sounded afraid, his voice a pitch higher than Carter remembered.

"Lieutenant, you're not making sense. What is out there, and what do you mean they got Price?" She began to lead them from the cave, knowing that Teal'c waited.

"I can't describe them," Baker said honestly. "But we've got to leave, Major, as soon as possible."

The four emerged from the cave. Teal'c, his staff weapon at the ready, seemed as astonished as Carter did at the appearance of the three remaining SG12 members.

"Major," Sam snapped. "Tell me what happened, Colonel O'Neill and Daniel are out there, if there's a hostile on this planet they need to know!"

"Where is the colonel?" Kelly asked, concern sweeping across his face. "Those things are, they're..." He caught his breath, fear in his tone, his blood-soaked clothes now very visible.

Teal'c moved forward, his huge frame now in front of the major. "Major Kelly, we need to know exactly of what you speak." His stern features glowered at the man. "Now, Major Kelly."

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Jack leant against the entranceway, looking out into the wooded area that surrounded the ruins, then across to the steep hill on the left. He turned momentarily to see if Daniel had moved from the position that he had been perched in for the last forty-five minutes.

He closed his eyes, shaking his head. "Anything?" he demanded suddenly, making the archaeologist startle.

"I, er, um..." Jackson stammered.

Then he and O'Neill said in unison. "Have no idea?"

"Yes, right," Jackson sighed. He looked apologetically at the colonel who was masked with his familiar sarcastic scowl. His eyebrows shot up then.

"Hey! Forget it Daniel," His expression studied now. "We'll just have to keep looking."

Daniel stood up abruptly. "It's a warning," he said, as if struck with the knowledge suddenly. "It's not written forwards or backwards, it's in the middle of the text, the surrounding doesn't mean anything," he mused.

"So," Jack said. "What kind of a warning?"

"Death shall be swift. The creatures of the underworld come," Daniel read slowly.

Jack stared at him. "Sweet," he said. "Does it say when they came, or come?"

Daniel looked at him, his expression drained. "No, Jack," he summarized. "It, er, says they're already here."

"Here," Jack pointed to the ground. "Where?"

"Well, wherever it is, I'm thinking we shouldn't be there!" Daniel concluded. He picked up his rucksack.

"Colonel, come in please," Carter's voice broke in.

"Yeah, go ahead, Major," O'Neill prompted.

"Sir, I've found three of SG12. Major Kelly says there are some forms of large predators on this planet. Sergeant Price was KIA, sir."

O'Neill and Daniel stared at each other.

"Well, that's not good," Daniel said.

"Ya think!" O'Neill replied. "Major, make your way to the Stargate. If we're not there when you get there, go through, and get backup."

"But, sir, if we met at your location, it would be safe, sir?" Carter argued.

"Major, I gave you an order. Daniel and I are gonna start making our way there now, move!"

"Yes, sir."

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Carter looked at the three SG12 members. They seemed terrified; the shock of losing their fourth seemed to overwhelm them.

Teal'c began to move off, his staff weapon readied. "We must be cautious," he warned. "I believe I know of what you speak."

"Teal'c?" Sam asked.

"These creatures travel in small groups, they are ferocious hunters, and cannot be tamed," Teal'c imparted. "They are on several planets."

"Exactly what are they?" Carter enquired. Their pace appeared to be quickening.

"They're like dinosaurs," Major Kelly said finally, seeming to be regaining his composure. "Jurassic Park kind of dinosaurs."

"T-Rex?" Carter looked and sounded amazed.

"No, Sam, more like the raptors," Kelly said, a dull recollection in his tone.

"They are known as Sokar's children," Teal'c commented. "Demons who walk by day."

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Jack kept his focus intense as the two men began to travel towards the Stargate.

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

"Yeah. Go ahead, Major."

"Sir, we've got an update on those creatures."

"I'm all ears," O'Neill prompted.

"Sir, they are some form of biped, Major Kelly seems to think prehistoric."

O'Neill's eyebrows raised in unison; a look of surprise swept across his face. "A what?"

"Jack, a biped is, um, like a T-Rex. If travels on its hind legs and, um, if it is a T-Rex, I think we'd have seen it by now. It's more likely similar in size to a velociraptor," Daniel advised.

"Understood, Carter, watch your six!" O'Neill snapped into his radio.

He turned now and regarded Jackson. "Something else in our little brainpan about these creatures that we might want to share, have we?" he enquired, sardonically.

"Um, yeah, they're pack hunters and very, very deadly," Daniel said, turning around quickly at the thought he may have heard something,

Jack immediately responded; the muzzle of his MP-5 brought round into that direction, and raised once clear of Jackson, who was suddenly overly alert and jumpy.

"What?" he demanded.

"Um, I thought I heard something. This is not their usual environment, Jack. They're usually in warmer climates, like, um, Borneo type climates," Daniel told him.

"Sweet. I'll mention it to them if I see them!" O'Neill snapped. He paused then looking at the archaeologist. "Daniel, they couldn't be dinosaurs, right? I've seen Jurassic Park, those things couldn't be here, right?"

"Um, depends on how evolved they are, I guess," Daniel explained. "They weren't known to be open terrain hunters though, so if we could get to the Gate out in the open…" He paused, looking at Jack's expression. "There's, er, one behind me isn't there?"

Jack's eyes widened; his jaw dropped.

"Oh boy!" Daniel said.

O'Neill flicked his eyes back to Daniel. "Pack hunters?" he asked.

Daniel nodded slowly. "Er, yeah, so if there's one then I'm figuring there is probably at least another two nearby."

"Ideas? Thoughts?" Jack prompted.

"Well," Daniel suggested, a heavy sigh leaving his lips. "Running comes to mind."

Jack shook his head. "Bad idea, that thing looks like it can outrun us. Get your gun, Daniel." Jack reached for a grenade, keeping his right hand firmly on the trigger of his MP5. "And get ready to move," he urged.

The creature moved now, tracking right of O'Neill slowly. Daniel caught his first glimpse.

It stood nearly 7' tall, a large, chiselled head, resembling a monitor lizard seated on powerful shoulders, the gaping jaws filled with sharp teeth. Its small arm-like forelimbs with huge claws nestled at its chest. Massive hind legs and a long tail gave the creature a length far in excess of its height. Its colouring a mixture of browns and greens that seemed designed to conceal it.

"Wow!" Daniel exclaimed.

Jack shot him a look. "Wow?" he echoed.

"Well, look at it, Jack, we could be looking at something that's been extinct on Earth for a few million years. It's, it's..." Daniel enthused.

"Thinking about lunch, so will you just shut up and for once consider self-preservation!" Jack snapped. "Alright, this is what's gonna happen, I'm gonna throw this grenade at it, you're gonna watch my six, and then..."

"Yeah." Daniel finished. "Run like hell, but, um, where exactly?"

"Back to that damn building," Jack told him, "Since it's the only cover we've got. Then I'll radio Carter, and hopefully if we make it that far, we can get rescued."

"Um... okay," Daniel agreed, still eyeing the magnificence of the creature.

"Ready?" O'Neill asked, keeping his eyes on the creature. With that, a second emerged from the tree line behind it. "Two, I see two, let's do it, Daniel, now!"

Jack tossed the grenade, opening fire immediately as he did so, moving towards Daniel, who was firing his handgun at a third creature from behind O'Neill. The grenades explosion killed one of the creatures. The other two, shocked by the blast, seemed to pause.

Jack and Daniel had already began running into the cover of the trees, back towards the ruins.

"Are they following?" Daniel yelled.

"Damned if I know, I don't intend looking back," Jack told him. As they hit cover, O'Neill managed to look back. "Whoa," he said. "Where'd they go?"

The two men stopped, leaning against the trees that were closest, both breathing heavily. The one dead creature lay in the open. "Well," O'Neill reasoned. "At least we know we can kill them."

"Um, so how many grenades do we have?" Daniel asked, like O'Neill, his eyes darted back and forth, trying to detect the location of the other two.

"Two more," O'Neill told him. "We need to move, and soon."

"Where, Jack?" Daniel felt a fear now that he'd rarely felt. "We're not dealing with something that can be reasoned with."

"Daniel!" Jack exclaimed. "More the better, no protocol, no need for conversation, know what I mean? Now just relax, we've been in worse situations!" he added, his words broken as his attention leapt back and forth.

Daniel froze; he saw one of the creatures and the terror he felt was so absolute he could barely speak. "Er, Jack," he gasped. "Behind you."

O'Neill spun round, opening fire, the MP5 spitting out bullets. The creature lunged towards them, struck something like a force field, and was knocked back by its own impetus. It lunged once more.

Daniel now matched the astonished expression from Jack.

"What the?" Jack spat. "Heck."

The creature disintegrated in front of their eyes; some form of beam eradicated all traces.

"Cool!" O'Neill remarked.

"Jack O'Neill." A familiar voice.

"Aris Boch," Daniel said, confirming what O'Neill already knew.

Boch appeared from behind a cluster of bushes. "Having a little problem?" he asked.

"Some," O'Neill responded. "Where the hell did you come from?"

"There are tunnels, O'Neill, I used them, these creatures don't exactly take prisoners. I was hoping you'd head straight for the trap," Boch said, freeing them. "Nasty little critters, aren't they?"

"Thanks, I think," Daniel said.

"Don't mention it. Hey, you Wanna help me catch one?" Boch asked.

"No. Not exactly," O'Neill retorted. "What are you doing on this planet anyway?"

"Looking for someone," Boch told them cryptically. "You?"

"Same thing," Jack said. "So, are you tracking anyone in particular?"

"Yes, I am. There's a group of Goa'uld rebels, and I'm not talking about the Tok'ra. They've started their own little challenge to the System Lords, and Cronos wants me to get their leader. A nasty character by the name of Hec'ketay."

"Sweet," O'Neill quipped. "And you saved us because?"

"Ah, now see. That's why I like you, you're quick, Jack. Apart from these charming little creatures, which is why they're hiding here, these Goa'uld have some sophisticated technology!"

"No!" Jack snapped. "We're here to get our people out, full stop!"

"Such ingratitude. Well then, it might interest you to know I saw them taking one of your people," Boch told them.

"What?" O'Neill exclaimed.

"He's lying, trying to get us to help him," Daniel pointed out.

"Now, why would I lie?" Aris asked. "Three of your people ended up in a cave, safe from the creatures. The fourth one almost got eaten. The Goa'uld saved him. Sergeant Price, I think I heard him say."

Jack looked heavenwards. "Great!" he said, lifting his radio. "Carter, come in."

"Colonel?" Carter's voice responded.

"We've, er, run into an old friend here. Go through the gate and report to Hammond that we know the location of Sergeant Price, and we're gonna attempt a rescue." O'Neill informed her.

"An old friend?" Carter replied.

"Yeah, Aris Boch. He says there are some rogue Goa'ulds here and they have Price. We're gonna try and get him out. Get some backup and hold the Stargate. O'Neill out."

"Jack, is this wise?" Daniel asked.

"Nope, but I guess we're gonna have to believe what he says. If the Goa'uld do have Price, then they're probably trying to get information out of him."

Jack turned to Boch. "Lead on. No time like the present."

End of Part One

Without Principle II

 Aris Boch led the way. O'Neill was a few paces behind, watchful of the trees that were spread around them. Daniel was close on Jack's heels, as aware as the colonel of the danger posed by the creatures. He'd hardly spoken since they set out.

"How far is this place?" he asked finally.

"It's ahead a way," Boch told him.

O'Neill's usual grimace followed this comment; his cheek muscles twitched with the obvious discomfort he felt at being out in the open.

"So, no transport then," he commented.

"Are you kidding? First thing the Goa'uld look for. No, we have to get there on foot," Boch imparted. "Besides, it'll keep you healthy."

"Healthy?" O'Neill spat. "I don't consider marching around this planet with those things on our tail healthy!"

"Relax, Jack," Boch reassured him. "This weapon neutralises them pretty effectively."

He held out the weapon in question. "Besides, it's not far now."

"Sweet," O'Neill quipped. "Don't suppose you wanna hand it over?"

Boch laughed to himself. "These Goa'uld don't have too many Jaffa with them, least I didn't see that many."

"Um, how many is not many exactly?" Daniel asked, almost tripping over O'Neill who had stopped, as he glanced behind to check once more that the creatures were nowhere in sight.

Jack sighed heavily. "Daniel, for crying out loud, will you just relax. Flash Gordon here has it all under control!" he remarked.

"Oh, I'd say probably about fifty Jaffa," Boch said. "Staff weapons and Zats. We should be able to take them out pretty effectively with these." He raised the peculiar looking weapon again; it was more streamline than the one Daniel remembered him carrying.

"Fifty!" Daniel exclaimed.

Jack shook his head. "Sweet. Only fifty!" He put emphasis on the 'only' part of his reply. "So, Aris, I suppose you have a plan, right?"

Aris Boch chuckled to himself. "Well now see, I had one. Then I ran into you guys and figured the odds would be much better if we teamed up... so now, I'm planless!" he explained.

"That's not good!" Daniel pointed out.

Jack's grimace was quick. "Ya think!"

"Well, we've got to get into the complex, which by the way is underground and has only one entrance," Aris told them.

"Let me see if I can figure that out," Jack said. "Rings?" His eyebrows drew down into a scowl of displeasure.

"You see, you're quick, O'Neill, that's why I like you," Aris countered. "So, I have a new plan. We let ourselves be captured."

"We, er, do?" Daniel enquired. "Isn't that a little stupid?"

Jack shook his head. "Let me get this straight, we let fifty Jaffa and some Goa'ulds take us hostage? Prisoner? Do the words *galactically stupid* mean anything to anyone?" he vociferated.

"Nope. My weapons will help out. They have stealth technology, they can't take what they can't see," Aris imparted. "No problem there."

"Sweet. So you'll have weapons and we'll?" Jack enquired, his expression askant, eyebrows drawing down once more.

"Use the weapons I give you. Come on, O'Neill, we haven't got all day. I'll show you how these work, and we can get the job done and go home!"

Daniel looked across at Jack. "Are we seriously thinking about doing this?" he asked.

"You know of any other way of getting down there?" Jack responded.

His features betrayed his own reticence about Boch's plan, but were short lived; a concentrated look, almost quizzical at his colleague now, who appeared, from the many expressions that creased his eyes and crossed his cheeks, to be considering alternatives.

Finally, he looked nonplussed, looking at O'Neill with a mixture of defeat, and cynicism. "Um, no, I, er, can't think of any better ways of getting in, um, but, er, shouldn't we at least wait for backup and tell them what we're doing?"

"Hey!" Aris exclaimed. "The longer we wait, the more likely it's gonna be that they've gotten the information they want from your friend!"

Jack winced. "If they haven't made him a host or killed him already?" he pointed out. "Alright, let's do it," he decided, as he considered what might happen or already happened to Sergeant Price.

He looked across at Daniel then. "Maybe you should wait here?" he suggested, a note of concern crossing his brow.

"You're kidding, right?" Daniel observed, his eyes widening at the thought. "With those creatures running around out here? No thanks! I'll take my chance with the Goa'uld."

Jack felt himself smile involuntarily at the expression that had swept across Daniel's face, at the suggestion. He nodded. "Yeah," he said. "Just kidding. What could be worse than being taken as a host?"

Daniel's eyes expanded, his chin dropped. "Being eaten alive!" he snapped.

Jack turned away, beaming widely now.

"Ok, so," he sighed heavily, "we all go in."

"At last," Boch exclaimed. "Right, these weapons go to stealth touching this button here."

He held the weapon up and indicated the position of the stealth mode.

"Now, you attach 'em to your hip, and then when we're ready, we just hit this and fire! Got it?" he questioned, looking at the two SG1 operatives.

 Jack indicated to the stealth mode. "Hit that and that to operate. Yep. I got it," he said.

Daniel nodded. "I still think this is a bad plan!" he protested. "But, if we have to do it, might as well do it now."

"Good. Ok, leave your stuff here. We don't want the Goa'uld getting hold of one of your Iris deactivators."

Jack looked at Daniel. "Ok?" he asked.

"Not really. I can think of better situations I'd rather be in right now," he replied.

"Oh yeah," O'Neill agreed, a look of reticence sweeping across his handsome features. "Fighting an Unas sounds preferable!"

"You guys are funny," Aris chuckled to himself, concealing his bulkier weapons beneath a convenient bush. "Now come on, we don't have all day."

Daniel took off his GDO transmitter. "So exactly how do we go about getting captured, without getting killed?" he asked.

"Trust me, I know where the Jaffa guards are stationed," Aris told him.

Jack looked heavenwards resignation shrouding his features. "Okay!" he said at length. "Let's go."

The three men deliberately wandered into a trap.

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These Jaffa wore different uniforms and a single Sun disc tattooed into their foreheads. The uniform they wore was a dark colour, etched with blue and gold.

Their helmets were similar to that of Ra's Jaffa, falcon-like in appearance.

"Great!" Jack exclaimed, as the three were being led towards the rings. "Good plan! Thought you said you knew exactly where they were."

Boch ably carried on the pretence of the argument. "Well, if you hadn't kept talking to me, I wouldn't have lost my bearings."

"Oh, we've all lost something," Daniel muttered to himself; Jack deduced it was probably their marbles!

The rings enveloped them, along with three Jaffa guards, and transported them to the impressive looking tunnel complex. The hieroglyphs, that had decorated many pyramids and Cheops vessels, lined the walls.

Finally, they were brought inside a bigger room where three men sat on throne-like seats.

"Ah, a prize indeed," the central one said. He was Arabic in appearance, his voice laced with the familiar tone of the Goa'uld.

"That's Akhenaton," Boch told them.

"He was a rebel king," Daniel told Jack, in lowered tones. "He, er, changed his name from Amenophis, which translated to Amon is pleased, to, um, Akhenaten, which means he who pleases Aten. The, um, Aten was a god, the, er, disc of the sun."

"Really?" Jack asked sarcastically. "Great, tell him we hate Ra, too!"

"Silence," Akhenaton roared.

"This is a trick," the blond Goa'uld, who sat right of the leader said. "Aris Boch would never allow himself to be captured in such a manner."

Jack looked concerned now. "We're not too thrilled about this either!" he snapped.

A Jaffa hit O'Neill across the back of the knees with his staff weapon.

"For crying out loud!" O'Neill protested. "Can't you fellas think of somewhere new?"

Daniel was similarly assaulted. Boch stood defiantly.

"Now, see, you Goa'uld never know when you're beaten," Boch told them.

"Silence," Akhenaten demanded.

Boch regarded him with an air of arrogance. "Cronos sent me," he said finally. "And you boys are in big trouble."

"Oh really?" the blond Goa'uld spoke now. "Considering we may kill you at any moment, it is you who are in trouble."

Daniel closed his eyes for a second before turning his head to look at O'Neill.

"This was a bad plan," he said to the colonel.

"Really?" Jack asked. "Whatever gave you that idea?"

"You fellas wanna start something now?" Boch asked.

Jack had kept his hand on the stealth gun, and his reaction was immediate. He brought the weapon up and rolled down onto his back, taking out the Jaffa guard that stood behind him.

Boch too reacted.

Daniel, slower, managed to find the weapon, but couldn't fire.

Suddenly the entire room became an exchange of energy blasts. O'Neill rolled to his left, instinctively allowing the movement to propel him to his knees. He blasted one of the Jaffa's that had Daniel covered.

Finally, Jackson armed the weapon; his hand shot back at the velocity, and the only Goa'uld who had failed to speak was instantly dead.

"For crying out loud, Daniel!" Jack shouted. "Point that thing elsewhere."

Boch expertly took down the three remaining Jaffa; the room was now under their control.

"You dare challenge us?" Akhenaton roared.

O'Neill looked heavenwards. "Wish they'd come up with some new lines too," he commented, as he positioned himself at the entrance to take out any more Jaffa.

"I got to send a signal to Cronos," Boch said. "Wait here."

"Oh, no," Jack warned. "We get our guy out first, and us. Then you can send your signal."

Daniel lifted the weapon towards Boch. "Um, Jack's right," he stated. "We've helped you, now you help us."

Boch chuckled. "Hey guys. I was gonna help. Honest," he said. "Cronos is a day or so away. I won't drop you in it."

"All the same," Jack said. "We get Price, we get out, then you can call your buddy Cronos."

"Okay. You and I will go find your friend; Doctor Jackson can stay here. Can you manage that, Doctor Jackson?" Boch enquired.

Daniel looked at Jack.

"I know," Jack said. "That's a bad plan, unless you wanna go hunting around this place for Price?"

Daniel looked ruefully at O'Neill. "Um, no, I'll, er, keep them covered," he stated.

"Sure?" Jack asked.

"Well, no. Um, not exactly. But I'm getting the feeling that here might be a little safer," Daniel imparted.

"Wise choice, we may run into some, well a lot of Jaffa, and the other Goa'ulds," Boch told him.

"Ya think!" O'Neill exclaimed. "I can hear them coming." Jack's face dropped. "And they have Price. Sweet. Now what?"

"Oops," Boch said.

"Oops?" Daniel echoed. "*Oops* has been this whole thing from the start!" he exclaimed. "And, er, *oops* now doesn't exactly help, does it?"

Jack looked surprised by Daniel's sudden attack on Boch. He kept a wary eye on the approaching Jaffa.

"Well, we have to do something?" Boch suggested.

"A trade?" Daniel said emphatically.

"Trade them for Price? And our freedom?" Jack asked. "Will it work?" He looked sceptical.

"It might?" Boch concurred. "But they might just kill your friend and come in shooting."

"If they were gonna do that, they'd have done it already," Jack argued. "Hey, Snakehead." His attention was now on Akhenaton. "Tell your people we'll trade you for Price and out of here!"

The Goa'uld smiled. "You have no power to trade us," he stated.

Jack fired the weapon, killing the blond Goa'uld that sat beside him.

Daniel's startled expression mirrored by Boch, who looked from Jack, to the Goa'uld.

"Ya think!" he questioned sardonically. "Now you wanna live, right? We wanna live, so we trade, or we kill you and take our chances. Your choice?"

Akhenaton regarded O'Neill cynically. "Very well," he agreed. He moved forward, raising his right hand, and sent a charge of energy into Aris Boch, who slammed against the wall.

O'Neill's response was immediate; the weapon discharge tore into the chest of the Goa'uld, sending him backwards.

Daniel looked horrified, first at Boch, and then at the dead Goa'uld. His gaze finally fell upon Colonel O'Neill.

O'Neill looked at Boch, he was breathing, barely.

"Er... Jack?" Daniel asked.

"Yeah. I know, Daniel," Jack replied. He exhaled heavily.

"Now what?" Both men said, in unison.

He was moving towards Boch now, feeling for a pulse.

Daniel raised his hands by his sides, shrugging. "Well, the odds of our getting out of here just went down!" he concluded.

"He's alive," Jack confirmed of Boch. "But I don't know for how long."

"I, er, didn't see that hand device, did you?" Daniel enquired, going back over in his mind the image of Akhenaton prior to O'Neill killing him. He walked towards the fallen Goa'uld; the hand device he had used was different, not as elaborate as they had seen previously.

"What difference does it make? We've got to get Sergeant Price and get the hell out of here. Suggestions? Ideas?"

Boch seemed to stir then.

Jack, who was still kneeling beside him, turned to look at the man.

"You with us?" he asked.

Boch groaned. "Ouch!" he said. "Where the hell did that come from?"

Daniel was already taking the hand device from the Goa'uld. "It's, um, a lot smaller," he noted.

"And that means?" O'Neill enquired.

"I don't know," Daniel replied sharply. "But it's obviously new technology."

"Sweet, bring it with you!" O'Neill replied. "Where the hell's Carter when we need her?"

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Major Carter followed Colonel Stuart through the Stargate. Teal'c followed on with SG3, SG6 and SG4.

"Alright," Stuart ordered. "Let's form a perimeter. We need to establish a solid escape route. Major Enfield, set your people up, Captain Simpson, you too. Let's move people."

Carter listened. "Sir, they were about 10 klicks south," she informed him.

"Were, Major?" Stuart replied, sarcastically.

"Our last contact, sir, indicated that they were still in the vicinity of the ruins we discovered," Sam informed him, managing to keep her tone in check.

Teal'c raised a considered eyebrow, tilting his head to the right. He wasn't overly keen on Colonel Stuart either, and the mild look of amusement made Carter look away.

"Ok. Carter, Teal'c and Harrison, you're with me. The rest of you keep this area secure. Report every thirty minutes. Enfield, you're in charge," Stuart ordered, already beginning to make in the direction that Carter had indicated.

Carter, Teal'c at her side, began to walk after him. "Reminds me of Colonel Makepeace," Carter revealed.

Teal'c nodded, as the pair continued after the colonel.

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"Ok. So, what now?" O'Neill asked.

Aris Boch was recovering fully. "Well," he said. "I think we ought to blow this place up."

"Blow it up?" Daniel questioned. "And how do we do that?"

"We set these things to self-destruct. One of them will make a pretty big dent. Set it over there, the Jaffa will think something bad happened to us, we can wait and take them when they come in," Boch declared.

O'Neill looked at him, considering the plan. "Yeah, but there are something like forty Jaffa out there, and some snakeheads!" he pointed out.

"You got something better, let's hear it," Boch prompted.

O'Neill considered their options. "They don't know we've killed the Goa'uld, right. So, they're not gonna do anything. I've got an idea."

"You have?" Daniel asked.

"Well?" Boch demanded. "What?"

"Help me get into one of those uniforms," O'Neill said. "I'm thinking we need to get some Intel here. I'll go out there, posing as one of the Jaffa, and get some orders. And give some. Daniel, which of these is first prime?" he asked, on his feet now and indicating to the dead Jaffa.

"Um, his uniform is slightly different. Jack, are you sure?" Daniel asked. "I mean if they know what he sounds like?"

"Look!" O'Neill snapped. "Blowing stuff up doesn't get us out of here...." He stopped mid-sentence. "But I know what will! Guys, change clothes!" he instructed.

Daniel looked at him quizzically.

"Find one of comparative size, Daniel, now!" Jack snapped.

Aris Boch nodded. "I see where you're going. Good plan!"

"Ya think? I'll let you know if we get out of this!" O'Neill snapped.

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Colonel Stuart looked at the half-eaten body of the creature.

"There are more of these?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," Carter responded. "Lots more of these!" she pointed out.

Teal'c nodded his agreement. "Indeed, it would appear that these creatures will eat anything."

"Okay, let's keep moving, before we find out exactly how many!" Colonel Stuart directed. They began to move towards the ruins once more.

"Harrison, are you picking up anything at all?" Stuart asked.

"Yes, sir, I've got a frequency marker, but it's coming from that direction." He lifted his arm and indicated the direction the three men had travelled.

"Major?" Stuart now turned to Carter. "Which is it?"

"I'm not sure, sir. They reported that they'd make their way to the gate from the ruins. But Aris Boch obviously knew where the Goa'ulds were, sir, so I guess it's in that direction."

"You guess?" Stuart replied. "Major, next time you bring another SG team to a planet, know your facts!"

Teal'c's eyebrows drew down; he looked at the Colonel, a fierce expression coming to rest in those intense eyes.

"Colonel Stuart, since we were only briefly in contact with Colonel O'Neill, Major Carter could have had no way of knowing exactly which direction they travelled."

Sam Carter looked a little shocked; Teal'c was obviously as fed up as she with the attitude of the marine. She however could not reply.

"Well, that's just dandy isn't it, Teal'c? O'Neill should have given those coordinates. Damn Air Force, guess you spend so much time in the skies you forgot what ground rules are."

"With all due respect, sir," Carter replied. "Colonel O'Neill's message was brief, he probably had no idea where they were, sir."

"O'Neill's a pain in the ass! That's what O'Neill is, Major!" Stuart snapped. "Let's move."

Teal'c looked at Carter as she moved towards him; she shook her head.

"Leave it Teal'c. Marines don't actually need brains, just give them a big gun!" she whispered.

The Jaffa's amused expression brought a smile to Sam's face.

"And I never said that" she laughed.

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Jack struggled to lift the helmet into place. "These things are so damn uncomfortable," he said.

"And heavy!" Daniel observed.

They had successfully managed to exchange clothes with three of the dead Jaffa.

"Now what?" Daniel asked, fidgeting uncomfortably in the uniform.

"Well now we do a lot of this," Jack took a staff weapon and blasted the three bodies, ensuring that none of them were recognisable.

Boch disintegrated one of the Goa'ulds using a Zat gun.

"Sweet!" O'Neill quipped. "Okay, Daniel, you're the linguist, you do all the talking," he said, the helmet snapping shut. "Aris, you can be slightly injured, kind of looks good!"

Boch nodded, closing the helmet of his uniform.

"Oh boy!" Daniel said. "Um... ah, Kree! How'd that sound?"

Jack's helmet snapped open. "Like you were asking for more!" he said, a perplexed expression sweeping his face. "Try to be a little more, well, Teal'c like? Or something."

Daniel's eyes widened. "Teal'c like?" he echoed. "Um... okay. Er. Kree!" he snapped.

"Daniel?" Jack's tone was now his old familiar sardonic one. "Try to sound like you mean it. Think of me. Geek!"

Daniel looked furiously at O'Neill. "Geek?" he repeated. "Jack, I hate it when you call me that."

"I know. Cool. Get angry then, and sound like a damn Jaffa!" O'Neill instructed.

Daniel shook his head. "Great. Sound like a Jaffa." His helmet closed.

Jack closed his almost simultaneously. "Ready?" he asked.

"I am," Boch responded.

"Yeah," Daniel sighed.

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"Sir," Harrison sounded alarmed. "There's something in those trees."

Teal'c was already pointing his staff weapon in that direction, turning his head and scanning the surrounding area.

"Hostiles?" Stuart asked.

"Safe assumption, sir," Carter replied.

"Alright, defensive formation let's get a circle here," Stuart snapped.

The group formed a small circle, with each member responsible for their own area.

"Projectile weapons will be effective if fired in great numbers" Teal'c informed them.

Stuart clutched a grenade. "I think O'Neill had the right idea," he responded. "Blowing 'em all to hell looked effective enough to me back there."

One of the creatures emerged. "Sir," Harrison pointed out. "Twelve o'clock."

"I see it. Alright, let's wait 'til it gets a little closer. Everybody ready?"

"Yes, sir." Carter acknowledged.

Teal'c merely nodded; he had already sighted a second creature and his staff weapon was now poised to find its target.

"Sir, I've got two at three o'clock," Carter informed.

"Well I don't think we need to doubt the numbers anymore," Stuart replied. "This is Bravo Delta 3, we are under attack from the creatures. Will update as available. Watch yourselves."

The first creature roared, beginning to move towards them. Harrison opened fire. They were clearly surrounded; the creatures converged from all directions.

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Daniel emerged from the room first. "Jaffa!" he snapped, gesturing for some of them to come forward. "Kel shack! Goa'uld," he said, as he saw one of the others, similar in appearance to those they had killed.

"Jaffa! Kel noch. Akhenaton?"

"No, my lord. Killed by the Tau'ri and Boch," Daniel replied.

"We must destroy this place," the Goa'uld instructed. "News reaches us that Cronos has despatched three mother ships."

"My lord," Daniel replied, throwing his arm across his chest in obedience, his head bowed.

Jack observed Sergeant Price; he seemed to have been tortured. He looked weak, supported by one of the Jaffa. Jack moved forward, taking his other arm.

The Jaffa let go, allowing O'Neill to escort the prisoner.

"And this one, my lord?" Daniel asked.

"We have all we need from him, take him to the surface where the Children of Sokar will undoubtedly feast upon him."

"Yes, my lord. Jaffa! Kree!" Daniel snapped.

Boch, O'Neill and Daniel half carried the badly injured Sergeant towards the rings.

"I've told you everything," Price rambled. "You said you'd let me live."

Jack felt a knot in his stomach, anger coursed through him; SGC personnel were trained to withstand torture. Clearly Price had decided his own interests were better served.

The rings brought them to the surface.

"Please," Price begged. "Don't leave me here, I'll tell them everything, everything."

"Oh, we're not leaving you here, Price," Jack snarled. "I'm sure General Hammond is gonna wanna know everything you told our snakehead friends."

"Colonel O'Neill. Oh my God, thank you, sir. I..."

"Save it, Price!" O'Neill snapped. "I don't wanna hear another word out of you!"

"Wow! It worked," Daniel said. "I can't believe it."

"Yeah, sweet," O'Neill replied, still furious at Price's obvious collusion.

"Let's go, we'd better get back to the Stargate before they figure it out," Jack said.

"Um. Colonel?" Boch wasn't following. "This is where we part company, until of course, the next time!"

"You sure? Those things are still running around out here," Daniel said.

All three still wore the helmets in their closed positions.

"Yeah, I'm sure. I'm gonna send one of my weapons down there, make sure none of them get out, then find my ship and get the hell out of here before Cronos arrives."

"Problem?" O'Neill asked.

"Well, some. He wanted them alive, and clearly, we can't let that happen right, not if he's given away your secrets!" Boch gestured towards Price.

O'Neill's helmet opened; he wore an expression of surprise.

"Good point. Need any help?" he asked.

"No, I'll take it from here. You'd better get back to your people. Cronos doesn't exactly like you guys. In fact, you're worth a lot more now than you were when we last met! I could have traded you both for a year's supply of Roshna," he imparted.

O'Neill nodded. "Thanks. On both counts."

"Okay, then, 'til we meet again!" Boch said. "Try to stay alive, those things are hundreds strong!"

"Yeahsureyabetcha!" O'Neill quipped. "Daniel, let's go."

The helmet on his uniform snapped shut.

<p align="center">********************</p>

"Sir, there are too many," Harrison yelled.

Teal'c's staff weapon blasted another, yet still more came.

"I'm almost out of ammo here," Carter told them.

"Grenades, use the rest of the grenades," Stuart ordered through the noise of their weapons fire.

As Jack, Daniel and Price drew closer they could hear the skirmish.

"Sounds like our people are in trouble," O'Neill said. "Let's move."

Price was still unarmed. "Colonel, please let me have a weapon. I swear I gave those Goa'uld false Intel, sir, on my life."

O'Neill paused; he carried a staff weapon, his own MP5, and a Zat gun.

"Jack?" Daniel asked.

"Okay, take the Zat," he said, offering the weapon over.

"Thank you, sir."

They moved as fast as the heavy armour would allow. O'Neill sighted the group first and opened fire, taking out one of the creatures.

Teal'c saw the Jaffa guards, apparently coming to their assistance, with a member of SG12.

"Damn Goa'ulds," Stuart said, aiming his weapon at O'Neill.

"No!" Teal'c shouted, his hand striking the MP-5 and sending the shots into the ground.

"What the hell are you doing?" Stuart demanded.

"They are assisting us. I believe that is Colonel O'Neill," Teal'c told him, turning in time to see another creature close; his staff weapon fired an energy blast that tore into it.

Major Enfield and two of his men had also found the battle and opened fire from their position; the creatures began to retreat.

Enfield also sighted O'Neill and Daniel; he aimed his MP-5 at them, opening fire.

O'Neill saw the action and threw himself onto Daniel, sending them both to the ground.

"What the hell happened?" Daniel asked.

"Ceasefire, ceasefire!" Sam Carter yelled into her radio. "They are friendlies."

Jack managed to get into a seated position; the helmet snapped open.

"Well. Guess they don't know what Kree means, eh?" he said.

Daniel knelt. His helmet opening, he looked at O'Neill. "Great! Remind me to give a lesson," he replied.

Teal'c walked to their position. "Colonel O'Neill, you are well?"

"Yeah, Teal'c, I'm fine," he answered.

Colonel Stuart arrived then. "Well, Jack, lucky for you your people recognised you. What's with the uniforms?"

"Stuart?" O'Neill asked, being aided to his feet by Teal'c. "Do you take lessons in asking stupid questions or is it a natural talent?"

Sam Carter grinned, turning away.

"I'm sorry, Jack, what?" Stuart demanded.

"You're sorry!" Jack replied. "Hey! You should be in one of these things."

"What happened, Colonel?" Carter asked.

Jack looked at Carter. "We, um, did a little shopping, Carter," he replied.

"And Aris Boch, sir?" she asked.

Daniel, who was taking off the helmet, turned and looked at Sam. "He's okay, but we're not. We should get off this planet before Cronos arrives. Apparently, we've got a very high price on our heads now!"

"Good point," O'Neill remarked.

He looked across at Price now. "Colonel Stuart, take Sergeant Price into custody."

"Colonel?" Stuart asked.

"He's been tortured. Go easy!" O'Neill said.

Price raised the Zat gun at O'Neill. "I'm not going back, Colonel," Price snapped. "Not for court martial."

Stuart raised his MP-5. "Put the weapon down, Sergeant, NOW!"

"You might get me," Price stammered. "But I'll take him down first." The look of hatred in his eyes, directed towards O'Neill, was intense.

"Price, you wanna shoot me, go right ahead. But you ain't getting off two of those Zat blasts before they take you down. You wanna be an idiot? Fine. Dying for it is something else."

Price kept his eyes firmly on O'Neill. Carter raised her weapon too.

Teal'c, who was out of Price's line of vision, began to move slowly around behind the Sergeant.

"Colonel Stuart, lower that weapon, that's an order," O'Neill snapped.

"We're the same rank, Jack, I don't take orders from you. He fires, he dies."

"Colonel Stuart, I am giving you an order!" O'Neill vociferated. "Now lower the damn gun!"

Price looked across at Stuart. "Maybe I'm pointing it at the wrong man!" he snapped.

O'Neill moved his hand onto the stealth weapon he had kept concealed, and then noted Teal'c had moved into a position to disarm Price safely.

"Colonel, you realise I could have you removed from this program?" O'Neill reminded Stuart. "And I will, if you don't obey my order."

Stuart lowered the weapon, turning to O'Neill now.

"Order?" he said. "Listen to me, flyboy! You don't outrank me. I take orders from General Hammond."

"With all due respect, sir, Colonel O'Neill outranks you by virtue of his designation," Carter pointed out.

O'Neill glared at Stuart, and then turned to Price. "Sergeant, taking you into custody is merely a precaution, procedures have to be followed. Now, please, we risked our lives to save yours."

Carter watched Price's eyes, her own weapon still covering the confused Sergeant. She wasn't sure if she could pull the trigger, but her instincts to protect O'Neill seemed to override her own misgivings.

"Careful, Jack," Daniel warned in a lowered tone. "He's not exactly himself."

Price nodded, lowered the weapon, and handed it across to O'Neill.

"Yes, sir, I'm sorry, I'm just..." Price began.

Jack raised his hand. "Sergeant, neither would I be," he insisted.

Teal'c moved forward then, took Price's arm, and led him towards the Stargate.

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 "Colonel Stuart," Jack said, as the party approached the Stargate.

"Yeah, what?" Stuart snapped. He stopped; the two men stood alone now.

"You ever disobey an order of mine again, I'll have you busted down to Major. Is that clear?" O'Neill snapped. "For the record, I think you're well aware of the standing orders. You don't like it, fine, take it up with Hammond. But threatening the life of a seriously disorientated man, who, by the way, assisted us in saving your butt, shows a lack of judgement."

"You know what, O'Neill, Jackson was right, you're an ass!" Stuart replied. "No wonder he doesn't trust your command."

"Excuse me?" O'Neill enquired.

"Hey, that's what he told Colonel Makepeace. Us marines, we like to share!"

Carter and Daniel looked back and saw the two men exchanging words.

"Wonder what that's all about?" Daniel asked.

"It's probably not good," Carter surmised.

Jack moved a little closer to Stuart now. "Really! Well, there's something I'd like to share with you." The punch came from nowhere, landing square on Stuart's jaw.

Jack's winced in pain, clutching his right hand, as he watched Stuart sink slowly to the ground.

"God, I've been waiting ages to do that!" Jack told the man.

Carter arrived almost immediately. "Sir?" she questioned.

"Just a little thank you, Carter, between colonels," Jack told her. He began to walk back towards the Stargate.

"Sir, isn't that a court martial offence?" Carter enquired.

"Yeah, I suppose it is," Jack agreed. "But you know what, Carter, I don't give a damn."

"No, sir, um, wish I'd done it actually," Carter confessed, not even attempting to contain her delight.

Jack stopped, turning, and looking at Sam now. "You do?" he asked.

"Oh yes, sir," Carter told him, a smile sweeping across her face.

"That bad?" O'Neill enquired, a quizzical expression adorning his.

"Worse, sir," Carter confirmed. "And, sir, I didn't see a thing!"

O'Neill smiled. "See what?" he asked.

Daniel activated the Stargate, waiting for Jack to catch him up.

"Um, what was all that about?" he asked, as the two men began to walk towards the event horizon.

"He tried to come between me and my team, Daniel," Jack told him, glancing sideways now. "Said, marines share things."

"What?" Daniel asked.

The two emerged at the SGC.

"What was he talking about?" Daniel asked.

Jack stopped, nodding to Hammond as the general appeared.

"Let's just put it like this, Daniel. The next time you're hurt, or wound up by me in anyway, you have my permission to do the same damn thing to me," he said. There was seriousness in his eyes now that needed no interpretation.

Jackson watched him walk down the ramp to Hammond.

"Mission accomplished, Colonel?" Hammond asked.

Jack turned and looked at Daniel. "Oh yeah!" he said. "Oh yeah."

The End.