New inhabitants arrive on Atlantis bringing change and secrets with them. What will happen when those secrets threaten to tear the expedition apart?

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Summary: New inhabitants arrive on Atlantis bringing change and secrets with them. What will happen when those secrets threaten to tear the expedition apart?

Warnings: slash, het
Chapter 01

Methos, AKA Doctor Adam Pierson, felt his body tingle as he stepped through the Stargate and, for the first time in 12,000 years, visited his childhood home.

Retired Major General Jacob Carter stood beside his lover. He was equally impressed by the city of Atlantis but his eyes quickly sought out his daughter. Stepping forward he greeted the soldiers on duty then strode over to her, enveloping her in his arms. “Sam! How are you?”

Sam was surprised, she had known that today new researchers would arrive as well as a new liaison officer, but nobody had told her it would be her father and his lover! “Dad!” she exclaimed hugging him back. “Are you the new liaison officer?”

“No, he will be arriving next. I’m just here as Tok’ra ambassador and Adam’s watchdog from the Tok’ra!” he laughed before becoming serious again. “The Tok’ra didn’t like the fact that the Asgard had an ambassador on Atlantis before they did. Malek suggested me… to be honest I think he knows about my relationship with Methos.”

Happily Sam smiled at her father. She’d missed him and the rest of SG-1. “Better yourself than anyone else watching him, right dad?” she whispered then laughed at the flair of jealousy in his eyes. “He looks a bit overwhelmed,” she said pointing back at Methos.

Jacob turned to his lover and saw him standing still in front of the gate with closed eyes. “Adam? Are you okay?”

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When Methos saw his lover go to his daughter he made to follow but was stopped by a female voice in his head. #Welcome back, Methos, son of Moros. You have been gone for some time.#
*Who are you?* he sent back.

#I am Atlantis. Do you not remember me?#

*I’m not sure… You’re much more evolved than the last time. Back then you were only an experiment.*

#That is true. But the last of the Lanteans managed to give me the ability to learn. I have done nothing else since.#

*Wow! That’s fantastic! Can you teach me the Ancient history since I left? About recent history and findings?*

Laughter rang through his mind. #Be at peace, my child. I will teach you everything you want me to.#

Indignant Methos exclaimed, *Hey! Who are you calling a child!?!*

#I saw you grow up, which means you are younger, which means I can call you child. I will also have to teach you to control your powers. The others here cannot communicate with me. They are untrained even though there are many descendants here.#

*Descendants? Oh, you mean that they’ve got the ATA gene?*

#Yes, I think they call it by that name.#

*Maybe I can help you get them to take notice of you…*

#That would be much appreciated. Then I could also warn them not to activate devices dangerous to them.#

*Who would be that careless?*
They don’t know anything about the devices they activate but wish to learn. The ones called McKay or Zelenka are the worst by far.

*I will try to speak with them about it,* Methos promised before coming back to himself.

Methos opened his eyes blinking leisurely before registering Jacob’s question. “Yeah, just getting a history lesson.”

“What are you talking about?” Jacob went over to Methos.

“Sorry, you couldn’t have known…” He smiled sheepishly. “I’m talking about the AI that is Atlantis. She recognized me and started talking to me.”

Shaking his head Jacob replied, “No talking to strange women!” Then he laughed at the pout on his lover’s face.

“I don’t think I can resist, dear.” Methos mumbled back, remembering where they were. While Atlantis was an international expedition it was led by the US government.

Activating his radio Methos contacted the SGC through the still open gate. “Jack? We’ve arrived and all is well.”

“Good, old man. The major is getting nervous again so I will send him through. Take care!”

“Will do, Jack!” Methos ended their call and waited for the last new inhabitant to arrive.

Sam looked curiously at the gate. ‘Who could this major be?’

The event horizon rippled as the missing member stepped through. Sam heard a surprised
exclamation behind her and saw Sheppard standing there with a dumbfounded loopy look on his face. Turning back to the gate she saw what it had been about.

“Paul!” Sam shouted in surprise and confusion. What was Major Paul Davis, liaison officer of the SGC and the Pentagon, doing in the Pegasus galaxy?

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“You ready, Davis? Remember not to let Carter push you around!” said Jack standing behind Paul. “And don’t let anything that happens with Sheppard get to you. Otherwise I’d have to come over and kick his ass. Okay?”

“Yes, sir,” Paul answered. He remembered that the last few weeks had been hell before it was decided to send him to Atlantis as the new liaison officer for earth.

‘If you had just listened to him it wouldn’t have happened that way!’ he admonished himself.

After Jack had visited Washington with Jacob and Methos, Paul had decided to start living a little and started a relationship with another man. It soon turned out that Peter had just been trying to get into the Pentagon and had soon started blackmailing Paul.

Seeing no other way out Paul had resigned from his position.

----Flashback----

Packing his things didn’t take Paul long. Some colleagues came to see him to ask what had happened, but he sent them away. He was angry with himself and hated the fact that he’d just destroyed, not only his career, but wouldn’t be able to contact Jack or Daniel.

Later when he sat at home alone and miserable, it slowly dawned on him what he’d lost because of that bastard. After the third beer he decided to shower and go to bed.

Just as he exited the shower, he heard his doorbell ring. For a moment he thought about not answering then the thought of Peter crossed his mind. Enraged he dressed in a pair of jeans and a sweater before running down the stairs.

Without looking through the door viewer he tore the door open and stopped short in surprise.
Jack stood in front of him, with Daniel right behind him.

“Paul, can we come in?” Jack asked while silently seething. His friend looked like hell, pale and on the verge of a breakdown.

Silently Paul stepped aside and closed the door behind his friends. Suddenly he was enveloped in two sets of strong arms. Relaxing bit for bit, Paul let the tears he had held back come forth, trusting his friends to not betray him like Peter had.

Minutes later he found himself sitting on his couch, Daniel on his left and Jack on his right.

“How…” he stopped himself after hearing the hoarse quality of his voice.

Jack looked at him and began to explain, “The President called me after hearing about your resignation. He wanted to know if something had happened. Imagine his surprise when he found out that we, as your friends, didn’t even know you’d resigned in the first place.”

“So here we are. Do you want to talk about it, Paul?” Daniel asked him in a gentle voice.

Shame flooded through him as he thought of his mistake. Trying to hide his face, he looked at the floor. “There’s nothing to tell…” he stopped startled when a firm grip on his face forced him to face Jack.

“Don’t lie to us, Paul. Something must have happened. You’d never just resign without at least talking to us!” Relaxing his grip slightly and softening his voice Jack almost begged, “Please, Paul, tell us.”

“After you left I felt lonely and started seeing someone. I thought I could trust him. Apparently I was wrong.” When both remained silent he continued, “Last week he started asking me about different assignments, and what I thought about some methods that could be used for more efficiency. Jack, he shouldn’t even have known about those assignments. When I asked him, he gave me the choice to work with him or he’d “destroy” me…”

“And you didn’t tell anyone about it?! Are you crazy?! That lunatic could have killed you!” Jack jumped up, angry and concerned for his friend.
“Who could I have told? If they knew I was gay, they’d have had my ass out of the Pentagon before I could even ask for the resignation forms!”

“You could have told us!” Jack looked disappointed at Paul. ‘Why didn’t he trust us?’

Paul looked as if Jack had just slapped him, “I wanted to, but you were Off-world… and then it was already too late.”

“What did he want?” Daniel asked gently. One of them had to remain rational while the other felt for their friend.

“He wanted to get into the Pentagon and later talked about visiting Cheyenne Mountain to get back the “alien” you’d stolen from them.”

“Them? Who does he belong to?” Daniel asked trying hard to keep the panic from his voice. ‘Please not the Trust! Then the alien would be Methos… How could they have known about him? We took most of the evidence with us and burned the rest along with Brook’s warehouse!’

“He told me that he belonged to the Trust…” Paul leaned back miserably and closed his eyes.

This confirmed Daniel’s fears. Jack was just as shocked, “The Trust?! Those Bastards again!” Jack raised his hands, clenching and unclenching them as he shouted in anger. ‘As if what they did to Methos wasn’t enough; now they’re threatening Paul!’

“Yeah…I didn’t know he was one of them, Jack! You have to believe me!” Paul pleaded. ‘What if they think I’m a traitor? Will they still see me as a friend?’

Hands on his shoulder brought him out of these miserable thoughts. “Calm down, Paul. We know you would never do anything to betray the President or the SGC.”

“What should I do, Jack? What will happen when Peter discovers I resigned? I don’t know what to do anymore…” he desperately tried to stop himself from falling into a depression.

“You should sleep a bit. Tomorrow everything will look better,” Jack soothed him seeing that
Paul was emotionally exhausted. “Daniel will stay with you, so you’ll be safe.”

Giving Daniel a nod, Jack stood up and went outside. As soon as he sat in his car he got out his phone and dialed.

“It’s O’Neill. Yes, I know what happened. Sorry, sir, I can’t tell you. Yes, you would have guessed right if you assumed that. No, I will take care of that. But, Mr. President, could I ask for a favor?” his voice trailed off as he disappeared into the distance.

The next morning, Jack found Paul sleeping in Daniel’s arms. Jack stood there and thought about the picture his lover made, with another man sleeping safely in his arms. He waited for the normal jealousy to appear and was surprised when it didn’t. ‘Maybe because you know of what Paul feels for Sheppard?’

Daniel opened his eyes, blinking sleepily, and feeling his lover’s eyes on him. When he looked up he saw Jack sitting in the armchair on his right side. “Morning,” he yawned.

Jack smiled at the disheveled look of his lover before answering, “Morning. You sleep okay?”

Nodding he looked critically at Jack “You sleep at all?”

“No. I had to take care of a few things.”

“For example?”

“For example the fact that Paul’s resignation went missing, and that his new position will keep him safely away from the Trust.”

Daniel thought about it for a few minutes then asked, “Atlantis?”

“Atlantis,” Jack confirmed looking at his now wide awake friend.
Paul looked back at Jack and Daniel one last time before stepping through the gate. On the other side he saw Methos and Jacob standing with Sam. And just behind them… ‘John!’

tbc

Chapter 02

John was thrilled with Colonel Carter’s presence. Woolsey had been annoying: a bureaucrat through and through. Sam was different: more practical and the scientist loved her, because she understood what they were babbling about.

Today would be the arrival of the new researchers and Carter’s new liaison officer with earth.

“Just what we need: more scientists and bootlickers,” John had said to his XCO two days ago. Evan Lorne had laughed it off before going back to his painting.

But now, seeing the way Sam greeted the two arriving man, he had to remedy his assumptions. The older man was General Jacob Carter, Colonel Carter’s father. ‘What’s a Tok’ra doing here?’ John wondered.

The other man he’d never seen before. He hadn’t been in the SGC when they went to Atlantis; that he was sure of.

When the younger man closed his eyes, a sudden hum could be felt in the air. Looking at his left he saw Lorne tensing, also noting the change in Atlantis. Just as suddenly as it started it stopped when the man opened his eyes and looked at General Carter. ‘Oh ha…’ John thought seeing a look of what had to be love pass between the men. Turning to Lorne again he saw the barely noticeable nod. ‘So Lorne saw it too.’

John was ripped out of his thought when he heard the man speak into his radio, “Jack? We’ve
arrived and all is well.” After a short pause he continued, “Will do Jack!” and ended the call.

The event horizon rippled and the third man they had been waiting for stepped though the gate.

What he saw surprised John and he couldn’t stop himself from exclaiming, “What the hell?!” He saw the man he’d thought about on many a cold and lonely night since coming to Atlantis.

----Flashback----

Nervously pacing John still thought about the decision he had made to go on this expedition. ‘Who would decide something like this by flipping a coin?’ he asked himself again and again.

Without looking where he was going he ran into an unexpected obstacle. He caught himself before he crashed to the floor in a rather undignified manner; he found himself looking into the greenest eyes he’d ever seen.

Just now registering that the man those eyes belonged to sat on the floor with papers lying all around him he hurriedly held out his hand. In the back of his mind he registered the warm, soft skin of the other man’s hand.

“Sorry,…” he glanced at the other man’s insignias quickly, “…major.”

“It’s okay. Nothing hurt but my pride!” the major laughed.

“I’m Major John Sheppard.” He held out his hand and smiled.

“Major Paul Davis.” He grasped the outstretched hand, shaking it as he grinned back.

----End Flashback----

After that they’d gone to the mess hall and sat down with some coffee and several different deserts like jello, pie and cake, as they talked about everything and nothing. Davis had laughed at his method to decide whether or not he’d go and told him a few stories of his own. The nervousness
that had plagued John vanished under the other major’s gentle ministration.

Now, years later, the man stood before him again. His face looked paler than he remembered and he had rings under his eyes, but otherwise his appearance seemed to be unchanged.

At Carter’s joyful exclamation his stomach churned. When she embraced him, a sudden onslaught of jealousy flashed through him. ‘Take your hands off of him, missy! He’s mine!’ Sheppard stopped short, surprised by his own thoughts.

He wasn’t so much surprised by the feelings as by their depth. He’d dreamed about the gentle green eyes week upon week. He’d spent many nights dreaming about the soft hands. But to realize, that the feelings ran deeper than the feelings for his ex-wife – that shocked him to the core.

If the Pegasus galaxy had taught him one thing it was that life was too short and could end any second. John Sheppard decided in that minute that he would find a way to at least befriend the major. He didn’t care that now they were a rank apart. They weren’t in the same line of command anyway.

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Evan saw the shocked look on his CO’s face when the last man arrived on Atlantis. A delighted grin spread over his face as he identified the emotions behind the blue eyes as interest for said man. ‘Seems I’ve won the bet! Ronon will have to pay up!’ he thought while gleefully remembering the bet he’d made with his lover about Sheppard’s love life.

Slowly looking at his silent lover Evan noted the wicked grin on his lips before his eyes heated up with a silent promise. Ronon was inventive when they were together and the memory alone sent shivers of delight down his spine. The only embarrassing moment had been when Ronon had distracted him in his office and Sheppard had come inside without knocking. Fortunately they had just been necking and were still dressed.

The calm look on his CO’s face had surprised him. Not that he’d thought of John Sheppard as an unfair or homophobic man, but to get it confirmed while practically caught with your pants down was something different all together.

“Sorry, Major. I need some papers then you can continue.” Sheppard had laughed at the panicked look on his face while Ronon stood there grinning.
“Colonel… sir…” Evan didn’t get any further with his stuttering because Sheppard started laughing along with Ronon.

“No reason to panic, Lorne. Ronon asked me a while ago if it would offend me if he started a relationship with you.”

Looking at his lover’s smug face Evan couldn’t resist asking, “And what was your answer to that?”

“He told me that as long as we don’t tell, he won’t ask. I don’t really understand that but it was permission enough for me.” Ronon replied.

Sheppard left still smiling, happy that his XO and his teammate were happy together. ‘I’ll do anything to make their lives easier on Atlantis!’

Now Evan would do the same for the colonel and try to get the two men together.

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Sam released Paul and stepped back, “You look terrible! Come on and we’ll sit down.” Before marching Paul away she remembered her task as leader of Atlantis and introduced the gathered people to her family, “Dad, Adam, Paul may I introduce Lieutenant Colonel John Sheppard, the CO of Atlantis. Next are Major Evan Lorne, Sheppard’s XO, Doctor Rodney McKay, head of the scientific department, and your new boss, Adam. Ronon Dex and Teyla Emmagan are inhabitants of the Pegasus galaxy and members of Sheppard’s team.” Turning around she introduced the new arrivals “People this is the retired Major General Jacob Carter, my father and ambassador of the Tok’ra in the Pegasus galaxy. Doctor Adam Pierson, former member of SG-1, head-researcher of Ancient history and ambassador of the Ancients. I think the Asgard call him Defeater of the Ori. This is Major Paul Davis, our new liaison officer with Earth.” She forced down the urge to laugh as the gathered people all eyed Methos.

When she had arrived on Atlantis she had told them about their defeat of the Ori. Sure, she had to tell their cover story, but they knew that Adam Pierson had played a major part in the last battle.

Remembering the matter at hand, she grabbed Paul’s arm and yanked him into her office. Leaving the others to fend for themselves.
“Sit down, Paul.” She directed him to a chair. Concerned she remembered the lively man she knew and compared him to the man now in front of her. After Paul had helped getting Jack and Daniel together, the whole team had slowly become friends with the major. ‘He’s always been on our side; protecting us, as much as possible in his position, from bureaucratic attacks.’

“Here.” She gave him a glass of water and watched as he drank slowly. ‘Why didn’t Daniel or the general mention it?’

Paul looked up as Sam sat down in the chair beside him, instead of her own across from him. “Jack and Daniel told you what happened, right?”

Shaking her head she replied, “No, they didn’t. What happened?”

Laughing bitterly at the memory, he began to explain, “I made a mistake, Sam, and it bit me in the ass…”. Sighing deeply he continued, “I met someone. We dated for a month before I told him what I do for a living. All was well the next month. One day he asked me about a special assignment I was working on, namely the SGC, and asked me what I thought about using other methods to protect earth. He was a member of the Trust.” Paul looked at Sam and saw the shock in her eyes.

“The Trust? They send someone to what? Seduce you?” Thinking about Paul’s position in the Pentagon and the SGC it began to make sense. “What did they want from you?”

“He tried to blackmail me into bringing him into the Pentagon and later into the SGC. The last thing he told me, before threatening to destroy my career, was that they were looking for an Alien they had captured, before it was taken away by the SGC a few months ago.”

Sam thoughts raced. ‘Methos! He was in danger, is that why they sent him here?’ Aloud she asked, “Is that why you’re here? Not that I’m not happy to have you here! At least I won’t have to deal with an idiotic bootlicking bureaucrat!” she babbled.

Paul laughed at the well known Carter-babble, and calmed down a bit. “I resigned from my position at the Pentagon.” At Sam’s surprised face he explained, “Jack and Daniel visited me after the President called Jack about my resignation… The President, Sam! He wanted to know why I left! Jack ripped me a new one, telling me how irresponsible I’d been in not calling him or Daniel. He later told me that he called the President and arranged my transfer to Atlantis to keep me save from the Trust and any repercussions that could arise from Peter following through on his threat.”
Seeing the haunted look in Paul’s eyes she couldn’t help but assume the worst. “Did he hurt you, Paul? Did he do anything to you?”

“If you mean physically, then no. But I trusted him… I fucking trusted him enough to stay with me for days. I hadn’t gotten that far in any relationship before. I have to admit that I’ve been jealous of Daniel’s and Jack’s intimacy and wanted to know what it would be like. He totally blindsided me.”

“Men can do that to you. It was the same with Pete and me. But I’m glad that now I can look forward to the future. The Odyssey’s been stationed here and will arrive in three weeks, and Kevin and I are still together.” Sam sighed happily. “Just wait, Paul, the right one will come.”

“Sure…who is this Kevin?” Paul tried to remember that name, but after reading so many personnel files he couldn’t remember this particular name.

“Lieutenant Kevin Marks from the Odyssey. Since he isn’t in my direct line of command, it isn’t against regulations.”

“Ah, I remember his file. Nice enough guy for you! Does your father know about him?” he teased.

Rolling her eyes she swatted at him. “What is it about you men that you know all personnel files of my fates? And yes, Dad knows. He told the general that Kevin’s files seemed to be okay…” grumbling she sat back.

“You’ll be okay here, Paul. Other than the wraith and replicators it’s been pretty boring up ’til now!” Sam feared that this would change, with Methos and McKay meeting each other… ‘Oh god! They won’t stop their sarcastic attitude!’ Then it occurred to her that they had just gotten another trouble-magnet on Atlantis. ‘Good grief. I’m just glad that Daniel and General O’Neill aren’t here, or we’d have to be worried about an imminent apocalypse happening due to too many trouble-magnets in one place.’

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Jacob saw Sheppard’s eyes follow his daughter. *No, Jacob. Look again!* Selmak spoke up laughing.
And, true enough, they didn’t follow Sam but Paul Davis. Well, well, who would have thought that!

We’ll have to wait and see, my friend. But Paul Davis hasn’t been well since arriving at the SGC with Jack O’Neill and Daniel Jackson.

You’re right, my girl. We’ll keep an eye on them.

A jab in his ribs brought him back and he saw all eyes focused on him. “Sorry; just a little talk with Selmak.”

“Selmak? Is she your symbiote?” McKay asked without preamble.

“Yes, she is. Now, would someone please show us our quarters?”

“Our quarters’ Do you mean to tell us that you share?” Sheppard asked slightly unnerved by that casual outing of their relationship.

“Yes. Do you have a problem with that, colonel?” Jacob drew up to his full height, ready to stare the man down just in case he said anything to hurt Methos.

“No, sir. We just weren’t told that you were sharing.” John tried to soothe the angry general.

“Good, I’d hate to have to beat some sense into you!” Methos spoke up. “Those stupid rules apply only for humans and then only for those in the military. Jacob isn’t human any longer, or even in the military anymore for that matter, and I’m definitely not American!”

Ronon laughed at the first statement, “You and what army, little man?”

At the same time John completely agreed with Pierson about the appliance of the rules. Hearing the ex-runner belittle their new researcher he startled them with his shout, “RONON!”
“Don’t worry, Colonel Sheppard. I can take care of myself.” Methos smirked at the big guy standing poised with crossed arms in front of him. He also perceived the warning looks Major Lorne shot the man. ‘There’s a history between those two.’

“General, Doctor, would you please follow me, I will show you too your quarters.” Lorne told them before turning around and going to the door.

Looking after him Jacob laughed at the dumbfounded look on Sheppard’s face. “Don’t worry, colonel. XOs do that all the time!” he said before following with Methos on his heels.

Tbc

Chapter 03

After unpacking their small luggage Methos and Jacob went back to the control room, where they hoped to find Sam. On the way there Methos saw the marines eyeing them. ‘We still have to prove ourselves here.’

*Love, why are you so silent?* he heard Jacob’s voice in his mind. Since his lover and Jack had been bound to him, they could all communicate telepathically even at great distances.

*I just thought that I’ll have to proof myself to them. Why should I need to do that? I grew up here and know that they endanger, not only themselves, but all of Atlantis because of their tampering with devices they don’t even know anything about!* Methos ranted.

*Wow, Methos, where did that come from?* Jacob asked surprised. He’d never seen his lover this angry before without having been provoked.

*I want to tell them who I am. But I also want them to respect me for who I am. Not only because I’m Ancient!* 

Stopping in the middle of the hallway Jacob asked, “That Ronon guy got to you?”

“Among other things, that guy had the nerve to call me ‘little man’! I wanted to zap him so bad!
And Sheppard was shocked about us being together! What if you get problems here?” Now Methos was a bit worried. ‘I haven’t had the chance to properly bind us together…’

“Dex is just trying to measure your strength. You have to convince him either of your strength or your mind. He seems to respect the others. And you can’t tell me he respects McKay for his physical fitness!”

Laughing Methos saw the logic in Jacob’s arguments. “Sorry, love, you’re right. I’m just itching for a fight. Since Teal’c left with Cameron to visit his family, I haven’t gotten a good work out!”

“You can always just ask the marines to train with you. That way you can determine their strength and they’ll see that you can take care of yourself.”

Laughing at the thought, of Methos beating up all the marines stationed on Atlantis, they made their way to the control room.

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“What the hell has gotten into you, Ronon? You can’t just go aroundg insulting our new researchers in front of a general!”

Seeing his lover getting ready to rant Ronon interrupted him, “But he is just an ambassador for those Tok’ra guys. Doesn’t that mean he has no say over you?”

“He’s still Colonel Carter’s father! And General O’Neill is his friend! They can order me back to earth!”

“I won’t let you leave, Evan!” Ronon growled at the thought of Evan leaving. “I told you I wouldn’t let you leave, and I intend to keep that promise!”

Seething at the possessive tone of voice Evan replied exasperated, “Ronon, are you even listening to me? I don’t WANT to leave but what should I do if they order me to?”

“Resign and stay with me!” Ronon was getting angry. Why couldn’t Evan see that he’d do anything to keep him safe?
“I wouldn’t have the permission to stay on Atlantis…”

Not understanding the power of those on earth, Ronon suggested, “Then we will leave Atlantis! Just go somewhere else and …”

“You don’t really want that, big guy. You hate the wraith and want to destroy every single one of them. I want to protect earth. Be it from wraith or replicators.” Evan’s voice took on a gentler quality.

Ronon sighed in defeat. “You’re way too honourable…”

Smiling smugly Evan replied, “You like me just the way I am!”

“No, I love you the way you are.” Ronon leaned down and kissed Evan.

After breaking the kiss Evan smiled up gently at his lover “Love you too, Ronon.”

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“These are your radios. You are required to wear them all the time,” Sam stated while giving them their equipment.

“All the time? Is that really necessary?” Methos asked. He hadn’t learned much yet about the conflict in the Pegasus galaxy with the wraith and the replicators. In the distance he felt both races as black spots in the universe but otherwise he knew next to nothing.

“Yes, Pierson, all the time. You are also required to take part in a test fight so we can establish your trainings partner, or decide if you need further training,” Sheppard drawled. He could hardly wait to see Ronon wipe that smug grin from that guy’s face. Not that John didn’t like him! He seemed like an okay kinda guy, but the feeling John got whenever in his vicinity made him itch.

“Will that test be with Mr. Dex?” Methos snarked at Sheppard. He could feel the man in the back
of in his mind and knew that he had to have the strongest ATA gene after Jack. Methos felt the gene in many of them but only Sheppard and Lorne would be able to achieve the level of control it took to communicate with Atlantis. Maybe later he could teach them what he’d taught to Jack?

“Yeah, you got a problem with that?” Sheppard’s eyes narrowed.

“Nope.” Methos smirked and folded his arms then looked at Dex and saw the hackles literally rise at the challenge he knew the man saw in his eyes. “When’ll the test take place?”

“Tomorrow at 0800. Today we’ll play your tour guides around the city and give you the penny tour.” Sheppard saw Ronon bristle at the Doctor’s obvious dismissal. ‘How can he be that confident? Ronon is better at fighting then all marines. Pierson can’t know that but just look at the guy! There are worlds between them! He’ll have his ass handed to him!’

“Good. Sam I’d like to tell all of you a bit about the Ancients and Atlantis in particular…”

Rodney sneered, “You just arrived and want to tell us what to do? Arrogant much?”

“McKay, it won’t hurt to listen!” Sam reprimanded him in a sharp tone.

“Pft, please, Sam! What could he tell us that we don’t know already!”

“For example, I could tell you that Atlantis spoke to me. I could maybe tell you that she told me to warn you about tampering with things you don’t understand. Or I could tell you that one of the ZPM’s is almost empty and approaching critical state, while you’re just sitting there sneering at me,” Methos told them in a bored tone.

At the same moment Zelenka’s voice sounded form Rodney’s radio, “Rodney, there is a problem with the ZPM you brought from that planet! The shields are weakening and I can’t stop the process!”

Looking startled at Pierson Rodney jumped up and ran out the door. “I’m on my way. And for God’s sake don’t touch anything!”

After Rodney left, Methos found himself the recipient of their astonished stares. “How did you
“Atlantis told me that the ZPM wasn’t working correctly. She thinks that it’s been manipulated by
the wraith. She found their signature on the energy flow exiting it.”

“You can really understand her?” disbelieve and hope flashed over John’s face.

“Yes, colonel, I can understand her.” Looking thoughtful at the relieved look he offered, “I could
teach you, if you’d like. She told me that she could distinguish between certain individuals, by
measuring the strength of the ATA gene. But nobody would communicate with her.”

Sheppard looked uncomfortable. “I thought I was going crazy. The first few weeks I heard a
voice, but thought it was nightmare caused by that damn wraith. It stopped and I was glad.”

Surprised that the colonel had already heard and understood Atlantis and had just decided to
ignore her, he asked, “Would you like to talk to her? As I said I could teach you…”

#Sam! We’ve got a problem. The shield is deactivating, and the camouflage isn’t working.
Somehow the ZPM we brought took from the replicators up all of the energy instead of giving it
to us!# Rodney’s panicked voice sounded through the radio. “Weapons are failing as well! The
section with the chair has been locked down!”

“Did you find a wraith code in the programming?” Sam asked, certain that Methos was right about
that as well.

#Yes, how did you… Pierson, who else? Can’t he just tell Atlantis to make it all go away?!”
Rodney snapped at her.

“Sure I could but she can’t change a program. She was designed to learn and teach not to repair
herself. That’s what the Ancients were for!”

The door was opened and Chuck entered slightly panicked. “Colonel Carter, two hive ships just
left hyper space. They’ll be here in three hours!”

Sam jumped up and asked, “Why didn’t we notice them sooner?”
“The deep space sensors aren’t working properly.”

#That could be because of the ZPM! The program must have been designed to slowly drain the power from the shields and camouflage to disturb our sensors!# Rodney tried to explain the happenings. #If we don’t get the shields running again soon, we’re as good as dead!#

*************************

“Adam? What should we do? We can’t just sit here and wait for the wraith to kill our people,” Jacob asked, after Sheppard and his team had left the room.

“I know. But I would have preferred to teach them how to do it themselves instead of interfering.”

“But we don’t have any other options, Adam. What can you do to help?” Sam asked in a commanding voice. She was still the leader! Her current task was the protection of the people on Atlantis and stopping the wraith from gaining entry to earth through their gate!

“I’ll have to take a look at the ZPM. Maybe I can repair it.”

“You can repair a ZPM?”

“Yes, the energy inside it is similar to my quickening. I could probably recharge it again and reset the programming. While I’m doing this, you and McKay could take care of the bug in the computer system.”

“Well we’d better get going then. ETA 2 hours and 50 minutes.”

*************************

Paul meanwhile had helped the marines secure the city as far as possible. They’d collected all the weapons and brought them over to the gate room.
“Davis! What the hell are you doing here?” Sheppard asked when he saw the other man reaching for a vest and gun.

“I’m getting ready for battle of course, colonel. Why?”

“You mean you aren’t just a paper pusher? We haven’t had the chance to test your abilities out yet,” John asked, careful not to insult the man.

Paul laughed at that. “Since starting at the SGC, I’ve been in more combat situations than I care to count. Don’t worry! I know how to shoot and how to hit them! I earned my USAF Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon fair and square.”

John looked at him sheepishly, wearing a crooked smile and scratching the back of his head. “Well good. Just stay down and NEVER involve yourself in close combat with them. They’re stronger than humans and feed through their hands, literally sucking the life out of you.” He shuddered at the memory of the feedings he’d experienced.

Distinctively paler, Paul nodded and decided that he’d definitely stay as far away from them as he could.

**************************************

“Rodney, we have to get the ZPM loose! It’s still absorbing energy!” Radek shouted.

“Oh, really? I hadn’t noticed!” Rodney snarled at his friend in an exasperated tone. “But the damn thing...it’s stuck!”

“Is that a technical term, McKay?” Rodney whirled around and saw Sam with Pierson and her father in the doorway.

“Oh it’s you... listen if you can’t help just go away!”

“As a matter of fact, I think I can help.” Methos stepped forward and laid his hand on the control pedestal where the ZPM was still absorbing the much needed energy.
“What are you…” McKay’s mouth dropped and he blinked a few times as the ZPM disconnected. After a few seconds he asked, “How did you do that?”

“Could we talk about it later? Right now you have to find the virus the ZPM uploaded into Atlantis systems and deactivate it ASAP.” Methos sat down on the floor and took hold of the ZPM. Reaching out with his mind’s eye, with his normal ones closed, he could see his power stroking over the surface of the device. ‘This is how we recharged them a long time ago!’ Methos remembered how the ZPM, then called chargers, had been installed after his birth. He’d always received the task of recharging them, as he was the only one able to wield this power. Just as he’d been the only one who could make the Ori’s power mutate.

Rodney sputtered in disbelief before quietening once again, when he saw the lighting flicker over Pierson’s hand, entering the ZPM. For a moment he ignored everything else he ran to the next computer consol and began searching for the virus. The inquisition could wait until later, but it looked like Pierson was an Ancient.

************************

Two and a half hours later Methos had finished recharging the ZPM and sat on the ground, right next to it, utterly exhausted.

“Adam, are you okay?” Jacob asked concerned. His lover had grown paler while sending his energy into the device.

“Yes, I’ll be okay. But I can’t fight them off long should it come down to that.”

“Then let them do their job and trust them to keep the city safe, like they’ve done for the past two years,” Moros said suddenly appearing next to Methos.

“Father! What’re you doing here?”

“I just wanted to see if you’re feeling comfortable in our old home. But as I see you haven’t even had time to eat!” Moros smiled at the sound of his son’s stomach protesting.
Blushing, Methos answered, “That can wait. The wraith managed to upload a virus into Atlantis and they’ll be here in…” Methos checked his watch, “… 30 minutes.”

“I know. I just came to see you before the battle. As you know, I’m not allowed to interfere, son. I could transport you and your lover back to earth though…”

“That won’t be necessary! We’re staying and are gonna fight!” Jacob exclaimed enraged. ‘I won’t run from a pair of space vampires!’

For a minute, Methos pondered telling his father to transport Jacob to earth, but he didn’t want to risk his lover’s wrath. “Thanks for offering, father. But we’ll stay and fight.”

“I thought as much, but had to ask.” Moros vanished again with the parting words, *Good luck, my son!*#

#Alarm to all. Hive ships are in the orbit. Darts are dispatching from the mother ship. Get ready for impact and stay alert! They’ll probably start transporting down soon!# Chuck’s voiced echoed through their radios.

“Shit! They’re too early!” Methos stood up and stepped up to the console where Sam and McKay were typing furiously. “You found it yet?”

“We found it but we need more time to bypass it!”

“McKay there is no time!”

“Just keep them away from here! Once the shield is up again, we can kill them all. But first we have to get around that damn virus!”

An explosion shook the city before silence descended. Methos whispered, “I think our time just ran out!”

tbc
“Lorne! Get the jumpers ready to take off! Stackhouse, you take point at the gate! Shoot everything that gets through!” Sheppard shouted orders while trying to take every possible outcome into consideration.

Activating his radio he shouted, “McKay! You ready?”

#I’ll let you know when I’m ready, colonel! Now go away and do what you do best!#

“No need to get snarky, Rodney!” Turning to the rest of his team he continued, “Ronon, you and Teyla take the south side. I’ll take Davis with me and go north.” ‘No way am I letting him get killed on his first day!’

“Are you sure that is wise, Colonel Sheppard?” Teyla asked in her quiet voice. “We don’t know what abilities Major Davis possesses.”

“I trust him, And, as he said himself, he earned that expert marksmanship ribbon,” he replied. And while it didn’t seem reassure Ronon much, it satisfied Teyla.

It was also enough to render Paul, who was standing a few feet away, utterly speechless. ‘Sure, I earned it, but it wasn’t earned in battle. Why does he trust me? He can’t know if I can help him! Hell, even I don’t know if I can help at all!’ At the same time he decided that he’d prove himself worthy of the trust the colonel had gifted him with.

********************

“Jumper one ready to take off!” Lorne started the jumper and waited for permission.

#Permission granted, jumper one. Good luck!#
“See you later, Chuck.” Lorne took off into the sky. Above his position he saw the hives getting into position to launch their attack. Activating the communication channel he said, “Jumper two and jumper three take point above the tower. We have to protect the gate in case we have to evacuate to the Alpha site!”

#Affirmative, jumper one,# jumper two answered

#Understood,# jumper three affirmed.

Looking fearfully at the darts nearing his position, Lorne sent one last thought to his lover before activating his weapons and flying into battle. ‘Be careful, Ronon.’

********************

“Colonel Sheppard, Major Lorne reported three darts coming through. We’re registering Wraith vital signs in the south part as well as in the ZPM room. They must have a tracker on the ZPM!” Chuck shouted at John.

“Damn!” Activating his radio Sheppard shouted agitated, “McKay! We detect wraith vital signs near your position… please tell me you’re ready to get out!”

#No, Sam and I are still writing a program to bypass that damn wraith virus!#

#Colonel Sheppard, here is Pierson. General Cater and I’ll take care of the Wraith down here!#

“Are you armed?”

After a short hesitation in which Pierson took stock of the weapons present he continued, #We’ve got three guns and 6 rounds of ammo. As well as a sword and three daggers.#

“Did you just say ‘sword’?”

#Yes. Could we talk about that later?#
“Gotcha, Pierson. Be careful and stay out of arms reach. Otherwise they’ll feed from you!”

#Nice to know you care, colonel!#

“It’d be too much paperwork to ask for a new scientist!” John laughed. “Will send men over ASAP. Sheppard out.”

Turning around he saw Ronon and Teyla leaving to get to the south part of the city. “Come on, Paul. We’ve got a job to do!”

Paul looked back at him and grabbed his gun, “Yes, sir.”

***************

Rodney looked at the sword Pierson held in his hand in astonishment. “Where the hell did you get a sword? And how did you get it to Atlantis?”

“I slept with the soldier that searched me, McKay!” Methos quipped before seeing the warning look on Jacob’s face. Sighing he clarified, “I’ve got permission from the president to use it and wear it on my person wherever I go.”

“Sam, how much time do you need?” Jacob turned to his daughter.

Looking back at the half-written code she shook her head, “I don’t know twenty minutes, maybe?”

“More like thirty when you try it that way!” McKay exclaimed before pointing out a line in Sam’s code. “If you do it that way you’ll practically open the whole city up for the Wraith!”

Annoyed, Sam exploded, “I know what I am doing, Rodney. I want to try and trap the virus instead of bypassing it.” Only Rodney McKay could make Sam lose her calm like that.
Methos looked on as they both argued about the best way to do it. ‘If I knew more about Atlantis programming I could easily repair the damage done!’

*I am sorry, Methos. But the maleficent program inserted through the ZPM has weakened me so much that I can’t project them into your mind,* Atlantis’ apologised.

‘It’s not your fault. Do you still have any control over the city?’

*Just the control and gate rooms. I detect the wraith nearing your position. Please be careful. I don’t want to be alone again!*

‘I’ll try, Atlantis.’ Methos turned to his lover. ‘They’re here.’

Jacob looked at his lover’s concerned face and knew that things had just gotten worse. ‘What is it?’

‘Atlantis has no control over the city anymore, only the control and gate room. She can’t do anything to stop or even delay the wraith.’

‘Sam, you and McKay stay here and get that program running. Adam and I’ll try and stop them!’ Jacob ordered his daughter.

‘Be careful, dad.’

Methos and Jacob left, armed with two guns, three daggers and one sword, to take on the wraith heading in their direction.

Jacob crept forward slowly. Just beyond the corner he was approaching, he could hear distinctive footsteps of the wraith as they walked down the corridor. Peeking around the corner he saw five monstrous aliens coming towards him. *I didn’t believe it when the reports from the Tau’ri database said they were fearsome!* Selmak remarked in his mind.
*I know how you feel. Selmak, we could die from their feeding as well, right?*

*Yes, Jacob. If I understood it correctly, they absorb the life energy of their victim and integrate it into their own metabolism.*

*What about Methos? Can they hurt him?* Jacob asked concerned.

*That I don’t know, my friend. Your mate’s too unpredictable to tell,* Selmak told him regretful.

Looking back at Methos, he tried to estimate his lover’s chances. ‘He’s lived for such a long time, has come back from another plane of existence. Can these vampires really hurt him?’

Methos looked back at his lover and knew what he was thinking. “I don’t know what would happen, Jacob. But I can tell you that I plan to avoid finding out!”

Calmed a bit by his lover’s promise, Jacob gave him the signal and they stepped around the corner.

Shooting at their enemies didn’t even seem to slow them down. Methos let go of his useless gun and drew his sword.

He was still too weak to use his quickening, but that didn’t slow down his reflexes. Stabbing and hacking at the arms reaching for him, while Jacob watched his back, he soon discovered the problem with hitting them mortally. The armour they were wearing wasn’t like anything Methos had come across before. ‘Then go for the neck! You have countless practice with that!’

Using this method he managed to kill the three wraith in front of him. Feeling a sudden cold entering his mind he turned around and saw Jacob pressed against the wall by a wraith. This one wore no mask and seemed less bulky than the others had been. The wraith raised his hand and prepared to feed on Jacob.

“NO!” Methos jumped forward. Had he thought the move through, he would have run the wraith through with his sword or decapitated him instead. Seeing as he was acting on instinct though, he tackled the wraith to get his lover free. What he hadn’t taken into consideration was that the wraith was not only stronger than him but poised to feed as well.
The wraith let go of Jacob immediately and caught Methos by the neck. Turning around he threw him to the floor with strength so great that it almost broke his neck. Methos struggled against the strong arm holding him before his shirt was ripped open and the wraith smirked at him, before placing his hand on Methos’ chest.

Just as the world exploded with pain, Methos heard his Jacob’s voice screaming, “METHOS!”

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Chapter 05

Jacob woke up from the shock he’d felt when the second wraith he’d shot suddenly grabbed him and pinned him against the wall.

*Jacob!* Selmak screamed as she felt his terror racing through their bond.

Out of the corner of his eyes Jacob saw Methos jumping running towards him, ready to take on the arrogantly smirking wraith holding him.

‘NO, METHOS!’

Suddenly the pressure holding him vanished. He slithered to the floor still in shock. He saw the wraith grab his lover in midair and throw him to the floor. Jacob winced at the crack that sounded through the corridor as Methos’ head hit the floor. ‘That probably would have killed anyone else!’

Struggling to stand, Jacob looked for his weapon when the wraith struck again.

A terrible scream escaped Methos as the wraith started feeding from him. Jacob screamed his lovers name again and again, and the screaming suddenly stopped. Looking at his lover’s still form he feared the worst.

*Calm down, Jacob. He hasn’t aged like the other victims we read about!*
Jacob was shocked when the wraith stood up, looking confused. It staggered a few paces before it went down to its knees. The corridor seemed to lighten up as the wraith let out a one chilling inhuman scream, “WWWROOOOAAAARRRRRR!”

Light flowed out of his chest and crept towards Methos’ fallen form, slowly settling like mist over his body before being absorbed. His lover took a deep breath and sat up. Looking confused at the wraith kneeling a few paces away, he tried to glide backwards, away from the still screaming wraith.

What happened then would be burnt into Jacob’s mind forever. He saw a line of pure white light connecting his lover and the wraith. The screaming reached a new height as the wraith’s body began twitch uncontrollably.

Locking eyes with the Wraith, Methos saw death creeping up on it. Registering movement in the wraith face he looked away from those eyes and recoiled in disgust. The wraith seemed to decay before their eyes. Skin and flesh disintegrated into nothingness until only the bones and armour remained.

A sudden foreboding urged Methos to raise a shield around the wraith just moments before the remaining body exploded into a whirl of energy and dust. Methos was thrown back and landed hard against the wall, the free energy bearing down on him.

As it touched his skin Methos felt the now dead wraith’s pain and hunger. ‘It burns! Oh god, make it stop!’ Methos had never felt this much pain before – not even when he was in the clutches of the NID. It was a hundred times worse than the feeding he’d just gone through. It seemed as if his very soul took the brunt of this last attack.

As the pain got worse Methos felt as if his nerve endings were exploding. His body and mind couldn’t stand the attack any longer. Methos opened his arms gratefully to deaths’ soothing nothingness as it approached him.

Jacob slowly crawled towards his fallen lover. Panic gripped his mind and he felt blackness closing in on him. ‘Methos!’
*Sleep, Jacob. I’ll look after him,* Selmak promised before taking control of their weakening body.

Pushing all her strength into shortening the distance between her host and his lover, Selmak managed to get to Methos. Weakly raising her hand she felt for a pulse, and found none. Desperately trying to avoid transmitting her sudden fear through their bond, she felt for their bond with Methos. She found it strong as ever.

The sound of running registered in her mind. She raised her head and saw Samantha and Doctor McKay approaching.

“Dad!” Sam skidded to a halt and looked him over for injuries.

“Samantha.” Selmak answered weakly.

“Selmak! What happened? Is my father alright?” worriedly she grabbed her father’s hand.

“He’s very weak. One of the wraith fed on him, until Methos managed to distract it. Methos destroyed it.”

Seeing Methos still closed eyes and finding no pulse Sam locked panicked eyes with the Tok’ra. “He’s…”

“Yes, he is, but not permanently. I still feel our bond.”

Sam closed her eyes in relief. ‘Thank God!’ Remembering the unusually quiet Rodney behind, her she stated, “We’ve managed to activate the shield and weapons. Whatever Adam did to recharge the ZPM worked like magic.” Hearing the gasp beside her father she knew that Methos had just come back to live.

“ McKay! Carter!” Sheppard’s voice surprised them. Turning away from her family, she saw Davis and Sheppard running down the corridor. ‘That was timing!’ Sam was glad that Methos could keep his secret for a bit longer. ‘Or not,’ she corrected herself as her gaze drifted back to Rodney.
“Watch out, Colonel!” Paul shouted as a wraith reached out to grab him. He took hold of Sheppard’s arm and yanked him out of the wraith’s range.

Relieved at having escaped another feeding, Sheppard turned around and shot the remaining wraith. “Good work, major!” Suddenly an explosion seemed to make the whole city tremble. “What the hell?”

Paul looked at him equally worried. They slowly crept down the corridor but found no signs of any more wraith.

#Colonel Sheppard!#

“Chuck, what is it? We’re a bit busy down here!”

#Sir, the darts stopped transporting wraith to the city. Now they’re transporting them out! There are only three wraith signs left. Ronon and Teyla are tracking them.#

“Good! What about McKay?”

#He hasn’t answered yet, sir. But the shields are up and the weapons on the west side are firing at the darts.#

“Keep an eye on things, Chuck. Sheppard out.” John began running down the corridor, hearing Paul follow him while trying to get a hold of Rodney. “McKay! Do you hear me? McKay! Colonel Carter?!” receiving no answer both men sped up.

Coming around the corner they saw scorched walls and burn marks on the floor. What they saw at the end of the corridor, though, filled them with joy. “McKay! Carter!” John shouted to get their attention. Just then he saw fallen forms of General Carter and Doctor Pierson.

Fearing the worst, John was surprised to see Pierson looking the same, just out cold. The general looked weak but alert. When the general focused on John his eyes flashed. ‘The symbiote!’
“Selmak! Are you okay? What about Jacob and Adam?” Paul was relieved to see his friends relatively unharmed.

“We’re fine, Paul. Adam and Jacob are too weak right now. But otherwise we’ll be fine.”

“The wraith are gone… Shortly after the explosion the darts started beaming them up. What was that anyway? Did you two blow something up?” John asked pointing at the scorched floor.

“Wasn’t me!” Rodney shouted.

Sam interrupted him, “We don’t know, John. We heard the explosion just as we managed to stop the virus and install the ZPM.”

All eyes turned to Selmak, who remained studiously silent.

Tbc

Chapter 06

Slowly Methos opened his eyes. ‘Not again!’ he thought sluggishly when he found himself lying on a bed in the infirmary.

“Yes, you’re in the infirmary,” a voice to his right confirmed.

“Jacob!” Methos raised his head and worriedly looked his lover over for injuries. “Are you alright? How long was I out?”

“You were unconscious for eight hours. It’s now 2100. I was weak for a few hours myself, but Selmak kept me conscious long enough not to raise too many questions.” He looked critically at Methos before deciding that his lover looked strong enough. “Are you out of your bloody mind? You can’t just run around and tackle Wraith! You could have gotten yourself killed!”
Flinching at the furious voice, Methos blinked before defending himself, “You needed me! What did you want me to do? Sit there and watch him drain you?”

“For your information, it didn’t only feed on you! Dr. Keller found the wraith enzyme in my body as well and now has a mystery to solve!”

“What…?” came Methos weak trembling voice. “That damn wraith fed on him! But he still looks the same! How is that possible?” he thought before remembering the mentioning of Dr. Keller and solving a mystery.

“Shit…I’ll have to tell them, right Jacob?”

“That would probably the best. But first can you tell me what happened to the wraith after it fed on you?”

A sound let Jacob whirl around. “Fed on you?!” McKay exclaimed loud enough to bring the rest of his team running inside.

Looking around swiftly, John determined that there was no immediate threat and turned to Rodney. “Who was fed on?”

“Them!” Rodney couldn’t bring himself to elaborate. When he heard the beginning of the conversation he had been on his way out. But when he heard that both Carter and Pierson had been fed on his mind couldn’t wrap around it.

Questioningly John looked at the men. “Care to explain?”

Grimacing, Methos lay back down and covered his face with his hand. Jacob gently laid his hand on Methos arms, squeezing reassuringly. Grateful, Methos took his hands down and focused on the expectant faces. “I’m an Ancient. Now can you leave me alone?” he asked hopeful.

The silence was broken only by Jacob’s muffled laughter. “Only you, love!”
“Don’t joke about things like that, Pierson!” John exclaimed, remembering the Ancients they had met.

“I assure you, colonel, he’s not joking.” Sam stood in the doorway. Ignoring the incredulous looks she went over to her father. “Are you two okay?”

“Now that Adam is awake, yes.”

“Methos!” McKay exclaimed. “The symbiote, Selmir, called him Methos! Is that your true name?”

“It’s Selmak, Rodney, but very good,” Methos praised him. “Yes, that is the name I was born with 12,000 years ago.” Letting them absorb this he paused and looked at them. They were surprised, but nothing else showed on their faces.

John tried to wrap his mind around it, ’12,000 years old! Wow!’

Teyla, always the practical one, asked, “But you are not ascended. You feel different.”

Surprised eyes turned on her as Methos replied, “That’s right. I’m the son of an Ancient and a human. I am different enough to have been cast out 10,000 years ago. Those years I spent on earth.” Methos gave them a brief summary of what had happened and how he’d come to join the SGC.

“And you are just here for research? You don’t want to take the city back?” McKay asked suspiciously.

“Not right now, no. I just want to learn. But now that I’ve met the Wraith, I think that it’s time for me to help you fight them.”

“Right. So what did you do to make the wraith explode?” Rodney remembered the general’s question before he had interrupted them.

“I think that happened because my power always returns to me. While the wraith was absorbing my power, it created a feedback and forced itself out from his body. But as his body theoretically thought it was feeding from me, it fed upon itself.” Methos shuddered remembering the decaying
wraith. “After that, the backlash forced the remaining energy to explode outward. Pop goes the weasel.”

“But what about the black… thing… that attacked you afterwards?” Jacob asked gently, seeing the look of distress cross his lover’s face.

“That was the wraith’s own energy. I can’t say more about it. I only felt hunger and hate. It hurt… deep inside, it hurt me. My quickening didn’t want it near me and to stop the absorbing, it killed me.”

“What about the feeding on me? I felt weak but that was it,” Jacob asked.

“I think I could explain it better than my son,” a new voice said from the doorway.

“Dad! You really have to stop flashing in and out like that!”

“But it’s fun to listen to you! Do you want the explanation or should I go ahead?” Moros asked with a smug grin.

“That’s an ascended Ancient?!?!?” flash through the minds of the people present, who hadn’t met Moros before.

Smiling mischievously at his son, Moros started to explain, “Well… he couldn’t really feed on Jacob Carter because of the bond you share with him. He can use some of your powers and unconsciously grabbed at them to stop the ageing process. The life force he lost was immediately replaced by yours. It left him weak, because, even though you are bonded, it’s not his own energy.”

“So as long as Pierson is alive he can’t die?” Rodney exclaimed.

“That’s right. But if my son dies, Jacob will soon follow.”

******************
After the huge revelation Dr. Keller had thrown them out, only keeping Jacob and Methos for observation as they continued to recover their strength.

Sam had asked John, Ronon, Teyla and Rodney not to tell anyone else and left. Rodney left as well, mumbling about an experiment with Radek, while Teyla serenely inclined her head and bid them good night.

That left Ronon and John standing in the hallway, unsure what to make of the happenings.

“So, he’s an Ancient?” Ronon asked when they turned in the direction of their personal quarters.

“Seems like it. You still want to fight him tomorrow?”

“More than ever! He can’t die?”

“Nope, apparently not.”

“And the Ancients won’t try to get revenge if I kick his ass?”

“Don’t think so…”

“Good. 0800?”

“0800.” John nodded and closed the door behind him, leaving Ronon anticipating the fight in the morning.

****************************

When Methos entered the gym at 0800 the next morning, he found people impatiently waiting for him. Sheppard, Sam, Teyla, and Evan were present. Even McKay and Zelenka had left their lab to watch this fight and met with their lovers, Katie and Amelia. Dr. Keller had only let him leave when he promised to come back later for another quick check-up.
“Okay guys. This REALLY is a test fight. So, no real damage, and no use of any strange techniques. We clear?” Sheppard handed them both a staff.

“Sure,” Methos agreed.

“Alright,” Ronon replied.

“Then let’s start!” Sheppard clapped his hands once.

Ronon didn’t hesitate. Taking a quick step forward he swung his staff and brought it down on Methos. Methos meanwhile hadn’t been idle and let himself fall to the floor to roll away and avoid the assault. ‘Let’s see how long he can keep this uncontrolled attacking up…’

While Ronon attacked again and again, Methos backed away and avoided all his opponents’ attacks.

“You a coward, or what?!” Ronon tried to provoke Methos.

“I always said ‘fight another day’. And I’m pretty bored over here!” Methos grinned at the enraged look on Ronon’s face. Suddenly changing tactics Methos charged forward into Ronon’s next attack and got under his defence.

Ronon let out a sound of surprise when the end of the staff was rammed into his stomach with an unexpected force. Whirling around, he tried to hit the once again fleeing Methos. ‘Damn it! Why can’t I get him?!’

“Emotions cloud your ability to think. What tactic does your enemy use? What are his abilities? How great is his physical strength? How good his endurance? I try to avoid fighting battles I don’t know for certain I can win!” Methos explained seeing the war in Ronon’s thought. Maybe he could teach him like he’d taught Teal’c? Not that Teal’c had needed any lessons in tactics… or patience for that matter…

“Stop talking and fight!” To spite his brazen comments, Ronon had to admit that the words of the man rang true. On the other hand, he’d always been a man to charge head first into every battle and until now this tactic had served him well.
Ronon swung his staff again, but this time Methos didn’t duck away. He remained standing there and anticipated the charge coming his way. Raising his own staff he began blocking each attack fluently. Their movements got quicker and more forceful. To those watching, it seemed as if the two men fighting were performing a well studied choreography. It was poetry in motion, almost like a dance, as fluent as an ever flowing stream. Ronon the yin and Methos the yang, as the immortal used the power of his opponent’s attacks to turn them against him – just like a true Tai Chi master would. He’d learned the style from the second student of the leader of a small empire during the beginning of the Tang dynasty that had been wiped out a few decades later and with it the fighting style. Pieces of it had been used for other martial arts, but mainly it was forgotten. He remembered how she had died on a hill surrounded by enemies, fighting till her last breath, her staff a blur of motion. In the end she was only human and succumbed to her exhaustion and death.

When Ronon attacked, Methos blocked and turned the attack against him, but never pressed an attack of his own. When Ronon took a step forward, Methos stepped back.

Minutes later they were still locked in battle, when Methos suddenly changed styles and tactics again and started actively attacking. In quick succession he forced Ronon into a defensive position, then into a retreat. The blows became stronger instead of weaker from exhaustion. A sudden hit to his right arm distracted Ronon enough to loosen his hold on the staff, a jab to his solar plexus made him stumble back. Momentarily stunned, he saw the staff whirling above his head, before he felt his feet kicked out from under him.

Heavily landing on the floor, Ronon lay there stunned. ‘Did I just…’

“Do you yield?” Methos asked as he placed the end of his staff under Ronon’s chin.

Ronon couldn’t even find the words to speak, let alone the air, that had been knocked out of him. He just stared at the other man.

A sudden laugh made both fighters’ jump. Looking over they saw Sheppard laughing and whooping in apparent joy. “Finally! Thank you Doctor Pierson! You don’t know how satisfying it is, to see Ronon get beat up for once! Usually he’s the one doing the beating up!” The others saw the humour in the situation as well. Lorne didn’t dare to show the trace of a smile though, just in case Ronon might be offended.

Still looking disbelievingly at the man who had just effortlessly beaten him, Ronon decided that it was high time to remedy his opinion of the man. “You win,” he growled gruffly. “What about close combat? You any good?”
“Care to find out?” Methos jumped back and threw his staff away.

Instead of answering, Ronon jumped up and attacked. Swinging a hard right hook at the other man’s jaw, he quickly discovered that it was almost impossible for him to match the lighter man’s speed, who just ducked out of the way of each attack.

Methos allowed himself to be hit in the stomach, to avoid frustrating the other man too much. He groaned at the impact. ‘Damn, he’s just as strong as Teal’c!'

Methos felt the damage heal immediately and began to match him blow for blow. As he periodically changed from style to style, he was impressed with Ronon’s quick ability to adept his attacks.

Ronon was very impressed by Pierson. He was proving to be, if not as strong as Ronon, to be quicker on his feet and in his thinking. He also seemed to have an enormous endurance, as he hadn’t even broken into a sweat.

Using a shift in Methos’ balance, he kicked out, knocking the Ancient back several steps. Jumping after him, he landed a direct hit to the face and felt the nose break under the onslaught. ‘Shit! I didn’t mean to really hurt him!’

Blood was running from Methos nose and tears sprung to his eyes. ‘Damn, that hurt!’

Concerned, Ronon took a step forward to take a look at the injury, but was met with a right hook, which hit him on the left temple. Stumbling back, Ronon’s hands flew to his face. He wiped the blood, now flowing freely from the cut beneath his eye, away before it could disturb his sight.

When he could see clearly again he glared at his opponent, before starting to laugh. “Thanks,” he croaked, surprising himself with the hoarseness of his voice. “I don’t often get to let go like that.”

Methos blinked a few times before starting to laugh as well. “I wouldn’t have guessed!”

Ronon watched in astonishment as Methos’ bleeding slowed down to a trickle and then stopped. He then proceeded to watch as the cartilage and bond set itself and the bruising disappeared. If he hadn’t known, he’d never have known that it had been broken only a few minutes before.
“Handy trick,” he gestured to the now healed face.

Wiping the blood away, Methos smirked, “That’s for sure.”

“Thought I had you there for a minute.”

“I’m not that easy to beat.”

“Can you teach me?”

“Sure. But it’s enough for now, don’t you think?” Methos asked pointing at Ronon’s still bleeding face.

After thinking about it for a second, Methos went over to Ronon and carefully raised his hand. Ronon watched him curiously but didn’t try to stop him. When he felt the hand on his face he closed his eyes at the sting. ‘Don’t be such a baby. You’ve had worse!’

While Ronon had his eyes closed, the others in the room saw Methos’ hand glow and watched as the damage seemed to repair itself.

“Well, how about breakfast? I’m rather hungry!” Methos exclaimed, before turning to his lover. Grabbing his arm he yanked him outside to go to the mess.

As he felt a tingling feeling on his face he opened his eyes in time to see Pierson turn away from him. He raised his eyebrow at the way the doctor grabbed the general and was surprised to feel no pain or discomfort from his injury. Feeling his temple he was surprised to feel no injury, only blood that was still marring his face.

He blinked and asked bewildered, “What???”

“He healed you.” Evan suddenly stood in front of him. Looking him over he deemed his lover alright and stepped back. “He’s good,” Evan said neutrally.
Reluctantly, Ronon had to admit, “That he is.”

Tbc

Chapter 07

Jacob took his place at Methos’ table, setting down his tray. When they had entered the mess, merely half an hour after Methos fight with Ronon, it became evident that no matter where you went, you could always count on the grapevine to spread gossip. He heard the excited chatter, as the people around them continued shooting appraising looks at his lover.

“Did you hear about…”

“Awesome fight…”

”Can you believe that the skinny guy…”

Methos was happily eating his breakfast, ignoring the hushed voices. He never did seem to care when people talked about him.

“Is this seat taken?”

Jacob looked up and saw Sheppard’s female team member standing there with a tray in her hand. “No, please take a seat, Ms. Emmagan.”

“Please call me Teyla. Your fight was very impressive, Doctor Pierson. And that you bothered to heal the damage done to Ronon just makes you seem a bit… well… unreal.”

“Teyla then. Please call me Adam. Well, it was my fault that he was hurt in the first place. So…,” Methos shrugged.
“But it was really cool!” John Sheppard said as he placed his own breakfast on the table next to Jacob. “General,” he nodded in greeting and sat down.

“Colonel,” Jacob nodded back. “Why are you all so happy about Dex loosing?”

“Probably because they regularly get their asses kicked. All but Teyla, that is.” Rodney sat down next to Methos without preamble and immediately began to eat.

“He’s pretty good. But you shouldn’t forget that I have a little more practice.” Methos laughed at their shamed faces.

John looked at him thoughtfully, “True. Hopefully Ronon isn’t a sore looser.”

“He never had any problems when I won our spars,” Teyla reminded him.

“Yeah, but that’s because you’d have kicked his ass for being so pathetic!” Rodney laughed. He muttered, “Speak of the devil…” as the object of their conversation walked through the door with Lorne.

“Is it me or are they friends all of a sudden?” he asked a bit irritated as he saw Ronon hand the major a tray.

“They’ve been friends for a while, Rodney. Surely you must have noticed that by now?” Teyla asked quietly. She knew of her friend’s relationship with the major. She also knew that it would be better to keep it secret.

“Of course I’ve noticed! I’m not dumb you know!” he huffed angrily before his curiosity got the better off him again. “But it’s almost as if they’re…”

“McKay!” At Sheppard’s sharp tone, Rodney looked at him and saw the warning look. Meredith Rodney McKay may be impossible when it came to interaction with other people, but it could never be said he was slow on the uptake.

Confused, he blinked at his team leader before, not a light bulb, but a supernova went off in his head. “OH!” he exclaimed loudly, before his brain went into overdrive.
He took a deep breath and hastily grabbed his coffee, just as Ronon and Lorne arrived at their table.

Ronon placed his tray on the table then grabbed Evan’s and set it down as well. He nodded at them before sitting down. Immediately he started stuffing his face with the food that was piled on his tray.

Jacob and Methos looked on horrified fascination. How could one man eat so much without pausing to breathe?

John smothered a laugh at their expressions. ‘Like a car-wreck! You just can’t look away!’

“Ronon,” Evan admonished quietly. And, in fact, after a quick look at his lover, Ronon slowed down considerably.

That was too much for Rodney and he began sputtering, looking at Ronon and Evan. “So, you two making like bunnies?”

Silence descended over the table. Ronon had halted mid-bite, while Evan looked like a deer caught in the headlights and held his cup in a death grip. John looked ready to kill the scientist, before hastily putting his hands over his ears. Teyla looked exasperated at the oblivious man who continued to look at them enquiringly, his face as red as a tomato.

Methos couldn’t help it, he began laughing. He laughed so hard he almost fell out of his chair. Only Teyla’s quick reflexes kept him from landing on the floor.

“McKay, you ever heard of ‘DADT’?” Jacob asked very quietly.

“Sure. But that’s a totally dumb rule! What is it for anyway? And it doesn’t even apply to them, as Ronon’s definitely not a G.I. Joe soldier from America.”

“Nevertheless, McKay! What about Lorne? Do you have any idea what could happen to him if word got out? For God’s sake! You seem to have forgotten that he is an American soldier and in charge of one of our teams!” John hissed furiously. It couldn’t be helped now. It was pure luck
that no one was in their immediate vicinity, who could have overheard them. “And as his superior
I would have to call it in…”

“Fuck… I… oh God…” Rodney paled and looked at Lorne. He still hadn’t reacted outwardly but
his knuckles were white from their death grip on the cup. “I’m sorry, Lorne! I didn’t think…”

“No, obviously you didn’t!” Ronon exclaimed before attempting to stand up, but John’s and
Teyla’s hands on his arms held him back. “If you ever pull a stunt like that again you’ll regret it,
understand?”

Swallowing the shame and hurt Rodney, nodded before looking down at the table. ‘Shit! How
could you be such an idiot! They’re trying their best not to be discovered and you just…’

Feeling a hand on his arm he looked up into the warm blue eyes of Lorne. “It’s okay, Mc…
Rodney. Just… try not to say things like that in public.” Evan smiled gently before sitting back
down and resuming his breakfast. The others followed his lead hesitantly.

The silence was still tense, so Methos decided to break it, “When should we start with the lessons
Ronon?”

Remembering his defeat Ronon, looked up and understood what Methos was trying to do. “How
about tomorrow?”

“Sounds good. Same time?”

“Hey, is that private tutoring, or can anyone take part in it?” John asked enthusiastic.

“That is a really good idea, John. May I take part in those lessons as well, Adam?” Teyla enquired
in a dignified manner, while inwardly just as excited as John was at the opportunity to learn new
kinds of martial arts.

Shrugging, Methos replied, “Sure, the more the merrier! Hey, at least I get the pleasure of beating
you all up!”

John shook his head before gleefully exclaiming, “Dream on, Pierson. Teyla will kick your ass!”
“We’ll see, colonel, we’ll see.”

“God, how could I be so stupid! I might just as well have made a citywide announcement!” Rodney rambled as he sat in his friend’s lab. Katie had tried to console him but she just didn’t understand the mistake he’d made and how he had managed to destroy the little trust that Ronon had had in him in the process.

“Calm down, Rodney. They know it wasn’t deliberate.” Seeing his Rodney’s state of mind, Radek was trying his best to calm him down. “If you don’t calm down I will call your girlfriend…”

“I could still be responsible for those dumb military jocks shipping Lorne home! I didn’t think! I never think and that gets people hurt!” Taking a deep breath Rodney registered what Radek had just said, “Girlfriend? She is not my…” seeing Radek’s smirk grow he knew he had lost, “Okay, maybe she is my girlfriend. By the way that sounds as if we are fifteen!”

“Sometime you act that way! And now enough your guilt trip, Rodney! So maybe it’s true that you aren’t the most perceptive person when it comes to others, but you’d never hurt anyone deliberately!”

“Of course not!” Rodney exclaimed before continuing in a quieter tone, “Never again.”

Having heard enough, and knowing he wouldn’t have to warn McKay about endangering his lover again; Ronon crept back to Evan’s office.

When the door opened Evan looked up from the report he was reading. “You fed him to the fishes?” he asked only half joking. Evan knew his lover well enough to know that sometimes he couldn’t hold back his impulses.

Letting himself unceremoniously fall into a chair across the table from Evan, Ronon stated, “No,
he was already beating himself up. Planned to do it for him, but didn’t want to involve Zelenka.”

“Good. He really needs to be more careful about things like this.”

“I know, love, I know.”

As a matter of fact, Teyla almost beat him the first time they practiced together. After a few moments of fighting with her, he finally managed to pin her down by analyzing her movements, taking her speed and quick reflexes into account. After that everyone agreed that Methos should teach them, while Ronon and Teyla would continue to teach the marines, seeing as Methos didn’t want too much attention focused on him.

Two weeks after their arrival, Methos began teaching John and Evan to control their Ancient powers. They’d never be as strong as Jack, but where John acted on pure instinct Evan thought methodically. After three weeks of grueling practice, they’d learned how to raise shields around themselves and heal minor injuries. As they learned control, they also learned to listen to Atlantis. She was a constant murmur in their heads and warned them about the inherent dangers the various devices Rodney and Radek tried to activate possessed.

They also discovered, due to Rodney’s demands to learn as well, that Atlantis couldn’t communicate with those who had received the gene therapy. Apparently only the people born with it had the cerebral requirements to talk telepathically and use the powers and control. Methos thought that it might stem as far back as to the development of the embryo.

He ran some tests using the medical equipment to monitor himself and discovered that whenever he accessed his powers, the brain activity level rose. Several areas of the brain, that the average person rarely used at all, showed a dramatic increase in activity. Lorne and Sheppard’s scans showed less of an increase, but still significant. He guessed that these synapses were made at birth. McKay did have a little more brain activity when he used Ancient technology, but it was not in that specific area. The only person who seemed to be interested in his discovery though, was the reluctant CMO, Dr. Keller.

He theorized that Jack’s would not only be stronger because of his close relation to an Ancient, but that the Ancient Repositories of Knowledge had also forced more of those synapses open than had been at birth. This would be logical, seeing as he showed much stronger healing powers while he had it downloaded. It made sense that those synapses had remained open, but he hadn’t
practiced enough with them. It might even be, that because they were forced open, that Jack wasn’t used to using them and still had to learn how to access them.

John Sheppard only had one real problem in these strangely peaceful times; for even their missions were going surprisingly well, with no emergencies and no new enemies. If General O’Neill had been there, he would have deemed it as boring. John was getting frustrated, for he still hadn’t managed to get any closer to Major Davis than they day they’d arrived.

Now that Methos had stopped being a slave driver about their lessons, he realized that Davis was always sitting alone at meals. You only saw him working or drinking coffee.

John decided to ask Methos and Jacob about the major’s odd behavior. “Hey, can I ask you guys a personal question?”

Jacob looked at him curiously before answering, “Sure. What about?”

“Davis, he’s acting a bit strange. He isn’t making any friends and he’s alone all the time. Has he always been like that?”

Seeing the concern in John’s eyes, Jacob looked back at the last two weeks. *He’s right, Jacob. We’ve all been so busy that he got left behind,* Selmak remarked.

Jacob couldn’t believe that he’d ignored his friend. The last few weeks had been going so smoothly. Methos’ research was going well, and he’d kept himself busy spending time with his daughter and doing research of his own. “Paul normally is a friendly person. I really can’t explain why he hasn’t made any friends yet…”

“It might have to do with what happened on earth before he was sent here. But we don’t really know what happened,” Methos uttered rather concerned. “Maybe you should just ask him?”

John looked into Pierson’s old and wise eyes. Biting his lip nervously, he asked, “What if he tells me to stop being so damn nosy?”

“Then you tell him why you’re concerned! This isn’t the right time to be stubborn, Sheppard!”
“You’re right. I’ll go look for him.” John left in a hurry, searching for the man he desired and had ignored.

*******************

“Hey, Davis! You got a minute?” Paul almost jumped out of his skin, as the unexpected voice interrupted his ponderings.

Looking up he saw the object of those thoughts standing in the doorway, “Sure, colonel, come on in.”

John eyed the major critically. To his dismay, he saw signs of exhaustion, many sleepless nights and an even paler visage than on arrival. “I couldn’t help but notice that you never sit with us during meals. That you never sit with anyone for that matter. Do you have a good reason for that?”

Paul paled even further and stuttered, “I… I… I don’t…” he gathered his wits together slightly. “I don’t know what you’re talking about, colonel.”

“We’ve all been so busy with ourselves that we didn’t even register your absence. I’m sorry ‘bout that,” John told him while leaning with his hip against Paul’s desk. “Now, major, please; tell me what the matter is. You’ve changed a lot from than the man I met at the SGC. I want to know why. That man was much more carefree. Now it seems as if you’re just hiding. Hiding from your friends, hiding from yourself – hiding from me.”

“Colonel…”

“Paul, please I really want to help you. I hate seeing you desolate, alone and suffering.”

Paul looked at the colonel. Was this his chance to get closer to the man, or would it push him away for good? The last few weeks Paul had been busy going through records and databases. When he’d finally discovered that Jacob and Methos had become friends, not only with Sheppard, but the whole team, he’d felt jealous. ‘And that made you hide even more,’ he chided himself.

Seeing Paul continue to hesitate, John decided to ask him directly, “What happened to make you come here? Pierson said that something happened, but couldn’t tell me what.”
Sighing, Paul decided to trust the man and began, “The Trust tried to blackmail me into getting them access to the Pentagon and the SGC. General O’Neill and the President decided to send me here to keep me safe.”

“What did they blackmail you with?” John asked before stopping short. ‘Why would he tell me that?’ He flushed a bit before quickly adding, “Sorry, sorry! I know it’s none of my business!”

“No, it’s okay. I’ve seen that you have no problem with either Dex and Lorne or Adam and Jacob.” Taking a deep breath he confessed, “I’m gay. And I met a man and started a relationship. Or what I thought to be a relationship. What I didn’t know back then, was that he was a Trust agent. I was his assignment, he was told to either convert or blackmail me.”

“Shit! What sorta asshole would do that?!” John exclaimed. Now he could see why Paul was reluctant to making new friends. ‘I’d be hesitant too, if something like that happened to me.’
“Don’t worry; there aren’t any Trust agents on Atlantis. We take care of each other! I… we’ll take care of you.”

Paul looked at him hope glittering in his slightly glassy eyes. Somehow when John Sheppard promised this to him, it made him feel warm inside. He noticed the slip of the tongue. Maybe… but he shouldn’t let his hopes get up. He was sure that John was just being nice. Still, he noticed that his ears were slightly warmer than usual.

John’s eyes widened as he remembered Paul’s revelation. “You’re gay?” he couldn’t help asking. Seeing Paul loose the slight color he had regained during their conversation, he hurriedly asked, “So… uh… could you… would you go on a date with me?” John couldn’t believe he had been that blunt! Paul stood there stunned speechless, so John hurriedly added, “I mean there isn’t much to do for a date, but we could maybe get a bit food and go to the south balcony. For a picnic, you know…” he trailed off.

Paul couldn’t believe that the man had just asked him on a date! ‘Say something, you idiot!’ “I’d really like that, Colonel.” The heat had spread from his ears to the rest of his head. He was certain, that he was blushing like mad.

“Hey, if we’re going on a date, you have to call me John.”

“John,” Paul let the name roll over his tongue. ‘John,’ he sighed internally.
Sheppard shivered at the tone and knew that this was the beginning of something new and exciting for both of them.

Tbc

Chapter 08

“Slow down, Sheppard!” Evan exclaimed while laughing at the way his CO was practically glowing as he practically skipped around the office. “Now, what was that about?”

“I said I’ve got a date!” he twirled around in a circle, his grin so broad, that Evan was surprised his jaw hadn’t broken – or at the very least become dislocated.

Evan raised an eyebrow à la Teal’c, slightly stunned at the overwhelming happiness Sheppard radiated. He asked, “A date? Dare I ask who it’s with, sir?”

“If we played by the rules; nope. But as I know that you understand; yes, you can!”

The innate confusion following the veiled comment cleared immediately as Evan remembered the looks John had been shooting at a certain guy. Deciding to be blunt he asked, “It’s Major Davis, right?”

John stopped short in his rendition of dancing and sputtered. He sat down where he stood; forgetting that there wasn’t any chair there and promptly crashed to the floor. He stammered, “What the f… h… how did you know?”

Evan snickered at the scene before him with the stunned and ruffled colonel. He replied, “It was kinda obvious, John. Sometimes you remind me of Ronon!” He laughed out loud at the look of irritation this earned him. “Ronon looks at me like that all the time. He said that he can’t help himself!”

“What the hell are you talking about, Lorne?!”
“I’m talking about the fact that whenever Davis is in the vicinity, you watch him like a hawk. Your gaze never leaves him,” he said before laughing again. “That and the fact that Pierson warned me in advance!”

“WHAT! Pierson told you I… that I… Damn, that man can be a real pest sometimes!” John sat back and sulked over the fact that he hadn’t been able to surprise the other team leader.

“So, when is that date and what are you planning?” Evan tried to get them back on track.

“It’s tomorrow. I thought a picnic on the south balcony sounded good. We wouldn’t be seen and we’d be able to talk freely.”

“And that way you can get him to chill out a bit. Cadman told me that he seemed to have a cold attitude towards everyone other than Colonel Carter, General Carter and Doctor Pierson.”

John grimaced at that. “Yeah, he also mentioned that to me. But that shouldn’t be a problem anymore. I can’t tell you much about it, but it seems like his trust was abused on earth, that’s why he’s here.”

Evan could totally sympathise with that. How often had his trust been misplaced? How can you continue to trust people, if all they want to do is kick you back down again every time you manage to stand up?

“I understand, sir. I’ll tell Cadman to let it be,” Evan replied before returning to his report.

*********************

Two days later Methos woke with a scream and immediately jumped out of bed. ‘I have to go!’

Within seconds Jacob stood beside him and looked over at Methos, who was getting dressed. “Methos? What’s the matter?” He looked at the clock, it read 0600 hours.

“Have to go back to earth!”
Suddenly wide awake, Jacob grabbed his lover’s arm, “Why? Has something happened?”

Calming down a bit at the contact, Methos nodded, “Yeah, I heard Jack screaming in my mind. Something must have happened!”

Jacob let go and grabbed his own clothes. “Then come on! We have to wake Sam up and tell Sheppard.”

Activating his radio he said, “Sam! We need you in the control room!”

#I’m already there, dad,# answered Sam.

He hit himself on the forehead. “Of course you are. I keep forgetting what a workaholic you are. Well, stay put. We’ll call Sheppard. Meet you there in a few!” Jacob ended their conversation before calling Sheppard, “This is General Carter speaking. Colonel Sheppard, come to the control room immediately. It’s urgent! Do you copy?”

Sheppard’s sleepy voice replied, #Understood. I’ll be there in ten.# They heard a big yawn echo over the radio. #Over.#

Methos and Jacob arrived at the control room and saw Sam waiting in her office. Despite the early hour she was already in uniform and busy working.

Mere seconds later a dishevelled Colonel and Major arrived. “Davis, I don’t remember calling for you,” Jacob remarked while trying to keep his face blank.

As Paul blushed and tried to find an answer, Methos hastily interrupted, “I have to go to earth now, Sam! Something’s happened to Jack!”

“What happened?” Sam asked now equally concerned.

“I don’t know. I just woke up feeling his fear. I think it was for Daniel.”
“Okay, it’s an emergency, and you can charge the ZPM up again when you get back. Dad, are you going with him?”

Jacob looked at Methos and saw something in his eyes that told him to stay on Atlantis. “No, I’ll stay here and continue going through the database. It won’t take very long, right?” he asked his lover.

“I don’t know. It depends on what happened. Thanks for understanding, Jacob.” Methos kissed his lover grateful.

“Don’t worry, Pierson. We’ll take care of him!” John joked as they broke apart again.

Having calmed down a bit, Methos replied sharply, “But not too much, colonel! You hear me? You’ve got your own partner now!”

John smirked and sent a gentle smile at Paul. The others saw it and knew that the couple had finally gotten their act together.

Turning around everyone, excluding Methos, entered the control room. Sam ordered, “Sergeant, please dial earth.” The immortal was on his way down to the Stargate.

“Yes, ma’am.” He saluted and started the dialling sequence.

“SGC, here is Colonel Carter from Atlantis. Do you copy?”

#We’re reading you loud and clear. Colonel Carter, what can we do for you?# Landry’s voice answered through the radio a few seconds later.

“Doctor Pierson wants to visit earth. He says it’s urgent, sir.”

#Send him through. I think I know what this is about.#
Methos raised an eyebrow. If Landry already knew that something was going on and didn’t sound too worried, then it must be under control. ‘For the moment, at least!’

“He’s on his way. Atlantis out,” Sam ended the conversation before turning to Methos. “Be careful, Adam. It could have something to do with what happened to Paul.” At his confused look she elaborated, “The Trust.”

Methos whirled around and looked at Paul. There were shadows there, showing of great emotional trauma, but not the kind that physical abuse would have brought upon him. ‘But what happened then? What did they do to him?’


“I’ll do that.” Methos bade a quick goodbye to Atlantis and stepped through the gate. The faces of a concerned lover and anxious friends watched him disappear through the gate.

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“Doctor Pierson! Good to see you. Please accompany me,” Landry greeted Methos when he arrived at the SGC and motioned for him to follow.

“General,” he greeted back and fell into step behind the man. When he entered the conference room he saw Daniel and Jack sitting at the table. Jack’s head was resting on his arms which were lying on the table, and that which was visible of his complexion was waxy.

Concerned, Methos rushed over and gently put a hand on his cousin’s shoulder. “Jack? Are you okay?”

The figure didn’t react other than mumbling, “’m fine.” Even that was whispered and so faintly said, that Methos had to strain his hearing to catch it.

Turning to Daniel, Methos looked at him pleadingly. The archaeologist replied, “Three men from the Trust tried to kidnap him.” Methos’ eyes grew large in horror, then burn with anger, before they narrowed at the thought of the danger. Daniel continued, “They were waiting for him at his apartment. When we entered, they shot me.” Methos finally saw the blood on Daniel’s sweater.
Methos let go of Jack and carefully pulled up the sweater. He discovered a healed, but scared over, wound just under Daniel’s heart. Quickly extending a bit of his own power, Methos healed it completely so that no trace would remain.

“Thank you.” Daniel looked worriedly at Jack who had finally raised his head and was looking with a glazed look in his eyes at the place where the wound had been. He kept seeing Daniel’s shocked expression and the gunshot wound superimposed over the image in front of him. He barely even reacted to Daniel waving a hand in front of his face.

Methos, on the other hand, grabbed his cousin’s face and looked him in the eyes. He drew back slightly in surprise. He had finally managed to get the other man’s attention though. “Jack? What happened to you?” Now that Jack was looking at him he saw a change in his features. The hair had turned into a dark honey brown and the face had become younger. Instead of seeming to be in his fifties, like he should, he looked like he was closer to being forty. The eyes remained identical though. As a matter of fact, they seemed even more shadowed than before. More pain, shame and guilt added to the masses that were already bubbling within the man. Methos cursed the men responsible in every language and every swearword he knew.

The question finally managed to get through Jack’s filters. “I don’t know… after they shot Danny, I blasted them. Killed them instantly. And then… when I healed him, I felt some sorta tingling sensation. Hank saw the change when he got there. Dunno how he knew to come though,” Jack explained in a dead voice.

“I called him, Jack. You were pretty out of it,” Daniel rubbed the man’s back. There was no reaction. “Still are.” His face scrunched up, he whispered, “Come back to me. Come back from that dark place you’re in. I need you.” He buried his face into the other man’s shoulder. “Don’t cut me out. Don’t let them win.” He felt the moisture brimming in his eyes as he fought back his tears.

Meanwhile, Methos pondered what the cause for Jack’s transformation could be. Finally he said, “I think that your powers are slowly restoring you to the peak of your health. Ancients always used their abilities, so your body was meant to age slower than the average human’s. Now that you’re constantly using your powers, first to help fight the Ori and now to heal Daniel, they’re slowly ‘de-aging’ you.”

Reluctantly accepting the explanation, Jack asked, “But what does the Trust want from me? I mean, they couldn’t have known about my powers, right?”

Daniel piped up, “Maybe they’re still looking for Methos?” At Methos’ questioning look he explained, “A member of the Trust started a ‘relationship’ with Paul and tried to blackmail him into finding a man named ‘Methos’. That’s why Paul had to leave earth. We sent him to Atlantis
to keep him safe. Somehow they knew that you were here.”

‘That explains a lot,’ Methos thought before coming back to his senses. “You can’t stay on earth! If they discover that you’re not human anymore they’ll experiment on you! And it’d be hard to hide the fact that you look younger. After everything people have done to find the elusive ‘fountain of youth’ I doubt they’d leave something like that unexplored. This is something you can’t hide.”

Jack finally started to come to life again. “This is the SCG, cousin dearest, weird things happen on a daily basis. Besides, I can’t just up and leave, Methos.” Daniel inwardly sighed in relief. The return of his sarcasm was a good sign that he was finally retreating from that endless dark chasm.

“I refuse to leave you here alone!”

“Gentlemen, I think we should talk to the President about it before discussing this further. I’ll call later. Jack, go back to your quarters and rest for a bit. You look like you could use it. I need to talk to Doctor Pierson for a bit,” Hank interrupted them.

**********************

Jack and Daniel slowly went back to Jack’s quarters. On their way they saw Teal’c walking towards them with his normal blank face. The other member, and former member, of SG-1 could see the well hidden concern in the large man’s eyes. “O’Neill, I have just been informed about what transpired. Are you well?”

“Yeah, now that we’re here, everything is fine and dandy.” Looking around Jack asked, “Where is Mitchell? I thought you went to visit his family?”

Teal’c couldn’t help the look of distaste that flickered across his face. “He is within his quarters.”

Daniel saw the grimace and inquired gently, “It didn’t go well, I guess?”

“Indeed. His father was not thrilled but accepted me as his son’s choice. His grandmother slightly suspicious of my intentions, but I was able to appease her.” Teal’c hesitated before continuing, “His mother on the left hand tried to force Cameron to end our relationship. She insulted him, calling him all kind of derogatory names. His father defended him, but she refused to stop, so we left.”
‘On the other hand,’ Teal’c,” Jack gently chided then let the rest sink in as he winced. “Shit… oh yeah, this exactly what he needs: a loving and supportive family watching his six!” He rolled his eyes.

“You should go back to him; he’s going to need you. His family’s always been very important for him,” Daniel advised.

“Indeed, Daniel Jackson. However, if you need anything do not hesitate to ask. Cameron would most likely be thankful for the diversion,” Teal’c told them before he inclined his head and headed back to his lover.

********************

Meanwhile Landry and Methos’ were sitting in Landry’s office.

“He can’t stay here, general.”

“I know that too, Methos. But he’s the only one in the US military that has a strong enough ATA gene to operate the chair in Antarctica, who’s on earth. That’ll be the president’s main concern. Otherwise he’d probably sent Jack to Atlantis without delay.”

“You need the ATA gene for that?” At Landry’s nod an idea came to mind. “And what if I can find someone to operate it instead?”

“We discretely tested all military personnel for the gene during their annual check-ups, as well as when they first enlist, and most of them have gone to Atlantis or are still too inexperienced.”

“What about someone, who isn’t in the military?”

“Doctor, we can’t just bring in a civilian!”
“How about someone, who’s similar to the Ancients?”

Landry caught onto Methos’ idea. “You’re thinking about one of those immortals? But I thought they couldn’t use the power like you can?”

“They can’t. But I could try and show him how to operate the chair,” Methos told him. “And I can personally vouch for him.”

The General looked at the half-Ancient thoughtfully. “Okay, Methos. I’ll make the suggestion to the President. If he agrees, you’ll have to give me a name so that we can investigate the man.”

“I can accept that. But I need your promise that you won’t use him for anything he doesn’t agree to. And I’ll speak with him alone.”

“The first I can promise you. But I’ll come with you!” Seeing Methos start to object he said, “It isn’t up for discussion, doctor. Now leave and wait outside so that I can call the President!”

After Methos left, Hank took a deep breath before reaching for the red phone. “Good morning, Mr. President.”

#Good morning, Hank. Is something the matter?#

“The Trust tried to abduct Jack last night.”

#Is he okay?# Hayes asked concerned.

“Yes, he is. He was a bit shook up there for a while though. Doctor Jackson was with him when the attack took place and is also doing fine.”

#What did they want from him?#

“We think they’re still trying to capture Dr. Pierson. But we have another problem, that directly puts Jack into danger. It seems that, due to the heritage we talked about, Jack is changing.”
#Changing how? Something bad?# the President asked worried.

“No, nothing bad. But he seems to get younger every time he uses his abilities.”

#Younger? Your facility just keeps on surprising me over and over again, Hank. Is it obvious?#

“He already looks over a decade younger and Methos told us that it probably isn’t over yet. He expects Jack to end up looking like he did in his prime – with the physical body to match. The positive angle of this is that he’ll stop complaining about his knees and back. However the downside is that we have to be concerned for his safety. It could be very dangerous for him on earth.”

#Y… you want to send him to Atlantis? No, Hank, that’s not possible. We need him here for the chair. And what about his position as the Asgard-ambassador?#

“Methos made the suggestion to bring in an immortal. He’d make sure that the man can operate the chair, and personally vouches for him.”

Silence met this statement as the President thought about it. #We’ll have to investigate this immortal. Who’ll contact him?#

Landry felt relieved and answered, “Methos and me are going to leave right after the investigation is concluded.”

Okay, Hank. I want Jack safe as much as you do. Even if I’d prefer if he didn’t leave earth, I can understand the necessity. What about the Asgard?#

“If we succeed, we’ll call Thor and see what he thinks about having a new ambassador.”

Alright. You have my permission to bring this immortal to the mountain, if the investigation goes well.”
“Thank you, Mr. President.” Landry ended the call.

********************

As Methos entered Landry’s office again, he saw the triumph on the man’s face. He asked, “You got the go-ahead?”

The general nodded. “Yes, now we just have to see who you’ve thought off. So, what’s his name?”

“Duncan MacLeod.”

Tbc

**Chapter 09**

As Methos had thought, the investigation hadn’t shown any criminal activity or, for that matter, much information about Mac’s personal life. Shortly after that, Landry and Methos had told Jack about their idea. He was slightly sceptic about the involvement of the immortal, who could be a potential threat to them. Simultaneously he was also glad that there was a chance for he and Daniel to escape the Trust.

Six hours later, they arrived in Seacouver in Washington State. After leaving the airport, Methos directed them to Joe’s bar.

As he entered, he knew that MacLeod wasn’t there, since he didn’t feel the presence of another immortal. A most welcome gruff voice sounded from behind the counter though saying, “We’re closed.”

“What, no beer for an old friend?” Methos asked while laughing inwardly.

Joe Dawson swung around at the voice of his friend. “ADAM!” Joe grabbed his cane, went around the corner and hugged the man. “Are you okay? Where the hell have you been? We’ve been searching fo you high and low all over the states!” Then he saw the other man behind his friend. “Hank? Adam, what’ve you gotten yourself into? What are you doing with the military?”
Landry was just as surprised to see the man, “Good to see you, Joe. I didn’t know we’d meet you here.”

Methos looked surprised and asked, “How do you know each other?”

“Oh, Hank and I met during our time in Vietnam when he flew in a Huey to pick up my team and me. We were both wounded and had beds next to each other while we were recuperating. We became friends then and stayed in touch.” Joe replied before whirling around and poked Methos’ chest. “And you damn well better answer my questions!”

“We should talk somewhere more private, Joe.” Methos directed them to Joe’s office. “General, can we tell him, too?”

Looking apologetic, Landry replied, “Sorry, Doctor. Let me make the call and we’ll see.” He left the room to call the president while Methos sat next to his friend.

“Are you okay? Have they done anything to you?” Joe asked in a hushed voice.

Methos answered in a serious tone, “No, Joe. They rescued me from a renegade group, who experimented on me. I can’t tell you anything else until Landry gets permission.”

“They experimented on you?” Shaking his head Joe told him, “MacLeod told me that you’d gone to Washington D.C. for an auction. After that you vanished off the face of the earth. We couldn’t even find a trace of you and thought that someone might have gotten to you. And you couldn’t even manage a call to tell me that you were okay? Damn, Methos, you’ve been missing for a year! We were out of our freaking minds with worry! And now you just prance in as if nothing were the matter! Sometimes I just don’t get you!” Joe shouted.

He hung his head, not quite meeting his friend’s eyes, ashamed that he’d been so caught up in everything that was going on across at least four galaxies, that he’d forgotten all about his friends back on earth. He resolved to talk to Joe about it later. He played around with his foot on the floor, knowing that what he was about to say would bother his friend even further. “Joe, Landry knows about the game.”

“What?!?! Are you crazy? Do you even know what you’ve done? Now they…”
“They won’t do anything to them. The President promised…”

“The President?” Joe blinked a few times, taken aback. “What President? The President of the United States?”

“Yes, Joe, that President,” Hank said as he entered the room. “He gave me permission to induct them both. But we don’t have much time, so I’d prefer if we found our missing immortal.”

Suspicious, Joe asked, “MacLeod? Why are you looking for him?”

“We want to offer him a job. I promise nothing will happen to him, Joe. Please trust me! He’ll be in for the ride of his life – but in a good way.” Methos pleaded.

“You want me to trust you with Mac’s live? When you didn’t even think to call us to tell us you were okay?” Joe asked enraged.

“Please, Joe. This isn’t about me – or even the game, for that matter. Trust me – it’s really important.”

“When is something not about you, Methos? Or have you forgotten what happened with Kronos?” Seeing the hurt look flash across his friend’s face, Joe knew he’d gone too far. Ashamed he looked down, “Sorry, I didn’t mean it like that. You know that I trust you.”

Hank looked on as Methos swallowed down the hurt and nodded. As the half-Ancient opened his mouth to retort, he decided to intervene before things got nasty. “Would you please call him, Joe? It’s a matter of national security. I promise you that we’ll tell you the whole story after he arrives.”

Methos quipped, “As a matter of fact, you might even say it’s a matter of global security.” He paused and winced. “I’ve been hanging around my cousin too much, haven’t I.”

Hank suppressed a smile. “It does seem that way.”

“Wait a second! Cousin? Since when do you have a cousin, Methos?” Joe blurted out.
“Sorry, can’t tell you that yet. But I will once Duncan gets here.”

“Alright, alright. Seriously, for a guy who’s over 5,000 years old, you can sure be impatient.” Joe took out his phone and called Duncan.

***********************

Half an hour later Duncan entered the bar, stopping short when he felt the buzz of another immortal inside.

Straightening he entered, reaching discretely for the sword under his coat. What Duncan wasn’t prepared to see, was his missing friend sitting with Joe and another man. “Adam!”

Methos jumped up and the two men embraced happy to see each other again after a year. “MacLeod, Good to see you!”

“Where have you been? In Bora-Bora?” Duncan asked, smiling in relief.

“Come on and sit down. I’ll tell you all about it. By the way, Duncan MacLeod this is Major General Henry Landry.” Seeing Duncan tense beside him, he continued, “One of his teams rescued me from a renegade group of assholes that kidnapped and experimented on me. He knows about the game.”

Duncan had to force himself not to react outwardly while shaking the general’s hand. ‘He told them?’

“Nice to meet you, Mr. MacLeod. I’ve got a request from President Hayes for you.”

“The President? Are you joking?” he asked in disbelief.

“No, Highlander. I swear that everything we’re about to tell you is the truth, the truth and nothing but the truth.” Methos replied.
After Methos and Landry had told them most of what had happened since their last meeting, Duncan and Joe sat there stunned.

“You don’t really think that we’ll fall for that, do you!” Duncan stood up abruptly. “You’ve got a lot of damn gall coming in here and telling us lies instead of the truth. You’ve been gone for a year, without a word, without even telling us where you were; now you come back here and tell us a shitload of crap about aliens and how immortals are the outcome of an experiment! Enough with your jokes, Methos! Either tell us the truth, or take your ‘general’ and climb back into whatever hold you crawled into for the past year!”

Methos temper got the better of him, and his powers burst forth from him. The bottles in Joe’s shelves began to rattle and suddenly Duncan found himself pressed against the wall, though the older immortal was standing at least a foot away. He snarled, “You don’t believe me? Then I’ll just have to show you!” With that warning Methos entered into Mac’s mind.

Joe and Hank could only sit there and watch. Methos’ powers kept them immobile. While Joe slowly became worried, Hank accepted this as the means necessary to convince the immortal.

Duncan, meanwhile, was trapped in his own mind. He saw things he could hardly believe, as Methos showed him what exactly had happened over the past year and what he knew of their origin. It came in flashes – scenes – each one merely a piece of a puzzle that alone meant nothing but together created a picture. He saw things from Methos’ perspective, yet knowing that it wasn’t his own thoughts or emotions

Methos waking up, strapped to a bed, while a man talked to him then being injected with something.

The pain of being beaten to death. The advancing violence as he came back to life again and again. The torture, as it was discovered that they hadn’t found a way for him to die.

The moment he saw Thor in front of him. Memories swarming into his head, after the block removed itself. The returning control over the powers he hadn’t known he possessed, and the knowledge about the birth of immortals as Margreb’s attempt to leave a legacy. Knowing that he was different than all others, that he truly was alone.
Meeting an older looking man, with glowing but loving eyes.

His father’s explanation off how Kronos had found him millennia ago.

Remembering the pain as he destroyed the Ori.

The fear of losing his only living relative while on Atlantis.

The hope as he thought of his friend, Duncan, to help him get Jack off earth. To save him.

Duncan felt his feet return to the floor. Shocked, he opened his eyes – he hadn’t been aware of closing them – and looked at his friend in a new light. Methos stood there looking at him face devoid of any emotion.

“Oh Lord… Methos…”

“Yes, Duncan. It all happened like that.”

Taking a deep breath Duncan could feel his thoughts running in circles inside his head. The only thing he was certain of, was that Methos had told him the truth. He felt the beginnings of a headache forming. “Okay, and what do you want me to do?”

“We want to see if you can operate a control chair the Ancients left behind on earth, along with some of their other technology.”

“You want me to fight their war?!”

“Calm down, Highlander. It’s your war too. You live on this planet just as much as they do. It’s in your own selfish best interest.” Methos was getting a bit impatient. He wanted Jack and Daniel on Atlantis and he wanted to get back to Jacob. “No, you won’t be fighting their wars for them. But in order to get Jack off this planet and into security, we need to find someone that can operate said
chair. You may be different than me, and can’t control your Quickening like I can, but it shouldn’t be a problem if you use your mental capabilities.”

Joe interrupted them, “What about me? What about the Watchers? If what you told us earlier is true, that the game isn’t real and immortals just a result of a megalomaniac Ancient, then what about us?”

Sighing Methos went to his friend’s side and laid his arm on Joe’s shoulder. “The Watchers were established by the Council to keep an eye on the immortals. They didn’t want to kill off all of the manipulated humans, but they wanted to keep track of them.”

“And you aren’t one of us?” Duncan asked, seeing Dawson speechless.

“No, I’m not. I’m the first and last direct descendant of an Ancient and a human. I’m the only one that survived their coming of age. Somehow I’m different. Not even the Ancients really know what I am. But now there’s Jack, my aunt’s grandson. Then there are the others with the ATA gene, some of them descendants, but many generations down, and others that are descended from the manipulated humans that haven’t procreated immortals yet. Then there’s the third group: the immortals, the other part of the results of an experiment.”

Silence descended over the men as they contemplated the news. Hank was silently watching the reactions playing across the two men’s faces. Methos, meanwhile, was impatiently waiting for them to come to a decision. Joe thought about the immortals that had lost their lives due to a rumour that was started millennia ago.

Duncan reached his decision and told them, “Okay, I’ll do it. How do we test if I can operate the chair?”

“We go to Antarctica of course!” Methos replied happy that his friend was at least willing to try.

“But in exchange you have to make a promise.”

Suspiciously narrowing his eyes, Methos asked, “And what would that be?”

“You have to promise me that you’ll try to end the game. If there isn’t a prize, then there’s no
honour or gain in killing each other. I think the others have the right to know that,” Duncan replied thinking about Amanda and Richie.

Methos shook his head. “They wouldn’t believe me. Why should they? Most of them don’t know me; those that know Methos exists learned to fear him, like Cassandra did,” Methos snarked at the Highlander. As much as he wanted to stop the game, he didn’t believe they’d trust him.

“That’s where you’re wrong. I felt the truth when you showed me what happened. They’ll feel it too. I’m sure!” Thoughtfully Duncan asked, “Can you link with them as well? Could you do it all at once and over distance? Or would you have to be near them?” Excited by the idea Duncan saw a future of peace and happiness for all immortals.

But Methos destroyed that future dream when he replied, “We’re all connected to each other already due to our Ancient genes, but I don’t think it would be possible for me to link to everyone at once.” Sighing in regret he continued, “I can only promise you, that someday we’ll try to find a solution for this. Maybe I could do it with the help of my cousin.”

Disappointed Duncan nodded, “That’ll have to be enough for now. So, when do we leave?”

“I suggest you quickly pack whatever you need for spending time in a very cold climate and we leave in two hours. Can you both be ready by then?” Hank enquired.

“Both? You mean I can come, too?” Joe asked excited by the idea of seeing this strange alien technology.

“Yes, you can. As Methos explained, you’re the Watchers of immortals. If you really want to change the dynamics between immortals, it would be good for the Watchers to know the truth about their origin. But,” Landry looked sternly at Joe, “your leaders will be required to meet with the president, make themselves known and arrange a treaty.”

Panicked Joe exclaimed, “I can’t just agree to that! I’ll have to talk to them and see what they decide.”

Hank smirked at him before replying, “Then I suggest you hop to it, seeing as you’ve only got two hours.”

Tbc
Chapter 10

Meanwhile on Atlantis

In the mess, John Sheppard was sitting with his team, eating dinner while discussing the events that had transpired that morning.

“You want me to believe that he could ‘feel’ the danger the general was in, several trillion light-years away on earth?” Rodney asked skeptically.

“Don’t forget that they’re cousins, Rodney,” John reminded him.

“And we’ve seen a few things he can do. Why shouldn’t he be able to establish a bond between them?” Teyla enquired.

“It’s just NOT possible!” Rodney exclaimed.

“Just as impossible as this?” General Carter’s voice to their left surprised them and they jumped. As they looked in his direction they saw a gentle glow emitting from his palm.

Rodney looked fascinated then began stuttering, “How…? What…?”

Laughing Jacob sat down, “I’m able to use a small percentage of his powers because of my bond with him. Even over this distance I can feel him in my mind. If I tried, I could even talk to him.”

“Why don’t you?” Ronon asked curiously. He’d seen the worried look on the Tok’ra’s face.

“It would distract him. I know what he’s doing right now and I know that he’s doing okay. I don’t use our bond to control every step he makes and vice versa.” Seeing the acceptance of the explanation on their faces he turned to Sheppard.
“So, colonel, you and Davis, huh?”

“Why can’t any of you mind your own business?” he asked while looking at his smirking team members.

“Because we care, John,” Teyla winked at the others.

“About gossip, or what?”

“What else?” Ronon laughed at the look on Sheppard’s face.

“They’re just joking, Colonel.” Jacob laughed at the sulking colonel.

“How did the date go, by the way?” Lorne enquired as he sat down next to Ronon.

“Lorne!”

Simultaneously the same question echoed from Teyla, Ronon and Rodney, “Date? You guys went on a date?”

“Yes, I did. And, no, I won’t tell you!”

“Why the hell not?” asked Rodney.

“Because it’s none of your business! How can we keep things like this secret if you’re always talking about it in public? Now butt out!”

The others looked around and saw that the mess was almost empty. Turning back to Sheppard they looked at him sternly.

Sighing, John accepted his fate. “Okay, okay. We went to the south balcony for a picnic.”
Satisfied?” John snarled at them and pouted. This was soon replaced by a smile as he remembered the day.

----Flashback----

Nervously, John picked at his BDU pants. He had just finished preparing everything for the picnic he’d planned. After bribing the kitchen staff, he was given a basket and was allowed to take some fruit and other small niceties with him. Lorne had loaded him a blanket that morning, with the sarcastic comment to return it in the same ‘clean’ state.

Now John was on his way to Paul’s at his quarters to pick him up. When he got there he saw the other man leaning against the wall outside his quarters, nervously chewing his bottom lip. John stopped short as he saw the way the BDU’s fit Paul tightly and accented his lean and well-trained figure. The dark cloth made John’s eyes travel up and down appreciatively, while he longed to taste the soft glistening lips.

Paul saw him stop in the doorway and greeted him with a shy smile. “Hi.”

“Hi,” John replied before pulling himself together. “You ready?”

“Yeah, where’re we going?”

“It’s a surprise. Come on.”

John led them back to the south balcony and was delighted with the surprised pleasure that surfaced on Paul’s face. “You really pulled it off? I thought you were just kidding.”

“Nope, not a chance.” John smiled and they sat down to talk and eat.

In the beginning they were both a bit hesitant to reveal very much about themselves, but soon they discovered similar interests and got bolder.

Hours later the food was almost gone and they were still talking. As Paul tried to suppress a yawn, John laughed and couldn’t resist asking, “Am I that boring?”
“No! I just didn’t sleep well last night.”

His brow furrowed in concern. “Did something happen?”

Blushing Paul looked down, “No, I was just too nervous and couldn’t sleep.”

John couldn’t stop the small laugh that escaped. “Same here,” he admitted.

“Really?” Paul’s head shot up. “I wouldn’t have taken you for someone who’d be nervous before a date.”

“It’s only when I really care for the person I’m going out with,” John revealed. “The last one was my wife. I haven’t been in a serious relationship since then.”

“Oh…” Paul mumbled in surprise. He hadn’t dared to hope for this much so quickly.

“Yeah, oh.” John took a deep breath and decided to be frank. “I like you, Paul. And maybe we could do this again?”

Exhilarated Paul answered, “I like you, too. And I’d love to!”

“Good,” John sighed in relief as the tension left his frame.

“Yeah, good.”

“So, would I be going too fast if I asked for a kiss?” John asked Paul half-jokingly.

“No, it wouldn’t.” Ears bright red, Paul leaned forward as did John, meeting each other halfway.
Their kiss was like a long anticipated event and both felt that this was right. Slowly John’s hand reached up to tangle in the other man’s short hair. The other arm inched around his companion’s waist, pulling the body towards his own, every instinct crying out for closer contact. He felt the desire to let himself drown in the major without ever surfacing again. Sighing in happiness, Paul and John got lost in each other and forgot the world around them for a few precious hours.

----End Flashback----


“Yeah? You want to enlighten us what your dates with Katie were like?” John snarked.

“Probably babbling about new doohickeys before they…” Ronon laughed at the scandalized look on Rodney’s face. ‘Take that, McKay!’

“Stop that, you stupid ape!” Rodney exclaimed. “Tell us about yours with Lorne!”

“Nope, none of your business.”

“Hey! Why did I have to tell and you don’t?”

“Cause you’re easy!” McKay and Ronon laughed at the outraged look on their leader’s face.

“Hey, Sheppard. Look who just came in.” Jacob remarked.

As John turned around he saw Paul getting a tray of food, looking around uncertainly and starting to sit down at another table.

John abruptly stood up, knocking into the table, and waved him over. “Davis! Come join us!”

Paul looked over and picked up his tray again. As he arrived at their table, John gestured towards
the empty chair and told him, “Sit down, Paul.”

“I don’t want to intrude, sir.”

“Oh! He calls you ‘sir’? Kinky, Sheppard!” Rodney laughed while John looked at him mutinously. Paul meanwhile paled and stood up again, ready to leave.

Ronon saw the look of panic and dismay cross Davis’ face, grabbed the fleeing man’s wrist and held him. Lorne whispered, “Sorry, Davis, McKay always talks before he thinks.”

John had seen the byplay and was glad that his friends had intervened. “Paul, these are my friends. I trust them with my life and secrets.”

He was interrupted by Teyla’s quiet remark, “Though not always voluntarily.”

Paul calmed down at that. He knew that John was risking just as much as he was, but it was one thing to know in his mind and quite another to know it in his heart. He was still trying to leave the instinct of flight behind him. “Sorry, I…”

“Hey, it’s okay. Trust me; we understand what this is about. Ronon and I have to be careful as well. And Rodney will keep his comments to himself, if he doesn’t want Sheppard to leave him on the next planet. Right, Rodney?”

Sheepishly Rodney nodded. He had just blurted out what he thought, as he always did. ‘It seems almost as if Davis is even more insecure than I am. I wonder why…’

“Sorry, major. I didn’t mean it like that.”

Paul eyed Lorne and Ronon before turning to McKay. “It’s okay, doctor. I had a bad experience with the Trust recently and I’m still nervous about being here.”

Stilted silence descended over the table before Rodney asked, “So, Davis, did you like the outcome of your date with Sheppard?”
Chapter 11

Back on Earth

Two weeks later, Methos still wasn’t back on Atlantis. He’d successfully managed to train MacLeod to operate the chair in Antarctica. Duncan had agreed to be available to them whenever the chair was needed. He then proceeded to head over to the Pentagon with Methos, Joe and Landry to meet Hayes and the representatives of the Watcher Council. Methos tried to mediate with the three men loathed the fact that the US government knew about them and didn’t even try to hide it. They also tried to take it out on the poor historian Adam Pierson (that is until they were told that he was actually Methos and had duped them for years). Then they branded him as a traitor.

In the end, President Hayes managed to convince them that the government wouldn’t interfere as long as no ‘mortals’ were be harmed.

When the Council asked for Adam Pierson to be extradited to them, however, Hayes told them he couldn’t do that, because the doctor was an ambassador and thus he had no authority over him.

“Which country does he represent?” Marson sneered.

“Oh, you misunderstood me. He doesn’t represent a country; he represents the immortals and two other alien races.” Hayes paid close attention to keeping his face blank and voice cordial, while silently rejoicing at having a chance to one-upmanship the stuffy idiot on the other side of the table.

Struck speechless the Council members let it be, satisfied that they still could act freely, and wouldn’t be hampered in their task to record all immortal activity.

After they finally left Methos sighed, “They don’t really understand what all this means…”
“No, they don’t,” Hayes replied. “Thank you for your assistance nonetheless, Methos. But now I think it’s time for you to go back to Atlantis. Jack has been locked in the SGC for two weeks now, and I fear that he’ll start shooting people soon.”

Methos laughed at that, but also knew it to be true. His cousin certainly wouldn’t take it well to be confined that long. ‘At least he has Daniel with him!’ Methos sighed wistfully. While he could feel his lover via their bond, he hadn’t used it to communicate with him other than to tell him that it would take longer than he’d thought.

“You’re right, Mr. President,” Hank agreed fearing for the sanity of his people stationed there with a cranky general.

“Well, Mr. MacLeod and Mr. Dawson, it was nice meeting you. Hopefully we’ll be able to overcome any concerns you continue to harbour.”

Duncan shook his outstretched hand, “Likewise, sir. I just hope that my involvement won’t ever be necessary.”

“We’ll spread word, that the game is a lie and see what happens,” Joe mentioned. “We can’t promise success, but maybe some of them will believe it and stop the duels.”

“That would be a good start.” Methos nodded. “Now, Mr. President, what happened to Major Davis? I was told he had a run in with the Trust?”

Hayes sighed. “Yes, Jack told me that Davis started a relationship with a man, Peter Dunhill, and was blackmailed into trying to infiltrate the Pentagon and the SGC. Major Davis handed in his resignation and left. I called Jack, he and Doctor Jackson flew in and talked to him. That’s when we decided to send Davis to Atlantis. Hopefully, the Trust won’t be able to get to him there.”

“Have you found Dunhill, yet?”

“No. We investigated him but found out that the only one with that name is eighty year old man. We have a description of him but no picture. He was very careful about that, claiming he was photo-shy” Hayes shrugged. “There isn’t much we can do about that right now though. At least Davis is on Atlantis and O’Neill and Jackson will be there soon. Maybe we should just station the whole SG-1 there?” he joked.
Methos thought about the rest of SG-1 that would be left on earth alone. “Maybe that wouldn’t be such a bad idea… I heard that Mitchell had some problems with his family,” he told him vaguely.

“Right now it wouldn’t be feasible for Mitchell and Teal’c to leave. SG-1 is our first contact and our ‘flagship’ team. It wouldn’t be good for morale if they left so soon after the others,” Landry rejected the idea.

Temporarily admitting defeat, Methos and Landry got ready to leave. “It was good seeing you again, President Hayes.”

“Sir,” Hank saluted and they left with MacLeod and Dawson in tow.

Together they drove to the airport where they parted company.

Methos hugged both his friends, “If you ever need my help just contact General Landry, he’ll forward your message to me. And tell Richie to take care of himself, okay?”

“Will do, old man. Just take care of yourself. You’ve gotten into more trouble this past year than Richie and I manage in several decades.” Duncan nodded a farewell at Landry.

“Adam, take care of yourself… and that lover of yours too, for that matter.”

“I promise, Joe.”

After those parting words, Joe and Duncan got on their plane back to Seacouver, while Methos and Hank headed back to Cheyenne Mountain.

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“Adam!” Daniel exclaimed in relief, when Methos and Landry finally arrived at the SGC. He might love Jack, but at that moment he was ready to strangle him.

“Daniel, how’re you doing? Is Jack still alive or has someone finally given into their temptation
and shot him?” Methos asked, laughing at the grimace on the man’s face.

Palming his face, Daniel replied, “Not yet. But it was a near thing when he made the marines on duty march up and down the halls humming the song, the guards of the Wicked Witch of the West hummed, in the Wizard of Oz. He also tried messing around with his powers a bit to create an illusion over them, which made them look like said guards. It was only partially successful – they didn’t have any underwear… and the uniform… well, if you ever want to dress up like one of the guards for Halloween or something, we’ve got quite a few costumes to spare. The illusion somehow became reality. Thankfully he only changed the uniforms and not the weapons or their faces. Since then they’ve been very careful to stay out of his way. And as if that weren’t enough, he keeps interrupting my work!”

Even Landry had to laugh at that. “Doctor Jackson, how long will it take for you to pack up everything you want to take to Atlantis?”

“We’re going then?” Jack’s voice asked from the doorway.

“Yeah, we found a suitable compromise, and the president agreed that you’d be safer there for now. We still have to contact Thor and see if the Asgard have any complaints about this arrangement.”

“Methos can call them, right? You still have your communicator-doodad…”

“Yes, Jack, I still have it.” Turning around Methos activated it, “Thor, this is Methos, can you hear me?”

A hologram of Thor appeared before them. #Certainly, Methos. What can I do for you?#

“Jack was attacked by the Trust. We want to bring him and Daniel to Atlantis.”

#Attacked? O’Neill, are you alright?# Thor asked concerned.

“All’s well, buddy! But they hurt Daniel.” Jack’s eyes darkened as he started to relive the scene again; the sound of the silenced gun; the sickening sound as the projectile met its target; Daniel’s body falling and hitting the floor as if in slow motion, blood pouring out, his eyes and mouth wide in surprise; the anger and despair wallowing up in him…. A hand on his shoulder and a gentle brush with his mind brought him back to the present. He sent a forced smile his cousin’s way.
“Doctor Jackson, are you well?”

“Yes, thank you, Thor. Jack healed me.”

“Would that also be the reason for your physical change, O’Neill?”

“You see it too, huh? Yeah, Methos told me it was because of my ‘increased usage of my inherent powers’,” Jack mockingly told him.

“That would be a logical explanation. You will be going to the Pegasus galaxy then?”

“If it was just me, then I’d stick it out. I’m not gonna let any asshole scare me shitless. But since others are endangered because of me… I guess I have to. So, yeah, well, you know. Well, that is if you don’t have anything against it… because technically I’m still your ambassador and…”

“Why would we be against your traveling to Atlantis? We would have asked for this in the future regardless. And you would be relatively safe there as well.”

Jack grumbled, “I don’t need to be kept safe! I can take care of myself!”

“Sure you can!” Daniel exclaimed sarcastically. “Just look at what almost happened! If I hadn’t been there… you probably wouldn’t have even used your powers to rescue yourself.”

Jack grimaced but didn’t deny it. Instead he shot back, “Well, I wouldn’t have needed them! I may not be as young as I used to be, but I was in Air Force Combat Control! That’s the crème de la crème of the Air Force! The first people sent into hostile area, who secure and later coordinate air traffic along with other tasks! That means, that I can take care of myself. I heard the muffled sound of the gun go off and dropped to the ground right off the bat. There were only four of them. I’ve taken on worse odds before.”

“Oh, so now it’s all my fault that I got shot, right? Well, general, for all that fancy Combat Control training, I can’t help but notice that you didn’t know that anything was out of place until we entered and it was already too late!”
“I was distracted! You were distracting me!”

“Oh, I was, was I? Well, then maybe I shouldn’t go to Atlantis with you, if I cause such problems for you. Wouldn’t want me distracting you at a crucial moment after all.”

“Oh, for crying out loud, Daniel! You know I didn’t mean it that way! Besides, your dream is finally coming true! You’re finally getting to go to Atlantis after four years of trying! So, if anyone goes, it should be you! Problem is, I know that if I let you go alone, you’ll get yourself killed again!”

Landry cut in, “That’s quite enough! Now, I know that you’ve been cooped up in close quarters with each other for a while. I know that you’re feeling stir-crazy, Jack. But enough is enough! You’re both going to Atlantis and that’s the end of it!”

Jack groaned, “I thought that I was your CO, Hank. What are you ordering me around for?”

“The president himself issued the orders for you to leave. He’s your commander-in-chief. As such, you have to obey him as long as you are in the armed forces.” He glared at Jack, as if daring his old friend to open his mouth again.

Jack glared back, opened his mouth as if to argue and closed it again. Still glaring he pulled himself together and delivered a textbook salute and ground out through clenched teeth, “Sir, yes, sir!”

“Good, then that matter is solved. Thank you, Thor. Would you please inform your Council that General O’Neill and Doctor Jackson will be accompanying Methos to Atlantis in…” Landry looked at his watch and asked, “Can you manage to pack in three hours, Doctor Jackson?”

“Yes, general, at least the most important things. I already started packing two weeks ago, just in case. The rest can stay here for the time being.”

“They’re leaving in three hours. Can you inform them, Thor?” Seeing the Asgard incline his head in confirmation, he continued, “Jack, maybe now would be the time to talk to Mitchell?”

His temper once again having cooled off, Jack nodded. “Yeah, he’ll be all alone with Teal’c until
they can get some new team members. I think he was talking about asking Vala to join, now that Carter is gone, so if that works out, he’ll only have to find a new archeologist slash linguist.” He left with Daniel in tow.

“Thanks, Thor. How’s the test-clone growing?” Methos enquired.

#It is going well. He has grown with certain human-like features but with the capacity of our brains. We are required to wait a while longer to see if the memories were completely transferred and to see what personality he will develop.#

“Well, it seems like it’s going well enough for the time being. Would you inform me when you’ve got more info?”

#Certainly, Methos. It is due to your research we even got this far. Until then, farewell.#

“Bye, Thor.” After Thor’s image vanished, Methos turned to Landry. “What are you doing to find Dunhill?”

“We’ve done all we could, now we can only keep an eye out for him. The mug shot we have, due to Davis, describes practically half the male population of the US.” Landry showed him a drawing of the man they were looking for. Idly, the immortal noticed that Davis really wasn’t that good of an artist. He really looked pretty unremarkable to Methos and was described as 5’10”, Hispanic, brown eyes, mousy brown hair and physically fit, a small scar next to his left eye was the only remarkable feature, but as it was rather faint, it’d be difficult to spot. There weren’t any other clues that could identify the man.

“Damn, that really could be anybody!” Methos exclaimed.

“Yeah,” Landry agreed.

“I think I’ll help Daniel. Please excuse me, general.” Methos left rather frustrated.

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“Hey, Mitchell,” Jack called as he entered the gym where the colonel was playing basketball with
The game came to a halt as everyone stopped and saluted the general in greeting. “Yes, sir?” Cameron answered.

“D’ you have a minute?”

“Sure.” Turning to the marines he said, “Be right back, guys. Go ahead and no cheating!” he exclaimed when they laughed.

Stepping out into the corridor, Cameron followed Jack into his office.

“Daniel and I are going to Atlantis,” Jack started without preamble.

Confused Mitchell asked, “What? But why? You were just allowed to stay here in the SGC…”

Looking thoughtfully at Cam, Jack enquired, “How much did Teal’c tell you about the attack?”

Shrugging, Cam replied, “Not much. Just that the Trust tried to take you and hurt Jackson in the process.”

“Seems as if they’re still after Pierson.”

“Shit! And when they discover that you…”

“Yeah, could get a little ugly.”

Cameron nodded, but remained silent. ‘Now Jackson will leave SG-1 as well. I thought they’d stay now that I managed to get them together again. Guess that was just a pipe dream,’ Cameron admonished himself.
“Hey, Mitchell, I know shoulda said it before, but you did good. In getting them together again that is. And I’m really sorry to break it up. Maybe we’ll manage to abduct you and Teal’c and carry you off to Atlantis as well someday.” Uncomfortably clearing his throat Jack continued, “Teal’c told us a bit about, you know, your vacation…”

“Did he tell you that I heard my mom curse for the first time in my entire life? That she cursed me for being… being what I am?” Cameron got angry, not at his superior, not at his lover, not even at himself, but at the thought of his mother hating him, of not accepting him.

Jack saw the anger and a bit doubt in Mitchell’s troubled gaze. “Something like that. Just remember that you still have your father and granny!”

Slightly comforted, Cameron remembered his grandmother grilling Teal’c on his intentions towards her favorite grandson. He smiled at the uncomfortable look Teal’c had wore as she threatened him: telling him to ‘treat her grandson well or else she’d find him and make sure that he wouldn’t be equipped to look for another lover’. Cam also remembered his father’s reaction. How the initial disbelief had turned into acceptance and curiosity towards Teal’c.

“You’re right, general. Thanks. I needed to hear that.”

“Of course I’m right! I’m always right, and don’t let Daniel tell you anything else!” Jack held out his hand. “Thanks, Cameron, for taking care of them. And good luck.”

“Thanks, sir. And look out for Daniel. Try to keep him out of trouble.”

“I think that would take a miracle,” Jack joked, then laughed and left Mitchell to go look for the trouble-magnet he loved.

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Three hours later, Daniel had managed to pack everything, he wanted to take with him, and was standing ready to leave at the gate with Jack and Methos. Most of the people on duty, and many who were off-duty as well, had come to see them off. The off-duty people there showed once again how fast the grapevine was in the SGC.

“You ready to leave, General O’Neill?” Landry asked as Jack swept a last gaze through the gate room.
He turned to the assembled soldiers and spoke, “Okay, you all know how much I love speeches,”
he rolled his eyes, “so I’ll keep this short. Jackson and I are taking up our new posts on Atlantis.
So listen to Landry and Mitchell, or I’ll come back to haunt your asses. Capiche?”

“Sir, yes, sir.” The soldiers snapped to attention and saluted.

In reply Jack saluted back one last time and said, “It’s been an honor serving with you.” He
swerved around and stepped through the gate with his lover and cousin right behind him, their
personal items on a FRED that would follow shortly. He was heading towards a new life and a
new battle.

Tbc

Chapter 12

“Jacob!” Methos exclaimed joyfully, as he saw his lover waiting for him on the other side.

“Adam.” Jacob stepped forward and embraced him. Everything else would have to wait until later
because they didn’t want to provoke the soldiers needlessly.

Sheppard and his team, Sam, Evan and Paul stood behind Jacob and smiled at the reunion. When
Jack stepped forward, John, Evan and Sam saluted and waited for Jack to reciprocate.

“Carter, colonel, major,” he saluted back, nodded and turned to his lover, who was standing there

Sheppard’s team looked somewhat taken aback; this wasn’t what they had expected the renown
General O’Neill to act like. John, Evan, Sam and Jacob just started laughing. Paul shook his head
smiling at his friend.

Jack held up a finger. “Ah! No giggling! And I missed you too, Carter!” Jack exclaimed in mock
anger.
“Likewise, general!” Sam couldn’t stop laughing at the exasperated look on Daniel’s face.

“Jack! You won’t impress anyone, if you behave like that!”

“Why would I want to impress them? Sheppard already met me and Lorne was on one of the SG-teams. I’m on vacation, d’you remember that, Danny?”

“We aren’t on vacation!”

“Yes, we are. No paperwork constitutes vacation. I doubt they’ll bother to send any paperwork through the wormhole just to annoy me.”

“That’s not vacation! And why did you bring your fishing gear?”

“Hey, gotta make the best of being surrounded by water! All work, no play, makes a Jack dull and grey.”

“Well, it seems like you don’t have to worry about that anymore, as your grey hair’s almost gone.”

“Yes, my hard-earned silver locks – just stripped away from me. After all the work you went through to give me them!”

“The time you went white wasn’t my fault!”

“Which is the reason, I’ll never eat any cake I’m offered off-world again! At least you never had to stop me from jumping off a balcony!”

Daniel muttered, “That was because of the drugs on that planet and you know that. Besides, I had to stop you from blowing yourself up instead – along with Abydos.”

They lapsed into a strained silence. Finally Jack broke it again. “Once we’ve eaten, maybe I can get some fishing in…”
“You’re here as the ambassador for the Asgard, and don’t forget that!”

“How could I? You remind me every couple of minutes…”

“Jack…”

“Danny…”

Methos commented, “They’ve been cooped up together for too long in the SGC. They’re starting to drive each other nuts. I’d say the idea of Jack fishing and Daniel following his archeological nose this afternoon is very good. Get them out of each other’s hair for a bit.”

“I really missed you guys!” First Paul snorted then couldn’t contain it anymore, and burst out into full-blown laughter.

“Hey!” Jack looked surprised at the laughing major and then at the others, pouting. “You broke my major! He’s always been so respectful and non-mocking! Look at him now!” Jack whined at Daniel, “They broke him!”

Daniel was just as glad to see their friend a bit more lively than he’d been on earth. “I don’t know; I like him like that. Makes him even more attractive, don’t you agree, Adam?”

Methos saw the mischievous glint in Daniel’s eyes and decided to play along. “Oh yes, very attractive! Maybe we should try to make him even happier, what do you think, Danny?”

Daniel agreed while taking a step towards Paul, “Oh, definitely!”

A sudden growl broke through their teasing. While Paul had known they’d just been teasing him, he was still unaccustomed to it and had blushed. John saw his lover’s blush, and became so jealous that he couldn’t hold back the growl that escaped him. When all eyes turned to him, he knew they’d heard it.

Jack stood directly in front of Atlantis 2IC and mumbled, “If you don’t want anyone to know,
Sheppard, you’ll have to work on your poker-face!” He laughed at the panicked look on John’s face. “Now don’t get a heart-attack! Danny’d make me sleep on the couch for a week, if I killed you within the first hour!”

Shocked, John looked at the general. “What? You and… and Doctor Jackson?” He paused. “I never would have guessed, sir.”

“Yeah. We’re much better at hiding it than a certain lieutenant colonel I know. Now, forget I said anything and I’ll forget you asked, clear, Sheppard?”

“Crystal, sir.”

Jack turned to Methos and Daniel, “And you two, stop those jokes right now! I had more than enough of that on the Odyssey!”

“Oh come on, Jackie!” Methos took his turn at whining. “You can’t expect us to behave all the time!”

Daniel nodded at Methos logic. “True. And I know you agree that Paul is attractive!” He laughed at the deepening blush on Paul’s face.

“Stop it this second! And don’t call me ‘Jackie’, Pierson!” Jack warned them. “If you continue, I’ll order Sheppard and Lorne to shoot you and tell the president it was self-defense!”

“He won’t believe you!”

“Sure he will. I’m a general. Besides, Paul will back me up. Right, Paul?”

“As it would be for my sanity’s defense, yes, I would.”

“Paul!” the two men exclaimed.

Daniel continued on, “Don’t you know that sanity is madness put to good uses.”
The others started laughing again at the petulant looks on the linguists’ faces.

When they all calmed down Jack said, “Okay kiddies, I know that Jacob is dying for some alone time with Pierson, so why don’t you tell me what has happened since my dear cousin arrived on Atlantis over lunch?”

Two weeks later, Sam was talking to Jack in her office. “The Daedalus is arriving tomorrow, sir. I still don’t understand why General Landry thought it would be better to transport the new crew-member this way, instead of through the gate.”

“He probably wants them to get used to being on the ship for months on end,” Jack suggested. “Hey, by the way, how is it going with Marks?”

Sam blushed delicately, “It’s going very well, sir. He understands the importance of my position and that we can’t just drop everything at the drop of a hat to spend some time together, even on a free day.”

“Pity, that. It would do you good to spend some time outside of work.”

“I will.” Jack looked at her expectantly, eyebrow raised and she amended. “Right after the Wraith and the Replicators are defeated.”

“Sure, keep telling yourself that!” Jack told her mockingly, knowing that, if possible, she’d never stop working.

“By the way, have you gotten used to living on Atlantis yet?”

“It still creeps me out that the city talks to me. But other than that she anticipates my moves and even helps me when I get lost! She even told me where the best fishing spots are!”

Sam laughed at the thought, “Only you would use the AI of Atlantis as a road map!”
“Hey, I resent that! Not everyone can be like Methos, born and bred here. He knows all the nooks and crannies of the city. McKay still drools every time they go to explore a new lab!”

“That’s Rodney for you,” Sam replied.

“So, anyone important on the Daedalus I should know about?”

“Not really, sir. Just the son of one of Paul’s former Pentagon colleagues. But other than that…”

“Whose son? Maybe I know him.”

“General Sykes.”

Thinking about the man he’d met once while visiting the Pentagon he remembered a pleasant, if slightly brown-nosing, man in his mid-sixties. “Nice enough man for a bootlicker.”

Exasperated Sam shook her head, “If you say so, sir.”

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General Landry had issued orders to show General Sykes’ son the city, because the general had always been a great supporter of the Stargate program.

It had been decided that this task would fall to Sam and Paul, as they both were more adept when handling diplomats than Jack or, god forbid, John.

So, the next day, Paul and Sam stood waiting at the gate with Evan and Daniel, who would be escorting them as well. The others had mysteriously vanished when Daniel had pointed out, that they’d have to play nice.
“Colonel Carter, the Daedalus is ready to transport him down,” Chuck reported.

Sam nodded and replied, “Go ahead.”

The light from the Daedalus Asgard beam lightened the room. Sam saw a man in his thirties, with brown hair and brown eyes. Before she could take a closer look at the man, who had to be Doctor Sykes, the general’s son, he suddenly exploded into motion and pushed Sam aside.

Surprised, she fell back on honed instincts as she was backhanded, dropped to the ground to avoid another attack, rolled and rose again while taking on a fighting stance. It was then that she saw the newcomer grab hold of Paul, and hold a knife to his throat.

Paul was just as shocked as Sam. He’d seen the light from the beam and then the grinning face of someone he’d hoped to never ever see again. This one second of terror was enough for the other man to get through his defenses.

When the arm grabbed him and he was pulled hard against the man’s chest, he gasped for air, suddenly wishing that he’d taken more martial arts classes; but he had been an XO then and thought he wouldn’t need them. He realized that he’d been wrong. Fear and surprise immobilized him, his mind blank, not even supplying the few techniques he did know. The arm closed tightly over his throat, blocking his airway. Too late he remembered the lesson of dropping your head to cover your throat.

As Paul looked on, he saw the marines training their weapons on the threat and, seeing that he was being used as a shield, at him.

It got harder and harder to breath as the arm closed over his throat more tightly. Black spots fluttered in font of his vision. As if from far away, he could hear Chuck’s voice calling for security, but he knew they wouldn’t come in time.

“Nice to see you again, Paul,” the man behind him hissed in his ear, before Paul felt the prick of a needle and the splotchy world turned black.

\[1\] Quote by George Santania
Chapter 13

#Security to the gate room! Security code one three five!#

John and Evan jumped up, from their table in the mess hall, and took off in the direction of the armory. Ronon, Teyla and Rodney followed them quickly.

“What the hell is one three five?” Rodney asked as they rushed down the corridor.

“Hostage situation,” John replied, worry evident in his voice.

As they ran down the corridor, they saw Methos, Jacob, Daniel and Jack coming at them from the other direction.

“Atlantis says that a man was transported down, but her scanners were blocked,” Methos told them.

“What the hell is going on?” John demanded as he came to a sudden halt at the doorway to the gate room. Evan took point behind him while Ronon took the position on the other side.

Slowly looking around the corner he saw Sam’s nose bleeding as she held a martial arts pose and – John’s heart skipped a beat – there, in the middle of the room, stood Paul with another man holding a knife to his throat.

“NO!” John ran forward without regard to safety or protocol when he saw the man inject Paul with a needle.

Mockingly, the man smiled at him, before gripping his own wrist. John saw a device light up with a green glow as the man activated it and both of them disappeared into thin air.
“What the hell?! How the fuck did that little piece of shit get in here?” Jack exclaimed as he saw the video footage of the incident a few minutes later.

Surprised, Daniel asked, “You know him, Jack?”

“That’s Paul’s ‘Peter’…”

Sheppard interrupted, “That’s the guy from the Trust? How did he get on the Daedalus?”

“Yep, that’s him alright. Same person; different name. Don’t know how he…” Jack trailed off, as he remembered his talk with Carter about General Sykes. “General Sykes’ son! That son of a bitch!”

“Sir! That would mean General Sykes is involved in this; maybe he’s even a member!” Sam shouted as she too remembered their conversation.

“Contact Landry and inform him ASAP, Carter. Meanwhile, we search the city for them.”

Turning to the others, Jack asked, “Any suggestions on finding them?”

Daniel remarked, “The cloaking device looked similar to the one Niïrti used, when she was on earth the last two times. Maybe he got it from Ba’al.”

Nodding abruptly, Jack turned to Sam. “Tell Landry to send us some those decloaking doohickeys ASAP.”

Methos ended his short conversation with Atlantis. “I think we can narrow the search parameter down a bit. Atlantis may not be able to see him right now, but she tells me that she can identify blank spaces in her scanners, because her sensors ‘saw’ him vanish and managed to pick up the energy signature. It’s pretty weak, but it should steer us in the right direction, at the very least.”

“Good! That’s fantastic. Now, Sheppard, call together four teams to search the city. The rest guards the gate and the public places. We wouldn’t want that asshole to escape, now would we?”

John nodded and contacted the personnel, as ordered. He was furious with the man who’d, not
only kidnapped his lover, but also harmed him in the past. ‘Who knows what he’ll do to Paul?’

“Don’t worry, Sheppard. We’ll find him.” Ronon laid a hand on his shoulder.

“Yeah! Of course we will! And once we’ve got him back, I want a piece of the bastard that hurt him!” He slammed a fist into the other hand, his normally happy-go-lucky features darkened as he felt the bloodlust bubbling up, that he’d always tried to force down, even when in black ops. At that moment he gave it free reign. The only thought permeating his being was revenge and getting his mate back. No holding back.

A slap brought Paul back to consciousness. Opening his eyes, he saw a face directly in front of his and would have jumped back, if he hadn’t been expertly tied to a chair.

“Morning, honey.” Peter Dunhill smirked at the pale face of the major. “Did ya miss me? I sure missed you. Even brought you a little present.” He hit Paul in the diaphragm.

“…” All the air in Paul’s lungs was expelled and he panted, trying to suck in the air he had lost, when every breath hurt like a thousand needles puncturing his skin. He slowly managed to raise his head to glare at his conniving abuser. “Peter! You bastard! What do you want here and how did you…”

He was stopped by a blow to head that left him reeling. He blinked a few times and shook his head, to clear the dizziness. He felt something warm trailing down his temple. He assumed it was blood, but what had breached the skin? He saw a ring on the hand that had struck him, with flecks of blood clinging to it. His vision was swimming slightly, so he assumed he had a concussion to boot. Hopefully the head wound would be allowed to close up. They bled a lot and the last thing he needed was to go into shock from blood-loss. He’d heard stories of people dying from it and it wasn’t a pretty or quick death either.

“The name’s Jason Sykes, lover-boy. Haven’t been Peter since you left. Rather unceremoniously I might add. Didn’t even give me a chance to give you a proper good-bye, you naughty boy.” Smirking, he reached over and trailed a finger down Paul’s cheek and over his lips. When Paul tried to bite him he laughed. “Why, all that time we spend together and I never knew that you were kinky, Paul. We could have had so much fun with that!”

“Shut up!”
“Gladly.” Peter, because Paul refused to play games with him, leaned forward and kissed Paul. Shocked, Paul was slow to react and couldn’t stop the man from deepening the kiss. As he tried to bite and turn his head away, he felt the presence of the knife at his throat again. “Behave, Paul. Or I’ll make sure that your colleagues only find your bloody corpse!” He proceeded to take advantage of the panting man and brutally kissed him again.

Breaking away, Peter laughed and pawed him, laughing at the slight arousal he found. “So you did miss me! Haven’t had anyone since, huh?”

Paul refused to answer, determinedly looking at the floor instead. He wouldn’t let that bastard know about John! Let him know about the only positive thing in his life. Let him know of the one thing that had managed to pull him out of the pit this goa’uld-suck-up had thrown him into.

“Now, Paul, tell me where I can find Pierson!”

Confused Paul looked up again at him. “What do you want with him?”

“Don’t play dumb with me,” Peter admonished. “I’d really hate to have to hurt you again, this soon into our little reunion.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about!” Paul’s eyes were wide, sweat trickling down his face, causing him to wince as it dripped over his wound and joined the blood. He tried in vain to control the trembling, but his body didn’t seem to want to obey his orders.

Critically looking him over, Peter sing-songed, “I think you’re lying.” He slowly dragged the knife down Paul’s chest, cutting the uniform away, careful not to hurt the other man… yet.

Paul was getting more and more frantic and scared. ‘He’s crazy! What the hell does he want from Adam?’

“You changed your mind yet, Paul?” Peter asked as he removed the man’s shirts.

Struggling in panic, he vehemently shook his head and yelled, “I swear, don’t know anything!”
Peter smirked, and with a sadistic glint in his eyes, started drawing on Paul’s chest with his sharp ‘paintbrush’ and blood-red ‘ink’. “Suit yourself.”

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Following Methos’ direction, as the man took off running toward the eastern pier, John thought gleefully about what he’d do to Sykes, or ‘Dunhill’ as O’Neill had called him, if he’d hurt Paul. Okay, take that back, he’d already hurt Paul. So, it was more a matter of what he’d do once he found the stupid SOB.

The thought of an injured Paul cost him the concentration needed to directly communicate with Atlantis himself, so he had to rely on the half-Ancient.

Lorne’s team had taken the long way around to the pier, to make sure that the intruder wouldn’t escape them, and Stackhouse’s team made sure he wouldn’t escape via the transporters.

When they’d reached the end of the corridor, Methos slowed down and gestured for John to take point.

Calming himself down, John nodded and signalled the group to split up. Ronon went with McKay; Teyla with Jacob. Methos would stay with John, to tell him if something changed with the position Atlantis had given him.

They were searching a room, when Atlantis spoke up, *Methos, the device has been deactivated. There are two life signs down the corridor that do not belong to the group you arrived with.*

‘Thanks. Can you alert me if he activates it again?’

*Certainly.*

Turning to Sheppard, he gestured to him that two people were just ahead of them in one of the rooms.

John activated his radio to alert the others, “This is Sheppard. We think we’ve found him. Get to
our position.”

#Understood,# came Jacob’s voice over the radio.

Readying his weapon, John and Methos slowly opened the door just as Atlantis warned them, *He has activated the cloaking device.*

John looked around, finding nothing suspicious until the light cone from his weapon landed on the motionless and half-naked form of Paul Davis.

Without thinking, he rushed over and knelt down next to his lover. Feeling for a pulse, relief flooding him as he found it steady, if a bit weaker than normal.

He turned Paul onto his back and cursed as he saw the blood dripping freely from cuts on his chest. John could also see bruises and bite marks on his face and throat.

“Is he alright?” Methos asked from his position at the door. He’d be damned if he’d let the man escape!

“For now, but we have to take him to Keller!” Just then, John remembered that Dunhill was still somewhere around there and turned to Methos just as Atlantis shrieked in their heads, *Methos!*

Unbeknownst to them, everyone in Atlantis had heard the scream and the search teams rushed to their position.

Methos looked down at the knife sticking in his chest in surprise. He hadn’t even felt the vicinity of the man.

Slowly his body crumpled to the ground, as he took his last breath, and died with the knowledge that something was very wrong.
Ronon, Teyla, Rodney and Jacob met up with Lorne’s team while rushing toward Sheppard’s position.

Suddenly, Jacob stopped dead and looked confused.

“General, what is it?” Evan asked worried.

“…” Jacob didn’t answer, but slowly brought up a hand to the middle of his chest. When he took it down the others could see the blood spreading on the uniform.

Teyla immediately took action, and examined the still motionlessly standing man. What she saw confused her. There was a wound, but it didn’t seem to be very deep. And she had no idea how he could have gotten it, as she had been with him the whole time.

“Methos… something’s wrong with him,” Jacob managed to croak out.

Nodding Evan ordered, “McKay you and Cadman stay with the general, the others, with me.” He took off with the rest, while Laura and Rodney helped the insensate Jacob to the floor.

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John looked surprised at the knife in Methos’ chest, before shooting at the position he thought the knife had come from.

When Methos crumbled to the ground, and John started forward, he was pushed back and hit the wall. Shaking his head he heard footsteps running away from him and watched the door open. Jumping up again he was surprised when he heard an “uff” of someone hitting something. Rushing outside, he saw Ronon holding down something just as Sam came rushing down the corridor with three marines behind her. She raised a weapon and lightened the area before Ronon.

Now visible, the man stopped his struggling and went limp. John turned away and quickly rushed back into the room. Feeling for a pulse, he quickly determined that Methos was indeed dead then hurried back over to Paul.

While the marines took Sykes to the brig, the others came inside and took in the scene of John
cradling the half-naked and bloody form of Paul Davis. Sam ran forward to try and stop the bleeding cuts on Paul’s chest. Jack and Daniel watched worriedly. Sam panicked slightly, as she realized that one of the cuts had nicked the aorta and another had practically cut through another artery. Jack breathed in deeply and stepped forward to start healing the younger man – what were a few years younger in comparison to his friend being well?

Ronon and Teyla took hold of Methos, searched for a pulse and found none. While they knew that this man was an Ancient and immortal, they were still worried.

“Should we take it out?” Ronon asked pointing at the knife sticking out of Methos’ chest.

Teyla looked thoughtful, before nodding. “Yes, as he is dead, it should not harm him further.”

Taking hold of the knife, Ronon pulled it out with a sickening sucking sound. Just as he threw it on the floor, a sound from the doorway alerted them to the fact that Jacob had arrived with Rodney and Cadman. Rodney looked decidedly green as he saw at Methos’ dead and Paul’s bloody body.

Jacob knelt beside his lover and took hold of his limp hand. “Methos, can you hear me?” Worriedly turning to the others he exclaimed, “I can’t feel him! I can’t hear his thoughts!”

Jack, looking a few years younger, finished healing Davis’ worst wounds and walked over to his cousin and cousin-in-law. “Jacob, he’s kinda dead…” he told him while laying a blood-stained hand on his friend’s shoulder.

“I know that, Jack. But I’ve always been able to hear him – feel him – even when he was dead!”

“Okay…” Jack tried not to worry and saw the blood on Jacob’s chest. “Why are you bleeding, by the way? And why hasn’t Selmak healed it yet? I thought that was one of the perks of being snaked.”

“You asking me? I dunno. It started the same time I felt Methos die. Maybe she can’t heal it until he’s healed.”

John looked up, “Sykes stabbed him and Pierson looked really shocked. But I think being killed could do that to anyone.”
“Still, something isn’t right… It feels different somehow.” Jacob was interrupted when Doctor Keller rushed inside and took stock of the situation. She rushed to Methos first, as he was the one nearest the door, Jacob waved her aside. “He’s dead right now. Take care of Major Davis first.”

Keller looked a bit uneasy, as she went over to Paul and examined his injuries. “This is strange, why are some of these half-healed?”

Jack spoke up, “That would be my fault. I took care of the worst wounds. Didn’t take care of all of them. Still have some stuff to take care of, so I didn’t want to wear myself out. ‘Sides, Jacob distracted me.”

She nodded. “Okay then, we’ve got to get him to the infirmary. I need to clean these wound and start an IV. Blood pressure is low and it looks like he has a concussion. Load him onto the gurney!” she ordered her nurses.

John stood up and was surprised, when Paul floated onto it without any assistance. Looking around worriedly, he saw O’Neill concentrating on Paul until he was settled down on the gurney. “Sorry, was me. Better not to move him much.”

Speechlessly, the others in the room, other than Jacob, looked on as the general stood there, looking like a child caught with his hand in the cookie jar.

A gasp brought them back to the present as they whirled around and saw Methos drawing in a deep breath. Seeing Sheppard’s indecisive movement towards Methos and the door where Paul was being rolled out, Jack ordered, “Sheppard, go with Davis and keep an eye on him! We’ll take care of Pierson.” Gratefully, John nodded and ran after Keller.

“Methos… Methos, can you hear me?” Jacob asked his lover worriedly, when he didn’t try to sit up, as usual, after dying.

“Yeah…” came his weak reply. “Someth… isn’ right…” he mumbled before cringing as a jolt of pain made him curl up on his side.

“Methos! What is it?” Jacob asked as he felt the echo of Methos’ pain.
“Pain… gnawing inside…” He coughed and looked surprised as saw the blood sprayed upon his hand.

“Jacob…” he exclaimed fearfully, before loosing consciousness again.

“No, no, no.” Jacob grabbed his lover and cradled him in his arms just as he felt weakness approach him as he saw black spots obscuring his vision before joining together as his eyes rolled up in his head.

As both men lay still on the floor, the others sprung into action. Instead of waiting for another med team, Ronon grabbed Methos and lifted him into his arms, as if weighted nothing, while Jack and Daniel supported Jacob between them. They ran as quickly as possible towards the infirmary and, hopefully, towards help. Meanwhile Jack cursed himself for using so much energy on Paul, that he hardly had any left for his relative.

tbc

Chapter 14

Paul was still unconscious when they arrived in the infirmary. Mindless of the blood marring Paul, John took his hand and held on as Jennifer cut away the remaining tatters of his uniform, revealing more cuts and bruises.

“Colonel, it’d be better if you waited outside,” Keller advised as she saw the shape of some of the bruises.

“No! I won’t leave…” John’s gaze found the bruises Keller had seen and paled. “These…”

“Are from being gripped tightly, yes. That’s why I want you to wait outside, John. I want to give him a thorough examination.”

Gently laying Paul’s hand down on the bed, John took one last look at his hurt lover, before leaving the room. Minutes later, he looked up from his brooding at the sound of footsteps on the floor he was sitting on, and saw Ronon running towards him at top speed, with Pierson on his arms. O’Neill and Jackson followed right behind, holding an, apparently, unconscious Tok’ra. Rodney, Teyla and Sam arrived right behind them, looking worriedly at the men vanishing inside the infirmary.
“What happened?” John demanded to know as he rose to his feet.

“We do not know. Pierson woke up, but instead of being well again, like he usually is, he began coughing up blood, and then fainted. The retired general lost consciousness shortly after. Both said that something was wrong,” Teyla explained.

“Wrong?” Sheppard asked. “What did he mean?”

Rodney shrugged and replied sarcastically, “How should I know? It’s not as if I’ve ever seen coming back from the dead before! Let alone understand the science of it! Theoretically it shouldn’t even be possible!”

“I have. Adam would normally be a bit weak, but well enough to stand up.” Sam was worried, not only about her father, but about Methos as well. What could’ve happened to make the half-Ancient that weak and ill?

From inside the doors that separated them from their friends, they heard yelling and rushed inside. The first thing they saw was Keller running towards Methos’ bed with the defibrillator, shouting orders to administer drugs. After Ronon had set Methos on the bed, the immortal had been hooked up to some machines, which were shrieking in alarm as Methos’ heart stopped beating.

They watched anxiously, as Jennifer shocked him, what they didn’t expect was Jacob’s body convulsing on his bed next to Methos. A nurse rushed over to Jacob and reported, “It seems as if he’s been electrocuted, Doctor!”

“Stop it!” Sam shouted as Keller prepared to shock Methos again. “Their bond’s transferring the electro shocks to my father!”

“But I can’t just let him die!”

“He is immortal, for God’s sake! He’ll wake up again right as rain!” Rodney exclaimed while rolling his eyes. ‘Didn’t she understand the meaning of the term “immortal” or something?’

“What about Paul?” John asked, seeing the look of contempt flash over the doctor’s normally pretty face when she looked at McKay.
“I finished the examination and found a few teeth marks on him, other than the bruises and cuts. He’ll have sore ribs, but nothing’s been broken. His face took some damage, bruised jaw and a cut to the temple. There might have been more, but I can’t tell for certain, with General O’Neill having healed some of the injuries before I arrived,” Keller told him after turning away from Rodney. “We should probably be more concerned about his psychological condition than his injuries. They’ll heal, but the major was obviously tortured.”

A whine escaped John’s throat. He’d known that something bad must have happened to Paul, but hadn’t wanted to believe that his lover had been tortured, even if he’d seen far worse. “When will he wake up?”

“I can’t say that for sure, colonel. It could be any minute, it could be in a few days. And, no, I won’t wake him up. He needs his rest and, in my humble opinion, the more he’s healed before waking up, the better for his mental state.”

At this moment Methos came to life again with a gasp. Looking around, his gaze fixated on his cousin, seeing that Jacob wasn’t within sight. “Jack… poison… something on the knife…”

Surprised Jack exclaimed, “The knife was poisoned?! That damn bastard!” Turning around he ordered, “Lorne! Send one of your guys to the room and get that knife! But don’t let it come into contact with skin! And have someone do a strip check of the prisoner. We need the knife he used on Davis as evidence or, if he coated it with the poison after dealing with the major, we need the vial he used. Find it.”

Evan nodded and ran off to get the knife himself, rather than endanger anyone else, while relaying the other orders via radio.

“Jacob…?” Methos enquired weakly.

“He’s right over here,” Sam called from her place by her father’s bed.

Seeing his lover lying motionless on the bed, Methos tried to stand up and get to him. As soon as his feet touched the floor he lost all strength and would have fallen, if not for Ronon and Teyla catching him.

“Have to… be with… him…” Methos gasped out in pain. “Bond unstable… because… not healing. Never seen this before…”
Slowly, Ronon and Teyla sat Methos on Jacob’s bed. Taking his lovers hand Methos sent all his feelings through the bond. Seconds later Jacob opened his eyes and saw Methos holding his hand. “Methos!” Jacob sat up abruptly and embraced Methos. “What the hell happened?”

Seeing Methos eyes closing again Jack explained, “He thinks that the knife he was stabbed with was poisoned.”

“But he should have been alright after the first death!” Jacob shouted worried about his lover. “There you have an immortal lover, and you worry just as much about him as any other!”

*I do not think it’s deliberate, Jacob,* Selmak remarked, trying to distract him a bit.

*I know! But I still worry! I already lost my wife… I can’t loose him too…*

Skidding to a halt Evan panted in exhaustion, having run all the way at top speed, and presented Keller the knife. “Maybe we should ask our prisoner, sir,” Evan suggested seeing that they wouldn’t get any further by standing around.

Jack nodded before turning around, “Lorne, Dex you’re with me! Sheppard, Emmagan, Carter and Daniel, you stay here.”

Daniel opened his mouth to protest, but John beat him to the punch. “General!” he exclaimed, seeing as he was being left behind. “I want to be present too.”

“No, you’re staying here,” O’Neill replied.

“What?! You can’t be serious!” Seeing an irritated look cross the older man’s face he quickly added, “sir”

“Oh believe me I’m very serious. So serious, in fact, that I’ll order you to watch over these men, until I get back. You don’t seem to understand the implications of what happened here, colonel!” Jack whirled around and started poking John in the chest. “What do you think will happen if we all go, leaving them alone and helpless, when someone out there could be working for the Trust? We don’t know if he was alone or more members of the Daedalus are traitors!”
It dawned on Sheppard that he would have to sit this one out. Reluctantly he saluted. “Sir, yes, sir.”

“Wonderful, oh, and Sheppard,” Jack looked him in the eye, “from SOF to SOF, don’t worry, we’ll leave some for you.”

He turned around and walked out the door with Evan and Ronon hot on his heels.

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Three hours later, Methos was still either unconscious or dying, while Jacob had recovered a bit, now that Methos was shielding the pain from him. But he felt the barrier getting weaker every time Methos died.

Jennifer, meanwhile, had checked the knife and vial that had been found for poison. She wasn’t surprised when she found some, but couldn’t identify it. It consisted of many of the strongest poisons known to earth, but had a component she’d never seen before. After she asked Sam for permission, she’d contacted Doctor Lam on earth, sent a sample through, and asked her to check their database as well.

‘Hopefully she’ll be able to find something,’ Keller thought, as she saw General Carter sit by his lover’s bed with his daughter and Teyla as support. Rodney sat, next to Sheppard, by Davis’ bed and chatted with the colonel. All she could do now, was wait and hope for the best, while the labs tried to create an antidote.

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“Okay, Sykes, or whatever your name is, tell us why you’re here and what you’ve done to Doctor Pierson.” Jack was just barely holding himself back from beating the other man up. The bastard sat back in his chair and smirked at them, even as Ronon and Lorne entered with their weapons trained on him.

“I’m surprised to meet you here, General O’Neill. Guess you managed to evade a horrible accident?”
Quicker than you could say ‘Stargate’, Jack had grabbed him and pinned him up against the wall. Jack narrowed his eyes and clenched his jaw. “Make no mistake, Sykes! Your people hurt Jackson and you’ll pay for that. Now you’ve hurt two of my friends too. If you still think you’re the one in power here, Then you’re very much mistaken. I know at least a hundred ways to bring you to the brink of death but not let you pass over. You’ll be wishing you were dead, but there will be no respite – not for the likes of you. I don’t take kindly to my friends being used and abused.”

“You can’t do that, General. It’s against your rules!” Glee showed in Sykes’ eyes as he mocked them.

Jack whispered into his ear, “I wouldn’t be too sure about that, bastard. It might interest you to find out that there were things I didn’t include in my report of escaping from that Iraqi prison. If you read the reports, then you know that the U.S. government left me there to rot. They wouldn’t lift a finger to get me out. I knew that was the case before I left on the mission. That’s the way black ops are. That’s why Special Operations Forces have the rule of not leaving anyone behind. I learned a lot about torture there. I escaped with only a knife, killing or dismembering all the guards I came across. It was a bloodbath. Some of them got a special ‘reward’ for their treatment of me. They, shall we say, lost their family jewels.” He sneered, his eyes dangerous and as emotional as blocks of wood. “They were the ones that had raped prisoners in the compound. I figured that the dismembering was the only suitable punishment for those sins. There were also several other imaginative things I did to them and my other captors. If I’d put it in the report though, the military would have seen me as mentally unstable and would have never let me return to action.” Sykes gulped as he tried in vain not to tremble in fear, only barely managing to keep control of his bladder.

Evan cleared his throat, interrupting the general. He hadn’t heard what was being said, but from the tone he was almost glad about that. He was suddenly very glad that Major General Jack O’Neill was on their side. He stepped forward, “That may be so, but that isn’t true for all of us.”

Jack looked at Lorne and saw him looking at Ronon. He whispered, “Guess that I won’t show you what I’ve learned today – instead you’ll get something much less, shall we say, creative. But if you don’t spill your guts to us…” he left the threat hanging. Smirking he stepped back. He and Lorne sat down on the chairs that were a slight distance from the prisoner. He spoke again, loud enough this time for the entire room to hear, “Lorne’s right. We may be too ‘civilized’ for that kind of measure, but I’m sure we could find someone without those bothersome morals who’d be motivated enough to extract the information we want from you.” He kept eye contact with Sykes throughout his little ‘speech’, conveying that he was just as unbound by those, but was keeping up the farce for the rest of the people in the room.

When Ronon stepped forward, Sykes’ already strained smirk vanished completely and he looked ready to faint. “You can’t do that!” To a certain extent he had known that the general wouldn’t act out, else he screw up his career. This new man was pure muscle, huge and didn’t seem to have any of the reservations O’Neill might have.
Jack picked up a pen and started playing around with it. He shrugged. “Sure I can. Who’re you gonna tell? We probably won’t let you leave alive, especially if this behavior continues.” He slouched back in the chair and lazily waved at heavier man. “Get on with the show, Ronon. I’m getting bored with this asshole’s idea of smalltalk!”

Without further hesitation Ronon hit the man’s face and relished at the sound of his nose breaking. The howl of agony was also much appreciated by the other two men. They might not care much for torture, but figured that in this case it was well deserved – especially after this man had inflicted worse than a broken nose to one of their own.

Tears of pain streamed down Sykes’ face, as he looked up again and saw Ronon pull his arm back again for another hit. “STOP!” he yelled and flinched back as the arm sped towards him again. He breathed a sigh in relief as it whistled by him and hit the wall with a loud bang.

“What? Already? I’d have thought you’d be a little tougher than that. The members of your organization are definitely lacking quality. Maybourne wouldn’t have surrendered so quickly, but then again, he was in special ops, so…” Jack asked acting disappointed.

Sykes interrupted, “YES, I’ll tell you everything! Just get this madman off of me!”

Nodding to Ronon to step back Jack grabbed Sykes’ shoulder and forced him down onto the chair he’d sat in before. He smiled at the man. Looking on, Evan felt a shudder travel up and down his spine. This was not the smile he was used to seeing from the man. It was as cold as Antarctica – in the middle of winter. The normal twinkle and fire that burned behind the eyes was gone, replaced by something foreign – almost a void. He could feel static electricity surrounding the other man as he reigned in his Ancient powers. It was almost as if he were standing next to a complete stranger who was the general’s identical twin, but decidedly more dangerous. He briefly wondered if it had really been Ronon, who had gotten the man to speak and what exactly his superior had said. He quickly discarded the question, deciding that there were some things you really didn’t want to know.

“Glad you’ve seen reason. Now tell me why you’re here!”

“To find the alien that escaped Brooks.” He struggled against the ropes binding him, instincts yelling at him to touch his nose and stop the bloodflow.

“Why did you take Major Davis hostage?”
“I wanted to make him sorry for betraying me!”

Jack couldn’t help himself. He laughed. “Betraying you?! You betrayed his trust!”

Evan gulped at the cynical and humorless laugh. He was a little freaked out by this darker side of Jack that was coming out. It was such an oxymoron in comparison to the normally light and childlike attitude the man showed. He guessed that this was the side reserved for enemies. Once again he praised the Lord for O’Neill being on their side.

“And believe me, it was very easy! Likes to take it up the ass and begs for more. Wasn’t difficult to find something to blackmail him with!”

Jack slapped his face and snarled, spit spraying the agent’s face, “You’re talking about my friend there! So you might want to think twice about what you say about him!”

Sykes smirked. “Why? You his new lover or something?”

“No, but Ronon over there will probably give you the message from his new lover if you don’t start talking again soon.” Ronon obligingly cracked his knuckles and smirked menacingly. He continued in a whisper, “And you might want to remember what I did to those prison guards. There are fates much worse than death.”

Swallowing hard Sykes continued, “Hey, I just smacked him around a bit! Nothing serious!”

Jack deliberately enunciated every word, pausing slightly between each of them, leaving no room for misunderstanding, “What have you done to him?”

“Bruised that pretty face a bit, eternalized myself on him. Thought about getting one last fuck, but you showed up first.”

“What you mean with ‘eternalized’?” Jack asked, feeling the bile rising in his throat. ‘If we hadn’t gotten there in time…’ He almost shuddered. He still remembered how long it had taken him to get over the trauma he’d experienced in Iraq. He’d shared some of the events with Daniel, knowing that it was necessary due to the nature of their relationship. In the beginning he’d had the occasional flashback when they got intimate. After a certain amount of trial and error he’d finally
learned what to avoid and now he rarely had them at all.

“The cuts. They’re my name!”

“What about Pierson? What did you do to him?”

“What’s wrong with him?” Sykes asked innocently.

“You damn well know what’s wrong with him!” Ronon bellowed as he jumped forward and grabbed the man’s throat, slowly squeezing until Sykes couldn’t breathe anymore.

“Ronon,” Jack warned and the Satedan released him.

Wheezing, Sykes collapsed in the chair. He looked up at the general who hovered in front of him. “I was given a poison that would prevent the aliens healing.”

“Where did the Trust get it?”

“After Brooks died we found the backup copies and later on, coincidentally, another of his species.”

“So you experimented on the other?”

“Yeah, took four month until they got it right and found the right dosage to kill these things permanently!” Sykes told them proudly.

“How does it work and is there an antidote?” Jack demanded.

“Nope, there isn’t! It dissolves the nerve endings to the brain. Even if these aliens recover from death, this poison won’t flush out of their system. After two days it destroys the spinal column, which causes the ‘immortal’, as they call themselves, to suffer from something similar to decapitation!”
Jack swallowed hard. As far as he knew decapitation was the only way to kill immortals. ‘But Methos said he’s different; that he can’t die by beheading!’

“Anything else you want to tell us?” Lorne asked, seeing that the general needed a little time to recuperate.

Sykes shook his head, “That’s all I know! I swear!”

“Okay, for now we’ll believe you. Ronon, would you please accompany him back to his cell?” Evan asked.

Ronon nodded and grabbed Sykes upper arm, pulled him out of the chair, dragged across the room and out the door.

After the departure of their ‘guest,’ Evan looked at O’Neill and saw worry reflected in the once again expressive eyes.

He asked, “What should we do now, sir?”

Jack set his jaw. “Go back to the infirmary and talk to the doc.” He took a deep breath and stood up. “I just hope that Methos was right and will recover even if we don’t find an antidote.”

Thinking about the people who were now sitting in the infirmary worrying about the two men, who hadn’t even been on Atlantis for long, Evan replied, “I hope so too, sir.”

Tbc

Chapter 15

Slowly waking up, Paul tried to raise his arm and scratch the irritating itch on his chest, when he felt someone taking a hold of both his hands.
“Paul, can you hear me?” a hopeful and familiar voice spoke up next to him.

Tired as he was, he couldn’t let the owner of that voice continue to sound so worried. Lifting his half-a-ton eyelids, he could only saw blurry shapes. He lazily blinked a few times as the image before him slowly went into focus. “John,” he sighed in relief.

Memories slowly rose from the depths of his subconscious, filling him with shame and humiliation as he remembered the scenes that had transpired before he’d lost consciousness again. “Peter… What happened? Did you get him?” Paul asked trying to sit up.

John gently pressed him down again. “Shh, lie still, or you’ll tear out the doc’s nice needlework. And it looks so neat and tidy too!” Sheppard took in Paul’s bright, if slightly dazed looking, green eyes. No shadows lurked behind them, which meant that Sykes probably hadn’t raped him. “We got him. But he stabbed Pierson with a poisoned knife first.”

Looking over to the other bed, he saw Adam lying there, pale and weak. Jacob sat beside him, when the Tok’ra felt another gaze on him, he turned around. Paul could see the relief in his eyes as he said, “Good to see you up, Paul. We were a bit worried.”

Swallowing the lump in his throat, he replied, “I’m sorry, Jacob. If I hadn’t been caught so easily, Peter wouldn’t have hurt…”

“Stop it right there, Paul! Jack already interrogated Sykes and we know what transpired between you two. We also know that he was sent here to poison Methos. If you hadn’t been there we wouldn’t have known he was a member of the Trust. He would’ve waited a bit longer, but it would have happened eventually anyway,” Jacob interrupted him, all the while stroking Methos hand with his fingertips.

“We also know what he would have done, if Sheppard’s and Pierson hadn’t shown when they did.” Paul jumped at Jack’s voice from the other side of his bed. He hadn’t even noticed he was there.

Paling, Paul looked at the covers clenched tightly in his fists. “He wouldn’t have done anything, Jack.”

“He planned to fuck you one last time. His words not mine,” Jack said bluntly knowing that Paul would want to know the whole truth.
“He kissed me; forced me to let him touch me.” Paul confessed, glancing away from his lover.

“Hey,” gentle hands turned his face back and even gentler blue eyes, with a ring of brown in the center, looked at him worriedly. “As long as you’re okay, that bastard doesn’t matter.” John leaned forward and kissed Paul, pouring his soul into the kiss. The worry fell away, as he took in the taste and smell of his now safe lover.

“Hey! Sheppard, you remember what I told you at the gate when I arrived?” Jack commented, raising his eyebrows as he waited for the colonel to break the kiss. And waited and waited. “Hello! O’Neill to Sheppard! Let the injured man get his breath back, before he faints!”

Jack laughed as John finally managed to break their kiss and panted, “Yes, sir.”

Jacob was happy that Paul was healing nicely. Now if just Methos would wake up…

Looking down he saw his lover’s eyes flutter open. “Methos.”

“Jacob… you’re okay?” Methos mumbled weakly.

“Yeah.”

“What… ‘bout… Paul?”

“He woke up a few minutes ago, and is in Sheppard’s hands over there.” Jacob pointed at the other bed, where Jack was still teasing John and Paul.

Rodney and Daniel were in the lab with Sam and Keller, trying to find an antidote. Ronon and Teyla weren’t ones for sitting around and waiting, so they’d gone to release their tension in the most destructive way they knew: sparring with each other.
Methos slowly turned his head and saw his friend looking somewhat pale, but not seriously harmed. “Good.”

“Sykes really poisoned the knife, love. He told us that the poison dissolves the nerves and was tested on an immortal on earth.”

“Dissolves nerves?”

“Yes, it is like an internal decapitation.”

“But… shouldn’t harm me… know I… can’t die that way.”

“That’s true, son.” A bright light signaled the arrival of Moros. “But it hurts and weakens you. Somehow this poison blocks the access you have to your powers, so you aren’t healing quickly enough to flush it out.”

“Father…” Methos breathed in relief. “Can you help me?”

Moros shook his head sorrowful, “I am sorry, son. The Ancients don’t know much about this poison. The only thing I can tell you safely is that the enzyme added, to it to make it even more deadly, was developed by the Goa’uld millennia ago.”

“To what purpose?” Selmak asked, taking over her host’s body for this discussion. “I have never seen nor heard of this poison before, and I’m the oldest Tok’ra alive.”

“We do not know. But what I do know is that it’s only due to his bond with Jacob, that he’s been able to heal himself, albeit slowly. That’s why you are feeling a bit weak, my son-in-law. It’ll take a little more time, but he will manage to recover on his own. Don’t worry.” Leaning down to bestow a kiss upon his son’s forehead, Moros vanished.

Jacob breathed easier, knowing that his lover would be alright and leaned down to rest his head on one of Methos’ hands.

Selmak laughed in his mind, *He called you his son-in-law, Jacob.*
Jacob snorted. *That’s typical for you to concentrate on that!*  

*One of us has to concentrate on trivial things, when you worry so much.*  

*Hopefully he’ll recover soon, then we can stop worrying.*  

*You heard what Moros said. We have to give it time and let him rest.*  

*You’re right, Selmak.*  

*Like always, Jacob.*  

Laughing at the smugness transferred through their bond, Jacob fell into an exhausted asleep.

******************************************************************************************

Two weeks later, Methos was still weak, but not in danger of dying again. He still lay in the infirmary, but Dr. Keller had promised to release him once his blood tests showed that the rest of the poison had left his bloodstream.

For the first few days, Paul Davis had kept him company, along with their respective lovers, who just left to shower once in a while and when threatened to choose between sedatives and their own bed. Due to Jacob being a Tok’ra though, this hardly had the same effect on him as it did on John. Keller had finally given up and given him a bed next to Methos’, but refused to offer the same treatment to John, who had additionally been called away on several occasions for his duties and to go off-world. Now Paul, who had healed nicely from his ordeal, had finally been allowed to return to his own quarters. He’d been relieved to hear that Dunhill/Sykes would leave Atlantis in three days and that he’d be given to General Landry instead of the NID. General Sykes, meanwhile, had been arrested for treason and attempted murder.

Jacob still visited his lover almost hourly, and spent all his free time with him in the infirmary, but he’d also started his research up again.
“Hey, dad. How’re you doing?” Sam asked as she entered her father’s quarters.

“Hey, Sam.” While Jacob looked better than before, he still wasn’t sleeping all that well without his lover’s presence next to him. “Better now that we know that Methos will be released soon.”

“Yeah, Doctor Keller told me about it. We can count ourselves lucky that he isn’t like the other immortals, otherwise he’d be dead.”

“I know, Sam. But I’m glad that Moros came here to tell us about it, regardless.”

#Colonel Carter, please report to the control room! Over,# came Amelia Banks’ urgent voice over the radio.

“Carter here, what’s the matter? Over,” she asked while looking at her father.

#Colonel, our sensors have detected three Wraith hives leaving hyper-space. ETA is in 2 hours. Over.#

“I’m on my way! Out,” Sam ended the conversation and turned to her father. “You coming?”

“Wraith again, huh? Sure I’m coming. Methos will want to know what’s going on.”

She activated her headset again, “Carter to Sheppard. Over.”

#Sheppard here. Over.#

“John we’ve detected three Hive ships coming in our direction. Over.”

#Not again! Lorne is with me. We’ll meet you in the control room. Over.#

“Alright. See you there. Carter out.”
A few minutes later, Sam and Jacob arrived at the control room just as John, his team and Evan and Paul entered through another door. Jack and Daniel were already leaning over the console where Amelia pointed out something to them.

“When will they get here?” John asked.

“ETA 2 hours, Colonel,” Amelia replied.

John cursed, “Shit! Shouldn’t we have detected them sooner? Last time we had two weeks!”

“It seems as if they used a new cloaking technology. If not for the higher radiation due to the sun winds we wouldn’t have been able to detect them at all. Chuck is already working with Radek to update our sensors.”

“Damn… Well, at least this time our shield is intact and we can cloak the city.”

Sam nodded at John’s comment, “True. But I’d like to know why they’re here again after what happened with Pierson.”

“What could they want here so soon after we kicked their collective asses?” John asked.

“We’ll have to wait and see. Amelia, activate the cloak and inform us when they’re in communications range.”

“Yes, Ma’am.”

“Colonel Carter, the Wraith are calling us!”

“Let’s hear it, Amelia.”
On the screen a Wraith appeared in the usual attire and looking hatefully at them, #Atlantis, we know you are there. The knowledge of the cloaking device was transmitted to us by our program.#

Sam grimaced but nodded to Chuck, “This is Colonel Carter from Atlantis. What do you want?”

#We demand you hand over the device you used to destroy one of my men last time!#

“I can assure you that there is no device…”

#Then give us the human that destroyed the soul of my subordinate! We know he is with you. We can sense him!#

“I have no idea what you’re talking about.”

#Then you just condemned the whole planet!#

Rodney muted their side of the transmission. “Sam, they’re powering up their weapons. The energy readings are higher than normal. We have to activate the shield right now if we don’t want them to blow us sky-high!”

Sam nodded at Amelia who immediately deactivated the cloak and raised the shield. “Shield activated!”

At that moment, the Wraith started firing at them. The city trembled beneath the onslaught and the lights flickered.

“What’s going on?” Methos demanded from his post in the doorway.

“Wraith, they wanted to pressure us into handing the ‘device’ over!”
“Maybe we should hand it over…” Methos thought out loud.

Everything seemed to come to a sudden halt as every person in the control room looked at him.

“You do know that they’re talking about you, right Pierson?” Rodney huffed disbelievingly.

“Yeah, but…”

“NO! There’s no way in hell you’ll go up there! I know what you’re planning and I won’t allow it!” Jacob exploded as the saw the look in Methos’ eyes.

Jack looked at him. “The same idea you had with the Ori?” At Methos nod, he stomped over to him and glared yelling, “What you think I’ll let you pull the same idiotic stunt twice? You’re sadly mistaken, mister! I absolutely refuse to let you go up there to get yourself killed again!”

“Jack…”

“No, don’t you dare ‘Jack’ me! When you joined us on earth you told us you wouldn’t be able to interfere with our wars! And what do you do? You fight them for us! It’s not your task to destroy every enemy we’ve come across, making us appear lazy!”

Methos looked stunned at the triad Jack had just let loose. “I know it is not my task, but I’m able to help and that’s what I’m going to do!”

‘Atlantis, can you transport me to the ship?’

*Even with the changes you made, I can’t say for sure if I can get you through their shields. The transporters haven’t been used since the Replicators took over.*

‘Do it!’

Jack sprung into action, as he heard the hum of Methos talking to the city in his mind. The buzz told him that Methos was planning something and he grabbed a hold of Methos arm, just as
Atlantis started the transporting process.

Jacob stood there stunned as Jack and Methos vanished. “Where…?”

A message began typing itself on the screen: Methos asked me to transport him to the ship you communicated with earlier.

“Are you Atlantis?” Sam asked, fascinated, despite her worry for the two men.

Yes.

“How did you transport them? That shouldn’t be possible from what we’ve discovered so far! Was it something that we didn’t know about yet or was it something…” Rodney exclaimed before he was distracted by the answer being typed.

He modified the emergency transporters. I was able to transport him through the shields of the ship.


As I said, the transporters have not been used for a long time and are faulty. The moment “Jack” made contact with Methos I was not capable of transporting only Methos.

“Why have you not made contact with us in this manner before?” Teyla asked curious.

I have not been able to do this for very long. Methos adjusted a few of my programs and enabled me to interact with you just before he fell ill. However at that point in time until now there was not much for me to tell you.

Enraged John paced the control room. “So, what are we gonna do now? We can’t just sit here twiddling our thumbs while O’Neill and Pierson are fighting for their lives.”

I can activate the weapons and start sending drones to the other two ships.
“You’re right, John. Now that the city can defend herself, we don’t need you to stay here for the chair.” Determination entered Sam’s eyes as she activated the city wide communication, “This is Colonel Carter, we are under attack by the Wraith but our shields are holding. Please stay calm. Gate teams 1, 2, 5, 7 and 9 gear up and report to the jumper bay immediately.”

Turning to Chuck and Radek as they entered the control room she asked, “Did you finish the modifications?”

“Yes, Mam. We analyzed their new shields and managed to add the range into our sensors,” Chuck answered as he sat down at the consol next to Amelia.

“Colonel, the Odyssey and Daedalus are calling!” Amelia interrupted.

“Put them through.”

“Carter! There are three hive ships coming your way. Two others have started their darts and are attacking us!” Emerson’s calm voice reported.

“What is your position?” Carter now remembered the exercise Emerson and Caldwell had been planning for weeks. A simulated fight to help them analyse weaknesses in their defense.

“Three hours from Atlantis!” Caldwell’s voice joined the conversation. “How was it possible for them to get so close to us?”

“They seem to have new shields and cloaks, Steven. They managed to deflect our sensors. Just because of the radiation we were able to detect the three hives coming our way. We still can’t see those attacking you!”

“Damn…”

Emerson cursed as well, “We’ll try to loose them and come to you as soon as possible.”

“Gentlemen, I wish you luck. Hopefully we’ll still be here when you come back…” Sam endes
the transmission and turned around to John. “Go and get them back, John. We’ll start attacking
them with everything we have.”

John nodded, slightly relieved, and left the control room with Ronon, Teyla and a reluctant
Rodney following in his wake. When they arrived in the armory they were met with stoic gazes
from Lorne’s team, as well as the other marines that were arming themselves.

John addressed the group, “When you’re ready, go to the jumpers. We’ll take four of them. One
pilot and two soldiers per jumper, the rest is with my team on the way to the first hive while the
others distract them. Atlantis will be firing drones. I’d suggest not to get between them and their
targets.”

“I can tell Adam to damage their shields, so it’ll be easier to get inside,” Jacob’s voice remarked
from behind.

John whirled around to see Jacob, Paul and Daniel gearing up. “What do you think you’re
doing?”

Jacob looked at him as if he was stupid, “Colonel, my lover’s on that hive! You don’t really
expect me to sit here and wait for him to blow up the ship, do you?”

“And don’t forget that Jack’s up there too,” Daniel remarked quietly.

John looked ready to protest but knew that both men were capable and experienced. Turning to
Paul he started, “Paul…”

“No, John. They’re my friends and I won’t leave them there! I’m military. I’ve been trained for
this. I said it once and I’ll say it again, I might have been flying a desk for the last few years, but I
earned every badge I have.” Seeing the determined glint in his lover’s eyes John conceded.

“You people do know that I’m the CO here, right?” he asked shaking his head at his inability to
convince these men.

“Sure, keep telling yourself that Sheppard!” Rodney snorted. “Maybe someday someone other
than you will believe it too. Even if, technically speaking, Sam, Jack and Jacob all outrank you.”
“But ‘Military Head’ was in my job description!” He pouted.

“We know that, sir.” Lorne smirked. “Even if Colonel Carter makes all the tactical decisions, I write all the reports and…”

Hurriedly John interrupted him, “Enough, major! That’s insubordination!”

The soldiers present laughed, used to their CO and his 2IC’s antics already. They arrived in the Jumper Bay.

“Let’s go. We’ve got a general and a doctor to find!” John jumped into the first jumper followed by the rest of his team, Daniel, Paul and Jacob.

Tbc

Chapter 16

“Swell, Pierson!” Jack whirled on his cousin as they both materialized on the hive ship.

“What the f…Jack! What the hell have you done?!”

“I? What have I done?! Must I just remind you that you wanted to go alone and were about to go against my orders?! Again!”

Taking a calming breath Methos remembered where they were and quickly put his hand over Jack’s mouth, effectively shutting him up. “Shhh!”

“Ssshhhyouself!” Jack tried to scoff at his cousin.

Slowly Methos let go and pointed down the next corridor that they heard footsteps approaching them from. Nodding in the other direction the duo hid behind the next corner.
After the footsteps receded Jack turned to Methos and muttered, “So, great master, what’s your brilliant plan this time? That is, other than getting killed again. I’d think you’d try to avoid that more. It’s rather painful from what I’ve experienced. Let’s see, you’re still recovering from your bout with the poison, we have no weapons, no radios and no fucking clue where we are!”

“I know where we are, Jack. Don’t worry. And while I’m a little weaker than I normally would be, I can still protect us from the wraith.” Haughtily Methos reminded Jack, “And don’t forget that I can talk to Jacob here.” He tipped himself on the temple.

“Yeah? Than you should think about contacting him right now!” Jack pointed at the wraith coming at them from the other side.

“Shit!” Methos brought up his arms and with a quick stroke of his quickening brought the wraith down.

Marveling at the turn of events Jack whistled in appreciation, “Impressive, Pierson…” Before Jack could say anything else Methos eyes glazed over in what Jack recognized as a telepathic communication.

‘Methos!’

‘Jacob…’

‘You stubborn SOB! I promise you, that when we’re back on Atlantis, I’ll tie you up!’

‘Kinky, dear!’

Jacob’s mental voice actually growled at him, ‘Methos!’

‘Jacob, I had to do this. And I swear I didn’t plan on taking Jack along…’

‘You don’t really think that your dear cousin would let you gone alone, do you?’ Sighing in regret Jacob continued, ‘You’re far too similar for that. I don’t know how you managed to survive to be
‘I’m sorry, love. But I had to do something.’

Sighing Jacob calmed down hearing the pleading tone in his lover’s voice. ‘I know. I just worry. You’re still weak from that thrice damned poison.’

‘Hopefully the more I use my powers, the stronger I get. By the way, where are you?’

‘In a jumper on our way to the hive you’re on. The other jumpers will distract the other two ships. Can you deactivate the shields so that we can land?’

‘We can try. But I’ve never been on a wraith ship before and don’t know where to go and what to do…’

‘No problem, we’ve got Rodney here. He’ll tell me and I’ll tell you. Atlantis told us about some of the changes you made and will fire the drones once the shield is down. By the way, Sam wants a word with you about changing programs and systems like that. She isn’t a happy camper at the moment.’

Methos swallowed down the lump that built in his throat as he thought about an angry Colonel Carter and her furious father. ‘That’s a plan! Okay, I’ll just talk to Jack and we’ll get started.’

Turning to Jack he saw his cousin looking expectantly at him. He queried, “What?”

“What what? Did you just have Jacob on the line, or were you resting your eyes at the wrong point in time?” Jack asked.

Rolling his eyes Methos replied, “Yes, that was Jacob. They are coming for us in a jumper. We have to deactivate the shields so they can land.”

He smiled sweetly. “Oh, really? Nothing else? That sounds easy. Especially seeing as we don’t have a clue where we are, and I’ve never operated wraith technology before. In other words,” the smile disappeared and was replaced with barred teeth and a hissing whisper, “are you out of your fucking mind?!”
“No, I’m not. McKay’s on the jumper and Jacob will tell me what he told him about the position of the shield generator.”

“Oh, right then, nothing to worry about. It’ll only slow things down drastically. Why couldn’t Atlantis have just beamed him up here as well?” Jack asked as Methos went back to his talk with Jacob.

*************************

Every corner, that brought them nearer to the shield, generator was more heavily guarded.

‘Jacob there are four wraith ahead of us. I’ll take them out, so wait until I contact you again.’ With that, Methos stepped forward and extended his powers, hitting the wraith and frying them without raising the alarm.

‘Okay, done. But we have to hurry, Jacob.’

‘Methos, are you alright?’

‘Don’t think so.’ Methos admitted. ‘Instead of feeling better, I’m beginning to feel weaker. I don’t know how much more power I can still use before I collapse.’

‘Damn! And you wanted to take them out alone?!’ Jacob asked disbelievingly.

‘Yeah. So what? I thought I could! Maybe I overestimated myself a bit…’

‘Maybe? A bit?’

‘Okay, definitely.’

*************************
It turned out that finding the generator was the least of their problems, getting to it was a slightly different issue though. Four wraith stood working at the consoles, as Methos carefully spied around the corner. Normally he’d have been able to feel their presence. Due to the relatively large quantity of them and their collective bond to each other, however, he couldn’t mentally separate them.

He turned to Jack and held up four fingers. They readied the weapons they’d taken from the last wraith they’d come across. Methos wouldn’t be able to use his powers anymore, as he was already beginning to feel weak. Something was definitely wrong with him. He wasn’t able to feel the energy from the universe, like he’d been able to, ever since regaining his memories and destroying the block on his powers.

Methos and Jack raised their weapon and fired simultaneously at the unsuspecting wraith. The shots from the energy weapon went through the armor of the two guarding wraith and immediately knocked them out.

The other two were quick to duck out of sight, and soon after an alarm sounded through the ship. #hrsdjr unfamr sjsoket#

“Do you by any chance happen to understand that, Pierson?” Jack asked while firing at the two remaining wraith.

“My educated guess would be that they just informed the whole hive that we’re here!”

From behind them they heard more wraith coming in their direction. Getting desperate to get Jack to safety, Methos stood up and jumped through the doorway. Due to dumb luck, he hit the wraith with his shot just as Jack finally managed to stun the other wraith.

“Quick, Methos. Shut the damn door!” Jack snapped while Methos looked for the door mechanism. Finally finding it, he followed Rodney’s instructions and shut the door just as a shot hit the console to Methos’ right.

“Puh, that was a bit close! Jack exclaimed.

“You think? I was thinking it might be fun to try that again,” Methos snarked.
Rolling his eyes in exasperation, Jack replied, “Contact Jacob and get them on board so we can get out of here!”

“Yes, sir, general, sir!” Methos saluted and his eyes glazed over again as he opened his link to Jacob, ‘Jacob, we’re there!’

‘Okay, listen, McKay says you have to slice the console open on the underside and tear the middle two connections apart. Expect some fluid to seep out, as it’s organic.’

Jack watched as Methos worked on the control, only to start as the door opened a bit and a hand reached through. “Hurry, Methos! They’re almost here!”

‘Patience, Jack,” Methos sing sang while tearing the last connection. “Done!” ‘Jacob the shield is down, so hurry up! They’ve managed to open the door and I can’t…’

‘Methos?’ Jacob sounded worried as his lover’s voice suddenly broke off. ‘Methos! We’re coming!’

Chapter 17

“Shit!” Jacob jumped up and began pacing as Sheppard flew the cloaked ship into the wraith hangar.

“What? General, what happened? I gave you as good a walkthrough as I could without being there. I mean, I told you before that it’s difficult to do, but would you listen to me? No. I’d think that” Rodney asked.

“I lost contact with Methos! That only happens when he is unconscious or dead!” Jack exclaimed.

“Dead?” Cadman asked. Lorne hadn’t told the others about Methos’ secret, and wasn’t about to spill about it now either.
“Yeah, dead. You got a problem with that lieutenant?” Evan asked with a warning glint in his eyes.

“No, sir. Just surprised. Didn’t see that one coming.” She nodded to her superior officer and asked, “Can I ask, sir…” Stackhouse as well as the other team members looked over, showing interest for the first time.

“You want to know what he is,” Evan replied. He looked over to Jacob, who gave him a short nod in confirmation. “He’s half-Ancient, born on Atlantis and left on earth 12,000 years ago.”

“Okay…”

Evan looked surprised at his team. “Okay? Is that it?”

“No offense, sir, but I’ve seen weirder things since coming to Atlantis.” Cadman shuttered, remembering her experience of being stuck in Rodney’s body.

“Alright people, stop prattling and get ready. We’re about to land,” John remarked from his place in the pilot seat. “We’ll just go in, get our men and leave again, okay?”

Without waiting for a confirmation John stood up and opened the hatch with a silent command and watched the others in the group carefully leave the cloaked jumper to secure the parameter.

Readying his own weapon, John waited until the others were out of earshot before he grabbed hold of his lover’s neck and kissed him fiercely. “Paul, I want you to literally be glued to me. Do you understand?”

Recovering from the unexpected kiss, Paul grinned. “Oh, don’t worry. I’ll be watching your ass the entire time!”

Laughing, John released Paul, “Don’t you mean my six?”
“That too!” They exited and followed Ronon, who was waiting for them impatiently.

“You done?” he asked in a gruff voice, but both men could see the laughter dancing in his eyes.

“For now. You’re just jealous ’cause you didn’t think of doing that with Evan!” John laughed as Ronon growled at him. “No time right now, big guy. I hear McKay complaining again. We should hurry before Lorne or General Carter shoot him!”

“So, what’s the plan? How do we find them?” Cadman asked, as they crept further down the corridor. They’d decided against splitting up, as they only wanted their men back and not to be captured themselves.

“As I told Doctor McKay, I can find Methos anywhere!”

“Yeah, is that so? What about General O’Neill?”

Rodney spoke up, “I knew it, I’m surrounded by idiots!”

John cut in, “You’re butchering a perfectly good line from Spaceballs there.”

“Whatever. That’s completely beside the point. Have you idiots completely forgotten about portable life signs detectors? We can find our errant expedition members with them and use them to avoid the Wraith.”

Daniel, who had walked silently until that moment, spoke up, “We should probably check the cells first. Pierson will be watched closely, when they discover what he is. If we got him first, we’d probably alarm the whole ship to our presence.”

John nodded. “Jackson’s right. Okay, we’ll make our way to the cells then. Rodney, which way?”

“Oh, now I’m good enough? My plan would have worked just as well.”

“ McKay! Stop sulking and get us there. Or I’ll be forced to talk to Zelenka about cutting down on
some evening activities of yours!”

Paling Rodney looked at his friend and team leader, “You wouldn’t dare!”

John grinned wickedly, “Wouldn’t I?”

“I hate you!” Rodney muttered as he checked his scanner and typed furiously.

“Hey, it’s not my fault you’re so easy!” John laughed along with the rest of the team. Since the team had found out about his relationship with Katie, they had needled Rodney about her influence on him. This relationship had changed Rodney bit for bit. Mostly he was able to let people nearer than before. This was discovered when Radek had been hurt in an accident concerning an explosion. None of them would have thought that Rodney would care that deeply for his fellow scientist. But instead of jumping back into work, as usual, Rodney sat with Radek the entire week he’d been in a coma and, if not for Katie, he would have forgotten to eat, causing him to pass out because of his hypoglycemia.

“Hah!” Rodney exclaimed. “I’ve found the signal of the general’s transmitter! We won’t have to search for him after all. This way.” Rodney pointed to his left and John and Evan took point while Teyla and Ronon brought up the rear, Stackhouse’s team secured the middle.

Paul and Jacob were in the middle with Daniel as they were the most inexperienced with fighting wraith.

Fifteen minutes later they arrived at the cells and quickly found the one holding Jack O’Neill. The general was sitting on the floor with his head down and knees drawn up to his chest, hugging himself and rocking slightly.

Daniel stepped forward, while the others secured the corridor. “Jack? Are you alright?” Receiving no answer and seeing no reaction, Daniel turned to Sheppard. “We have to get him out of there, now!”

“Rodney, can you open this door?” John asked.

“Don’t insult me. Of course I can. I can practically do this in my sleep now with all the practice I’ve gotten over the last four years.” Rodney began fiddling with the controls and the door slit open.
Daniel and Paul rushed inside and Daniel gently reached to caress Jack’s face. Just as his hand made contact, a strong hand gripped his wrist and threw him to the floor. Paul gasped as a hand closed around his throat and practically threw him into the next wall, forcing all the air to leave his lungs in one big whoosh.

Sheppard looked surprised as the general attacked his own friends, but before he could step forward to intervene, O’Neill stopped and seemed to register their presence.

“Sheppard?” Jack asked in a hoarse voice.

“General.”

“You really here?”

“Yeah, what was that about?”

“They tried to enter my mind… they wanted to know how we got here and how many others were with us. Wanted to discover what we planned, by playing around with my mind. They couldn’t get into Methos’ and took him to their commander.” Jack looked down and saw Daniel and Paul still lying prone on the floor. Suddenly he remembered what he’d just done to his lover and friend and looked somewhat green, eyes filled with self-loathing. “Shit! Danny, are you alright? Paul? God, I’m sorry!”

Paul shook his head and accepted the hand John held out to him. He rubbed ruefully at his neck. “It’s okay. I’m fine. Nothing hurt but my ego.”

John pulled his lover up and examined the bruises he could see forming on Paul’s throat. Despite his lover being hurt, he couldn’t find it within him to get angry at the general. He knew what it was like to have the wraith picking through your brain. It had only been an hour since they’d lost contact with the two men, but the wraith scrambled human minds quicker than any other race they’d ever come across, other than perhaps the Replicators.

“It’s okay, Jack. We know that you didn’t mean it,” Daniel tried to placate his lover before enveloping him in his arms. Lorne’s team was surprised by the openness and looked away. It was one thing to suspect and something completely different to know.
Jack calmed down, after being reassured by Paul as well. He looked at Jacob and remembered the missing person. “Jacob, I’m sorry. They hit us with stunners and, as we went down, Methos managed to fry three of them. I’m so gonna kick his ass for that! How could he be so stupid and reveal himself like that?!”

Sighing and briefly closing his eyes, Jacob replied, “He probably wanted to protect you from them. You know him just as well as I do, Jack. Don’t you think that would be the most likely scenario?” Seeing Jack nod he asked, “What exactly happened there, Jack?”

“Methos was still trying to shut down the shield when the door opened. He flicked a bit of his quickening at them and fried them in the process. Then we were shot. When I woke up again, there was a wraith, ugly bugger by the way, trying to root through my mind.”

“Did he get lost in the maze?” Daniel joked, trying to lighten Jack’s mood.

“Ha ha, Jackson. They tried to make me believe that Methos had come back and rescued me, but had left all the decisions to me. That was when I knew that it wasn’t real.”

“True. Methos wouldn’t have you let decide. He’d have gotten you to the hangar and out of here before you could blink.”

“Okay, Jacob. You can find him, right? We should hurry up before they start dissecting him. I hear it’s quite painful.”

Jacob nodded. He closed his eyes and focused, trying to center in on the immortal. A few moments later he came out of the daze and pointed in the direction he’d felt his other half’s presence. Slowly and carefully they set out on the path to the control room.

******************************

Methos sat on the ground, where the wraith commander had forced him to his knees, and looked mildly interested in the events taking place around him.

The wraith didn’t know what to do with him, as they thought it too dangerous to feed from him, when they didn’t even know what had caused the last death, seeing as the only beings that could
tell them anything, were either dead or not talking.

At first the commander had tried to interrogate him, but the wraith became more and more irritated when Methos just didn’t react to his threats. It was so used to intimidating humans with their fear of the feeding, that they didn’t know many other ways to access the information, other than beating him up, which made them look like fools as he healed in front of their eyes, and digging into his mind, which they were reluctant to do without having more information.

Methos’ head shot up when he felt the sensitive brush of his lover’s mind. Opening the bond, he let Jacob see through his eyes, before feeling his cheek being caressed by a mental hand in farewell.

Preparing himself for the onslaught he knew would come in the next few minutes; he sprung forward, startling his captures into sudden action.

The guard next to him reacted like it always had, and pushed Methos against the nearest wall. Then he made the mistake off thrusting his hand to Methos’ chest to feed.

The commander howled in fury, before everything became silent.

Just like the last time the energy left Methos and seeped into the feeding wraith. But instead of being absorbed, it spread throughout the entire control room, like a mist, connecting the wraith with the power.

The six wraith tensed as the mist slowly seeped through their clothes and entered into their bodies. While standing stock still, shocked with the unexpected events, they sprung and wrenched themselves away, when the guard, still feeding on Methos, left out an inhuman howl and wrenched himself away, while Methos crumbled to the floor and stayed down.

Methos braced himself for what, he was sure, would happen next. But differently than the time before, the wraith just continued to howl until the howl seemed to echo through the whole ship. He felt his hair rising from the building electricity. When the first lightning bolt struck him, he saw the wraith push his head back in pain before crumbling to dust. Without any warning the others tried to escape, but just barely managed to open the doors before the lightning hit them.

Methos felt the darkness approaching him, just like the first time. But instead of shying away, he welcomed it. It seeped through his skin and Methos felt himself suffocating. Just as suddenly, he felt his own powers eject the wraith powers in a violent explosion.
The last thing he saw was the bright light, as it exploded outwards and his friends as they came through the door and were hit by the eruption.

Tbc

Chapter 18

“Methos is in the control room,” Jacob remarked after disconnecting from Methos.

Rodney sucked in a startled breath, “Control room? There will be many wraith and then we won’t manage to escape, which means…”

“MacKay! We will not leave Pierson here, you understand?” John interrupted Rodney’s rambling when he saw the way O’Neill’s head swung around.

“Sure, no problem. Control room,” Rodney forced himself to calm down while looking over his PDA, “this way, at the end we have to go right.”

Sheppard nodded before turning to the group, “Okay, Rodney, you stay behind us, Lorne your team will take the point, Stackhouse, take the rear. General, it would be better if you left this to us…”

“Let you have all the fun? Hell no!”

“Jack…”

“No, Daniel. Ever one of you seems to forget that this is my cousin we’re talking about. I may not have fought many wraith yet, but if I don’t do it now, I won’t get the chance again! So let’s go and kick some ass!”

“Jack…”
“What?!” he turned back to Daniel.

Daniel looked exaggerated at him before handing him his weapon, “You might need your gun, so why don’t you take it back?”

Jack looked surprised at the weapon. “You mean…”

“Yeah, you laid it down when we rounded the corner and forgot it.”

“Oh,” Jack took the gun back and checked it before turning to walk down the corridor.

Jacob shot Daniel sympathetic looks before following.

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Just as they shot the last guard in front of the control room an inhuman howl vibrated through the whole ship.

“Methos!” Jacob remembered this scream from the last time and without hesitation he opened the door.

Stepping inside they saw the wraith dying in front of them, but instead of it being a slow process like the last time, they crumbled to dust in the blink of an eye.

“Methos?” Jacob looked around until his eyes fell onto his cowering lover. He sat on the floor, leaning against a wall in support with closed eyes.

Suddenly they snapped open and Jacob jumped back when shadows appeared all around them.

“Get back! This happened the last time just before the spirit tried to take him over and exploded!” Jacob warned and forced the others back.
“But we can’t just let them HAVE him,” Jack exclaimed trying to get to his cousin’s side.

Daniel held him back, “Jack, Methos would never be able to forgive himself if you got hurt because of him. Stay back and we’ll find a way.”

Reluctantly Jack nodded and looked back to Methos. Without warning a flash blinded them and threw them against the wall or outside the corridor.

In the background they heard Teyla’s shout of pain.

“Teyla!” John looked around and saw Paul next to her on the ground, holding her arms as she convulsed in what looked like seizure.

“Teyla, calm down. Nothing happened!” Paul tried to calm her down.

Jack looked at Jacob, “Did you hear that?”

Jacob nodded, “Yes, voices that screamed in pain before dying away.”

“Wraith?”

“Probably. He killed them?”

“Likely.”

“Then what about her?” Jack asked nodding his head in Teyla’s direction.

Jacob looked at the others until Lorne explained, “She’s half-wraith.”

Looking thoughtful Daniel contemplated, “That would explain why she’s the only one affected. Her wraith genes would be affected by the power wave that was released. And it would react like
she was under attack, while her human genes would protect her from worse.”

In the distance sounded an explosion, Methos’ power wave had hit something vital while destroying the wraith on the ship.

“Life-support is failing, energy leaks all over the ship!” Rodney exclaimed. “We have to leave now! Otherwise we’ll be blown up with the ship!”

“What about the wraith?” Ronon asked.

“There are no wraith life signs on this ship. I can still detect this “wave”. It has now connected with the other ships,” Rodney stopped speechless.

John looked up from Teyla, “MacKay?”

Shaking himself from his stupor Rodney continued, “Their life signs are vanishing. If I’m right, and I’m always right, well mostly, anyway, then the wave he,” Rodney pointed at Methos still lying limb on the floor, “released was somehow converted energy the wraith set free.”

Jack looked worried at the others, “Converted to what?”

“It seems to be a mixture from a hyperspace signal and…” seeing their blank looks he sighed, “You remember the disrupter weapons that were used on the replicators? They disconnected single molecules and prevented them from connecting again. This is almost the same. The energy Pierson has binds the life force from the wraith to its own and pulls it out of the wraith. In the process the aging that has been stopped due to their longevity catches up with them.”

Seeing their disgusted looks he continues, “His quickening acts as the disrupter, but the energy can’t stay with him because they aren’t compatible. That’s why he had to send it out into the universe to be free,” Rodney made a gesture of flying butterflies.

“Aha. And why will the ships be destroyed?”

“Sheppard, these ships are living creatures. They may not have the same physiology but they are related to the wraith. Same as Teyla. They may not be affected to the same extend but they still
feel the pain. And there is nothing we can do to stop them from collapsing once the other hives are empty as well.”

John gestured to Paul and helped Teyla up. She was still moaning in pain but conscious enough to stand on her own feet. “Ronon, can you carry Pierson?”

Ronon nodded and effortless pulled Methos up over his shoulder. Jacob looked ready to protest but after Jack’s warning look he decided to remain silent.

All the way back to the jumper they saw the dust of dead wraith, the mist that was usually present in hives had ceased and Rodney’s scanner warned them that they had the atmosphere in the ship was slowly turning toxic.

More explosions were felt as different systems malfunctioned and caused overloads. Just as the arrived at the hangar doors the corridor behind them collapsed, burying Lorne and Cadman who brought up the rear under debris and rotten flesh from the ship.

“EVAN!” Ronon sat Methos down and sprung back to Lorne’s last position. Hefting debris left and right he soon discovered an arm lying motionless. Taking hold of the hand to assure whomever they’d found he saw the wristband and grabbed the hand tighter.

‘That’s the one I gave him when we started our relationship…’ Ronon mused. He was shaken out of his thoughts when other hands grabbed at Lorne’s arm and pulled him out of the heap, careful when they discovered the gash on his side where a sharp piece of debris had struck him and the blood marring his temple.

Ronon took his lover aside and turned back around to look for Cadman. ‘You have to get her out as well. Evan would never forgive you if you let her die!’ Frantically he scanned the chaos before detecting movement just to the right where they had found Evan.

The others had seen it as well and were scrambling over the debris. Cadman was conscious when they found her and already trying to free herself. Taking hold of the hand that reached for him John was relieved that both his soldiers were alright. Ronon pulled away the scrap lying across her and freed her legs.

Cadman hissed in pain, her right leg seemed to be broken and her right arm looked dislocated. But otherwise she looked fine. Daniel carefully picked her up while Jacob and Jack took a hold of Methos and Ronon tenderly took his unconscious lover into is arms.
“Faster! We’re loosing atmosphere! The collapse breached the hull, we’re just lucky we didn’t get sucked into space or lost the last oxygen!” Rodney urged them on.

Finally arriving in at the jumper John climb behind the controls with Rodney as co-pilot. “Ladies and Gentlemen, please prepare for a quick start and be ready for turbulences.”

That said John powered up the jumper and flew in the direction of the hangar doors. Seeing that they were closed he fired drones and blasted the doors into pieces.

“YEHAAA!” John exclaimed when the cleared the area around the ships and contacted the other jumpers as well as Atlantis.

“Jumper two, three and four, here jumper one. Clear the area around the hives, repeat clear the area around the hives. They are going to blow up any second. Atlantis, rise your shields. We don’t know what junk will go down on the planet when these ships go boom!”

The other three other jumpers confirmed, #Affirmative, jumper one.#

#Jumper one, here Atlantis. Shield is up. What about our people?# Sam’s voice sounded through the com.

“All accounted for. Be ready to treat some injuries. Lorne got a nasty hit on the head, Cadman’ got a broken leg and dislocated shoulder.” John hesitated, “Pierson’s not responding to stimulation.”

#Understood, we’ll wait in the hangar. Atlantis out.#

Just as Atlantis ended the call a huge explosion lit the space around them and shockwaves made the jumpers tremble. Seeing the other three jumpers in front of him John knew that this time he didn’t loose anyone.

“Okay, people, it’s time to go home.”
Chapter 19

“Major, would you please lie still and stop that twitching?!” Dr. Keller asked irritated. Since Ronon left to get his sketchbook he hadn’t stopped turning his head ever once in a while to look at the door. This made it rather difficult for Keller to take out the stitches on his temple.

“Sorry, Doc.” Evan heard the door open and tried to turn his head again, but this time Keller was prepared and held his jaw firmly.

“Hey, Doc. Is he making problems?” came the laughing voice of his CO as he stepped up to the bed.

“Oh no, he is just the same as all soldiers.” Laughing at the sulk that appeared on both their faces she finished treating him. “Okay, Major, just to make things clear…while I’m releasing you from the infirmary, because I don’t want your other half camping here and scaring away other patients, you are restricted to bed. WITHOUT…” she intoned at the blush appearing on his faces”…any strenuous activity. If you come here again due to this injury I promise the tie you to the infirmary bed and denying Ronon access!” with that she turned around grinning to herself at the sputtering she heard from the major and the laugh from his superior.

“You heard the doc, Evan! Nothing strenuous!” John laughed as the blush deepened on his friends face.

“Sheppard,” the hand on his shoulder made John whirl around and try to take a step back when he saw Ronon looming over him.

“Hiya, Ronon!”

“He’ been treating you okay, Evan?” Ronon glanced at his lover’s beet red face.

“Just being his charming self. But I’d rather leave now. A week in the infirmary is enough to last
Ronon remembered how they had brought the injured members of their rescue party to the infirmary. How Keller hadn’t been able to prevent Evan slipping into coma due to the head injury, she could only realign the three broken ribs and wrap them tightly. How she set Laura’s leg and reset her shoulder. How she couldn’t help Methos other than making him comfortable.

Cadman was still lying on the other bed asleep with painkillers soothing the pain of her broken leg.

Slowly focusing on his concerned looking lover Ronon nodded and gently helped him standing up from the bed, “Yeah, let’s get going.”

Slowly making their way down the corridor to Evan’s quarters, which he shared with Ronon since becoming a couple, Evan couldn’t help asking, “Has Adam woken yet?”

John’s grimaced thinking about the only member of their team he had been sure couldn’t be hurt permanently, who was also the only one still lying in the motionless in bed without having woken once. “Nope. He’s still out of it. Problem is that the SGC send him a message from the Asgard requesting his assistance in some experiment. When Sam had to tell them that he wouldn’t be able to come they told us they would be here soon.”

“Who’re these Asgard?” Ronon asked.

“Little grey men, who help earth from time to time. As far as I know they decided to commit race-suicide until Pierson came along and helped them,” John explained.

“They dangerous?”

John grinned, “Nope. They seem to have adopted Pierson.”

Evan laughed, “Pierson gets adopted wherever he goes!”
Ronon and John joined him. That seemed to be true. For a half-ancient he was surprisingly human and had already been adopted by the Athosians, the remaining Satedan, Lanteans, Asgard, Tok’ra, Ancients and Humans!

After settling Evan in his quarters John left to visit Adam. The man had been transferred to his own and Jacob’s quarters after it had become clear that Keller couldn’t do anything for him.

He chimed at the door which opened immediately to admit him. When he entered he saw Jacob sitting next to Methos’ bedside stroking his hand over the still man’s hair and soothing himself while trying to concentrate on reading the reports on the Padd in his hand. When John entered Jacob looked up and smiled tiredly at him and nodded in greeting.

“Hey,” John greeted him quietly.

“Colonel, how is Lorne?” Jacob inquired.

“Finally in his own quarters with Ronon. Maybe we’ll get some peace around here now!” Both men laughed at the memory of Ronon driving all habitants of Atlantis insane with his mood swings. But the tall man had taken great care to never show his hurt lover any of this and by silent understanding none of the others told Evan about it.

When both calmed down again John asked, “Any changes?”

Pain and grief flashed across Jacob’s face and he slowly shook his head, “No. I can just hope that the Asgard will come up with something.” Selmak send out calming tendrils as she had done since Methos had been brought home.

*Do not worry, Jacob. The Asgard will be able to help him. I am sure of that!*  

*I feel so helpless. He always gets hurt to protect us! First on Earth and now on Atlantis…Will it never end?*  

*Are you questioning your decision to be with him, Jacob?* Selmak asked, trying to understand the feelings flashing through their bond.
NEVER! I’m glad I got the chance to be with him, and I’ll be at his side as long as possible…*

Selmak soothed him, *I know that, my friend. But then you shouldn’t be that angry at him for protecting those he cares about. I think he still thinks he has to repent for the things he did as a horseman.*

Thinking it over Jacob discovered that John had taken a wet towel and was slowly cleaning Methos’ face with soothing motions. *Methos doesn’t know that all those people care about him, even when he isn’t protecting them.*

*That’s true.*

Jacob sat back and watched Sheppard take care of Methos.

Tbc

**Chapter 20**

“Greeting, Colonel Carter.” The Asgard arriving on Atlantis nodded his head as he stepped through the gate.

Sam’s eyes lit up when she recognized his voice, “Thor! It’s good to see you. I’d just hoped it’d be under different circumstances…”

“That would have been preferable, Colonel. Where is Methos?”

Eyes clouding over in worry Sam answered, “Dr. Keller couldn’t do anything for him so Dad took him back to their quarters.”

Thor nodded, “Would you show me the way? Heimdall will arrive tomorrow and Freyr will accompany her.”
“Heimdall and Freyr are coming too?” Sam asked surprised.

“Certainly. The Asgard owe Methos our continued existence. Every single Asgard would come to try and help if that was possible.”

“He is that important to you, Thor. I mean he is important to us too but not even all on Atlantis know that he is half ancient.”

Thor shook his head in exasperation, “You forget that the Asgard are more evolved, Colonel Carter. We already passed this phase in our evolution and due to Methos findings we are able to evolve further, rather then die.”

Chastised Sam thought about the differences between the Asgard and humans and had to admit that compared to the Asgard that the humans were still children. The Asgard didn’t have any wars with each other and they didn’t kill other than in defense.

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Arriving at her fathers door Sam chimed and was immediately admitted as her father knew that the Asgard would arrive.

Entering she wasn’t surprised when she not only saw her father as well as Jack and Daniel, but also Paul with John, Rodney with Katie and Ronon standing behind Evan’s chair.

Seeing the Asgard Jack jumped up from his place next to Methos’ bed, “Thor, buddy! It’s good to see you!”

While everyone wondered how Jack was able to identify the Asgard without hearing his voice Thor just blinked up at his friend, “It is good to see you too, O’Neill.”

Stepping forward he haltet in his process when a barrier flickered on around Methos.

“How do not worry, Avatar of Atlantis, I do not intent to hurt our friend.” Thor told Atlantis when she hummed a warning at him.
Surprised the others looked at him, “You can hear her?” Daniel asked.

“Certainly, due to our past connections with the Ancients we knew that they tried to create and artificial intelligence to represent their city. Methos confirmed it when he contacted us after establishing MacLeod as the user of the chair on earth.”

Hearing his explanation and seeing Jack’s trust in the Asgard Atlantis hummed waringly again before deactivating the shield.

“Thank you. You should know that no Asgard would ever hurt him. He is the reason we were given a second chance.” Thor looked at Methos before deciding that he would be better able to examine him if he were able to access the infirmary and the scanners.

Ronon picked Methos up and together they made their way to the infirmary.

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“No! This is my infirmary and you will NOT make any adjustments to my scanners without me knowing what you are doing!” Keller shouted when Thor basically told her to move aside so that he could work on Methos.

Sam grinned happy that Thor wasn’t intimidated by the woman and silently cheered him on. In the beginning Dr. Jennifer Keller had seemed like a sweet woman but after the disaster Rodney broke up with her because she was too ‘suffocating’ and Ronon not taking her because he was with Lorne something inside her had snapped. The most of the time she acted normal but other time, like right now, the transformed into a total bitch. The last straw was Rodney starting a relationship with Katie Brown.

“Dr. Keller, as I am the leader of Atlantis, technically it’s my infirmary. If you don’t want to help, please move aside.”

Rodney couldn’t resist and muttered, “Don’t let the door hit your arse,” while Katie couldn’t resist taking his hand and shushing him.

Fuming Keller glared at her and whirled around to leave.
“Now, Thor, that wasn’t very nice of you.” Jack laughed and congratulated himself to finally having an influence on the Asgard, “Well done.”

“I do not know what you are talking about, O’Neill.” Thor blinked up at him with those big and innocent eyes. “I was merely stating the truth. While reviewing the data she collected on Methos I found another file and ‘accidently’ read it.”

“Thor!” Sam exclaimed when she saw his solemn face like he was discussing the weather.

“Yes, Colonel Carter?”

“You can’t just go around and read our files…”

“I wouldn’t have done it if it hadn’t been encrypted with an Trust code Methos showed me.”

Disbelieve crossed their faces. “You mean to tell us Keller works for the Thrust?!” Sheppard exclaimed.

“Yeas, I take it you didn’t know and that you also didn’t know that she had developed an therapy to stop your other doctor from dying.”

“Which other doctor?” Jacob asked confused.

“Doctor Carson Beckett.”

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When they heard this they were speechless. Jacob gestured them to leave and find Keller and to give Thor quiet to work on Methos. Only Jack, Daniel and Paul stayed with him while he waited for Thor’s results.
An hour later Jacob began to get worried.

Two hours later he started pacing across the room with Jack while Paul and Daniel were sitting there silently.

After three hours John and Ronon came back and sat down next to Paul.

Four hours later the door opened and Thor stepped outside.

“And?” It was impossible to tell who said it first as they all inquired at the same time.

“After scanning his body for injuries and not finding any I managed to adjust the scanners to operate on the level I needed them to scan Methos’ energy, his life-force, or quickening as he calls it. There I discovered some remaining wraith energy…”

Jacob was instantly more worried, “Wraith energy? How can we get it out?”

“That will be the problem, it seems as if Methos took to much wraith energy into himself and know his body is trying to transfer it into his own. But it is impossible for him do achieve this. In any other case I would have suggested trying to get a wraith to get it out of him…”

“But any wraith feeding on him dies! That would set new energy free and make the whole situation worse!” Jacob exclaimed.

“Not necessarily…” John interrupted while touching a hand to his own chest.

Ronon looked at him and then growled out, “Sheppard, you can’t be serious! We can’t trust him!”

“I know, but he is Methos’ only chance.”

“Whom are you talking about, Colonel Sheppard?” Thor inquired.
“Okay, the short version: a few month ago I was captured by the genii. To escape I had to work together with a wraith they had also captured. He fed on me and later gave me all he took and some more back.”

“Would you be able to contact him?”

Ashamed John nodded, “Yeah, due to him feeding on me and giving it back he created a bond. It’s dormant just as he promised me. But he also told me that he owed me his life and should I ever need his help I could open it and he would contact me.”

“WHAT! And you never told us about it?” Ronon couldn’t believe that Sheppard as team leader would be that careless.

“I’m sorry, okay! I just didn’t want to be shipped back to earth to be experimented on!”

Jack looked at him and then nodded in acceptance, he could understand and respect the Colonel’s decision even if he didn’t think it would be respected by their military leaders. “Okay, Sheppard, go and contact this wraith. Ask him for help, but also make it clear, that we don’t know if Methos will fry his arse. Understood?”

John jumped up and saluted before leaving the room with Paul and Ronon training behind them.

“Kids…” Jacob laughed at Jack’s muttered words. Sitting back he could just hope that this wraith would be able to help them after all.

Tbc

Chapter 21

Meanwhile Stackhouse’s team with Rodney and Teyla had tracked down Keller and were taking her into custody.

“What is the meaning of this?” she screeched when Stackhouse cuffed her hands. “Lieutenant, I order you to take these off otherwise…”
“Otherwise what, Jennifer? Will you let him down like you did Carson?” Rodney sneered at her.

Trying to look innocent she fluttered her eyelids, “I don’t know what you mean, Rodney. Did Bell put you up to this?”

Rodney got a bad feeling in his stomach, “What does Katie have to do with this?”

“Oh she didn’t tell you?” grinning Jennifer looked at him coyly before leaning in, “She is pregnant and not sure you’re the father because she’s been fucking around with Davis.”

“With Davis…” he asked.

“Yes. You know the man is absolutely hot under all that uniform and going through the women like some change their socks!” Keller glared at Rodney when he started laughing.

“With Davis!” he roared with laughter. For a second he had been worried that there might be some truth to the bitches story, but when she mentioned Paul’s name he knew she was just trying to get a last shot to hurt him. “Honey if you’d told me she was getting it on with Stackhouse over there it would have been more believable!”

Stackhouse looked confused before remembering the kiss he had witnessed between Sheppard and Davis when they were on the hive-ship. Seeing that had made him think about telling on them before registering that this would mean loosing the best CO they would ever get. Sheppard was a very good CO. He listened to those serving under him and while not the most eloquent man he brought his point across efficiently. And in the end he’d sacrifice himself for every single person on Atlantis. Being gay didn’t change that. As for Davis, in the beginning Stackhouse had thought him to be very arrogant and aloof. But that changed… Mark’s eyes widened… about the time when Sheppard and Davis started eating together and leaving together, smiling at each other when nobody was looking… Hell, he couldn’t tell on them, if it made them happy, than so be it.

Rodney saw comprehension dawn in Stackhouse’s eyes and when their eyes locked he knew that the man wouldn’t betray Sheppard’s trust.

Turning back to Keller Rodney sneered, “If you had paid better attention than you would have known that Davis is already in a relationship with someone! Maybe then I would have believed you and started doubting Katie’s feelings for me. But you can’t possibly think for a minute that I
believe this crap!” That said Rodney whirled around and left her to Stackhouse and the rest of his team.

Teyla looked sadly at the woman he once would have called a friend and left as well.

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Thor had contacted Sheppard and suggested that he tried to open the bond to the wraith in the infirmary under observation to make sure he wasn’t harmed. John had readily agreed and after a night of restless sleep he dragged Paul there to start.

The Asgard was already there working on something or other with Sam sitting beside Methos, talking quietly to her father.

When John entered Sam looked up, but instead of the accusation he had feared her eyes looked clear and understanding.

Nodding to her he sat down and waited while Thor connected a few machines to him he already knew because of the time he had seem them on Teyla, when she connected to the other wraith.

“Concentrate know, Colonel Sheppard. Try to remember the wraith, his voice, his appearance, his hand on your chest.”

Hearing Thor’s hypnotic voice John could see the wraith in front of him, feel his live leaving him and then the surge of strength when he got it back. He felt a soft tendril in his mind, slowly unwrapping from a protective sheath and reaching out towards him. When he reached out with his mind it curled around him like a safety blanket. Instead of the cold and slimy touch he had expected from a wraith mind he felt warmth and not quite soothing but at least not aggressive feelings directed at him.

Surprise flooded him from the wraith, *Sheppard…*

*Yeah, it’s me,* John admitted hesitatingly.

*Why are you calling on our bond?* Curiosity got the better of the wraith.
*I need your assistance.*

*For what*

*Can we talk in person?*

The wraith mental voice sounded suspicious and cold, *Why should I risk that? You could kill me or try to experiment on me? I know you are similar to the genii, why should I trust you?*

*Because I give you my word that as long as you behave yourself, which means NO feeding or hurting and killing anyone, you will be safe.*

Apparently the answer had soothed the wraith a bit as the warm feeling returned, *Why do you think your word means anything to me, Sheppard?*

*Because you owe me your life.*

*True.* After a few minutes of silence where John feared that wraith had broken their contact the grave voice spoke again, *If you personally guarantee for my safe return to my ship I will come and meet with you.*

*I guarantee it. Where should we meet?*

*I would like to visit Atlantis.*

Suspiciously John hesitated, *Why?*

Laughter rang through the bond and John felt true amusement, *Because the Lanteans always fascinated me. I’m not only a commander but also a scientist.*

*You give me your word you won’t sabotage the city?*
*I give you my word.*

*We’ll meet on the planet the genii held us at and then we’ll see.*

*Until we meet again, Sheppard,* with that the wraith broke the connection and John came back to himself.

Blinking against the bright light John registered Paul’s hands holding his own and squeezed them in reassurance.

“Hey…” he croaked out. His throat was dry as if he had screamed to whole time.

Paul lovingly stroked his cheek, “Hey. Are you alright?”

“Yeah, that was pretty exhausting for just sitting on my arse!” John laughed weakly. He startled when a glass was presented to him and looked grateful at Jacob who held it out to him.

“Did you reach him? Thor could just tell that you had gotten into a trance…”

“He found me. Probably sensed my opening of the bond and answered. He’ll meet with us on P???????. Then he wants to get to Atlantis. But first we’ll have to see if he’ll risk his own neck for his debt.”

“We can’t force him. Methos wouldn’t want us to.”

John laughed at Sam’s words, “Believe me nobody could force a wraith, much less HIM, to do anything they didn’t want! You didn’t see him when we escaped. He was compliant at first but he never gave up. That’s why I suggested an alliance to him.”

“I just hope that he’ll decide to help us.” Jacob went back to Methos and kissed the top of his head.
“Jennifer,” Sam greeted when she entered the cell with Jack and John behind her. Ronon stood outside waiting, while trying to not think of the feelings he had had for her until she rejected him for Rodney. Now he was grateful for it because in the end it had brought him to Evan.

“Sam,” Keller nodded in greeting. “Are you here to apologize and let me go?”

Surprised Sam asked, “Why would you think that?”

“Because I didn’t do anything wrong.”

Getting angry Sam asked, “And developing a cure for Carson, and not telling us or helping him, isn’t wrong?”

“No,” Jennifer answered calmly. “Then you’d have sent me back to earth. I couldn’t risk it.”

“What was your task?” Jack asked stepping forward.

“I don’t know what you mean?” Jennifer tried to turn away but something held her firmly.

Jack held his hands still while holding her face with his powers, “Oh, Missy, you know exactly what I mean. Now should we talk about it like civilized people or do I have to hurt you like we did with Sykes?”

Fear entered Keller’s eyes. She had been the one to treat Sykes wounds, and had seen what had been done to him. Lowering her head she replied, “My task was to make sure nobody survived this expedition… But then I saw the threat the wraith were and knew that if the got through the gate earth would be in danger. So I changed the plan and delayed it until you would have killed them all.”

Pale Sam stood up, “You would have killed every member of the expedition team?” She shivered at the thought of her family, friends and colleagues dying.
“It was my task…”

“And would you have done it?” John asked looking at her.

Tears traveled down her cheeks when she realized that she had lost everything, “Yes…After Rodney left me and Ronon didn’t want me anymore I wanted to hurt them too!”

Outside Ronon trembled with rage. The bitch would have killed her own people to get revenge on him and McKay?!

Storming inside he pressed her against the wall, “Listen, Keller, while I may have been blind enough to fall for you I wouldn’t have gotten near you again. I was already in a relationship when you approached me again. And let me tell you, you were lucky my lover didn’t shoot you when you kissed me in the mess. You just wanted to make sure I wouldn’t reject you in public!”

“And you did! You laughed at me in front of all!” She shouted.

Ronon let her go and went to the door, “If you hadn’t done this we could have remained friends. So don’t try to make it my, or McKay’s, fault. It’s only yours. The decision to hurt your own people was yours.”

With that Ronon left and Jennifer broke down sobbing.

The others looked at her but couldn’t find it within them to feel anything for her but pity.

*******************

Ronon practically ran to the quarters he shared with Evan and, upon finding his lover reading on the couch, he swept him up into his arms and started kissing him passionately.

Surprised but not in a bad way Evan let his lover hold him up and kissed back, until he finally surrendered to Ronon’s passion and let him take charge.
After soothing himself with the feel and taste of his lover he settled them down on the couch with Evan lying between his legs supported by his chest.

Minutes later Evan couldn’t help asking, “Ronon, what happened?”

Pushing his face against Evan’s neck Ronon answered, “Talked to Keller. She told Carter and the others that me and McKay are responsible for her deciding to kill all of you…”

Shocked Evan tried to turn around, “She did what?”

Seeing his lovers pinched face as he tried to turn around Ronon forced him to lie back again, “Yeah. Told them that she wouldn’t have done it otherwise.”

“Why didn’t she help Beckett?”

Nuzzling against Evan’s cheek Ronon took a deep breath, “Because then she’d have been sent back.”

“So it’s my fault really for being with you…” Evan replied insecure.

Shocked Ronon reared back. Turning Evan around in his arms without hurting his side he held his arms in a forceful grip, “How can you say that? Do you think you’re just a substitute? I thought I managed to convince that’s not the case!” Ronon growled in rage thinking back on the first time they had gotten together, due to Amelia Banks and Katie Brown’s meddling.

-----Flashback-----

“Come on, Ronon! We want to go to the mainland to swim. Please come with us!” Amelia pleaded at him to join her and Katie.

Since they had decided to remain friends because of Amelia’s feeling for Radek they discovered that they were better friends than ever before. That was why Ronon complied easily when she asked him for something.
“Okay, woman, stop your jabbing!”

Hours later he regretted the decision when he saw Lorne, McKay and Zelenka board the jumper as well.

When Lorne’s eyes found him a shiver ran through him, ‘Too late to back out now!’

“Hey, Dex! You coming with us?” Evan asked.

“Yeah, Amy wouldn’t stop blabbing.” Seeing Zelenka’s eyes sadden he regretted saying it.

Barely registering Evan’s short answer Ronon turned to see Katie and McKay holding hands and quietly talking to each other.

When Evan left Ronon’s consciousness plagued him for ignoring the man again. Every time he was in the vicinity his senses seemed to focus on the man. It was dangerous for a Runner, ex-Runner, to become distracted.

Ronon was so deeply immersed in his thoughts that he didn’t see Amelia going after Lorne.

“Hey,” She called to Evan when he took the pilot seat.

“Hey,” he answered dejected.

“I’m sorry, I din’t think he would be like this.”

“What are you sorry for,” Evan asked surprised while starting the jumper.

Blushing Amy confessed, “Katie and me saw you watching him…” She stopped when his head snapped towards her. Panic shone in his eyes and hurt crossed his face.
Regaining control over himself Evan turned back around, “What do you mean?”

Sighing and agreeing with Katie about ‘stubborn men’ she continued, “We saw you looking at him during work out and how your eyes follow him around. And then weeks ago we saw you when Ronon talked to Dr. Keller and she kissed him on the cheek. You were hurt and nobody saw it.”

Pained Evan replied, “You are not allowed to ask, Banks.”

This was the only confession she really needed, “And I don’t intent to ask, Evan. We just thought that you two would make a nice couple.”

Snorting in disbelieve Evan turned his head back to her, “Why would he want me? I don’t even know if he likes men, and he has you.”

Laughing Amelia replied, “No, Evan he doesn’t ‘have’ me. He and I are just friends. We talked about getting together but discovered that our feelings weren’t for the other.”

“What do you have feelings for?”

“Can’t you tell? It’s Radek…”

Disbelieve crossed his face, “Zelenka?!”

“Yea, him. It’s something the matter?” Amelia asked angrily.

“No, no. Just surprised. Then he is a lucky man.”

*******************************

When they arrived at the beach Katie took McKay’s hand and pulled him away. Rodney followed stammering about sun protection and getting sand everywhere.
Amelia winked at Evan before grabbing Radek by the hand as well and leading him to another place. Radek looked surprised but followed without saying a word.

That left Evan with Ronon.

Ronon looked at him, “What’s happening?”

Evan asked surprised, “What do you mean?”

“Why have they left?”

“To get privacy, I’d assume.”

“They left you with me?”

Blushing a bit Evan swallowed hard, “Yeah.”

“Why are you here? You could have brought someone wanted to fuck with you, like they did…”

Getting angry Evan glared at the satedan before whirling around to get away. ‘Just go, before you say something you’d regret!’

Ronon eyed the man stalking away from him and knew he had said something wrong. Lorne had always seemed to be more sensitive (not in a bad, or girly way) than others. And know Ronon had unwittingly beleidgt.

Not wanting the other man to hate him Ronon ran after him and grabbed his arm. The lightning that raced through his veins was totally unexpected. It traveled right through his body into his heart and then down to his groin.

Evan felt the same current running through him and tried to free himself to avoid Ronon
discovering the effect his nearness had on him.

When Lorne began to struggle Ronon tightened his grip until he knew he would leave bruises on the Major. Suddenly Evan dropped to the ground and tried to pull Ronon with him, but Ronon was prepared for the attack and quickly rolled them through the sand. They stopped when Evan lay on his back and Ronon across him.

Evan squeezed his eyes tightly shut, waiting for the fist to strike him when he felt his erection digging into Ronon’s stomach.

Looking down at the flushed face and the heaving chest Ronon suddenly realized what this had been all about. Feeling the others arousal against him made him confess that the distraction Evan had been to him until now hadn’t been bad, and had felt similar to his feelings for Melena.

Trembling from the force of his feelings Evan slowly opened his eyes when Ronon stayed still on top of him. Just as his eyes locked onto Ronon’s the man leaned down and sealed his mouth with a kiss.

-----End Flashback-----

“I’m sorry, Ronon. I really try not to let it bother me but it’s not always easy.”

“I know, love. But remember that on Sateda it was normal for men to be with men or women.”

Evan laughed bitterly, “I just wish Earth would be that evolved in this matter.”

“Give it time, Evan.”

“Yeah, I know.”

Ronon picked him up and carried him into their bedroom. Slowly undressing him he pulled the blanket over Evan to prevent him from getting cold, before he took off his own clothes. Normally they’d be all over each other now, but the emotional roller coaster had taken its toll on them. So Ronon just wrapped his arms around Evan and cuddled against his back.
Seeing Evan that insecure about their relationship had brought back another set of memories. The one time where he truly feared loosing his beloved due to his own actions.

-----Flashback-----

Evan laughed when he saw Ronon standing quietly in the queue of the mess hall. In the past the satedan would have scared the others away or just gone to the point but after getting to know most of them and knowing that no matter what there would be enough food had mellowed him.

Sitting with Amelia and Radek had the advantage that his eyes could follow his lover without him fearing to be discovered. When sitting with the other soldiers he had to consciously restrain himself.

“And?” Amelia asked catching Evan off guard.

“And what?”

“How is it going?” Amelia glanced at Ronon and Radek looked up at him knowingly.

Blushing Evan averted his eyes just before Radek kicked his shin, “Don’t ever do that again!” the scientist hissed at him. “Whatever you do, you hav to stand by yor decision and face consequences head on!”

Evan nodded in understanding knowing the scientists background in his homeland.

“So?” Amelia enquired again.

This time Evan looked at them when he replied, “It’s going good, I think. We’re going for a stroll later tonight and I plan to show him my favorite place in the city.”

Evan radiated happiness at the thought of showing Ronon where he got the inspiration for all his paintings from. If he hadn’t seen it himself Evan wouldn’t have believed that Ronon was an appreciator of paintings. Evan’s in particular.
Having finished their meal they stood up to leave just as Dr. Keller stormed into the mess hall. Evan immediately became suspicious when her eyes lit up upon seeing Ronon. When she stormed over and kissed him Evan couldn’t take it any longer and practically ran outside.

****************

When Ronon entered the mess his eyes immediately found his lover sitting with Amy and Zelenka. Winking at him he took his place in the queue and from time to time glanced at his lover.

Remembering their plans for later that night Ronon grinned, unknowingly frightening some of the new arrivals.

When the door banged open his eyes instinctually searched for the threat before coming to rest on Evan standing there ready to leave. Suddenly he felt small but firm hands grab his arms and turned around just to be surprised by a hard and forceful kiss. Recognizing the scent of Jennifer Keller Ronon forcefully pushed her away. Out of the corner of his eyes he saw Evan storming away and knew that this had hurt his insecure lover.

Focusing on the woman still sitting on the floor in front of him he glared at her, “What do you think you’re doing?”

“Kissing you. You made it clear that you were in love with me.”

Ronon snorted in disbelieve, “What, your bed empty after McKay left?” with that he turned his back to her and left. Leaving her to the accusing stares and laughter.

****************

Evan ran until his legs couldn’t carry him further. He collapsed against the railing of Atlantis and just now recognized this as his favorite place. ‘The place you wanted to show Ronon...’

Forcing the hurt and tears away Evan sunk down and tried to forget the small voice telling him he needed to get inside because of the wind and rain.
Ignoring it Evan let go and sank into blissful blankness.

*************************************************

Ronon hadn’t been a Runner for nothing and knew how to track people. After not being able to find Evan he sought out Amy and Radek.

But upon finding him he was surprised when the calm and usually fearful scientist just glared at him and left, while Amy stood there glaring at him accusingly.

“Where is Evan?” Ronon asked without preamble.

The glare raised another notch, “Why should I tell you? I already regret bring you together! And now you’ve just used him!? I thought I knew you better, Dex. But that doesn’t seem to be the case!”

When she tried to storm away he took a hold of her, “Amy, listen. That with Keller was nothing! She came over and kissed me, tried to get me ‘back’. But I don’t want her, I want Evan. And I can’t find him without your help!”

When she continued looking at him searching for the truth in his eyes he knew that he had to convince her of his sincerity. Reaching into one of his pockets he took out a wristband. “I wanted to give him this tonight. On Sateda one gives his/her partner a wristband as a promise. Katie told me this would probably be similar to a promise ring on Earth…”

Surprised Amelia looked at the wristband, and while made of leather she could tell that he had put many hours of works into it. Making her decision she took his hand and together they went toward the abandoned part of the city, where Evan’s balcony was.

*************************************************

When Evan woke again he felt not only cold on the inside but his whole body trembled as the cold rain and wind tore at him.
Refusing to let the tears come he stood up and slowly made his way inside. Just as he reached the doors he ran headfirst into someone.

“Evan? Are you okay? God, you’re freezing!” Ronon felt the icy skin and shrugged out of his shirt to put it on Evan.

“…” When Evan didn’t react to his presence Ronon leaned down and looked into the cold eyes staring at him.

“Evan?”

Shrugging the hands off Evan took a step back. “What do you want? Hasn’t Keller got any time for you?”

“Evan, listen….”

“NO! I know what I saw! I should have known that someone like you wouldn’t be serious about us!”

“Someone like me?” Ronon asked confused.

“Yeah, wild and free and gorgeous. Why would you be with someone like me…”

Ronon looked even more confused, “Like you? What’s wrong with being you?”

“I not exactly handsome, Ronon. I know that. Our interests are so different, our lives are different, even our intentions seem to be different…”

“What do you think my intentions towards you were?” Ronon started getting angry. How could his lover be that intelligent and stupid at once?

“Don’t know…Maybe to pass your time, have someone warming your bed…”
“You really think that of me?” Hurt brown eyes locked onto blue eyes. The hurt in both sets registered just as Evan finally broke down.

“I don’t want to think that, but what choice do I have? I’ve fallen for you the second I saw you. And I know you didn’t want me until Amelia and Katie brought you on that trip. You never tell me how you feel bout me, about us. When I tell you I love you, you don’t answer or turn away…”

“Evan, I do love you. On Sateda we don’t say these words often. We show them with little things.” Ronon pulled the wristband out of his pocket and grabbed Evan’s right hand, “This is a tradition from Sateda. This leather signals my feeling towards you. Something unbreakable that will pass through time with us. My feelings are manifested in this wristband, to signal our bond, our feelings for each other. This, “he pointed at the inscribed symbols, “are the symbols of my clan. It makes you a part of it as well.” Ronon raised Evan’s hand and after kissing the knuckles he fastened the wristband.

Evan looked on in disbelief as Ronon admitted his feelings and intentions. It turned into surprise at the tender kiss and finally into joy and happiness when he realized the satedan felt the same way towards him as he did.

“As for the kiss with Keller, I’m sorry you had to see that. She thought she could start over with me, now that Rodney has left her for Katie. But I told her to shove it.”

Leaning down Ronon kissed Evan fiercely. After that it took them some time to get back to Evan’s quarters for dry clothes.

-----End Flashback-----

Chapter 23

“I am ready to precede, O’Neill.” Thor reported over the com when he finished preparing for Carson Beckett’s revival and therapy.

“Alright, buddy.” Turning to Sam he said, “Let’s warm him up, Carter.”

“Yes, Sir.” She deactivated the cryostatic chamber and slowly raised the temperature.
Slowly the startling blue eyes opened and just as he pitched forward Ronon caught him.

“Good to see you, doc.”

“Hey, big guy…”

“Sleep a bit, Dr. Beckett. We’re bringing you into the infirmary and starting a therapy that will hopefully cure you.” Teyla told him while gently stroking his hair.

Carson looked surprised but mumbled an agreement before slipping into sleep.

*****************

It had been a long time since Carson had the chance of waking slow and peaceful.

The only sound he heard was the rhythmic beeping of a heart monitor. The scents told him that he was in the infirmary, the sharp tang of clinical disinfect smelled like home to him.

When he tried to open his eyes he found them heavy like BLEI. With great effort he managed to open them and squint into the bright light above him.

“Hey, doc.” Carson’s eyes focused on the man beside him and he recognized Colonel Sheppard as well as Ronon, Rodnex and Teyla. Behind them he saw Colonel Carter and Doctor Jackson standing with two unfamiliar men.

“Hiya, lad…” he croaked out before a glass of water with a straw was passed to him. After a few careful sips he tried again, “Did ya manage to get a cure?”

“Yeah, with Thor’s help we were able to adjust a few things.”

“Thor?” Carson looked around until he saw the gray alien enter with General O’Neill.
“Greetings, Dr. Beckett.”

Trying not to stare at the alien in front of him and remembering the stories told at the SGC about the Asgard he waved uncomfortably, “Ehh, hello. I understand I have to thank you for my being here?”

“That is not completely correct. I have just made a few adjustments to Dr. Keller’s theory and developed the cure. We had similar problems when we started cloning ourselves, so these adjustments had just to be specified to humans.”

“Nonetheless I thank you, Thor. I owe you and Jennifer my life. Where is she by the way?” Carson asked confused. He would have thought she would be here to examine him after all that happened.

Seeing anger and sadness wash over their faces Carson assumed the worst, “Is she… Did she die?”

John couldn’t stand the look of compassion and sadness on his friends face after that woman had betrayed him like that, “No. She is very much alive.” Taking a deep breath he continued, “We discovered that she was working for the Trust…”

“What!? That’s not possible! Not Jennifer…She is too intelligent and compassionate to…”

“She had a possible way to heal you, doc. And she didn’t tell anybody about it.” Ronon told him bluntly, hating the pain that crossed the gentle doctor’s face.

Carson couldn’t hold back a gasp. Why would she have done something like that? How could she betray him like this? Hesitantly he asked, “How long have I been in there?”

“Just a bit over seven month.” Rodney couldn’t hold back anymore and finally took his best friends hand. Squeezing it to convey the happiness he still couldn’t show in front of the others. “We missed you, Carson.”

Seeing the sincerity Carson felt tears well up. “I’m glad to be back, Rodney.” The most important question broke out of him, “Am I healed? I don’t want to go back in there…”
“You won’t have to, Carson. Thor healed all damage done by Michael and due to the information about your condition he managed to slow down the aging of your organs to normal human speed. You have to thank Jack for that as well. If he hadn’t been cloned beforehand and if Thor hadn’t healed his clone he wouldn’t have really known what to do!” Daniel told him while smirking at his disgruntled lover.

“Hey! Don’t remind me of the mini-me running all around universities! I tell you he’s just doing that to embarrass me!” Jack pouted when Daniel laughed at him.

“Right, Jack. He’s working on his degree in physics and astronomy just to show you up!”

“He’s probably trying to impress you, too!”

“Sure, Jack,” Daniel grinned at the sulk before continuing, “I bet he like the same things you do…”

Jack clamped a hand over Daniel’s mouth to stop him from giving away any secrets he might still have. ‘Sometimes he’s really mean!’

When the others started laughing Jack turned on Carter, “What have I told you about giggling, Colonel?!”

Hiccupping in mirth Sam tried to look serious, “Sorry, Sir!”

Carson laughed and exclaimed, “You know I’ve really missed this craziness!”

“Is your team ready, Sheppard?” Sam asked when the day of John’s meeting with the wraith had come.

“Yeah, more or less.” John admitted. He still felt unsettled by the connection to the wraith and couldn’t help be scared about the meeting. ‘What if this is a trap?’
“You have the go, Colonel. Take care.” Sam saluted them as Sheppard’s and Stackhouse’s team left through the gate.

When they arrived on the other side John ordered Stackhouse to guard the gate while Ronon took point with Teyla. Rodney had taken out his scanner and began searching for life-signs.

Just as Teyla warned them, “I feel the presence of wraith nearby.” Rodney exclaimed “A wraith life-sign, one mile in this direction,” he pointed north.

“Okay, people, let’s get going.”

Slowly and silently (as silent as possible for a babbling and swearing Rodney McKay anyway) they made their way through the woods until John recognized the clearing as the one where Todd had given him his life back.

He signaled them to stop and just as he looked around the wraith appeared from behind a tree.

Ronon and John pointed their guns at him while Teyla looked on in interest. This wraith somehow felt different that any other, even Michael…

“Greetings, John Sheppard,” the wraith hissed at them.

“Hi, emmhh… I don’t know your name…”

The wraith laughed, “You wouldn’t be able to pronounce it properly.”

“So what? I get to name you?” When the wraith didn’t react John continued, “Think I’ll call you Todd. Is that okay, Todd?”
Grimacing in distaste at the name, ‘Todd’ agreed, “If you must. So what do you need my assistance for, John Sheppard?”

“Well you see, a friend of mine is in a coma due to absorbing too much wraith energy and…”

Todd looked surprised, “A human absorbed our energy? That’s not possible!”

“To be truthful he is only half-human…”

“What’s the other half?”

“Ancient?”

Blinking and trying to process this Todd sat down. How could a human, even if half Ancient, be able to absorb their energy? “And what do you need me for?”

“To get it out of him.”

“How did he get it?”

“One of your cousins tried to feed on him and he killed them all when he absorbed it and then blasted the whole ship practically into pieces.”

Finally understanding the magnitude of what this human was asking of him he stood up abruptly, startling John into jumping up as well. “And you want me to try and ‘help’ him? Risking myself in the process?”

John saw the distrust creep back into those black eyes and felt the bond that had been humming in the back of his mind snap close. “Basically, yes. It’s your decision. I told you this because I trust you that far. I trust you not to go running to your ship and telling on us.”

“You trust me? Human, you have got no idea what you’re playing with!”
“No, I don’t. But I know that you owe me your life.”

Whirling around Todd stalked in the other direction as if to distance himself from the memories assaulting him.

Teyla felt the wraith loose the tightly wrapped control and in the process received a few images from the wraith’s mind.

_Hurt, pain, hunger. That was expected. But not the humiliation and soul deep pain. The hate not directed at John but at the Genii. Seeing three men enter his cell and Kolya ordering them to chain him to the wall. The way Kolya took great pleasure in beating and taunting him, almost breaking him._

“Oh…” Teyla exclaimed before turning away to stop the images. She tried to hold back the vomiting she felt at the thought of another being treated like this. Even if it was a wraith.

“Teyla? Are you okay?” Rodney asked concerned when he saw her paling.

“They hurt him, John. They hurt him so much…”

The roar of rage and pain stopped her from continuing. “Stop it woman! That’s none of your business!”

“That’s why you’re here, isn’t it. Your kind won’t accept you back….”

Loosing the rage due to the truth Todd sank to the ground, “Are you happy now, Sheppard? Happy that when I answered your call it further estranged me from my kind. That I was already the laughing stock on the ship? A wraith commander that couldn’t stop one human from taking that was never supposed to be taken from a wraith? A wraith commanders very being bound to a puny human and owing him his life?”

While John had known some of it he hadn’t guessed the range of the happenings. Feeling bad for bringing it up and sorry for the loss he replied, “I didn’t know about it, Todd. I… I’m sorry for what that bastard did to you.”
“Exactly what I need. Humans to pity me…”

“Will you help us, Todd?”

Looking at Sheppard, Todd thought about his existence and knew that he owed this human more than his life… and his sanity. “I will if you promise to grant me a favor should I survive.”

Suspicious John looked at Teyla, Ronon and then Rodney. “What favor?”

“Nothing harmful to any human or the city…”

“I promise to think about it when the time comes.”

“We have an agreement.” Grinning and flashing his teeth Todd asked, “Should we shake hands on that?”

Rolling his eyes John stayed as far away from the offered hand as possible, “Why have all wraith the same sick humor?”

Chapter 24

Arriving back on Atlantis they were welcomed with drawn weapons when Todd exited the gate.

Turning towards Colonel Carter, General O’Neill and Doctor Jackson standing in front of the steps John introduces, “Todd, these are Colonel Samantha Carter, General Jack O’Neill and Doctor Daniel Jackson. General, Colonel, Doctor, this is Todd.”
Sam looked up at Todd. “I trust you that you know how to behave yourself?”

“Indeed I do, Colonel Carter.”

“Let me guess, Sheppard gave you the name ‘Todd’?”

“You would guess right. It’s a bit undignified having a human name me, but better than trying to teach our pronunciation.”

“Would you tell me your real name?” Daniel asked, always interested in learning new languages.

Looking a bit put out Todd nodded before telling his name.

Daniel thought about it and nodded before saying it right back.

Todd looked completely baffled. Never had any human managed to get one of their names right, even after countless tries. “I have to admit to being surprised, Doctor Jackson.” Todd told him in a respectful tone. “No human ever managed to say it.”

Blushing Daniel confessed, “Well it’s a bit more guttural than the language of the Unas but similar enough for me to remember.”

“Unas?”

“Another race from our galaxy…”

“Maybe you could tell me more about it later?” Todd asked. As a scientist at heart he always wanted to learn new things.

Uncomfortably Daniel finally registered the disbelieving eyes resting on him, “Yeah, maybe.”
Shaking himself from the stupor he had fallen into John directed Todd towards the infirmary. “This way. After that you can talk to Jackson about everything you want.”

Thinking about what lay ahead of him Todd muttered to himself, ‘If I survive…’

******************

Upon arriving in the infirmary Todd stopped short when he felt energy calling to him. Turning to the only occupied bed he saw a dark-haired man with a sharp nose lying on the bed. Slowly walking towards him he felt the power of this man calling to him, seducing him with the promise to feed on the most powerful being in Atlantis.

Shaking his head in confusion he registered another human presence just as a small gray being stepped up to him.

“You have to be the wraith Colonel Sheppard told us about. It was very gracious to heal him instead of taking the rest and letting him die.”

Not answering Todd looked back at the man he had come to help because Sheppard had asked him to. Shame wasn’t anything wraith were familiar with, neither were hurt or pain. Since meeting John Sheppard and establishing that bond by healing him, Todd had changed from a simple wraith to an individual. And that was something that shouldn’t be possible in a hive with collective minds. The first time their queen had called him he heard it in the back of his mind instead of all around him like before. This was his first clue that the experience with the genii and Sheppard had changed him beyond repair.

Now looking at the man lying in front of him he knew that should he fail he would not only die, but condemn this human to death as well. And he wouldn’t be able to pay Sheppard back…

Ignoring everything around him he sat down on the bed and ripped open the man’s shirt. Hesitating at the feeling of a hand on his arm he looked up and into the intense eyes of Sheppard. “If you hurt him I’ll have to kick your ass.”

Nodding in understanding Todd concentrated before he pushed his hand forcefully into the unprotected chest.
Jacob cried out in denial when he saw the energy travelling into Methos like the last few times.

They looked on in disbelief when the energy suddenly changed directions and left Methos to go back to the wraith. It was a wonder already that Todd hadn’t died once he started the process.

“Who are you and what are you doing here?” a voice asked Todd when he opened his eyes.

“Your friends got me to help you…”

“Lies! They would never ask you life-force sucking space-vampire!”

“I am here because I owe John Sheppard my life. Do not ridicule the sacrifice I was ready to make for him!”

The hesitation Todd felt gave him the chance to look around. He seemed to be in a desert. The sky was black and he could hear animals nearby. Other than that there seemed to be nothing.

“What’s your name?”

Grimacing at the question Todd replied, “Why do you humans always ask my name?”

“Because we like to know whom we are talking to.” Amusement was evident in the tone.

“Sheppard named me ‘Todd’.” He was already beginning to hate that name.

“Todd…My name is Methos. Why are you really here? I feel pain and your desire for something…”
The wraith commander looked around for the voice as he could finally detect the direction it came from and promptly saw the same man he had seen on the bed in the infirmary.

“Sheppard convinced me to help him escape when captured by the genii. He saved me from going insane when their leader had taken a liking to beating and humiliating me.”

“I am sorry. I know what that is like. The hurt and despair, the anger and feeling of dirtiness.”

Laughing mirthless Todd replied, “These feelings are unnatural for a wraith! I shouldn’t even have them!”

“But you do have them. You’re more human than you ever wanted to be. But not because this man did those things to you, or because you feel you don’t fit in with your hive anymore. No, it’s because of Sheppard and your bond. I can feel his presence underneath you thoughts. That’s why you want to die once you helped me, right?”

“It’s what I initially wanted. But meeting Doctor Jackson has intrigued me on the possibilities the universe may hold in stock for me. I can’t return to the wraith. I am a traitor. Not only to my queen and hive, no, to all wraith…”

Methos thought about it and a smirk crossed his face, “I promise you won’t have to return to the wraith. No matter what happens.” Methos offered the wraith his hand.

Todd, surprised at the action, took it and felt warmth flood him.

************************************************

One hour had gone by without Todd moving a muscle. Slowly Ronon had lowered his weapon, but was still intently watching the wraith leaning over Pierson.

Just as John stood up to stretch a glow began to emit from where Todd’s hand lay on Methos’ chest.
It glowed brighter and brighter until they couldn’t see anymore.

When an inhuman scream sounded they feared that Todd hadn’t been successful, and were prepared for the worst.

A flash and the light was gone again.

Leaving a sitting Methos with living and breathing wraith in his arms.

Looking at them he smiled before impishly greeting, “Hey, guys.”

Tbc

Chapter 25

Before Methos could start laughing at the shock on their faces he was squished against his lover’s chest.

Jacob looked at Methos in surprise before jumping forward and embracing him in a tight hug. He wasn’t even irritated by the additional weight holding his lover down. “Methos,” he sighed in relief.

“Jacob,” Methos leaned up and kissed his lover tenderly.

“Harumph,” a throat clearing broke their kiss. When they looked in the direction they saw their friends and family looking back at them.

“Hey, old man. Welcome back,” Jack greeted grinning happily. “You want to tell us why you broke the nice wraith trying to help you?”

Shaking his head in exasperation Methos replied, “Hey! Who you calling old, grass hopper! And I didn’t break him; he absorbed the wraith energy back into himself. And before any of you argue, I promised him he could stay!”
“WHAT!” Rodney sputtered. “You can’t just go around and decide these things alone! Do you know how dangerous he is?!”

Looking fondly at Rodney Methos answered, “Yes, I know. But he hasn’t been feeding properly because of the feelings his bond with John woke inside him. A while ago I read about Dr. Beckett’s and Dr. Keller’s ’Retrovirus’ and I think with Thor’s help we could adjust it.” Turning his head towards John Methos said, “The favour he wanted from you, Sheppard, was to kill him.”

“What?!” John shouted shocked, “He wanted me to…”

“Yeah, he planned on dying since he got back to his hive. After what happened with the genii he didn’t feel like a wraith anymore. I explained that it was due to your influence rather than the genii’s.”

“My influence?” John asked confused.

“Your bond with him had more side-effects than he had calculated. It changed him so much more than it could have ever changed you. Your emotions reached him on a basic level and he discovered what the wraith were missing. Now he just wants us to find a way to stop his need for feeding, and make it possible for him to eat normal food.”

Looking down at the wraith still lying unconscious in his lap Methos ran his hands soothingly over the long white hair. “He didn’t know whether or not he would survive helping me. His intention was to help me, that’s what protected him from my powers. I couldn’t let him die…”

Ronon stepped forward and lifted Todd up. Putting him on the bed next to Methos’ they could see him properly for the first time.

His face was as pale as a newborns with the tattoo standing out darkly. The armour he still wore hung around him.

Carson came over and turned to Ronon, “Please help ma get him outta this. And we’ve already tried the Retrovirus and look at the disaster it caused!”
Methos looked confused at him, “Who are you?”

Surprised Carson looked at the man on the bed, “Oh! We haven’t properly met yet! I am Carson Beckett!”

“What? I thought you were in cryogenic sleep?”

“I was, but with the help of Thor I was healed.”

“Wow…I sure missed the existing part around here!”

Snorting Carson looked up from Todd and replied, “Don’t worry, things are never boring around here!”

Laughing Methos decided he liked the Scot and asked, “What did you mean by disaster?”

“Michael…”

“Oh, I read about him in your files.”

“Yeah, and when I reviewed Keller’s files I found the reason why her retrovirus worked even worse than mine. The degeneration of the cells was sped up to the point where a human would have died within the first hour. It looks as if Jennifer tried to find a way to kill all wraith instead of strengthening our alliance.”

“Keller? What about her? Where is he by the way?” Methos looked around for the doctor.

Jacob cleared his throat, “That would be one of the things you’ve missed, love. She was an agent of the Trust.”

“What?! Did she do something? Did she hurt anyone?”
„No, she just planned on killing the whole expedition team once we won against the wraith!“ Rodney exclaimed.

Blinking Methos sat back on the bed, “I think you better start from the beginning.”

******************

Todd woke feeling disoriented. Feeling eyes resting on him he looked up straight into the eyes of the human male he had become to admire within a few minutes of meeting him.

“Good to see you awake,” his visitor greeted him.

“I did not expect to wake again.” Todd fixed the man with a glower, “And what happens now?”

Daniel Jackson looked surprised, “Well, we haven’t decorated your room yet and Dr. Beckett would like to keep you here…”

Surprised Todd sat up causing Daniel to step back in surprise, “You mean I can really stay here?”

Confused Daniel nodded, “Yeah, Methos promised you that. Didn’t he?”

“Well, yeah he did, but I learned that wraith and human are almost never truthful with each other.”

Shaking his head in exasperation Daniel looked down at Todd, “They also started working on the Retrovirus again. With the help of Thor they hope to tweak it just right and help you.”

Todd deflated at the news and lay back down, “It’s not just for me. If it really works this time we could change all wraith and maybe this endless war and search for new food sources will come to an end.”

“Many have died in this galaxy just because they have been used as food, right?”
“Yes, but if I’m truthful I don’t really want this for the humans. But for my whole race…We have become stagnant and didn’t evolve in the last thousands of years. Then there is the wraith your people call Michael… He isn’t what I hoped the next stage of the wraith would be like.”

Daniel sat back down on his chair, “How did you think your race would be like?”

After contemplating this for a few minutes Todd answered, “Not peaceful, I wouldn’t go that far. But I always imagined us to be free and able to be more than mindless drones serving our queen, we would be able to evolve our science rather than take it from others, we wouldn’t be dependent on finding humans as food but something else.”

“Why not be like Michael then? He is independent and doesn’t have to feed.”

“That is true but he is somehow possessed by the idea of destroying everything else. After we found one of his abandoned outposts I managed to restore some data and found out that he is slowly losing himself in madness. Wraith and human are at war within him. He also mentioned his desire to reproduce with your athenian woman, Teyla.”

Daniel paled, “He would force her to carry his child?”

Nodding Todd felt his energy leave him and he closed his eyes, feeling safe in this human’s presence and in the knowledge that he had been granted asylum.

******************************************************************************

“Jacob?”

The Tok’ra lifted his head from its position on Methos chest, “Mmh…”

Shamed that he had made his lover worry about him again he mumbled, “I’m sorry…”

Sitting up Jacob looked at his lover with stern eyes, “For what exactly?”
“For running off like that, for being careless, making you worry, take your pick!” Methos snarked.

“Methos, you don’t have to hide from me, you know? You don’t have to hide behind a brave facade or your snarky attitude.” Cradling his lover’s face in both his hands Jacob looked deep into those old and ageless eyes, “I promise to always be here for you, no matter what crap you pull.”

Biting his lower lip Methos looked steadily up at the Tok’ra, “In the beginning I felt I didn’t deserve to be with you, to be happy, after the things I have done…Now I couldn’t image existing without you.” Sighing deeply after that confession Methos’ eyes sparked with what Jacob knew to be a leer, “So you not gonna go and punish me?”

Straddling Methos Jacob pinned his lover’s arms above his head and forcefully held them down, “Haven’t made up my mind about that yet. Maybe you’d remember to look after your hide better if I beat it into you…or I could just keep you chained to our bed. Then you wouldn’t be able to get into trouble and I could have you any time I wanted and wouldn’t have to wait for you to get home from whatever hair brained idea that caught your fancy.”

The glint in Jacob’s eyes made Methos shudder as he passively lay on the bed waiting for his lover’s next move.

Afterwards Jacob cradled Methos protectively in his arms as if to protect him from harm. When Methos nuzzled his cheek he looked down and saw the sleepy and satisfied eyes slowly losing focus. “Sleep, Methos. Tomorrow will be a hard day.”

“You think I did the right thing with granting that wraith asylum?”

“That’s not for me to decide. But he definitely is different than the others we’ve met. Maybe this will be the start of a new era.”

Yawning Methos cuddled closer and let sleep claim him, “Hopefully.”

*****************************************************************************

“Rodney, come to bed.” Katie Brown looked at her boyfriend and swore that the man had unending energy when it came to rambling. ‘As well as other things,’ her mind reminded her of the energy Rodney used when they made love. Once he had taken over an hour to drive her crazy and higher into pleasure until he finally claimed her in a round of gentle and outdrawn lovemaking. ‘Never once has this been fucking!’
“Katie! Are you even listening to me?!” Rodney’s screeching voice brought her back from the pleasurable place she had let her mind wander to.

Flushed and aroused from her memories of that night she looked at him from under lowered eyelashes, “Not really, lover. I remembered the birthday present you gave me.”

Seeing her coy look he went beet red as arousal coursed through him. “Th…That…Katie! Stop distracting me!”

“Oh, am I distracting you from anything important, Rodney?” she asked playing with her hair. Katie knew she wasn’t playing fair, Rodney loved her hair and could never resist touching it. Whenever she played with it herself he would soon be touching her.

“You know that!” he pouted then changed his mind and prowled over to where she lay draped on their bed. “And if you don’t stop I’ll have to take some drastic measures…”

Heart beating wildly Katie asked in a husky voice, “And what would that be?”

“I would turn you onto your back…”

“…what else?”

“Than I’d bind your hands,” Rodney’s gaze grew hotter as he let his eyes wander over her form.

“And after that?”

“I’d make you listen to me the whole night.” Rodney smirked at the disappointed groan that escaped her.

“Rodney! That wasn’t nice…”
“Never said I was nice did I?”

“No but you didn’t warn me about you being cruel!”

“Oh poor baby, here let me kiss it better.”

Paul looked on as John paced through his quarters like mad. He couldn’t even begin to imagine how the Colonel had to feel. To discover that the being he had been bound to, however unwilling and dangerous it could be, wishing to die and practically making him promise to kill it had shocked the man to the core.

“John…” just as Paul wanted to ask him how he was doing John turned to him.

“I didn’t see that coming! He wanted me to kill him, just like that! I mean in battle is one thing, but not with him helping Pierson and then deciding he couldn’t live with me in his head! I wouldn’t have been able to do it, Paul! I couldn’t have pulled the trigger and killed him, even if I promised!”

“John!” Paul exclaimed when he saw his lover running out of energy and slumping on the bed. “It’s okay, Todd will stay here and we’ll find a way to adjust the Retrovirus. He doesn’t want you to kill him anymore. Daniel said so after he talked to him.”

“It’s just…I expected him to ask for technology or information and I was ready to give him whatever he wanted…”

Paul pulled John up and made him stand while he started undressing his mentally exhausted lover. Leaving him in only his boxers he made John lie down before lying down himself. Covering them both with the blanket Paul was glad when John embraced him and kissed him before finally settling in for the night.

Already half asleep Paul barely registered the tender kiss on his lips and the whispered confession, “I love you, Paul.”
When Evan woke up the next morning to Ronon’s watchful eyes he immediately knew that something was irking his lover, “Morning, love” he yawned and stretched.

“Hmm.”

‘Back to damn short answers’ Evan sighed before getting up from the bed. He felt his lover’s eyes follow him to the bathroom but the Satedan didn’t make a move to join him.

After showering and shaving Evan entered his bedroom again, just to find Ronon now sitting on the bed, still naked. He had buried his head in Evan’s pillow and was breathing deeply.

“Ronon?”

The taller man’s head snapped up and he tensed when he saw Evan’s concerned gaze.

“What?” Ronon’s voice was harsh and Evan knew that his lover probably hadn’t slept at all.

“What happened? Why are you acting like this?”

“Like what?”

Evan knew this tactic and also knew that his lover didn’t want to talk about this. It didn’t stop the anger from taking over, “Like that! Why didn’t you sleep and why are you watching me like that?”

“Didn’t know I needed your permission.” The second Ronon said it his eyes softened. He knew it hurt Evan when he talked like that.

Evan turned from his lover and pulled on his uniform, he had a meeting in an hour and had hoped for them to spend the time together. ‘But not when he behaves like this!’
Seeing Evan starting for the door Ronon jumped forward pushing his lover against the wall.

“What the f…!” Evan exclaimed when Ronon pushed his head against his lover’s neck and began pulling off the uniform he had just put on.

“Don’t leave…” Ronon pleaded. “Not like this.”

Anger leaving just as suddenly as it had appeared Evan embraced Ronon. “What is it, Ronon? Please tell me…”

“The wraith, I don’t want it here.”

‘Aha, that’s the problem.’ Evan pushed against Ronon’s chest and made his lover step back in surprise. Straightening his clothes Evan made Ronon sit on his bed, “I know you hate the wraith, Ronon. I understand that, but please consider what we could achieve with Todd’s help. And Beckett is probably already up and working on the Retrovirus…”

“It’s not right to change them against their will! Killing them is one thing, but to experiment on them!” Ronon raged as he remembered Michael.

“But this time it’s not against Todd’s will. He asked us to do this. We don’t know his goals or what will happen in the future but we can’t throw him out. He helped us and know we’re helping him.”

Ronon confessed in a troubled voice, “I dreamed of him feeding from you. I saw you dying and couldn’t protect you.”

“You won’t always be there to protect me, Ronon. But trust me, I am a trained soldier, I can take care of myself.” Evan pulled Ronon up and after dressing hurriedly both went to the mess for breakfast.
Three weeks later

Everyone but Ronon had slowly become used to seeing the wraith on Atlantis. Not that they were happy with this but it was unavoidable.

Todd meanwhile had taken a liking to Daniel Jackson and could often be found in his company. The only thing that surprised them was that General O’Neill didn’t seem to have a problem with that. Oh, sure he snarked about Daniel neglecting him and smirked when he called Todd Daniel’s shadow, but he knew that Daniel was learning as much from Todd as the wraith learned from him.

Ronon had calmed down a bit but as soon as Todd started growing weaker from not feeding properly he began shadowing him all over Atlantis to prevent the wraith from harming the Lanteans.

He was following Todd when the wraith was called to the infirmary to test the new retrovirus.

Ronon was sure that he saw the wraith’s hand tremble before Todd turned around to make his way to the infirmary. With sudden insight Ronon realised that Todd was scared, scared of them and the changed they would bring on him, of the possibility that it didn’t work…

Speeding up his steps he walked up to Todd who stopped and tensed in preparation of a fight. “Going to the infirmary?”

Todd meanwhile didn’t blink, “Yes, as you very well know.”

“I’ll come with you.”

Confused Todd cocked his head, “Why are you telling me this? You’ve followed me the whole time I have been here.”

“Saw something when they called for you.”

“And what would that have been?” Todd didn’t know what to make of the Satedan.
“You’re scared.”

Growling Todd turned around and continued on his way, “That is none of your business.”

“Sure.” Ronon grinned and followed the wrai… Todd.

*************************************

“Now, Todd, with Thor’s knowledge of stem cells we were able to adjust the Retrovirus. Are you sure you want to test it?” Carson asked gently seeing the hesitation in his cat like eyes.

“Yes, Doctor Beckett. I…”

Sheppard interrupted from the door, “You don’t have to, Todd. We could go and catch another wraith and see if it works.”

Todd looked at the human in surprise. The whole time he had been here John Sheppard did his best to ignore his very existence and know he wanted to…what? Protect him? “That will not be necessary, John Sheppard. I wish to do this.”

“Why? You still want to die?”

“No, I want to live. But I want us to make peace and I believe that this will be the first step.” Turning away Todd nodded at Carson and the Doctor gave him the new Retrovirus.

Everyone waited; even Thor seemed to be concerned with the outcome. A few minutes later the door opened and Daniel entered with Methos, Jack and Jacob as well as Sam and Rodney.

“Hey, Todd.” Daniel greeted him and without preamble sat down on the chair next to his bed.

“Doctor Jackson.” Todd acknowledged him and eyed the other warily. “What are you doing
Before Daniel could answer Jack stepped up to them, “Wanted to see how this works out. Daniel would pout at me if you died. So…” he shrugged before suddenly grinning, “can I have your coat if you die?”

Daniel sputtered but didn’t say anything when Todd began laughing at the absurdness of the man’s statement. After calming down he asked, “What could you possibly do to stop it, human!”

“We prepared all of Atlantis emergency systems and could infuse you with energy to keep you alive,” Methos replied.

Before he could laugh again Todd felt a sharp pain in his abdomen. The others looked on worriedly when the wraith paled further and started sweating.

Carson stepped forward and asked worriedly, “Todd, are you alright?”

Shaking his head Todd started having problems getting air as his breathing grew heavier due to the pain. A sudden electric current ran from his abdomen down his legs and up his torso, spreading into his toes and fingers. When the current arrived at his hand Todd began screaming in pain. The feeding slots were sensitive and tender, but now it seemed as if someone was stabbing his with a knife.

When Todd curled up into himself Jack and Methos looked at each other before stepping forward. Each laying a hand on Todd’s shoulder they began soothing the pain, they would wait with the energy infusion until it became necessary but if they could stop the pain from making it worse they would do so.

It seemed as if hours had passed until Todd finally collapsed exhausted and lay still.

Daniel looked at Jack and asked in a hushed voice, “Is it over?”

Jack smiled at his lover and nodded, “Yes, and right now it seems that it was a success.” He pointed at Todd’s hand and when Carson picked it up to examine it they saw that the slot had closed and the skin looked unbroken.
All of them were relieved that the pain was gone. Even Ronon had winced at the pain filled screams the wraith had emitted.

John looked at Carson and asked what everyone of them wanted to ask, “And now what?”

“Now we wait.”

Tbc

Chapter 26

“Ye cannae listen for once, ye daft bugger!” Dr. Carson Beckett cursed when he saw his patient trying to get up from the bed.

“Now, doc, no need to swear like that.” Jack laughed as he and Daniel entered the infirmary.

“No need?! I told him nea te move until I came back to examine him! And here he is trying te stand when his spine had been broken in two places just six days ago!” Carson’s face was beet red as he shouted at the General. “Just ‘cause I’ve just gotten back dinnae mean I’ll let you all have your way in MY infirmary!”

Cameron Mitchell looked scolded at the fuming doctor. It was his fault the normally calm and easy going doctor was that angry.

A week ago an attempted attack by the Trust in the SGC had left Mitchell dying with a broken back and inner bleedings.

-----Flashback-----

“Sir, you can’t really believe that Ba’al wants to meet with us to talk!” Cameron raged.

Landry looked calmly at his subordinate, “No, Colonel. I don’t believe it and neither does
President Hayes. But Ba’al has managed to put himself inside Senator Kinsey’s circle. The fool doesn’t know that Ba’al is a goa’uld and thinks he wants to help him gain control over the SGC.”

Leaning forward in his chair Landry lay his folded hands on the table in front if him, “You remember Dr. Weir’s reports about Senator Kinsey’s behaviour during Anubis attack?”

“General, I remember every report concerning SG-1…”

“Yes, yes. How could I forget!” Landry asked ironically. “Seems as if the slimy worm managed to elude punishment by cuddling up to Hayes opponents. One of them introduced him to Ba’al…”

“And why do we have to meet with them? Can’t we just shoot them?”

“As tempting as the idea is, Mitchell, we can’t do that. The president asked us to find all connections from the Trust to the Pentagon.”

“Shit…,” Cameron cursed before sighing in defeat.

***************************************************

“Calm yourself, Cameron,” Teal’c tried to sooth his lover by slowly running his hands over the tense shoulders.

“I can’t, love. I just know that something bad will happen…”

“Be as it may, but you will exhaust yourself worrying when you should save your energy for the battle you are so sure is to come.” Secretly Teal’c admitted to himself that he himself had a very bad feeling about the upcoming meeting with Ba’al.

“You are right, T. Come on, it’s time to make show our ‘guests’ how hospitable we can be!”

***************************************************

“Colonel Mitchell, it’s nice to finally meet the man who managed to eject the distasteful
remaining members of SG-1!” Kinsey couldn’t have chosen any words that managed to hurt and enrage Cameron more as he held out his hand in greeting.

Cameron seethed while taking the offered hand and biting out a “Sir” between tightly clenched teeth. His eyes lit up when Kinsey’s eyes finally fell on Teal’c standing to his left.

“Well, apparently not all of them…”

“Senator, I’d like to say how delighted I am to finally be in the SGC!” Ba’al called out theatrically before making his way over to Cameron. “And I’m sure you’re just as delighted to see me again, Mitchell, Teal’c.”

“You know each other?” Kinsey asked confused.

Cameron rolled his eyes before looking at the Senator, “You could say that. What name are you using, Ba’al?”

“Oh, I go by Stuart Smith right now!”

“Ba’al? I don’t think…”

The last of the goa’uld system lords turned to his unknowing accomplice, “You are right, fool, you didn’t think. But thank you for gaining me access to the gate!” Ba’al’s eyes flashed before he raised his hand and activated his shield.

Kinsey looked at him in disbelieve, “You are a goa’uld!”

Landry shook his head at the stumped tone in the man’s voice, “Obviously.” Just then three soldiers entered the conference room, their weapons trained on Ba’al as his shield flickered and died.

Now it was Ba’al’s turn to look confused as he tried to reengage his shield, “What? How is that possible?”
“We knew you were coming, idiot!” Cameron sneered at the rage that swept over the man’s face. “Your friend Kinsey here has been under investigation the whole time and when the NID saw your photo they told us about you and we prepared a surprise!”

“NO!” Ba’al shouted as he activated his hand-device and blasted the soldiers against the wall. Then he turned to Teal’c as the most dangerous opponent in the room.

When Teal’c attacked him, Ba’al pointed his hand at him and Teal’c was hit by the energy dead on and held in its power. Trying to resist the device like many before him he slowly sunk down to his knees.

At this point Cameron couldn’t stand to wait any longer and tackled Ba’al. They hit the ground hard and Cam managed to punch Ba’al before he was hit by the stronger man. In his anger he’d forgotten how much stronger goa’uld hosts were.

Shaking his head to clear the pain he felt Ba’al grab a hold of his throat before being pushed away by an energy wave from the hand-device. But instead of hitting a wall he felt himself fall as the window was shattered due to the force of the blast and his weight.

The next seconds went in slow motion as he felt himself fall through the glass, cutting himself in the process. He saw Teal’c jumping up just to be attacked by Ba’al. He saw Landry rush forward and felt a hand grab his own, catching his weight for half-a-second before gravity took hold of him again.

Just before he hit the ground he heard his lover’s anguished scream.

***************

Seeing Cameron fall through the window enraged Teal’c like nothing had ever before. Not his wife’s death nor Shaun’ac’s had hit him this hard.

Fighting without any regard to his own safety he grabbed Ba’al’s outstretched arm and pulled him nearer. Twisting it he heard the grunt of pain followed by a scream when he broke it. Finally having enough and succumbing to the need to run to his lover he grabbed Ba’al’s jaw and twisted it. Breaking his neck with a vicious twist.
After finally disposing of Ba’al with the help of the remaining soldiers Teal’c raced down the stairs. ‘Please, let him be alive. Please…please…please…’

The soldiers standing around Cameron’s fallen body were roughly shoved aside but they didn’t dare protest as they had never seen the stoic jaffa show this many emotions before.

“Cameron? Cameron!” Teal’s let his hands travel over his lover’s broken body to check the extension of his injuries. The fall hadn’t been far but the force and angle with which Cameron had landed could prove to be fatale.

“Get out of the way!” Teal’c barely registered Dr. Lam’s voice shouting at the soldiers. “Teal’c! You have to step back. I need more space. Where is the damn gurney!”

“Te…Teal’c…”

“Shh, Colonel. You have to stay still.”

“Too late, doc. Not gonna make it…”

The doctor knew that this was possibly the truth but that didn’t mean she would go down without fighting. “No! That’s not for you to decide, Colonel!”

Cameron ignored her and looked pleadingly at his lover. When he saw the loss in the Jaffa’s eyes he wanted to reassure him but knew it to be pointless. “Teal’c…”

The troubled eyes reluctantly focussed on his own, “Yes, Cameron?” Teal’c did his best to sound dignified and not start pleading his lover to stay with him.

“You get him?”

“Yes, I got him.”

“Good. Didn’t even get the chance to see Atlantis or the others a last time…” Cameron’s voice
started slurring.

“Is that your last wish, beloved?” Teal’c didn’t care about the problems this could cause him. Only his lover mattered.

“I just… want to be with you…”

Teal’c looked at General Landry and when he saw the sorrow in the man’s eyes turn to determination he knew what would happen next. Caroline had also seen the glint in her father’s eyes and administered the strongest painkillers.

Cameron jumped when the gate started dialling. He looked on in confusion when Teal’c bend down and hefted him up into his strong arms, when the soldiers present saluted and then he was through the gate.

************************************

“Medical team to the Gate room!”

When the alarms sounded John and Paul abandoned their meal and hurried to the gate room. It had been two weeks since Todd had left to get back to his hive and spread the Retrovirus. Since then they hadn’t received a message and were slowly becoming impatient.

When they arrived in the gate room they saw Jack and Daniel while Sam hurried down the stairs.

What they saw just behind them shocked them to the core. There standing in front of the still open gate stood Teal’c with a broken and bleeding Cameron Mitchell in his arms.

A sad hum filled the air when Atlantis recognized this one as her descendants and registered the fact that this one was dying.

Carson Beckett arrived and after taking one look at his new patient knew that they would have to hurry.
“Lay him down! I’ll hav’ to hurry as it is!” When Teal’c just stood there looking down at the man dying in his arms Carson exploded, “Bloody fool! You want him to die?! Set him down immediately!!!”

Teal’c finally registered the people around him and sat Cameron on the gurney. When the medics began hurrying away he followed them without caring for the people he left behind confused.

Arriving in the infirmary he was forced to stay outside and finally collapsed in a chair, his face a mask devoid any feelings.

“Teal’c! What happened?” Jack asked when they arrived just minutes later. Without crowding Teal’c Jack, Daniel and Sam sat down.

When the big man didn’t react at all they knew it had to be pretty bad. “Teal’c?” Sam tried to get him to look at him.

Shaking himself from the stupor he had fallen into Teal’c started talking without taking his eyes off the door leading to his beloved. “Kinsey brought Ba’al to Stargate Command. Thought he could surprise us and take over without much fight. He had a hand device and attacked me. Cam… Cameron tried to help me and was pushed through the window. He fell…”

“He fell? Through the window? The hand-device held enough power and would have accelerated the speed of the fall too…” Seeing the dark look Jack send her she stopped before exclaiming, “It’s a wonder he wasn’t dead right away!”

“It was his wish to see Atlantis and you all one last time. It is truly a miracle that he held out long enough to make it here…”

The door opened and Methos rushed into the infirmary and with a running leap he jumped through the doors separating Cameron from them. Teal’c jumped from his seat and made to follow when a hand seized his shoulder and pushed him down again.

When he tried to free himself and found himself caught he turned around and saw Jacob Carter holding him down.

“Trust me, Teal’c, Methos will do his best. Atlantis is helping him with everything she can do…”
“Why would Atlantis do that?”

“She recognized him as a descendent…”

“Oh please! Is everyone a far removed relative around here!” Jack exclaimed when he realised that he or Methos would have to teach Mitchell how to communicate and use his powers, if he had any… and if he survived…

tbc

Chapter 27

While Carson and his team operated on Colonel Cameron Mitchell Methos sat next to him and slowly fed him energy he received from Atlantis.

The AI felt had fear for her descendents live when she recognized his quickly vanishing live force and had panicked. Calling for Methos had been her first reaction and allowing to pull all her reserves if need be had been her only thoughts.

*Don’t worry, they’re doing all they can to rescue him.* Methos soothed her thoughts.

#What if this is not enough?#

*It will be. You’ll see…*

*********************************************************************************

Hours later the original SG-1 and Jacob were still waiting and had been joined by Rodney, Paul, Evan and Ronon.

When the door opened and an exhausted Methos exited they all held their breath.
When Methos came to a halt in front of Teal’c the Jaffa didn’t dare hope.

But when Methos smiled tiredly but gently before whispering, “He’ll be fine.” Teal’c couldn’t stop the tears from breaking free of his tight control. Arms encircled him and he could sense his friends holding him up before he finally succumbed to darkness.

Methos and Jack caught Teal’c when he pitched forward. “It’s been too much, even for him.” Methos calmed them down.

Jack nodded before looking at Methos, “Mitchell will really be fine?”

Grinning Methos nodded, “Yeah, was touch and go for a while but Atlantis gave me so much energy to support him that he’ll probably high as kite for the next week!”

Laughing in relief they sat back to wait.

-----End Flashback-----

Shaking himself from the gruesome recollection of the happenings Cam tried to get the doctor to release him, “Sorry, Doc. But I’m fine and want to leave, pretty please?!”

A calm voice from the door stopped Carson from answering, “If Doctor Beckett tells you to stay in bed you will do so, Cameron,” Teal’c looked down at his lover. The concern and fear were still present in his eyes and he only left the infirmary when he was forced to eat and change.

“Yeah, I know, love. But I really feel fine!”

“That may be, but if you continue your wiggling about I’ll strap you down!” Carson laughed at the scandalized look on the Colonel’s face.

Carson then proceeded to examine Cameron. Half an hour later he grudgingly allowed his patient
to be released from the infirmary under the condition that he used wheelchair to get around.

“But, doc…”

“No buts! Either you take the wheelchair or you stay here! Are we clear?” Carson looked at Teal’c to see the nod of affirmation and knew that the Jaffa would follow his instruction to the letter…At least where his lover was concerned.

Teal’c lifted Cameron from the bed and gently placed him in the chair. After placing a blanket over his legs and shoulder he wheeled Cameron to the nearest balcony.

Looking around Cameron took the time to admire the incredible view. The city was truly beautiful, a work of art, and the ocean was just as beautiful.

“Enjoying the view?”

Cameron jumped when the unexpected voice interrupted his thoughts. Turning around he saw his former team as well as General O’Neill and Paul Davis with John Sheppard standing behind them.

“Yeah, it’s really beautiful.”

Clearing his throat uncomfortably Jack looked at the Colonel, “We are glad you’re okay, Mitchell.”

“Thank you, sir.”

Teal’c looked up when the sun began to vanish behind the horizon and it bathed his lover in a gentle red light.

“Very glad.” Many things could happen in the future, but right now everything was fine.

The End for now
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