

Points of Origin

(A NaNoWriMo Novel)

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Chapter 1

The transport made its final pass over the field, reflecting the morning sun. Deloris Burkemeier stifled a yawn. *Just like him*, she thought, *to get here early. He knows I'm a night person. And that I don't drink my coffee until nine.* To be fair, of course, his local time was closer to noon than 0700. But still, he *could* have been a bit more considerate.

Mary Wilkes (Colonel, U.S. Army) glanced at her alleged boss. Obviously she wanted to um, remind, the Good Doctor that one was supposed to be respectful of guests, especially these particular guests. *Sorry Wilkes, I don't just hop out of bed in the morning. I know, if I'd signed up like you, I'd have learned, but that just wasn't something I wanted to do.* And, of course, had she chosen a military career, it wasn't likely that she would have ended up here. Very few women, or men for that matter, advanced far as both scientists and officers. On the other hand, here wasn't all that great, either.

In addition to Himself, one Scientist/Soldier was on the transport, which now hovered over the landing site, kicked up a last bit of dust (*Hmm. Wilkes doesn't make them scrub it down every night. Just everything else.*) and touched down. As the hatch opened, Burkemeier looked at her, for want of a better word, command. Roughly two hundred-something scientists, engineers, and techs, all dressed in what they considered their best clothing (except for those who had chosen to make a fashion statement), more or less standing straight up. Exactly 173 Army and Air Force personnel (including Wilkes), all in summer dress uniforms, all at parade rest. Everyone not on essential duty present, accounted for, and as respectful as one could expect at 0700 hours.

The hatch opened. A Sergeant shouted "Aten'Hut!" and 173 pairs of

legs simultaneously shifted position. As she went to attention, Wilkes some managed to kick Burkemeier, who straightened up a bit more in response. Some of the other civilians stood up straighter. Wilkes, of course, was now immobile, except for her eyes, which for a moment went into a squint. Never seen that before, thought Burkemeier, as she turned to look at the transport. Down the ramp came its passengers. The first off was dressed in camouflage fatigues.

I'll kill him. He orders up a full scale inspection and shows up in fatigues? No. I'll let Wilkes kill him. She can take him apart better than I can. For Wilkes was obviously seething as well.

The fatigue-clad one strolled up to Wilkes, and more or less vaguely returned Wilkes' salute. "Welcome to P7M-3527, Sir," she said. He nodded, and turned to the Burkemeier.

"Welcome to Massilia, General O'Neill." She then greeted the rest of the team, also dressed in what Burkemeier privately referred to as "casual killing clothes." "Colonel Carter, Doctor Jackson, Teal'c, a pleasure to see you. Three quarters of SG-1, I see."

"All of SG-1, Doctor Burkemeier." Mitchell was just climbing down the transport. Apparently, he was the pilot, for no one else was on the transport. *Interesting*, Burkemeier mused, *a so-called formal inspection and all I get are the four Aces of SG-1 and a wild-card Jack.* She let out a small snort.

"Doctor?"

"Sorry, General. Sinuses. Saturn apparently liked ragweed so well, he engineered it to bloom year-round." OK, formalities must be obeyed. "Colonel Wilkes, will you please assist General O'Neill in reviewing the troops?"

"Ma'am!" Wilkes and O'Neill turned to the straight-backed military. As SG-1 turned to follow, Burkemeier whispered to Carter, "Sam! What is this? I thought he wanted a full scale inspection! Instead, it looks like he wants to go play hide and seek!"

Samantha Carter whispered back, "More like fishing, Dee. He's got his tackle box back in the transport."

"But why here?"

"It's as far away from Earth as he could get without using the *Pegasus*. Besides, the rest of us were coming anyway, to see your various projects. He just hopped a ride."

"And why would he want to do that?"

"The Office of Homeworld Security is being audited." Carter hurried to catch up with Wilkes and O'Neill, followed by the rest of SG-1.

Everything became crystal clear to Burkemeier. *He's hiding. The man's faced down Anubis, and helped kill Ra, Apophis, Cronus, and more Goa'uld than I can count. He regularly sticks his head into Ancient mind-bending devices. But he's afraid of auditors.* She decided that she didn't need to kill O'Neill, after all. Maybe just slow-roast him over a fire for a little while.

The inspection was complete, or as complete as any inspection for Jack O'Neill needed to be. Time to act. Wilkes would undoubtedly assist.

"Dr. Carter, I'm sure you'll be interested in *inspecting* the Naquadah-Naquadria project. Dr. Wu?" Sam Wu led Carter off to the lab.

"Dr. Jackson, as you know, this planet was terraformed by the Goa'uld Saturn some four thousand years ago. Our archaeologists have found some records that I'm sure they'd like to share with you. Dr. Marvin?" and off they went.

Wilkes saw her chance to leave O'Neill to his fate. "Colonel Mitchell, Teal'c, if you'll accompany me, I can show you some of the new stealth X-307. We've been experimenting with a Naquadria power source for a longer range, which is why all the testing is done here." And off they went.

Which left one General, obviously ready to go fishing. "Dr. Robbins?" Robbins was one of the fashion statement crowd, being dressed in a tee-shirt, blue jeans, and a fisherman's hat. He obviously spent a lot of time in the sun. Judging from his waste-line, he also spent a fair amount of time with a bear bottle. O'Neill brightened. "General, Dr. Robbins is our expert in waste treatment. As you know, we're trying out new recycling techniques. He'll show it all to you." O'Neill visibly deflated.

Ah, the sweet, sweet taste of revenge. *Make me dress up to watch you land at seven in the morning, will you?* Still, he was fleeing auditors, so only roast him lightly. She pulled Robbins aside. "Paul, give him the three hour tour, then show him your favorite fishing spot." Robbins, who hadn't been looking forward to shepherding a surly General, brightened. "Sure thing, Dee."

"The full three hours, Paul."

Revenge tasted almost as good a morning cup of coffee.