

Bad Day by Xanthe



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Story Notes:

This is my first spanky fic in about 18 months or more. The title of this fic was inspired by the Daniel Powter song – lyrics below the story. I always felt this would make a terrific SGA/Rodney music vid J

Warning: This is a comfort fic I wrote for myself because I was feeling a bit tired and down. It features a loving, consensual spanking but if you don't like spanking, or you feel that fictional characters shouldn't like dealing with their issues by spanking, then please don't read it.

Thanks to: Bluespirit for lovely beta :-)

To recap "Trinity" – Rodney persuades Sheppard to support him in trying to make an Ancient weapon work. Rodney is blinded by his desire for professional glory and despite being told by his colleague that it'll go wrong, he continues and he and Sheppard nearly die as a result.



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Carson Beckett let himself into Rodney's room that evening – after the events of the day he was pretty sure that Rodney wouldn't come to his room. While Rodney would often come to spend the night with Carson if he was feeling excited, irritated, or just plain horny, when he was really down he'd hide away for a few days. Somehow, after the events of the day, Carson doubted that Rodney would be feeling very upbeat this evening and he really didn't want his lover to be alone tonight.

Carson lit some of the candles he'd brought with him to make the room look more cosy and welcoming - Rodney wasn't exactly a candle kind of person so he didn't possess any himself - then he settled down on the bed with a medical journal and waited for Rodney to show up. It was already late, so Carson knew his lover wouldn't be long, and sure enough the door slid open half an hour later and Rodney stood in the doorway, blinking in the candlelight, looking a little confused.

"Carson?" he muttered, walking into the room. Carson's tender heart skipped a beat; he'd never seen his lover looking so incredibly dejected. Rodney's shoulders were set into a deep slump and his mouth was pinched into a thin line of despondency.

"Hey...I thought you could use the company," Carson said, tossing the journal aside and getting up from the bed.

"Hmmm. Did I apologise to you?" Rodney asked, absently placing his laptop on the table. "I thought I'd covered everyone but I don't think I apologised to you."

"You didn't do anything to upset me. You don't have to apologise to me," Carson said, stepping forward.

"Really? That's a relief. I think I apologised to everyone else. Elizabeth – of course, Radek – that was an extremely difficult verging on embarrassing experience, Colonel Caldwell – although I did that by email because that man scares the hell out of me, and of course Colonel Sheppard." His shoulders hunched even more at that last name.

"Did he give you a tough time?" Carson asked gently.

"Hmm?" Rodney looked up. "Sheppard? As a matter of fact, no. Well...at least...no more than I deserved. He was kinder to me than I'd have been to myself in the circumstances. He doesn't trust me any more but that's to be expected."

"Oh Rodney." Carson put his hands on Rodney's shoulders and gazed at his lover sympathetically. "You made a mistake. It could have happened to anyone."

"Not really, no," Rodney said, not sparing himself from the brutal honesty he was often so quick to hand out to everyone else. "It happened to me because I let my ego blind me, Carson. I went

out of my way to convince everyone I could do this and it blew up in my face – quite literally. I over-reached myself and I paid the price."

"You honestly thought you could make the weapon work," Carson told him firmly, still keeping his hands on Rodney's shoulders.

"Did I? Or was I just blinded by the thought of how much praise and credit I'd get for it if I succeeded?" Rodney asked bitterly.

Carson gazed at his lover sadly. Rodney was right – as he so often was. He had made a huge error of judgement and he had been blinded by his own ego – but all the same, that didn't stop Carson feeling desperately sorry for him right now.

"C'mere, love." He pulled Rodney into a warm hug, and Rodney came, stiffly, reluctantly, unable to accept any kind of sympathy right now while he was so busy kicking himself for his own stupidity. Carson sighed – he could see this wasn't going to be easy. Rodney didn't relax much in his arms so eventually he let him go. Rodney sat down at the table and undid his boots and kicked them off.

"Elizabeth was furious," he said. "I tried to explain myself but really – she was right. I deserved everything she said. I should have listened to her in the first place. She knows what I can be like."

"Aye, well, sometimes you just let your intellectual enthusiasm run away with you," Carson said, sitting down opposite him and resting his elbows on his knees, leaning forward, trying to connect with his lover.

"Yeah. Well, I should only let myself do that in less explosive situations," Rodney said bitterly. "Idiot." He sat there for a moment, looking tired and lost. Carson wished there was something he could say or do to make it better but he knew Rodney too well. The other man wouldn't accept a platitude or anything that was less than the brutal truth, and Carson didn't want to add to the list of people who'd already given Rodney that brutal truth after the events of the day. "As for Radek – he was the opposite; far too nice to me in the circumstances. He tried to warn me but I didn't listen. And you know..." Rodney scrunched up his face in a pained expression. "It does really kind of hurt that he was right and I was wrong. I mean...he's a good scientist and has a fine mind but I'm in another league entirely. He's just not as good as me, damnit! So to have to apologise to him was...well, hard."

Carson gave a little smile – Rodney's self-assessments, whether positive or negative, were always entirely honest, but he doubted whether his lover realised how that came across sometimes.

"You still did it though," Carson said, patting his lover's knee. "I'm proud of you. You might get things wrong but you always apologise when you do."

"I don't like getting things wrong," Rodney snapped.

"You're only human – everyone gets things wrong occasionally," Carson told him firmly.

"But not this. This was my field...this was something I should have got right," Rodney sighed, looking gloomily at his feet.

"Did you eat?" Carson asked, trying to change the subject.

"Not in the mood." Rodney shook his head. Carson didn't like the sound of that – Rodney was never not in the mood to eat.

"Why don't you take a shower and I'll fix something – then we can go to bed," he suggested. "I'll make a nice pot of tea."

"Carson I don't want to eat and I don't want you feeling sorry for me or fussing over me or giving me bloody tea," Rodney snapped. "What is it with you Brits and your endless need for tea in times of crisis? You should just go away and leave me alone. I'll be fine."

"No." Carson got up, feeling his shoulder muscles tighten. He had a feeling he knew where this was going to end up, and if it was necessary then he was quite prepared to go there. "No, I won't leave you alone, Rodney, because we all know what'll happen if I do."

Rodney glared at him. "What do you mean?"

"I mean that you'll stay up all night, working on your equations, going over and over where you got it wrong – isn't that why you brought your laptop back this evening?"

Rodney looked as if he was going to argue about that and then sighed, and wrapped his arms around his body and sat there, hunched and sullen.

"Then it'll go on for days. You'll drink too much coffee, stay up every night going over and over what went wrong and how it was all your fault, snap at everyone in sight, including me, and mope around here when you're off duty. You'll be miserable and you'll make everyone around you miserable."

"Thank you for the very accurate character assessment," Rodney snapped. "I'm sorry if you think I make everyone miserable but..."

"I'm more worried about the fact that you'll be miserable," Carson told him softly, resting a gentle hand on his shoulder. "Rodney – you need to move on from this, not dwell on it. Aye, you have to win back people's trust, particularly Colonel Sheppard's, and that won't be easy, but sitting here all night giving yourself a hard time about it won't do anything to help you win back that trust, will it?"

"I know what you're trying to do, Carson, with the candles and the tea and sympathy but it won't work," Rodney told him in a hard voice. "So please – just go away and leave me alone."

"No," Carson made sure his voice was firm. He knew Rodney was used to getting his own way in

their relationship, but that was because Carson was perfectly happy to allow him to do just that most of the time. He loved Rodney's enthusiasm, his babbling conversations and the fact that every single emotion that Rodney ever experienced showed in those blue eyes of his, rendering him startlingly vulnerable even when he was at his most obnoxious. Carson often felt like the adult in the relationship, standing by and allowing his genius lover to show off and generally be excitable and endearing, and irritating and irascible by turns. However, there was another truth to their relationship, and it was one that neither of them discussed, but the bottom line was that no matter how brilliant Rodney was, or how snappy he could be, or how much he pushed Carson around during their workdays – at the end of the day, Carson was in charge. He was the stable one and beneath that gentle exterior he had a quiet authority that he rarely ever wielded - but when he did, that was that, and even Rodney was brought into line.

Rodney's head shot up at Carson's tone of voice and he gazed at him. "What are you saying?" he asked, and Carson didn't miss the slight hitch in his voice, or the eager and yet anxious expression that had suddenly crept into his eyes. Now he was sure he knew what to do.

"I'm saying that either you snap out of this and go and take a shower and sit down for a meal with me and try and move on, or I'll take care of it the other way we take care of things, and if I do that, I'll do it properly or there's no point doing it at all," Carson told him in his best no-nonsense doctor's voice. "It's your choice, Rodney. You can either let this drag on for days while you descend into a little pit of misery, or we can spend an hour or so taking care of this now. It'll be quicker, and it'll probably hurt less in the long run."

"But not in the short," Rodney said mirthlessly.

"I told you it's your choice, Rodney," Carson said firmly. "I'll be in my quarters. You decide." He looked down on Rodney's glum face and sighed. He wrapped his arms around Rodney's hunched shoulders and hugged his stiff, unresponsive body for a second or two. "I love you, Rodney," he whispered. When he got no response he rose to go, but Rodney reached out a hand and clutched his arm, pulling him back.

"You'd do it properly?" he asked, in a soft, desperate tone. "You wouldn't let me off lightly because you're feeling sorry for me?"

"No," Carson told him firmly, although he felt his own stomach do a little flip of nervousness in the hope he'd get it right. He'd learned from experience that if it was going to happen at all, then it had to be done properly. Rodney could always see through any attempt at a lie and that made the whole thing pointless. They'd had arguments about it before, until Carson had finally figured out the way his complicated lover's mind worked. Rodney might wheedle and whine for mercy, in fact he frequently did, but if you gave him just that he was likely to bite your head off.

"And you're sure?" Rodney asked, biting his lip. Despite everything he might say, Rodney was a soft-hearted man, and he would hate it if he felt Carson was doing something against his will.

"Aye. I'm sure." Carson stood up straight and gazed down at his lover with every ounce of his resolve. "Like I said – your choice but you've got half an hour to make it because after that I'm going to bed."

And with that he turned on his heel and left. He would have much preferred to have stayed, to have wrapped Rodney up in his love and kissed him better, but that was another thing he'd learned from experience – Rodney couldn't accept any kind of comfort while he was in this kind of mood and still berating himself so thoroughly.

Carson returned to his quarters and pulled out the box under his bed. It was Rodney's box and it contained Rodney's things, but Carson didn't quibble about his lover's need for them. It was something he could do for Rodney and sometimes it was the one thing Rodney needed, and often, if Carson was honest, it was a pleasure for him too. Rodney was, after all, a man who could effortlessly hurl a professional insult in his direction with malicious ease. He could take up a whole day of Carson's time with trivial and often non-existent medical complaints just because he wanted attention, and he could pout for Atlantis when denied something he wanted. In those circumstances, Carson had come to pretty much enjoy using the inhabitants of this box.

Carson opened the box and laid the contents out on the table. He had no idea where Rodney had got them from but he presumed that at least some of them had been personal items he'd brought with him from Earth – although more had shown up since then and Carson wasn't entirely sure where they'd come from. They were all unfussy and straightforward implements – none of them had any frills or unnecessary accoutrements. Rodney meant them to do business, not be used as instruments of erotic pleasure, and although at first Carson had found that hard to understand, he'd come to appreciate just what these implements could do for his lover when wielded correctly, and with that came a certain degree of respect for them.

In time their relationship had moved on from Rodney requesting when they be used to Carson taking control of that. It suited them both better that way, even if Rodney did sometimes argue with him when he felt they weren't necessary and Carson thought they were – or vice versa. Carson trusted himself to be a better judge of this than Rodney though, and time had proven that to be the case. Rodney was much happier now than he'd ever been, and for the most part led a more settled, contented life. It suited him that Carson was his bottom line – that when the chips were down it was Carson who was there for him and who kept him in check, and Rodney knew that no matter how much he wheedled or commanded, when push came to shove Carson was in charge and Rodney wasn't. And that was that.

Carson examined the implements one by one, trying to judge which would work best in their current situation. He always did this – it helped to get him into the right frame of mind to take care of Rodney's needs, and ever since he'd started to actively enjoy this side of their relationship, Carson had come to appreciate how important it was that he was in the right mindset before starting. For that reason, he always tried to get a few minutes alone before turning his attention to Rodney – even if that meant getting his lover to face the wall for a few minutes – which was something that Rodney hated and fumed about with a vehemence that made Carson laugh.

Carson picked up the tawse first. He always did – he was most naturally drawn to this implement – and with good reason. It was a thick strip of hard leather, cut halfway down the middle to provide two "tails". Carson viewed it with a healthy respect because it was the only

implement in the box of which he had personal experience. It wasn't an experience he'd ever forget either. The tawse had been the main implement of discipline used at his school, years' ago. Carson had always been far too well-behaved to ever be on the receiving end of it, unlike some of the other boys who were constantly in trouble, but there had been just one occasion when he had been tawsed, and just touching the damn thing could still make him shiver, even after all these years.

He'd been 13 years old and was pretty much the brightest boy not only in his class but in the entire school. The headmaster, Mr Sullivan, was a good, kind man, and very proud of Carson. Having lost his own father a couple of years' previously, Carson had started to rely on Mr Sullivan as a role model and someone to talk to. Mr Sullivan had encouraged him and helped him with extra tuition in order to fulfil his considerable promise and Carson has flourished as a result. He adored the headmaster and what had happened still made him wince in distress. His best friend, Danny, had come to school one day in a panic because he'd forgotten to do some homework. It wasn't the first time this had happened and Danny knew he'd be in serious trouble. Soft-hearted Carson, who was just becoming painfully aware of his homosexuality and was nursing a serious crush on his best friend, had given in and allowed Danny to copy his homework. Danny hadn't changed it enough – if at all – and the boys were soon found out. Carson had immediately cracked under pressure and admitted to the crime and that was how he'd come to find himself in front of the headmaster's desk, staring at his own feet as a way of avoiding looking into Mr Sullivan's disappointed brown eyes. It had been one of the most traumatic experiences of Carson's entire life. He wasn't used to being in trouble and he hated that he'd upset one of the people he respected most and who had shown him such kindness. He wished the floor could open him up and swallow him and his shame. Mr Sullivan hadn't spared the lecture – he was extremely disappointed with Carson and he let him know it. After the lecture he'd called Carson forward and told him to bend over his desk. Then he'd opened his desk drawer and removed the tawse. Carson remembered swallowing hard on a completely dry mouth, feeling sure he would faint. He'd never been in serious trouble before – it just wasn't in his nature - and he was petrified. Mr Sullivan had delivered six sharp swats to his backside in swift succession but Carson barely remembered the final five because he'd been so busy trying to get over the first one, which stung like crazy. Afterwards his head was spinning as he pushed himself away from the desk, red-faced, and mumbled an apology. Mr Sullivan had accepted the apology and pulled Carson's face up to look at him.

"You're a good boy, Carson. I know you won't do anything like this again," he'd said, and Carson could still remember the feeling of total relief that had swept through him. "Now, you've been punished and we won't mention it again. I'll see you tonight for extra biology tuition as usual."

Carson remembered walking away from the headmaster's office feeling light-headed with joy that he'd been forgiven and that he wasn't in trouble any more, despite the pain his rump – or maybe, partly, because of it. It was that whole experience which made him understand what Rodney got from the implements in this box – otherwise he might have had a harder time appreciating exactly why Rodney needed them. Carson fingered the tawse, remembering that day again. Mr Sullivan had been a good, kind man, and Carson had never once resented him for punishing him that day. Carson had told Rodney the entire story and it was soon after that that the tawse had made an appearance in the box. Carson wasn't entirely sure what Rodney meant by that, and they never talked about it, but oddly, Carson found it rather touching.

Carson pulled out a smooth, hard paddle, and whacked it experimentally against his palm, enjoying the thud. This made a nice, loud noise and he liked using it for that reason, but the tawse held more emotional resonance for him. He discarded the other implements, including a fearsome looking cane which he doubted he'd ever use on Rodney, and returned them to the box, but kept those two out. They felt more suitable and he'd decide which one to use when Rodney arrived. Carson had no doubt that Rodney *would* arrive. He'd be reluctant – for someone who kept a box full of these implements, Rodney could be curiously diffident when it came to them actually being used on him - and sometimes they had a battle of wills over it, which Carson always won and which he knew Rodney needed him to win. Carson just assumed it was part of the whole process and if it worked for Rodney then that was fine by him – he could dig in and be as stern as Rodney needed him to be. He doubted he'd have too much trouble with him today though – even Rodney knew he'd fucked up, big time, today.

Carson glanced around the room and made a few adjustments to it to get it ready. He took away the chair from the side of the table closest to the door, and he displayed the implements on the table, so Rodney would see them when he arrived – it was small touches like that which Carson had learned helped them both to get into the right head space. Finally, he sat down and thought about what he was trying to achieve and how he might go about it.

Carson didn't have a list of "punishable offences" in his head. He didn't personally think Rodney needed to be punished for anything any more than any of the rest of the base did but as this part of their life was very real and had taken on increasing importance to them both he had tried to figure out what Rodney might feel he'd need to be punished for. As he'd become more confident in his role as Rodney's top, he'd also devised a list of his own of things that Rodney might not feel he needed to be punished for but Carson thought showed he wasn't just an expedient right arm, there to dish out on Rodney's command. His insistence on meting out minor spankings for when Rodney had been completely obnoxious or insulting had actually worked out very well for both of them. Carson was a firm believer in politeness and Rodney had tempered some of his more outrageous outbursts as a result of the spankings he'd received. More than that though, it helped reinforce, in Rodney's mind, that Carson wasn't a pushover and that Rodney wasn't in control – and it was that which helped them both when it came to issues that Rodney really did have a problem with. Such as today...Carson tried to focus on what exactly Rodney might be feeling. He had been egotistical to the point of lunacy and had nearly got himself and Colonel Sheppard blown up in the process and it was *that* more than anything else that Carson wanted to focus on. He suspected Rodney himself would want more focus on how his actions had been stupid and impacted on the others in the base and the consequent loss of their respect for him, but as far as Carson could see they'd all made their own decisions, even if they had been blinded by Rodney's zeal. Besides, Carson wasn't concerned with the others on this occasion – this was about Rodney, and Carson remembered how distraught he'd felt when he was 13 years' old and had been caught cheating, even for the most well-meaning of reasons. Rodney had to be feeling something similar – he needed to know he had been held to account and thoroughly punished for his poor judgement and Carson knew he could do that for him, however painful it would be.

There was a timid knock on the door and Carson waited for a second or two before calling for Rodney to come in. Rodney finally entered, looking bashful, his eyes lowered. Carson remained

seated where he was, watching Rodney intently as his lover came to stand in front of the table. Carson could remember many authority figures, including his own father, and Mr Sullivan, and the brilliant but somewhat ruthless surgeon who had coaxed the first hint of brilliance from him several years previously and he had used all of them in constructing his top persona. He was himself a highly respected man, with many staff who looked up to him, and he was used to managing people with a combination of respect and firmness. This wasn't very much different, even if it wasn't quite his usual style.

Carson gazed at Rodney for a long while. Rodney stood there, looking a little uncertain, and that was exactly how Carson wanted him to feel. After a few moments Rodney wilted, and his eyes flickered to the implements on the table in front of Carson, then flickered back to Carson. Finally it was all too much for Rodney.

"Look, I know I'm in trouble!" he blurted. "Can we just get the lecture over with and get on with it, Carson?"

"Did I give you permission to speak?" Carson asked quietly.

"No but..." Rodney began and Carson shot him a look that dried the words right out of his mouth. Carson wished he could replicate that effect in their everyday lives.

"You are in trouble," Carson told him, getting up. "You're in a whole world of trouble, lad." Rodney took a deep breath and squared his shoulders.

"Yes, sir," he muttered. Carson suppressed the smile that always came to his lips when Rodney called him 'sir'. It seemed to be something that slipped out naturally when Rodney was in this position and Carson actually found it rather endearing. It also showed that Rodney accepted he should be punished and was ready for that.

Carson undid his shirt sleeves and then began rolling them up, very, very slowly, one by one. Rodney watched, transfixed. This was another weapon Carson had in his armoury – he knew that just this simple act could take Rodney down as quickly as any lecture. Carson took his time, making sure his movements were firm and controlled with just a hint of annoyance about them and Rodney bit on his lip as his eyes followed every movement. Finally Carson finished and then he turned back to his lover.

"In a minute I'm going to punish you," he said, and Rodney swallowed hard and nodded. "I'm going to punish you severely," Carson added, and Rodney's head jerked up although he must have been expecting that. Carson perched on the side of the table in front of his lover and gazed at him sternly. "You've had a bad day, Rodney," he observed.

"Yeah. You could say that." Rodney gave a little laugh which faded from his face when Carson's mouth remained set in a resolutely firm line.

"I'm glad you find it funny. I, on the other hand, do not," Carson rapped out. "Your arrogance almost cost you your life, and that's not acceptable to me, Rodney."

"What?" Rodney frowned, confused. "I was an idiot, yes, but it wasn't just my life that was in danger."

"I know. You also wheedled Colonel Sheppard into your stupidity and Colonel Caldwell too and they both risked their lives to a greater or lesser extent as a result. You were also rude to Radek – and you know how I feel about your rudeness."

"Yes sir," Rodney muttered. "Although really that was just the heat of..."

"Be quiet, Rodney!" Carson interrupted, in a furious tone. "I don't think you realise just how much trouble you're in, lad."

Rodney gazed at him, startled, a panicked look in his eyes, and then he nodded. "Yes sir, sorry sir," he whispered.

"So I'm going to punish you," Carson said, turning back to his implements. Now he knew how he would use them; he'd use the paddle to deal with the issues that were bothering Rodney most, because it made a loud noise and all Rodney's senses would tell him how vigorously he was being punished. Then he'd use the tawse for those issues that were more of a concern to him personally – the way Rodney had treated Radek, and the fact he'd put his own life so stupidly in danger.

"Yes sir," Rodney said again, in a subdued tone.

"In the circumstances I think you deserve a long, hard punishment – so I'm going to use both the paddle and the tawse," Carson told him. Rodney's head jerked up again – this was unusual, but Carson hoped that by doing it this way he'd deal with how big this issue was for Rodney. They'd never had to deal with something of this magnitude before, and Carson knew that Rodney would require there to be some special degree of chastisement before he'd accept that he'd been punished and could move on.

"Yes, sir." Rodney's words were barely audible.

Carson circled around him, put a hand on his shoulder and squeezed firmly. "Pants down please and bend over the table," he ordered.

Rodney trembled slightly under his touch and Carson kept his hand there, steadying him. Then Rodney took a deep breath, nodded, and undid his pants. He slid them down to his ankles, along with his boxers and kicked them off, and then Carson pushed him forwards until he was stretched over the desk. Rodney had a very nice, round, fleshy bottom and although Carson thought that generally speaking he'd prefer to be making love to it rather than spanking it, he had succumbed, during the course of their relationship, to the charm of seeing it squirm and wriggle and redden under his stern ministrations.

Carson picked up the paddle first – he'd save the tawse for later, when he would take Rodney over his knee and make the spanking more intimate. For now, he knew Rodney needed a more formal spanking before he'd accept anything else.

First do no harm, Carson sighed, offering up a little prayer of apology to Hippocrates. The truth was that in the course of his job he'd often had to inflict pain in order to encourage healing, and he told himself that this was no different; it felt pretty much the same.

Carson placed the paddle against Rodney's buttocks, watching them quiver slightly, and then pulled it back and delivered a firm, hard slap to Rodney's flesh. The paddle gave a pleasing crack as it impacted on bare flesh, and Rodney jumped slightly. Carson put a hand on his back to still him and then set about in earnest.

"What you did today was stupid, reckless and arrogant," Carson said, listing the faults that he knew were bothering Rodney most.

"Yes, sir," Rodney yelled as the paddle descended again. Carson didn't spare him – he'd promised he wouldn't and he knew it wouldn't do any good anyway. Rodney was feeling bad right now and he needed the spanking to match the severity of those emotions or it wouldn't do what they needed it to do. Carson was surprised how good he'd got at judging this. He was acutely observant, aware of what Rodney's body language was telling him, and he had become very skilled with using the various implements in Rodney's box. Every stroke hit home on the fleshy area of Rodney's bottom, leaving broad red marks in their wake that would probably have faded straight away if they hadn't immediately been replaced with a new one. Carson absolutely refused to do anything that would cause bruising or bleeding but he did want Rodney to be sore for a few days and remember this spanking, in case he was tempted to turn back to berating himself endlessly. He wielded the paddle like the expert he'd become, covering every inch of Rodney's bottom, and not stopping even when Rodney's breathing became harsh and he started grunting as every spank hit home. Finally, when Carson could feel Rodney start to shake under the hand he had on his back, Carson stopped. Rodney looked up, as if startled.

"I'm not done yet," Carson told him grimly, and Rodney nodded, accepting that. "That was for screwing up and for misleading Colonel Sheppard," Carson said. "Now come here." He put the paddle back on the table and picked up the tawse. Then he took hold of Rodney's arm and led him over to the bed. "Over my knee," he ordered, pulling Rodney down. Rodney was used to this position and quickly got into place. Carson paused for a moment and examined his lover's bottom. It was red and looked pretty sore, but Carson knew he could take more. Carson caressed it for a few seconds, feeling the heat, judging what else was required, and then he picked up the tawse. "This is for me – for making me worry about you, for nearly getting killed and for the way you treated Radek," Carson told me.

"You keep going on about Radek," Rodney muttered resentfully, raising his head, and Carson judged by his tone that this was something he didn't feel he needed to be punished for.

"He was right, you were wrong, but you accused him of professional jealousy in front of several people," Carson told him sternly. "I think you can take a few for that." Rodney sighed, and put his head down, taking hold of Carson's knees.

"Yes, sir," he sighed, his body language signalling that he accepted that Carson was going to have the last word on this one.

Carson put one arm around Rodney's body and brought the tawse down firmly on his backside. Rodney growled and bucked slightly in his grasp and Carson guessed that had to really hurt after the spanking he'd just received. He felt the usual empathy he always felt for Rodney when he used the tawse on him because he knew how this implement felt, and that somehow always brought him closer to Rodney and made the experience more intimate for them both. Carson didn't let up – he knew that this part of the punishment was important if he was going to do it properly. He smacked the tawse down several times, keeping up a brisk pace, and Rodney clung to him, his body wracked with tension. Carson wanted to break that tension and he wasn't going to stop until he did. He ratcheted the pace up a notch or two, his arm moving at a blistering pace, until Rodney started to make little sobbing sounds in the back of his throat, then Carson dialled it down, until finally he stopped altogether. Rodney wasn't crying but he was sort of keening – and it was now, finally, that Carson got to do what he had wanted to do all evening. He pushed Rodney off his lap, pulled him onto the bed, lay down beside him and held him tight. Rodney wrapped his arms around Carson and buried his face in Carson's neck and held on tight, finally accepting the comfort that Carson had tried to give him an hour or so previously. Rodney's breathing was still coming in hitching gasps and Carson stroked him, allowing his hands to linger on Rodney's hot flesh before moving up to gently caress his back.

"I love you," Carson whispered over and over again into Rodney's ear as his lover lay there, nuzzling at his neck, holding onto him for dear life. Rodney was often like this after a spanking – craving total closeness with Carson, clinging to him, and Carson loved being able to get close to Rodney and take care of him when he was at his most vulnerable. Usually Rodney was an excitable blur of action, talking, gesticulating, or even making love with an intensity that could be frightening, but right here, right now, he was just a weary, contrite man who needed to be held, and Carson could do that for him.

"I'm sorry," Rodney whispered as Carson hugged him close.

"I know, love. It's okay now though," Carson told him, cuddling him for all he was worth. Rodney relaxed into his embrace and Carson kissed the side of his face, several times. Finally Rodney's breathing calmed and he looked up. His blue eyes were bright and glassy but he hadn't cried – he rarely ever did when Carson spanked him. He looked tired but much more relaxed than he'd been all evening.

"I really am sorry, Carson," he said softly. "I didn't think about how worried you must have been when the weapon went critical."

"I was listening to the whole thing," Carson told him with a squeeze. "You and Colonel Sheppard were lucky to get out alive."

"Yeah." Rodney made a face. "Idiot," he said again, but this time the reproach lacked the bitter self-loathing his tone had held earlier.

"Aye, but you're my idiot," Carson grinned, kissing him on the lips. Rodney responded hungrily, his mouth pressing against Carson's and they kissed for a long time, a gentle, sweet, needy kiss of connection and love.

"Will you eat something now?" Carson asked when he released him.

"God yes – I'm starving," Rodney said.

"Get undressed and put my bathrobe on. I'll get something," Carson told him. He bustled around and made a couple of sandwiches and pot of tea for the pair of them and turned back to find Rodney standing right behind him, in Carson's bathrobe; his lover never could bear to be out of touching distance from him after a spanking.

"Tea?" Rodney raised an eyebrow at Carson as he poured two cups.

"I don't care what you say, the reason why we Brits drink tea in times of crisis is because it *works*," Carson told him.

"Hmm. I prefer coffee," Rodney muttered.

"I'm not giving you coffee on an empty stomach just before you go to bed. You'll be up all night," Carson said reprovably. He sat down and Rodney hovered next to him for a moment.

"I really can't sit down right now, Carson," Rodney told him with a grimace. "I'll sort of perch." He knelt down beside Carson and rested against Carson's legs, like a cat. Carson reached out and gently tangled his hand in Rodney's hair. He loved doing this and it was rare that Rodney was still enough to allow it. Rodney gobbled down his sandwich in record speed and then stole half of Carson's sandwich as well. Carson smiled to himself – clearly his lover was feeling much better.

"Can I stay the night?" Rodney asked, through mouthfuls of sandwich.

"There's no question of you going back to your room," Carson told him firmly. Rodney grinned up at him, still munching.

"Good. Can we...you know..." he asked, glancing at the bed.

"If you're up for it," Carson replied, smiling down on him, still stroking his hair.

"I'm never not up for it, Carson," Rodney said reprovably, finishing his sandwich and swilling it down with tea. He swallowed that down in three gulps and then got to his feet, grimacing. "Hell, Carson, I must be black and blue all over," he complained, putting a tentative hand on his bottom.

"You're not black and blue – but you are as red as a beacon," Carson said with a grin as Rodney pulled him out of the chair and pushed him eagerly over to the bed. This was *his* Rodney, not the bitter, despondent man he'd been talking to earlier.

"The paddle *and* the tawse," Rodney said, shaking his head. "You're just plain mean, Carson Beckett."

"Aye, and you're a handful, Rodney McKay," Carson retorted, as Rodney began unbuttoning and unzipping his clothes with those nimble fingers of his.

"Am I?" Rodney paused for a moment to consider that and then grinned, before continuing with his task, humming happily to himself as he went. He swiftly divested Carson of his clothes, and then slipped his bathrobe off and pulled the naked Carson tight against his bare flesh, as if he wanted them to be as close as physically possible. "I don't know what I'd do without you," he whispered into Carson's neck, in a tight, emotional voice. "You know just how to handle me."

"Aye, Rodney, I do," Carson replied, his hands coming to rest on Rodney's exceedingly warm bottom. He caressed it softly, despite Rodney's little whimpers – perhaps it was mean of him to get some malicious enjoyment out of that but Rodney seemed to find it arousing judging by the hardness of his erection as it dug into Carson's thigh. "Who's on top?" Carson asked, as Rodney reached out a hand to swipe the lube from the nightstand.

"You've been toppy all night so it's probably my turn," Rodney said.

"Aye, but you have this cute red arse," Carson replied, fingering Rodney's bottom.

"I think my cute red ass has had enough for one night," Rodney replied. "And I want to be close to you, to be *in* you."

"Och, that sounds very appealing," Carson sighed happily as Rodney pushed him back onto the bed. Rodney straddled him, kissing him thoroughly all over. Rodney's blue eyes were as intent as ever and for a moment Carson wondered how the hell it was possible that that weapon hadn't capitulated under the force of Rodney's will the way virtually everyone and everything on this base had, and then he felt a jolt of the same disappointment he knew Rodney must have felt, to finally come up against a puzzle that had proved too complex for him to solve. "You're still the smartest man I know you know," Carson told him, reaching out to caress the side of Rodney's face. Rodney paused in what he was doing for a moment, one finger still prodding Carson's nipple, and then he smiled – and Carson thought he could deliver all the spankings in the world if it meant he got to see *that* smile, that sweet, adorable smile that Carson knew for a fact Rodney never flashed to anyone else.

"Thanks, Carson. You're not so bad at what you do either, if you consider being a voodoo medicine man actually a profession," he replied. Carson took great delight in pinching Rodney's sore ass and eliciting a pained yelp from his lover. Rodney recovered quickly enough and lowered his head to take Carson's nipple in his mouth, rolling it expertly under his tongue and Carson moaned and pushed up against him. Rodney moved onto his other nipple and gave it the same treatment and Carson surrendered under the skilled attention, as he always did. Then Rodney slid his lubed fingers into Carson's ass, stretching him, whispering all the time about how much Carson turned him on and how he couldn't wait to be inside him. He slid his other hand along Carson's hard cock as he worked, pausing every now and then to go back up to Carson's mouth for a deep, loving, hungry kiss. Rodney's need was still palpable – he couldn't bear to be out of skin to skin contact with Carson for even a second and he needed constant

reassurance which Carson was happy to give. Finally Rodney lubed his cock and parted Carson's legs further, before positioning himself between them. He looked down on Carson with one of those unguarded smiles of his, full of affection, and then slid easily inside him. Carson gasped and wrapped his legs around his lover and Rodney sank deeper in, shifted to get a better position, and from then on every thrust hit Carson's prostate, sending him into paroxysms of pleasure which milked Rodney's cock. Rodney was slow, taking his time, and after he'd thrust for a few seconds, he paused, pushed himself deep inside Carson, and then rested against his lover's body, kissing his neck and nipples and mouth over and over again for a long time.

"I'd like to stay here forever," he whispered, his hard cock pulsing deep inside Carson's body.

"Feels so damn good," Carson replied, reaching his hands down to caress Rodney's back. "I'd like that too."

"I love you, Carson," Rodney told him, those blue eyes of his disarmingly close. Even if Rodney's eyes told him that a thousand times a day, Rodney himself rarely ever spoke the words, so it meant a lot to Carson to hear them.

"Love you too," Carson replied, stroking him insistently. Rodney sighed and continued kissing him for several long minutes until finally the scientist sighed, shifted again and began to thrust once more. It wasn't long before they both came, and then Rodney finally, regretfully, withdrew – but only so that he could take Carson in his arms and hold him close. Carson nestled into him, loving how affectionate Rodney could be after a spanking – often after sex he'd just roll over and fall asleep, but now he looked as if he just wanted to cuddle Carson all night. They were quiet for awhile and then finally Carson realised it was the kind of quiet that meant that Rodney was thinking about something.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Just wondering," Rodney said, with a tight little squeeze. "It's just...I thought today might be the day you finally christened that cane on my ass," Rodney told him, and he felt still and quiet behind Carson. Carson turned in his arms to gaze at his lover.

"That thing scares the bloody life out of me. I can't think you could do anything that would deserve that," Carson replied. Rodney relaxed a fraction.

"If I needed it – would you use it?" he asked. Carson paused.

"I don't know. Let's hope it doesn't come to that," he replied. He reached out and ran his hands over Rodney's still very hot bottom and Rodney shifted and grinned at him.

"So - I had a bad day," he said, echoing Carson's words from earlier back at him. Carson returned his grin.

"Aye. That was a pretty bad day all right," Carson replied.

Rodney rested his head on Carson's shoulder and closed his eyes. "It got better though,"

Rodney murmured, and Carson smiled, and kissed his cheek.

"Aye, it did, Rodney. It did."

The End

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