

Because by Xanthe



<http://www.xanthe.org/because/>
Chapter 1 by Xanthe

Mulder felt a bead of sweat gather on his forehead. It dripped slowly down the side of his face, splashed onto his shoulder, and then plopped noiselessly onto the floor where it left a tiny wet mark on the wooden surface directly in front of him. A new bead of sweat swiftly replaced it and began inching its way down his body. His flesh itched mercilessly in its wake, but he didn't dare move to ease it.

He was kneeling in the Playroom, directly under one of the dimmed lights which was gently heating a tiny patch of his shoulder and the side of his head. It wasn't painful, but it added to what was becoming a very uncomfortable experience.

He had been kneeling in what his Master called the "reflective" position for at least twenty minutes - the last ten or so of which had passed under the watchful scrutiny of his Master...or at least Mulder assumed he was being watched. The reflective position was a relatively new one that Skinner had taught him only a couple of months previously. A cross between the submissive and confessional positions, it involved him kneeling, half hunched, with his hands, palms down, flat on the floor beside his knees. His head was bowed, his eyes fixed firmly on the patch of floor directly in front of him, and all he could see of his Master was when the big man's large, shiny black shoes came into his line of vision.

Skinner's shoes sparkled – something that Mulder noted with a degree of satisfaction as it was he who kept them looking so perfectly polished. Shining his Master's shoes was one of the chores he enjoyed most about his slavery, much to his surprise. He had such a quicksilver mind that the idea of polishing shoes had once bored him, and he had always neglected his own personal grooming to the extent that he threw his shoes away once they started looking battered rather than restore them to pristine condition. At first it had rankled with him that he should waste so much time doing something so tedious as shining his Master's shoes, but he had soon found a curious calm in the act. There was something very peaceful about switching off and devoting himself to this small aspect of his Master's comfort. In time, he had come to enjoy the serenity of buffing the shoes into a shine so sparkling that you could see your own face in it. He loved the whole ritual – he would sniff his Master's shoe leather before beginning, loving the scent of it, the leather warmed and worn into a familiar shape by his Master's flesh. He relished the moment when he would insert his hand into the shoes and wriggle his fingers before applying the smallest dab of black polish with his free hand and then polishing dreamily, a process he repeated over and over again.

His own shoes, meanwhile, were given a cursory brush and polish when he had time and only because his Master was very strict on the topic of his slave's grooming. Mulder didn't care much about his own shoes, but his Master's were a different matter. Mulder wondered what his Master would say if he knew that his slave took such relish in such a mundane act – that thought would have made him laugh if the circumstances had been different, but as it was he was too aware of the gravity of his situation to muster so much as a smile.

Mulder had no idea why he was here, kneeling naked in the middle of the room like this. It had been a perfectly normal evening, not Slave's Day, but just a regular Wednesday. They'd both come home from work at the same time, which was rare enough these days when their working lives were so hectic, and while Mulder had been looking forward to watching the Yankee game, preferably from within the circle of his Master's strong arms as they both lounged on the couch, Skinner had informed him that he had some work to catch up on.

Mulder had been disappointed but it was fair enough – he was called away in the field often enough during what would normally be their leisure hours after all, so he could hardly begrudge his Master the demands of **his** work. They'd eaten, talking easily, with Mulder occasionally surrendering himself to a loving kiss from his Master's lips, and then Mulder had settled down with a can of beer, a bowl of popcorn, and a warm cat to watch TV while Skinner had retired to his den to do his work.

An hour or so later, Skinner had emerged. Mulder glanced up from the engrossing game on TV with a smile, and had been about to offer to make Skinner a cup of coffee when his Master had smiled pleasantly, and then, without warning, handed his slave a key, and said in a low, dangerous tone: "Go to the Playroom, undress, kneel in front of the throne in the reflective position, and wait for me. I don't want you to move a muscle while you wait. I just want you to think about the very long, very hard spanking I'm going to give you."

Mulder had blinked, nervously, uncertain what he'd done to deserve such a spanking. True, he was still dressed, but his Master had recently given him permission to remain dressed on weekday evenings unless ordered otherwise. Mulder didn't dare question his Master as to how he'd angered him – the look in Skinner's eyes was dark and demanded immediate obedience. Mulder had squeaked out a scared "yes, Master," dislodged a drowsy, protesting Wanda, placed her on the floor, got to his feet, and run for the stairs, leaving the game reluctantly behind just as it was getting exciting. His Master had a habit of doing this to him, Mulder thought forlornly. It was as if Skinner was pathologically opposed to his slave enjoying baseball games unhindered, and particularly when the Yankees, his favourite team, were playing.

Mulder made a face at the Playroom door as he undressed, but all the same he didn't dare disobey his Master. He took off his work suit, which he hadn't bothered to change out of when he first got home, save for removing his tie, folded his clothes neatly, and then approached the throne and got into position. The reflective position, Skinner had told his slave, was for just that purpose – reflection. It wasn't the hardest position to maintain, and Skinner had told his slave that he expected him to learn how to remain in that position, unmoving and utterly still, for extremely long periods of time. Staying still was Mulder's least favourite occupation as his Master well knew, which was, Mulder supposed, why he often ordered him into this position.

Mulder had been brooding on the general unfairness of missing the exciting climax of the game and being given a hard spanking for absolutely no good reason as far as he could see, when his Master had entered the room. Skinner's first act had been to dim the lights to a warm, orange glow. Mulder hadn't dared look up. Instead he concentrated on not moving a muscle as ordered. If, for some bizarre reason, it pleased his Master for his slave to show his devotion by remaining kneeling in one position for a long time, then it wasn't Mulder's place to question that, however much he was rebelling inside.

His muscles were already starting to burn from holding position, and he hoped he wouldn't let himself down. He didn't understand the mood his Master was in so he wasn't entirely sure what would happen if he couldn't keep in position – and he didn't want to risk finding out.

Skinner's shiny black shoes came into sight again and then stopped. Mulder heard his Master sit in the throne. He could see the tips of his Master's polished toecaps now. Mulder exhaled a long breath that he hadn't realised he had been holding – it had made him nervous hearing Skinner behind him, moving around the room, opening the cupboard doors and no doubt getting out implements to use on his slave's tender flesh. Mulder racked his brain again for how he could have offended his Master. It was possible that Skinner had been annoyed that his slave had been more interested in watching TV than in sitting beside his Master while he worked in the den. Was that it? That wasn't very like his Master – Skinner didn't insist on constant attendance at all times and Mulder would have happily knelt beside his Master in the den all evening if Skinner had indicated that he wanted that.

Perhaps it was something he'd done at work? Maybe something in that paperwork Skinner had brought home? Mulder thought about it for a moment, trying to remember if he'd submitted a particularly outrageous request for a 302 recently, or maybe a sloppy report. He thought back to his most recent case, the week before, trying to recall whether he had ditched Scully, or written off any Bureau property but he didn't think that was the case. Neither had he risked his own life unnecessarily recently, something that was guaranteed to earn him swift retribution from his Master's hand, less, Mulder thought, because Skinner enjoyed punishing him so harshly, or even because the big man thought it would do any good, and more to express his Master's relief that his slave was still alive and to re-affirm the bond between them – and by so doing to remind his slave that someone would care very much indeed if one of these days he managed to kill himself without his Master's permission.

The silence stretched on. Mulder tried to relax his tense muscles without moving – something that wasn't easy. How long had it been now? Thirty minutes? More? How long did his Master intend to make him wait? And how hard did he intend to punish him? However long the wait was, Mulder steeled himself to endure it, just as he would endure the punishment. He enjoyed erotic spankings but he had been promised more than that. This wasn't just a little nightcap, a way to unwind, something for them both to enjoy before bedtime – this was something else, something much more profound.

Mulder let the tension in his shoulders go, gradually, releasing the muscles slowly, a little bit at a time, without actually moving. He breathed in deeply, and then started to do the same with his neck, which he had been holding so tightly that it was starting to hurt. He was surprised to find that his method worked. He was able to relax his muscles to just the right degree so that they were flexed enough to keep him upright and in position, but they weren't so tense as to cause him pain. Mulder continued breathing deeply, focusing on all the muscles in his body, one by one. He concentrated on gazing at the inch or so of his Master's shoes that he could see from his kneeling position, using them as a focus while he relaxed his tense muscles. The shoes never moved, and Mulder shivered. His Master's silent presence was even more un-nerving than his moving around the Playroom had been. Mulder was suddenly acutely aware that he was naked, his bare flesh offered up like a sacrifice to this man to whom he had surrendered his entire being. No, not a sacrifice – a gift. Mulder swallowed hard. His naked body was the gift with which he honoured his Master and it was a small enough gift at that. A Master such as the man who sat before him, loving, centred, strong and good deserved nothing less than his slave's total love and obedience, and if all he had to show that with was this trembling mass of naked flesh then so be it.

He was still nervous; nervous of the silence, of his Master's scrutiny, of somehow failing Skinner's test, if test it was. He was anxious about the coming spanking, scared of his own vulnerability as he knelt, naked, in this

room, offering himself up to punishment and pain. It should be so easy to get up, and walk away from this. Any normal person would do just that. They wouldn't kneel here and subject themselves to this. It wasn't what he wanted right now. He was tired after work and he wanted to finish watching the game and then go to bed. He didn't want this. He wasn't in the mood – and he was sure his Master couldn't be either. They'd both been so busy these past few weeks. Life had been stressful what with one thing and another and they hadn't had much time to play - or even the inclination if Mulder was honest.

If the silence stretched on any longer then maybe he would do something. Maybe he would get up and tell his Master he wasn't in the mood for this, that he didn't want to be spanked, and had done nothing to deserve punishment. It had been a long day and they were both tired. Maybe in the morning...or it could wait until Saturday.

Their jobs were so demanding at the moment that it was crazy to do anything on a work night. Skinner had been working day and night on issues of national security and even the X Files department had been required to drop investigations into the paranormal and return to mainstream FBI work while the current security crisis was underway.

Only the previous week had their working lives begun to return to anything approaching normal and Mulder had taken advantage of that to disappear to Idaho for 3 days with Scully in tow investigating a case that hadn't quite worked out. He and his Master had barely been in the apartment at the same time of late, and when they were together they had gotten into a comfortable routine that had begun with Mulder wringing the concession from his Master that he not always be naked in the apartment. It hadn't been practical as most weeknights they were so tired they barely had time to eat before rolling into bed. There wasn't any time for Master/slave routines – they confined them to half an hour in the morning when Skinner got his wake up call and Mulder got his morning spanking, which was often a cursory affair these days, no more than a couple of slaps on his upturned ass, or a swat or two in the shower.

That was all they had had the time and inclination for these past few weeks – it wasn't easy combining their lifestyle with such demanding everyday jobs after all, and sometimes Skinner had an early meeting or Mulder was out of town, and then they didn't get a chance to even perform those rituals. That was just the way a Master/slave relationship worked out in Real Life, Mulder thought with an inner shrug – that was just mundane reality. Mulder was aware of the tiny, wistful sigh that dropped from his lips as he thought that. He stiffened, wondering if his Master had misinterpreted his sigh as a protest over being kept kneeling for so long in this position but there was no movement from his Master, who was as still and silent as his slave.

Maybe Skinner had fallen asleep, Mulder thought. How was he to know when he could only see two shining leather toecaps? Supposing he knelt here all night, while his Master snoozed on his comfortable throne? Mulder wondered whether he dared risk raising his head to take a peek at his Master. He thought about that seriously for a moment, and then rejected the idea. His Master had ordered him to kneel in position and await discipline and that was what he would do. No matter if he didn't think he deserved discipline, no matter if he wasn't in the mood for a hard spanking....none of that mattered. What mattered was that his Master had commanded it, that his Master took some pleasure in spanking his slave, that he had chosen to give his slave a long, hard spanking. Nothing else was important.

Mulder closed his eyes and accepted the inevitable. He had no choice. His Master had spoken and it was his duty to obey. Now he was surprised to find how little tension there was in his back and shoulders. The game on TV would be long since over after all this time and he didn't regret missing it, even if his favourite team had been playing. A small nugget of resentment that he didn't even know he'd been nurturing vanished, leaving him feeling lighter. The baseball game wasn't important. Nothing was important except his Master's will – he felt utterly liberated by that knowledge and his breathing slowed. His body was so light now that he thought he might be able to float.

He stayed in that hazy state for several more minutes, and then, suddenly, his Master spoke, taking Mulder completely by surprise.

"Come here, slave. Keep your gaze fixed on me the entire time. Don't look around the room. Don't look anywhere else but at me."

"Yes, Master." His own voice sounded strange to him after his long period of silent reflection, during which his internal voice had been so active. Mulder unfurled his body cautiously, taking the time to see that the blood was flowing into his muscles again before attempting to stand. He didn't want to annoy his Master by falling flat on his face. He stretched out his limbs like a cat, and then went to stand in front of his Master. Skinner was still dressed in his work clothes – sans tie and jacket. His crisp white shirt was open at the collar to reveal his strong neck – a sight that never failed to turn Mulder on. He liked seeing his Master without his suit jacket as well – Skinner's perfectly laundered shirt did nothing to obscure the magnificence of his broad expanse of chest - in fact it just revealed the contours of that wide, muscled torso even more.

"You've done well to keep in position for so long. I'm proud of you," Skinner said as Mulder came to halt in front of him and Mulder basked for a moment in the praise, feeling himself grow an inch taller as a result of it - his Master's praise wasn't given lightly, and he was delighted to have pleased the other man. "Now watch me," Skinner ordered.

Mulder nodded numbly, his throat having gone unaccountably dry. Skinner slowly reached out his right hand and undid the cufflink on his shirtsleeve. These were new cufflinks that Mulder hadn't seen before so he was surprised when his Master leaned forward and, with a little click, attached the cufflink to one of his slave's nipple rings, creating a tiny weight that tugged on his nipple, causing a wave of arousal to run through him. Mulder looked down in surprise, intent on examining the link to see how it had fastened so easily. Maybe this was some new item of his Master's that he was unfamiliar with - he certainly didn't remember any cufflinks that looked as if they might attach to rings in this way.

"I said watch me," Skinner rapped out and Mulder looked up quickly, obeying his Master implicitly. Skinner undid the other cufflink and attached that to his slave's other nipple ring. Mulder didn't make the mistake of looking down this time. He kept his eyes fixed on his Master's face as Skinner played with his nipples for a while, tugging at them with his fingers, flicking the new cufflink adornment, squeezing them into hard points of arousal with merciless fingers, sometimes pinching so hard that Mulder had to bite down hard on his lip to remind himself to remain in position. Mulder swallowed hard, keeping his hands by his side and not interrupting his Master in his task although he longed to squirm and cry out as the sensations in his nipples began to build.

Finally, Skinner seemed satisfied. He moved his hands from Mulder's nipples to his chin and briefly touched his slave there, causing Mulder to make eye contact. His Master's eyes were dark and unfathomable and Mulder found no answer to his predicament there. He kept his gaze fixed on his Master as Skinner slowly began to fold up the cool white cotton of his right shirtsleeve with blunt, businesslike fingers. The act held an inherent threat that wasn't lost on Mulder and he swallowed hard as inch after inch of brawny forearm was revealed. Skinner stopped when he reached the elbow, did an efficient double crease to keep the sleeve in place, and then turned his attention to his other shirtsleeve. Mulder swallowed again – he knew this ritual presaged his own doom.

He was so transfixed that he didn't react when Skinner reached out an arm, grabbed his wrist, and pulled him over his knee in one swift movement. This was a familiar place, one he was intimately acquainted with, and Mulder quickly got into the position that was most convenient and comfortable for his Master – his own comfort counted for little, but it was important that his Master had his slave positioned for optimum effect, so that his white buttocks were directly under the big man's right hand, his cock conveniently trapped between his Master's thighs, his long body resting on the rest of his Master's lap, his chest and neck supported by the large, soft cushioned armrests of the throne. Skinner's thighs were so wide and well padded that they weren't uncomfortable to rest on – Mulder had reason to be grateful that he didn't belong to a skinny Master.

He took a deep breath as they both settled into position. He had been told to fix his eyes only on his Master so he had no idea which implements, if any, Skinner had got out for use upon his slave. He wished he knew. If he knew then he could prepare mentally for what was to happen. Would it be the strap? Or the thin, short, biting cane that his Master kept for over the knee spankings and which cut severe welts into his skin? He hoped not

the latter. Although Skinner rarely used anything so harsh on him unless for a very good reason, such as marking, or extreme punishment. Mulder was so uncertain as to why he was upended over his Master's knee at this moment in time that he thought the little cane might be a possibility.

He was so lost in this reverie that he almost jumped out of his skin when something descended on his ass. Something familiar. Something warm. Something he knew well, something that fitted on his backside as if it had been made specifically to dwell always near that region. It was his Master's hand. Mulder gave a little smile, and relaxed into his Master's thigh. Skinner wasn't spanking him, he was merely stroking him, his heavy hand cupping Mulder's buttocks, heating the skin there, kneading it gently. Mulder sighed. This felt so good; his Master's hand of ownership caressing him as he lay across his Master's thighs, accepting his Master's will.

"Do you know what this spanking is for, Fox?" Skinner asked him, breaking the silence once more with his deep voice, as seductive as the caressing hand on Mulder's bottom.

"I'm not sure," Mulder ventured. The hand continued its caressing.

"Such a nice ass. So white and tempting," Skinner crooned softly. Mulder relaxed even more. Maybe this **would** just be an erotic spanking after all. "Try, slave," Skinner prompted. "The reason for this spanking."

"Well, I thought that maybe you were pissed with me for remaining clothed in your presence," Mulder offered hesitantly. The hand never ceased its exploration of his flesh.

"Didn't I give you permission to be clothed?" Skinner asked.

"Well, yes," Mulder admitted. "I just thought..."

"Have I ever been the kind of Master who would punish my slave for something he had been given permission to do?" Skinner demanded. "Have I ever played those kinds of games with you?"

"No," Mulder said softly. "No, Master. You haven't."

"I don't want a timid slave, Fox, and that is what I'd end up with if I was that capricious and unfair a Master. I want you to think about it while I begin tanning this beautiful white hide of yours. I'll ask you again in a minute."

"Yes, Master," Mulder whispered, bracing himself. The first spank was little more than a tap, and the second only a fraction heavier, but soon the strength and intensity of the blows began to mount. Mulder fought down a wave of panic. He had no idea why he was being spanked. Would he have to endure this until he had figured it out? His Master's hand was familiar in its heaviness on his bare backside as it slapped down each sharp, stinging spank. This hand knew every single inch of his body, knew how to caress it to the heights of ecstasy, how to bring it to the edge of endurance, how to topple it over the precipice of that curious alchemy of pleasure and pain that brought Mulder such intense sexual satisfaction.

Mulder felt his cock begin to stir where it was trapped between his Master's thighs. Skinner's hand quickened its pace on his slave's backside and now all hope of coherent thought was lost. Mulder had no idea what he could have done to deserve this spanking, and he was too caught up in the sensations of it to care.

Having warmed his slave's bottom lightly all over, Skinner changed his strategy. Gripping Mulder around the waist and drawing him close, Skinner concentrated all his energy on one particular area of his slave's right buttock. Mulder tried to lean into his Master's thigh to lessen the impact but after a while even that failed to work and he found himself squirming, struggling to get away from that hateful hand as it rained down those stinging spanks over and over again in the same place. Skinner was immovable though, as always. He paused for a second to pin his slave back in position and then began again on the same spot until Mulder was pleading for respite, longing for it to stop again, even if only for a heartbeat, anything to stop the pain that was reverberating through that one particular area.

Skinner was merciless. He didn't alter his positioning or his rhythm and soon Mulder was incoherent, his legs scissoring all over the place. His Master had never done this before – had never concentrated for so long on one area of his buttocks like this for such a long period of time, and he couldn't bear it. He truly couldn't. He told his Master so, over and over again, but still there was no respite. Mulder gave up begging and just moaned instead, his ears filled with the sound of hand spanking flesh, mingled with his own cries and the searing intensity of the pain in his bottom. Then it stopped. Suddenly the gentle caressing hand was back, soothing and taking care of him, lightly fluttering over the sensitised skin on his buttocks and making his cock hard once more.

"Have you given it some more thought?" Skinner asked. Mulder blinked. Thought? His Master had expected him to have some kind of coherent thought during that?

"Uh...I wondered if I'd done something on that case last week," Mulder said uncertainly. "Maybe I screwed up in some way. You were reading my report in the den weren't you?"

"Yes, I was. Do you think you screwed up on the case?" Skinner asked thoughtfully, still caressing his slave's skin.

Mulder bit on his lip. He wasn't sure. "Well, I didn't solve it..." he said at last.

"And do I spank you for not solving cases?" Skinner asked him, a gentle tone in his voice.

"No." Mulder shrugged.

"The case was an X File. You submitted your theories about how the perp managed to commit the murders but as the perp is now dead, we have no way of knowing which of your theories is true."

"I know. But still..." Mulder shrugged again. "It was such an unsatisfactory ending."

"Many of our cases are. That's life." Mulder felt his Master's shrug through the warm, solid flesh under him. "Why do you think I'm spanking you for the case?" Skinner asked. "Was there something you didn't put in the report? Or something I should know about as your Master, if not your boss?"

"I don't think so." Mulder chewed on his lip. "I really don't. I did everything you said while we were away in the field, but it was only 3 days anyway. I called you at the times you requested, I even wore that damn butt plug every night." He grinned to himself as he remembered inserting that monster in his motel room. "I think I used an entire tube of lube getting that damn thing in place," he added cheekily. He wondered whether his Master was smiling at that. He couldn't see. All he could see was the floor and the side of his Master's thigh.

"I'm not spanking you for the case, Fox," Skinner said softly, still stroking him gently. "You conducted yourself very well, both as an Agent and as my slave on that case. Think again while I even up the colour in these ass cheeks."

"Oh shit." Mulder grabbed on for dear life as Skinner began spanking him again. This time, his Master concentrated his swats on his slave's left buttock. At first Mulder was relieved, grateful for the respite his sore right ass cheek was getting, but soon his relief turned to discomfort, and then to pain, and before long he was screaming and squirming all over again. He hated this!

His Master was as thorough and focused about tanning his slave's left ass cheek as he was about his work and Mulder gave in to the horrible pain and lay quivering helplessly as Skinner turned his left buttock into fire. It hurt beyond belief. He would have willingly endured the cane rather than this torment. How could a man's hand hurt so much? Surely only an implement could cause this kind of pain? It was incredible.

He was dimly aware of the endorphins kicking in, taking him to another level, and he surfed the waves of pain trying to reach that plateau of serenity that was such a blissful place to be. He hadn't been there for awhile -

Real Life had gotten in the way of their Master/slave relationship somewhere along the way and while the past few weeks had been comfortable, they'd lacked the intensity of this kind of interaction, and it was an intensity that Mulder was addicted to. He wondered how long it would have been before he'd gotten antsy, before the cosy familiarity had made him do something rash in his quest for some kind of catharsis, or excitement. Suddenly he was grateful that his Master was doing this to him - he hadn't even realised he had needed it. Maybe Skinner had seen something in his report, some sign of boredom or restlessness, and had decided to head it off at the pass. Mulder was thankful he had a Master who understood him so well, and he stopped fighting the spanking and gave into it instead. Just as he thought he was getting close, just as he surrendered himself to his Master's will, and accepted the torment being applied to his backside, it stopped.

"Master?" He looked over his shoulder to find Skinner caressing him gently again. Skinner smiled down at his slave and tangled his hand in Mulder's sweaty hair, smoothing it away from his face with a loving caress.

"Figured it out yet, little one?" Skinner asked in a gentle tone.

"No, Master," Mulder admitted, shame faced. "I can't figure it out, Master. I must have done something to really piss you off. I'm sorry, for whatever it is."

"Hush." Skinner placed a finger over his slave's lips. "I don't want you to apologise. How do you feel, boy?"

"Warm," Mulder said with a hazy smile. "And...free." He gazed at his Master, still confused. "Hurts though. Hurts bad."

"I know – and you look so beautiful, lying here like this, taking it." Skinner smiled back at him and there was a look of such love in his eyes that Mulder was taken aback.

"Master?" he said, uncertainly.

"Hold still, it's time to finish this." Skinner wrapped his arm around Mulder's waist and pulled him close once more. Mulder looked back at the floor, lost in the moment. He had no idea what his Master was going to do next and he no longer wanted to anticipate what that might be, or try to prepare for it mentally. Skinner could do as he liked. He was the Master, Mulder was the slave - and Mulder would willingly endure whatever his Master wanted to mete out and for whatever reason.

His breathing slowed and suddenly everything about the scene came into sharp focus for him. The dimmed lights in the Playroom glowed a seductive orange, bathing them in soft warmth. It was dark outside – the blinds were rarely drawn and Mulder could see halfway across the city out of the huge wall of windows. Lights twinkled on the street far below and up here he was lying where he belonged, over his Master's knee, at peace.

If he closed his eyes he could shut out the city, and it was just he and his Master. He could feel the scratch of his Master's woollen pants on his naked skin. His nipples were aching as the cufflinks chafed against the fabric, arousing the nubs of flesh into hard points. If he really concentrated he could hear his Master's heartbeat through his white shirt. Beneath that cool cotton, his Master's flesh was warm, his body a source of endless erotic delight to Mulder. Skinner's starched exterior hid a man of passion and sensuality.

Mulder imagined the feel of his Master's skin under the shirt, the soft scratchiness of the curls on his chest, and the silky hardness of acres of golden skin stretched taut over muscle. Skinner smelled of sweat and the remains of the cologne he had applied this morning after his shower. He smelled warm, earthy...arousing. Mulder took a deep breath and inhaled the scent, allowing it to dizzy his already hazy senses.

A sharp thwap on his bottom took him by surprise and he let out a little murmur of protest. This was new! Mulder knew all the implements in the Playroom and could identify them all purely by the sensations they produced on his bare skin. He hadn't felt this one before. It had to be new. It induced a dull, throbbing feeling deep in his buttocks, taking away the sting of what had gone before and replacing it with a sensation that seemed to work all the way into his body, right into the centre of his being.

He gave a startled gasp as he realised how intense the new implement was. A second blow took his breath away. He identified it as some kind of paddle – a heavy, booming kind, not one of the stinging sharper ones. This one was meant to drive home a message that would not easily be forgotten. Mulder wondered when his Master had bought the implement – had he smuggled it home today in his briefcase intending all along to use it on his slave tonight, even while they sat and ate dinner together, Mulder all unknowing, or had he purchased it some time ago and kept it hidden in his den until now?

Mulder felt aroused by the fact that his Master had bought a new implement to try out on his slave's helpless buttocks. He imagined his Master going into a shop and considering the items for purchase...imagined him swinging them through the air and trying them out on his own palm and thigh until he found just what he was looking for, just the right thing to punish his slave with, and reduce him to helpless tears. Was it a rubber paddle, Mulder wondered? Or maybe just a very heavy leather one? Skinner boomed another swat down and Mulder surrendered to this fascinating new implement, no longer trying to get its measure, or rationalise the pain it created in his hindquarters. It just was.

After several long minutes, Mulder was aware of an amazing metamorphosis taking place. The deep, dull pain from the paddle was spreading out over his entire backside, filling him with a delicious, arousing warmth. It hurt – boy it hurt – and yet it felt so good. His Master was paddling him in earnest now, one arm wrapped tightly around Mulder's waist, keeping his slave in position so that every deliberately aimed swat went where it was intended. The pace never slackened and Mulder was flying high as a kite. He wanted it to end and yet never stop. He needed it to end – it hurt so much – and yet he wanted to stay here over his Master's knee being paddled for all eternity. He didn't care if he never saw the Yankees play again, if he never saw another X File again. This was all he wanted, forever and always.

He could feel his body rising and falling in time with the paddle, his cock hard between his Master's thighs. Now he was no longer sure where he ended and his Master began. They had become as one, a lithe, sensuous twisting creature, bodies merged together, bound inextricably together in a beautiful, unending crescendo of spanking. Mulder thought he could surf that wave forever, right into oblivion. He had tasted his own little piece of heaven and never wanted to relinquish it again.

As if from a great distance he became aware that the swats had slowed, and then they stopped. He was still connected to his Master though, their hearts still beating as one in the fire of the dance they had just created. Skinner was stroking his bottom, stoking the fire back up to full blaze again and Mulder cried out, close to the edge of climax.

"Have you figured it out yet?" Skinner asked him softly, his voice barely penetrating the haze that was Mulder's mind.

"Figured what...?" Mulder blinked. Skinner gave a low, throaty chuckle and smoothed his slave's sweaty hair out of his eyes once more.

"What was this spanking for?" Skinner asked. "It was a hard one, don't make any mistake about that. You won't be sitting down in the office tomorrow."

"No...I..." Mulder gazed at his Master blankly. "I'm sorry, what was the question again?"

Skinner laughed out loud, a deep baritone sound that Mulder heard through his Master's shirt, through the vibrations of that rich, bass sound deep inside his Master's chest, as much as through his ears.

"I asked you why you were spanked tonight. Do you know why I spanked you tonight, Fox?"

"No, Master," Mulder answered truthfully, staring up at his Master over his shoulder.

Skinner smiled. "I spanked you tonight because you're mine and because I can," he said softly. "No other reason. I was sitting at my desk, reading your report, and imagining you out in the field, away from your

Master, and then I thought how you were here now, and how I'd missed you when you were away, how even now that you were back I hadn't really enjoyed you enough because our lives have been so difficult lately. I thought of my slave, sitting watching television in the next room while I sat and worked and thought what a waste that was. Then I remembered how good it felt to have this beautiful ass waiting for my hand. I thought about how much I love that moment just before I start spanking you, when your ass is still white, and I can contemplate the canvas upon which I'm going to work. Then I thought about the way you wriggle and squirm, how you want so desperately to escape and how good it feels to capture you here, and feel your struggles. Then there's that sweet moment, that oh so sweet moment, when you finally give in. When you accept my will and surrender yourself to me, when you give it all up to me and I take it and give it back to you in return, over and over again, until it builds into something tangible, something I can feel in the bond between us, in the way our bodies move when I'm spanking you, in the way our combined scents smell...something about all that drives me wild, and makes my cock get so hard. Can you feel how hard it is now, slave?"

Skinner gently lifted his slave up, and Mulder almost lost consciousness as the blood drained away from his head after so long draped over his Master's knee. Skinner supported him, holding him facing him against his shoulder, Mulder's legs wrapped around his body, his sore ass resting on Skinner's lap.

"Feel it, slaveboy." Skinner took hold of Mulder's hand and pressed it against his crotch. Mulder grinned – his Master was rock hard inside his pants. He opened Skinner's fly and the other man's cock rose greedily to meet his questing fingers. "A moment ago, before I used the paddle, you were lying there, naked, abandoned, and so accepting of my will that I was overcome. I love spanking you, Fox. Tonight, I spanked you because you're mine - my slave, subject to my will, and you'll take whatever I choose to give you. That turns me on. Boy that turns me on!"

Skinner grinned, and clasped Mulder's hot buttocks in both his hands. Mulder gave a hoarse cry as the sore, sensitised skin responded to the rough embrace. His Master's words were turning him on like nothing else, and his Master's actions just sent him into an even higher state of arousal.

"These hot mounds of flesh are mine," Skinner whispered into his slave's ear. "Mine to hurt, or kiss, or stroke whenever I like. Do you understand that, boy?"

"Yes, Master," Mulder whispered, thinking how that truth had been lost to him lately, and how he had missed it, without even being aware of it. Skinner's mastery of him was a blanket in which he wanted to be wrapped forever. It kept him safe, it kept him happy, and it kept him sexually vibrant and alive. He was his Master's slave and there could be no lifestyle more beautiful, no goal more alluring than that. It was where he was himself in his most truest form.

Mulder cried out as a finger slipped deep inside him.

"This in here – that's mine too," Skinner hissed, his teeth gleaming white inside his tanned face, lit by the dimly glowing lights of the Playroom. "All of you is mine to play with and mine to love. Do you surrender to your Master, boy?" Skinner asked.

"Yes, Master. All of me is yours. I belong to you." Mulder arched his back as Skinner probed inside his body with his finger. He was lost in a haze of sensation and knowledge. He had done nothing – he had been spanked for no reason save that his Master enjoyed spanking him and he had been made to submit to such a harsh spanking for no reason save his Master's pleasure.

Skinner hadn't been taking him down for his own good, he hadn't even been giving his slave pleasure, although that was a very pleasing side effect of the whole event; no, his Master had simply enjoyed spanking his slave. That made Mulder feel warm inside and it aroused him unbearably. His own cock was rock hard as well now.

"I'm going to use you, Fox," Skinner said, freeing his cock from the confines of his underwear. "I'm going to use my slave hard." He grabbed Mulder's buttocks in both hands, and guided his slave's ass onto his hard, erect

cock. "I love you like this. Warm, sweaty from the spanking, blissed out, eager to please, hurting, loving..." Skinner grinned, and squeezed unmercifully on Mulder's sore flesh, causing his slave to cry out and bury his head in his Master's shoulder. "Go down on me...slide down...slowly...I'm so hard for you...so big...hmmm?"

Skinner held Mulder's buttocks apart while he positioned Mulder's ass over his cock and soon Mulder felt the familiar sensation of his Master's massive blunt cock snubbing into his anus. There was a burning sensation but Mulder was used to taking his Master in this way and once past the entrance Skinner slid in easily. "Hold still," he warned, grabbing Mulder's hips, and then he thrust up deep inside his slave's body. Mulder gasped and cried out, nearly losing consciousness as Skinner's cock found his prostate and a wave of the most intense pleasure spread through his body. Skinner was so big and Mulder's ass was such a mass of sensation – it hurt and yet it felt so damn good. Mulder smiled dreamily and his Master leaned forward and claimed a long, deep kiss from his lips, thrusting his tongue deep into Mulder's mouth. He withdrew and smiled, a feral, sexual grin, before moving his hips again with another savage movement, lancing Mulder deep inside his body, causing the slave to cry out once more.

"I'm going to do that again..." Skinner punctuated the words with the act itself. "And again..." He thrust up savagely once more and Mulder moaned incoherently. He swayed close, pressed his mouth against his Master's and was rewarded by another kiss. "And again," Skinner hissed into his slave's open mouth, and Mulder cried out as his Master's cock brutally claimed him, pulsing and thrusting over and over into his hot, willing body. He dimly remembered that his body was all he had to honour his Master with – Skinner could thrust into him all night if he wanted. He was Skinner's devoted slave, he existed to serve, his body didn't belong to him but to his Master and Skinner could use him how he wished. His own cock was weeping now, needing the release he knew he would not be allowed until his Master had his own climax.

Skinner got to his feet, his need becoming urgent, and Mulder balanced his own feet on the throne on either side of his Master's body. Skinner's arms took the rest of his weight as he held Mulder's buttocks with his hands, his skin feeling unbearably rough against Mulder's tortured, overheated flesh. Mulder wrapped his own hands around his Master's shoulders and smothered his Master's head in dozens of adoring kisses. Skinner in return teased Mulder's nipples with his teeth, pulling on the nipple rings and their cufflink attachments, hurting them with his teeth and then soothing the hurt with his warm tongue, over and over again until Mulder was sure he couldn't last much longer.

"Yours, yours, yours, Master..." he whispered, as Skinner pounded into him with endless gyrations of his sturdy hips, each one pushing that teasing, tormenting cock deep into Mulder's body, then sliding it out, before powerfully sinking back home again, up to the root each time. Finally Mulder felt his Master spasm beneath him, and then gasp out loud, and a few seconds later he felt warm come run down his legs. Skinner sank back onto the throne, and pulled Mulder down with him. Mulder howled out loud as his sore bottom bumped onto his Master's lap but then Skinner was kissing him, deeply, and his hand was on Mulder's straining cock pumping it to release, and within a few seconds Mulder felt himself coming all over his Master's hand while his Master's tongue explored deep inside his mouth.

They sat there for a long time, face to face, Mulder on Skinner's lap, his come sticky on his Master's shirt, Skinner's cock soft inside his slave's body, their foreheads resting against each other, their lips just touching. Then Skinner drew back. He stroked his slave's dark hair gently, with infinite care, and gazed deep into his eyes.

"I love you, slave of mine," he murmured.

"Love you too, Master," Mulder replied, utterly worn out and sated by the night's events. "I love that you want to spank me just because you enjoy it...I don't know why that didn't occur to me before."

"Oh, I sure as hell enjoy it. This ass was made to be spanked." Skinner smiled, squeezing Mulder's buttocks and making his slaveboy squirm against his broad chest. "Tell me, slave – why did I spank you tonight?"

Mulder looked into his Master's warm, loving brown eyes. Even now that it was over, they were still one, still joined by a bond too strong to ever be broken. Somehow they had been so busy with their jobs and day to day living recently that they'd forgotten an essential truth – a truth his Master had just reminded them of in the most pertinent way possible. Being his Master's slave wasn't an optional extra in Mulder's life, it was integral to his life - and his happiness.

“Because you can, Master,” he replied softly. “Because I belong to you and you can do what you like to me, when you like, how you like, for as long as you like.” And then he smiled, and snuggled back against his Master's broad chest, and smiled even more when Skinner's large, comforting arms wrapped themselves around his shoulders and held him tight. “And because I'm yours, Master,” he whispered happily.

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