

## Disappointing Yoda by Xanthe



Story archived: <http://www.xanthe.org/disappointing-yoda/>

### Story Notes:

I have no idea where this one came from! It's a little bit dark, and a little bit different. Many thanks to the fabulous Bluespirit for the beta, as always.

Rodney McKay had only loved three living things in his entire life. When Jeannie McKay had arrived home from the hospital he had found her boring, smelly and noisy. She, like small creatures everywhere, adored him from the minute she first set her blurry blue eyes on him, much to his complete disgust.

He spent the first five years' ignoring her completely, but Rodney found it hard to resist anything that loved him that much, and, as she grew older, and as their parents' marriage fell apart, they grew close.

She was the first living thing he loved.

Their parents worked long hours, so, when she came home from school one day with chewing gum stuck liberally all over her hair, courtesy of a bully named Karl Rouse, it was Rodney who had to try and untangle the sticky threads.

And it was Rodney, who, when a comb proved no match for the tangled mess, had to pick

up the scissors and cut large swathes of her long blonde locks from her head, while she sat there, sobbing the entire time as if her heart was about to break. As he slowly turned her long, loose curls, her pride and joy, into a short, clumsy bob, he found there was a small, dark, secret place in his heart that he'd never realised existed before.

Rodney's skills did not lie in his fists, or he'd have gone over to where Karl Rouse lived and beaten his brains out there and then. Instead, as he picked up the pinkly congealed hair from the floor, he had another idea.

He went out and bought several packs of gum that evening, and studied the ingredients carefully. He experimented for a few hours in the home-made lab he'd set up in a corner of the basement. Then he tested his experiment, over and over again, completely absorbed in it. Finally, he was satisfied.

When Karl Rouse opened his locker the next day, a small incendiary device went off, showering him with a warm, pink, sticky gum that hardened almost immediately as it cooled, and stuck fast.

It worked even better than Rodney had anticipated – he was especially pleased by the trajectory of the gum, which ended up mostly splattered all over Karl's head and tangled in his lank, dark hair. Rodney had hoped for that, and had tried testing for it, but there had been too many variables so he'd had to leave to chance. It was, therefore, especially pleasing to see how well it had worked.

He was the first on the scene to offer the kid a hand.

"Shit! Are you okay? What happened? What the hell is this stuff? Oh shit...it's hardening. I think you're gonna need to go to the hospital."

Karl spun around frantically, stuck in a sticky web of goo, completely covered in cooling pink gum. Rodney leaned in close. "I'm Meredith McKay, by the way," he whispered. "Jeannie's brother? Man, that gum is going to be a bitch to get out of your hair."

As Karl was carted off to the hospital with minor burns, Rodney made sure to wave at him, and wish him well. Karl gazed back at him from terrified eyes.

Karl returned to school a couple of days later with a completely shaved head and little pink splash burns all over his face.

Nobody ever touched Jeannie McKay again after that.

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The second living creature Rodney loved was his cat.

Aloysius Einstein McKay was a tiny scrap of a kitten, found in a nest next to three dead siblings, lying in the snow outside the lab where Rodney worked in St Petersburg. The body of the kitten's feral mother was spread out messily all over a nearby road.

A couple of the lab technicians brought the barely living kitten inside, and discussed using it for bait. Rodney marched over to them, scooped the kitten away from them, soundly berated them in perfect Russian for being brainless Neanderthals, and then looked down at the small lump of cold, damp, tabby fur lying huddled in his hands...and fell in love.

He set up a nest for the kitten in the corner of the lab with some blankets inside an old test-tube box, cobbled together a bottle and teat from lab equipment he had lying around, and fed the kitten heated formula every two hours.

Rodney lived in a bunk in the corner of his lab so feeding and taking care of the kitten was easy enough, and, slowly, the little creature thrived. Rodney adapted one of his own socks into a sleeping bag for the kitten to keep him warm while he was tiny, and he carried the sock around with him wherever he went, keeping the little creature close by at all times until he grew, and was able to take care of himself.

The kitten, as was so often the case with baby creatures, whether human or animal, was enchanted by Rodney, and followed him wherever he went.

Rodney worked on his experiments with Aloysius sitting on his shoulders, peering curiously down at what Rodney was doing from two large, yellow eyes. At night, Aloysius curled up next to Rodney in his bunk, and nestled in close against Rodney's stomach, keeping them both warm in the long, cold, Russian nights. Rodney loved running his fingers over the cat's stripy fur coat, and fell asleep every night to the sound of a low, rumbling purr.

When Rodney returned to the US, he spent a small fortune bringing Aloysius back with him. They settled into Rodney's apartment and lived there happily for a year or so until Rodney's idiot, alcoholic neighbour took a pot shot at Aloysius with his air gun one day.

Rodney spent another small fortune having Aloysius put back together again. The cat's pelvis was shattered, and, once again, Rodney nursed him back to health. He made a sling for his beloved cat to enable him to exercise his back legs and, slowly, Aloysius regained his strength.

He was never quite as nimble on his feet again, but he could get around, and as what he enjoyed doing most was sitting on Rodney's lap and kneading his belly through his tee shirt with his paws, he didn't exactly need to do a whole lot of running and jumping.

When Rodney went to see his neighbour the guy just laughed, and said the cat was good target practice, and if he ever saw him out again he'd take another shot at him. Rodney yelled and screamed but the man was six foot five, and built like a brick outhouse.

"What are you gonna do about it, faggot?" the man asked, sneering down on him.

Rodney was familiar with bullies. He had never felt able to tackle them on his own behalf – but when they hurt someone he loved, well, that was a different matter.

So Rodney went back to his apartment, and pondered the matter. Mostly he tried to use his powers for good, but there were times when it was simply necessary to take a step or two over onto the dark side.

Rodney made a radio-controlled device, then went out one night and attached it to his neighbour's car. When the guy came out he got into the car, drunk as usual, and Rodney stood across the street, and used the remote to drive the car straight into the nearest tree.

Then he crossed the road, opened the car door, removed the device, and smiled at his neighbour who was lying there, groaning, pinned in his seat by the steering wheel, blood trickling down the side of his face.

"Man, you look in a bad way," Rodney said. "I'll go call an ambulance. Don't go anywhere. Must hurt like a bitch! Oh, by the way..." He turned back, conversationally. "My cat's name is Aloysius. Don't ever hurt him again."

His neighbour was charged with drunk driving and ended up in hospital for three months with a shattered pelvis. Rodney found the irony delightful – even if he'd tested that variable for months he'd never have been able to predict it – it was just pure chance, but it made him feel like the force was strong with him.

He spent all night lying on his back on his couch with a bottle of beer hanging loosely from his fingers, and a massive bowl of popcorn perched precariously on his thighs, watching a back-to-back marathon of all his Star Wars DVDs in celebration. Aloysius stretched out on his stomach and purred all the way through, even when Obi Wan Kenobi died.

"I don't \*think\* I'm going over to the dark side," Rodney said to Aloysius, gently combing his fingers through the cat's soft, stripy fur. "Although I am wondering whether Yoda would approve."

It almost killed him to leave Aloysius behind when he went to Atlantis.

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The third living being he loved had nearly died a few weeks ago.

Rodney glanced at the clock on his night stand, and saw that it was nearing the agreed time. He slipped out of bed, crossed the room without turning on the lights, and opened up his laptop. His heart did a little flip when he saw that the incoming transmission light was flickering. He picked up the laptop, and walked silently into the bathroom.

It had taken him a long time to track Kolya down. It had taken him even longer to find the

right wraith. The Wraith didn't seem to have names, and just addressing his message to, "The Wraith That Was in the Prison Cell Next to John Sheppard Being Held Prisoner by Kolya of the Genii", didn't really seem adequate somehow. Still, he had found the right wraith in the end. Rodney was nothing if not persistent.

Of course you couldn't order a wraith to do anything, but somehow, having read Sheppard's report, Rodney had a feeling that this one would enjoy what he had in mind. He was giving the creature something it wanted after all - a chance to take his revenge on a man who had kept him imprisoned in a state of degradation for so long.

Rodney sat down on the bathroom floor, opened up his laptop again, turned the audio down low, and clicked on the transmission light. He'd set up the schematics the previous evening and was confident everything would work. He was right. A little box popped up on the screen, and a wraith loomed into view.

"Are you ready?" the creature growled.

"Yes. Do you have him?" Rodney replied.

"Yes."

The wraith stood back, and Rodney saw Kolya, strapped to a chair, his dark eyes wide with fear combined with the usual Kolya bravado. Rodney gazed at him dispassionately. He had always thought it was important to witness his acts of revenge. If he was going to lend his powers to the dark side, the least he could do was see his actions through, unflinching.

"Do it," Rodney said, and then he sat there and watched as the wraith advanced upon Kolya, laid his hand on Kolya's chest, and sucked the life out of him. Kolya screamed, but Rodney just folded his hands in his lap, and watched. That small, dark, secret place in his heart glowed, unhealthily, and then it was done.

An old man blinked at him. Rodney blinked back. Was that really Kolya? He looked so small and frail now, all the menace gone.

The wraith loomed into view behind Kolya. "Look into the camera," the wraith ordered the old man. "He needs to know it's done."

"Who needs to know?" the old man growled, and Rodney smiled. Oh yes, that was him. Even drained almost to the point of death, that was definitely still Kolya. Rodney recognised the hard voice, and the arrogance in those dark, cold eyes, and found that he didn't regret what he'd done.

"Who sent you here? Was it Sheppard?" Kolya rasped at the camera. "I wouldn't blame him. I should never have allowed him to escape. How did you find me anyway?"

Rodney touched a button his laptop. "It wasn't Sheppard, no," he said quietly. Kolya went very still.

"Who is that?" he demanded. "Who told him where to find me? Who did this to me?"

"It's me. McKay," Rodney said. "I did it."

"McKay?" Kolya snorted. "I don't believe that."

"You should," Rodney said softly. "I asked the wraith to drain you but not to kill you. I wanted you to know who did this to you, and why."

"McKay? Rodney McKay did this to me?" Kolya glared at the camera. "McKay?" he said again, in a softer tone.

He sounded lost, confused. Rodney didn't blame him. He'd seen the same look in Karl's eyes, and in his neighbour's eyes after he'd taken his revenge on them too. These bullies just didn't understand it when someone they'd written off as a harmless geek turned out to have a more finely honed taste for revenge than they'd realised. Rodney liked to think he was striking a blow for geeks everywhere, but he knew that wasn't his motivation. It never had been.

"Yes. Rodney McKay did that to you. John Sheppard is very important to me. Don't ever hurt him again," Rodney said firmly. And then he ended the transmission, storing the file on his computer. Tomorrow he'd edit it, and send it out to the Genii, and to anyone else he thought might find it instructional. Maybe this galaxy would eventually learn not to hurt someone Rodney McKay loved.

Rodney took little actual pleasure in his acts of revenge. They were a means to an end. When you'd only loved three living things in your entire life, you had to take care of them as best you could, with the only weapons at your disposal.

Rodney closed his laptop, and took a deep breath, fighting off the memory of standing by and being forced to watch, helpless, as Kolya ordered the life to be drained from John Sheppard.

He wasn't very good with love – he always resisted it, but when it crept up on him, and took him by surprise, as it had with Jeannie, with Aloysius, and with John, then he always ended up falling headlong into it. Maybe he lacked the capacity for half measures but when he loved something, he did so with all his heart. And it hurt. It always surprised him how much it hurt.

He knew that he wasn't someone people feared, and he knew that he'd never best anyone in a fist fight. The only way left to a man like himself was the silent revenge of cunning and brainpower.

Rodney left the bathroom, put his laptop back on his desk, and then turned back to the bed. The figure lying there stirred, black hair dishevelled against the white pillow. Then he opened his eyes, and blinked at Rodney, blearily.

"What you doing?" he murmured. "Working again? It's the middle of the night for god's sake, Rodney."

"I know. I was just...checking something."

Rodney stood there for a moment, looking down on John Sheppard where he lay in his bed. The man was naked, golden skin warm and inviting, his body younger and more beautiful than ever.

Rodney shivered, remembering how he'd watched this man, the man he loved, being tortured to the point of death. He remembered too how he'd been powerless to do anything, the pain eating him up, and making that dark, secret place, deep inside, burn with a cold, silent rage.

"You're shivering – get into bed, doofus," John told him, holding up the blankets. Rodney slipped into the bed, and John slid his arms around him. "What were you doing?" John asked.

Rodney smiled. "Just spending a little time on the dark side," he murmured.

"What? What the hell are you on?" John asked, his lips warm as they nuzzled the side of Rodney's jaw.

Rodney smiled, and relaxed back into his lover's arms. He wouldn't tell John what he'd done – there was no need for anyone to know. He hadn't told Jeannie, either, although she'd given him her dessert for a whole week afterwards so he suspected that she'd had a pretty good idea. And Aloysius was still alive, purring in someone else's arms it was true, but still alive out there, and all because Rodney had taken steps to keep him safe. This was the same kind of thing.

Rodney snuggled back against John's warm, living body.

"Sorry Yoda," he murmured.

The End

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