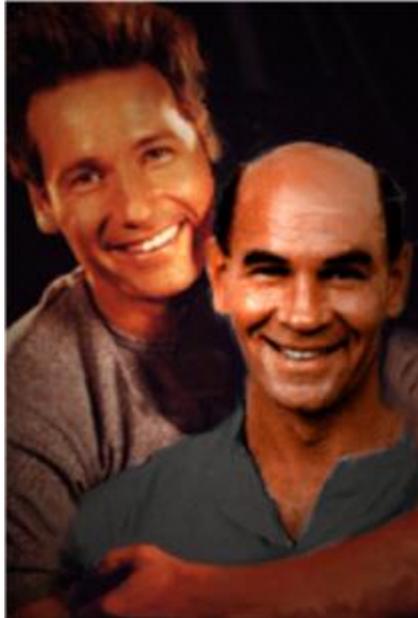


Make a Wish by Xanthe



www.xanthe.org/make-a-wish/

Story Notes:

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Mulder sauntered into his office, whistling to himself, still feeling upbeat, if a tad tired, after the events of the previous day. All in all, it hadn't been too bad a day. Okay, so he had succeeded in wiping out the entire human population of the world, but that had been a mistake - and one he'd rectified immediately. If only all his mistakes could be so easily remedied, he thought with a sigh, sitting down and glaring at the phone, knowing it was about to ring any moment...

"Now," he murmured, picking up the phone on its first ring. "Hello, sir, I thought it would be you." He made a face and swung his legs up on the desk, ping-ponging a paperclip at his I Want To Believe poster as he did so. "Yes, sir. I know, sir. Yes, I do have a very good reason for, um, materialising in your office like that yesterday. Yes, I thought you'd want to see me about it." Mulder sighed and grabbed his little green alien executive toy, and threw it against the wall.

"Earth stinks," the toy pronounced mournfully as it sank to the floor.

"I couldn't agree more, buddy," Mulder said. "What? No, sir, sorry, I wasn't talking to you. Um, no, nobody else is here. I was talking to my...um, executive toy, sir. It's an alien stressbuster - when you throw it against the wall it talks to you. I get given a lot of alien novelty stuff. Every Christmas, every birthday," he sighed. "Sometimes I really long for a regular pair of socks - you know, a pair that doesn't have a little green man emblazoned down the side - and I have more coffee table books with titles like *Mysteries of the Unexplained* than is strictly necessary for a grown man. I'd be happy enough with a good old-fashioned book on trains or something...uh, sorry, sir, I'm rambling. I still haven't got over yesterday. It was an...eventful day."

Wasn't that the truth! It wasn't every day you found a genie and got granted three wishes - and ended up to all intents and purposes materialising out of thin air in your boss's office after the damn genie "forgot" to tell you she'd granted one of the wishes, thus making you look like a complete idiot.

"Yes, sir, I do have a completely, absolutely 100% genuinely good excuse for showing up in your office, shouting like that. I promise." <It's not one you're gonna believe, but I do have one>. "Tonight, sir? Your apartment?" Mulder gulped. Oh god, it had to be bad if Skinner was intending to deal with it 'off the record'. "8pm. Yes, sir," Mulder mumbled. He put the phone down, and picked up the executive toy in one smooth movement, throwing the small, grinning green alien at the wall with a satisfying thud.

"You are invading my space," it piped up, in its tinny, 'alien' voice.

"Yeah, and you are full of really bad puns," Mulder riposted, mimicking the robotic voice back to the toy. The little green figure just smiled at him from its embroidered red triangle of a mouth.

Mulder loitered in the corridor outside Skinner's apartment for a good twenty minutes rehearsing his speech.

"It's quite simple, sir. There was this genie you see, and I had three wishes, and I wished for peace on earth with the first one, which was fine, only everybody disappeared, which was kind of lonely, if, indeed, very peaceful, and I kind of wanted everyone back again, even you, because I really, really missed you...no, too much information." Mulder paced back and forth. It was at times like this that he wished Scully had allowed him to take up smoking again after that unfortunate incident with the tobacco beetles. He gave a cough of memory, and tried not to think about all those larval creatures partying in his bronchial tubes. "Focus, Mulder," he admonished sternly. "Stay on message here. Okay. It's simple, you just walk in there, and blind him with science. 'Sir, I was in your office because of a spatio-temporal disturbance that temporarily displaced the entire population of the world'." Mulder paused outside his boss's apartment, one hand raised to knock on the door. "No - too Star Trek." Mulder turned back up the corridor again. "Oh hell, look at you, Mulder. He's just a guy at the end of the day. What can he do to you?" Mulder nodded firmly, and tugged his suit jacket into place, returning to stand outside his boss's apartment again, raising his hand to knock. "Just walk in there, and say 'Yo, Skin-man, it's no biggie. This cool genie chick gave me three wishes and two of them didn't turn out so good. Don't sweat it, big guy.' Yeah, that's it." Mulder's raised hand came down and rapped on...a solid chest as the door was

opened to be replaced by his tall, glowering boss.

"Mulder, are you going to stand in this corridor like a gibbering idiot rehearsing this speech all night or are you coming in?" Skinner demanded.

"Sorry, sir." Mulder grimaced, stepping into his boss's apartment nervously. He followed the other man towards the kitchen - then stopped, as a startling fact permeated his consciousness. "You're wearing an apron, sir," he gaped.

"Ten out of ten for observation, Mulder. I knew there was a reason we employed you," Skinner replied dryly.

"It's of a naked man, sir," Mulder pointed out. It was. Skinner was wearing a full-length apron depicting a naked man, complete with graphic, and somewhat over-generously represented genitalia.

"It is, Mulder, yes. You are not the only one who gets unwanted novelty presents for Christmas," his boss said in a wistful tone. "However, it's the only apron I've got, so..." he gave a resigned shrug. "Do you like chicken, Mulder? You're not a vegetarian are you?"

"What?" Mulder blinked.

"I'm cooking coq au vin. Is that okay with you?" Skinner pressed.

"Um...we're having dinner?" Mulder examined his world-view momentarily to see where this fitted in, and ended up filing it mentally under "U" - which covered unexpected, unprecedented - and probably several other "uns" as well, including un-fucking-believable.

"Yes, Mulder. We're having dinner. Together," Skinner said, removing the apron, to reveal that he was wearing tight, close-fitting, ass-hugging black jeans that showed off his long legs, and narrow, flat waist, and a tight, taut, chest-embracing white tee-shirt through which all his big, huge, massive muscles were rippling and bulging like...like something very impressive indeed, Mulder thought to himself. It was at that moment that his own trousers started feeling a bit tight too.

"Dinner. Right." Mulder nodded uncertainly.

"Open the wine - it's on the table," Skinner gestured with his head in the direction of the dining room.

"Wine. Okay." Mulder backed out of the kitchen, loosening his tie nervously as he went. "Highly attractive boss...naked man apron...tight clothing...dinner...wine...it's all adding up to something, but what?" He pondered darkly as he surveyed the dining table set for two, complete with burning candles, and low mood lighting, with James Brown rumbling away on the stereo. "Hmmm." Mulder frowned, as he tried to figure it out. Maybe he's throwing me out of the Bureau and wants to soften the blow first, he thought, his heart sinking. Skinner entered the room a few seconds later, bearing two platefuls of the most delicious smelling

food.

"I didn't know you could cook, sir," Mulder said, sitting down at the table.

"I have many talents you don't know about," Skinner replied, pouring them both a glass of wine. "In fact, I have lots of hidden talents," he purred throatily - and then he did something alarming. He grinned. It was a wide, open smile, revealing a set of pure, white teeth. Mulder stared fascinated. It was a beautiful sight. His boss was beautiful when he smiled. Even more beautiful than when he was angry, although Mulder thought he was pretty damn beautiful then too. Second only to when he was wistful, his dark eyes looking so sad, although he was cute when he had his puzzled look too, the one that usually appeared when he was reading one of Mulder's reports, a deep frown furrowed across his brow. Mulder had so often wanted to lean over and kiss all the worry lines out of that beloved forehead.

"So, tell me about what happened yesterday. How did you perform that 'Beam me up, Scotty' transporter thing in my office?" Skinner asked, forking a piece of chicken into his mouth. "You nearly gave me a heart attack. One minute I was sitting in a meeting and the next you were just there, yelling into thin air."

"I know. I'm sorry," Mulder sighed, taking a forkful of his own food and chewing without enthusiasm, before realising that it tasted divine. "Boy, this is good!" He exclaimed.

"I told you I have hidden talents." Skinner smiled again, and Mulder stared, fascinated by the sight. "Go on." Skinner nodded at Mulder to continue his story, and Mulder's heart sank again. There was no way this man, his prove-it-to-me, by-the-book superior, was ever, in a million years, going to buy the story about the genie. It was preposterous. Genies were the stuff of legend and folklore. They didn't exist.

"You won't believe me," Mulder said with a sigh.

"Try me." Skinner put his fork down, and rested his hand lightly on Mulder's wrist. Mulder stared at it, trying to process this new piece of information. Hand. Wrist. Friendly gesture of encouragement and support - or, or...romantic gesture implying...no, don't go there, he admonished firmly.

"There was this genie," he began, with a heavy heart.

"Uh-huh," Skinner nodded, and smiled again.

"And she gave me three wishes - you know, like genies do," Mulder continued.

"Mmmmm," Skinner stroked the palm of Mulder's hand with his thumb.

"And, uh...so, I made a wish for peace on earth and then everyone disappeared, so..." Mulder paused again. Skinner, still smiling, reached up and unhooked his glasses, placing them on the table. "So," Mulder continued, trying to get back to yesterday's events, and not be distracted by a pair of dark, beautiful eyes, no longer hiding behind a set of forbidding

wirerims, eyes that were full of... "Uh, so...I wished everything back the way it was, only I was in your office when I made the wish...so..." he paused again. Something was rubbing his leg. No, not something. Someone. Someone's leg was insinuating itself between his thighs...and someone's naked foot was caressing between his legs. "Um, and uh, so you were gone, and then I wished you all back because, well, you know, killing off the entire human race is a bit extreme, and anyway, I missed you...well, not just you, but you among others...and anyway, so I wished you back, but to you it looked as if I was the one who appeared when really..." Mulder gabbled, all the blood from his head flowing south in the direction of his groin.

"Mmmm?" Skinner's face leaned closer, and closer.

"Anyway," Mulder gulped, trying not to drown in a pair of dark chocolate eyes, "uh, all this wish making seemed kind of dangerous, and I didn't want to fuck anything else up, and she was, I dunno, a bit sad, so I used my third wish to set her free."

"Ah. You know, that all makes perfect sense," Skinner murmured, his hand moving slowly, seductively, up Mulder's arm, to stroke the side of his face.

"It does?" Mulder squawked.

"Well, no," Skinner admitted, "but frankly I don't give a damn," he grinned. "Did I ever tell you that I love it when you talk paranormal?"

"Well, no, actually, as a matter of fact." Mulder blinked nervously, as Skinner's finger came to rest gently over his lips, silencing him.

"I do," Skinner said throatily. "I love it. I love hearing every single, last, preposterous detail that drops from those beautiful, full, sensuous, kissable lips."

Mulder swallowed hard, and moistened said kissable lips unwittingly with his tongue.

"Kissable?" He squeaked.

"Oh god, you're killing me," Skinner growled, his eyes transfixed by Mulder's lips. "Come here." He pulled Mulder towards him, wrapped one big hand in his agent's hair, and kissed him. Hard. Slow. With tongues. Mulder moaned, and grabbed his boss's shoulders in order to stay upright.

"Oh god," he whimpered, when Skinner finally released him. "I must be dreaming. Tell me I'm not dreaming," he implored the other man.

"You're not dreaming. I love you. I've loved you for years," Skinner said stroking his finger over Mulder's swollen, thoroughly kissed lips. "I love the little mole on the side of your face, and the way your eyes look so lazy just before you say something utterly profound. I love you when you're being stubborn, and cussed, yelling your heart out to me about something you believe in, and when you're quiet, and reflective, curled up in your basement lair typing away on your computer, wearing your glasses. I love you. I never would have said anything

but suddenly, something inside me just snapped and...and...it all seemed so easy," Skinner frowned. "I don't know why. The time just felt right. In fact, I think we've both wasted enough time for the past few years, and I really, really think that it's time to take this someplace else. Yes?" He stood up, all rippling muscles, and smooth, sexual, feline intent, and held out his hand to his agent. Mulder took it, and was pulled into yet another breathless embrace. He melted against the big man, his heart beating too fast, full of happiness, as they made their way towards the bedroom...

Meanwhile, in a Starbucks across town, a striking, pale-eyed woman ordered a decaff mocha-mint, latte cappuccino special, with whipped cream, and smiled to herself as she sipped it.

"You look pleased with yourself," the waitress commented.

"I am. I never knew this many varieties of coffee existed. Which ones haven't I tried so far?" The woman asked.

"I think you've been through most of them," the waitress grinned. "What is it - a special occasion or something?"

"You could say that." The ex-genie smiled broadly, her pale eyes glittering with joy, and an innate sense of mischief. "You see, a soul who is kind enough to grant a genie his or her liberty has one final wish granted for free as our way of saying thanks - and they never even know about it."

"Is that so?" The waitress cleared the table, listening with half an ear.

"That's right; and as people are generally so bad at making good wishes it's a kindness for the genie to make this special wish for them. So - I've just granted a good man the one wish closest to his heart..."

The End

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