

# ~ Ah, Whom Can We Ever Turn to in Our Need? ~

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Warning: This story implies a loving relationship between two consenting adult women. So, if you're not old enough, please go away and come back later. If two women loving each other is illegal where you live, you should seriously think of moving. This time there will be no graphic depictions, sorry, just a bit hurt and angst.

Pairing: Sam/Janet (established relationship).

Timeline: beginning of Season Nine with a twist: O'Neill is still in command of the SGC, Sam is the leader of SG-1. Takes place shortly after "Avalon".

Special thanks go to Mary, my valiant beta reader

Part I of the "Beauty is Nothing but the Beginning of Terror"-Series.

Summary: An old friend alerts Sam that Cassandra is having trouble at College and hangs out with the wrong people.

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"Carter."

"Colonel Carter, Sergeant Durer, dispatch. I have a Professor Wellington on the line. She claims that it's important."

"Thank you, Sergeant, please put her through. - Hey, Billie, I haven't heard from you in a long time. What's up?" Sam asked.

"Hey, Sam, good to hear your voice. You know, you're harder to get a hold of than the President himself. I tried for three days straight at every hour of day and night; so, I should know."

"I'm sorry, Billie, I've been out of town for a few days, and I don't spend much time at home. So, what can this measly soldier do for such a distinguished professor as yourself?"

"A measly soldier? Please, Sam, be realistic. Your book on wormhole theory still has half of the academic world buzzing."

"You're exaggerating, Billie, as always, but I guess you didn't call to exchange compliments, right?"

"No, I didn't. It's about Cassandra. The sophomore you asked me to keep on my radar. I know

you told me not to ask any questions but I got the impression that she's pretty important to you. So, I thought I should call you...."

"What's wrong with Cassy? Was there an accident? What happened?" Sam had jumped up from her seat and was gripping the receiver of the old-fashioned phone in her lab as if her life depended on it.

"Calm down, Sam. There was no accident. Cassandra has a few academic problems. She had all the markings to become one of our top students but lately... Her latest paper has been overdue for two weeks now, and three days ago we had a pre-announced test to which she did not show up. I spoke with a couple of my colleagues. It's the same with them. She's close to failing the term."

"There's more right?" Sam asked.

"I also spoke with her roommate, Michaela Neddes. She's also in my course. Michaela said that she's hanging out with a tough crowd, off campus, bikers mostly. Cassandra is avoiding Michaela, and Michaela fears that she's started to drink." Billie said softly; her tone of voice audibly meant to soften the blow.

"I'll come over and talk to Cassy. Can you book me a hotel room close to the campus?"

"For the weekend?" Billie asked.

"For tonight. There's no time like the present."

"You will stay with us, Sam. We have a very comfortable guestroom with a private bath. William and the kids will be thrilled to have you. But can you simply leave without getting into trouble?"

"I have enough leave rolled up to take half a year off, and my CO has been nagging me to take some time off for a while now. It's a two and a half hour drive, with time to delegate some things and pack a bag I should be there in about five hours at the latest. I'll call if something unexpected should come up."

"See you then, Sam, and please, drive carefully." Billie said and hung up.

Sam put the phone back in the cradle and slumped against the wall. She thought back to Cassandra's last visit. They had had a week of fun and relaxation all planned out, but then there had been the replicator crisis, and she only had been home for two days of Cassandra's break. Cassy had been left alone, alone with her memories, alone with her grief and her pain. Sam had failed her, again.

The blonde shook herself forcibly out of her musings; this was not the time to think about herself. She had to make it up to Cassy. She had to keep her from destroying herself.

-X-X-X-

One and a half hour later Sam turned on the highway towards Fort Collins and the Colorado State University. When she had asked General O'Neill for some immediate leave, he had practically escorted her out of the mountain in relief and ordered her to "have some fun for a change, Carter!"

Sam was not sure if fun was the operative word under the circumstances but she had smiled at him without giving away her true thoughts and feelings; something she had become very adept at since Janet's death.

Billie and her family lived in a quiet suburb, houses with generous back yards, two-car garages and the obligatory lawn in front of the house. Typical American middle class, except for its inhabitants. Billie's husband Will was a cross between an artist, a stay-at-home dad and a computer wizard. Their three kids were almost frighteningly intelligent and had skipped at least one grade, and Billie was an internationally acclaimed physics professor specialising in geothermic research and cold fusion.

Sam, Billie and Will had been at college together. Sam had been barely seventeen, a daredevil in every sense of the word, cocky as all hell, and with a chip on her shoulder the size of a steel girder. Will had been in his last year and Billie in her third when this young blonde had walked right up to the board in one of Professor Petterson's interminably longwinded lectures. She had changed the equations on the board and walked out without a word.

Sam had only been at college to pass the time before she turned eighteen and would be allowed to join the Air Force Academy. She had not been out to make friends, but Will and his then girlfriend had been persistent, and over time she had opened up to them. They had bailed her out of trouble more than once when she took offence at something someone had said or done. It had been her way to deal with her mother's death some three years earlier. Three years she had spent building walls around her heart and her soul, walls only Billie and Will had been allowed to look behind. Like Cassy now she had sought comfort and oblivion in drink and without these two Sam would certainly not have come as far as she had. They were part of her family.

-X-X-X-

Will opened the door and stepped onto the porch when he heard Sam's bike on the driveway. He was a tall man with brown friendly eyes and an athletic physique. Sam took her helmet off and shook her almost shoulder length hair into some semblance of order. In her line of work having short hair was much more practical but she had started to let it grow out after Janet's death in remembrance of one of their last conversation when Janet had speculated on how her lover would look with really long hair.

"Sam, wow, you're as beautiful as ever, and I see you're still driving this death-trap on wheels."

"Still jealous, Willie?" She answered with a smile and embraced him.

"You got the bike, I got the girl. I don't complain."

His answer referred to the day Sam and he had answered the same add to buy a run-down 47-Indian to restore. They had arrived independently and both had had the cash needed. In the end Sam's shining eyes had won the seller over, and her bubbling excitement at her new toy had been worth losing out on the bike. Later that day, when they had told Billie about their chance meeting she had gently patted Will's cheek and told him in no uncertain terms that as long as he wanted to be with her, he would not risk his life on such a death-trap but drive something with a lot more metal between him and impending disaster. Billie had yet to change her mind on this point.

"So, where is Willie's Billie?" Sam asked mischievously after Will had hugged her, knowing all too well that he hated such comments.

He suddenly lunged forward intend on tackling her to the ground and tickle her but her reflexes were much too fast for him and suddenly Will found himself pinned down, being tickled himself. His helpless laughter soon was echoed from the porch.

Sam stopped but kept her hold on him. "Do I hear Super-Sammy and the WonderTwins?"

And suddenly the tables were turned since she was bowled over by two small and one taller body. "Aunt Sam! We missed you. You haven't been here in forever and ever!"

"I missed you too, kiddos. So, what are you doing here? Shouldn't you be in school or something?"

Sam looked up to a girl of about fifteen or sixteen with curly red hair and unusual brown eyes. Samantha Louise Wellington was her goddaughter. The twins, Tom and Harry, ten years old, also had the curly hair of their mother but instead of their father's brown eyes, they both had blue-green orbs, just like their grandmother on their mother's side.

They were right. She had not seen them since before Janet's death. They had stayed in email contact but she had carefully skirted all invitations to spent the holidays with them.

"Hey, guys, let Aunt Sam get up. She's not that young anymore." Will said, mainly to get a reaction out of his blonde friend.

"Bah, Dad, that's not true. You and Mom, you're ancient, but Sam, she's cool!" Harry said and launched himself at his father in absolute trust that he would catch him.

A shadow crossed Sam's face. There had been a time when Cassandra had had as much trust in her.

Her change in expression didn't get by the red headed teenager. "Sam, are you alright? We didn't hurt you or something?"

"No, Sammy, everything is alright, or at least it will be in time. You didn't hurt me."

"You know that except for my mom you're the only person calling me Sammy. Everyone else uses Sam or Samantha."

"I can stop if it bothers you, Sam. For me there was also only my mother and one other person who called me Sammy, at least not without regretting it later." Sam answered with a smile that didn't reach her eyes.

"No, I don't mind you using Sammy. Why are you so sad? I can see it in your eyes."

"You always shared your mother's ability to look right into my heart. You're right I'm sad. I'll be better in time. Being here already helps a lot. So, where's your dear mother?"

"Oh, she's holding a lecture on advanced something or other." Samantha answered.

"Sammy!"

"Yes, I know, respect your elders." The girl rolled her eyes. "That's why we came out. Initially the boys wanted to ambush you entering the den. Mom just called. She wants you to come to her lecture. She said to tell you that it would be a good opportunity to talk to the roommate. Whatever that means."

"Thanks Sammy. Oh, please don't pout. It's boring grown-up stuff."

"That's what you adults always say when things start to get interesting. I know you'll tell me when the time is right. It was worth a try."

"You really are something, Samantha Louise. Now, in which room does your mom hold court?"

"If you give me a ride I will show you."

"Will your mother roast me on a small flame if I let you climb on this?" Sam asked only half joking.

"No, she will not, as long as she wears a helmet." Will answered in her stead.

"I have a spare one in my saddlebag. I never would take her without a helmet. We will go slowly, after all the Indian is about fun, not speed."

"Then go. I'll put your bag in the guest room. The boys and I will prepare a light dinner." Will said.

"Are you sure that Billie will be alright with it?" Sam asked.

"It will be fine, Sam. Billie knows that you're a conscientious driver, and though she's not too keen on bikes she knows that children need to experiment to develop their whole potential. And it's not as if it were the first time that you took her for a ride."

"No, it's not. Ready to go, Sammy?"

-X-X-X-

Twenty minutes later Sam's Indian stopped in front of the main entrance of a faculty building. They took their helmets with them and Sammy led them up the stairs to the third floor. They entered the big auditorium from behind and found seats in the last row. Billie gave no indication that she had seen them come in, but when she ended for the day some fifteen minutes later, she dismissed all of her students except for Michaela Neddes.

Sam and Samantha descended the stairs towards the board and Sam was quickly engulfed in a bear hug by a red-haired woman with sparkling blue eyes. She stood at about five foot five, and according to her own judgement she had a few pounds too much on her hips, a legacy of the birth of the twins, though her husband always told her that he loved her just the way she was.

Billie looked deep in Sam's eyes, seeing more than the blonde would ever have allowed anyone else to see. Then the professor turned to her daughter, "So, you conned Sam into giving you a ride? What was it, the Indian or the other monster?"

"The Indian, Mom, but we went really slow and Dad said that is would be okay." Sammy answered.

"It's alright, Sammy. I was only teasing you. Now go and wait outside."

"Mom, please..."

"Samantha Louise Wellington!"

"Alright, already, I'll go, but under protest."

"Sam, may I introduce Michaela Neddes. Michaela meet my old friend Samantha Carter."

"It's an honour to meet you, Doctor Carter. Cassandra told me a lot about you." The young, dark haired woman at Billie's side said.

"I'll leave the two of you to talk. Sam, dinner is at seven, please don't make us wait." Billie said with a smile.

"No, ma'am. I'll be there. Miss Neddes would you tell me about Cassy, please?"

"Please call me Michaela. The dorm is about ten minutes through the park."

-X-X-X-

Sam was on time for dinner. She listened to the twins telling her about their latest adventures and pet subjects but her mind was miles away. So, Billie decided to cut their meal short and take her old friend for a walk. It was time for them to talk.

"Talk to me, Sam."

"There's nothing to tell, Billie."

"Sam, please don't insult my intelligence. I know who Cassandra is for you, Sam. I knew from the moment you asked me to keep an eye on her. I know she was Janet's daughter. Why did you never bring her with you when the two of you came to visit? You know she would have been welcome."

"Cassy was with Janet's parents every time we came here. When she told her parents about us they disowned her and threatened to make it public and have us thrown out of the Air Force. Sending Cassy to spend most holidays with them was their condition to keep quiet about it."

"I'm sorry that we never spoke about her but it hurt too much to talk about her when we knew that they were just trying to fill her head with their hypocritical nonsense. They even tried to take Cassy to the East Coast with them after Janet's death." Sam answered.

"I'm sorry that they put so much pressure on you, both of you."

"It's in the past. They can't hurt me any longer. Janet is dead, nothing can hurt me now."

"Oh, Sam, please, honey, don't do that to yourself. Janet would not want you to give up on life."

"No, she probably would read me the riot act, but I can't help it. Janet was my life, and without her the only thing I have left is work. I failed Janet."

"You have Cassandra, Sam." Billie said.

"I failed her, too. I failed her when I buried myself in that damned mountain. I was not there for her. I tried but it was too hard. I failed her and she had no other chance but to run away."

"Sam, stop it! Now!" Billie had her hands on Sam's shoulders ready to shake her out of her self-recriminations.

Sam's blue eyes were filled with tears that refused to fall.

"Sam, it's not like you to give up this easily. You came here to help Cassandra. You can help each other, now."

Now the tears fell and Billie held her distraught friend. They were the first tears Sam allowed herself since Janet's death, and to her it seemed as if they would never stop to fall.

-X-X-X-

Later that night Sam rode her bike to the first of three addresses Cassandra's roommate had pointed out as her possible whereabouts. She found her on the second try in a stereotypically seedy biker's bar. Sam's entrance went unnoticed since everyone's attention seemed focused on some action at the bar. She saw Cassandra's head sticking out above the others. She was probably sitting on the bar.

Sam stepped closer and saw that some guy was in the process of removing Cassandra's top by cutting it off with a fifteen inch long dagger. Cassy's eyes were dull and she looked as if she were not even aware of what was happening to her. Sam's protective instincts went into overdrive.

Her slight built allowed Sam to slip through the first row of spectators. The hand holding the knife was grabbed by the wrist and pulled back in a secure police hold. She used his surprise to turn the man around who topped her own five foot eleven by at least six inches. She pushed him towards his cronies and ordered calmly,

"Keep your dirty paws off of her!"

The man had found his equilibrium and looked at her. His once probably muscular frame was starting to disappear under layers of fat and his receding hairline let Sam estimate his age at about thirty-five to forty. His eyes were slightly dilated, and looking at all the men visibly supporting him Sam thought that stepping in like this might not have been one of her brighter ideas.

The imbalance of power in the room seemed also to dawn on him and he leered at her. "So, want to take her place? Sorry, no deal. I like my women younger."

Sam knew that diplomacy would not get Cassandra and her out of the bar, but bravado just might. "I wouldn't even consider spending time with you if you were the last human being on Earth, and I use the term human with caution."

"Get her and teach the old broad some manners, Pauly." The man with the knife ordered.

Pauly turned out to be a small, skinny guy of about twenty-five. He drew a switch-blade but Sam



didn't give him the chance to get in position. She whirled around and took him out with a roundhouse kick to the throat, hoping that the impact had not been hard enough to crush her opponent's windpipe. A second man attacked, but she ducked under the fist and rammed her elbow hard in his neck.

"You can't take all of us out, bitch." Their leader growled.

"That's enough! I won't have no brawls in my bar. Stop it now, or you and your gang will need a new place to hang out, Rover. Same goes for you, Missus."

"You'll get no trouble from me, barkeep. I only came here to find my daughter and bring her home. If your customers let us go, that's fine with me, but if I have to fight my way out of here, I will. It would be easier for all of us if you just let my daughter and me go." Sam said.

The word 'daughter' spoken a second time seemed to have penetrated the probably alcohol induced haze Cassandra was in.

"You are not my mother. You killed her on that godforsaken planet. You killed her as sure as if you would have shot that staff weapon yourself. Go away, Samantha Carter. Enjoy your new rank and your new lover and leave me the fuck alone."

Cassandra had hopped down from the bar but her legs refused to hold her and she grabbed the lapels of Sam's leather jacket in support. She shouted in Sam's face.

"I hate you, Colonel Carter, you and the SGC and the Stargate. You should have let me die on Hanka. I never asked to be taken to your stupid planet. You should have let me die."

Sam closed her arms around the young woman's body. Cassandra tried to get loose but the Air Force Officer held on tight.

"I love you, Cassy."

That broke the dam and Cassandra started to cry. Most of the men found something else to do, but the man called Rover kept a close eye on them, and Sam on him. He tried to intimidate her by playing with his dagger.

When Cassy started to shiver in Sam's arms, he tried to grab her, but Sam was faster and introduced his groin to the steel cap of one of her biker boots. Sam pulled Cassandra behind her and made sure that she was securely positioned against the bar. She faced Rover who was still hunched over and three of his cronies, ready to attack at a moment's notice. Sam resigned herself not to get out of the bar unharmed.

A baseball bat banged hard against the countertop of the bar. "I said no brawls. Let these ladies go, Rover."

The man had at least partially regained his breath, a deep growl emanated from his throat. "No,

Tony, I won't let them get away like this. I want my pound of flesh. This college girl has played hard to get long enough. I will take what is mine, one way or the other."

"If you touch her, I will cut off your balls and use your dick to stuff the tiny things down your throat." Sam knew that she had just kissed her last chance goodbye to get out of here in one piece by hurling the worst possible insult at the tall man. But the thought of her Cassy in the hands of this brute made her blood boil beyond reason.

Predictably Rover was about to launch his bulk against Sam's smaller frame to bring her down by force but a shrill whistle halted him in mid-movement. A woman as tall as Rover with broad shoulder, high cheek bones, shining blue eyes and long jet-black hair stepped from the crowd. She dominated the room with a mixture of authority and raw sexuality. Sam had a hard time not to gasp for breath at the sight.

"I don't like it if someone insults my brother."

"Then you should have taught him some manners when he was younger. He might have become a man instead of a sorry excuse for a human being." Sam retorted.

Instead of getting angry the woman laughed. "You really are something, lady. You come here, bust up my men, insult my little brother, and all of this without breaking a sweat. I think I'll let..."

"But Mara, I want the girl, and the broad needs to be taught a lesson. I waited for so long to taste her virgin ass."

"Stop whining, Rover. She looks too old to be your daughter, blondie." Mara said.

"The name is Sam, and Cassandra is my adoptive daughter, but to me it does not make any difference. You seem to me like someone amenable to reason. So, I offer you a deal, Mara. If you look outside you'll see a '47 Indian in the parking lot. It's mine, has been for twenty years now. I'm willing to leave the papers with you if you let us both go and one of you defeats me at pool."

"I like your style, Sam. You have a deal. Rover started this whole thing; so, he will be the one you'll have to best. He will break."

"Let's do it."

Rover turned out to be as unimpressive at playing pool as he was at hand-to-hand combat. Even with one hand bound behind her back Sam would have had no problem to win. After he had lost three games in a row he glared at her and sulked towards the back of the bar.

Mara escorted Sam and Cassandra to the front door and before she opened it she said, "One day I'd like a friendly match of pool between the two of us. It should prove more challenging for you."

"It just might, Mara. Thank you."

The fresh night air was like a jackhammer to the distraught and disoriented Cassandra. She stumbled and lost consciousness. Sam had not expected such a quick reaction, but before the young woman's body could hit the ground, strong arms scooped her up.

A familiar voice said, "I got her, Sam. My car is over there, the blue pick-up. I already put the plank out to get your bike up."

"Thanks, Will, you're an angel. Could you drop us off at Cassy's dorm. I'll stay with her for the night."

"No, you won't. I have orders to bring you home, both of you. Make my life easier and just comply. She used her mom-voice, Sam."

"Seems as if we have no choice then. I learned long ago that there are some things one just can't resist; one of them is the mom's voice.

-X-X-X-

Will carried Cassandra to the guest room and Sam put her to bed. The young woman threw up twice and after the third time Sam had had to wake her from a nightmare she climbed into bed with her and held her for the rest of the night. Shortly before sunrise she fell asleep.

When Cassandra finally woke up she looked into Professor Wellington's concerned eyes and felt Sam's comforting arms around her. For a moment she enjoyed the feeling but a moment later she jumped out of bed as if it were on fire. It was a testament to Sam's exhaustion that she didn't wake at the sudden movement.

"Where am I? What happened? What is she doing here? Professor Wellington? What...?"

"Calm down, Cassandra. You're at my home, in my guest room. Sam and my husband brought you here last night from the bar. Take a shower, the bathroom is over there. I'm sure that Sam won't mind if you borrow some of her clothes. I have coffee waiting in the kitchen downstairs. Try not to wake Sam up. She spent the night soothing your nightmares and making sure that you didn't suffocate from your own vomit."

-X-X-X-

Twenty minutes later Cassandra entered the big, sunlit kitchen. She was wearing the clothes from the night before including the torn shirt. "Good morning, Professor Wellington."

"Good morning, Cassandra. I hope you like coffee. How's Sam?"

"Colonel Carter is still sleeping. If you could tell me where I am I'll find my way back to the dorm. I have to get as far away from her as possible."

"Sit down, young lady, now!"

Despite her best intentions Cassandra obeyed. She later rationalised that it must have been the tone of voice.

"Sam loves you. She wouldn't be here if she didn't. She wouldn't have spent the night guarding your sleep if she didn't. She wouldn't have risked her hide in that bar last night if she didn't love you, Cassandra Fraiser."

"What are you talking about, Professor? She embarrassed me in front of my friends and dragged me out against my will. She has no say in how I spend my time. Without her my mother would not be dead. I just want her to leave me alone. She can go to her new lover and start her shining new life."

"Oh dear, is this what you remember about last night? So, let me tell you a thing or two."

Billie told Cassandra everything Will had told her of the scene in the bar, every detail and as much of the dialogue she could remember.

"Sam threatened Rover to feed his balls to him?"

"Yes, she did."

"She put up the Indian to get us out? Why would she do that? She doesn't care for me."

"Sam loves you, Cassandra. You're as much her daughter as you were Janet's."

"You knew my mom?"

"Yes, I did. She was a great person. We all liked her very much."

"But how? She never spoke about you."

"All those holidays you spent with your grandparents, Sam and your mother spent with my family here."

"I didn't like going there but Mom always made me."

"Sam told me yesterday that Janet's parents blackmailed them. They threatened to tell the military about their relationship. They didn't have a choice." Billie said.

"I wish Mom would have told me. It explains a lot. They always said such nasty and stupid things about gays and lesbians. Why didn't they tell me?"

"We feared that it would turn something you enjoyed into something you resented. At least we thought that you enjoyed being with your grandparents. Why didn't you tell us?" Sam asked from the door.

"It seemed to be really important to Mom. I thought it was her way to keep in contact with her parents despite the way they treated her." Cassandra answered. "Why did you come here, Sam? I don't need you."

"Billie called me and told me that you might be in trouble. I wanted to make sure that you are alright." Sam said.

"Why? You couldn't get rid of me fast enough after Mom's death, Lieutenant Colonel Carter. I have always been nothing more than a burden to you. You pawed me off on Mom and now with your new life, your new lover, there's no place for me anymore. Tell me; did you cheat on Mom with this guy? Where you glad when she was out of the way?"

"Why do you hurt me this way? I never cheated on Janet and I never will. She is the only one who ever held my whole heart and soul, and she is the only one who ever will." Sam said with tears clinging at the edge of her eyes. "I love your mother. I never stopped loving her and I never will."

"But this guy, he said that you accepted the promotion to leave Colorada Springs and accept a posting in Denver. He said that you would marry him and have his children and that you were already looking for a new house with a nursery."

Sam sank on one of the kitchen chairs. "Did he tell you his name, Cass?"

"Pete Shanahan. He said that you were looking forward to become Samantha Shanahan. He said that it has a nice ring to it."

"That conniving bastard! I wouldn't marry him if he were the last intelligent life form in the universe. Pete Shanahan is a friend of my brother; he's a cop in Denver. Some months ago he was in Colorado Springs for a case and Mark talked me into going to dinner with him. I never have been as bored in my whole life but for him it had been the perfect evening. He got it into his head that it had been a date and was the beginning of something special. He began to stalk me and I zatted him." Sam said.

She cast a nervous glance towards her old-time friend and for a moment considered asking her to leave them alone, but something, either the expression in Billie's eyes or her unacknowledged need to have some moral support let her decide to simply deal with the fall-out later.

"You zatted him?"

"Yes, we had a plan to capture Osiris. Pete followed me to Daniel's house where we had set a trap for Osiris and because of his interference she almost escaped. I didn't have a choice. General Hammond threatened him with the Patriot Act and he disappeared back to Denver; at least I thought he did. I'm sorry that he gave you the wrong idea. Why didn't you ask me directly? Is he the reason you fled to Fort Collins instead of staying at home?" Sam asked.

"You still love Mom?"

"Yes, Cassy, I still love your mom. She was my life and my light and my strength. I never would betray her."

"I didn't leave because of this Pete guy. Everything in Colorado Springs reminded me of Mom. It just hurt too much to stay. But it also hurt being away from home. Pete came by during the last holiday. I'm sorry, Sam, I should have known that you would never leave the SGC. Earth needs you too much."

"I wanted to leave after your mom died. After the memorial service when you were already in bed I wrote my letter of resignation. I was so angry at all of them, at General Hammond for sending Janet to P3X-666, at Colonel O'Neill for getting shot and leaving me in command, at Janet for getting killed, at myself for not having been able to save her, to bring her back.

"It was Daniel who convinced me that leaving the Air Force now, at a moment the SGC was under investigation, would send the wrong message, but a day does not go by when I doubt the wisdom of this decision."

"Mom would not want you to give up, Sam." Cassy said empathically.

"No, she wouldn't, but sometimes being at the base is harder than being at home. I expect to run into her at every corner I turn; every time I'm in the infirmary I'm looking for her. Every time we go through the gate I'm looking up to the control room searching for her eyes and her smile. Even working in my lab I expect her to come in and scold me for working too long and not taking care of myself." Sam said tonelessly.

"Oh God, Sam, why did you never tell me? You always seemed so strong. I thought... I thought..."

"It's alright, Cassy. You had enough to do dealing with your own pain. I didn't want to burden you with mine. You deserve a life of your own, a happy life."

Sam closed her arms around the young woman and held her as she had done numerous times in the past. "I love you, Cassy. I never wanted you to go away, but I can understand why you did it."

Cassandra openly sobbed and Sam also could no longer hold her tears back. A few minutes later Cassy looked up and said, "What I said yesterday... I don't hate you, Sam, I never did."

"I know, Cassy, being angry at me and the rest of the world dulled the pain, and the alcohol also made it go away, at least for a while."

"I didn't drink because of the pain. Professor Wellington told me what happened last night. Thank you for coming to get me. They really could have hurt you... and your Indian... oh Sam, I'm so sorry."

"Everything worked out fine, Cassy, and the Indian would have been a small price to pay to get you out of their clutches. This Rover guy is a creep."

"He was as far removed from my normal, my old life as I could find. Since Professor Wellington told me about last night a few images have come back and I'm really glad that you stopped him. I only allowed him to touch me when I was drunk."

"Why did you, Cassy? You said it wasn't to escape the pain. Why? Did you want to escape your memories?"

"Perhaps, but the main reason is that it keeps the telekinesis at bay. It's back and I have a hard time controlling it. When I'm drunk it goes away."

"I can teach you how to control it, Cass, if you let me."

"How? Last time I checked you had no telekinetic abilities." Cassandra's voice sounded a bit challenging.

As an answer Sam turned her head towards the coffee maker and the pot began to move across the counter, hovered for a moment and then glided directly in Sam's hand.

"Wow!" Billie said.

Both of them had forgotten that she was still there. The look Cassy gave Sam was akin to panic.

Sam said, "Billie is my friend. I trust her. It's alright, Cass."

"How, Sam? And why did you never tell me?" The young woman asked.

"Janet was the only one who knew, Cassy. With her help I learned how to control it, but we never had the chance to find out how it really works. My MRI shows increased activity in areas where there should be none. We think that what's responsible for the telekinesis."

"It was Nirrti, right? When she put you and Jonas into that machine?" Cassandra asked and Sam nodded in affirmation. "MRIs are mandatory after missions, how could you keep it quiet? It would make you a prime target for the Trust."

"The first thing Janet taught me was how to quiet my mind enough to fool the MRI, and ever

since Jolinar I have been a prime target for the Trust and the NID; Daniel and I both. I'll teach it to you."

"Rewind a bit you two! What I just saw is against every law of physics I know about." Billie said exasperatedly. "Sam, you always used more than the usual twelve percent of your brain, but what you just did... It's just... It shouldn't be possible."

"It's just a question of perspective, Billie, and it has nothing to do with the overall percentage of brain capacity used. It's more about certain regions of my brain having been stimulated, regions which usually are dormant. It allows me to manipulate the magnetic field of most things as well as Earth gravity."

"And Cassandra has been subjected to the same manipulations?" Billie asked.

"No, and yes, Billie. Janet thought that Cassy's abilities are genetic while mine have been created artificially. We're still miles away from a real explanation."

Billie didn't know what to say to that but after a deep breath Cassandra said in a flat voice, "You were the guinea pig. Mom feared that despite Nirrti stopping me from changing the first time the telekinesis and whatever would sooner or later come back. She used you to find out how to control and how to conceal it."

"Your Mom didn't trust Nirrti, that's true, but I wasn't a guinea pig. I needed the help she gave me. The thought that one day it might also help you was just an added incentive, Cassy."

"So, when do you start teaching me?" Cassandra wanted to know.

"As soon as you're ready, Cass, but don't you think that first you owe your roommate an apology?" Sam asked.

"I guess I do. I know I don't deserve it, but could you lend me the Indian? I swear I'll be careful." Cassandra said.

"Sure, the keys are on the desk in the guest room. Take my leather jacket and the helmet, and please put a new shirt on. Drive carefully. If you get a ticket we'll repeat the beware-the-consequences-of-motorcycle-accidents lesson."

"Love you, Sam."

"I love you too, Cassy."

-x-x-x-

"The what-lesson?" Billie asked after the young woman had gone upstairs.



"When Cass got her driver's licence she also wanted a permit to drive a bike. She needed Janet's permission but that came at a price. Janet showed us a very graphic video about motorcycle accidents and took us to a rehab centre specialising in bike victims. Believe me, it made an impression, even on me."

When Cassandra came back down she had changed her ripped top for one of Sam's T-shirts. "Professor Wellington, if I brought you the paper I still owe you later today, would you still accept it?"

"Yes, I would. In my eyes there are extenuating circumstances, but I doubt even Sam could write it in only a few hours."

"Oh, it's ready. Has been for weeks, I just didn't hand it in. Thank you, Professor."

She gave Sam a kiss on the temple and was gone again.

"Samantha Carter, I really should be angry at you for having kept such a great kid from us all these years."

"I concur," Will said from the back door.

"Since when did you listen in, Will?" Sam asked.

"Long enough to be thoroughly confused, Sam. We know that your work is top-secret. One does not need someone with your brain for radar telemetry. Between what I heard Cassandra say yesterday and what I heard now, I think that your book about wormhole theory is anything but theoretical." Will said.

"Sam, you know that whatever you tell us, it will not leave this room." Billie said and put a comforting hand on her friend's arm.

Sam offered a silent apology to General O'Neill and a prayer that the IOC would never find out and gave her friends the 101 on wormholes, the Stargate network and ancient gods. To say that they were completely stunned would have been a vast understatement.

"So, the Egyptian gods are the bad guys and the Norse gods are the good guys, right?" Will asked.

"It's not as easy as that but yes, in a roundabout way."

"And this Stargate? I can't imagine any element on Earth able to withstand the energy necessary to open a wormhole." Billie said, still trying to wrap her mind around the technical dimension of what they had just learned.

In between answering Will's and Billie's question Sam called Cassandra at the dorm and invited

her to spend some time with her at Billie's house. It would give them the chance to reconnect and should things get too rough Sammy and the twins could act as a distraction.

-X-X-X-

Aside from her classes Cassandra and Sam spent every waking minute together for the next two weeks. The young woman quickly learned how to control the telekinesis. Will had talked a friend into allowing them access to his office and lab to run an MRI on Cassandra. It showed increased synaptic activity between the hemispheres of her brain and a slightly increased overall activity.

Not all of her professors had been ready to give Cassandra a second chance after her recent slacking. But most of those were easily convinced with a simple phone call. However for one of them Sam had to pull out the big guns. She called Daniel to send over her dress uniform.

In the evening, after the children had been sent to bed, Cassandra retold the whole story and was met with howling laughter. Sam tried to stay out of it but could not suppress a smile when she remembered his slack-jawed expression at her entrance.

He apparently had been prepared to haughtily dismiss a trouble student, and the sight of a blonde woman in Air Force dress blues with more decorations than the average three-star-general had visibly caught him off guard. He had looked at her as if she were an apparition and had finally offered her a seat, completely ignoring the young woman standing next to her. It had taken her all of five minutes to get him to give Cassandra a second chance, another five were spent in small talk.

"And the most amazing thing was that she didn't even have to resort to tell him about Mom. She simply dazzled him. She smiled at him and he was a goner. It's no wonder at least every other male falls for her. Right, Sam?"

"He simply listened to reason, Cass, and all the jingling bit on the uniform also might have had something to do with it. That's all." Sam said defensively.

"Oh come on, Sam." Will said. "From the first moment we met, when you were still all arms and legs, most of the guys and at least half of the girls were lusting after you. Over the years it only got worse. Do you remember that Fortune 100 heir who offered you diamonds and cars, Sam?"

"That was half a lifetime ago, Will, and all the money in the world could not make up for the fact that he was a complete jerk. He only wanted a show piece, not a partner. Besides, your exaggerating."

"No, we're not. It drove Mom crazy that they kept following you around like puppies. Narim, Orlin, Martouf. Orlin even became mortal to share your life."

"Cassy, none of them knew me. They only thought they did. Your mom was the only one who

really knew me."

Three days later Sam was recalled to the base to help figure out the machine holding Daniel and Vala captive. From then on Sam and Cassandra phoned at least twice a week and Cass spent most of her weekends with Billie and her family.

End of Part I

Continued in "[Listen, my heart, as only saints have listened](#)"

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