

Title: Reflections

Author: Elizabeth

Email: elizabeth@starwarriors.net

Category: POV.

Pairing: Jack/Sara, Sara/Other

Rating: 13+

Season: None.

Spoilers: None.

Summary: As her life changes, Sara reflects on the past.

Warnings: Sexual references, nothing explicit.

Status: Complete January 2005

Notes: Many thanks to Mary for a spur of the moment beta, but any mistakes you find are purely mine. As always, feedback is appreciated and will be replied to. However, no flames please. I can burn my own toast without any help, thank you.

DISCLAIMER: Stargate SG-1 and its characters are the property of Stargate (II) Productions, Showtime/Viacom, MGM/UA, Double Secret Productions and Gekko Productions. This story is only for entertainment purposes and no money exchanged hands. No copyright infringement is intended. Anyway, if they were mine do you think I'd let anything happen to them? The original characters, situations, and story are the property of the author. This story may not be posted elsewhere without the consent of the author.

I can't believe I'm being lazy enough to lie in bed like this. It's heaven and certainly doesn't happen enough for my liking. But give it another week and it'll be a different ball game altogether. I can see utter pandemonium descending, which always happens when the family get together. Dad's getting in a state already and it's not as though I haven't done this before!

Another week and I'll be Mrs Dave Neilson. I can't believe it. Even the surname seems to be telling me something, like I can't leave the past behind completely. I can't live with him and I can't seem to live without him.

It's so strange how life works out. Not always how you want it to, and all the regrets and maybes in the world can't change that now.

How does that song go?

'Regrets, I've had a few, but then again..... (and this is where we have a word change) too many to mention'

Oh, Jack.

Even now, after everything that's happened, I still can't let him go. I guess I never will completely.

Shutting my eyes is the only way to stop the sudden tears that threaten. I can feel the heat from the sun, trying its best to warm me through the lightweight curtains. It's so easy to drift back, to turn the clock back to other mornings. Mornings spent like this, lazily enjoying each other's company and body, while the world moves around without us.

The sun becomes the heat of his skin next to mine, and I can dream of the strength of his arms about me, the powerful, yet gentle hands that caress me, the soft lips that tease and arouse me. And as the memories strengthen, I tingle with memories of the indescribable feeling when he moves within me.

Yes, I've moved on, but a part of me will always be there in the past. A part of me will always love Jack O'Neill.

Now don't get me wrong. I love Dave dearly, I really do. Two lonely people who sort of drifted together, after years of friendship gradually morphed into something else, something far deeper. I love him and I enjoy his company; the way he makes me laugh, the way he cares about me, the way he makes love to me, and the way he understands.

Just like I understand about his wife Audrey. About how some young driver, not paying enough attention as he changed radio stations, took a corner too wide and stole Audrey's life from her. Yes, he understands lost love and pain so deep, it can't even be named. Yet still we're able to comfort each other, to hold onto each other and enjoy what life still has to offer. Some might call it 'settling', but that does it an injustice. Love can still be love, no matter what else it encompasses.

So yes, I've moved on and in a few days time will move one step further. But the part of my heart that was Jack's will always be separate from anything else.

I only hope that one day he's able to move on too.

I know it's not easy for him. It never is for career military people, especially those in the more covert divisions. And no way is Jack not still doing something highly dangerous and secret. Deep Space Radar Telemetry, my ass! I know Jack and though he does know more than the average person about stellar phenomenon, that's his hobby, not his career. Studying radio frequencies, or whatever it's meant to be in there, will not fuel my Jack with the adrenaline rush he's always needed to function in his job.

My Jack.

I still see him now and again. There's no way either of us can move far from Charlie's grave, nor Dave from Audrey's, so I sometimes run into him down at the mall. He's still as strong and handsome as ever, though the brown hair has been replaced by a startling silver, that seems to catch the eye even more. We go and have coffee and chat about things in general. He asks me how I am and I ask about him. It's a little bit rote, and hesitant, but you'd have to be dumb to not know we both still care.

There are a lot more lines on his face now and I often worry about him and what he's up to. I've seen too many bruises and too many stiff movements that suggest a body still living the hard life. But then, when he talks about his team, I know he's far from ready to retire. At least I know that when he's with them, he's surrounded by people who care about him. That much is obvious. There's no way he could care about them so much, without the feelings being reciprocated and, funnily enough, that means a lot to me.

I sent Jack his invitation to the wedding a couple of months ago. I needed him to know that his blessing still mattered to me. Legally, we might not be connected any more, but emotionally? I doubt that bond is ever going to be broken. We still love each other, but there's just too much hurt between us to ever get back together again. We just seem to magnify the pain between us.

I also need to show our joint friends that Jack is still a part of my life and that he always will be. I know he doesn't socialize with them any more, and he has his new friends from the mountain now, but that's his choice. I guess I just wanted to show everyone that Jack was not persona-non-grata, or whatever the expression is. I doubt Jack's bothered one whit about what anyone else thinks, but it's important to **me!**

I told him he could bring his team with him if he wanted. I know invites traditionally say 'partner', but I'm not having Jack feeling lonely among a large group of people he either doesn't know, or doesn't really want to speak to any more. I'd hate the thought of him struggling to find the 'one' partner to come with and his embarrassment if he couldn't. After Dave and Dad, he'll be the most important person to me there and if the price of seeing him is three more dinner settings, it's a small price to pay.

I don't think he's 'seeing' anyone at the moment, although there is that pretty Major in his team that might be a possibility. I know he'd never break the regulations, but I also know she's the type he'll find attractive. Looks aren't everything, but you have to admit, there's more than a passing physical resemblance between her and me. And from the comments he's made, I know he cares a lot about her. Mind you, he cares about all of his team though, so what do **I** know? He's always taken his responsibilities seriously.

I just hope, one day, he does find someone to share his life with. He deserves it.

I've asked Dad to keep an eye on him if he does turn up, especially if he comes alone. He doesn't know yet if he can get away. He says his schedule's somewhat erratic these days, but barring any emergencies, he'll try his best. Jack's a strong enough personality to do that, come alone, even knowing all the stares he's bound to get as

the 'ex husband who's done her wrong'. Oh I know what they think, even if I disagree. But he'd do it all the same - for me.

Dear God, why do I still love him, when I can't still love him?

I got his wedding gift yesterday. There was a note saying he didn't want to leave it until the last minute in case the base had an emergency. And he wanted to give us enough time to exchange it if we didn't like it, before the wedding panic got in the way. But both Dave and I were enchanted by it. It's beautiful. Jack's always had exquisite taste. It's a genuine antique grandfather clock and must have cost a fortune. Just as well Jack gets hazard pay, because it probably cost an arm and a leg. Oh bad images there, Sara. I really don't want to think about Jack like that. The reality's bad enough without adding to it.

There are none of those pretentious tunes on the clock; just an honest deep chime with each passing hour, and it has a beautifully worked mahogany case. Delicate filigree patterns chase each other up it's length and on its face is the legend 'Time flies, but beauty lingers'. I'm sure Jack was trying to tell me something with that message and he probably bypassed a dozen other gifts to settle on this one. But he always was a thoughtful husband where gifts were concerned. Quite a romantic, though he'd hate to have others know it.

Well, it really is time to get up now and enjoy my last easy day before I have to start the final preparations. Most things are in hand and I'm not really worried. Years of being a military wife teach you a thing or two about organization. But next week I'll be marrying an economics teacher and starting a whole new chapter in my life. I do love Dave and I can't wait to wake up to him each morning, arguing because we're late for work, or we've run out of bread for sandwiches. Even though I worry if part of this is only because it will bring me comfort to be with someone again.

Perhaps I'm being too honest and analytical for my own good, or maybe it's just those last minute jitters again. I certainly had those before marrying Jack and not a single thing went wrong that day, or made me doubt my decision.

I felt a million dollars stood next to him in his uniform, like the whole Air Force had stopped to watch its golden boy get hitched. He was immaculate. And his eyes laughed in a way that never ceased to make my legs turn to jelly over our years together.

I take one last moment to stretch and wake myself up for the day. I'm going to go shopping and get some fancy lingerie to surprise Dave with. It's always worth it to see the surprise on his face when he discovers me in something new and he doesn't mind the money it costs. After our losses, we've both learned to place value where it really belongs. I hold his pillow to my face for one moment and, for just a second, before reality reasserts itself; I notice that it's the wrong smell.

Yes, I'll soon be Mrs Neilson, but a part of me will always be Mrs O'Neill, two L's.

The End

