

**not with a bang**

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# not with a bang

by [synecdochic](#)

## Summary

It's not that kind of love.

## Notes

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miella was oh-so-very-patient in putting up with me forcing her to actually think about Jack and Daniel being anything other than hetero lifemates. This one, unoriginal though it might be, is for her.

Stretches the definition quite a bit, but still, slashfic25 prompt #21: *epiphany*.

It shouldn't shake Daniel so much to see Hammond in jeans and a flannel shirt; he's seen the man off-duty before, seen him in just about every situation possible, in fact. But it's odd to slide into the booth across from him like they're any two guys catching up over dinner. They're not Dr. Jackson and General Hammond; they're Daniel and George. It's harder than Daniel thought it would be to stop thinking of him as "General".

"It's good to see you again, son," Hammond says, and reaches across the table to shake his hand. "I'm just sorry I haven't had the chance to catch up with all of you the last few times I've been down at Peterson."

"We wouldn't have been able to get away," Daniel says, smiling. It *is* good to see him; Landry's a good enough man, but he's no George Hammond, and Daniel has missed George more than he'd realized. "How are Tessa and Kayla?"

It's the right question, but it always has been. "Growing up so *fast*," Hammond replies, with a sigh and a shake of his head, and then they're off talking about grandchildren and retirement and a hundred other bits of conversation they'd never really found the time to have.

The updates on everyone's lives and the messages Daniel's been charged to pass on carry them all through dinner, and by the time they're on to dessert George is telling stories about Jack's ignominious debuts on the Washington scene, the ones Jack hasn't shared with Daniel yet, and they're both laughing so hard Daniel can barely touch his cappuccino. George finally sits back and wipes his eyes and sighs, fondly. "He'll do fine," he says. "It's good for them all to have someone to shake them up a little. It was certainly good for me."

Daniel laughs. "Well, I can't deny being responsible for my fair share of that."

"No indeed," George says, and laughs again. "The two of you. If I hadn't already been bald, my hair would have fallen out from stress." He shakes his head, and then his face gets serious. "Although I do have to say, son, I've always been grateful to the two of you for your discretion in certain other matters."

Daniel's mind is already on how he's going to torment Jack with the thing about insulting the First Lady's dress without knowing who she was, so it takes a second for the distracted "hmm?" to slip loose.

George leans across the table, his voice softening, like he doesn't want anyone to overhear. "You boys never rubbed my nose in it, and you never made me make a hard decision, and I thank you for it. I wasn't convinced of the wisdom of things at first, and it took me a while to overcome some of my prejudices, but I'll confess, watching the two of you -- well, it helped with that. I was just glad to see the both of you happy and settled, even though I know you had some hard times getting there."

Daniel can feel his brows drawing together, the lines grooved in his forehead. He can't possibly imagine what George might be talking about, except -- "You think -- *me*? And *Jack*?"

George cocks his head. "Of course I couldn't say anything, not until after I'd retired, but --" He stops, as though he's reading Daniel's bafflement, which is entirely possible; Daniel knows he must be telegraphing across the entire restaurant. "You mean --"

Daniel holds up a hand. He's searching through his memories of the past eight years, replaying them back and forth, looking at them through the right set of eyes. "Oh, God," he says, and then bursts out laughing.

George is starting to look flustered, and Daniel waves him an apology. "No, no," he says, trying to get control, breathing evenly and deeply and still snickering anyway. "No, I'm not laughing at you, I'm laughing at -- the thought -- No, we're not, I mean, I heard a rumor once, but there's nothing -- we never --"

Heads are starting to turn, subtly, as he loses it again, and Daniel just gives up and rests his head on the table, wrapping his arms around his abused stomach muscles. "Sorry," he says, when he's laughed himself out, "sorry," and then clears his throat and straightens. "George, I'm honored that you'd be such a good friend, but there's never been anything like that between me and Jack."

There's a faint blush, just the palest hint, across George's cheeks. "Well, then," he says. "I am sorry for misreading the situation."

"Don't worry about it," Daniel says, and then it's more gossip all the way down to Siler's new bike and Balinsky's betting pool until the predictable fight over the check and promises to do this again as soon as possible.

\*

Daniel takes the phone into bed with him, pulls the covers up and shuts off the light before calling. Jack answers on the third ring. "'Lo?"

"It's me," Daniel says, chuckling. "Insulted any world leaders' wives lately?"

"How did you -- oh, right, you were having dinner with Hammond tonight. I take it I was a topic of conversation?"

Daniel can picture Jack, curled up in the bed of his Georgetown townhouse, smiling into the dark. "*We* were," Daniel says. "He told me how much he appreciated our discretion, and the fact that we never put him in a bad spot, and thanked us for opening his eyes to a few prejudices he was holding."

"He --" Daniel can tell the exact second the penny drops, because Jack breaks into laughter as well, the short sharp bark Jack uses when he's truly amused about something.

"That was my response, too." Daniel rolls over, stretches out on his stomach. "I had to break it to him gently. I thought he'd die of embarrassment."

Jack's shaking his head; Daniel can practically hear it. "And he never said anything. I guess it's good to know we had someone watching our backs."

"Even if the backs in question didn't need watching," Daniel agrees. "Still. I was touched. He said to say hi, by the way." Jack's response is lost in a yawn, and suddenly Daniel remembers. "Oh, shit, I'm sorry. I forgot about the time difference *again*."

"You always forget about the time difference, Daniel," Jack says, dryly. Amused; tolerant. Familiar.

"Still. I shouldn't have called; I just had to laugh at that with you before I forgot. Go back to sleep, okay? I'll call you in the morning."

"Okay," Jack says. If Daniel hadn't already realized he'd woken Jack, that would have cinched it; the only time Jack was that sweetly agreeable was when he was already three-quarters gone. "Sleep well. Love you."

"Love you too," Daniel says, and hangs up. Across the country, he knows, Jack has gone back to sleep with the phone still in his hand, stretched out across the pillow, waiting for the dawn.

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