

## Home

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# **Home**

by [magequisition](#)

## Summary

Sam's struggling with the stress, and she's not sure why.

## Notes

Written for Caffeinated Magic's FanFest 01. Many thanks to Beth for the beta <3

Sam sighed as she set aside the last piece of paperwork-for now, anyway. Pushing a loose strand of hair out of her eyes in irritation, she stood up, intending to go to the gym to blow off some steam before dinner. As she stepped out from behind her desk, Rodney came storming into her office, Radek Zelenka close behind him.

"Sam, would you tell Radek that there is no way that a positron convergence array can do what he's attempting? He continually insists on trying to use Asgard tech and he really has no idea what he's doing and he's setting the whole project back-" Sam held up a hand to silence him.

"Rodney, shut up. First of all, I have no idea what Radek is trying to do, so I don't know if it'll work or not. Second of all, he does know what he is doing and you know that. Third...well, there actually isn't much of a third point. Let Radek do what he's doing, Rodney; you know perfectly well that he's thoroughly competent, and as for setting the project back, it's not like this is a high priority thing you're working on. So relax, okay?" Sam snapped at him. Rodney stepped back, stunned into uncharacteristic speechlessness. Sam sighed.

"Sorry, Rodney. I shouldn't have snapped. But I still meant it, even if it came out badly. Let Radek test his theory. He's good with the tech and he knows what he's doing." Rodney gave her a sidelong glance and left the room, muttering something Sam mostly missed except for the words cranky, PMS, and deprived. Radek sent her a look of sympathy and gratitude before following Rodney out of the lab. Sam rolled her eyes and left as well, hoping some time on the treadmill would work out some of the tension she was feeling

The truth was, she was struggling more than she'd expected to with the rigors of commanding Atlantis. She was competent, she knew that, and it wasn't like she lacked command experience-she'd led teams when necessary during her time on SG-1. Professionally, she was fairly certain things were going fine. With the exception of Rodney's attitude-and that was just Rodney-she felt like she was developing fairly good relationships with the people she was commanding, and the city hadn't blown up yet, so she wasn't terribly concerned about her performance review when it came up, but personally she wasn't faring quite as well. She could feel the stress starting to get to her, and she was trying to figure out exactly why she was on the verge of a meltdown most days. She'd always coped with the stress and danger before. Turning into the gym's locker room, she continued to muse over the situation while she changed into the shorts and tank top she preferred to work out in. She moved into the main area of the gym and found an empty treadmill. She climbed on and set it to a quick jogging pace. Beginning to run, she found her thoughts wandering back to the stress she was feeling as her feet pound against the machine.

She ran for an hour before climbing off the treadmill, sweaty, tired, and no closer to figuring out why she was having more trouble than usual dealing with stress. Moving back into the locker room, she turned the shower on very hot and stepped in.

After a quick shower, she tied her hair up and headed to the commissary for dinner. As she sat at a small table with her tray of chicken, some kind of mixed vegetables, and blue jello, the cause of her intense stress hit her.

*Sam Carter was homesick.*

Well, not homesick, exactly, but she was missing her friends from SG-1. For ten years, they'd been essentially inseparable and while she was fond of many of the people she worked with on Atlantis, in particular Sheppard's team who she was getting to know fairly well, she realised she was missing the comfort of a small group who knew you as well as-sometimes better than-you knew yourself. The fact that it wasn't exactly easy to even communicate with them didn't help. She was sure it was partly her own fault. John in particular had been nothing but friendly, and she quite liked Teyla, but she was reluctant to try and press her way into the friendship dynamic John had cultivated amongst his team. She'd always been a bit awkward in new social situations, if the topic of conversation was anything other than physics, and she knew very well the importance of team dynamics among a group who faced the types of dangers Sheppard's team faced every day. She was also, she realised, concerned about her image as a leader. She'd always been in awe of General Hammond's easy command of the SGC and now that she was in a similar position, she wondered if it truly was as easy for him as he'd always shown or if he was just well-practiced. Glancing down at her plate, she realised that she was just pushing her food around-although her jello was gone-and gave up. As she stood up, a commissary employee approached her and took her plate from her.

"Let me, Colonel." he said, placing the still nearly-full tray onto a cart. "Not hungry?" Sam smiled at him.

"Not today....Aaron?" she asked, hoping she'd remembered the right name.

"Yes, Colonel," the young man replied, smiling at her. "I'm touched you remember."

"Anytime. Thank you." she said before starting the walk to her quarters, still musing the sense of loneliness that she now realised was manifesting as stress. She decided that when she arrived back at her quarters she'd try to arrange some time to get in contact with Jack. Finally arriving at her room, she slid her hand over the sensor and the door whizzed open. She stepped inside and unzipped her uniform jacket, hanging it up on the hook she'd put beside the door. Turning back around, she stopped dead in her tracks.

Jack and Daniel were sitting on the couch on the far side of her quarters, their faces split into wide grins.

"Hey, Carter," said Jack easily.

"W-when...how...?" she stammered.

"Check it out, Daniel, she's speechless. Didn't know it was possible." Jack said, teasing. Daniel stood up, walking over to wrap his best friend in a hug.

"We wanted to surprise you. We arranged it with Colonel Sheppard. Happy birthday, Sam."

"I'm going to kill John," Sam said, grinning widely as she hugged Daniel. When he released her, she turned to Jack, who had walked up behind Daniel. Jack hugged her tightly.

"Happy birthday," he whispered, his face suddenly serious. Sam tried to blink away the tears pricking her eyes.

"It's a lot better now," she said, her face buried in his shoulder. As he held her, she felt the tension leaving her body.

"Uh, I'm just going to go see if your archaeology department's got anything new, Sam. I'll catch up with you guys later." Daniel said, suddenly eager to leave the two alone. They didn't respond and Daniel slipped out unnoticed. When they finally pulled apart a few minutes later, Sam looked at Jack and smiled.

"Thank you," she said.

"Daniel and I both had some leave coming. And I wanted to tell you the news in person." Sam blinked, confused.

"News?" she asked.

"My paperwork went through. As of August 31, I'm officially retired. Who runs this joint? Think you can pull some strings to find some quarters for a new resident?" Sam beamed.

"Somehow, I don't think that'll be a problem. " She wrapped her arms around him again, the excited grin refusing to leave her face as she realised that in a few short months, everything she'd been so bothered by twenty minutes before would be, essentially, a non-issue. Taking Jack's hand, she led him back to the couch he'd been sitting on when she entered and sat down, feeling lighter than she had in weeks.

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