

Lemons For Lemonade

By Scribblesinink

With a jolt that almost threw Rodney off his feet, the transporter came to an abrupt halt. He frowned in confusion as he steadied himself against the wall with one hand. That was... odd. The transporters normally ran so smoothly; you never knew you had arrived at your destination until the doors opened.

Which... they also didn't. Rodney's frown deepened, creasing his brow, and he waved a hand at the control panel. Nothing. Growing a bit concerned, he tried again. The results were the same: nothing happened.

Sighing heavily, he tapped his earpiece. "This is Dr. McKay. Is there something going on with the transporter system?" There was a brief burst of static, before Dr. Weir's voice came in.

"Um, yes. Sorry, Rodney. Hang in there; we'll get this sorted out in a minute. Where are you?"

Rodney growled something unrepeatable under his breath, before snapping, "In a transporter, obviously!" He drew a breath and added, trying to sound a little calmer, "Somewhere between the South Pier and the cafeteria."

In his excitement over exploring the new storage rooms they'd found in one of the distant towers, he'd forgotten the time. It was now mid-afternoon, and his stomach was growling audibly. In fact, he thought, he was even getting a little lightheaded from the lack of food. After all, he had a delicate metabolism that was easily upset. "How long?"

Another moment of silence followed, before a different voice—one of the techs, he thought—informed him they were still trying to determine what exactly the problem was.

Rolling his eyes at so much incompetence—if he'd been there, he'd at least have found the source of the problem by now—Rodney switched off comms and began to examine the control panel more closely. If only he hadn't forgotten his datapad when rushing out of the storage room in his quest for lunch; it'd be so easy to connect to the controls and use the manual override. But perhaps if he could get the covering off...?

He tried to get a fingernail behind the cover plate, hoping to wrench it loose so he could reach the crystals and wires behind it. However, he quickly learned it was hopeless without something to lever the plate out. The Ancients had been too good at putting

things together, and his attempt only resulted in a torn nail. Sucking on his wounded finger, Rodney realized that, without tools, there was no way he could help himself: he'd have to wait for rescue.

Grumbling about the injustice of it all—usually he was the one *doing* the rescuing, and then it all went so much faster, anyway—he settled himself on a crate somebody had forgotten in the corner. His stomach rumbled again.

With nothing to do, and nothing to occupy his mind, he grew fascinated with the workings of his body: the hole where his stomach was supposed to be; the soft (or not so soft) *growl* as his innards protested their need for sustenance; the dryness of his mouth that made it hard to swallow. He patted his pockets, hoping there might be a PowerBar or something in there, but he found them all empty. He wished he'd brought something to drink, at least.

Frustrated, he got back to his feet and kicked at the doors. While he knew such violence was utterly useless, doing something—anything—made him feel better for a very brief instant. Then he kicked the doors again with enough force to hurt his toe. "Ow...!"

Hopping on one foot, he half-fell against the doors. He twisted around to survey the rest of the small transporter chamber, seeking for another way out. That was when his gaze fell on the crate again. From this angle, he could see it was labeled 'catering'; at the sight of the word, his stomach uttered a very loud *GROWL*. His mouth watered. Supplies for the kitchen: that had to be edible, right?

He hesitated only a second more before pouncing on the crate. Nobody, not even Dr. Weir, would begrudge him a little raiding of their stores while he was stuck in a transporter, would they? Kneeling next to the crate, he tried to dislodge the lid. Human-made, it gave a lot easier than the control panel covering; within a minute, he could pull the lid up and see what was inside.

With a horrified cry, Rodney stumbled back, landing hard on his backside. He hit his earpiece again. "Sheppard! Somebody! Get me out of here! NOW!"

He scuttled backward, pushing himself into the furthest corner of the compartment, which suddenly seemed to have shrunk to half its normal size. He didn't dare glance away from the crate, as if afraid that, if he did, the contents would jump out and devour him.

Because: the crate? Was packed to the rim with big, fat, yellow lemons.

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