

The Gift

Obviously, this is set in a universe where Gethsemane (the X-Files episode, not the religious event!) never happened and before fifth season. Oh, and the date at the end? Nope, it's not Skinner's birthday, nor their anniversary, nor anything to do with when I started, finished, or conceived this story. Let's just say that walking through a Hallmark shop a week or so prior to this event inspired me!



Mulder shoved his hands deeper in his jeans' pockets, and glowered at yet another window display. He didn't actually mind shopping; quite enjoyed it, most of the time. Loved walking into a menswear store and watching as the salesmen argued over who was going to get him. Loved standing there while some guy tried not to salivate while measuring his inseam. Loved the way he'd have four guys waiting on him, vying to see which sweater went best with the color of his eyes.

This, however, just wasn't any fun at all.

And no, he didn't give a damn that he sounded like a spoiled brat, even to himself: he was, frankly, entitled.

He moved on; to the next window, this one displaying enough golf paraphernalia to stock St. Andrew's and The Masters and still have enough left for Dinah Shore and her lady friends.

Skinner didn't play golf.

Fine. On to the next window.

Skinner didn't play tennis.

And Skinner used the FBI gym, the FBI pool, the FBI track. Or the gym and the pool in his apartment building.

Whoopee.

To the next window.

Maybe Skinner would appreciate a satin teddy or the latest 'sheer support' bras.

Or maybe Skinner would use those spaghetti straps to strangle him.

Kids clothes. Clothes for Barbie—oh, sorry, those were clothes for teen-aged girls. Teen-aged girls with bad taste. God, those sweaters would be too short even on Scully.

A 'health' store, with bottles of the latest fads in herbs and vitamins.



Oh, yeah, Skinner would really appreciate the underlying message in those little gifts.

A card store, windows dripping last minute Father's Day cards and hideous trinkets. A furniture store with a 'Just for Dad' recliner, a sunglasses store, a bath stuff store.

Walter Skinner reclining in strawberry scented bubbles.

No, Mulder didn't think so either.—

Mulder took the escalator up to the next level of the mall, nimbly dodging strollers, giggling teens and people taking surveys, and emerged safely with an entirely new level of mall to mine.

A bookstore: that was possible.

Half an hour later.

No books. Or too many books. Did Skinner have that photography book? Would he appreciate that one, or consider it too pornographic for an assistant director of the FBI?

Mulder was pretty sure Georgia O'Keefe wasn't Skinner's style, and Mapplethorpe would get him hung. Which took care of hobby books.

And after some of their recent cases, he didn't much think Skinner would appreciate the latest Stephen King. Oh, here was the perfect thing: *Mindhunter* by John Douglas, yep, Skinner would love that. Almost as much as one by Bill Patterson.

So no books.

Candy store. Nope. If it wasn't imported, and Belgian, forget it.

A wine store. That might be it...

Champagne would be trying just that bit too much, white wine too subjective a preference, and how could he know if Beaujolais, Merlot, Pinot Noir or something else entirely was Skinner's choice in red this week?

And he refused to even consider kitchenware.

Ditto for the bed'n'bath store next door.

A back remedy store? Oh, yes, that would go down just swell: here sir, since you're getting so old...

Skinner's back was fine. No back remedies, or he'd be the one to end up in traction.

More clothes.

Sweaters. Shirts, ties, belts, underwear, pajamas, T-shirts, golf shirts, pants, shorts...

He'd find something in here. Guaranteed.

He began with the sweaters, was nearly defeated by the sheer magnitude of choice offered.

Then the 'what size' problem hit him with all the subtlety of a dyspeptic buffalo. Length of sleeve. Width of neck. Fabric. Texture. Style.

Okay. Ties. Ties were good, ties were safe.

His choice in ties was laughed at, no matter how much time he spent carefully selecting what he thought were perfectly normal, suitable G-man ties.

Okay, so no ties.

Pajamas and underwear.

Oh, yeah, that would look good, an agent giving his boss briefs.

Shirts. Belts.

He'd given his dad shirts for years.

So no shirts.

And belts... Mulder stood handling the belts for a long time, before leaving them behind.

Belts were something for Skinner to choose.

Disappointed salesmen in his wake, Mulder left for pastures greener.

Two hours later, empty-handed, he arrived.

The door was opened almost immediately, Skinner staring at him for a moment. "I wasn't aware we'd scheduled a meeting, Agent Mulder."

"We hadn't," Mulder said, easing his way in. "I was in the neighborhood..."

"On a Sunday afternoon, and you decided to stop by my apartment?"

Mulder looked around, sniffed, surreptitiously: no smell of tobacco. Which warranted a careful, assessing look at Skinner.

Skinner, in black sweater with the sleeves rolled up, and black jeans. Old black jeans. Faded black jeans. Black jeans that were tight, and form-fitting, and faded along every...detail.

Creak, clack, brain crashing back into gear, jump-starting his mouth. "I wasn't busy."

"And that's why you came here?"

Subtle nuance in the voice soft and dark as that sweater.

They didn't discuss this. They never discussed this. They just—sometimes—did it.

"I'm sorry, sir," Mulder said, lowering his head and folding his hands neatly behind his back. "I didn't mean to intrude."

"Look at me."

Mulder looked up, through lowered lashes. Allowed his mouth to drop slightly open. Just enough. An invitation, not a demand.

He'd learned not to demand.

Skinner was standing there, hands on hips, looking at him.

Stone-faced, unyielding, controlled.

Mulder was hard already.



Finally: a nod, and Skinner pushing his sleeves up again. “Upstairs,” he said.

He knew better than to smile, but it was there, inside him, as he let the day, and the world, slide away. Just him, and Skinner, and what they did, sometimes. “Yes, sir.”

All the way up those fourteen steps, he could feel Skinner’s gaze on his ass, stripping him of his pretenses and bastions, seeing him for what he truly was. What he could dare to be, with Skinner.

At the door to the bedroom, Mulder stopped, awaiting instructions, and every one of Skinner’s words undid another knot of tension in his spine, leaving him languid with anticipation: “Naked. Shower first, and clean yourself out.”

“Yes, sir,” Mulder said, stripping right there, without even checking to see if the vertical blinds were closed over the window at the end of the hall. He simply did as he was told.

Trust.

That’s what this was all about.

Well, that, and sex.

He made sure he was completely dry before he knocked on the bedroom door.

Waited, impatiently, hungry, until he was told to enter.

The blinds and drapes were drawn, absolutely no light entering from outside. One lamp dripping pale yellow in a small circle, the bed stripped down to the bottom sheet, bare necessities, the simplicity of their needs.

The cuffs were already in place.

Mulder’s cock stirred, his erection returning, his cock rising as he walked towards the bed.

Stood there, waiting again, eyes lowered, although he wanted, desperately, to stare.

Shivered, naked and vulnerable in more than body, Skinner looking inside him, knowing his thoughts, Skinner’s voice stroking him like leather down his back.

“Look at me.”

He looked. And permitted, looked even more, drinking it in. Skinner was standing at the other side of the bed, naked. A special treat, that, to allow him to see so much so soon, having done nothing to earn it. Skinner was right beside the light, every muscle picked out in the pearlescent glow. Every muscle, and the perfect chest hair, and the gorgeous, heavy curve of his cock.

And the gorgeous, heavy curve of the belt, dripping from Skinner’s left hand.

“On the bed. Face down.”

No need to think, all that was required was that he react, and that he obey. Barely a breath, and he was on the bed, face down, with arms raised, wrists in the cuffs, waiting to be locked in place.

Click. Click. He tugged: secure. No escape.

All right, so they both knew he could release these easily if he wanted to, or in case of emergency. But they both also knew he wouldn’t free himself for anything less than the Apocalypse or CSM showing up at the door: the illusion of freedom, and the actuality of obedience.

Cream, being rubbed into his shoulders, and the tops of his thighs, dappling down to his buttocks. Cream that smelled of the locker room, BENGAY beginning to burn nice and warm. An old quilt covering him now, some crib quilt made a long time ago by someone long forgotten. Someone who had never imagined to what use her quilt would be put.

Mulder lay there, and waited.

Time, passing.

And he waited.

Time passing.

He squirmed, rubbing his cock into the sheet under him, rubbing his nipples against fabric smooth as skin.

Time passing.

And it was time for him to earn what came next, to earn his reward with this unnatural patience and obedience.

So he waited, wanting, comfort growing inside apace with desire as he surrendered his will, as he was anchored, and steadied.

Still, he waited.

And then...

The sound of air being displaced, a muffled whack, and the sweet sting of pain.

No marks to betray them, but the pleasure of almost the full pain of the belt marrying the lingering after-sting as the ointment burned.

From his shoulders to his mid-thighs, again and again, the sound, the feel, the pure pain, and the warm, warm glow of pleasure blurring along his nerves, into his muscles, turning his bones liquid, setting him free in this oasis of sensation.

The warmth turning into heat, too hot, beginning to edge from pleasurable pain to real pain—and then, as always, it stopped.



One blow away from spoiling it, it stopped.

The quilt removed, coolness along his heated skin, coolness and warm hands, the air motionless against him, the hands moving, skimming, pressing, tracing, molding, whatever pleased Skinner.

And Mulder knew he pleased Skinner.

Knew it from the way Skinner touched him, knew it from the way Skinner did this against all common sense, knew it from the way Skinner lingered over him.

Knew it, too, from the care Skinner took. There was a cool dampness against him, making sure there was no unabsorbed BENGAY to get in where he really didn't want it to be. And then the hands were back again, stroking him, sliding between his buttocks, down, between his legs, touching the back of his balls, fingering him, moving him, one hand touching him between the cheeks, the other stroking his cock.

A finger inside him, sudden, cool, dry.

His cock pulled down between his legs, his balls pulled tight by the pressure of his cock being pulled hard against them, separating them, scrotum tightly shining, his cock pulled backwards, upwards towards his ass, far enough to hurt. Just enough. To what had been his limit, once, and then more, harder, farther, to what was his limit now.

Movement behind him, the mattress dipping under the familiarity of Skinner's weight.

Skinner's mouth on him, licking the tip, tasting him, licking the crown of him again, and then the tongue sliding that last inch, wetness licking at the darkness of his ass.

Not something they'd done very often. The sensation surged through Mulder, his balls trying to pull up tighter, his ass closing tight, hungry to pull Skinner inside him.

"Please," Mulder said, raising himself up onto his knees, wanting more of Skinner's mouth. "Oh, sir, please."

He was abandoned.

His cock slapped up against his belly, the head wet, the air-cooling it, taking him a few steps away from the edge of orgasm. He knelt there, ass in the air, knees widespread, his asshole exposed.

Mulder waited.

And waited.

Heard a voice: His voice. Warm, and rough, like a tongue rasping down his spine. "What do you want?"

"I want you to fuck me."

A hard slap, between his cheeks, the fingertips catching his balls. Enough to make him jump, not enough to lose his erection, the pain jangling tenderly through him.

"What do you want?"

He'd told Skinner what he wanted. Told him, told him—

"I want you to..."

Another hard slap, and before the heat of it had faded, a hand reaching between his legs, holding his balls, tugging them downwards, hurting him. It was... heavenly.

"I want you to spank me, sir," he said, and felt his face burn hotly as the rest of the truth died in his throat.

"How?"

One hand, tugging sweetly on his balls, the other hand stroking his ass so gently. Not enough. Nowhere near enough.

He wouldn't get what he needed, what he wanted, unless he actually said it.

Fear, bitter as bile in his throat.

They'd reached a limit weeks ago, had been working up towards the next limit, the next barrier, as they had done so many times, with so many of his other limits. Easy enough, to breach those barriers. Easy enough.

But this wasn't just sex. This wasn't just pain, or perversion, mere pleasures of the flesh.

This was about a truth he'd thought himself ready to face.

Seemed he might have been wrong.

He knew what Skinner wanted from him; knew what Skinner was demanding of him. Wanted to give it, to both of them, for both of them. But to put into words what they had never spoken of before...

To confess.

It was harder than he'd imagined it could ever be.

Skinner was indulging him, giving him an amazing, and flattering, amount of leeway to get him through this, Skinner's voice seductive and encouraging as Skinner asked again: "How do you want it?"

"Over your knee, sir," he breathed, so low he barely heard it himself.

Smack! Hard on his ass, and he groaned, the first aching crack of ice floe thawing in spring.

"Louder," Skinner told him.

The words were inside him, tumbling over and over like rocks down a mountain, bruising him. He





swallowed, fought himself, said what he could.

“Over your knee, sir.”

A lifeline thrown to him, if he had the courage to take it, to hold onto it. “Like a bad boy, Fox?”

Like a boy?

How could a man admit a thing like that yet still see a man’s face in the mirror come morning?

The hand stroking his ass gently, Skinner giving him time, giving him space. Giving him the warmth of his voice. “I asked you a question.”

He’d heard the question. Couldn’t quite bring himself to hear the answer. To say that answer out loud? To admit it was to make it true. To make this deeper than any game.

To make this real.

To lay his soul bare, his shame and his need in plain sight.

He couldn’t say it. Not yet, not quite yet.

He breathed in, a souging sob, and left only silence.

Skinner was leaning over him, uncuffing him, rolling him onto his back.

No expression on Skinner’s face, no disapproval, no approval, nothing. Just Skinner, as impassive as he’d ever been, uncuffing him, and reaching for the lube.

It would end, like this, with a simple fucking, and never be mentioned again, that unbreached barrier stabbing upwards between them.

Skinner was lubing him up now, one finger in him, soon pushing two inside him, while Skinner’s free hand was bringing Skinner back to full erection.

No disapproval. None at all. Just...disappointment.

He’d failed Skinner. He’d been led to his limits, and allowed to find his own truths, in his own time. And now, when he’d come here, today of all days, no mistaking his intent, no mistaking his tacit promise—he’d failed Skinner.

“Sir?”

An inquiring look.

“Pleas—don’t.”

The fingers withdrawn immediately, Skinner getting up off the bed.

“No! I didn’t mean don’t fuck me—”

Skinner standing by the side of the bed, wiping his hands clean, not looking at him. “Get dressed.”

“Sir—”

“I said: Get. Dressed.”

And Leave. Unsaid, but heard nonetheless. Only for today, perhaps, but to leave—

“Please, sir, I’m sorry, I didn’t mean—”

Skinner wasn’t looking at him.

Broad shoulders, long, strong back, so much tension, so much rejection.

For both of them.

Skinner had actually put it into words, had all but asked, and not just for what Mulder needed.

And he...

He was on the verge of destroying this, if he hadn’t already. All because he couldn’t actually say what he wanted, what they both knew he wanted.

Couldn’t say what they’d been so cautiously edging towards for months now.

But he could, at least, tell another truth.

“I’m scared, sir,” he whispered. Repeated, louder: “I’m scared.”

Skinner turning towards him at last.

“Scared? Of what?”

Horrifying, to see that in Skinner’s eyes. “Not you. Of myself.”

Silence, waiting, listening properly, the only person who ever seemed to truly listen to him.

He’d said the first of it, unlocking the scarred old door inside himself, Skinner’s patience pushing it that bit farther ajar, light trickling in.

Skinner coming back to the bed now, looking at him, looking right into his eyes, reading him. Knowing him.

And it wasn’t the end, after all.

“What do you want, Fox?” asked low, and soft, and gentle.

“You,” Mulder told him, unflinching. “I want you, putting me across your knee. Punishing me, sir.” Deep breath. Easier to say this to Skinner than to hear it from himself. Taking strength from the steadiness, and confidence, in Skinner’s gaze.

Discovering that living up to Skinner’s faith in him was more important than hiding from a truth they both, after all, already knew, but still, his voice flickered like a candle in a gale. “Like a bad boy.”

Then Skinner was there, needing this as much as Mulder, needing it enough to let Mulder not have to say the final, irrevocable words, letting that be enough: Skinner, there, surging up onto the bed, hauling Mulder into a hard hug, holding him tight enough to hurt. Constriction easing, and he was being moved, pressed down across Skinner’s lap, being positioned just so.

A hand on his ass, only stroking him, promising





more, one more check, one last part before their covenant. "Is this what your father did?"

"God, no! Nothing like this. I was sent to my room, or ignored. Never anything like this."

Which according to his college books, explained everything.

Only it didn't.

Nothing explained why he was feeling soothed, inside, where turmoil was such an old lodger, he rarely even noticed it any more, save by its absence. Nothing explained why he needed this, and why someone else would want to give it to him, and frankly, he didn't much want to think about it. Not right now. Not when Skinner was touching him between his cheeks again, fingers teasing him, thrusting into him, where he was still slick from before.

A moment's stillness. And then: a hand landing on him, the sound more shocking than the sensation. At first. For the first half-dozen strokes, it was mild, mellow. Slowly, growing harder, and hotter, and wilder. Not mellow now, no, burning fierce and hot and hungry.

Perfect.

Under him, he could feel Skinner, hardness pressing into him every time the mirroring hardness of Skinner's hand smacked into his ass. Caught between a rock and a hard place, Mulder thought, and smiled. The smile grew dreamy, as Skinner kept up the rhythm, and gave Mulder what he wanted. Gave him what he feared.

Amazing, what a difference it made, to simply know what it was he wanted; what this was all about. What they'd been slowly skirting for so long.

The last smack, and then hands soothing him, slow, gentle circling.

"Fuck me," he murmured. "Please, fuck me."

Rolled onto his back, his legs lifted into the air, put over Skinner's shoulders.

"Say it, Fox."

Looking up, into brown eyes that knew he could do it, knew he could find the courage to face it, to say it.

"Fuck me, Daddy."

And Skinner slid his cock home. One long, smooth slide, and Mulder was filled. Complete.

He'd said it, and the Heavens hadn't fallen, and his father hadn't risen up to haunt him, and his dick hadn't fallen off. He'd said it. And it had got him Skinner inside him, hard, thick, hot. Needing him.

"Thank you, Daddy," he said, stroking the strong muscles of Skinner's chest, his upper arms.

His reward was seeing his words hit home; feeling his words' effect in the thrust of Skinner inside him.

The sky still hadn't fallen.

He'd been afraid of this? Of saying it out loud and having Skinner know? Of needing this? The fears slipped away, as Skinner filled his needs, as Skinner knew, and accepted him anyway. As Skinner met his openness with an openness Mulder had never expected to see. His own need, matched in Skinner's eyes.

He was being kissed, tongue thrusting deeply into his mouth, and he was being fucked, cock thrust deeply into his ass. Skinner stopped kissing him for a moment, Skinner's mouth open against his skin, Skinner's breath tingling as words were whispered into him. "You're mine," Skinner said, and Mulder felt those words hit home in their turn, in his turn; wondered if it showed in his eyes as much as it had in Skinner's.

He wanted to hear it again.

"You belong to me," Skinner told him, each word punctuated by a long thrust deep inside. "You are *mine*."

Small words, simple words, bearers of so complex a truth.

"Yes," Mulder said, lifting up to meet Skinner's downward thrust, "yes, Daddy."

"Nobody else can have you, Baby," Skinner said, his hand wrapping around Mulder's cock, pulling on him, hard and fast, the way Mulder loved best. "You're mine and nobody else's."

And it was true. Perfectly, simply true.

That was what he'd been truly afraid of. Scared, of needing, of wanting what he had wanted. Scared of the depth of hunger that would open up when he admitted what Skinner was to him.

Nothing compared to the fear of Skinner not wanting him. Of Skinner rejecting him, of Skinner turning him away.

Of Skinner wanting and needing him just as much.

But it was worth the fear, and the risk, to have Skinner inside him, like this. To have Skinner stroking his cock, like this. To have Skinner whispering words to him, like this. More than worth it, to hear the words Skinner was whispering to him.

One last touch, a hard squeeze on his cock, an unyielding thrust deep inside him, and he came.





Dissolving, into the whiteness streaming from his cock, into the whiteness of pure pleasure. Dissolving, into the new certainty of Skinner, claiming him.

He opened his eyes again, watched Skinner. Was allowed to watch Skinner, to see the naked hunger in those eyes, to see the bare need, to see Skinner lower all defenses and then, a few moments of kaleidoscoping sensations and emotions, to see as Skinner let pleasure claim him, too.

His legs were lowered, his thigh-muscles eased and caressed, his body turned onto his side and gathered into Skinner's embrace.

Skinner was rolling his nipple between fingers and thumb, the occasional sharp sting of nail a welcome brightness. His ass was still warm from his spanking, his hole still sensitized from being fucked, his back and shoulders were reminding him of the sting of the belt.

In other words, he felt wonderful.

There would be not a mark on him tomorrow, not a mark to betray what they'd done. Not a mark to betray what he'd said, and what they'd become.

He'd called Skinner 'Daddy.' And Skinner had wanted that as much as he had.

Daddy.

He'd said it. And been accepted. Hell, he'd been welcomed with open arms, literally. And he'd been possessed, figuratively.

"Daddy," he whispered, just to hear himself say it.

Was pulled into a tight embrace, was kissed, Skinner's hands cupping his ass, and was kissed again.

Nice to be wanted.

Nice? It was fucking fantastic.

They'd survived saying it; survived admitting it; survived this first, small beginning.

Maybe, just maybe, they could survive what he was beginning—just beginning to dare—to trust that they might both be feeling.

Maybe, just maybe, he'd say those words out loud too, one day.

But in the meantime, it was Sunday, June 15th, 1997, and he'd found the perfect present after all.

