

Friday April 28th 2068, 12.47pm, Tracy Island

"Knock knock," Dominic said, poking his head around the sickroom door as it slid open. "Anyone home?"

Dianne looked up from her work and gave him a small smile. Tyler, propped up on some pillows, looking tired and wan, glanced over at this unexpected visitor.

"Good afternoon, Dom," Dianne said, putting down her data pad. "To what do we owe this pleasure? You're not on duty until tonight."

"I just thought," he said, stepping over towards Tyler's bed, "that Tyler here might be interested in reading an old book of mine. I first read it when I was sick when I was around his age, maybe a bit older."

Dianne looked over at Tyler, who nodded gently.

Dominic sat down on the chair beside the biobed and handed an old, yet still in surprisingly good condition book to Tyler, who took it and read out the title.

"Under the Hawthorn Tree, by Marita Conlon-McKenna." He surveyed the cover art and read the blurb on the back.

"Me ma gave that book t' me when I was sick in hospital, and told me that she expected me to make a full recovery so I could tell her all about it." Dominic said. "It's about the Irish famine waaaay back in the 1840s. We had t' learn about it in school. I guess you probably don't. I think you'll like it though, and if you do, I have the two sequels in my apartment. I've got a boatload of books you might like. I've heard that you're something of a bookworm."

"How'd you know?" Tyler asked, shooting a glance over at his mother, who looked unconvincingly innocent.

Dominic tipped him a wink.

"Anyway, just thought you might be interested. Don't have to read it, like. If you do, I won't ask you to give me a full account of the story, considering I know it off by heart, but I will ask you your opinion, if you don't mind."

"I'll try it," Tyler said around a yawn, "when I can stay awake to read it." He managed a smile, and Dominic grinned back.

"Righty-o. See you later, Tyler."

"See you later, and thanks," said the boy.

Dominic sauntered over to Dianne and leant down on the desk.
"How's he doing today?" He asked.

"Much the same," Dianne said. "At least we know what it is now, more or less."

"That is something."

She shot him a questioning look, and before she could say anything, he said, "I'm a book hoarder as well as a book worm. I've kept a lot of my old books. Sometimes they were the only friends I had, what with all the moving about."

"Well, I'm sure Tyler will give it a read, at some stage, anyway."

"Marvellous." Dom clapped his hands and stood up. "Right, I've a little terror to track down. Last I heard he was running riot in Kat's apartment -- she's very keen to have him around, which is useful, I can tell you. See you later, Doctor."

"See you, Dom."

Dominic saluted Tyler on his way out, and went in search of his own wayward child.

From ArtisticRainey 8/6/2005
