

May 8, 2068; Tracy Island, around 2 p.m.

Gordon came into the kitchen where Emily was making one of her trademark apple pies for the evening's dessert. He stood watching as she finished her preparations and put it in the oven.

"Mmm," Gordon remarked, taking in the scent of the cinnamon and fresh apples. "It already smells great!"

"Thank you for the compliment," Emily replied, turning to her grandson, a wooden spoon in her hand. "But it won't get you a piece until AFTER dinner so don't even try." She waved the utensil in his direction for emphasis.

"All right, I get the message," Gordon said, putting his hands up in mock surrender. "I just came to ask if you've talked to Virgil. I haven't seen him since breakfast."

"No, I haven't talked to your brother. Have you tried Thunderbird Two?"

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Virgil sat in Thunderbird Two's pilot's seat, going over a list of things that needed to be checked before they were called out again. Going to the storage area behind the cockpit he started taking inventory of the tools. He paid special attention to the oxyhydrite tanks and the laser cutters, making sure the tanks were full and the cutters were functioning properly. From there, he went to the lockers containing the fire suits. He pulled them out, checking them carefully for tears. After close inspection, he discovered a small tear in one of the suits. "I'll have to get Grandma to repair this," he remarked, setting the damaged suit aside.

He was on his way to check the food stores when Gordon's voice came over his wristcom. "Hey Virg, where are you?"

"I'm down in Thunderbird Two, checking supplies."

A few minutes later, Gordon joined his brother. "Hey, I was wondering where you'd gone off to. I wanted to see if you'd like to go diving. Maybe check out the reef on the other side of the island."

"Sure thing. Just let me finish here then we'll go."

"Great. I'll meet you at the boat pen."

It took Virgil an hour and a half to finish with the equipment check and he hurried to join Gordon at the boat pen. He found his brother waiting patiently by one of the cabin cruisers.

"It took you long enough, Virg. Any longer and I would have left without you."

"Sorry, Gordon," Virgil said, tossing his diving equipment into the boat. "I was just making sure everything was okay."

As the two brothers made their way to the other side of the island, they talked about the lack of rescue activity.

"It's strange to go more than a few days without a rescue call coming in," Gordon said to his brother while steering the boat.

"I know. But it'll come soon enough. And when it does, we need to be ready. In the meantime, let's enjoy the peace."

As the boat sped through the water, Gordon described in detail what they'd find. Virgil smiled, leaning back in his seat, listening to his brother's enthusiasm.

From: Magicmaster8 Sent: 9/14/2005

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