

Friday 16 March. 8.15am. Tracy Island.

The cheery sound of baby talk filled the air, and Joshua Kelly was one happy little boy. His daddy was back! And he was spending lots of time with him. Not that his daddy didn't usually. But it seemed like he had been away for ages, and now he was back, and hadn't left him alone! The little boy could find it in his heart to forgive him; he always did. Of course, he was only two years and three months old, and couldn't really understand things, but all he cared about was that his daddy was back, at last!

Dominic sat, cross-legged on the balcony outside his apartment, on a folding chair he had found in a closet near the sliding glass door. The sun was shining -- as it tended to do on a tropical island, he thought with a smile -- and the view of the morning sea was fantastic. From his vantage point in the cliff house he could see right down the sweeping runway and out to the expanse of sea that went on for miles without fail. What had made the morning extra special was that he had his little son on his knee, who had been enjoying being read to very much. All the child seemed to need to hear was, 'Once upon a time', and he was perfectly attentive, and calm, ready to listen to his father's gentle tones.

Unfortunately, the story was now over, and Joshua was clamouring for attention and squirming around. He wrapped one little fist around a strand of Dominic's middle-length hair, and kept babbling in his pseudo-English. By now, of course, Dominic could discern what his son was saying -- most of the time, anyway. Joshua was getting better every day, which unfortunately meant getting louder every day, too. But that was just what kids were like, it seemed.

Dominic palmed one of his eyes tiredly and stifled a yawn. He hadn't slept very much since they had gotten back from the rescue, partly because of Joshua, and partly because, well, he didn't know exactly. It was how he had always been after a particularly harrowing experience with LifeFlight. Like after searching for hours in the cold and wet looking for that teenager a few months ago. Boy, that was tough. I didn't sleep well after that for about a week. I guess I'll have to get over this. Ah, well. Joshua tugged harder on the fist-full of hair he had grabbed, and Dominic scolded him gently.

"What have I told you about pulling hair?"

Joshua, after a moment's thought, relinquished the hair, and flung his arms around Dominic's neck, jumping up and down and saying, "Walk, walk!" Dominic unfolded his legs and got up off the chair, supporting Joshua in his arms. He glanced at the chair, but decided it wasn't worth putting Josh down to put it away; the kid would only yell, or run away. Either option was not something he particularly wanted to deal with. So, he left it, and made his way back through the apartment and towards the elevator, to catch the monorail over to the villa. Perhaps there, Joshua could find some entertainment.

Jeff idly flicked through one of the magazines that he had plucked from the rack beside one of the lounge couches, wondering why the place was so empty. The villa was quiet; it seemed as if everyone was off doing other things. Scott had left not long ago to find Elise. He smiled. He was very glad she had decided to stay with them, and hoped she wouldn't have a problem with going for her things so quickly. We need to get her trained up as soon as possible, and get on with training all our new recruits. They've shown how good they are already; with more experience, they'll be one crack team, all right.

He looked up when he heard voices coming up from where the monorail came in from the Cliff House. He guessed it would be one of their 'newbies', and was proved right when the little blond child, Joshua, toddled in, with Dominic close behind. The young man took his gaze from his child for a moment to give Jeff a courteous nod; morning sunlight glinted off his glasses. Jeff smiled back; now would be the perfect time to start to get to know all the new members of IR better.

"Good morning," he said, and he watched as the little boy, ever inquisitive, edged his way towards him. He's probably more interested in this chair than me! he thought, fond memories of his own boys as children coming back to him.

"Good mornin', Mr Tracy. How're you gettin' on?"

"Excellently," Jeff said. "I'll be out of this thing in no time."

"Good, good."

Their conversation stalled, and Dominic stood by, somewhat awkwardly, watching the child. Joshua walked shyly up to Jeff, and stared up at him through his large, well-smudged glasses. Jeff looked from Joshua to his father, and back again. The kid must've got his looks from the mother's side. He's blond, Dominic's dark-haired. Joshua looked down again and retreated to safety behind his father's leg. Jeff chuckled.

"They don't stay that shy for long."

Dominic shook his head.

"Tell me about it. This'un's already starting. Just wait till he gets t' know you a bit better. He'll not leave you be."

The young man stifled a yawn with one hand, and shook his head, as if trying to rid himself of his weariness. Joshua reached his arms up, wanting to be held, and Dominic obliged, only to be asked, "Juice?"

"Alrighty, young man. How's about we get you some breakfast, huh?" He smiled at Jeff and shrugged. "You know what it's like."

Jeff nodded.

"Oh yeah, I know."

The two chuckled, and Dominic headed towards the doorway that led to the hall, and would take him downstairs to the kitchen. Jeff smiled fondly. The little blond reminded him a lot of Alan when he was a tot, all cherubic with big blue eyes. It brought back memories, all right, the majority of which were indeed, very happy.

Post ArtisticRainey on 17/11/2004
