

Friday, March 16, 11:00 a.m. PST, somewhere over the US

"Do you need something, Di?" Lisa asked, making her way to the cockpit. "Something to drink?"

"That would be good, Ma, thanks."

Lisa made her way back to the small galley and returned with a can of soda. Dianne smiled as she turned to accept it, then her eyes fell on Elise and her smile faded a bit.

"Elise? How about coming on up and keeping me company again?"

The sound of Dianne's voice startled Elise and for a split second, Lisa thought the girl had the look or a terrified deer on her face.

"Um, okay... sure. I'll be right there." Elise replied trying to sound confident.

As she made her way to the cockpit, her hands began to feel clammy. She breathed slowly and prayed her fears wouldn't surface.

"Thanks for coming up here. It gets lonely pretty quick when I'm by myself," said Dianne.

Elise half smiled as she sat in the co-pilot's seat. Dianne immediately noticed how edgy Elise seemed.

"So, are you looking forward to New York? I know you hadn't been living there long before the accident."

Dianne did her best to make the last two words flow with the rest of the sentence. She herself had to get past the events of nearly four weeks ago. She glanced quickly at Jeff, who was playing Dutch Blitz in partners with Tyler and smiled. Then she turned her attention back to Elise.

"I'll be glad to see my things again. Can't say I've missed New York though, as I wasn't there long enough to feel really at home."

Dianne sensed Elise was going to add something, but instead the girl turned her head and looked out of the window. Dianne decided there was no easy way to begin what she wanted to say, and so dove right on in.

"So how does it feel to be back in the air?"

Elise knew where Dr. Tracy was going with this, and knew she'd have to tell her sooner or later. Suppose sooner would be better... oh well... here goes

"Actually I'm a little more nervous than I thought I would be."

"How so?" Dianne probed carefully.

"Yesterday, I had...um, well, a flashback, and it scared me. I've never experienced that before."

"Have you ever crashed before?" Dianne spoke softly.

Elise chuckled, "No, unless you count the 'almost' incident with the Fireflash!"

Dianne looked puzzled.

"Ask Scott," was all Elise replied.

Dianne considered her words carefully. "So, you've experienced something that's new to you, and frightening. And it's coming back to you, especially now while we're airborne." Dianne didn't make it a question.

"But why now? It's been weeks since the accident! Surely I would have had dreams or something!" Elise answered. "I've had bad flight experiences before, flown through horrible conditions, yet nothing like this has ever happened!"

"I can see this upsets you, Elise, and I'm sorry, but I think you really need to talk about it. From what I understand, a lot of pilots, even the very best, sometimes go through this."

She lowered her voice as she continued. "Jeff would have my hide if he knew I was telling you this, but while he was in the hospital, it happened to him, too."

Elise looked at Dianne, shocked. The other smiled and added, "Honey, he's been to the moon and back, can pilot anything made to fly, and yes, he had flashbacks that frightened him."

Dianne took a sip of her soft drink. "The doctors at Mt. Sinai diagnosed him as having PTSD, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. It's something he and I have had to deal with in a patient-doctor setting since he came home. But Elise--"

Dianne reached out to touch Elise's arm gently,

"He doesn't remember half of what happened that night. You've got a whole lot more memory to work with and I would think that the stress would be greater because of it."

"I suppose....," Elise said hesitantly. "I'm finding that I'm almost afraid to fly again."

"It's only natural, Elise, that you would feel this way. But I believe that you can overcome this. Once the boys have you training with the team, you'll be too busy to let this get you down."

Elise smiled a little, then suddenly looked anxious. "Oh, no... you won't tell Scott about this will you? I don't want him to find out."

Dianne soothed Elise's fears. "No, I won't. But I can't promise he won't pick up on it. He makes a

point of knowing what is or isn't bothering the team members and that includes his brothers."

"Thanks" Elise answered, softly.

"When you have a flashback, come to me and we can talk about it. Facing the fears is what will help you get over them," Dianne suggested.

She looked out over the blue sky with a snowy white bank of clouds making a deceptively firm surface below them. "You'll fly again, Elise. And with the love you had for it before the crash."

"I hope you're right Dr. Tracy, I really hope you're right." Elise, too, looked out over the vast expanse of blue and white. I only hope I can overcome this soon.

Post by FrankieCTB2 and Tikatu on 22/11/2004

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