
Subject: Re: Winds of Change
Posted by [Tikatu](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 18:33:31 GMT
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From: lillehafrue Sent: 3/25/2007 9:04 PM

Tracy Island, Sunday, August 19th, 9:30 AM...

Knock-Knock

Luke opened the door to find Alan smiling up at him. "Good morning! Mom and Dad sent me to see if you wanted any breakfast."

"Breakfast sounds great. Lead the way." He followed Alan out the door and down the steps towards the villa. When they got to the dining room, there seemed to be a large group of people there. Luke paused in the doorway for a moment.

Dianne looked up and smiled. "Good morning, Luke! Please come in and join us."

Luke stepped into the room, uncomfortably aware of all the eyes upon him. He took an empty seat near Dianne. Kyrano approached him. "Would you like some coffee, Mr. Morel?"

"Yes, please. And it's Luke." Kyrano merely smiled and placed a steaming cup in front of Luke. He picked it up and took a sip, smiling in contentment.

Dianne chuckled. "One of those, huh? Need your caffeine to wake you up?"

"That's for sure. Ba-a friend told me a grizzly was easier to talk to than me in the morning," Luke answered.

Jeff chuckled. "I know someone like that," he said with a sidewise glance at Scott. Scott merely grinned and held up his mug in a toast.

Kyrano stepped in again and placed a large plate of pancakes in front of Luke. "Thank you," Luke said and turned his attention to his breakfast, unobtrusively listening to the conversation around him.

Dianne reached across the table, trying to reach the maple syrup. She gave a wince and she pressed one hand against her ribs. The table went silent.

"Di?" Jeff asked, concern evident in his voice.

"Ah'm fine," Dianne replied as Virgil passed her the syrup. "And no, Ah'm not going to go lie down," she stated firmly.

"Never thought to mention it," Jeff muttered, turning back to his own plate, but keeping a sharp eye on his wife.

Luke watched Dianne closely. "Mrs. Tracy?" he started.

"Mrs. Tracy is my mother-in-law. Dianne or Dr. Tracy will do fine." She sighed. "It's all right, Luke. I was in an...accident a few weeks ago. Still a bit sore."

Breakfast continued, if a bit more subdued. Jeff pushed back from the table and walked over to kiss his wife on the cheek. "I have some work to do. Make sure you take it easy."

"Ah will." Dianne smiled up at him.

"You'd better," he winked, then straightened up. "Luke, would you mind joining me? Virgil, you too."

Luke nodded and, thanking Kyrano for breakfast, followed Jeff out the door.

Jeff led them down the corridor and around two corners to a wing with doors leading to the outside at the end. Just before he reached those doors, however, he stopped and put his hand up to the wall. Luke's eyes widened as a panel slid back, and Jeff laid his palm on a dark panel. The palm was scanned, and he keyed in a code for good measure. A door slid open, revealing an elevator car.

"What's all this about?" he asked, frowning. "Where are we going?"

"Not everything on this island is above ground, Luke," Virgil said as he stepped inside the car. "And there's something important we need to show you. It has to do with the job... which we're offering you, by the way."

Luke looked over at Virgil, who had a grin on his face, then turned to Jeff. "I got the job?"

"Yes," Jeff replied. "But there are just a few more things we need to go over with you. Please."

Luke got into the car next to Virgil. Jeff climbed in after them and closed the doors. The elevator rocketed downward at a high rate of speed. Moments later, the elevator came to a stop. Jeff opened the doors and Luke found himself in a small room cut from the very rock itself. Before them stood a pair of red cars, suspended on a single rail.

"What's this all about?" Luke asked, sounding suspicious.

"As Dad said, there's something we need to show you, a component of the job that you should know before you make a decision." Virgil gestured toward the car. "This takes us to our desalination plant, our power plant, and a couple of other beauty spots beneath the mountain."

"Caves?" Luke asked.

"Lava tubes," Virgil told him.

"Hm," hummed Luke as he got into the car.

The little car took them along a well-lighted track. Branches split off in tantalizing directions, but finally the car stopped at a junction to some stairs.

Jeff and Virgil stepped out of the car and Jeff gestured to Luke to follow them. He led the way down a dimly lit corridor. It opened up into a giant cavernous room, also in near darkness.

"Luke, I'd like you to meet my baby." Virgil stepped in front of Luke and hit a switch on the wall. Floodlights blinked on, illuminating the space, making Luke realize that it was even bigger than he first thought. Then his gaze fell on the giant green ship in the center of the room.

"No..." his voice trailed off. He stared at the ship, his eyes taking in the giant "Thunderbird Two" emblazoned on its side. "You have to be kidding me."

"I can assure you we're not," Jeff replied.

Luke finally tore his gaze away and looked at Jeff. "You're International Rescue?" Jeff nodded. Luke turned back to the ship. "Holy..." His head snapped back to Jeff. "Then Mrs. Tracy's injuries. She was the operative in that tornado crash, wasn't she?"

Boy's quick, Jeff thought to himself. "She was. As you know, rescue work can be dangerous."

Luke nodded. "So this job you're offering me; it's not really for an environmental specialist, is it?"

"Well, that will be your official title, on the books. We all spend some time in the office, for appearance sake," Virgil told him. "But no, that won't be your primary job focus."

Luke looked back out over the hanger bay. "Amazing, absolutely amazing."

Virgil grinned. "I like to think so."

"And the others? Callie, Elise? They're part of this too?"

"Everyone on the island is part of our organization. We have another operative on personal leave at the moment, and another of my sons, John, is manning our space station, Thunderbird Five," Jeff said.

"Space station? You have a space station?!" Luke shook his head. "This is almost too much to take in."

Jeff chuckled. "There's plenty more to see. We have five other ships here on the island. Well, Thunderbird Seven is out of commission at the moment, but we're working on that. Plus the pod vehicles and equipment."

Luke shook his head. "Wait a sec, I'm not going to have to fly that thing, am I?"

Virgil looked slightly offended. "Eventually yes, but for now you'll be assigned to her to assist with the rescues. We all know or are being trained to operate all the equipment. Never know what will happen out there."

"Wow," Luke breathed. "I-I don't know what to say!"

"Take your time. Think about it. I don't need an answer today," Jeff told him. "But I do have to insist that no matter what your decision, you reveal this information to no one. Not your co-workers, not your family, no one."

Luke nodded. "Yes, sir."

"Do you have any questions?"

Luke started to shake his head, then paused. "Just one, sir. And I'd like to talk to you in private if you don't mind." He nodded towards Virgil.

Jeff sent a puzzled glance in Virgil's direction. Virgil merely shrugged. "I'll see you later then. Feel free to come find me if you have any questions, Luke."

"I will, thanks." Luke waited until Virgil had left before turning back to Jeff. He took a deep breath. "I have to tell you something about myself that may affect the dynamics of your team. I'm gay. It's not something I'm ashamed of; it's who I am. None of my friends or family have a problem with this, but some of my former co-workers did."

"I see." Jeff nodded thoughtfully. "Was one of these co-workers your boss you mentioned?"

"Yes. Derek never came out and said it, he's too smart for that, but I'm sure it was a sticking point." Luke glanced back at Thunderbird Two, then back at Jeff. "Before I even consider accepting your offer, I need to know if my preferences will be detrimental to your team."

Jeff stood still for a moment, thinking. A person's sexual preferences, to him, had always been a matter of "don't ask, don't tell". Not that he had any personal problem with homosexuals; he judged people on how they acted with other people, not what they did in private as consenting adults. He had to admit that if one of his sons came to him one day and told him he'd rather sleep with men, it would knock him back a bit, but wouldn't change the love he had for that son. But he didn't know how the others would take it.

"I'm not going to jump in here and say it definitely wouldn't be a detriment, Luke," he finally said. "I don't know the minds of the rest of my team on this matter. However, should there be a problem, I will treat it as a sensitivity issue in the workplace, just as I would if it were in Tracy Industries." He spread his hands. "I can't say anymore than that. Personally, I'll judge you by what you do, not who you are."

"That's all I ask, sir. Now, if you don't mind, I'd like to go think this through. I'm sure I'll have questions at some point. At least after the shock wears off." Luke grinned good-naturedly.

Jeff chuckled. "Come and find myself or one of my sons. We'll be happy to help you out."

"Thank-you, sir." They started back towards the tunnel. Luke took one more glance back. "International Rescue...man, never saw that one coming."

