

Thursday 24 May 2068, Tracy Island, 10.15am

Virgil found himself once more out on the balcony, a cup of coffee clutched in one hand. At least today it's at a decent hour! No more of those early mornings for me. And, once more, he found himself thinking back on the training of the new recruits. I think we've been lucky with who we've gotten, he thought as his eyes swept out across the churning ocean. Elise is coming along fine. She'll be trained up before we know it. Dom, on the other hand... Virgil took a sip of his coffee, his brows drawn, and thought back on the last training session he had scheduled for the man.

"Holy bejayzuss!"

Virgil chuckled as Dominic practically fell into the pilot's seat of Thunderbird Two. He did it every time. And it was always very funny.

"God, my back..." Dom shot a sharp glance at Virgil. "Who designed that thing? What about a nice, normal lift?" he asked as the seat straightened up and the steering gear pushed out.

"Myself and Brains came up with the idea," Virgil said, chuckling. "It's quicker. It's also useful for having people make ungraceful entrances."

Dominic sniffed pointedly and sat up in the seat. Virgil shook his head and tried to wipe the grin off his face, though he didn't have a lot of success. Instead, he was sure to stay behind Dom as the man went through the pre-flight checks and procedures that they had practiced so many times before in the simulator.

"There's a helluva lot to memorize," Dom commented.

"You say that every time," Virgil said.

"I know. And it doesn't change."

Virgil had been watching Dom closely. He was getting better. Certainly, he wasn't perfect, but he was getting better. Today wasn't the first time that he had taken TB2 up for real. Even so, there was a slight shake in Dom's hands, and Virgil twisted his lips into a frown. He's still hesitant, still worried. Maybe it'll take an actual rescue to get his confidence up. No offence to him, but I hope it doesn't come down to that any time soon. He's probably not ready for a baptism of fire just yet.

Soon enough they were heading up the runway, emerging from the massive cave hangar into the sunlight. The great ship was raised up on the ramp, and Virgil saw Dom mouthing the sequences as he went through them.

"Okay, here we go..."

The muffled roar of the massive craft's powerful engines burst to life, and Thunderbird Two rose up into the air, Dom's hands firmly clamped on the steering gear.

"Steady, now," Virgil said as Dom began to level her off. "Keep it gentle. Like we talked about before."

The rest of the flight didn't go too badly. Virgil chalked it up as a success. If only he would relax a little more. I know flying this 'Bird is a serious business; I would kill him if he didn't take it seriously, but hell, being as coiled as a spring doesn't help either. By the time TB2 was tucked up in her hangar, and the two men were ready to leave, Dom had unwound somewhat.

"How'd I do, Chief?" He asked as they headed for the lift back to the villa.

"You're getting better," Virgil said. "Some of the manoeuvres still need work, but you're shaping up nicely," he gave Dom a grin. "But..."

"There's always a 'but'," Dom said, the grin slipping off his face.

"You're too tense," Virgil said plainly. "You need to relax a bit more. You'll find that if you don't worry too much, things will come much easier. That's not to say," he hastened to add, "that you stop taking all of this seriously. I just think that you need to unwind a little bit when you're flying."

"It's not easy. Relax? Bloody hell, I'm flyin' about sixteen bazillion tons of metal and you say to relax a bit!"

"It'll come to you," Virgil said.

On the balcony, Virgil finished off his coffee, and let the mug dangle from his fingers. I only hope it does come to him, he thought, sooner rather than later. With a shake of his head, he deftly swung the mug up into his palm, and headed back to the kitchen for another.

From: ArtisticRainey Sent: 10/25/2005
