

Thursday, May 31, 2068, 8:30 a.m., Creighton-Ward Manor (7:30 p.m. Tracy Island)

"Good morning, Lena," Penelope said, as the older woman entered the dining room. "Did you sleep well?"

"Good morning to you, Penny," Lena replied with a smile. "I slept very well, tank you."

"Come sit here beside me," the younger woman said. "So often my guests sit across from me at the other end of the table and I feel like I must shout at them to carry on any conversation."

Lena laughed, and took a seat to Penelope's right. Parker came out with a teapot.

"Tea, madame?" he asked.

"Yes, tank you, Parker."

He poured for her, then offered her the sugar bowl with its silver tongs. Lena selected a lump of sugar to add to her tea.

"Breakfast will be h'out shortly," he announced, and he made his way back to the kitchen.

"Did de Tracys arrive safely last night?" Lena asked after a sip of her tea.

"Yes, they did," Penny replied. "Though I must admit I was a trifle surprised. It seems that Jeff sent Brains along with Alan, instead of Scott. I am at a loss as to why. He rarely makes such errors."

"Perhaps he changed his mind for some reason or otter," Lena suggested.

"Perhaps. I shall have to ask." She looked up to see the door to the dining room open. "Oh, here is Alan now."

"Good morning, Penny. Good morning, Lena," Alan said, smiling. "I see I'm in time for breakfast."

"Your timing is impeccable as always, Alan," Penny said, returning the smile. "However, I did think you would sleep longer than you have."

"So did I," Alan admitted as he took a seat across from Lena. "But the time zone change made it a little difficult. Plus, I'm a light sleeper anyway. Comes with the territory as space monitor."

"Ah, I understand," Penny said, nodding. She discreetly rang for Parker and let him know that Alan was ready to eat.

"Space monitor? What is dat?" Lena asked, curious. Then she shook her head. "You don't have to

answer dat if you don't want to."

Alan and Penny exchanged glances, then Alan shrugged.

"I might as well," he said. "Our communications are handled through a space station, which we have christened Thunderbird Five. It's in geostationary orbit just to the west of the island. Whoever is up there is dubbed the 'space monitor'."

"Ah! I see."

At that moment, Parker came out with plates of Eggs Benedict for the ladies. "Ay will return wiv yer breakfast momentarily, Mr. H'Alan. Would you like tea or coffee?"

"Coffee, please, Parker," Alan answered.

As Parker went off for the coffee pot, Lena asked, "Where is Brains? I understand dat he came wit you instead of Scott."

"He's still sawing logs," Alan replied. "Father thought about the situation a bit and decided that, since Scott is making the run up to the space station tomorrow, he shouldn't be flying for long hours beforehand. This way, Scott will be fresh to fly up to Thunderbird Five with John."

"I understand," Lena replied. "Which one of dem will remain?"

"John will," Alan told her. "He and I and now Callie Spencer share duties as space monitor." He smiled widely. "It sure is nice to stay down on Earth for two months at a time."

"Speaking of time off, how was Monaco?" Penelope asked.

This started a discussion on the Grand Prix and how things developed there as the trio ate breakfast together.

From: Tikatu Sent: 11/4/2005

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