

Saturday, June 2, 2068, 6:15 a.m., Tracy Island

"Ugh," Dianne moaned as she rolled over. Her wristwatch communicator was buzzing for her attention and she picked it up to answer the call.

"Yes?" she asked thickly.

Alex's pale and worried face stared back at her. "Mom," he said. "Tyler's throwing up. And I don't feel so good either."

She sighed. "I'll be right there."

"Okay, Mom."

Dianne rolled out of bed, feeling weary and tired. She went to her closet and pulled out a modest robe. As she donned it, Jeff stirred.

"Wassamatta?" he slurred from his side of the bed.

"Tyler's sick, and probably Alex, too," she replied, tying the belt of her robe. "I'm going to check on them."

"Kay," Jeff muttered. He rolled over and his steady breathing told her that he had gone back to sleep.

She sighed a long-suffering sigh and, taking her communicator with her, left their suite. Standing outside the door was a pale Cherie.

"Mom, my stomach hurts and I feel hot," the teen complained.

Dianne raised the back of her hand to her daughter's forehead and said, "Yes, you've got a fever. Go back to your room and I'll be there in a few minutes. I need to check on the boys first."

"Okay, Mom," Cherie said wearily. The two walked together, past Scott's room, and to Cherie's suite, where the teenager stopped and stepped through the door. Dianne continued to the room on the corner.

Entering the cluttered sitting area, she passed through the double sliding doors to the boys' even more cluttered bedroom. The light was on in the bathroom and she could just hear the toilet flushing. Stepping inside, she found both boys. Tyler was sitting on the floor next to the commode looking totally wiped out and holding his stomach, while Alex was rinsing out his mouth.

"I threw up, too, Mom," the older boy said, sounding miserable.

"So I gathered," Dianne replied. She made her way over to her youngest son. "I think we'd better take you down to the sick room."

"I don't wanna go there," Tyler whined, shaking his head. "I hate it there! Can't I stay here and sleep in my own bed?"

"Please, Mom, let him stay," Alex pleaded. "I don't want to be up here alone."

Tyler's eyes grew wide with panic, and he climbed to his knees, leaning over the toilet to vomit again. Dianne held his head steady as he retched, then found a washcloth to wipe his face with when he was done. She noticed how hot he was and glanced up at Alex.

"I think you both should go down to the sick room, at least until we figure out what this is and have an idea of how long it's going to last," she said. "And until I can call in some back up to help take care of you. I have a feeling this has something to do with the fish we ate last night..."

Alex cut her off. "We didn't do anything bad to the fish, Mom! I swear we didn't!"

Dianne put an arm around him. "I know, Alex, I know. If what I think has happened is true, you had nothing to do with it." She sighed heavily. "I'm going down to the sick room for a couple of emesis bowls so that you'll have something to throw up into should you need to on the way down. But you're both going down there, at least for a little while. We'll need to take blood samples." She squatted down beside Tyler and pushed his stiff hair from his sweaty brow. "I promise that once we get things squared away down there, and the nurses are here to help me, you can come back and sleep in your own bed, okay?"

Tyler nodded. She stood, breathed out another sigh, then headed down to the sick room.

On the way, she contacted Kyrano and Brains, asking them to meet her at the infirmary. Her mother came along as well, and Dianne was glad to see her.

"All three of the youngest children are sick, but especially the boys. I'm going to bring them down here for a period of observation. Kyrano? Would you please contact Dom and Nikki and tell them I need them? Mom, please go up and check on Cherie, then stay with the boys until I can get back up there. Brains? I'm going to take blood samples from the boys and I'd like you to analyze that fish for us. See if that's the culprit."

"You know what it will mean if it is," Brains warned.

Dianne nodded. "Yes, I do. It means the whole family will be sick, from Tyler all the way up to Em. Myself included."

"Lisa and I did not eat the fish, nor did Mr. Brains or Tin-Tin. And I did not send any to Mrs. Matumbo, either," Kyrano informed her.

Dianne sat wearily down at her desk. "I'd hate to ask Lena to help out if this turns out to be as bad as it looks, but we might have to." She glanced over at the three people before her. "Well, I'd better things ready for those blood samples. Ma, I'll be up for the boys in a few minutes."

"Right. When you bring them down, I'll look in on Em," Lisa said, nodding.

"Okay. Let's get going. Hopefully there'll be some time before the adults come down with symptoms. And pray, really pray, that we don't get an emergency call," Dianne said seriously.

"International Rescue may be non-functional for a few days here."

From: Tikatu Sent: 11/21/2005

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