

Brains sat back with a sigh and looked over at Tin-Tin, then at Lena, who had just come into the lounge. "It's over. They are on their way back to the island."

"Wonderful," said Tin-Tin. "Now we know that they can handle themselves. Why don't you go get some rest until they arrive? I can handle things from here."

"Can't," he replied, smiling at her. "I have to check on Mrs. Tracy and the three youngest kids, to see if they have responded to the injections. And if they have, I think there are three others who could probably use some of the medicine. But I would like you to stay here and make sure the airspace is clear when they get close, so they can land."

"That I can do. Go take care of the invalids."

"Lena, would you come with me and assist?"

"Of course. I'll see you later, Tin-Tin."

"I'll look forward to it. Give my love to all of them," the young Malaysian replied.

Lena and Brains headed to the boys' room, where they found Tyler sleeping peacefully, and Alex sitting up, reading. He looked up at them as they walked in, and smiled.

"How do you feel, Alex?" Brains asked, walking over to the bed.

"I'm a lot better than I was this morning. I've been awake for about an hour, and haven't felt like I needed to throw up in all that time. But I'm still feeling a little queasy and weak."

Brains and Lena smiled at each other. "Has your brotter been awake in dat hour?"

"Uh-uh. He's sleeping like a baby. Man, whatever it was, sure is going away fast."

"It had some help. A few hours ago, we gave you two an injection while you were asleep."

"An injection? And I didn't wake up? Where did I get it?"

"In your arm."

Alex started rubbing his arm. "That's why it hurts, isn't it?"

Lena chuckled. "Wrong arm, Alex. Dat pain is all in your mind."

Brains laughed at the expression on the boy's face. "You get some rest. If things go as well as they have so far, you'll probably be fine in the morning. Just take it easy."

Alex nodded and returned to his book, as Brains and Lena left and headed to Cherie's room. She woke up as they walked in, and sat up. "Hi, Lena, Brains." She paused, realizing that she was sitting up and not throwing up. "I feel so much better. Do I need more of the medicine?"

"No, Cherry. One shot is supposed to be enough, and judging from you and their brothers, it is. So after we check on your Tracy grandmother, we'll be giving shots to a few others. You should all be completely back to normal in a day or two."

"Just stay in bed and rest, honey," Lena added, smiling.

"Okay. Can I read?"

"As long as you don't get overtired," Brains answered. "Any time you feel yourself getting sleepy, stop and take a nap. That way, you'll get better even faster."

She agreed, and they left. They checked on Emily, who was also responding, but less quickly than the children. She had been awake when they walked in, but fell back to sleep before they left.

Brains was feeling optimistic about the medicine's efficacy, and he and Lena discussed who else should receive a shot -- and in what order. He decided, after checking the other rooms, that three other people needed injections -- Jeff, Scott and Virgil.

"Alan and Gordon seem to be less affected than the others, and Dr. Tracy is fighting it very well on her own. I'll keep an injection on hand in case she goes downhill, but I don't think she'll need it," Brains told Lena as they reached the top of the stairs.

"All right. Who do you want to do first?"

Brains stopped in the hall to consider her question. "Mr. Tracy. Then Scott and Virgil."

They went to the master suite and Lena knocked. They heard a voice, but couldn't make out the words. She took matters into her own hands, and opened the door. Dianne was awake, but didn't sit up. The bedclothes were twisted, so Lena went over to her and straightened them, telling her that the children were feeling better, as was Emily.

"That's good to hear, but I haven't seen any improvement in Jeff. I'm not quite as nauseous as I was, but I have a long way to go before I feel like myself again."

"We've come to give your husband an injection of de medicine. Dat will help."

As Brains went to Jeff's side of the bed and pulled one of his arms out from under the covers, the older man woke up and looked up at him. "What are you doing?"

"I'm going to give you an injection. You aren't improving according to your wife, and it hasn't been that long since you were in the hospital."

"An injection?" Jeff replied, unconsciously repeating what Alex said earlier, and trying to move his

arm back under the covers. "I had enough of needles in the hospital to last me the rest of my life."

As Lena tried to hide a smile, Dianne irritably said, "Jeff, just take your medicine like a man. Do you want to feel like this for a few more days, or for a shorter period?"

"Oh, all right," Jeff grouched. He held his arm out. "Just do it."

Brains gave him a wry look, and quickly injected the medicine into Jeff's arm. Lena moved over and straightened the covers on his side of the bed, made sure there was water in their containers nearby and the bowls were cleaned out. Then they left and headed to Scott's room.

Scott was awake and throwing up when they walked in. Lena hurried over and held his forehead, then helped him to lay back when he was through. She gave him some water and cleaned out the bowl, replacing it where it had been. Scott watched her, then looked over at Brains.

"What's that?"

"Some medicine to counteract the illness."

"That's a needle. I don't want a needle."

Lena gazed down at him. "My hero. You aren't afraid of such a small ting, are you?"

"You don't understand, Lena. I - I fainted the last time I got an injection."

"Come on, Scott," said Brains incredulously. "That was different. That needle was larger than this one. It won't be so bad."

"Welllll... I don't know."

"Lena, will you do what you did when I gave Cherie a shot?"

"What did you do, Lena?"

"I just talked to her, like dis," Lena replied as she leaned over and began whispering in his ear.

Brains took Scott's arm and gave him the injection. Much to his surprise, Scott flinched. "I don't believe you. You actually felt it?"

"Sorry. I barely felt something, and instinct took over. Thanks, Lena."

"You're welcome. Now, get some sleep. I'll check in on you in a few hours." She covered him as he settled down and she and Brains left the room.

Once outside, she said to her companion, "Like fottter, like son?"

He choked a laugh. "It would seem so, wouldn't it? Let's hope we don't have to go through the same thing with Virgil."

Fortunately, Virgil was asleep and, like Alex and Tyler, never woke up as they took care of him. They left and parted company, Brains heading down to the sick room to take care of the syringes. Lena headed to the lounge to keep Tin-Tin company.

"All set?" Tin-Tin asked.

"All set," Lena affirmed. "Now all we have to do is wait for the otters to get home."

written by Hobbeth Sent: 12/29/2005

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