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Subject: Re: Winds of Change  
Posted by [Tikatu](#) on Sat, 28 Jul 2012 01:58:48 GMT  
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From: lillehafrue Sent: 6/11/2007 5:12 PM

Tracy Island, Sunday September 2nd, 10:30 AM

Luke stood on the beach, his hand held straight up in front of him. A few yards away, Rommel, wearing a bright red vest, held still.

"Rommel, sit," Luke commanded as he brought his hand down. The dog instantly obeyed. Next, Luke raised his hand without speaking and Rom stood at attention. "Good boy! Come!" Rommel trotted over to his side and Luke gave him a treat. "OK, now back to work."

He led the dog down the beach where he had set up some broken logs and branches. He commanded Rommel to stay and jogged to the other end of the obstacle course where he tied a brightly colored rag to a stick. He was making his way back to the dog when a movement in the bushes caught his eye. He paused and grinned to himself, then turned back to his dog. "Rommel, get it!" The animal was off like a shot, dodging and climbing over the objects in his way. Luke kept one eye on the bushes, not surprised to see a mop of blond hair showing through the leaves. A second head of auburn red appeared next to it. He turned his attention back to Rommel and soon the dog was back at his side, the rag in his mouth. Luke knelt down to take it and give the dog a rub. "Good boy." He glanced up at the bushes, which were now rustling as each tried to get a better view. "You know, if you come out of there, you'll be able to see a lot better!"

There was instant silence.

"It's no use, boys, I know you're there. Come on out," Luke called, at the same time giving Rommel the signal to 'stay'.

A few moments later, Alex and Tyler appeared, both looking embarrassed at being caught. "We were just watching. We didn't want to bother you," Alex told him.

Luke smiled. "You're not a bother. Why don't you guys sit right over there?" The boys scrambled over to park themselves on the rocks. Luke waited until they had settled, then began working with Rommel again. A half hour later, he called the lessons to a halt and pulled Rommel's vest off. Rom gave an excited "woof" and, with tail wagging, ran over to the boys.

They climbed down from the rocks, but held back at touching the dog until Rommel nosed his muzzle under Tyler's hand. Tyler giggled.

"Go ahead and pat him. He loves having his ears scratched," Luke told them.

"He's so big!" Tyler exclaimed as Rommel began licking his face.

"He's a rescue dog, silly. He has to be big!" Alex told him, getting over his shyness and reaching out to touch the dog.

Luke laughed. "Well, being big isn't a requirement, but I won't say it doesn't help." He watched the boys playing with the dog. Alex was tossing a stick and Rom was catching it. "You guys can play with him anytime you want, as long as your parents say it's OK and if Rommel isn't working," Luke told them.

Tyler looked up. "How will we know?"

"If he has his vest on, he's working. Any other time is fine."

"Does he work every day?" Alex asked.

Luke nodded. "Just about. How often do your brothers train for International Rescue?"

Alex thought a moment. "Scott and Virgil go to the gym every day."

"And Gordon is always in the pool," Tyler added.

"Right. So we train a little every day, too. Not too much," Luke added as an afterthought. "If I work him too hard, he gets grumpy," he said with a wink.

"Just like Alan," Tyler quipped, causing them all to laugh.

"Hey, I'm not quite done with him. You guys want to help?" Luke asked.

Both boys nodded enthusiastically. "OK, then, let's go back up to the house."

A short while later, they were gathered near the pool. Luke slipped Rommel's vest back on and turned to Tyler. "Can you swim?" The boy nodded. "Good. I want you to go in the water, as deep as you feel comfortable, and thrash around, like you're drowning."

Tyler frowned. "We're not supposed to do that."

"I know. But this time it's OK; I talked with your Dad so he knows you'll be helping me." Luke told him. "And, Tyler, keep your shirt on."

After one last dubious look, Tyler dove into the pool. A few moments later, he was thrashing around and yelling, "Help! Help!"

Instantly people appeared on the scene. Scott and Jeff peered down from the balcony above; Nikki and Alan both got up from where they had been sitting on the patio, and Gordon practically flew down the steps. Luke grabbed him by the arm before he could dive in the pool. "Let go of me!" Gordon tried to pull his arm free.

"Relax, he's fine. He's helping me." Luke turned to the dog. "Rommel. GO!" The dog was off like a shot, diving into the water. He grabbed Tyler by the shirt collar and began towing him to the side of the pool.

Gordon pulled free of Luke's grasp and hoisted his little brother out of the water. Tyler was giggling like mad. "That was fun!"

Gordon shook his head. "Scared the daylights out of me!"

Tyler instantly looked shamefaced. "I'm sorry."

Luke stepped in. "No, I am. He was helping me with Rom. I'd never, ever do anything to put them in harm's way."

Gordon nodded. "OK then."

"It's OK, Gordon! He has my permission!" Jeff called out.

"All right, Dad!" Gordon called back. Jeff nodded and he and Scott disappeared back inside.

"I'm sorry," Luke said again. "We're done here anyway." He started taking off Rommel's vest.

"Awwww! Don't I get a turn?" Alex whined.

"I think I've caused enough trouble for today," Luke told him.

"Pleeeeeease!"

Luke looked over at Gordon, who shrugged. "Fine with me. But I'm watching too."

Luke turned back to Alex. "OK then. Go to the shallow end of the pool. Can you hold your breath under water?" Alex nodded. "Good. Go hold it and sit on the bottom of the pool. Rom will come and pull you out."

"Cool." Alex ran off and threw himself into the pool.

As soon as the boy's head disappeared under water, Luke issued a command to Rommel. "Get him out!" The dog raced into the water and quickly jumped in and circled the area around Alex. "Get him!" Luke shouted again. Rommel dove under the water and came back up pulling Alex with him. The two climbed out of the pool, Rommel shaking the water out of his fur. "Good boy." Luke grinned at Alex. "Thanks for the help! You did great!" He then turned to Tyler. "You too. I hope you know I'll be recruiting you from now on."

Tyler's eyes lit up. "Really?! Cool! C'mon, Alex; let's go tell Mom!" The two boys raced up the steps.

Luke turned back to Gordon. "I really didn't mean to scare you."

"I know. But next time warn a guy!" Gordon told him.

"I will." Luke snapped his fingers and Rommel trotted to his side.

Gordon bent down to ruffle the dog's fur. "So, big guy, what else can you do?"

Luke looked around. Spying a towel draped over a lounge chair, he grabbed it and held it up for Rom to smell. "Find him, boy."

Rommel gave the towel another sniff and trotted off, pausing to snuffle occasionally at the ground. Suddenly he looked up and giving a loud bark, disappeared into the bushes.

Gordon looked puzzled. "Where'd he go?"

Luke shook his head. "I have no idea. I figured it belonged to you or Alan," he said, nodding over to the duo on the patio. "I better go after him." Luke started across the patio, Gordon following close behind.

"Hey! Let go of me!"

Luke skidded to a stop as Rommel emerged from the bushes, pulling John by the shorts. "Oh God..." Luke groaned, slapping his forehead.

Gordon burst out laughing. "Got ya, John! Teach you to leave your towels hanging around!"

John frowned, looking from Luke's embarrassed face to Gordon's hysterical one. "Someone want to explain this to me?"

"I was just showing Gordon some of what Rom can do. Rescue type stuff. How we train together. We were just in the pool with Alex and Tyler working, too." Luke realized he was babbling and quickly pulled Rommel away. "Rom, good job. Back off, now." The dog let go of John's hem. "I'm so sorry."

"Don't worry about it." John gave Rom's head a quick pat. "Nice to meet you, Rommel. Now if you'll both excuse me, I'll get back to weeding." He headed back to the garden.

Luke knelt and unzipped Rommel's vest. "You big dork. What are you trying to do to me?" Rommel responded with a lick up the side of Luke's face. "I think that's enough excitement for one day. Let's you and I go for a run. Later, Gordon."

"Have fun!" Gordon replied. He got a speculative look on his face as he watched Luke and Rommel head down the path. Then shrugging, he turned and went back into the house.

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