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Subject: Re: Home is Where the Heart Is  
Posted by [Lillehafrue](#) on Sun, 29 Jul 2012 01:40:01 GMT  
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From: Hobbeth Sent: 7/8/2006 11:17 AM

July 18, 11:30 PM; Tracy Island

"Does anyone have anything to add to this debriefing?" Jeff asked as it wound down. They were at the dining room table, having dinner. Those who had been on the rescue either said, "No", or shook their heads. Brandon, Elise and Kat had joined the group, wanting to know what had happened. They looked stunned to hear that the Hood had been involved.

"All right. Then we are done here. Finish your meal, then get some sleep." He got up and pushed his chair back up to the table. "Scott and Kat, will you come with me?"

The young mechanic looked startled, then apprehensive, but stood up and followed Jeff and his son out of the room. When they arrived in the lounge, Jeff said to Scott, "Please go and wait in the study. I want to talk to Kat first, in private."

Scott agreed and went into the other room, closing the door behind him. Jeff went over to his desk and sat down, not looking at her. Instead he turned on his computer and brought up a file. She moved to stand in front of him, and nervously waited.

He sat back a few minutes later and looked up at her. "Kat, tell me about the jet pack. I understand that it was the one Gordon 'altered'. According to the maintenance logs," he gestured to his monitor, "it was brought back and you did the repairs on it. As far as I can tell, it hasn't been used since, until this rescue. Is that correct?"

"I-I." She closed her mouth and swallowed hard. "Yes, it is."  
And did you test fly it?"

"I-um. . . Oh wait! Yes. Some time later, when Brains was there, I did take it up and brought it back down. It seemed to be working fine."

Jeff frowned, puzzled. "What did you have to do to fix it?"

Kat thought back. "Let's see; Gordon had attached a receiver to the control panel, so he could fly it using a remote control device. I removed the receiver, and made sure there were no loose wires."

"Anything else?"

There was a pause. "No, sir."

"I realize you had never worked on one prior to that day. Did you have the manual with you when you worked on it?"

"Yes, of course."

He sighed. "Kat, the maintenance of the vehicles and equipment are your area of expertise. You should have checked more thoroughly to make sure nothing else in the pack had been affected. This problem should never have happened."

"Now I realize that Brains has been working with you to some extent, but he has many other tasks on his plate. You are here to take over this part of the work from him. Am I to assume from this incident that you aren't up to the job?"

She was shocked. "No, sir. I can do it!"

"Then you must constantly keep in the back of your mind the fact that our equipment has to be in top repair at all times. This includes testing whatever you have repaired. The lives of everyone on a rescue can depend on it." He leaned forward. "Kat, Gordon could have been seriously injured. In fact, I'm having Dianne check him over. You remember that he hurt his back a few months ago, during that Tower Bridge rescue?" She nodded. "That was the second time. His first back injury was an extremely serious one. He has come back from both very well, but he is more vulnerable than usual because of it."

Kat felt shaky. She realized that Jeff was right; she hadn't been thorough, and she was responsible for what had happened. Jeff watched her, his stern expression never changing.

"Sir, I take full responsibility. It will never happen again."

"It had better not. I give only one warning. But I can't just overlook what happened; I haven't before now, and I must be consistent." He sat back, considering his options. Finally he said, "I am taking into account the probability that you had never worked on equipment of that type before, although I presume you had the manual with you at that time. Therefore I'm going to rectify that situation. Starting tomorrow, in addition to your already scheduled work, you will completely take apart that jet pack, repair it, put it back together, and test it. You will also fully check over and test the other packs, as well. And you will do this without anyone's help. I expect all the jet packs to be fully functional by the end of the week. Today is Wednesday. You have until Saturday."

"Without any help? Does that include instruction manuals?"

"No, of course not. I meant that no other person will be allowed to assist you in any way. This way, you will be fully conversant with the function, mechanics and usage of the jet packs."

Kat was silent. She wanted to protest, to say it wasn't fair, that Gordon was partly responsible, but she knew that wasn't true. She was maintenance, not him. At last, she nodded. "I accept your punishment. And I won't shirk any other repairs I have scheduled."

"I'm glad to hear that. Now you may go."

Kat left the room, thankful that things hadn't been worse. She left the Villa and headed to her apartment.

Jeff sighed again, and shook his head. Too many things had gone wrong on this rescue for his liking, and he was thankful that it ended as well as it had. In fact, I'm surprised it did end so well, he thought. He called Scott and asked him to return to the lounge.

His eldest son walked in and stood in front of the desk, as Kat had, but in the military "at ease" posture. Jeff noticed and was inwardly amused, but didn't let it show. He closed the maintenance logs window and set the computer to record this session with his Field Commander.

"Scott," he began. "We were damned lucky things weren't worse than they could have been. What were you thinking, letting Callie go off on her own like that?"

"Sir, it seemed to me that I had no other choice, if I was going to get everything done in fastest possible time. But I told her she had to report in every five minutes, instead of the normal fifteen."

"That may have been the one thing that saved her -- and us." Jeff stood up and paced around the desk and into the room. He returned to Scott's side. "Can you imagine what would have happened had The Hood gotten any more information than he did? He might have even spirited Callie away to wherever he had his hideout! It's a good thing we injected those chips into everyone. I shudder to think what might have happened otherwise."

Scott remained silent. What could he say? He agreed with his father completely. He remained standing still, staring straight ahead.

Jeff looked at his son, feeling pride that he didn't argue or contradict his father's assessment of the situation. Finally, he relaxed somewhat and moved back to his desk, saying, "Sit down, son. You're starting to make me feel like a major dressing down a private."

Scott's posture eased, and he turned and went to the nearest chair. He smiled, but didn't respond. Jeff resumed his seat, leaning back and gazing at his son. "This is unacceptable. We have security in so many areas, but not when it comes to something like this. And it would be very naïve to think it won't happen again."

"I agree, sir. But what can we do. Too often we have to be in several places at the same time. Even I'm vulnerable, at Mobile Control, unless we're in a populated area and can have local security around."

"I know, son. But bringing everyone back safely is your responsibility. So I want you to come up with ideas to enhance security for all who go on a rescue, whether in a remote area or a populated one. I want a minimum of five suggestions. A minimum, mind you; I expect more. And I want it on my desk by ten tomorrow morning."