Subject: Re: Home is Where the Heart Is
Posted by Lillehafrue on Sun, 29 Jul 2012 20:38:41 GMT
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From: FrankieCTB2 Sent: 8/26/2006 7:26 PM

Tracy Island, July 29th, 3:00 p.m.

"It's no use. I can't do this."

"Yes, you can," the voice gently coaxed, "Just give me your hand and I'll guide you."

The fear came back again. "Nope, it won't work, I just can't do it."

"Sure it'll work; I'll be right here with you." The gentle voice continued to soothe the rising fears until the moment the water covered their heads.

WHOOSH! The water spouted up like Old Faithful as Elise tore off her snorkel mask and started gulping for air. Gordon came up right next to her.

"See! ... I ... told you ... I ...couldn't do ... it!" she spluttered.

Gordon had the patience of a saint when it came to helping people overcome fears, whether it be out on a rescue with a total stranger or training with a teammate. "You did fine Elise, really you did. Just try not to come up so fast next time."

"Next time?" Elise was still trying to comprehend the fact that she was still alive and breathing air after this time!

"In a couple of minutes we're going to try again, okay?" Gordon continued his gentle coaxing until she nodded a quick 'yes' a few minutes later.

Elise knew she had to at least try once more. It was part of the therapy Dianne had suggested and she knew deep down that Gordon wouldn't let anything happen to her. For Pete's sakes, he's an Olympic swimmer and part fish - he won't let me drown! She clung to the side of the pool, regaining her breath before she tried again. She pulled the mask down over her face, and made her way with Gordon to the middle of the pool where they again went under.

Just like the first time, Gordon held her hand under the water and gave it reassuring squeezes. They didn't stay down for long and when they surfaced it wasn't as dramatic as it'd been before. Gordon's plan was to get Elise as comfortable as possible with just going under and re-surfacing, and he was willing to take as long as it took.

"What is so fascinating down there?" Scott asked, approaching Virgil who had been on the balcony for some considerable time.

"Those two," Virgil indicated without turning to Scott who now stood next to him.

"How long have they been at it?" asked Scott.

"About 45 minutes. He's doing a great job with easing her fears."

"Good. It's tough, but she needs this."

Virgil nodded silently in agreement, knowing that facing her fears was Elise's biggest challenge right now. After a little while the two brothers started to casually talk about how training was going with various team members, including Elise, then discussed some ideas that they'd had about pod vehicles and equipment. Their attention drawn away from the pool, they were unaware of what happened next until they heard Gordon painfully yelling, "Hey! Guys! I need help down here, NOW!"

Simultaneously, Scott and Virgil looked down. Gordon was trying to swim to the pool edge, dragging a spluttering, panicking Elise, and the both of them were not getting very far.

Instantly, Virgil was down the steps and running with Scott on his heels. By the time they reached the pool edge, Gordon was about 2 feet away; leaning down on the poolside, Scott reached out to Gordon's outstretched arm and pulled him in. Virgil did likewise and grabbed hold of Elise, swiftly pulling her out of the water. She all but collapsed onto the ground, spluttering and gasping.

"What the hell happened?" Scott asked Gordon who was now lying on his back, wincing and breathing heavily.

Gordon turned his head towards Virgil. "Is she ... all right?"

"I think so," replied Virgil not taking his eyes off Elise, but helping her calm down and sit up slowly.

"Gords?" Scott asked again, impatient yet concerned.

"Oh yeah, ... sorry ... Scott. We were doing fine, swimming great until the snorkel somehow slipped and ... as I tried to help her adjust it, she opened her mouth and took in water."

Gordon was still having trouble believing it himself. "She panicked, and as we came up to the surface she was kicking and got me ... where it counts." He winced again remembering the pain.

Scott almost laughed out loud in relief at his brother's choice of words. "Sorry bro, I feel for you. I'm just glad it wasn't more serious."

"More serious? I may have suffered irrevocable damage!"

Scott looked him over quickly and smiling at Gordon's wounded look, replied, "I doubt it!" Scott helped his sibling to his feet, grabbed some towels and handed one to Gordon and one to Elise.

"Are you okay, Elise?" Scott asked.

"Yeah, I think so. Gordon, I'm so sorry I panicked." She looked up at him, wrapping the towel

around herself.

"S'okay, I think I'll live." He winked at her then added, "Are you okay? Do you hurt anywhere?"

"No. I'm fine. Just got scared."

"Well, apart from swallowing the pool, you did really great. But I think we'll call it quits for today."

"Thanks," she answered, sounding relieved and apologetic at the same time.

Virgil helped her stand and as he did she noticed how soaked he and Scott were.

"Sorry guys, for getting you all wet."

"It wouldn't be the first time, and I'm sure it won't be the last!" Virgil smiled at her. She laughed a little at his humor and they slowly made their way to the stairs and as Gordon and Scott headed up to the villa, Virgil stopped and turned Elise toward him. "Are you absolutely sure you're okay?"

The concern in his voice was evident and she was touched by it. "I'll be okay. If you're wondering will I ever get back in the water - I will. Gordon was so patient and understanding with me. He really helped. I just wasn't expecting to swallow half the pool today!" She smiled, hoping her answer would reassure him.

He softened a little and she noticed. "As long as you're sure, then let's go and get ourselves into some dry clothes!" He smiled at her as he carefully placed his arm around her shoulder and helped her up the stairs.