
Subject: Re: Home is Where the Heart Is
Posted by [Lillehafrue](#) on Sun, 29 Jul 2012 21:26:00 GMT
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From: susanmartha Sent: 9/2/2006 1:48 PM

Tuesday, July 31, 2068, 3pm. Christchurch, New Zealand

Anna packed the last picture in the box and looked around the office. Nothing was left to show she had ever been here. "No, that's not true. All of the files on my patients are still here and I did make a difference," she sighed. "Even if it seemed like nothing ever changed. People got better and left and someone else took their place. It's an ever flowing stream and I was just a tree on the bank." She grinned, wryly. "As long as it doesn't wash my roots away again."

She'd stopped accepting new patients 6 months ago and had been transferring her remaining clients to other therapists who worked for the city. For the past 2 months she had been sharing her office with her replacement. Today she had seen her last patient for the city.

The actual retirement party had been 3 months ago, when she went part time. Now she started to carry her belongings out to the car. She made it about 3 feet before she was stopped.

"You shouldn't be carrying that." Officer Dean Thomas grabbed the box from her and headed towards the elevator. "Isn't it over your weight limit?"

I don't have a 'weight limit'." She grinned. "I just can't carry it for more than 15 minutes at a time."

"The kids were asking about you the other day. John still has a couple of your books." Dean had been wounded during a convenience store robbery 5 years ago. He had fired back and killed the shooter. She had spent time with the entire family, sometimes as a counselor, sometimes just looking after the 3 kids so Mom could take a break or go with Dean to his doctor's appointments. She had totally corrupted John, then 11, by bringing him some of her favorite young adult fantasy and mystery books. "You know he's already read all of the sci-fi and mystery books in the school library. And this from a kid one of his teachers said was 'retarded'."

"I wouldn't insult people with any sort of disability by calling that teacher retarded. She is just plain stupid and an ass."

They reached Anna's car and she opened the trunk. "All I really did was give him something he thought was worth reading. Most of the books she wanted them to read talked down to the kids. She wasn't even following the school's recommend reading list for 6th graders. Teaching is one of the hardest jobs in the world. Why does it attract so many idiots?"

"Same reason we get them once in a while. Too many idiots." Dean closed the trunk and leaned against the car for a moment.

"Well, John is always welcome to come over and borrow any of my books he wants. Just make sure someone else comes with him or that both Ryan and I are there." She gave him a long look. "And you know you can give me a call if the nightmares come back."

"So what will you be doing now that you're retired? Work with kids some more? Start a private practice? Take up gardening?" Dean grinned. Anna's ability to kill any plant she tried to grow was a running joke around the office.

"I don't know. I want to volunteer more, or do something to get me out of the house. Maybe take on a few private patients. Some extra income would be nice. I wonder if Habitat for Humanity is still asking for people to help with rebuilding after the tsunami. Although I can't swing a hammer very long these days."

Pounding nails into wood was a wonderful way to get rid of stress. And seeing something you helped build being used by someone who really needed it gave a much needed boost to her morale. But there was no way she could swing a hammer for more than 20 minutes, nowadays. "They would probably put me to work helping the other volunteers deal with the stress." And I don't think I could handle doing that full time any more. "People never realize how stressful it can be working with people who have lost everything. Especially when it seems like you're not doing enough and never making any progress."

"Whatever you do, I'm sure you'll enjoy it." Dean moved away from the car. "What was that saying about God you always quoted?"

She started the car and released the brake. "God has a weird sense of humor." She pulled out of her slot and onto the street.