
Subject: Re: Home is Where the Heart Is
Posted by [Lillehafrue](#) on Sun, 29 Jul 2012 21:28:56 GMT
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From: Tikatu Sent: 9/2/2006 6:48 PM

July 31, 2068, 3:30 p.m., Tracy Island

Jeff looked up as Dianne and Lisa came into the lounge. He took one more look at his computer screen, nodded, then smiled at the two women. Lisa gave him a small, nervous smile back, while Dianne approached the desk.

"How did your phone interviews go?"

Dianne shook her head. "Don't ask. I'm finally getting places by using my name instead of yours, but the two men I've talked to were less than enthusiastic about coming out to the island. They have well-established practices and don't want to leave their patient load for any length of time." She shrugged. "I can understand it, really. I do have an appointment for a face-to-face interview on the second with the head of the psychiatric department at the Christchurch School of Medicine. It's a branch of the University of Otego. We'll see how that goes."

"Do you have any more calls to make?"

"Yes. A member of the faculty at the Otego's Wellington branch, a couple of people in Auckland, and three more in Christchurch. Private practices mostly. I'm hoping to set up at least two more face-to-face interviews for the second, though I could handle four more at the most."

"Sounds like you'll have a busy day in Christchurch."

"Yes. No rest for the weary." She tried to get a look at Jeff's computer screen, but he had minimized the window. "Should we get started?"

Jeff shook his head. "We're waiting for Kyrano. I think he should be here. He was in the midst of a chore, and said he'd be a few more minutes."

"Oh." Dianne leaned up against his desk and said, "You had a great response to the announcement."

Jeff chuckled. "Yes, I did. I've got a couple of responses to my email invitation, too."

At lunch, Jeff had stood up and called for the family's attention.

"I wanted to take a moment and invite you all to join us for Virgil's birthday party. It will be a dressy dinner and dance party, to be held in the dining room of the Paradise Peaks hotel, on August 15." He glanced around the table at the delighted faces and waited until the excited chatter died down before continuing. "Now, I will tell you that though everyone is invited -- yes, that means you children, too -- I will need some volunteers to either stay behind, or return early. Thunderbird One will be flown to Paradise Peaks and hidden nearby, kept in readiness for those who are willing to

come back and man the base -- or for any rescue that might be called in."

"Well, I'll be staying behind, that's for sure," John had piped up, smiling wryly. "Kind of hard to send a taxi to come get me."

"I'm sorry about that, John," Virgil had said sincerely. "When we first planned this, you weren't scheduled to be in Five..."

John had held up a hand. "Don't worry about it, Virge. I got to go to the ranch, and this way, Callie gets to celebrate her birthday with her family, as is only fair. I'm not complaining, just joking around."

"Well, we'll miss you," Dianne had said.

"Some of us in particular," Gordon had muttered, raising his eyebrows at John from across the table. John, to his credit, had merely colored a little. After lunch, however, there had come the sound of Gordon yelling, "Hey! Don't!" followed by a large splash.

"So, who has said what amongst our new recruits?" Dianne asked.

"Dom has said he'd stay, and so has Brandon," Jeff told her. "No one else has responded yet, with RSVP or the decision to stay here. I asked them to tell me either way, and if they'd be okay with coming back early should they decide to go."

At that moment, Kyrano entered the room. He nodded to Jeff and Dianne, and went to sit next to Lisa, taking her hand in both of his and whispering something in her ear. Her whole demeanor, which had been a tight bracing for the worst, relaxed, and she nodded at Jeff. Jeff indicated with his glance that Dianne should also sit, and she did, taking a chair where she could see both her husband and her mother easily.

Jeff came out from behind his desk, turning his computer screen so he could easily see it from where he stood, leaning up against the front. He maximized the window he had been looking at earlier, and glanced at it once more. Then he took a deep breath, and began.

"I asked you here to discuss with you the results of the investigation I had our security people make into Garrett Parkhurst. I was as concerned as you were about this man's motives and the timing of his reappearance in your life, Lisa, especially since he didn't seem to have any qualms about invading your privacy with his phone calls and personal contact." He paused to moisten his lips with his tongue. "I wish I could say I have good news, and that this man really seems to be sincere in making amends with his family, but... from the information presented to me by our people, I'm afraid I can't."

Lisa leaned closer to Kyrano, who kept her hand in one of his, and let go with the other, slipping it instead behind her back. There was a long moment of quiet, until finally, Lisa asked softly, "What did they find?"

"Well, he's been living in Biloxi, and has been working for the city in their parks landscaping maintenance department. He specializes in trees; pruning, planting, and generally taking care of

them in the city's parks. He remarried about twenty years ago, and has two children by his second wife who is twenty years his junior. He's a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, and volunteers at the local homeless shelter."

"Sounds like he's turned his life around," Dianne muttered, shifting in her seat and folding her arms, frowning. I do not like the fact that I have a couple of half siblings out there somewhere.

"It does, doesn't it?" Lisa said softly.

"It sounds as if he has," Jeff said, nodding.

"Ah hear a 'but' in theyah, Jeff," Dianne replied, a bit of satisfaction in her tone.

"Yes. There's a 'but'," Jeff said, sighing. "I had my people look deeper. It seems that Garrett is in some financial hot water. He's got a heavy debt load, and his wife, who seems to be a compulsive gambler, has lost heavily at the casinos. Foreclosure proceedings have started on their house, and there have been some police reports of domestic violence calls. He's been arrested twice, and she's been arrested once, but the charges were either dismissed or the sentence reduced to community service and anger management counseling. Right now, he's on an 'emergency family leave' from his work; they believe he's..." Jeff paused and shook his head. "They think he's visiting his ailing daughter from his first marriage."

Garrett and his motives, part 1