
Subject: Re: Home is Where the Heart Is
Posted by [Lillehafrue](#) on Sun, 29 Jul 2012 22:02:03 GMT
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From: susanmartha Sent: 9/10/2006 9:04 PM

"Dr. Hanson? I'm Dr. Dianne Tracy." She was meeting her 5th and final candidate for a counselor. Ms. Hanson had just retired and no longer had an office, so Dianne had suggested they meet at the hotel restaurant. If they wanted to talk privately, they could go to Dianne's suite later.

Anna Hanson didn't look like a businesswoman. She was wearing a nice pair of slacks and a plain silk blouse. She looks comfortable, more like a school teacher. Her handshake was firm.

"Dr. Tracy. I'm pleased to meet you also. And it's Mrs. Hanson. I just have a Master's in Social work, not a PhD."

"Considering some of the PhDs I've met so far, that might be an advantage." Dianne chuckled. "Would you like to order something? Tea, coffee?"

"Coffee, please. Decaf, with cream." The hovering waitress nodded and brought a cup and a bowl of flavored creamers over, while the two women sized each other up.

"I understand you are looking for a counselor to help with a family practice. I gather from your comment your search has not gone well?"

"No, it hasn't been going well. I have a patient who needs help immediately. It's not something I feel comfortable doing. I've dealt with trauma before but she is going to need more help than I can give, and more time than I can spare. I already have her on antidepressants and they are helping some. But I don't think she's actually healing from what happened, just suppressing it. I have 2 other patients who need some help. Plus I'm keeping an eye on one of my sons. Tyler was sick a couple months ago and I believe it was due to stress. There have been a lot of changes in his life in the past year. My husband nearly died last February and there were several other major changes in Tyler's life about that time. I know I'm not the best one to handle this -- I'm too personally involved." Dianne took a sip of her coffee. "I don't want him to cover his feelings up to try and protect me. If that's what he's doing, I can't be the one to deal with it. It needs an outsider."

"For several reasons, I would like to have someone come to my home to start work with the patients. They could come to the mainland for appointments after things have been set up, but right now the doctor or counselor needs to come to them."

"The problem is none of the established doctors are willing to do that. They don't want to leave their current patients for that long. And they don't see a reason to. The ones who are willing to come -- well, I wouldn't turn a dog over to one of them and the other," she hesitated, "I think he's out for all he can get. And I just don't feel right about him."

"Trust your gut. There are some doctors and counselors out there that shouldn't be trusted with a houseplant, much less a human being." Anna grinned. "Sturgeon's law applies to doctors and counselors as well as everything else."

"Sturgeon's law? What's that? Who is he?" Dianne looked quizzically at her.

"He was a mid 20th century science fiction writer. His law is right up there with Murphy's. '90% of everything is crap'."

Dianne snorted. "Sounds about right for today."

"I'm curious." Anna looked at Dianne. "Where do you live that it's so hard to get a counselor out there? Most places that are large enough to have a doctor usually have enough people to have at least a part time counselor? And why do you need to have someone come there at first?"

Dianne stared at her for a second, then quickly recovered. "I want someone to come and stay for a bit because one of the problems is rather complicated. You would be better off talking to several of the others involved before talking to the patient. She will be better off talking to you in a place where she feels safe. And, yes, we are a bit isolated."

She doesn't know we have our own island. she mused. If she doesn't know I'm 'That' Dianne Tracy, so much the better.

"You know, I specialized in trauma cases - especially with police officers, firefighters and paramedics who have been injured on the job, seen a colleague killed on the job, or been forced to kill in the line of duty. My other experience is mostly with victims of major accidents, natural disasters, rape and abuse. That's not exactly a family practice."

"The two people I'm most worried about fall into those categories. And I can't say anything else without breaking patient confidentiality." Or, she thought, without breaking IR security.

Anna leaned back and looked at her. "You do know the law requires me to report anytime I feel a child might be in danger. If there is something like that going on I must turn you in. And I will."

"The only child involved is Tyler, who's nine. There is nothing illegal or immoral going on." She grinned. "I won't say anything about fattening."

Now for the biggest sticking point. "How are you with handling other religions? Or 'alternate belief systems'? One of the patients has some unusual beliefs." Dianne had decided this was the best way to try to explain about Callie and the Hood, after her first attempt had been met with laughter and a, "She hears voices in her head? We have a good inpatient treatment center," from a noted psychiatrist.

"It doesn't matter what I believe. It's my job to help my client in any way I can." Anna closed her eyes for a second. "You know I've worked with domestic violence victims?" When Dianne nodded, she went on. "While I was in college, I interned at a shelter. One of our clients was convinced her husband had put a curse on her and could follow her anywhere. So she and I together hunted up a priest, shaman..." Anna shrugged. "I never could decide just what he was. But she had faith in him. We arranged for him to come to the center the day she escaped, and he did a full ritual while we were filling out paperwork. I don't know if it worked, but her husband never found her or her kids. We did have to disconnect the smoke alarm though."

Anna waved the waitress over for a coffee refill and thought for a moment.

"You know, I planned on being an Episcopal priest for a while." Dianne's eyebrows shot up in surprise. "I've come to the conclusion that God is a whole lot bigger than I am. I have no idea what he looks like to others. And there are so many things out there I don't understand; how can I say what is actually possible? I once had a patient who thought rocks talked to her. Since they generally gave her good advice, I didn't worry too much. As long as it isn't hurting anyone, why should I care? If his or her beliefs get in the way of the client's healing, I'll worry about it then."

"How is the 'rock' patient doing?" Dianne knew it was unprofessional of her, but she had to ask.

"Well, I last saw her 20 years ago. She had left her alcoholic husband, gotten her first job and had returned to finish high school. Rocks no longer talked to her much but they were still very soothing." She paused for a moment. "You know, that was actually the case that made me decide to return to school and become a certified counselor instead of a social worker. I realized I was so much better at counseling than arranging for public assistance. And I actually enjoyed it."

Dianne nodded slowly and sipped her coffee. "I'd like for you to come to my home and meet some people. It's on an island, so it might be easier if you planned on staying overnight. If the people involved agree, I would like for you to stay a while or make some arrangements to come back for a short time to do initial assessments and meet some of the other people involved."

"I'll need to talk this over with my husband. How long would you want me to stay?"

"The first time? At least a week. After that, we'll try to set up regular appointments here or arrange for you to fly out once a week. You have a pilot's license, don't you?" Dianne had noticed that and thought it might simplify things.

"Yes, but I really don't like to fly anymore." At Dianne's raised eyebrow she continued. "Three words: congestive heart failure."

Dianne looked her over with a professional eye. "How bad?"

"Not very. I get tired easily. I don't walk up more than two flights of stairs. But when I do get tired, I just go plop! I need to rest right then with no time to land a plane." She made a face. "I never liked piloting that much. My husband likes to fly and I figured I better know how to at least land his plane. But I'd rather walk."

"Well, let's get back to our respective husbands and I'll call you tomorrow." Dianne took a deep breath. "If you are still unsure about going to a strange place with a total stranger, I could provide some references. With your background I can understand being cautious."

Anna grinned and stood up. "No, I don't need references. Your request was odd enough that I called some friends in the police department and checked up on you. But you can tell Jefferson Tracy that he better have a good explanation for his son quitting NASA. I know he had to quit -- his boys needed him to be there. But why did John quit? He was doing so well."

Dianne watched as she walked away. "You just might find that out."
