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Subject: Re: Home is Where the Heart Is  
Posted by [Lillehafrue](#) on Sun, 29 Jul 2012 22:53:44 GMT  
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From: Tikatu Sent: 9/19/2006 8:00 PM

Saturday, August 4, 2068, 12:55 p.m., local time, Murray Gill, KS (5:55 a.m., Tracy Island time)

Scott climbed out of Thunderbird One's cockpit and gazed around. The sky overhead was a mass of dark clouds, pushed by a strong wind. There was the smell of ozone from lightning strikes and Scott had seen the damage that the multiple twisters had done as they marched across the landscape. He had been tempted to deviate in his flight just a bit and see if their old farmhouse still stood; John said that some of the tornadoes had touched down near there.

"They haven't finished yet, Scott," John had warned him. "I'll do what I can, but you need to keep a weather eye out yourself."

The school building looked like it had been hit by a bomb. The roof was gone, and the walls that supported it had gone with it. The only reason Scott could tell that the school had once had three floors were the few support columns, truncated yet still tall, that stood like branchless trees amid the rubble. The cement panel walls had fallen away, some smashed to chunks on the ground below, some still sticking out, slab-like, from the heap. The basement must be extra reinforced for times such as this. He took in a deep breath, then began to look around for Thunderbird Two's landing spot.

His arrival had not gone unnoticed. There was a work crew already on hand, but their equipment was too small and too few for the giant task of removing the debris from the school. The man who was obviously in charge hurried over to Scott, pulling off his feed cap and running a hand through his sparse hair.

"Man, am I ever glad to see you," the man said. He held out his hand. "Henry Dolan. I'm the construction inspector for the city."

"You can call me Maverick." Scott shook the man's hand then took another look at the front end loader and the two plows that were hard at work, trying to move the rubble. "We got a call from your mayor. Some youngsters with special needs are trapped inside, and so is he." He nodded toward the equipment. "I see you've gotten a start here."

Dolan nodded. "I know about the kids, and the mayor. He called me to see if I could get some plans for the high school here. Said you were coming and would need them." He sighed heavily. "All the emergency services are tending to gas fires, downed power lines, clearing roads of debris, and more. Communications are spotty; I was surprised the mayor was able to get through. When I heard from him, I came out with what equipment and people I could gather. When can you get them out?"

Scott glanced at his watch. "My heavy equipment will still take some time to get here. I'm here to do some reconnaissance and figure out where we're setting up our vehicles and equipment." He gave Dolan a confident smile. "We'll hit the ground running once we get here."

"Should we keep at it?"

"Yes, definitely. Any progress you make is helpful. I'm going to set up my communications base, and I'll relay those plans to get a head start on our strategy."

Dolan fished around in his pocket and pulled out a data card. "Here they are. We'll keep at it." His face relaxed into a tentative smile. "I'm glad you're here."

Scott nodded, and the inspector jogged off to continue supervising the crew. Scott climbed back into Thunderbird One.

"Thunderbird Five from Thunderbird One. Come in, Quasar."

"Thunderbird Five here. Go ahead."

"I'm at the Danger Zone. I'll be uploading plans to the high school we'll be digging out and I'm sending the mobile camera to get some pictures of the place as well. I'll need them relayed to Sweet on Two. She's the best one to decipher where we should start digging."

"F-A-B, Maverick." John paused, then asked. "How bad is it?"

"Bad. You'll see just how bad in a few, Quasar." He stuck the data card into the reader onboard Thunderbird One. The computer scanned the information for possible malware, then transmitted it to Five. While it was doing that, Scott pulled out the remote control for the anti-gravity mobile camera and a pair of digital binoculars. The computer beeped that it was finished, and Scott removed the data card, tucking it into a pocket of his vest before climbing back out again. "First the images, then the landing site." He jogged his way down toward the storage bay, ready to pull out Mobile Control.