
Subject: Re: Home is Where the Heart Is
Posted by [Lillehafrue](#) on Sun, 29 Jul 2012 23:20:13 GMT
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From: AmandaTracyandFred Sent: 10/1/2006 11:15 AM

(Saturday, August 4, El Dorado, Kansas 4:45 p.m./Sunday, August 5, Tracy Island 9:45 a.m.)

While eating dinner, Jenny watched Heather carefully. She noticed that her niece kept looking out the kitchen window, peering at the place where the lovely house had once stood. The dark grey sky with its flashes of lightning described Heather's mood. Then in a fit of frustration, Heather shoved her chair back, marched over to the kitchen window, and pushed the window shades closed. Sitting back down, Heather started to eat again.

"Are you all right?" Jenny asked carefully as she passed a plate of biscuits.

Accepting two hot biscuits, Heather smiled. "I'm about as all right as I can be." Taking one of the biscuits, Heather buttered it, dribbled honey on it, and then nibbled on it thoughtfully.

"Pass the mashed potatoes?" Jenny asked. Heather wiped the honey off her fingers and passed the bowl of steaming mashed potatoes, being careful not to bump the large spoon stuck in the lumpy mound.

"You know, Aunt Jenny," Heather spoke thoughtfully. "At first, when I saw you standing on the grounds, I thought I could handle it just fine. My home was just nuts, bolts, boards, brick, paint and electronics. All could be rebuilt. So, why does it bother me so bad? I shouldn't feel like this!"

Patting a slightly rough hand, Jenny sighed. "Honey, it's hard to describe, but you've basically set down roots and the tornado pulled them up. You and your father designed the house together, so it meant something to you. You worked hard to build it. You couldn't wait to move in. You built the fence around it, and put all the electronics in it so you could keep in contact with the rest of your family who live so far away. All the neighbors were so excited to have you move here. But I know that you're trying to decide whether to take Mr. Tracy's offer. Don't worry about what your mother thinks, what your father says, or even what I think. Do what's best for you."

As Heather reached for the fried chicken, she nodded at what Jenny had said. "The first thing I want to do is get a room at the Regis Hotel in Wichita."

"When would you go?" Jenny asked, taking a sip of coffee.

"I'll go this evening," Heather said as she sipped her iced tea.

"What about all your legal papers and such? Or did you have them there?" Jenny asked.

"Oh I had them there--"

"Oh no!"

Raising up a hand, Heather reassured her, "No, it's okay. The tornado took the house and everything above ground, but I put all my legal papers and things in a fireproof safe and that's in the basement. I'll go get those before I take off for the big city."

Seeing the exhaustion tugging at the corners of Heather's eyes, Jenny quelled the desire to insist that her niece stay at the farm, because once Heather was gone, the tough navy pilot would be out of her care for good. Who's going to look after her then? "Heather," she asked. "After you get your paperwork, come back here. I'll have something for you that will help get you by for the next few days."

"Okay," Heather agreed.

After they finished dinner, Heather drove over to what was left of her home and, grabbing a spare flashlight in the glove compartment, she found the basement stairway and walked down it.

Flashing the light about, she had to push her way through the piled up furniture, and looked to the back wall where a tapestry once hung. Walking over to it, she found the safe in perfect condition. "Best thing I'd ever done." Opening it, she pulled out her legal papers, the cases that held her medals and ribbons won in service, handwritten letters by her father, her mother, and Donny, and a diamond necklace she wore on rare occasions.

Taking all her treasures out of the safe, she stowed them safely inside her coat and made her way back up and out of her ruined home. As she promised, Heather stopped by her aunt's farmhouse. A light scent of pale lavender came off her aunt's skin as she hugged the older woman close.

"Heather, I've never had a daughter of my own. You've been the closest thing to it that I've ever had. Would you forgive me if I've tried to hold you too close sometimes?"

"Of course," Heather replied. "You act as if I'm leaving for good."

"It's because you are."

After giving Heather one last hug, and an envelope of money, Jenny walked towards the porch where she would keep watch of her niece. Getting into her car, Heather waved from the open window as she fired the engine to life. A moment later, Jenny watched with a heavy heart as the black Jag roared off towards Wichita.

"God protect you, honey. You always seem to find yourself right smack dab in the middle of trouble," she whispered.