
Subject: Re: Home is Where the Heart Is
Posted by [Lillehafrue](#) on Mon, 30 Jul 2012 00:27:27 GMT
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From: Tikatu Sent: 10/13/2006 8:11 PM

Jeff pinched the bridge of his nose, going over his options in his head. His thoughts seemed to swirl; unwanted visions of his wife, Lucille, after the accident that had claimed her came to the fore and made it hard for him to concentrate. I lost Lucille this way. I can't lose Dianne, too. I hope, I pray that the difference is Scott and Thunderbird One.

Finally, he had the bare bones of a plan. I can't abandon the desk, not while the operatives are out still out there working. So, I need to get Scott back here. Soon as that happens, then I can take off... no, we can take off. Drew's right. The kids need to see Dianne, no matter what happens... all of the kids. I can't have a repeat of Lucille. If she doesn't... No. I can't think that way either. She's going to be all right. She has to be all right.

Turning to the intercom, he paged his retainer.

"Kyrano." It was hard to keep his voice steady.

"Yes, Mr. Tracy?" Kyrano could hear the edge in his employer's voice, and put down his cleaver. Emily, who had been working with him on making lunch, stopped what she was doing as well.

"I need for you and Lisa to gather up the children and bring them up here quickly. There's been an... an incident."

Kyrano and Emily exchanged glances. "Do you want me up there, too, Jeff?" Emily asked.

Jeff took a deep breath. "Yes, Mom. I need you up here, too. As soon as possible."

"We are on our way," Kyrano said firmly. The connection closed, and the kitchen's denizens began to put their perishable things into the refrigerator. "It sounds ominous," Kyrano said as he washed his hands.

"It does," Emily agreed. "You get Lisa. She's watching Joshua, so he'll have to come along. I'll find the children and meet you in the lounge."

"Yes." Kyrano nodded and the two went on their separate missions. Meanwhile, Jeff was talking with his eldest son.

"The security head has arranged for me to move Thunderbird One to a less conspicuous spot," Scott told him.

"What have you heard otherwise?"

Scott sighed. He knew this question was coming. "I haven't gotten an update yet. I'm not sure who to ask."

"Well, find someone!" Jeff snapped. "I need to know how our people are doing!"

"F-A-B," Scott replied sharply, emphasizing each syllable. "I'll find out now. Maverick out."

The connection quit, and Jeff ran his hands through his hair. That was uncalled for, Tracy. You don't need to take your frustration out on him. He's not the reason your wife is in the hospital. You'd be better off figuring out how to tell your children that their mother is injured. He glanced up to see Kyrano come in with Lisa, who carried Joshua in her arms. Following in their wake were Cherie, Alex, and Tyler, all of whom had apprehensive - Make that downright scared - looks on their faces. Bringing up the rear was Emily, who had a comforting hand on Tyler's shoulder

"Sit down, please," Jeff said as he rose from behind his desk. He eyed Joshua as the others sat down. Will I someday have to tell that boy that his father is dead or crippled? God, I hope he's not badly hurt this time!

"I'll get right to the point, everyone. About an hour ago, Thunderbird Seven was picked up by a strong twister." He paused as the people around the room gasped in horror. Tyler let out a whimpering little, "No!" and sat close to Emily, nearly hiding behind her.

"What happened?" Emily asked sharply.

"I don't have all the details, but Thunderbird Seven was really - banged up doesn't cover it - really badly damaged."

"Is... Is everyone okay?" Cherie asked tentatively.

Jeff ran a hand over his face, then went to sit down next to her. "No, Princess, they're not. Dominic, Nikki and your mother were all injured in the event."

"Injured?" Alex said, picking up on the word and using a cautiously hopeful tone. "Not... dead?"

"Not dead," Jeff said firmly. He leaned forward and made eye contact with everyone. "Dominic and Nikki seem to have relatively minor injuries, but your mother is hurt more. They are all at the hospital in Los Angeles where your great-uncle Drew works. He's going to make sure they all get the best of care."

"Surgery?" Lisa asked bluntly.

Jeff was equally blunt. "Yes, at least in Dianne's case. But she was conscious and alert long enough to make that decision, which is a good sign."

"Can we go see her?" Alex asked, his tone half hopeful.

"Yes. That's part of the reason I called you all here. I need you to pack your clothes and get ready to go to Los Angeles. Lisa, I'm under orders from Drew to have you call Maggie and bring her up to speed. He says we're to stay with them, and won't let me argue about it."

"Of course he wouldn't. Family stays with family." Lisa got up and handed Joshua off to Kyrano. "I'll call right now." She moved over to Jeff's desk to make her call.

"Mom, could you take Joshua?" Jeff asked. When Emily nodded, he continued. "I've also been told I'm not to do the flying, which means you'll have to take the pilot's seat, Kyrano."

"Of course, Mr. Tracy."

Kyrano rose and brought Joshua to Emily, who settled the toddler on her lap and looked at her son with an expression of concern. "When will you be leaving?"

"When Scott gets back here. I'm not leaving the desk unmanned or you alone," Jeff told her.

"Has there been any news about Marion?"

Jeff shook his head. "No, but I've probably got some voice messages to listen to. I'll check them once Lisa's finished with her call."

He rubbed both hands over his face, then glanced up to see Tyler standing before him. "Dad? Is Mom going to... die?"

Jeff opened his arms and settled his youngest son on his lap. Holding Tyler close, he told the boy, "I don't know for sure, Ty, but I don't think so. Scott got her to the hospital in Thunderbird One, so you know she got there quickly. And Uncle Drew... well, he's not going to let her die, not if he can help it."

Alex joined them as Cherry leaned up and put her arm around one of Jeff's. "I'm scared," Tyler whispered.

"We're all scared, Ty," Cherry said. "But Dad's right. Uncle Drew's on the case. He won't let Mom die."

"He may not have any choice," Alex said gloomily.

"Now that's nonsense, Alexander. Your uncle would move heaven and earth to save your mother. And don't forget: your mama made us a promise, and you know she's going everything she can to keep it," Lisa said, coming up to the little group. "Everything's set with Maggie, Jeff. She'll be waiting when we get there... whenever that is." She held out her hands to her grandchildren. "Come along, Tyler, Alex. Come with me, Cherie. Let's get packed up and be ready to go."

Jeff hugged Tyler hard before letting him get up. He patted Alex on the back and ran his hand through the short blond hair, then he kissed Cherie on the cheek and on the forehead. The children moved away slowly, with many a backward glance, but urged on by their grandmother.

"I will prepare Tracy One for flight," Kyrano said. He bowed, a courtesy not used much between them anymore, and followed Lisa out.

Jeff sighed heavily and returned to his desk. John's portrait was still active, but muted. All of the

other "portraits" had been moved to icons on his desktop computer. Unless the operative was in a vehicle, they showed up as CGI characters on his screen. He called up his answering service, and began to listen to the messages, something he never did during a rescue. But he knew his mother's mind; it wouldn't be at rest until she had news. Besides, he was concerned about the caretaker at their family farmhouse, too.

Emily looked up as her son let out a sigh, one that sounded relieved. "Jeff?" she asked as she bounced Joshua on her lap.

He gave her a smile, small but genuine. "Good news, Mom. Marion called Jeanette, who relayed the message to me. She was in town most of the day, so she's safe. She hasn't been out to the house, though."

"Oh, that is a relief," Emily said, returning his smile. She put Joshua down, and stood, taking his hand. "I think this young 'un needs some lunch. I'll make sure you get some, too, Jeff." She approached the desk and put her free hand on Jeff's shoulder, squeezing it. "She'll be fine, son. She's in good hands."

Jeff merely nodded. Emily kissed him on the cheek and led Joshua off to feed him.

Putting his head in his hands, Jeff agonized silently. What the hell am I going to do? There's so much to think about! I need to focus on the team... but how can I? How can I put my wife on the back burner and think about others?

His eyes fell on Dianne's picture, the one that sat on his desk. It had been rigged to function like those of the boys, showing Dianne's face as she piloted Seven, but was rarely used now. He took a deep breath and put her picture face down on the desk. He let out the breath, and reached into the cabinet behind his desk. Pulling out a bottle of fine Scotch and a glass, he poured himself two fingers worth, downing it in one shot. Then he put away the liquor, laid the glass on his desk, and went to call Scott.