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Subject: Re: New Beginnings

Posted by [Lillehafrue](#) on Mon, 30 Jul 2012 02:40:47 GMT

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Thursday, January 10, 2069, 6:10 a.m., Tracy Island

"Hey, Dad, you did pretty well there," John remarked between gulps of air. He pulled his sweat-soaked Harvard t-shirt over his head, and used it to mop his brow. "Kept up with me at every step. Who knew the old man had it in him?"

Jeff nodded, breathing heavily. His ancient and well-worn Air Force shirt was dark with sweat, but he took time to catch his breath before he spoke.

"I'm too winded to come up with a snarky retort to that," he finally huffed out. "But thank you for the backhanded compliment."

John grinned. He opened the small cooler that waited at their end of the trail leading from this section of the beach to the Villa. He tossed a bottle of cold water from the cooler to his father, who caught it handily, then took one for himself. Settling his shirt around his shoulders, he grabbed the cooler's strap, and walked over to the trail. Jeff opened his water bottle, took a couple of swigs, and joined his son.

"Looks like you'll be in tip-top form for the moon mission," John said, opening his own bottle, the cooler settled on one shoulder, padded from skin contact by the wadded up shirt.

"I certainly hope so," Jeff said as they began walking up the trail. "With everything that's gone on in the past year, keeping in shape hasn't exactly been a top priority. Getting into the kind of shape that's needed in for this mission? It's a good thing Dianne's been pushing me."

"She's really gung ho about you going, isn't she?"

Jeff snorted. "Yes, but only because she knows I'd kick myself if I didn't do this. I can tell she's a bit nervous about it, though. She keeps trying to read the specs of the shuttle we're taking, and asking Brains to translate the schematics for her. She wants to know where every emergency exit is."

"Hm." John frowned, clearly thoughtful. "I didn't think she'd be worried. It's not as if we don't go into space all the time." He barked a short laugh. "I'm assuming she's worried about me, too... though it's not like I don't go into space every three months and spend a month up there by myself. She never seems concerned about that."

"Yes, she is worried about you, too, John, but about me more. Like you said, you go into space all the time, and you're flying...and staying...in vessels constructed by someone she trusts, out of materials she knows from personal experience are virtually indestructible. I don't." Jeff took another swig of water. "She doesn't trust the WSA like she trusts Brains. She's also not happy that I'm going to have to spend a month at Kennedy Space Center preparing for the launch, then the time we're up there, and quarantine when we get back."

"But she still wants you to do it?"

"Yup. Gotta love a woman like that."

They were quiet as they continued to climb, finishing their water before they reached the Round House. Then John broke the silence.

"What do the sprouts think of all this?"

Jeff shook his head. "I'm not sure. We haven't really talked to them about it much. They don't seem concerned; they probably equate it to one of our space missions or a trip to Thunderbird Five and back." He grimaced. "That's where being part of this operation has a downside. Even something as dangerous as a space launch becomes routine. I think that's why the destruction of Thunderbird Seven was such a shock to us all. We'd become complacent, thinking it was routine, when what we do is anything but."

John nodded his head slowly. "Yeah." He turned to his father. "I think you have something there."

They continued walking, past the Round House and up towards the Villa. The island was still relatively quiet, with only the birds creating their morning cacaphony. Sunlight shone far out to sea, as the sun rose behind the island's central peak. The air was still relatively cool in the shadow cast by said eminence, but the day was brightening every moment, and the temperature would soon climb with it. Jeff sighed.

"I guess Dianne and I will have to talk with them about it and explain a few home truths. God knows I don't want to scare them, but they have to know the risks." He shook his head. "Not yet though. When the time comes." His face lit up with a slow grin. "Who knows? I might not even pass the physical." With a huff, he added, "Though not for lack of trying."

John laughed, and nudged his father with his upper arm and elbow. "C'mon, Dad. You did fine today."

"Maybe today, I did fine," Jeff said, making a face. "But tomorrow I run with Scott. Compared to him, you're sadly out of shape yourself."

"Oh, you think so?" John stuck his empty water bottle in the cooler, and dropped it. He slung the shirt from his shoulder, whipped it around his head three times, then began to run. "Last one to the breakfast table is a rotten egg!"

Jeff just shook his head. He grabbed the cooler and slung it over one shoulder, then set off at a leisurely pace in John's wake. Sometimes, it wasn't so bad being the rotten egg.