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Subject: Re: New Beginnings

Posted by [Lillehafrue](#) on Mon, 30 Jul 2012 03:12:54 GMT

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Jeff finished his champagne and handed his flute to his wife. "You don't mind if I dance with the birthday girl first, do you?"

"No, of course not," Dianne said, sipping her own champagne. "We'll have plenty of time later."

Jeff smiled, and kissed her on the cheek. "I'll be back."

Penelope was just accepting a second glass of champagne from Parker when Jeff found her.

"May I have this dance, milady?" he asked, bowing slightly.

Penny smiled, a bright twinkle in her eye. "Of course, Jeff. I would never turn down a chance to dance with you." She handed her glass to Parker, and stepped into Jeff's arms.

"I hope you enjoy yourself tonight," Jeff said as they swayed to the music.

"I'm sure I shall. It is a marked contrast to my usual birthday celebrations. They so often felt as if they were an afterthought in the excitement of holiday preparations." Penny sighed slightly. "Having one's birthday on Christmas Eve does tend to lessen the impact of the day in the minds of others." She glanced over to her left, and nodded in that direction. "I am sure you are aware of that since young Tyler and I share the same natal day."

Jeff smiled. "I've been aware of it for longer than that, Penny. Gordon's birthday on Valentine's Day was often a challenge, too; at least, while Lucy was alive... and now again with Dianne."

"But you have successfully celebrated both." Her tone shaded it as a question rather than a statement.

"Yes, we have. We've tried to make each birthday celebration as special as the person we're celebrating."

She smiled then, her cheeks coloring beneath her make up. "And I thank you for that."

They were quiet for a while, letting the music guide their steps. When the tune came to an end, Jeff leaned in and kissed Penelope on the cheek. "Happy birthday, Penny."

She looked downward, swallowing hard. "Thank you again, Jeff. For everything."

He was about to answer, when there was a slight tap on his shoulder. "Can I have this next dance with the birthday girl?" John asked.

"Of course, John," Penny said. Jeff could have sworn that tears had sparkled in her eyes the moment before, but now there was no sign of them. "I would be delighted to dance with you."

"She's all yours, son," Jeff said, drawing back.

"Don't I wish!" John replied with a grin as he took Penelope's hands. The music began again, and John swept her off into the small knot of dancing couples.

Jeff let a long breath out through his nose as he watched them for a moment. Then he went off in search of his wife. He felt a strong need to hold her in his arms, and dance with her, cheek to cheek.

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