

Tracy Island, Late afternoon . . .

Edward sat silently as the nurse pushed the wheelchair toward the hospital exit. He would have preferred to walk but just the prospect of finally leaving the hospital had eliminated the will to make too much of a fuss over the hospital policy. As the doors parted, and he made his way through the doorway, Edward took in a deep breath of the fresh air. It was good to be free of the sterile environment of the veteran's hospital.

The nurse brought him to a stop beside his brother's car. Ted opened the door for him and, refusing help, Edward climbed into the passenger seat. As he waited for his brother to walk around the car, Edward thought about how to start the search he had been waiting almost two months to pursue. He was determined to find Desert Rose.

Satisfied with the ending of the chapter, Lana saved the file and closed her laptop. She looked over toward the pool where Aaron and Lea were throwing a ball back and forth. A smile came to the mother's face as she watched her kids play.

More voices made Lana look toward the Villa to see Alex and Tyler making their way down, followed closely by their mother. Dianne spotted Lana and waved. Lana returned the greeting, and as Alex and Tyler made a beeline for the pool, Dianne walked over to her.

"Mind if I join you?"

"Not at all," Lana said indicating the empty chairs at the table.

Dianne sat down across from the other woman. She placed the book she had brought down to read on the table.

"Wasn't sure anyone else would be down here," she commented.

"Well, the kids wanted to go swimming and I figured the fresh air would be nice." After a short pause, Lana continued. "Izzara is a very intriguing woman. I enjoyed talking with her last night."

"She is indeed. Those who have visited her already report she's a very competent dentist. I'd definitely recommend her if you're looking for a nearby dentist for your own family."

Lana smiled. "Izzara managed to fit her own pitch in last night. The kids are actually due for a check-up next month. I'll probably call her office and set up an appointment. At least the dentist issue is one thing I can check off my to-do list."

"Always a nice thing to be able to do."

"I actually wanted to talk to you about another item on the list -- schooling for Lea. Aaron's continuing the internet program he did back in Hawaii. I was homeschooling Lea back home, but it

was set up locally so I need to figure out something else."

Lana looked over at the pool. Aaron had organized the younger kids in a water version of monkey in the middle. Tyler was currently in the middle and looking to get a bit frustrated. As Lana watched, Aaron purposely made a bad throw and let Tyler get the ball.

"He's pretty good with kids," Dianne commented, having followed Lana's gaze.

Lana nodded, a proud smile on her face. She took her eyes off the game and looked back at Dianne as she continued. "Anyway, given the isolation here on the island, Vince and I thought about sending her to a school on the mainland but needing to fly her back and forth daily just seems impractical, especially after her reaction on the flight over here."

"Yeah, a daily flight back and forth could be hard on her, though Jeff and I would definitely work something out to accommodate you if that's what you want."

Lana shook her head. "It would be good for her socially but one of the reasons I started homeschooling her was so I could be involved in her education, especially with my degree in elementary education. Your kids are schooled here on the island, right? Is it something I could get Lea involved in?"

"Yes. Tyler, Alex and Cherie are all involved in a satellite program. It runs along the U.S. school year, but some of the teachers are from New Zealand and Australia. It's all done via the computer. It wouldn't be hard to include Lea in with the group. Right now my mother, Emily or I supervise them during 'school hours'. Another hand with that task would be very welcome and you could stay involved in her education. If you want, we could get things set up tomorrow."

"I'd like that," Lana replied, happy that her the question about her daughter's education was resolved.

The two women continued talking as the kids played in the pool.