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Subject: Re: New Beginnings

Posted by [Lillehafrue](#) on Mon, 30 Jul 2012 22:06:49 GMT

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Bozeman, Montana, Friday January 18th, early afternoon (next day, Tracy Island)...

Roger carefully made his way up the snowy walkway to his parent's door. He knocked once then stepped inside. "Anybody home?" he called out as he took off his coat.

Richard appeared from the living room. "Hey, Roger. Good to see you, son." He gave his eldest a hug.

"You too, Dad. What's going on?"

Richard rolled his eyes. "Your mother and brother."

Roger grinned. "Uh-oh. Who killed who?"

"It's not funny. Luke was out shoveling when your mother got home from the store. She lit into him about it, he snapped back and it got ugly." He glanced back at the kitchen and lowered his voice. "Apparently Barry called earlier and that put your brother in a bad mood. He was spoiling for a fight and your mother walked right into it."

"So now you want me to play Switzerland and calm Mom down?"

Richard shook his head. "I'll handle your mother. You talk to Luke. He's upstairs."

"Great, give me the hard job. Thanks, Dad." Roger made his way upstairs. He paused in front of his brother's door and knocked.

"Leave me alone."

Roger opened the door. "No can do, little brother. What's going on?"

Luke lay on his bed, arms folded under his head. He glared at his older brother. "Why are you here? Dad call?"

"Got it in one." Roger sat down on the edge of the bed. "Want to tell me what happened?" He reached down to pat Rommel, who was curled up on the rug.

"Don't touch him!" Luke snapped angrily, sitting up quickly. He hissed in pain causing his brother to narrow his eyes in concern.

"Luke?" he called out tentatively, watching his brother pace the room.

"Don't you start. I'm fine."

Roger settled himself on the bed. "Well?" he asked when the silence had gone on too long.

Luke turned, his grey eyes flashing angrily. "I'm not an invalid and I wish everyone would stop treating me that way. I know perfectly well what I'm capable and not capable of. Shoveling the damn steps is not going to kill me."

"I agree."

"Then why does she keep harping on it! She must call ten times a day, asking if I'm OK. Do I need anything? Did I take my meds? Dammit, Roger, I'm a grown man! I can take care of myself!"

"Luke, she's just..."

"And then there's Rom." The dog looked up at hearing his name. "She feeds him treats all the time, lets him lounge with her in the kitchen, tells me to leave him here when I go out. He barely listens when I call him anymore. I'm already behind with his daily training as it is, and she's not helping! He's not a pet; he's my partner. He can't behave like this or why have him?" Luke took a shuddering breath and sat down heavily in the chair near the window.

"Are you done?"

"Back off, Roger," Luke growled.

"No." He sat up and walked over to sit near his brother. "I can't tell you how to deal with Rommel, other than to take him with you everywhere. You told me yourself as a SAR dog he has all the rights as a Service animal. He can go where you go." He paused a moment. "As to her babying you, you have to see this from her point of view. You're her child and she almost lost you."

"But she didn't lose me! I'm fine! Hell, the doc said I could go back to work in another month! She needs to get over this."

"You died, Luke."

His head snapped up. "What?"

Roger took a deep breath. "Your heart stopped just as the Life-Flight team landed. They had to resuscitate you." He looked up, his eyes boring into Luke's.

Luke grew quiet and he looked down at his hands. "I didn't know."

Roger shrugged. "It's not really the type of thing that comes up in everyday conversation, know what I mean?" He paused a few moments. "It was probably one of the scariest times in my life. So give Mom a break."

"Yeah, I guess you're right. Again." He grinned up at his brother.

"So, want to tell me what happened with Barry?" Roger asked.

Luke's head snapped up in surprise. "Who told you about that?"

"I have my sources. What happened?"

His brother got up to pace the room again. "He told me he was going to come up and visit sometime after the New Year. When he called today, I figured he was telling me his flight info."

"And?" Roger prompted after the silence went on too long.

"And he's not coming." Luke's tone turned cold. "Seems his boyfriend has a prior engagement that they can't get out of. What kind of name is Sloan anyway?" he snorted.

Roger was torn between amusement and sympathy. Looking at his brother's distressed face, he softened. "Luke, it's over. You need to move on. He obviously has."

"I know. But... I was sort of hoping, you know?" He sighed. "I guess you're right."

"I'm the big brother. I'm always right."

Luke chuckled. "Thanks, Rog." He ran a hand through his hair. "Guess I need to go talk to Mom."

"Yeah, good luck with that." Roger got his feet and pulled his brother into a hug. "Give yourself and the rest of us a break, OK."

"I will."

"Good. I'm going to check in with Mom. I'll talk to you later. Maybe I'll bring the kids over this weekend. They can help you muck out the barn." Roger grinned at his brother's expression.

"That's one chore I don't mind missing! Bye, Rog."

Roger headed back downstairs, leaving Luke alone with his dog. He sighed and rubbed Rommel's head. "I need to get back to the island, boy. I miss my work, my apartment, my friends..." His voice trailed off. He heard the downstairs door slam and the start of Roger's truck a few moments later. He smiled ruefully down at Rommel. "Well boy, what do you say we head downstairs and see if Mom is ready to start peace negotiations?"