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Subject: Re: New Beginnings

Posted by [Lillehafrue](#) on Mon, 30 Jul 2012 22:10:37 GMT

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January 18, 2069, 11 PM, New York City (9 PM same day, Bozeman, Montana; 5 PM January 19, Tracy Island)

"Okay, Virgil. Thanks for telling me." Jeff folded up his satellite phone. He turned to his wife, who was sprawled on the sofa, a glass of white wine in her hand. "Virgil just told me that Luke has called. He wants to talk to one or both of us."

Dianne groaned. "Oh, Jeff. Can't it wait until tomorrow?"

Jeff looked at his watch. "It's only nine o'clock out in Montana. I might as well call and get it over with."

Dianne shook her head and rolled her eyes as Jeff stepped over to the vidphone. She sipped her wine as Jeff dialed the number he'd been given.

Luke was in the family room, surfing the channels on the television, looking for a hockey game. Rommel lay at his feet. He glanced down from his searching.

"You and I are going to get back into training again no matter what the weather," he promised the dog.

His satellite phone sounded off, using a tone that he had reserved for the Tracys. He picked up the phone and frowned; the number was not one he recognized. "Hey. I wonder who this is." He opened the phone, putting a wireless transmitter in his ear so he could see the screen, and said, "Hello?"

"Hello there, Luke," Jeff said. "How are things in Bozeman? I had a message from Virgil about your returning earlier than expected."

In the background, Luke could hear Dianne let out a loud, "What?!" In a heartbeat, Dianne's voice was added to Jeff's, and she was there, peering over Jeff's shoulder.

"What's this about you returning?" she demanded.

Luke laughed. "In answer to your question, Mr. Tracy, things are very cold and snowy here, and I'm suffering from cabin fever. Where are you right now?"

"We're in New York," Jeff explained. "We'll be heading to New Hampshire sometime tomorrow. So, what's this Virgil was telling me about? Has your doctor released you?"

"Well," Luke said, "Not exactly. But my thought is that I could finish my recovery just as well on the island as I could here." He sighed. "Never thought I'd say this, but I can't stand much more snow. I can't get out do actually do anything..."

"Cabin fever, shmabin fever. What does your doctor say?" Dianne's question was pointed. "I want details." She shook a finger at him. "And don't sugarcoat it. I'll have it out of him or her myself soon enough."

Luke seemed taken aback. He paused to collect his thoughts. "Well, she told me yesterday that I should be back to work in three to five weeks, and on light duty for a month after that." His tone sounded disappointed as he added, "Dr. Tracy, I really need to get out of here. My mom... she's treating me like I'm fragile. Doesn't want me to do anything around the place. We got into an argument over shoveling the steps..."

"Good for her," Dianne commented tartly. "That's what a mother's supposed to do."

Jeff's eyebrows went up, and he said, "Excuse us one moment, Luke." He leaned over and whispered in his wife's ear. Luke watched as her expression first turned thunderous, then sour as she glared at her husband. She folded her arms and took herself away from the screen. Luke was certain she wasn't far away, though.

"I was just reminding my wife of her own words during her recovery from that... ahem... auto accident." Jeff's tone was blasé, but there was an undercurrent of amusement there as well. "So, you think you can do better at the island than at home. Why?"

"There won't be the temptation to get out and shovel snow, for one thing," Luke said, wryly. His face hardened. "Then there's Rom. My mother treats him like a grandchild, and between her babying me, spoiling him, the weather, and my recovery, I haven't been able to train with him. He's losing his edge. Getting back to the island means I'll be able to get his training in hand; in fact, it's something I can do while waiting to go back on full duty." He smiled ruefully. "And there's the fact that I miss everyone there, too. I love my folks, but I can only take so much of them, y'know?"

"Yes, I do." Jeff stroked his chin, looking thoughtful. He glanced over his shoulder in Dianne's direction. Luke could hear a "hmp!" in the background, but she reappeared, standing next to her husband and looking stubborn. "What do you think, Dianne? Scott is picking up Drew, so there'll be someone to keep Luke accountable. Scott could make a detour and pick Luke up as well."

Luke crossed his fingers, and looked hopeful. He knew that Dianne's word would be the final say in the matter.

"Ah'd rathuh he waited until he was back on light duty," Dianne said, her drawl making Luke's heart sink. "But... if'n he has his doctuh send his records on, and lets Drew examine him right off th' bat, an' he is off duty entirely until Ah get back an' take a look... Ah suppose he can go back to th' ahland." She snorted. "Ah'm only doin' this because o' Rommel, y'hear. An' t' keep yoah poah mothuh from havin' t' put up with yew any moah than she has tuh! Unnerstan'?"

"Yes, ma'am!" Luke grinned, and all but saluted. "I'll do exactly as you say."

"Well then," Jeff said, returning Luke's grin and tipping him a sly wink. "I'll let Scott know about this development and have him make the detour needed. He'll be in touch with you about pick up times and such. You can be packed and ready within a day, I hope."

"Yes, sir! I certainly can!" Luke couldn't stop grinning. "I'll be ready."

"All right, then. Is there anything else?"

"No, sir, but I hope you and Dr. Tracy enjoy your vacation. The skiing should be good."

Jeff nodded. "I expect it will be." He glanced at Dianne. "Love, is there anything else you want to say?"

Her response was terse. "No."

"Then we'll talk to you later, Luke."

"Right, Mr. Tracy. Goodbye."

The call ended, and Luke pumped his fist with a hissed, "Yes!!" He looked down at Rom, who gazed back up at him and thumped his tail on the floor. "You hear that, mutt? We're going home!"

Jeff approached Dianne, and put his hands on her shoulders. She huffed a breath out through her nose. "You know that Drew won't let him do anything that will jeopardize his recovery, Dianne. And you can give Gordon a heads up, too. I'm sure he'd be willing to help out with any physical therapy Luke might need." He shook his head. "I do wish Nikki was available. I'm not sure that Dom will be up to helping Drew..."

"Ah took cayuh o' that," Dianne said, shaking her head once. "Maggie is going t' th' ahland with him."

"That's great! If anyone can keep Luke in place, she can." He leaned in to kiss the side of her neck. "Now, let me help you work out that tenseness..."

"Don't yew have t' call Scott?" she asked, a slightly haughty tone in her voice.

Jeff groaned. "You're right. He needs to know about the flight deviation." He turned her around and kissed her on the forehead. "Why don't you fill up the Jacuzzi for a late bath? I'll join you as soon as I finish talking with Scott, and giving Drew a heads up." He smiled at her and added, "Please?"

Her shoulders dropped, and she sighed. "All right." Waving a hand toward the vidphone, she said, "Go make your calls. I'll fill the Jacuzzi."

He kissed her again. "Thank you, love."

As he went to the vidphone, she watched him for a moment, then went off toward their sleeping quarters.