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Subject: Re: New Beginnings

Posted by [Lillehafrue](#) on Mon, 30 Jul 2012 22:18:08 GMT

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Bozeman, Montana, Sunday January 20th, a little after 10 AM (6 AM Monday, January 21st, Tracy Island...)

"Remember, Scott," Drew said, poking his head into the cockpit. "There are certain deliveries we'll be waiting for when we touch down in Bozeman."

"Right." Scott nodded. "Have you come up with a story...?"

"Of course." Drew gave him a smug smile. "We're just on our way home from visiting with you folks... in Wichita."

"That should do the trick," Elise said, grinning. "As long as Luke's parents don't ask too many questions."

Drew's grin grew wider. "Oh, don't worry about that. Maggie has that covered."

Luke meanwhile, stood in the private lounge terminal, gazing out over the tarmac. Rommel wearing his orange service vest, sat by his side. A few yards away, his parents stood talking, his mother kept shooting him furious glances.

"I still don't understand why he has to leave so suddenly."

Luke sighed and closed his eyes, leaning his forehead against the cool glass. She just doesn't understand. I have to go back. Before I don't want to anymore. He took a deep breath and straightened up. "Mom? Please, don't make this harder for me than it already is."

"Harder for you?" Melisa replied heatedly. "How can you say that, Luke? How on Earth can you say this is harder on you?"

"Melisa, please," Richard tried interjecting, but she brushed him off to march over to her youngest son.

"Your own doctor said you weren't ready for full time work yet. And still here you go, back to Los Angeles. Who's going to take care of you there?" She paused and thought a moment. "I'm going with you."

Luke held up his hands. "Mom, no. I'm perfectly capable of taking care of myself." He sighed. "Yes, for a while I needed looking after, and believe me, there's no place I would have rather been." He smiled ruefully for a moment. "If truth be told, I wish I'd never needed taking care of in the first place!" He got a chuckle from his father, but his mother stood fast. He placed his hands on her shoulders. "I have to go, Mom. I have to make sure I can," he said quietly.

Her expression softened. "Oh, Luke." He pulled her close.

"Excuse me?" They looked up to see a flight attendant standing near. "I'm sorry to interrupt, but Tracy One has just called the Tower. They should be landing momentarily."

"Thanks," Luke told her, then turned back to his mother. "Please, don't worry about me. If I have any problems I'll get myself to a doctor immediately. And I'll call. I promise."

She smiled, her eyes wet. "I suppose that will have to do. But I expect to hear from you a lot more frequently that we do now, is that understood, Luke Francis?"

Luke winced. "Yes, ma'am."

The door to the terminal opened, and a delivery man, wearing the uniform of a medical supply company, entered, a hefty crate on his dolly. He looked around at the small group and asked, "Dr. Carmichael? Dr. Andrew Carmichael?"

The Morels glanced at each other, then Richard replied, "There's no Dr. Carmichael here..."

The flight attendant came up and spoke quietly to the delivery man, who took a seat, his dolly standing next to him. Luke glanced at both his parents and shrugged.

"Tracy One has landed," the attendant announced. Luke reached over to pick up his bag, but his father got there first.

"I know, I know, you can carry it. But just let me this one time, OK?" Richard asked.

"OK." Luke smiled. "Thanks, Dad."

"Luke!!!"

He turned just in time to catch Elise as she rushed into his arms. He held her close, swallowing the lump in his throat. "God it's good to see you," he said hoarsely.

"I've missed you! We all have!" she said, her green eyes filled with tears despite the smile on her face.

She was followed by Scott, who held the door open for Drew and Maggie. Richard's eyes went from Luke to the small group arriving. "Looks like you have a welcoming committee, son." He gave Elise a smile. "Good to see you again, Elise."

"Good to see you, too, Mr. Morel," she replied, holding Luke's hand tightly.

Scott stepped forward, holding out his hand. "Mr. Morel, I'm Scott Tracy. We spoke on the phone a few times."

Richard shook it warmly. "It's nice to meet you. This is my wife, Melisa." She came forward and also shook Scott's hand. "I can't thank you enough for all you and your family have done." Richard said.

"Dad..." Luke said, clearly embarrassed.

Scott chuckled. "No problem, sir. Have they gone to trial yet?"

Luke shook his head. "No. They were found negligent at the preliminary hearing, but the formal trial will be later. Sometime in March is what we were told."

Scott shook his head. "Gotta love the justice system."

Drew and Maggie hovered in the background, and Scott turned to them. "Mr. and Mrs. Morel, this is my... great-uncle, Dr. Drew Carmichael, and his wife, Maggie."

Drew eyed Scott. "Great-uncle, huh?"

"Well, by marriage," Scott replied, looking sheepish.

"Don't mind them," Maggie said, moving in to shake hands with Richard and Melisa. "I'm pleased to meet both of you."

The flight attendant came over and spoke quietly to Drew, indicating the deliveryman and his burden. Drew nodded and followed her over, signing the data pad the man held out.

Richard's gaze followed him, and he frowned slightly. When Drew returned, he said, "I feel like I've seen you before, Mr. Carmichael."

"You probably have, Mr. Morel," Elise said, smiling. "That is, if you're into watching parades."

"Parades?" Melisa asked, then she smiled. "The Rose Bowl! You were the Grand Marshall."

Drew grinned. "Guilty as charged."

"I never miss it, all those flowers." Melisa nudged her son. "This one however, only has eyes for the football games."

Luke shrugged. "What can I say? A bunch of guys marching with carnations? About as boring as figure skating." He winked down at Elise.

"I'd hit you, but I'd be afraid to break you," she retorted.

Richard nodded over at the boxes. "What is all that?"

"Well," Drew drawled. "I have it on good authority that someone isn't quite fully recovered from a rather serious accident he had a few months ago. Those," he indicated the boxes, "are supplies to be used on the flight... if needed."

Luke groaned. "Dr. Tracy ratted me out, didn't she?"

"My niece is anxious that you get to LA in one piece," Drew replied.

"And since we were on our way home from a visit, we thought we'd pick up what we needed here," Maggie added with a smile.

Melisa let out a sigh of relief. "I won't tell you how much better that makes me feel," she told Maggie.

"Being a mother is the toughest job in the world, isn't it?" Maggie replied.

"You can say that again. Especially with this one!" Melisa frowned at her son.

Luke merely smiled. "I am a model if not patient, patient."

Everyone laughed. "I'll see about getting this loaded. Are those the rest of your bags?" Scott asked Luke.

He nodded. "Yeah, I've got a carry-on with stuff for the mutt here, but that's all of it. Thanks, Scott."

"No problem." He walked over and talked to the flight attendant.

"I'll go start the pre-flight checks. It was good to see you again, Mr. and Mrs. Morel," Elise said.

"Good to see you, too. Don't be a stranger. Come back and visit us again, with or without this guy," Richard quipped.

Luke rolled his eyes. "And you all wonder why I want to get out of here."

Maggie and Drew said their good-byes, and left Luke and his parents alone. Richard grasped his son's hand, then pulled him into a hard hug. "You take care of yourself, son."

"I will, Dad," Luke replied huskily. "Thanks for everything. Really."

Richard didn't reply, but squeezed his son's hand then stepped back. Melisa held Luke close. "Oh, Luke."

"It's OK, Mom. Really, I'll be fine. And I promise I'll keep in touch."

She kissed his cheek then brushed his hair from his forehead. "You need a haircut," she told him, smiling through her tears.

He held her hand. "I'll get one when I get ho...back to LA." He hugged her tightly. "I love you, Mom."

"I love you, too." She reached over and patted Rommel, who woofed. "Take care of him." She took her husband's hand and stepped back, watching as the two of them walked down the hall to the plane.

