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Subject: Re: New Beginnings

Posted by [Lillehafrue](#) on Mon, 30 Jul 2012 22:19:36 GMT

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Monday, March 21, Fireflash, somewhere between Sydney, Australia and Mumbai, India (10 a.m., Tracy Island)

"Here you go." The waiter set a wine glass on a coaster before Tin-Tin, and a martini before Brains, who sat next to her at the round table. "Is there anything more I can get for you?" His smile, wide and white in his dark brown face, seemed sincere.

Brains glanced at Tin-Tin, who shook her head slightly. "Nothing at the moment, thank you."

Their waiter, whose Air Terrainean ID badge said, Ranjit, nodded. "If you should need anything, merely press the button. I am at your service."

"Thank you," Tin-Tin said with a gracious smile and dip of her head.

Ranjit smiled once more, then left them. Brains took a sip of his drink, and sighed, contented.

"I didn't know you drank martinis," Tin-Tin commented as she sipped her wine.

"I don't usually drink them at home; I find that whoever is serving them is usually a bit heavy on the vermouth," Brains admitted. "But away? I like to live a little more dangerously."

She chuckled. He reached out to clasp her hand.

"So, this is the famed Fireflash," he said, looking around. "I've never really had the opportunity to fly in one." He made a wry face. "In fact, I know more about the wiring schematics..."

Tin-Tin squeezed his hand a bit. "Let's not talk shop," she said, giving him a gentle smile. "I would have reserved a spot on a Skythrust, but the Fireflash is faster. It will be easier to spend less than half a day flying to Paris, especially since we're only to be there for a few days. And when we get back to Sydney, Ladybird will be waiting for us."

Brains smiled at her warmly, raising her hand to his lips and kissing it. "You are a very practical lady, my love. Practical and beautiful. What more could I ask?"

Tin-Tin blushed, smiling. "Flatterer."

"It's not flattery if it's true," he replied, squeezing her hand before releasing it.

They sipped their drinks, the low-level murmur of their fellow first-class passengers and the occasional clink of silverware or glass providing a pleasant background noise. Finally, Brains popped the martini's olive in his mouth. Once he was finished with it, he asked, "What are your plans for our visit?"

"Well." Tin-Tin pulled a small datapad from her handbag. "It will be nearly 2 a.m. when we arrive in

Paris. I thought we might go to the hotel, deal with our luggage, and find an all-night café for a bite to eat. Then, perhaps a nap before visiting my grandfather."

"That sounds like an excellent idea. And after that?"

Tin-Tin gave him a sly smile. "We could go sightseeing a little, or maybe shopping..."

Brains laughed. "I should have known that shopping would be on the agenda." He cocked his head to one side. "I've never been shopping with you before; at least, not for clothing or personal items. Groceries and supplies, yes, but not the other. I'm rather looking forward to it."

"You may wish you hadn't said that when we are through," Tin-Tin warned him. She gave him a thoughtful look. "Did you get to do much sightseeing when you were there last? For that conference?"

He shook his head. "No, I didn't, which was probably a good thing. I was being followed, you know, by the Hightowers."

"Were you?" Her green eyes opened wide. "I didn't hear about that!"

It was Brains's turn to blush. He leaned close and lowered his voice. "Lady Penelope, Parker, and the gentleman in charge of our French operations kept an eye on both me and my would-be abductors." He chuckled. "You'll have to ask Lady Penelope about it sometime; she said I had the luck of St. Patrick himself. They would try something, and I totally, obviously did something that kept me safe."

"Oh, my!" Tin-Tin lifted her hand to her lips. "I most certainly will ask Penelope when we see her on Wednesday."

"Is that part of our agenda?" he asked, leaning over to see her datapad.

"Yes, for Thursday afternoon and evening. I hope to do a little bit of shopping with her, too." She frowned. "I'm not sure what to do during the early hours, though. More sightseeing?"

"Well, I have an idea."

"What's that?"

"My friend, Professor Borrender, has moved to Paris. I have no idea why; he seemed to enjoy living in Bern. But he is living there now and I would like to see him... perhaps introduce you to him." He paused, giving her a hopeful look. "What do you think? We could have lunch with him..."

"I think that's a wonderful idea, Hiram," she replied. Taking out a stylus, she quickly added the date to their itinerary. "Would you call him and make sure it's all right with him?"

"I'll do that when we get to Paris, and after we see your grandfather," Brains promised. "Don't want to wake him up."

"Of course."

Ranjit reappeared as Tin-Tin tucked her pad away. "May I interest you in some coffee, or a light repast?"

Brains glanced at his watch, but asked, "How much longer to Mumbai?"

"We are forty-five minutes from the city and will land in about an hour."

The pair glanced at each other, and Tin-Tin nodded slightly. "Then, yes, we would like some coffee, and perhaps something light to eat," Brains said.

"Very good," Ranjit said, making a note on his own datapad, and sending their order on to the galley. "I will return shortly."

With their attendant gone, Brains and Tin-Tin fell into a comfortable silence. Brains pulled out his PDA, and looked up the weather for Paris. He smiled at Tin-Tin as he said, "Looks like we'll have clear weather for the duration of our visit."

"Even if it were raining, I'd still cherish Paris... especially with you," she replied, leaning over to kiss him gently on the cheek.