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Subject: Re: New Beginnings

Posted by [Lillehafrue](#) on Mon, 30 Jul 2012 22:25:44 GMT

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The afternoon was wearing on and clouds were wearily drifting across the blue sky. Dominic rolled his eyes and planted his hands firmly on his hips.

"No, Joshua. You may not have ice cream. If you tidy your toys away we can have some after dinner."

"I want ice cream now!"

"No, Joshua. Tidy your toys now, please."

"NO! I WANT ICE CREAM!"

"Joshua, go and sit on the naughty stool."

"NO!"

"Joshua, go and sit on the naughty stool."

"NOOOOOOOO!"

At this point the door chime sounded, and Dominic rolled his eyes again.

"For God's sake," he huffed. "Joshua, I'm warning you. Go and sit on the naughty stool."

Joshua burst into a full-scale flood of tears and clung onto his father's long cargo shorts. Dominic dragged himself over to the front door and hit the release.

He blinked.

And blinked again.

"LUUUUUUKE!"

"Hey, Dom." Luke grinned sheepishly, running a hand through his hair. "Surprise. I guess no one told you I was coming back. Mind if I come in?"

Dominic spluttered and Joshua detached himself from his father's leg to cling on to Luke's.

"Geez, yeah, come in! Come in! Man, this is... geez!"

Luke grinned at the abject delight on Dominic's face, and he figured that it was a change from the man's more recent expressions. As Dominic leaned in close to extract his son from Luke's leg, Luke had the chance to see up-close the Irishman's too-pale pallor. Also he got the fresh scent of a musky soap and aftershave. There was no five o'clock shadow to darken Dom's chin.

Dominic whirled Joshua up into the air, all thoughts of ice cream forgotten as the small boy giggled with delight.

"Where is Wom?" he asked, his grinning face suddenly crumpling in confusion.

"Rom's having a nap at the moment," Luke said, "but I'll be sure to bring you so see him later -- if that's okay with your dad."

"Of course!" Dom spluttered, looking as if he were torn between saying, 'You should have brought the dog!' and 'Thank God you didn't bring the dog!' It creased his eyes in an endearing way.

As soon as Dominic deposited Joshua on the floor the boy was straight back over to Luke, who smiled and went to pick him up. A twinge of pain went through him and he stumbled. Joshua's eyes filled and Dominic was by his side in a minute.

"Sit down," he ordered.

Luke glanced up and saw that Dom's medical face was on, and there was no point in arguing. The man was learning well from Dianne. Luke sat down carefully on the couch and Dominic wiped Joshua's newly wet face.

"Oh, buddy, you didn't do anything wrong," Luke said, regaining his composure. "I just... "

"Luke was sick, remember Jak?" Dom jumped in.

Joshua nodded his head slowly.

"Yes, and he's still getting better."

"Like Daddy?" Joshua asked, and Dominic's mouth fell open.

Luke raised an eyebrow and muttered, "Smart kid."

"Yeah, like Daddy... " Dominic said. "Where he got that idea I have no clue."

"I do," Luke said, pinning his friend with a hard stare.

Dominic cleared his throat and knelt down on the floor to look Josh in the eye.

"Why don't you show Luke what you were making for him, hmm?"

"But it's not finished!"

"He might like a sneak-peek," Dominic said, and he propelled his son towards his room.

Joshua came running back in with a large piece of paper, stumbled but regained his balance, making his face light up even more. One more good thing and that kid'll look like a Christmas tree,

Luke thought. He allowed the paper to be thrust in his lap, and he laughed with delight. It was a beach scene with two large figures holding hands and one small, evidently Joshua because of the huge glasses and the bright blond hair. All three figures were standing beside a huge sandcastle -- or at least Luke assumed it was a sandcastle.

"Oh, cool man!" Luke said, urging the child to jump up beside him on the sofa. "So, this is you, right?"

"Yes! That's me! And this Daddy," he said, pointing to the larger figure with a mess of black hair.

"Yeah, you've caught him perfectly," Luke said with a wry grin, at which Dominic rolled his eyes.

"And this you!"

It was Luke's turn for his face to crease in confusion, and he ruffled the little boy's hair.

"Are you sure this is me? I'm holding hands with your daddy."

"Luuuuuuuuuke!" Joshua complained with a scowl. "Yes, YOU. You and daddy with Jak on beach -- happy!"

Dominic grinned and shrugged his shoulders.

"It's because we're friends," he said. "Joshua's made a new friend with Vince's daughter, and they hold hands all the time. That's what friends do, right, Jak?"

"Yes!"

Luke chuckled.

"It's a wonderful picture, Josh."

There it was -- the Christmas tree look was apparently in. Dominic fussed over the picture and asked Joshua to put it away for now. Josh looked as if he was going to object, but Luke gave him a stern look, and the boy went running to put the picture away. Dominic folded his arms at the scene.

"Hmm. I think I might want to keep you around here for a while," he said. "I could use that kind of discipline."

Suddenly his face went bright red, and he turned away, muttering something about tea. Dominic was all about the tea. Luke cocked his head to the side. That man has had his wits scared out of him, he thought. His butter is quickly slipping off his noodles. He sat back in the soft couch cushions, huffing out a half-contented, half-concerned breath. Joshua launched himself onto the seat beside him and began animatedly telling him about something -- what, Luke couldn't say. Maybe I can get some info out of the kid as well, he thought. Dom, don't think I'm going to let this lie.

