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Subject: Re: New Beginnings

Posted by [Lillehafrue](#) on Tue, 31 Jul 2012 02:51:26 GMT

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Monday, January 21, 2069, 10 a.m., Paris, France (10 p.m. Same day, Tracy Island)

Brains covered his yawn with his hand, trying to stifle it as best he could. The nap he and Tin-Tin had taken might have been sufficient, as far as length was concerned, but his body was still running on Island time, and to him, it felt like 10 in the evening.

The car, provided by Tracy Industries' Parisian motor pool, pulled up in front of the vine-covered apartment building where Tin-Tin's grandfather and aunt lived. Brains checked the device in his ear; it had worked well for Kyrano and Lisa on their honeymoon, but he wanted to test it out for himself as they conversed.

"Reviendrez-vous ici en une heure," Tin-Tin said to the driver he handed her out of the car. Brains let himself out on the other side, bringing with him a shopping bag. The device translated it as, "You will return in one hour."

"Oui, mademoiselle." The driver touched his cap, and closed the car door as Brains joined Tin-Tin on the walk up to the house.

"Are you ready?" he asked, offering his arm.

Tin-Tin took a deep breath and nodded. "I'm ready." She took his arm, and together they walked toward the house.

Tamea was waiting for them in the vestibule. Her eyes grew wide and she put her hands on the sides of her face. "Mon Dieu! Comment bien que vous ressemblez à votre mère!" Brains heard it as, "My God! How much you look like your mother!"

The older woman took Tin-Tin's face in her hands and kissed the girl on both cheeks. "Come in, come in!" Brains heard her say. "Come see your grandfather!"

With a bemused glance at Brains, Tin-Tin allowed herself to be led into the apartment. "Papa!" Tamea called. "She is here!" Brains followed, amused.

He stopped just inside the door. Emily Tracy was old, and Kyrano was elderly, but compared to them, Elias Manabo looked positively ancient. The bony hands that reached out for Tin-Tin's were covered with age spots, and the nearly bald head was practically skeletal in its appearance.

"Ma chere petite-fille!" Dr. Manabo whispered as he took Tin-Tin's hands in his own.

"Bonjour, mon grand-père," Tin-Tin said, smiling.

Brains heard the next whisper from Dr. Manabo as, "I am so glad you came!" He made a mental note to test the translator in a crowded room; the microphone was very good at picking up the whispers and he wanted to make sure it would function as well in a noisy environment.

He was startled by the gentle touch of Tin-Tin's hand on his. She had taken a chair so she would be on the same level as her grandfather, and was in the midst of introducing them.

"Grand-père, je vous presente mon ami..." She stopped short, an expression both stricken and puzzled on her face.

Brains picked up on the problem. She can't exactly introduce me as Brains, he thought. I had better fill in my real name here.

He gave a little bow and said, "John. John Grayson. I'm very pleased to meet you, Dr. Manabo."

Tin-Tin gave him a look of surprised delight. Dr. Manabo, still speaking French for Tamea's sake, said, "Welcome, John. I am pleased to make your acquaintance."

"Likewise, sir."

Tamea came out with a laden tea tray. Tin-Tin jumped up to help her, but Brains was there first. He took the burden, and placed it where Tamea told him to. She seemed surprised that he understood her when, to this moment, he hadn't said a single word in French. He decided not to say anything about the translator; it would take any conversation off into directions he'd rather it didn't go.

Tamea indicated another chair, smiling at Brains. He sat next to Tin-Tin, who gave him a grateful look. She seemed unlike herself, so ill-at-ease, that Brains thought he should take the initiative. He motioned toward the bag. "Tin-Tin, don't you have something for your grandfather and your aunt?"

"Oh, yes!" She ducked into the bag and pulled out a small book. "I brought this," she said in French, "so that you and Aunt Tamea could know me better."

The gift was a photo album, filled with pictures taken from Tin-Tin's life. Elias smiled, smoothed his hand over it, and opened to the first page. Brains himself was fascinated; here were pictures and moments in Tin-Tin's past that he was totally unaware of. As she explained the significance of each photo, he too became better acquainted with the woman he loved.