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Subject: Re: New Beginnings

Posted by [Lillehafrue](#) on Tue, 31 Jul 2012 03:08:24 GMT

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Tuesday, January 22, 2069, 5 a.m., NH (10 p.m. same day, Tracy Island)

Jeff rolled over, his mind barely conscious, his arm reaching for the warm body next to his in the bed. It took a few uncoordinated, unsuccessful grabs for him to realize that the portion of the bed beside him was empty. That realization brought him slowly awake; he touched the bedside lamp and squinted at the rumpled, thrown back covers. A quick glance at the clock showed him that the sun was far from rising. With a heavy sigh, he scrubbed his face with both hands and shoved his own blankets aside, padding off barefoot in search of his wife.

A quick check in the bathroom disclosed that she wasn't enjoying a soothing soak in the hot tub. He shuffled out to the main living area, intending to head for the kitchen.

He didn't have to. There, standing before the window, looking out at the night sky, was the soft, pale-limned silhouette of his wife. She was draped in the long embroidered robe that she loved so well; it was open at the front, revealing her shapely legs and bare feet as well as the short, sheer chemise she had worn to bed. Her hands were clasped around a cup, steam rising from its depths. The light aroma of orange and spice wafted his way. Herbal tea, he realized, his mind's catalog automatically bringing recognition to the fore. His body stirred at the sight of her, and he moved without thought in her direction.

He must have made a sound, for she turned to look at him. Starlight on her face enabled him to see her weary smile before she returned to her contemplations.

"Ah'm sorry if Ah woke you," she said as he came up behind her.

"You didn't," he replied, sliding his arms around her waist and kissing the top of her head. Her hair was damp and stuck up at odd angles; she smelled of shampoo and perspiration. "I reached for you and you weren't there." He set his own gaze to follow hers. "What's going on? Didn't I wear you out today?"

He could feel the muscles in her face move as she smiled. "You'd think Ah'd be dead to the world with all the skiin' we did today, wouldn't you? Then the ice skatin' an' the sleigh ride?" She leaned back a bit, resting her head on his bare chest. "You did wear me out, suh. Ah was sound asleep when..." She drew in a large breath and sighed. "Ah just suddenly woke up, all covered with sweat. Mah sheets are probably still damp."

He frowned a little. "Not that I noticed." Lowering his head a little, he rubbed his stubbled cheek over hers. "How long have you been up?"

She shrugged. "Ah dunno. Ah jus' couldn't get back t' sleep, an' Ah didn't want to wake you. So, Ah thought Ah'd have some tea, see if it'd help."

"I see." He slid his hand up, surreptitiously feeling her forehead as he smoothed her damp hair back.

"Ah'm not fevered, if'n that's what yoah worried about," she told him. "Ah already checked."

He smiled at her perceptiveness. "You know a parent's instinct never quits."

"Noah does a husband's, it seems."

They stood silent together for a few moments. His hands ghosted over her form. Her skin was chilled and the gooseflesh he encountered wasn't raised by his touch. "So, any ideas about what brought this on?"

She shook her head slowly, her hair brushing soft against his neck and collarbone. Her shoulders lifted and fell with another deep sigh. She sipped more of the tea, the steam long gone. One sip, two, and she let her arm drop. The lukewarm liquid sloshed in the cup; a few fragrant drops fell on his foot.

"Ah've had enough of this," she said. "It's no good cold."

"Let me take it." He slid his hand down her arm, encouraging the elbow to bend, taking the cup from her fingers. He was loath to leave her, and so reached out for a nearby table and left her drink there. When he straightened, he found they were now face to face. Her eyes, shadowed by the starlight behind her, still glimmered as she raised her mouth to his. They kissed; her mouth held the tang of orange and spice. He couldn't help himself; he cupped her face in his hands and deepened the kiss, conveying the urgent hunger that swept over him.

"Come back to bed with me, love," he whispered, his voice husky with desire.

She dipped her head, a single, solemn nod, and reached up to run her hands through his hair. They slid around his neck, then down, trailing warm fingers over broad shoulders. He caught one hand with his; their fingers entwined and he drew her to their bed to satisfy both his ardent yearning and hers.