
Subject: Re: New Beginnings
Posted by [Lillehafrue](#) on Tue, 31 Jul 2012 03:09:01 GMT
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January 22, 2069, noon, Paris, France (midnight, Tracy Island)

The car pulled up before a modern set of condominiums. Brains glanced at his watch. "I hope Professor Borrender will be available for lunch today."

"And I hope he doesn't think he has to provide it for us," Tin-Tin said as the driver handed her out of the car. "This is to be our treat." She turned to the driver and gave him instructions about when to return.

"He did say he had something new he wanted to show me." Brains offered his arm, and the pair walked into the well-appointed lobby. "Looks like he decided that it was time to live in something modern instead of the old place he had in Bern."

"It's lovely." Tin-Tin looked around, taking in some of the more esoteric architectural details. "They keep it very clean."

"Hm." Brains frowned as they entered the elevator. "That may be a problem."

"Why?"

Brains said, "Seventh floor." The lift immediately rose. "Professor Borrender isn't known for being very neat."

"Oh, dear."

xxx

"Come in, come in!" the old man called, waving the two younger people into his condo. He closed the door behind him, and hurried to move a short stack of books from one of the comfortable chairs. "Please, Fraulein Kyrano, sit here." The books joined another stack in the corner, by the televid. He then gathered up a pile of data padds that were scattered across the sofa. "And you, my young friend, sit here."

When he had disposed of the padds...by tucking them into an almost dangerously full closet...he rubbed his hands together. "Now, can I get you something to drink?" He wagged a finger at Brains. "I don't have the ingredients to make you one of your martinis, Hiram, but I do have a good beer, a bottle or two of wine, and some soft drinks."

"Oh, we couldn't possibly," Tin-Tin said with a soft smile. "Breakfast was so very filling..."

"Ah, I see," Borrender nodded vigorously. "We should save some room for luncheon in any case."

"Yes," Brains said, smiling. "We'd like to take you out for lunch, if that's all right with you."

"Ja, ja, I think I would like that." The older man glanced around the room. "Sometimes I forget what the world outside is like, though on cold days it's better to stay home and keep warm."

There was a moment of silence then Brains asked, "What made you move to Paris, Professor? And why did you leave that big old place you had in Bern for..." His voice trailed off, and helplessly waved a hand, "... this?"

"Oh, that old place was too hard to keep up," Borrender said. "I was always losing things. So I decided to downsize. As for the move to Paris, well..." He tipped a wink at Tin-Tin. "Das Mädchen here are much prettier, and I have access to one of the best laboratory facilities in Europe. It is also easier for Sir Jeremy Hodge to visit and help me with my work. He has an apartment here, you know." He shrugged, holding up his hands. "What more could I want?"

Tin-Tin decided to change the subject. "What are you working on now, Professor?"

"Ach, ja!" A broad smile spread across his face. "Hiram tells me you are yourself an engineer, nicht war?"

She inclined her head gracefully. "I am, Professor."

"Then you will understand what I am trying to do."

He got up and beckoned them to follow. The condo had two bedrooms, and the second one was dedicated to his workspace. It was less cluttered than the living room, but only marginally so. They followed him to a long table he had set up. "Of course, I cannot work on this in the research facility; the owners would think it below them. To them it is a passing fancy or perhaps a hobby. But that lovely girl, Lady Penelope, brought me a most interesting problem some time ago, and asked if I could duplicate the effects in a way that would bypass the original methods."

There were several cans lined up on the table. Brains squinted at them. "Beans?" He looked thoughtful for a moment, then his face cleared. "I think I know what this is. Tin-Tin, do you remember Mr. Tuttle and Lady Penelope's visit to him?" He was being circumspect; though Sir Jeremy was a member of International Rescue, Professor Borrender was not.

"Yes! I do remember!" Tin-Tin picked up one of the cans. "This couldn't possibly be..."

Brains nodded as they said in unison, "Ma Tuttle's beans!"

"Ja, ja, it is the beans," Borrender said, nodding vigorously. "Lady Penelope assured me that these beans had explosive properties. I thought she was joking until she demonstrated it for me one day." He shook his grizzled head. "I am trying to figure out exactly what it is that makes the explosion. Is it the spices? The beans themselves? The method of canning? Mrs. Tuttle refused to give out her recipe and its secrets, so now I must try and discover them for myself." He chuckled as he swept a hand toward the cans. "I am lucky that Lady Penelope's chauffeur was able to procure these samples for me. I do not think the old woman would have let her Ladyship take any home."

The two engineers glanced at each other. Brains smiled, while Tin-Tin stifled a giggle. "That's

Parker for you," Brains said. "He's very good at, ah, procuring things."

"What progress have you made?" Tin-Tin was determined to treat this as a legitimate line of inquiry...which for the professor and for Penelope, it indubitably was.

Borrender sighed. "Not much. I have been having great difficulty in reproducing the exact conditions under which the beans are cooked and canned. Most people who can their own foods use glass and pressure. Mrs. Tuttle has managed to use a lightweight metal. I have found no historical references to this at all."

"Perhaps we could ask Mrs. Tracy," Tin-Tin suggested. "She might know of the method used."

"Or know where to find a description," Brains added. He glanced at Tin-Tin. "Tin-Tin's father is a chef; he might have some insight, too."

Borrender nodded. "It seems that perhaps this is not a job for a scientist, but for a cook." He glanced at his watch. "Speaking of cooks, where would you like to go for luncheon? I can recommend a good German restaurant..."

The conversation turned to cuisine, but Tin-Tin studied the cans for a long moment, wondering if it would be safe to take one or two of them back home with her. She decided against it, and resolved to ask Parker if he could provide another can or two for their own analysis.