

Early afternoon, right after lunch...

"Patient has glucose of 30. You give him D50 and he states that he wants to leave. He tries to take out the IV and appears not fully alert. The next step would be to..."

Luke sighed and shut his laptop. I am so NOT in the mood to study today, he thought to himself. "What I need is a decent study partner. One who can actually help me." He nudged Rommel, who was sleeping at his feet, with his toe. The dog merely rolled over, tail wagging sleepily. Luke chuckled. "Some help you are."

He set the computer on the coffee table and leaned back. I could ask Dom to help me. I'm sure he wouldn't mind. But that brings up a whole set of other issues. Luke stared up at the ceiling. Does he want me because he's attracted to me, or because I need looking after? That's how it all started with Barry and me. Is Dom feeling the same way? He's never even given me an indication of feeling like this before. Dammit, I'm so confused... His thoughts were interrupted by the ringing of the door chime.

Rommel sat up, eyes alert. "Come in!" Luke called out.

The door opened and Alex and Tyler walked in. "Hi, Luke!" Alex said.

Luke smiled. "Hey, guys! How are you?" He nodded and signaled Rom, who trotted over to the boys, tail wagging happily.

"Great!" Tyler replied, sitting on the floor to scratch Rom.

Alex handed Luke a basket. "We had fried chicken for lunch and Grandma sent some over for you."

"Terrific. I'm starving. Tell her thank-you for me." Luke walked into the kitchen and put the basket in his nearly empty fridge. "So, what are you guys up to this afternoon?"

"School," Tyler said morosely.

"Hey," Alex piped up. "It's not too bad. It's only one more class and it's science!"

"I have history. Bor-ring," Tyler muttered.

Luke smiled at their banter. "Hey, I have something for you guys. Be right back." He disappeared into his bedroom for a moment, then came back out holding two packages. "Better late than never. Merry Christmas." He handed one to each of the boys.

Both tore into them. "Awesome!" Alex said as he pulled out a green t-shirt with the phrase: Support your local Search and Rescue. Get lost. There was also a ball cap with a SAR Rocky

Mountain Division patch on it. "Thanks, Luke!!"

Tyler promptly pulled his t-shirt over his head. "Wait until Mom gets back and we show her!"

"I also have this." Luke handed Alex a computer disc. "Remember how we talked about stocking a trout pond?" The boy nodded. "Well, here's some preliminary data. It looks like it would be too hot for trout, but bass might work. Take a look and tell me what you think. Put a report together for me and then we'll work on the next step."

"Cool!" He glanced down at his watch. "C'mon, Ty, we have to get going."

"Awww! Do we have to?"

"Tyler, listen to your brother," Luke told him. "Tell you what. I haven't given Rom a good workout since I got here. Go to class then check with your grandmother. If she says it's OK, come get me and we'll go do some training with him."

Tyler jumped up and headed for the door. "We will!!! See you soon, Luke. Bye, Rommel!!!"

With a wave, both boys left. Luke smiled down at his dog. "Well boy, looks like I'll go pack a bag. We have work to do."