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Subject: Re: New Beginnings

Posted by [Lillehafrue](#) on Tue, 31 Jul 2012 03:44:49 GMT

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Thursday, January 24, 2069, 4:30 p.m., Tracy Island (10:30 p.m., Wednesday, January 23, New Hampshire)

Lisa smoothed her hair as she sat down before the kitchen vidphone. Drew, a cup of coffee in hand, was seated at the little table where his sister and Kyrano took many of their meals.

"You sure you want to do this?"

Lisa turned to her younger brother, an eyebrow raised. "Of coahse..." She cleared her throat, and fought to keep her drawl under control. "Of course. She'll listen to me if she'll listen to anybody."

"What about Jeff?"

Lisa snorted a laugh. "Jeff Tracy is a teddy bear. Well, to me, anyway." She shook her head. "After putting up with Garrett all those years, a mere multi-billionaire is a piece of cake."

"A teddy bear, huh?" Drew sipped his coffee, using his cup to hide his smile. "I'll tell him you said so."

Lisa snorted again, a soft, offended huff. Then she told the machine to dial Jeff's satellite phone.

In New Hampshire, Jeff and Dianne were cuddling before the fireplace, watching the wood spark and pop. Jeff has his arm around his wife's shoulders, and she had her feet tucked up under her, her head on his chest. She shifted a little, and groaned as she rolled one shoulder.

"Are you okay?" Jeff asked, suddenly solicitous. "That was a nasty spill you took."

Dianne hummed a little, a tuneless sound. "Yes, I'm all right. Just a bit sore. I expect I'll be stiff in the morning."

"Well, we can let the Jacuzzi work its magic." He glanced over at the tall windows, where fat snowflakes plummeted down, whirling around in the glare of the security light. They joined the thick layer of snow that already lay on the chalet's deck. "It's not like we'll be going anywhere, not with that much snow on the ground. I understand that they may close the airports."

"Then I'm glad..." Her thought was interrupted by Jeff's phone ringing. He extricated himself from their clinch and went off to find the instrument.

"It's your mother," he said, calling from the bedroom.

Dianne stifled another groan as she unfolded her legs. "Why is she calling us? Is something wrong?"

"Hello, Lisa." Jeff's smiling face appeared on the viewscreen. "To what do we owe this pleasure?"

"Hello, Jeff." Lisa fidgeted a little in her seat. "How are you? Are you having a good time? What's the weather like out there." Her words came out a good deal faster than she had planned, and she grimaced a little.

"We're fine. We went skiing today, and Dianne took a little tumble, but she's just stiff and sore. The weather? We have heavy snow and we're pretty much snowed in." Jeff frowned at his mother-in-law's picture. "What's going on there? What's wrong?"

Lisa swallowed, and her shoulders slumped. "Theyah's no easy way to say it, so Ah'll jes' come out an' say it. Alex fell off a cliff today."

She regretted her words the minute she saw the blood drain from Jeff's face. He took a deep breath and let it out slowly. His face regained some of its color, but his expression was thunderous. "Now, let me get this straight, Lisa. You say Alex fell off a cliff?! What. The Hell. Happened?"

In the background, there was a shriek of "What!" and like a flash, Dianne had ripped the phone from Jeff's hands. "Alex? A cliff? What are yew talkin' about, Ma?"

All of a sudden, Lisa felt very weary. She shook her head. "Jes' listen to me, an' let Jeff listen in, too, so Ah only have t' tell this once. First o' all, Alex is okay. He had a bump on his head, an' a dislocated shoulder, both o' which have been tended. He was out helpin' Luke do some trainin' with his dog, he an' Tyler, an' he slipped on some rocks at the north end o' the ahland. Fell about fifteen feet onto a ledge. Rommel led Luke to him, an' Luke went down on a rope t' get him an' make shuah he didn't fall off. He also called John in th' office. John sent out Scott an' some othahs in th' helijet, an' they got Alex off'n th' ledge. Drew treated him an' he's in the infirmary ovahnaht foah observation. Maggie's with him now." She paused. "Okay, you ken ask yoah questions."

"It was an accident?" Jeff asked, his scowl ratcheting down to a less intimidating frown.

Lisa was visibly relieved at the change. "Tha's what Ah heah. His cap blew off'n his head an' when he went t' fetch it, he slipped on th' rocks theyah. Ah'm told theyah slick from sea mist."

"Then I think I know where it happened."

"What the hell was Luke thinkin', usin' mah kids lahk that?!" Dianne's face was red with anger. "Who was watchin' them?!"

Jeff put a hand on Dianne's shoulder. "If I recall correctly, Di, you said they could help him with Rommel."

This made Dianne stop in her tracks. "But... but... I never meant..." With that, she handed the phone back to Jeff, and buried her face in her hands, sobbing.

"How's Alex?" Jeff asked, his tone sounding resigned.

Drew moved in to peer over Lisa's shoulder. "He's gonna be fine, Jeff. I had to lightly sedate him to fix his shoulder. He was a bit dazed... Luke said he wasn't conscious at first. His neuro checks

were fine, though; he answered all my questions, and there's no physical sign of concussion trauma. But I'm keeping him overnight, just to be sure. He's likely sleeping off the sedative right now." He paused. "Y'know, someone mentioned that if Luke hadn't been there, Alex might have rolled off the ledge."

Jeff paled again, and took in another deep breath, then cleared his throat. "How's Tyler?"

Drew smiled a little. "Perfectly fine. Sticking close to big brother, though. Anna might find this comes up in conversation when she gets back."

"How's Luke?" Jeff only just remembered Luke's condition.

"Can't discuss that with you, Jeff." Drew was matter-of-fact about the subject. "I can tell you that I checked him over too, and released him to his apartment."

Lisa now spoke up. "Alex did ask when you would be coming home."

Jeff glanced outside again, then shook his head. "Not for a couple of days, I'm afraid. It's been snowing hard all day, to the extent that we're pretty much socked in. The main roads are fairly clear, I think, but no one's thinking about the little side roads... or the helijet pad, I reckon. The last report was that air traffic was being rerouted to the coastal areas, where they're not getting quite as much of this." He glanced over at Dianne, whose breath was hitching from her cry, but was otherwise calm. "Di?"

She came over and took the phone. "Is Alex awake?"

Lisa shook her head, and Drew looked sad. "No, he's likely asleep," Drew said again.

"How about we call again early tomorrow afternoon?" Lisa suggested. "He should be awake then and it won't be too late where you are."

"That would be fine." Jeff took the phone again. "We're not going anywhere for a couple more days." He made a rueful face. "Even we Tracys have to bow to Mother Nature... once in a while."

Drew snorted a laugh, and Lisa smiled. Dianne stood next to Jeff, and he put his arm around her. "Give him... give him hugs and kisses from us, would you, Ma?"

"Of course. I'll give them all hugs and kisses from you... even the big boys."

This finally brought a chuckle from Dianne. "Love you, Ma. Uncle Drew... thanks. I'm glad you were there for him."

"So was I, truth be told," Drew said quietly. "Now, it's late over there, isn't it? Get some rest."

"Yes, Doctor."

It was Jeff's turn to talk. "Thanks, Drew, for taking care of my boy."

"You're welcome, Jeff. Anytime. Now go sleep!"

Drew pulled back, returning to the table and his cooled cup of coffee. Lisa lingered. "You two take care of yourselves and don't take any chances, y'hear? These kids will need both of you rested and whole when you come home." She shook a finger at her son-in-law. "Take care of my daughter."

"I will, Lisa. We'll talk to you tomorrow. Goodbye." Jeff finally ended the call, and put down his phone. He turned to find Dianne at the windows, staring through the pulled back slats at the swirling flakes.

"I used to love snow," she said with a sigh. "I loved it when we got a day -- or more -- off from school. Even when it was the kids getting the time off. Now..." She leaned back a little as Jeff wrapped his arms around her from behind. "... I think I hate it."

"Don't say that," he told her, his warm breath caressing her ear. "There's magic in it still. I think we should go out in the morning and make a huge snowman... just like my boys and I used to do when we lived in Kansas."

Dianne chuckled. "We had snow days with as little as an inch on the ground, if the weatherman predicted more. We never got to make a huge snowman. Just little puny ones."

"Then we'll be from Kansas tomorrow and play in the snow, like the kids we still are inside." He rested his chin on the top of her head. "Whattaya say, Mrs. Tracy?"

She turned her head, dislodging his chin so her mouth could find his, then said, "Sounds like a plan, Mr. Tracy."