

Luke made his way up the steps of the Cliff House, Rommel at his side. As they moved closer to the second level, the dog's ears pricked up and he stepped in front of his master.

"Rommel," Luke warned and the dog paused. When they got to the top of the stairs, Luke spied what was exciting his dog. Josh sat playing, zooming trucks and cars along the floor. He looked up as Luke and Rommel approached.

"Hi, Wuke!" the boy lisped.

Luke smiled. "Hey, sport. What do you have going on here?" He knelt down to examine the boy's cars.

"Here! Use this one!" Josh pushed a yellow car into the man's hands. Together they played for a few minutes before creating a spectacular pile up. Their laughter attracted Dominic, who came out to see what was going on. A wide smile crept across his face.

"You two be careful now," he chuckled. "I don't have to attend any traffic accidents."

Luke eyed the impressive pile of 'smashed' cars and couldn't help but smile.

"It could be a bit too late for that," he said.

Dom playfully shook his head and sighed.

"What am I ever going to do with you two?" he asked. "You want to come in for a drink? The wee man needs a snack."

"Yeah, snack!" Josh said.

He ran straight through the pile of toys, sending small plastic cars in every direction. Dom folded his arms and gave his son a semi-stern look.

"Ah-ah, you need to tidy your cars first. We can't have anyone tripping and falling now, can we?"

Josh looked a little sullen but nodded. "Yes, Da," he said.

"Here, I'll help you, champ," Luke said.

Josh's face lit up and together they transported the toys back into the apartment.

Dominic walked to the fridge and pulled out a juice box. "Here you go. Want something?" he asked Luke. "I've got a very nice red." He held up another juice box and grinned.

Luke shook his head. "I'm good, thanks." He put the small piles of cars on the table. "How are

you feeling? Sorry I didn't get down to see you earlier, I ah, got tied up." He smiled at Dom but it didn't quite reach his eyes.

"Wait a sec." He turned to his son. "Want to watch a some cartoons?" The boy nodded enthusiastically and a few moments later was on the couch, juice in one hand, cookie in another, eyes glued to the screen.

Dom led Luke over to the kitchen area, where he poured two glasses of lemonade and set them on the table. "Sit!" he said as he sat down and motioned for Luke to do the same. Luke paused a moment, glancing out the door at Rommel. The dog was lying down, sleeping in the shade under the table. He sat and took a sip of lemonade.

Dom did the same. "I'm doing OK, head's a bit sore, but getting better."

"That's good," Luke replied. He looked down at his glass, playing with the water ring on the table.

Dominic frowned in puzzlement. "I overheard a bit of news while I was in the infirmary. I'm sure we'll be getting an announcement in a couple of days."

"Cool."

Dom reached over and took Luke's hand. "What's wrong?"

Luke sighed. "I had an argument with Virgil last night."

"What about?"

"He...he accused me of having an affair with half the women on the island, including Elise."

"What?!" Dom yelped.

Luke nodded. "Yeah. I told him it wasn't true, that I was gay. He didn't believe me." Dominic stared, his mouth open like a gaping fish. Luke went on. "It got ugly, we kept going back and forth then I...I..." He took a deep breath. "I kissed him, Dom. Dammit, I don't know why I did it, I just acted on impulse. God, I'm sorry. I'm so sorry." His voice hitched.

Dom couldn't help but let his fingers flinch away. However, the crestfallen look in Luke's eyes brought them right back down again. His insides were turning over and over. What?

"Well... God, why did you do that?" was all he could say.

"I don't know!" Luke said. He paused for a moment and then shook his head. "Well, actually, I think I do. It was just on impulse. He was being completely stubborn and block-headed. The last straw was when he implied that I had been carrying on with Cassie and then told her I was gay to get out of it, or at least I think that's what he meant." Luke's brow furrowed deeply. "I just felt like it was the only way I could get him to believe me."

"What was his reaction?" Dom asked, keeping his voice as steady in tone as possible.

"I don't actually know," Luke said. "I left. I didn't give him a chance to react. You're not angry, are you?"

"What? No, of course not!" Dom said, although the hitch in his voice betrayed him. Luke raised an eyebrow and he conceded. "Well, I have to admit the thought of you kissing someone else didn't sit well with me. But, we're not exactly going out so I don't really have the right to that reaction."

"It wasn't even a real kiss, anyway," Luke continued. "I was pissed and trying to prove my point, I guess." He sighed. "Needless to say, I'm not going to the camp-out. I sent a message up to the house telling them I wasn't going to make it. Scott didn't seem to question it."

"Then I won't go either."

Luke shook his head. "No. I'm not ruining your day further. Besides, I'm not fit for much company anyway. Rom and I are just going to chill."

Dominic's forehead furrowed in thought, then he looked up and smiled. "Take Josh."

"What?"

"I was planning on bringing Josh up to the Villa but why don't you take him instead? The two of you can...chill...together!"

Luke frowned. "Dom, I don't think--"

"It's perfect! I have his bag all packed and ready to go." Dominic paused a moment. "Unless you just want to sleep here?" At Luke's stunned expression, Dom chuckled. "Your place it is then." The Irishman turned back into his apartment, appearing a few moments later with a fireman duffel bag in his hand, matching sleeping bag in the other. "Here you go," he said handing them to Luke. "I'll get Josh washed up and bring him up in a few minutes."

Luke stood staring. "Dom, I--"

Dominic smiled softly and took Luke's hand. "It's alright." He squeezed Luke's fingers gently. "We'll talk later."

"Thanks, Dom." He smiled thinly. "Have fun. Bring him up when he's ready." He turned and walked outside, snapping his fingers for Rommel to follow him up the steps.

Dominic watched him go, then turned to his son. "Hey, Jak, I have a surprise for you."

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