

Sunday, September 16, 3:15 p.m. Tracy Island

Cassie looked down at her watch. She had switched it to the time on the island so she could keep track of things like meals. Being late would not make a good impression on her potential employers. Of course right now she wished she'd never switched it as she wanted to call Mark. What time is it in New York anyway? Cassie thought. Maybe I should have paid more attention to the time differences Mr. Tracy was telling me about when he was informing me of the arrangements he had made for me to get home. After a few minutes of trying to figure it out, she gave up and headed for one of the vid phones that had been pointed out to her. She'd just take the chance and give him a call. He usually turned his cell phone off when he was sleeping anyway, so if it was too late, she wouldn't disturb him.

Cassie punched in the number and listened to it ring. Looks like I'm going to get his voice mail, she thought to herself. She was about hang up and try again later when she heard her brother's voice.

"Hello?"

Cassie smiled. It was nice hearing a familiar voice even if her brother was being his usual suspicious self.

"Hey, Mark. It's Cassie."

"Cass! Are you okay? How's the interview going? When are you coming home?"

"I'm fine. The interview went well and I'll be home soon. My flight should be coming into JFK at nine o'clock Monday morning there. Can you pick me up?" she asked her brother. She could hear voices in the background and wondered where he was at.

"Yeah, sure. I'll be there."

"What time is it there anyway?" she asked, her curiosity getting the better of her.

"A little after eleven. I just got off work," Mark told her, which explained why he had taken so long to answer the phone. "Why, the guys too loud for you?"

"Well, I can hear them in the background. Mostly, I was just hoping I hadn't called you at a bad time. You know I was never good with time zones."

"Exactly, what time zone are you in?"

"A different one than you," Cassie replied, easily. She couldn't really blame him for trying to get her to tell him where she was at. In his place, she'd probably want to know. "The Tracys would like me to keep the location of their home secret. You can't really blame them. We've seen some of

the media circuses they've had to deal with when they've been in the city."

"Fair enough. So what's up with the job?" Mark asked. Cassie heard the voices fading away in the background and figured her brother was leaving the locker room.

Cassie took a deep breath. Here it goes. Except for silly things when we were kids, this will be the first time I've ever lied to him but it's for a good reason, she thought to herself. "Well, I've been offered the position. It would mean relocating to Wichita, Kansas as I'd be based at the Tracy Industries branch there. The job would entail making sure fire safety protocols are up to date and upheld in all their branches, even those overseas. The traveling should be fun and it would be a change from what I'm doing."

"You always did want to travel," Mark commented, trying to sound upbeat. He didn't want his sister moving halfway across the country but he also wasn't going to stand in her way. He wanted her to be happy. "Aren't you going to miss the actual firefighting part of the job?"

I won't be missing out on that entirely, Cassie thought, recalling some of the rescues she had followed that IR had already carried out. "Yeah, I'll miss it some but maybe it's time for a change. What I'll be doing would be important in its own way and probably less stressful. Besides, I haven't said I'm going to take the job yet. Mr. Tracy has given me some time to think it over."

"Maybe you're fooling yourself, Cass, but not me. I can hear it in your voice. You really want to take this offer."

"I haven't made up my mind yet," she insisted.

"Yeah, sure. Whatever you say."

"Well, I guess I should be going. I'll see you when I get back to New York."

"I'll be waiting. Stay safe."

"You too. Bye, Mark," Cassie said, hanging up the phone.

She felt slightly guilty about not being able to tell him the real nature of the job. Still, she understood the Tracys need for secrecy. She rarely kept anything from Mark. Keeping things from him would be the hardest part about taking the job with IR. There were, however, a lot of positive things about the job. I just need to decide if the sacrifices I'm going to have to make are worth taking the job, she said as she headed out of the villa. Maybe a jog on the beach will help me think things through.

Posted by starrynebula on August 22, 2007

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