

---

Subject: Re: Regaining Momentum

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Mon, 23 Jul 2012 23:52:54 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

---

Sunday, September 16, 5 p.m., El Dorado, Kansas (10 a.m., Monday, September 17, Tracy Island)

"You sure you want to go through with this, Heather-girl?" Jenny asked. She busied herself setting the dining room table. Donny carefully carried the forks to the table, counting to himself as he put the forks on the right hand side of the plates. His aunt sighed slightly and bit her lip to keep from correcting the young man.

"Yes, Aunt Jenny, I'm sure," Heather said with a sigh. She fingered the curled end of her French braid. "I hate it; I've never broken an agreement before in my life, but..." She watched Donny as he finished with the forks and went to the flatware drawer for the spoons. "...my family needs me more now," she murmured. Straightening, she smiled a little, a sad expression. "I'll make the call from my room."

"When you're done, tell your father that dinner's almost ready," Jenny instructed. She clucked her tongue. "With as much time as he's spendin' redesignin' that house of yours, it'll be a mansion before he's done."

"I'll tell him," Heather said as she left the dining room, heading for her own bedroom. The past few weeks had been hard, almost too hard to bear. Once the reality of Martha and Amy's deaths had set in, James Kennedy had walked around with an air of stunned disbelief. The funeral hadn't helped; he was still in that fog for at least two weeks. Then, as if a switch had been thrown, he'd dived into his work -- making the redesign and rebuilding of Heather's old home a priority. Jenny had watched from the sidelines a little, then decreed that the family was moving out with her for a time, for a change of scene and perhaps a respite from the media circus that had developed.

The investigation into the cause of the pile up was still ongoing, but from the first there had been rumors that Martha had contributed to it. They were suppressed to an extent when the coroner's report was made public and had revealed that Martha hadn't been under the influence. Still, the rumors had hurt, and James had become more and more morose -- and reclusive -- every day. The move to Kansas allowed him and Heather to disappear for a while and hopefully regain some measure of peace.

Donny missed his mother, but missed Amy more, and was still having trouble with the concept of her not coming home from her dance lesson. Jenny loved her nephew, but it was up to Heather to deal with him on a daily basis. The bond between the siblings had deepened, and Heather knew that a move to Tracy Island would be devastating to him. So, she and Jim had made the decision to relocate to Kansas permanently. Rosy was watching the family home in Virginia, and would join them as soon as the new house was finished.

Now Heather was ready to say goodbye to a life that might have been. She sat on her bed, staring at her phone, then opened it, picked up the card that had the number Jeff had given her, and dialed.

If my calculations are right, it's Monday morning on the island, she thought. Hope it's not too early.

Jeff had gotten down to business this morning. He'd sent out a priority request to the security office in Christchurch for background information on the various teachers and leaders involved in Cherie's choices of extra-curricular activities. He'd deputized Tin-Tin and Virgil to head to Wellington and pick up some groceries his mother had requested for Kyrano's birthday dinner -- as well as a special bottle of fine cognac and a set of gold-etched goblets that he'd ordered as a gift. The folks in New York were still enjoying their Sunday, so he waited to discover if there were any responses to the ad they'd placed for a new mechanic, but he did check some of the major newspapers online to read the ad and make sure it was correct. He was just settling back with a fresh cup of coffee when the private line buzzed. A quick glance at the caller ID made him frown. Heather Kennedy? Don't tell me she's ready to come back... Reaching over, he tapped the buttons for "Voice and Picture".

"Hello, Heather." The young woman before him looked weary, vulnerable, and younger in a way. Very likely the hair, Jeff mused. "How are you? To what do I owe the pleasure of this call?"

Heather mustered up a smile for her personal hero. "Hello, Mr. Tracy. I'm... doing as well as can be expected, I guess, under the circumstances."

"I am truly sorry for your loss, Heather." Jeff looked sober and sympathetic. "How is your father handling things?"

"He's... coping. He's thrown himself into his work, in particular the rebuilding of the house I lost during those tornadoes." She paused, then asked, "Speaking of the tornadoes, how is Dr. Tracy?"

Jeff smiled. "She's doing very well, physically. Walking with only a slight limp, nearly finished with her physical therapy. She's got a little ways yet to go emotionally, but she's getting there." He paused, sobering again. "Why do I have the feeling you didn't call just to inquire after Dianne?"

Heather lowered her eyes for a moment, then had a half smile when she looked up again. "Because I didn't... though that was important." She paused, looking away from his gaze. "This is hard for me, sir. I've never broken an agreement in my life before now." Straightening, she looked him in the eye, took a deep breath and said firmly, "I'm calling to tender my resignation as your family pilot... and all of its attendant duties."

Jeff nodded; he read between the lines and realized that she was referencing IR. "Resignation accepted, Heather. I understand from experience that your family needs you at this time."

"Thank you, sir." Heather's soft voice held so many emotions: sadness, disappointment, regret, grief, and even a touch of relief.

He gazed at her picture, his own heart aching a bit for this young woman, so quickly a mother-figure and main support for her father. "What are your plans? I gather since your father is working on getting your house rebuilt you'll be staying in Kansas."

"Yes, sir." She brightened a bit. "We're staying with my aunt Jennifer at the moment. She felt we needed to get away from... things. When the house is built, my father, Donny and I will be living

there. Dad can work from anywhere he likes. Our housekeeper, Rosy, will be helping to take care of Donny; she's very good with him." She sighed. "As for me, well, I'll find an airport to work from and continue the organ donor flights. My partner will be glad I'm back. He told me he hadn't had time to find another pilot, never mind break her in."

They laughed a little, and Jeff, who had been surreptitiously checking the Human Resources boards, asked, "What do you think about returning to Tracy Industries in your former capacity, as a test pilot? I see that they haven't filled your slot quite yet."

Heather blinked, startled. "They haven't?"

"No, they haven't, if what I'm looking at is up-to-date." He gave her an encouraging nod. "I'll see to it... if you want the job. It's not like you really left Tracy Industries, after all."

"Oh!" She took a moment to think. "I... I'd like that, Mr. Tracy. I worked with a good group of people there, salt of the earth, and I'd love to return there."

"Then it's settled. I'll send an email right now, informing Human Resources of your transfer back to your old position." Jeff smiled widely. "I'll also remind them that you are on compassionate leave... with pay. You take your time getting back to work, Heather."

She laughed a little. "My supervisor did say I had a lot of vacation time accrued."

"This is different," he insisted. "But you just tell Blake when you're ready."

"I will, sir." Heather paused, and smiled. "It's been a pleasure meeting you and your family, Mr. Tracy. You've been one of my personal heroes for a long time and... where a lot of men would disappoint, you haven't. You're still my hero... after my dad, of course. Now more than ever."

"Thank you, Heather. I appreciate your faith in me. I'll do my best to see it's not misplaced." He took a deep breath and let it out slowly. "So. Is there anything else?"

Heather thought a moment, then nodded. "I didn't pack up all my things when I left. Could you...?"

"We'll see to it." Seem to be doing a lot of this lately. "Just let me know where we should have it shipped."

"Could I give the address to Tin-Tin? I really need to talk with her and tell her what's happening."

"That'll be fine. Right now she's off on an errand; her father's birthday is today. But you could email her or leave a message for her. I'm sure she'll get back to you as soon as possible."

"All right, I will. Thank you again, Mr. Tracy." Heather suddenly looked away. "I should go. Aunt Jenny says dinner's ready."

"Then goodbye, Heather. I hope we'll run into each other again."

"I hope so, too. Goodbye."

Heather disconnected the call, and shouted, "Coming, Aunt Jenny!" Then she left the phone on her dresser and went off to drag her father from his little office.

Jeff, who had already been composing a transfer request, sent it off to Human Resources. She's too good a pilot to lose, and I really think she needs the boost right now. She would have made one helluva Thunderbird One pilot; it's too bad that we can't see that come about. He sighed. "Back to the other applications to look for another 'family pilot'. And I'd better let the other team members know what happened." With that, he turned back to his computer and composed another email.

"As of today, September 17, 2068, Heather Kennedy is no longer an IR operative..."

Posted by Tikatu on August 23, 2007

---