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Subject: Re: Regaining Momentum

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Tue, 24 Jul 2012 00:17:13 GMT

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Christchurch, NZ, Saturday, September 22, 10:30 am...

Luke stared blankly at the wall of paint chips. Off to his left, Nikki and Elise chatted happily, comparing one color to another. John had disappeared, claiming he was going to get them a dolly, but he'd been gone over fifteen minutes now and Luke figured he was trying to avoid being asked for advice.

Luke sighed as he glanced down at his watch. The four of them had left right after breakfast, landing in Christchurch around nine. By the time they had gotten the car and made their way to the store, it was nearly ten. The girls dragged Luke straight to the paint section, claiming they couldn't do any real shopping until they had the walls figured out. I suppose they're right, Luke thought to himself, but God, I hate shopping. Whose bright idea was this anyway? His thoughts were interrupted by Elise calling his name.

"Hello! Earth to Luke! What do you think of these?" She held out some chips for him to look at.

Luke shrugged. "They're OK."

"OK? OK? A little enthusiasm here."

John appeared at their side pushing a large flatbed dolly. "So, what have you decided?"

Elise glared at Luke. "Nothing yet. Here, John, do you like these colors?"

John held up his hands. "Hey, leave me out of it. I'm just the hired hand!"

Nikki giggled as Elise rolled her eyes. "All right, Nikki and I thought this one here, Desert Sands, would be nice for the living room." She handed Luke the chip.

He looked down at it. "It's tan."

"Desert Sands," Elise corrected. "And this one for your bedroom."

"Green. That works."

Nikki shook her head. "It's called Spruce. It's a warm green, and with the right bedding and curtains, the room will look great."

Luke got a pained look on his face. "Bedding? Curtains?"

Elise nodded matter of factly, "Of course. What did you think, you were keeping that moth eaten blanket you have on the bed now?"

"Hey! I've had that since college," Luke protested.

Elise arched one eyebrow. "And your point is?"

John elbowed Luke. "Just smile and nod; it's easier."

"I heard that," Nikki said. John merely grinned.

"Fine, Spruce and...Desert Sands. Paint done." Luke turned away.

"Not quite. We still need something for the kitchen area, and do you want satin, gloss, semi-gloss or matte finish?" Elise asked.

"Matte what?" Luke asked, dumbfounded as John tried not to laugh and Elise sighed in frustration. "Look, I trust you two, that's why I asked you to come help in the first place. So, get whatever you think works. John and I are heading over to the lumberyard to pick up what I need for bookshelves. We'll meet you at the check out." Luke all but dragged John away. When they were out of sight, Luke glanced over at his friend. "I didn't think we were going to get out of that alive."

John chuckled. "Just think, you still have bedding and curtains to buy."

Luke groaned. "Oh God, this is torture...And before you say it, yes, I know it was my idea." They made their way to the lumberyard, and Luke sorted through the boards. He picked out some nice oak ones, examining each one carefully first. Then loading those on the dolly, he selected some two by fours and other assorted pieces. Finally he decided he was done, and he and John made their way to the check out. They found Elise and Nikki waiting, eight cans of paint on the counter. "Do I want to know?" Luke asked, grinning.

"It would serve you right if we got pink," Elise told him.

"Aww, would you really do that to me?" Luke asked, wrapping his arm around her shoulders and batting his eyes at her.

Elise shook her head, but smiled. "Good thing you're not straight; you'd have the female population falling at your feet."

"Who says I don't anyway?" he replied with a wink.

Laughing, they paid for their purchases, arranging for them to be sent to the airport. Nikki and Elise then led them to a department store and headed straight to the interior decorating section. It took time, but Luke finally settled on a plaid comforter in shades of dark green, navy blue and maroon on a tan base. He chose curtains in the same shade of maroon for the sliding doors in the bedroom, and navy ones for the living room.

"What about couch pillows?" Nikki asked.

"What about them?" Luke replied.

"Hopeless, men are hopeless," she muttered.

"That's why we depend on you, right, John?" Luke called out.

John shook his head. "Oh no, I'm Switzerland here. Not getting in the middle of this one, either."  
They all laughed.

They made their way down the escalator, where Elise paused thoughtfully as they passed the women's department. "You know, Nikki, while we're here..."

Nikki smiled, "I was just thinking the same thing."

"No! No way! I picked out paint, bedding, curtains, even pillows! I am NOT going clothes shopping," Luke insisted.

"But--"

"No." Both Luke and Elise glared at each other, arms folded across their chests.

John stepped forward. "OK, as Switzerland, I'm proposing a truce. Elise, you and Nikki go get what you need. Luke and I will go finish up getting whatever else he needs. Will that work for everyone?" They nodded. "Good. Have fun and we'll see you at lunch." With that Luke and John headed one way, and Elise and Nikki the other.

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Later, around 2:30 PM...

"There, that's it. Done!!" Luke said as he paid for his groceries. They were going to be delivered to the plane which freed the two men from having to cart them back to the airport.

"Anything else you need to get?" John asked.

Luke thought for a moment. "I don't think so...House stuff, food, pet supplies....I think I'm all set. Want to go grab a cup of coffee or something while we wait for the girls?"

John nodded. "Sure. I have another hour or so before I meet our interviewee. I know where there's a great bookstore-coffee shop."

"Lead the way."

A short time later, both men were seated at a table, drinking coffee and sharing a plate of chocolate chip cookies. Luke glanced at the book stacks behind him. "I need to see what they have for fishing books. Bet you don't have many rainbow or cut-throat trout on the island."

"No, we probably don't. Gordon does some beach and deep sea fishing once in a while, and I know Alex has explored some of the jungle. If anyone knows where there are some freshwater streams, it would be him. Get him to show you sometime. You two nature buffs would have a field day," John grinned.

Luke chuckled. "I'll do that. I asked him and Tyler to keep an eye on Rommel for me while we were gone. I don't want him in the pool again."

John laughed. "Don't blame you. Wet dog, eww." He took a sip of his coffee as the two sat in comfortable silence for a few minutes. "So, how did you get involved in Search and Rescue?"

"This is going to sound cheesy, but when I was a kid, I knew I wanted to grow up and be a ranger. I was always outside somewhere, fishing, hunting, hiking, exploring. It was just sort of natural that I'd go that direction." Luke took a cookie. "I worked all over the West for a few years, then took a weekend search and rescue course. I enjoyed it more than I thought I would, so I took some more in-depth courses and got certified."

"Cool. We sort of fell into it, family business and all," John grinned.

Luke laughed. "I can see that! Anyway, my career's been pretty uneventful until the last few weeks. Started with Barry leaving, then the plane crash, and ending up here. But, I'm looking forward to the challenge. Can't wait to get in there, if you know what I mean."

John nodded. "So, how did you and Barry meet?"

"At a party. I'm not the 'go out and party type', but the gang from work dragged me there. Barry was tending the bar and we got to talking. We dated on and off for a few months, then I got into a bad accident at work."

John frowned. "Accident?"

Luke nodded. "Avalanche. We managed to find all the victims and were getting them off the mountain when a news helicopter showed up to cover the story. The noise triggered another slide and I got caught in it. Broke my arm and my ankle, both on the same side, of course. The ankle was pretty bad; the docs wouldn't put me in a walking cast, so with the arm, I couldn't even hobble around on crutches. Barry offered to move in for a few weeks to help me out and things went on from there."

"Why did you guys split up? If you don't mind me asking."

"No, not at all. Barry's in advertising. He'd been commuting from Boulder to Denver and then got offered a big promotion in L.A. He would have been a fool not to take it. Plus, I was spending more and more time up at the SAR cabin so we really didn't see each other as much as we used to and we just drifted apart." Luke toyed with his coffee mug, his thoughts clearly on his ex.

"I'm sorry," John said. "I didn't mean to bring up bad memories."

Luke shook his head and smiled. "Don't worry about it." He drained the last of his coffee and got to his feet. "I'll go find those books and we can get out of here."

Posted by lillehafrue on September 9, 2008

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