

Sunday, September 23, 1:30 PM; Tracy Island

"Did you enjoy your tour of the facilities this morning?"

"Yes, sir. Brains is a good guide. I gotta say, I was particularly impressed by the boat pen. Not only are your vessels well protected there, the shape of the pen facilitates repair. You can bring the tools you need very close to the boats, and have them handy."

Jeff walked into the lounge, followed by Will and Brains. He sat down at his desk, started his computer, and indicated that the other two should seat themselves, also. He was just about to speak, when Tin-Tin walked in. Will looked at her questioningly.

"Since this is an interview for the mechanic's job, I thought I should be here, too."

"You're a mechanic?" He realized almost immediately how that sounded, and tried to redeem himself. "No offense, Miss Kyrano; there are two female mechanics at the shop I manage, and at least ten of my father's other shops have them as well. But I thought you worked in other areas."

"None taken, Mr. Abbott. I do help out with maintenance, when needed."

Will looked admiringly at her, then started when he heard an "ahem" from the man sitting to one side. He looked at Brains, then back at Tin-Tin. A suspicion entered his head that these two might be more than colleagues. But he had to say one more thing. "Well please pardon me for sayin' so, but if my father's shops had female mechanics who looked as good as you do, we'd've blown the competition out of the water long ago."

"Why thank you, Mr. Abbott."

"Let's get down to business, shall we?" Jeff interjected. "Both Brains and I have a number of questions for you."

"Yes, sir. I'm ready."

Jeff glanced at the information he'd brought up. "Your record with the Navy is impressive. Your teams scored at the top every time for keeping both the ship and the jets in optimum condition. And it says that any repairs needed were done right, the first time. That's over a ten year period. You should have made the Navy your career, but you left, due to a 'family emergency'. Would you please elaborate on that?"

I knew this question would be comin', but right off the bat? He doesn't waste time, does he? "Well, sir, it had to do with my younger brother, Mitchell. Have you heard of the drug called Arise?"

"I have. It's an offshoot of a prescription medicine called Arris, an antidepressant, as I recall," Brains answered. "Someone thought it would be a good over-the-counter medication that less

fortunate people could afford. But the changes they made in it caused certain types of users to become extremely addicted to it very quickly."

"That's correct. Mitchell was one of those people. He'd become depressed after his engagement was called off. A so-called friend gave him some Arise one day, and that's all it took. He was on it for about six months before anyone found out, though. At that time, the only way to combat the addiction was to quit, cold turkey. But the withdrawal symptoms were terrible to go through, and almost as hard to watch. I was needed to help. At first, I thought I could take a leave, and return to duty a couple of months later. Well, I found out differently - showed how little I knew about the stuff. I finally had to resign."

"And you couldn't go back once it was over?"

"Well, sir, it took over a year to get him off it, and then I had to take over the business, so our folks could get some rest; their health had suffered. Mitch was by then able to help out, and he, our sister, Jenny, and I sent them on a cruise. Durin' that time, I found I liked what I was doin', and felt I'd been gone too long to go back to the Navy."

"And for the last," Jeff checked the computer again, "two years, you've been managing the branch in San Francisco." He looked back at Will. "That's a good job; why would you want to change?"

Will rubbed the back of his neck. "I miss the hands-on work. In the Navy, I didn't just tell my teams what to do, I worked alongside them. Sure I can do paperwork, and inventory and sign off on things, but that's not what I'm cut out to do. It took me a while to realize that, but I finally did, not long ago."

"How does your family feel about you leaving the business?"

"Well sir, I talked to my father about it, and he told me that I could leave, provided I didn't go to one of the rivals, and the transition to a new manager was a smooth one. I guess he understood that I needed to find my niche - to do what I do best."

"We don't have automobiles here on the island; we don't even have roads. Aren't you going to miss working on cars?" asked Brains.

"Well, sure, but I'll still be workin' on boats and jets, if I get the job. Somehow I suspect you all would keep me so busy, I'd forget after a while that there weren't any cars around."

"More than you imagine, Mr. Abbott."

"Please, sir; just call me Will. Mr. Abbott's my dad."

Jeff smiled. "Okay - Will. Does anyone have any more questions?" He looked at Brains, then Tin-Tin, who shook their heads. "Will, you might have questions, but I'd like you to hold them for now. If Brains and Tin-Tin agree with me, I'd like to offer you the job, but before I do, there's something you need to see." He looked again at the others, who were nodding and smiling their agreement. He stood up. "If you will come with me, please. Brains? Tin-Tin?"

"I have something that requires my attention elsewhere, Mr. Tracy," Tin-Tin replied, and turned to leave. "I'll see you all later."

"All right, Tin-Tin. Will, I'd like you to accompany Brains and me." Jeff glanced at the engineer, who nodded and led the way. As they headed toward the monorail, he continued. "I know you had a tour of the island - or part of it. But there's something you need to see before you make up your mind."

Will looked puzzled, but followed the others out of the room. It wasn't long before he found out what they wanted to show him.

Five minutes later, he was staring up at Thunderbird Two. His jaw dropped. He closed it, and tried to speak, but nothing came out. He swallowed and tried again. "Holy mackerel! That's a... You... I... It's... How..." He stopped, and looked around, then turned back to Jeff and tried once more.

"That's a Thunderbird!"

"Right."

"But a Thunderbird's an International Rescue vehicle! You're International Rescue?"

"Right again."

"You're tellin' me that you want me to work for International Rescue?"

Jeff nodded, amused at Will's reaction.

"Hoo boy. I'm - I'm - I don't know what I am! This is big, a lot more than I expected." He gazed at Thunderbird Two again for a long minute, then turned to Brains. "You're not expectin' me to work on somethin' as huge and complex as that, are you?"

"Not by yourself, no. You might be asked to help me and one or another of the pilots once in a while," Brains replied. "But your main duties would be to maintain our boats, jets and auxiliary vehicles and equipment."

Will shook his head slowly. "I gotta say I'm relieved to know that. She's a beauty, and I'm feelin' privileged to be one of the few in the world to have been shown her. But it's been a long time since I've felt overwhelmed by anythin'."

"Look, Will," said Jeff. "I want you to think this over carefully. If you decide to take the job, it'll mean living here on the island, away from your family. And you won't ever be able to tell them the whole truth about what you do. I don't expect you to give me an answer now, or even before you leave tomorrow. I want you to consider all the ramifications of accepting this job offer first."

"Thank you, sir, I will. And I appreciate it."

Posted by hobbeth on September 10, 2007

---