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Subject: Re: Regaining Momentum

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Tue, 24 Jul 2012 00:20:39 GMT

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Monday, September 24th, 5:30 Hartford, CT (Tuesday, September 25th, 9:30 a.m. Tracy Island)

Cassie stowed her bag where her six-year-old nieces, Kate and Allie, slept, then returned to the living room. While she was sleeping on an air mattress in her nieces' room, Mark would be sleeping on the couch during their stay in Hartford.

Kate and Allie were on the floor playing Trouble. Both Cassie and Mark had promised to join them in a game after dinner. Jason was in his bassinet, sleeping. Lisa was in the kitchen finishing dinner. Mark and Philip were sitting on the couch discussing their work. It was a safe topic for the two brothers, who both knew that Mark's personal life was a touchy issue between them. Though he still loved his baby brother, Philip was still uneasy with his brother's sexual orientation. It had put a strain on their relationship.

"Do you need any help?" Cassie asked her sister-in-law, as she stood in the doorway of the kitchen.

"No, I'm just about done, but thank-you," she replied.

Cassie turned back to the living room. Walking over to the arm chair, she sat down and listened to her brothers' conversation. Philip was talking about the current story he was working on, involving a car theft racket that had the Hartford police baffled. He was still talking about it when Lisa called them for dinner.

"So what's with this impromptu visit?" Philip asked his sister after grace had been said.

"I wanted to see you all before I leave New York. I'm starting a new job which is going to take me to Wichita, Kansas."

"I didn't realize you were unhappy with your job, Cass," Philip commented.

"I wasn't. It was more that I needed a change of scenery after everything that has happened."

"I can definitely understand that," Lisa said. Her husband nodded in agreement. "What's this new job of yours?"

"I'm going to be a consultant for fire safety and protocols for Tracy Industries. Though I'll be based in Wichita, I'll be traveling to their other plants around the world and making sure fire codes and safety protocols are within company specifications, as well as keep those specifications up to date."

"Bet Dad is happy you're finally taking his advice and doing something less dangerous," Philip commented.

"Yes, Dad was quite happy about the change in jobs, though he said he'd rather I was based in

New York."

"Of course, he just isn't ready to completely let go of his little girl yet," her brother teased. "You know Mom and Dad are going to support any decision you make though," Philip said, purposely refraining from looking at his younger brother. Their parents had all but written Mark off when he admitted he was gay. Philip just tried to steer clear of the issue, not wanting to get involved. "They might miss you but they're not going to stand in your way."

"I know. It's going to be weird being out on my own though. I've never really experienced that before," Cassie commented, finding the prospect both frightening and exciting.

"Hope we didn't shelter you too much growing up, Cass," Philip commented.

"You and your brothers shelter her?" Lisa commented with a laugh. "If anything, she probably learned how to fight thanks to all of you."

"Guilty as charged," Philip admitted as the grownups at the table laughed. "When are you leaving, Cass?" he asked, growing serious.

"Next Monday. I'd give you contact information but I'm not completely sure of that myself yet. There is always my email account, of course. I'll email a phone and mailing address to everyone as soon as I'm settled."

"Does that mean we won't get to see you as much?" Kate asked, looking at her aunt. Beside her sister, Allie looked toward Cassie, too. The two girls had already said they didn't see her enough.

"Yes. It's going to be harder for me to come visit," Cassie told them, looking at both of them in turn. "But I'll tell you what; I'll write to the both of you personally. Wouldn't it be neat to get your own mail?"

"You mean, like when we get birthday cards?" Allie asked. Both girls looked forward to getting the cards. Receiving mail made them feel important like their parents.

"Exactly, only instead of getting a card, I'll write to you about what I'm doing. You can write back and tell me what's going on here."

Katie's face fell. "But we don't know how to write many words yet," she admitted. The girls had just started first grade. "What if we want to tell you something that we don't know how to write?"

"Then your mother or I will help you, Sweetie!" Philip assured her. Katie and Allie nodded, returning to their dinner. Looking from his daughter, Philip addressed his sister. "You let Alex keep the computer didn't you?"

"Yes, I did," Cassie answered, wondering where her brother was going with the subject. She hadn't needed the computer when she had moved in with Mark and right now, it was at least one less thing she'd have to worry about packing and shipping.

"Well, then, you and I are going to go find you a laptop tomorrow," Philip said. He had discussed

the idea with Lisa before, wanting to do something for his sister after what she had gone through. Given the situation, he knew she wouldn't mind that he did it now instead of waiting. "If your new job is going to entail traveling then a laptop is going to come into handy. Consider it our going away present to you."

"Philip, you don't have ..."

Philip held up his hand, cutting her off. "I know I don't have to but I want to. Besides, this way I know you won't have any excuse for not keeping in touch."

"Thank-you," she told him, giving in. She knew her brother had the same stubborn streak that she did. All her siblings had it and they got it from their father.

A cry from the baby's room interrupted them. Lisa wiped her mouth on her napkin and stood up. "I'll go get him." She looked across the table at her sister-in-law. "Cassie, why don't you come with me?" she suggested, knowing that Cassie was likely going to be upset seeing the baby for the first time. Lisa figured she didn't need an audience for that.

Cassie nodded. Standing up, she followed Lisa out of the kitchen. Her sister-in-law paused outside of the room. "If you're not ready, you don't need to come in. I just figured this way it would just be you and me. I know losing Nathan wasn't easy," she said softly, her voice conveying the empathy that only another mother could show.

Cassie took a deep breath. "No, it hasn't been, but seeing Jason before I leave is one of the reasons I came. He is my nephew and I'm happy for you and Philip."

"I know," Lisa said, putting her arm around Cassie's shoulders and giving her a small squeeze. Cassie smiled at her sister-in-law, thankful for her understanding. Lisa turned the light on as she walked into the baby's room. Jason was lying in his bassinet, his face scrunched up, and crying at the top of his lungs.

"Hey little one," Lisa said, leaning over and picking up the crying baby. "Your Aunt Cassie wants to meet you," she told her son. The baby stopped crying as she cradled him in her arms and walked over to where Cassie stood.

Cassie held out her arms for the tiny baby, sight blurring as she remembered holding Nathan like this. Her nephew was such a beautiful baby. She was happy for Lisa and Philip, but her heart still ached for her own son.

Her thoughts drifted to her new co-worker whom she had flown to Kansas with. I sure hope the custody battle went well for him, she thought as she rocked her nephew in her arms.

Posted by starrynebula on September 13, 2007

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