
Subject: Re: Regaining Momentum

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Tue, 24 Jul 2012 00:25:14 GMT

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

Tracy Island, Thursday September 27...

Luke jogged up the path, Rommel a few paces in front of him. Suddenly the dog paused and looked back at his master. "What is it, boy?" Luke asked. Rommel gave a "woof" and with his tail gyrating madly, he waited for Luke to catch up. They entered the clearing around the Cliff House and Luke saw what was getting Rom so excited.

"Doggy!" Josh got to his feet and toddled over towards them. Rom sat down next to Luke, looking up with pleading eyes.

Luke sighed. "Go ahead." The dog jumped up and met Josh halfway, dropping to the ground and rolling so the boy could scratch the dog's belly.

"Jak, where have you--JOSH!" Dom saw his son with the big shepherd and froze, the color draining from his face.

Luke stepped forward instantly. "Rommel, come!" The dog got up and trotted to his master's side. "Stay," Luke commanded. He turned to Dom. "He wouldn't hurt him."

Dom nodded hesitantly. "I-I know." He eyed the dog warily as he scooped his son up in his arms.

Josh struggled to get free. "Doggy! Doggy!"

"Rom, upstairs. Go." The dog obeyed, quickly making his way to the stairs outside the apartments and disappearing from view. Luke turned back to Dom. "I'm sorry. I won't let him go near Josh again."

"Doggy!"

Joshua struggled against his father's grip, and began to wail as Rommel disappeared from sight.

"It's...it's not that," Dom said over the sound of his son's crying, as he tried to coddle the child into quiet. "I know he wouldn't hurt Joshua, but... I'm not the world's biggest fan of dogs. Truth be told I'm outright scared of them." He gave a little self-deprecating snort. "I bet you think that's wild stupid."

"No, of course I don't," Luke said.

He studied the other's man's facial features and body language, and came to the conclusion that he was stressed. Very stressed.

"Joshua likes him...there's no need to keep him away from him..."

"But keep him away from you?" Luke asked.

"That would be...appreciated. Sorry."

"No, it's fine! Almost everyone has a phobia of some sort." Luke paused for a moment, as Joshua began to quiet down. "I've heard that things have been pretty rough for you, recently. Would you like to join me for dinner tonight? I'll do all the work; you just show up with Josh. And you won't get any trouble from Rommel."

Dominic didn't answer straight away. Do I want to be in company? Is it going to be exceptionally rude for me to say no...? Screw it, maybe it'll be fun!

"Sure, that sounds good."

Luke clapped his hands together. "Great! I'll see you around seven? You know where to find me," he said with a grin. "Does stir-fry chicken sound okay?"

"The stir-fry does, but not the chicken. I'm a vegetarian."

"Ah, I didn't know. Well, I can whip up a veggie stir-fry no problem. So I'll see you later?"

"Yeah. Yeah, you will."

"Great! See ya."

Luke trotted off in the direction Rommel had gone, and Dominic turned Joshua around in his arms; the child's sniffing had stopped, but he kept looking towards the point where Rom has disappeared.

"You'll see the doggy later, Josh."

"Doggy?" Josh asked excitedly.

"Yes, doggy. We're going to go visit the doggy. Now, let's get you cleaned up and down for a nap, hmm?"

Joshua responded only with a happy squeak: "Doggy!"

Luke stood at the counter, chopping up vegetables and tossing them into a skillet. The steady thumping of rock and roll pulsed in the background. He took a sip from his beer and glanced behind him.

Most of his things were still in boxes, but he had managed to get the bedroom and one wall of the living room painted. He'd put the curtains up around the glass doors, so the room didn't look too bad. Brains had shown him where the power tools were, and Luke was in the process of building book shelves.

Rom was locked in the bedroom, the AC turned on high. Knowing the mutt, he's probably sprawled across the bed, Luke thought to himself. He turned back to his task and was just finishing up as the door chime sounded.

Wiping his hands on his jeans, he turned down the music and then answered the door. Dom stood there, Josh in his arms. The child smiled up at Luke. "Doggy?" he asked.

Luke chuckled. "We'll go see the doggy later, he's taking a nap. C'mon in. Can I get you anything? Beer, juice, soda?" He frowned at Josh for a minute. "I'm afraid I don't have a sippy cup for the big guy here," he said, ruffling the boy's hair.

"I always come prepared," Dominic said, turning to the side to reveal an over-stuffed diaper bag.

Luke laughed. "Sure looks like it. Have a nuclear fallout bunker in there, too?" he asked with a grin.

"Just about," Dom said, chuckling. "I'll take a soda, please. I have some juice here for Josh."

The little group settled inside the apartment, Luke assuring Dominic that he didn't need any help.

"You're the guest," he said, and saw to it that the man was settled in a seat, enjoying his drink.

Joshua was babbling about Rommel: "Where doggie? When doggie?" It was only when he was assured that he would get to see the German Shepherd fifteen times, and when the smell of dinner became stronger, that the boy shifted his attention away from him.

"Foods? Foods-foods?"

Luke chuckled at the boys antics, but not at Dominic's exasperation, even exhaustion. He sure seems tired... I wonder why he chose to be a part of International Rescue with such a young child.

"Yes, Josh, you will see the dog. Yes, we're getting food." It was all spoken in the same soft, weary tone.

Dinner was a quiet affair (for all except Joshua). Afterward, Joshua got his wish to see Rommel, and the dog and boy played together in the living area under the careful watch of the two men. At first, Dominic didn't take his eyes off Rom, part out of fear for himself, part out of fear for Joshua. But surprisingly, he seemed to relax somewhat and even looked away from time to time. The men talked in general terms about island life, and Dominic recounted a few anecdotes about life before Luke had arrived. He didn't talk about the recent events that had affected him, but Luke was glad to note that when he left, he had a smile on his face, and his voice had attained a less monotone and more cheerful element.

"Thanks for dinner," Dominic said as Luke saw him out. "Next time, my place."

"I look forward to it."

Dominic and Joshua waved goodbye, and Luke watched as the door slid shut.

"That's what I call a successful visit," he said, ruffling Rom's ears. "Now, how about I show you how to do the dishes."

By ArtisticRainey and Lillehafrue on September 23, 2007
