
Subject: Re: Another Really Rather Marvellous Chapter...

Posted by [Tikatu](#) on Thu, 19 Jul 2012 05:32:05 GMT

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Dominic yawned and ran his fingers through his hair as he pulled himself up into a sitting position and sighed, though stifled the noise when he remembered that he wasn't the only one in the room. He had been sleeping on one of the couches of the small lounge/kitchenette; Luke was curled up on one of the others, and Scott was spread-eagled on a third. Thankfully his snoring had abated eventually. It had taken a lot of self-control not to smother him. Rommel sat up and watched as Dom rose to his feet, and trotted along after him as the young man wandered over to the kitchen area. Dom eyed him warily, but forced himself to relax. It's just a dog, he thought. It's also a very well trained dog. It is not going to bite you, unless Luke tells it to, and Luke wouldn't do that, not even as a joke. Rom let his tongue loll out of the side of his mouth, and Dom very slowly and carefully reached out a hand to pet the top of the dog's head.

"I need to get used to you, mutt," he said quietly. "If it's a case of me or the dog, I know Luke would choose you."

Rom's fur was very soft, and Dom even went as far as to scratch behind the dog's ears. That action was met with approval. Dom nodded, feeling as if he had accomplished something great. Rom sat back down and watched as Dominic went about his business once more.

The lounge/kitchenette was a functional if sparse area with the basics of living. There was a stack of MREs (though none vegetarian, much to the annoyance of Dom's growling stomach), long life milk, dried snacks and of course, coffee (even if it was instant) and various other accoutrements in the cupboards, as well as a stove and several basic sofas, chairs and a dining table. It looked a lot like the student apartments Dominic had frequented in his university days, though he himself had never been able to move away from home. His mother's condition had prevented that completely. The Irishman idly pulled open the cupboards, yawning again, and grabbed a jar of coffee and an unopened carton of milk. With his eyes barely opened, he filled the kettle with water and leaned against the counter as he waited for it to boil. His eyes slid closed again. He had not slept very well.

The beds, like the rest of the accommodation, were basic and clearly not meant for a stay of more than one night. Though as far as Dom was concerned, those who had claimed a bed were the lucky ones. There were six crew members and only four beds (as Virgil had said, the place was not designed for a larger group; when it had been furnished, none of the additional IR crewmembers, not even Dianne, had been taken on). Dom had sniggered a little into his hand. The lack of a woman's touch was very obvious. There were two rooms with two beds in each of them, so the ladies had been unceremoniously forced to take one room. The men drew straws for the other beds; Virgil and Brains had come out as the winners in that situation. Dom had flushed when he realised both he and Luke would be sleeping together -- not together! Don't think about it that way! -- in the lounge. He had hoped no one had seen, though Dianne's hawk eyes had picked up on it. One of her eyebrows had nearly disappeared into her hair line. Luke, for his part, was completely at ease, though he was concerned that Dom wouldn't like sleeping in the same room as the dog. Dom had brushed the concern off, not wanting to appear weak in front of the others. It had unsettled him a little, but he had been so tired that as soon as he lay down on the sofa he was out cold, and Scott's snoring hadn't bothered him. Much.

When he had woken, he felt a little pang of guilt at how he had been more concerned about a dog sleeping in the same room as him than he had been about being away from his son for the night. He knew, however, that Joshua would no doubt treat the whole thing like a game, and would probably even relish the idea of getting to sleep in a different place. The little boy had been pining since the Crenshaws had left, taking his only playmate Lea away with them. Cherie, bless her heart, seemed to have picked up on it, and was trying to include Joshua as much as possible when she was spending time with her biological brothers -- much to their chagrin.

Dom started suddenly and grabbed onto the side of the counter as he was torn from his sleepy reverie by a new voice in the room.

"You're cute when you're tired."

Luke grinned at him, and Dom frowned, flexing his fingers against the sideboard.

"You nearly gave me a heart attack!" he said.

Luke reigned in his grin and held up his hands.

"I'm sorry," he said. "I didn't think you'd react that sharply."

Dom calmed his heaving chest and waved the apology off. He glanced over at the couches to see if Scott had arisen too; he hadn't.

"No, I'm sorry," he said. "I didn't mean to snap." He turned around as the kettle boiled and picked up the jar and the milk. "Coffee?"

"Please," Luke said.

Dom went about making the drinks and stirred the milk in with a little more force than was strictly necessary. He felt that he should really be saying something, but couldn't think of the words. God, you're like a love-struck teenager, he thought.

Thankfully, within the next few minutes the rest of the crew trundled in, as if the smell of the mediocre coffee was some kind of kiss of life. They had a light breakfast and Dianne called in to see if it was safe to return. They were given the go-ahead, and there was a communal sigh of relief.

"I will not miss those beds," Elise said. "Who on earth picked them? It was like lying on rocks!"

"Agreed," Dianne said. "I may need to have a talk with a certain Mr Tracy about doing some upgrades out here."

"Right. Man, my back is killing me," Elise said.

Virgil looked as though he was about to say something, but Luke hadn't noticed and cut in.

"You could have come out and slept on the couch with me," he said playfully. "It would probably have been more comfortable!"

Elise chuckled and set down her coffee mug.

"You're probably right."

At that point Virgil got up from the table and thumped his mug on the counter before pulling open the dishwasher. Dianne shared a confused look with Dominic, who simply shrugged. Who knew? Dom stood and went over to the kitchen area. He was reaching down to stow his own mug in the dishwasher when Virgil spun around and knocked the other man over. Virgil was significantly heavier and more solid than the thin Irishman, and Dominic yelped as he toppled to the side. The last thing he felt was the side of the counter cracking into his temple.

Dianne wrenched her neck around to see what the commotion was about as she heard her nurse yelp, followed by a rather nasty crack and a crash.

"Oh, God!"

She watched as Virgil knelt down and hovered over the unconscious man, and immediately Dianne was on her feet and over beside them, with Scott at her heels.

"What happened?" she asked. She was about to call for her medical bag when it was immediately deposited in her hands by a terrified-looking Luke.

"I turned around and knocked him over," Virgil said. "I didn't mean to. God, there's so much blood!"

Dianne motioned for Scott and Elise to attend to Virgil, who was clearly not shocked by the injury but more that he had caused it. Elise gently pulled him up by the elbow and patted his arm.

"It was an accident," she said.

Dianne opened her bag and pulled out her little torch. She opened Dom's eyelids, shined the light in them and frowned. His pupils were unequal. As she let go of his second eyelid the man began to stir and she felt a little relieved. Dom opened his eyes and closed them several times, and Dianne placed a hand on his shoulder. Luke was rustling through the medical bag for dressings and had begun to staunch the bleeding.

"Dominic, can you hear me?" Dianne asked. "Mistah Kelly, you know Ah do not like to be ignoah'd!"

"Nuuuuuurgh," Dom muttered, and finally managed to open his eyes and keep them opened. "What the... Yes, I can hear you. Why are you yelling at me? Did I do something wrong?"

"No," Dianne said, patting his shoulder. "You just had a little accident, that's all."

"Oh, God, that's embarrassing," Dom mumbled. "Did Luke see? I really hope he didn't."

"I'm right here, buddy," Luke said. He placed his own larger hand on Dom's other shoulder and smiled. "And don't worry. I've seen you do much more embarrassing stuff -- Dorothy."

Dom chuckled but immediately winced and cried out a little.

"Calm down," Dianne said softly. "You'll be all right. Just a little concussion is all. We're heading back to the island now."

She shared a reassuring glance with Luke, who seemed to be inordinately concerned, and several pieces of a puzzle she didn't know she had been assembling finally clicked together. She had to bite her tongue to stop her utterance of, 'Ooooh, now I get it,' and instead took over mopping up the blood at the nurse's temple, and gave Luke another reassuring smile.

Concussion! by ArtisticRainey
