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Subject: Re: Regaining Momentum

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Tue, 24 Jul 2012 00:31:03 GMT

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Thursday, October 4, 2068, 11 a.m., Tracy Island

"Everyone ready back there?" Dianne's voice filtered into the passenger cabin. She was sitting up front with Anna for first leg of the day's journey.

"We're okay!" Cherie called back. She grinned at Cassie, who sat in one of Tracy One's luxurious seats. "This is gonna be fun!"

Tracy One lifted off the runway smoothly, climbing quickly into the warm spring sky. Dianne leveled off at a good cruising altitude for the jet, and turned to Anna.

"Sorry we're leaving so early, Anna, but I've got a couple of errands to run before Cherie's class and no time to waste."

"That's all right," Anna replied. "It doesn't make sense to send someone out to take me back just so I can sunbathe a little longer." She paused. "I talked to the people I needed to talk to." She glanced over at the pilot. "Do you think we can go through with what we talked about when I'm here next?"

Dianne took a deep breath and let it out slowly. "Yes. I think I'll be ready. I need to get back to work... all of my work."

"You need to take this at your own pace and not push yourself," Anna reminded her. "We'll see how things go next week. One step at a time."

"Right."

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Cassie glanced away from the window and over at her young companion. "So what kind of art class are you taking?" she asked wondering if Cherie was doing a general art class or one that specialized in something like painting or pottery.

"Oh, this is an advanced drawing from life class. Virgil's been teaching me a lot, and I've been practicing, but I could use a different perspective on drawing." Cherie smiled. "I've been having fun so far. Are you into art?"

"I like to appreciate what others have done. I used to visit the art museums in the city whenever I could find the time. However, I don't have any talent for it myself. My six-year-old nieces can draw better than I can. I was happy when I got to sixth grade and art class at school was no longer mandatory. Perhaps I could see some of your work sometime."

Cherie nodded. "How do you like living on the island so far?"

"It's different. Much quieter than what I'm used to. Never thought I'd say it, but I'm actually missing the sounds of cars and horns when I'm trying to fall asleep."

"You could get a recording of city sounds to play when you're feeling homesick."

Cassie laughed at Cherie's suggestion. "My brother actually offered to make a recording of New York City sounds for me if I ever felt like that."

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Within a half-hour they were setting down at the Lake Colonge Airport. Cherie helped Anna gather her things as they taxied to the small terminal.

"Have fun tonight, Cherie," Anna said as she left the plane. "I want to hear all about it next week."

"Yes, Mrs. Hanson," Cherie replied with a grin. "See you next Wednesday!"

"Cassie? Would you like to come sit in the cockpit with me?" Dianne called back.

"Sure," Cassie replied, excited at the chance to sit up front. She had caught a glimpse of the cockpit when she was on the plane before but had never actually been in the cockpit of a plane. She excused herself from Cherie's company and headed up front.

She sat down in the empty seat and looked over the controls in front of her. "I'm not sure I'll ever be able to learn what everything does."

Diane chuckled. "I'm sure it looks overwhelming now but once you start learning what everything is and what it does it won't seem so bad. I think Jeff is going to have Scott give you flying lessons."

Cassie nodded not sure how she felt about the idea. She couldn't shake the feeling that Scott still didn't want her here. Deciding to change the subject, She decided to ask the question that had been on her mind since meeting Anna Hanson before they boarded. "Is Mrs. Hanson a member of IR or just a family friend?"

"Mrs. Hanson works for us as our family counselor. She knows about IR as well. It's been helpful having her on board to help cope with personal issues that may pop up. She comes out to the island on a weekly basis."

Cassie found herself nodding again. She thought about her own sessions with Dr. Lindon. Talking with her had helped her sort out the turmoil of emotions following the loss of her son. There had also been job related issues that she had talked through with the department psychiatrist. She could see how the rescues that IR would be involved in could cause some issues that needed to be dealt with. It's good to know there's someone I could talk to if something goes wrong on a rescue, Cassie thought to herself.

"If you don't mind me asking, what do you need to visit Sydney for that couldn't be done in Christchurch?" Cassie asked, trying to make small talk.

Dianne put up a finger, indicating that Cassie should wait for a moment. She put a finger up to the headphones she was wearing, and pressed a button on the side. "TRAC-0001 to Lake Colenge Tower, requesting take off clearance."

"TRAC-0001, you are cleared for take-off on runway 2B."

"Roger that, Lake Colenge, and thanks."

"Roger, TRAC-0001. Fair skies to you."

Dianne guided the plane to the indicated runway, and lined it up with the guidelines. "You'd better put on those headphones," she suggested, indicating the pair that hung on the back of the co-pilot's chair.

Cassie nodded, and pulled the headphones around, sliding them down over her ears. She made sure her safety restraints were fastened. The noise of the jet's engines was muted, even as it went up in pitch. Dianne pressed the steering yoke forward and the plane moved down the runway, increasing in speed, until it finally left the ground and soared into the air once again. Once they were again at a safe cruising speed, Dianne turned to smile at Cassie.

"In answer to your question," Dianne said, her voice coming in through the headset Cassie was wearing, "I'm visiting a very special jeweler in Sydney. When my husband's helijet went down back in February, the hospital had to cut off his wedding ring. I promised him I'd get him a new one, and I'm going back to the same jeweler who made both of ours." She rubbed her own ringless finger with her thumb. "Our second anniversary is coming up; I wanted to give Jeff his ring then." She sighed. "My rings have gone missing, too. I wouldn't be surprised if Jeff's already made a trip out here himself."

"Oh, okay. I understand now." Cassie found herself thinking of her own ex-husband and wondering if Alex would have ever thought of doing something romantic like replacing her wedding band if it had ever been lost or damaged while on the job. She pursed her lips. "Will this trip still allow time for us to shop?"

"Sure! At the speed we're traveling, it'll only be an hour's flight. And it'll be two hours behind island time, so we'll get there a half-hour before we left!" Dianne chuckled, and Cassie joined in. "We can hit a few shops in Sydney, and be back just in time for Cherie's class. Then I can take you around a few stores in Christchurch while she's in class."

"Sounds like a plan," Cassie said, smiling.

In an hour, Dianne was requesting permission to land at Sydney's busy jetport. "Customs won't be a problem," she assured Cassie. "Just show them your ID and let them search your handbag. Since we'll have already paid the taxes and all, and aren't 'exporting' something large, like a car, we won't have trouble taking our things with us, either."

The three women climbed into the sleek, chauffeured sedan that waited at the hangar for them. "Wow! Must be nice to have a chauffeur wherever you go," Cassie remarked.

"We don't have chauffeurs everywhere," Cherie informed her. "Just in places where we're sort of expected to have them."

"And sometimes not even then," Dianne added. "In New York, we're more than likely to grab a cab as likely as not."

Cassie's face became thoughtful. "I had an interesting cabby when I came out to interview for the job. His name was Bernie..."

"Ah yes, Bernie." Dianne's eyes twinkled as she mentioned his name. "He's a keeper, that one."

Cassie looked startled and was about to ask a question when their chauffeur said, "Dr. Tracy. We've arrived."

"Thank you, Estelle," Dianne said graciously. "Well, girls. Let's go!"

As Estelle opened the door, the three of them got out of the car and stepped onto the sidewalk. Cassie looked at her surroundings. Sydney was different from New York but there were still those aspects familiar to all cities. They were surrounded by buildings, some taller than others. People walked the sidewalks, going about their daily activities. On the street, vehicles rolled by on their way to whatever destination the occupants needed to get to.

Definitely not New York, but it seems more like home than the island does, Cassie thought to herself as she took in the sights and sounds of the city. I'd love to explore this place sometime. Maybe check out the Museum of Contemporary Art or even catch a performance of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

A doorman stood ready to do his job, and tipped his hat as the three women entered. An understated brass plate on the outer wall said, "J. R. Symmes, Custom Jewelry Design". As they stepped inside, Cherie looked around with wide-eyed amazement at the ornate furnishings. She'd never been to this place before.

"Dr. Tracy." Alicia rose from behind her receptionist's desk and approached. "Very good to see you again."

"Thank you, Alicia. This is my daughter, Cherie, and a... friend, Cassandra Kishi." Dianne indicated each of her companions.

"Nice to meet you both," Alicia said. Then she paused. "Cherie... are you the one who has the charm bracelet?"

The girl looked startled. "Yes. Yes, I am. My brother, Scott, gets me new charms every year." She looked a bit sheepish. "I normally wear it, but I have art class today, and sometimes it gets in the way of drawing." She cocked her head to one side. "Does he get the charms here?"

Alicia smiled widely. "He does. They are custom made."

"Ooh." Cherie's eyes went wide. "I didn't know."

"Now that you do, does it mean you'll wear the bracelet more often?" Dianne said as she guided her daughter over to a chair. Cassie had already sat down, and they sat near her.

"I'll try."

In the meanwhile, Alicia was on the phone. She glanced up at the little party, then down at her desk, and frowned. "All right, I'll tell her." Looking up again, she said, "There's an appointment before yours, Dr. Tracy, but it seems that Mrs. Chauvelin is late. Mr. Symmes says he'll see you now."

"Thank you, Alicia." Dianne rose gracefully from her chair, and followed the receptionist back.

As Dianne disappeared to the back of the store, Cassie continued to look around the room. She had never been in such a fancy store before, though she had glanced in the windows of some of the fancy ones in New York. She never had a reason to go in though, as everything in them was well above her price range. Besides, she wasn't a huge fan of jewelry anyways. As Cherie had said about her charm bracelet, Cassie had found that it tended to get in the way. Not to mention that jewelry, other than wedding bands, had been against the dress code for the fire department.

Not sure how long Dianne would be with Mr. Symmes, Cassie decided to start a conversation with her young companion.

In Julian Symmes's studio, the slight, dapper jeweler came forward to shake Dianne's hand. "Dr. Tracy! A pleasure to see you again!" He looked her up and down with a shrewd eye. "You're looking well."

His comment and searching inspection made her raise an eyebrow. "Thank you, Mr. Symmes. You may have heard something about an accident..."

"An accident?" Julian sounded surprised. "What kind of accident?"

If you want to play innocent, I won't stop you, but I'm sure Jeff's been here. Dianne smiled. "I was in an auto accident back in the States. But I'm well again now. Do you have my order ready?"

"Yes, yes, I do!" He moved over to a safe, and put his hand up to a scanner, then tapped in a code. When the safe opened, he pulled out a small velvet box. "It sounds like both you and Mr. Tracy have had a rough year." He brought the box to her, and opened it, then handed it over. "What do you think?"

She slipped the silvery band from its cushion and examined it. "It's perfect!" she exclaimed. She read the inscription. "Yes, that's exactly it. Different from the first one, but far more appropriate now." She handed it back to him, and he polished it slightly with a chamois before putting it back into the box.

"I'm so glad you like it!" Symmes said. "I'll have Shang gift box it, if that's all right."

"Yes, please."

Symmes called for his assistant, Shang, who took the velvet box, and put it in a larger gift box, then wrapped it in gold paper with a red ribbon.

"Now, what about this other commission?" Julian asked.

"Ah, yes." Dianne reached into her purse, and pulled out a small envelope. Opening it, she dumped its contents into her palm. A silvery ring, cut and warped, sat there. "This is the ring they cut from Jeff's finger after his accident. I... I don't know what to do with it, but I think something should be done. Something different."

She handed it to him and he gazed at it long and hard. "Hmm." He nodded. "Your husband's not one for wearing necklaces, is he?"

Dianne shook her head. "No, he isn't. Though if it's precious enough... he might be persuaded. He did wear dog tags at one point."

"Yes. I can see a few possibilities." Symmes looked up at her with a smile. "I'll come up with some designs and email them to you."

"Thank you so much, Mr. Symmes." Dianne smiled back gratefully.

"Please, call me Julian."

"Excuse me, Mr. Symmes." Alicia slipped into the room. "Mrs. Chauvelin has arrived and..."

"And is being her obnoxious self." Julian shook his head. "Please, tell her I will be with her in a moment."

"Yes, sir." Alicia nodded and went back to the reception area.

Dianne had her phone out and was calling Estelle. "My car will be out front in a few moments."

"I'm sorry, Dr. Tracy." He suddenly chuckled. "I just remembered..." His voice trailed off as he realized he was about to tell her about Jeff's earlier visit. "Ah, it's nothing." He offered his hand. "I will send those designs within the next two weeks."

"I'll be looking for them." Dianne took his hand and shook it. "Thank you so much." She took the handled shopping bag that Shang held out.

He walked her out to the reception area. "I'll be in touch. Have a good day, Dr. Tracy."

"You, too, Mr. Symmes."

A cross-looking red-haired woman looked up. "It's about time!" she snapped. "I had an appointment."

Dianne raised her chin, looking down regally at Mrs. Chauvelin. "Perhaps next time, ma'am, you'll show up when yoah expected. Mr. Symmes's time is very valuable," she drawled. Striding into the reception area, she motioned to Cherie and Cassie. "C'mon, gals. We've got shoppin' to do!"

--Sydney side trip by Tikatu and starrynebula on October 15, 2007

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