

Wednesday, March 7, 2068; Thunderbird Five; 2:20 p.m.

Callie was checking transmissions when she heard John calling. "Yes, John?"

John motioned her over from where she stood and when she reached him, he sat her down at a computer station. "Now, down at base, everyone is working on doing maintenance on the various Thunderbirds which were used during the rescue yesterday, getting them ready for the next go-round.

"We have a similar task to perform. I'm going to show you the major systems that we need to check. Some we check on a daily basis, some on a weekly, and others once a month. Then when we're through running diagnostics and checking the systems, I'll show you how to create and store a rescue log."

Callie stood up and said, "Okay, John." She looked at all the systems and said, "Um, where do we start?"

"Sit down again, Callie," John replied with a smile. "We can do most of it right here from the computer."

He reached over and logged himself out. "First, let's get you set up in here with a user name and password. Then I'll show you how to run the diagnostics on our most basic systems: power, life support, and artificial gravity."

After he set up the screen for a new user, Callie typed away at the keyboard. "I'll use clspencer to log in. Now what's a good password--I've got it!" She typed up four letters and pressed the enter key. "That should do it."

John smiled. "Now that you're logged in, you can see I've set up folders for the different tasks. Dailies, rotating, weekly, and monthly. The monthly checks are done before you leave the station, so you know that you're leaving Thunderbird Five in the best state possible, and so that if parts are needed to make repairs and they aren't aboard, they can come up with Thunderbird Three."

"The rotating checks are done on a daily basis, but only one system is done per day. This pertains to our actual communications equipment. We'll take one bank down at a time and look it over, doing one bank per day."

Callie clicked on the folder marked "Daily" and opened the file. "I just start with this first file, right?"

"Right. That will run the diagnostic on the power systems. It takes a while, but it's the most important system, so we do that first. If there's a problem with another system, then we'll know it's not the power grid."

"Go ahead and start the diagnostic and I'll show you the logs while it's running," John instructed.

Callie double-clicked on the file and started the diagnostic program.

"Good. Now, during a rescue, we get everything. All the talkback, all the communications. It's our job to catalog it into print form for our records and then download a copy to base. Believe it or not, it's easier to thumb through a paper copy than to scroll through a print file or listen to all the talkback.

"What we'll do is identify the speakers and report the action as told during the debriefing." John grimaced. "It's not easy and I usually wait until the wee hours to do it, but this is as good an opportunity as any to teach you."

"How long does it take to go through all the paperwork during a rescue?"

"Most of this stuff is on disk or is uploaded to us from base, or from Mobile Control, for example. We get to put it all together since we 'see all, know all' so to speak."

"As a result," said Callie, "we have to go line-by-line on the disk, and we also have to listen to all the audio. No wonder you said this wasn't easy. It sounds like a busy day at a hard-running radio station."

John laughed. "It's even more than that, Callie. We're an emergency services dispatcher as well."

"I don't see how you can handle doing this day in and day out. But, I need to get used to this; I'll have to do this on my own before too long."

"Very true, Callie." John looked over all the information files that were lined up in the upload queue. "Looks like we're waiting on an upload from Mobile Control. I suppose I'd better... oh, wait. There it is."

Callie noticed how quick the upload was. "So, this is where we start the tedious task, huh?"

"Right." John sighed. "Thunderbird Five may be the strongest link in International Rescue's chain of activities, but the work here can be boring... and sometimes lonely." He looked down at her, his blue eyes looking old and weary. "That's something else you'll eventually get used to, Callie."

Callie smiled with understanding in her eyes. "Hey, there were times I felt lonely working at the International Space Station. Some of the work I had was pretty routine and boring, too. What kept me going was the fact I was helping the people on the ground."

"That's what makes it all worthwhile, Callie. And now that you're here, things will be easier for all of us," John replied, smiling again. "Now, let me pull up an old log and you can see the format we use...." And he did, giving Callie her first lessons on keeping Thunderbird Five spaceworthy and inhabitable while teaching her how important the satellite was to the whole operation.

Post by TracyFan4Ever and Tikatu on 01/09/2004
