

Wednesday, March 7, 5 p.m., Mt. Sinai Hospital, New York

Dianne gazed out the window of Jeff's hospital room, watching the sun begin to set. It was already behind the building across from her, but the sunset colors still lingered in the sky, punctuated by ripples of clouds that reflected the colors. Her mind was thousands of miles away, wondering what everyone was doing back at the Villa, trying to make plans on how to get Jeff around when they got back home. There were a million different things to deal with, and how many would fall to her? She turned as Jeff's bed was wheeled back into the room, and went to join him as the surgeon addressed them both.

"I have good news for you, Mr. Tracy, Dr. Tracy. The imaging showed us that the vertebra is fused and nearly healed. The arm and the leg are progressing very nicely and casts should come off in about a week, I think. The foot? Well, that's going to take some more time. Things are going as well as can be expected there but the internal swelling has gone down, which is a good sign." He smiled at them both. "I think, that barring any unforeseen circumstances, and knowing that you will be in the care of your family physician 24/7 when you return home, we can probably release you from the hospital this weekend."

Jeff and Dianne both gasped and turned to each other, a smile of delight on each face.

"This weekend? So soon?" Jeff asked, not daring to believe.

"Yes, Mr. Tracy. Saturday or Sunday, provided everything continues in this same direction," the surgeon said. He wagged a pen at them. "You realize that you would normally be going to a rehabilitation hospital from here. But as I said, you live with your doctor and I'm sure she'll be able to monitor your progress and make sure you do your physical therapy and all."

"Oh, he'll follow doctor's orders," Dianne said with a raised eyebrow and a sly smile, "or else."

"Ah, I don't think I'm going to ask what that 'or else' will entail," the surgeon quipped.

"Will I be okay to travel?" Jeff asked, thinking suddenly that being released from the hospital might mean being released to the penthouse.

"Yes, if you use a wheelchair and rest when your body tells you to. I know that your home is not in New York and that you'd have to travel to get there," the doctor said. "Go ahead and make your travel arrangements. I don't foresee any complications."

Jeff smiled, relieved. The penthouse was nice, and better than a hospital room, but it wasn't home.

"Thank you, doctor, for such good news. Now I have something to work for," Jeff said. He held out his hand and the doctor shook it, and then left the two of them alone.

"Home this weekend! Oh, how I've waited to hear that!" Dianne said with relief. She sat on the edge of Jeff's bed and leaned over to kiss him. "Should I call home and let them know the good news?"

"It can wait a bit. When you go back to the penthouse for the evening." Jeff used his right leg and right arm to push himself over on the bed, making room for Dianne, who climbed up to sit beside him. He took her hand in his and leaned over to kiss her head. "Right now, I just want to feel you beside me."

Dianne smiled softly and leaned her head on his shoulder, basking in his love and closeness, thankful just that he was there.

Post by Tikatu on 15/09/2004

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