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Subject: Re: Cold Front

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Wed, 25 Jul 2012 20:59:03 GMT

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Sunday, November 4, noon; Tracy Island

Brandon was calculating the time difference between the island and San Diego for the fourth time when his phone rang. He saw who was calling, and answered, saying, "Hi, Sis. I was gonna call you, but it's too early. I'm glad you emailed me. . ."

"Brandon."

"... reminding me that Daylight Savings Time started this morning. I've been..."

"Brandon!"

"...calculating over and over to make sure I get it right. But you beat me to the punch. Didn't you..."

"Brandon!"

"What?" He suddenly realized that Shannon sounded upset. "What's wrong?"

"It's Mom. I had to go to the store. I wasn't gone for more than half an hour, but Dad fell, attempting to stand on his own. She tried to help him up, but she's so frail."

He heard the catch in her voice. "She's not..." He couldn't go on.

"No. She's alive. But she's in the hospital again. She had a heart attack, then, in the ambulance, she also had a stroke. It wasn't a severe one, thank God. The doctors say she'll recover, but not fully."

He couldn't say a word. He knew what was coming next, but he couldn't bring himself to say what he knew his sister wanted to hear. But as the silence lengthened, he finally found himself able to speak. "How's Dad?"

"He's at home with a nurse there. He's really broken up about this, and feeling guilty for allowing her to try to help him. Brandon..."

"I know, Sis. It'll be all right."

"Brandon, please. I need you. We need you. Here."

"I know. I just kept hoping... Well, there's no point indulging in wishful thinking. I guess this time it's gonna have to be permanent."

"I'm sorry, bro. I know how much you love your job. But I can't handle this myself any longer. Please come home."

He sighed. "I'll have to talk to my supervisor, first. There's a lot to arrange. I'll call you back in the afternoon on your cell phone, and let you know the what, when, and how."

There was a long pause. "Okay, Brandon. Somehow, I was wishing you could instantly come, that you'd be here in five minutes. But that can't happen, even if you could leave this minute."

"I'm sorry you have to bear all this alone right now. But I'll come home as soon as possible. Hang in there, Sis."

"I will, but the sooner you get here, the better."

"I'll talk to you later. Bye."

"Bye, Brandon."

He hung up, then sat with his head in his hands for several minutes. Damn! Just when everything's going okay, this happens. Why me? Why them? It's not fair!

Finally he called the Villa, and asked Jeff if he could come over and talk to him right away. He got an affirmative answer, and left his apartment, taking the monorail to the main house. When he got there, Kyrano was waiting for him. "Mr. Tracy is waiting for you in the lounge. Dr. Tracy is with him."

"Thank you, Kyrano." Brandon headed quickly up to the familiar room. As he walked in, Jeff looked up at him.

"Hello, Brandon. What can I do for you?" The smile on his face faded when he saw the expression on Brandon's. "What's the matter?"

"My sister, Shannon, called me. My mother's back in the hospital. She had a heart attack, trying to help my dad when he fell. On the way to the hospital, she also had a stroke."

"Oh no!" Brandon turned to see Dianne get up from where she was sitting and walk over to him. She put a hand on his arm. "How serious is it?"

"It wasn't a severe stroke. My sister says she was told Mom'll recover, but not fully." He paused, hating what he had to say next. "She also said she needs me to come home. Permanently." He sighed. "So I'm -- reluctantly -- tendering my resignation, effective immediately."

"I'm sorry to hear that. But, of course, your family needs you there. Please sit down." As Brandon obeyed, Jeff turned to his computer and Dianne moved around the desk to see what he was doing. A few minutes later, they looked at each other. Dianne smiled and nodded at her husband, then went back over to where Brandon was sitting.

"Brandon, I accept your resignation, on one condition. I want you to return to your old job at Tracy Industries. Do you think that will be acceptable to your family?"

The look on the young man's face went from sadness, to stunned, to joy. "If I can't work here any

more, that's the only other thing I'd want to do, sir. I don't deserve it, though."

"Let me be the judge of that, young man. You'll do what you were doing before you joined International Rescue. In addition, should we come up with a new model of any kind of aquatic vehicle in the future that we can use in rescues, you'll be the one to test it, since you'd already know what we'd be looking for."

Brandon stood up and walked to the desk, hand held out to Jeff. "Thank you, sir. I accept."

Jeff shook his hand, then said, "Well then, what's needed is to get you packed and home again. Do you think you could be ready by tomorrow morning? I suspect your sister wants you there yesterday."

"Oh yeah. Too bad I couldn't transport myself there, like they did in those old Star Trek shows and movies." He grinned slightly.

There were chuckles from the others, then Jeff said, "Okay. I'll have a flight plan filed. And I think I'll have Alan go with you. You'll stop in Honolulu to refuel, then fly straight to San Diego. I'll let you know about times later, so you can tell your sister."

"Thank you, again. I'd better get back to my apartment and start packing my things."

"I'll talk to Kyrano and have him scrounge up some boxes for you. We'll bring them over later."

"Thank you, Doc. I'll appreciate that." Brandon headed out of the lounge and back to the monorail.

As he walked into the common area, Callie stepped out of the elevator. "Hi, Brandon. What's up?"

His face saddened. "I have to leave, Callie."

"Leave? Where are you going?"

"Home. I got a call from Shannon. My mom's had a heart attack and a stroke."

"Oh, that's terrible. Is she going to be okay?"

"They say she'll recover, but not fully. I have to go help."

"How long do you think you'll be gone?"

Brandon grew sadder. "Permanently, I'm sad to say. And I'm going to miss you all."

"Oh no! We'll miss you too. When are you leaving?"

"Tomorrow."

"Tomorrow!? Can you be all packed and ready by then?"

"If I have to stay up all night, I will be."

"No; you won't have to do that. I'm gonna go back into my apartment and make a couple of calls. Then I'll come help you. And I think I won't be the only one."

Gratitude swept through Brandon, and he reached out and hugged Callie. "You're a good friend. Thank you."

She returned the hug, then disengaged and gave him a gentle push toward the elevator. "Go on, now. I'll join you, soon."

She headed back into her apartment, and he headed up to his. Another chapter in his life was ending, and a new one was about to begin.

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