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Subject: Re: Cold Front

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Wed, 25 Jul 2012 21:31:41 GMT

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Thursday, November 15, 2068, 12:45 p.m., Tracy Island

"Dad?"

Jeff, who looked preoccupied, glanced up. "Yes, Alex?"

"Where's Mom?"

"Here I am," Dianne said as she hurried into the dining room. Virgil followed close on her heels. She frowned a bit as she saw the empty plates. "You didn't have to wait on lunch for me and Virgil."

Jeff took her hand and kissed it as she sat down. "I wanted you here before we told everyone what happened."

"Did something important happen, Dad?" Alan asked, a perplexed look on his face.

"Whatever it is, it sounds serious." Gordon sat forward so he could see his father.

"It is." Jeff motioned toward his oldest son. "Scott, tell them about the call."

Scott put down his water and took a deep breath. "A couple of hours ago I got a call from Roger Morel, Luke Morel's brother. There... was an accident while they were out hunting. Luke was shot..."

There were gasps around the table. "Shot!" Emily exclaimed, a wide-eyed look of horror on her face. "How is he?"

"He's alive," Jeff said, putting up his hands for quiet. "According to what we've been able to learn, he's in surgery to repair his lung."

"The bullet ricocheted around a bit, landing near his heart," Dianne took up the explanation. "Even nowadays, getting a bullet out of such a sensitive area is still a very tricky thing. He'll have a lengthy hospital stay and it will take time to recover."

"But he's not dead?" Tyler's voice quavered a little.

Dianne gave him a soft smile. "No, Ty, he's not dead. He's going to live. But he won't be back for a while."

"What will happen to Rom?" Alex asked, his face showing his distress.

Jeff and Dianne both exchanged glances with Scott, who shrugged. "I don't know, Alex. I suppose Luke's family will take care of Rommel."

"We'll ask next time we call," Dianne assured her son.

"Hey, Virge?" Alan asked, as the food began to be passed around. "Where were you? You're not usually late for lunch."

Suddenly put on the spot, Virgil started. "Oh, ah," he stammered. "I... I was over at Elise's. She and Luke were close... she thinks of him as family. I thought she should know... privately."

Scott raised an eyebrow at this, but gave Alan a quick dig in the ribs before the younger man could say anything stupid. Alan glared back, but kept his mouth shut.

"Do the other recruits know?" Anna asked.

"Cassie does," Dianne said, taking a sip of her iced tea. "She and Luke were such good friends, we thought it would be wise to give her the news personally."

"I'm going to call a quick meeting with the rest once lunch is through." Jeff took a bite of chicken from his salad and chewed. When he'd swallowed the bite, he sighed. "You may want to be on hand for that, Anna; let people know you're available."

"I will," Anna said, nodding.

Tin-Tin, looking troubled, suddenly asked, "Should someone tell Lena? After all, he helped her out during that plane crash..."

"Of course, we should," Emily said briskly.

"Would you please do that for me, Tin-Tin?" Jeff asked.

"Yes, Mr. Tracy," Tin-Tin replied. "Of course. Right after lunch."

"Or as soon as the time zones are favorable," Brains added.

Jenny, who was taking an empty bread tray back to the kitchen, stopped Lisa as the older woman was on her way out to the dining room. "Excuse me for asking, but who is Luke?"

Lisa smiled softly. "Luke is one of our newer recruits. He was a forest ranger before he joined us, and has a rescue dog named Rommel. Very nice young man."

"Oh," Jenny said, nodding. "Thanks for telling me."

The rest of the meal was quiet, and Jeff was again preoccupied, thinking of how to break the news to the rest of the team. He finally had it in his head when he glanced down the table and remembered that one son was missing. Sighing, he shook his head.

"Scott, when lunch is over, will you please tell John about Luke. He should know sooner, not later."

"Sure, Dad, I'll call him and let him know."

Jeff gave Scott a half-smile and blew out a breath. "Well, I'd better call that meeting." He glanced at each of his older sons. "Scott, Virgil, Gordon, Alan?" When he had their attention, he continued. "This will be a blow to the team. Use your best judgment in dealing with any fallout when it comes to training sessions or craft maintenance." He paused. "However, the recommissioning of Thunderbird Seven will proceed as scheduled tomorrow, so keep that in mind." He caught Anna's eye. "Half an hour from now, on the Cliff House patio. Dianne can guide you there."

He stood, and after giving Dianne and Emily each a kiss on the cheek, left the room, ascending to the lounge. Sighing deeply, he put his headset in, and dialed an all-call on the wristcomm frequency. "To all new team members, please meet me on the Cliff House patio in twenty-five minutes. There's something important we need to discuss."

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