
Subject: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:04:31 GMT

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Jeff's recovery is complete, and for the Tracy family, life has settled back into a more-or-less familiar routine, with training the new recruits the only new addition to it. But for the newbies, life on a tropical paradise isn't all that it's cracked up to be. Each one has to learn to live within the confines of the island and to live side-by-side with people who, until a few months ago, were total strangers. They must continue to train and hone those skills that will make them even more a perfect fit for the IR team while learning how to deal with the various personalities that surround them and with the peculiar disadvantages of island living. All this while a faraway enemy continues to test the defenses that IR has thrown up around itself, preparing to strike a blow that may lay open the Tracy family's secret to them.

Post by Tikatue on 10/03/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:23:34 GMT

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Wednesday, March 6th 2068, 3:00am.

Elise sat in bed wide awake, her knees drawn up under her chin and her arms wrapped around them. It had happened again.

When will it stop?

She tried to close her eyes, but that only served to bring back the memories. The nightmare of her drowning, and of her parents and Jeff all dying, had been haunting her dreams. It was almost every night now that she'd wake in a sweat or crying; sometimes even calling out for people who were not there. Now, in her own apartment, she was alone with no one to comfort her. She stared off, not looking at anything in particular and wondering how much more she could take.

I can't go on like this indefinitely. I need some sleep.

She got off her bed and padded to the kitchen for a glass of water and then sat on her couch.

No use going back to bed. I'll never sleep.

She thought back to her earlier conversation on the balcony with Callie. They both had been relaxed and enjoying the evening. Elise had enjoyed Callie's company and had almost confided in her about the nightmares. But she hadn't. Feeling too silly, Elise had said nothing. She leaned over to the pile of manuals and such about flying, and in particular TB2. Virgil had given them to her for 'homework' as he'd called it. She absently turned the pages not really absorbing anything. She knew how to fly, but the simulator was a challenge, especially with Virgil being so picky! Yet Elise knew she could do it. The real question she feared the most was: "Could I fly it for real?" The thought of flying again made her feel uneasy and she didn't like it. Never had she feared being up

in the air, yet now, since the crash, she was almost terrified.

Elise had not told anyone of her fear, thinking that Mr. Tracy would send her packing, and she had no job or home to go back to on the mainland. She thought about going to talk to Dianne, but didn't want to admit being a failure. She sighed and told herself to Suck it up and move on! then started reading the manual... again.

7:45 am seems like noon when you've been up since 3:00 am, thought Elise as she headed down to Thunderbird Two's hangar.

Virgil, of course, was already there. He looked thoughtfully at her as she approached him.

"Reporting for duty, boss," she said as she came to a halt in front of him.

Now that she was closer, he could see how tired she looked. "Are you ok?" His voice showed concern.

"Yeah, I'm fine, just a little tired. Didn't sleep too well last night," she lied. Last night? I haven't slept peacefully for quite a few nights!

Virgil almost asked if it was a nightmare but the look on her face told him the subject was closed. "Okay, well, we need to get going on the simulator. Today we get to fly in adverse weather conditions." He smiled but paid very close attention to Elise's reaction.

Oh that's just great, she thought. It was going to be a very long day.

An hour and a half into the session, Elise was not doing well and Virgil knew it. He'd seen her make mistakes that were okay for a rookie, but not a pilot of her caliber.

"Let's take a break and I'll go get us some coffee."

She smiled her thanks to him and was relieved to get out of the simulator. Virgil watched her walk away, stretching her back out as she did so. Something's wrong. I just know it.

He ventured off to get coffee and find Scott. Scott was in TB One's silo working with Christopher.

"Hey, Scott, you got a sec?" Virgil called out to his brother, who in turn looked down and replied, "Sure, hang on, be right there."

Moments later Scott strode over to where Virgil waited.

"What's up?"

One word was all Virgil replied with. "Elise."

Scott momentarily looked down, then back up at his brother.

"C'mon Virg, spill it, what's wrong?"

Virgil then told Scott about the morning training, about the mistakes she'd made, and how tired she was.

"She's avoiding answering any questions about her being tired, Scott, and I'm sure she's having that nightmare again."

"Do you think it's PTSD?" Scott asked.

"Yes, I do. I'll know for sure when I get back. I'm going to simulate flying '2 through a snowstorm and her reaction will tell me all. If it's what we think it is, bro, she's going to need help, whether she wants it or not."

Scott nodded in agreement. "I know, Virg, I know," replied Scott, not exactly relishing the idea of telling Elise what they thought was wrong. He asked Virgil to call him later.

Scott finished up with Chris a little earlier so he could go and talk to Dianne. He knew all about flying, but about fixing the fear of it? Not his specialty, hence the talk with Dianne. He didn't want to tell his father, not yet anyway, but Dianne needed to know now.

Virgil had returned to the simulator to find Elise back in it, resting her head, eyes closed.

"Am I that boring?" he asked, handing her a cup of coffee.

Her eyes flew open. She hadn't realised she'd fallen asleep. "Oh, no, it's not you, I was just relaxing a bit. Thanks for this," she answered, holding up the coffee and sipping it.

A while later, Virgil set up the simulator for a severe snowstorm, then gave Elise the go ahead to fly. Placing the helmet which enabled her to visualize in 3-D and 180 degree peripheral vision, Elise proceeded to go through her flight checks and fire up the engines. The first part of the flight was encountering strong winds, then rain and storms. Virgil carefully monitored her timing and reactions. So far she was okay, but as the rain storm turned into a thunderstorm he noticed her uneasiness.

"You're doing good, Elise, keep focused." His voice rang in her helmet.

She felt her hands start to become clammy, and found herself taking deeper breaths. Virgil hadn't told her about the snowstorm, not because he wanted to be unfeeling, but he wanted to see her gut reactions to a sudden weather change without warning, which on occasion had happened.

"C'mon, girl, you can do this. It's just rain, for Pete's sake." Elise was talking herself through the flight.

Handling TB2 wasn't the problem, it was her own mind that was causing the problem. Suddenly the wind strength increased, causing a wind shear which rocked TB2. Elise reacted appropriately and maneuvered the machine to stay on course. Virgil was impressed, she was doing everything she should, but then he hadn't programmed the snow until now. His fingers typed in the codes and he sat back to watch. Elise paid close attention to every instrument on the control panel and then

she looked up and saw it in the distance.

Snow!

She squeezed her eyes tight two or three times, telling herself over and over that it was okay, TB2 was not the Tracy helijet. As she flew closer to the impending snowstorm, she noticed a mountain that hadn't been there before. In fact it reared up in front of her, causing her to make a violent move to the left. TB2 shook at the sudden change of flight pattern, and Elise fought to regain control.

Virgil could see on his panel screen exactly what the pilot in the simulator could see, and all he saw was a snowstorm and open land. There was no mountain, and he was puzzled as to why she veered off violently.

Inside the simulator, Elise was straining to control TB2. "Dammit! I can't get her nose up! We're going to hit!"

She looked up briefly and saw the snow covered mountain heading towards her rapidly. It was no use, she couldn't save the flight, and she slammed into the side of the mountain.

Virgil looked at his screen, stunned. What she'd actually done was rolled TB2 over to her side and nose dived straight into the ground. As soon as he'd heard the words "WE'RE going to hit!" he knew instantaneously she was talking about herself and his father. Elise was back in the helijet and reliving the crash.

He rushed over to the simulator where all kinds of alarms were going off and reached in to Elise. She had taken her helmet off and was leaning over the controls, visibly shaking.

"Elise?"

"I can't....I ca....I can't do this, I can't do this anymore," she answered, not looking at him.

He leaned in and softly touched her arm. "It's going to be okay, Elise. C'mon on out and take it easy, honey."

She accepted his offer of help out of the simulator and they went and sat down. "What the hell am I doing this for? I can't make it, What am I going to do?" she half sobbed as tears threatened to spill.

"It's a delayed reaction to the crash you and Dad had, Elise. It's not your fault."

She looked at him incredulously. "Virgil, I slammed TB2 into a MOUNTAIN! You saw me do it!"

He chose his next words carefully, seeing that she was totally convinced she'd hit a mountain.

"Elise, you didn't hit a mountain. You hit the ground." She continued to look at him like he'd grown another head that very second.

"There was no mountain, you rolled and dove into the ground. I think what you saw was a flashback and the seeming reality of it made you react the way you did." He paused for a moment then continued, "You've not been sleeping well have you?"

She shook her head in reply.

"Nightmares again?"

"Yes," she answered in a small voice.

"Elise?" This time she looked at him, as he reached over and placed his hand over hers, giving it a small squeeze.

"I think you may have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and what you're going through is a common reaction."

Elise was too shocked to say anything, so Virgil pressed on. "Why don't you go and talk to Dianne? I know she'd understand and we're all here to help, too."

She looked directly at him, not saying anything and then stood up.

"I need to get out of here. I need to be alone right now." She started to head off, shaking her head as if to try to fathom what Virgil had just said. She hadn't gotten far when Virgil trotted up and stood in front of her, causing her to stop.

"Elise, you are a great pilot, and if you need help with anything, we will be here for you. You're part of the family of International Rescue now, and that's what we do for each other."

"I've always been alone Virgil, I don't know if I can be part of a family anymore. I'm sorry." she quietly replied, and then sidestepped around him to head back to her apartment.

Virgil swore to himself and then raised his wrist to call Scott.

Post by FrankieCTB2 on 12/03/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:24:03 GMT
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Tracy Island, Friday 6th April 2068, 1.30pm

Kat sauntered into the lounge and hesitated when she saw Mr Tracy standing, albeit with the aid of crutches.

"Hello Kat, how are you?"

"Fine, thanks Mr Tracy," she answered, and then added, "it's good to see you without your plaster cast."

"Yes," Jeff agreed, "It is so much better not having that heavy cast on my foot."

"But," and he looked at her, "something tells me you want to ask me something?"

"Mr Tracy," Kat began, "I am beginning to run out of certain things, and wondered if you would allow some of us to fly to Christchurch for a shopping trip. I think that Dominic needs some purchases as well."

She stopped and looked at him.

"I can see no problem with that, Kat," Jeff answered, "maybe one of the boys can fly you over tomorrow."

"That would be absolutely great, thanks, Mr Tracy," Kat replied. "I'll just go and tell Dom before we have our lunch," and she left the room.

Jeff Tracy watched her go, and thought, not for the first time, that he had been extremely fortunate in his new recruits.

Kat found Dominic sitting in the sun on their balcony, a sleeping Joshua in his lap, curled up to his chest, with a children's soft toy clutched in one small hand.

"Dominic?" She said softly as she approached.

"Hey, Kat," he said with a smile, "what's up?"

"I was wondering, what with your decorating and all, if you wanted to go on a trip to the mainland? I've asked Mr Tracy, and he said he would ask one of the 'boys' to fly us out."

"Sounds great!" Dominic said. "I need to pick up a few things. But hey," he added, grinning, "I have my pilot's license, and so does Christopher. We could make it a 'newbies' trip."

Kat nodded.

"That's an idea. I'll talk to Mr Tracy again, and ask around to see if anyone else would like to go -- though I suppose numbers would have to be limited. We can't have everyone flying off at once!"

Dominic chuckled softly, and ran a hand over his son's downy blond hair.

"I guess you're right. Let me know how it goes, yeah?"

"Sure thing, Dom."

Nikki was sitting on her balcony, drying her hair. She looked up as Kat called her name.

"Nikki, Dom and I are considering going to the mainland to do some shopping. I have got Mr Tracy's permission, and Dom is prepared to fly us there. Would you like to come as well?"

"Gosh! Would I ever, yes please." Nikki replied enthusiastically. "I need some more personal items, plus I would like to see what's new, fashion-wise."

Kat grinned, "Oh, yes, I would like to see what is fashionable in New Zealand."

"I wonder who else would like to go with us?" Nikki said. "Obviously we can't all go."

"I think Callie would want to go, after all, she has been on Thunderbird Five for a month, and now just come back from a rescue. If I were her, I definitely would want to go." Kat replied.

Post by Tawnyangel2 and ArtisticRainey on 12/03/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:24:33 GMT

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Tracy Island, Saturday 7th April 2068, 9.00am

Nikki, Kat, Callie and Christopher met in the lounge.

"We are only waiting for Dom," Kat told them. Almost immediately Dom entered the lounge carrying a very excited Joshua.

The group headed for the hangar where the planes were kept. Christopher felt very proud, but a little nervous as well, as Mr Tracy had told them they could use Tracy 1.

Everyone eagerly climbed aboard. Nikki, Kat and Callie strapped themselves in. "Could you three watch Josh for me?" Dom asked. "I am going to co-pilot with Christopher."

"Sure, Dom, no problem." Callie answered for the three young women.

"I have a list for things to get for Elise and Brandon," Nikki said, taking out some sheets of paper.

"Tracy 1 to Tracy Island, permission to take off." Christopher tried to keep his voice sounding steady.

"Permission for Tracy 1 to take off." Jeff's calm voice came clearly over the intercom. "Take care and have a safe journey and a successful shopping trip."

Everyone settled down for the short flight to Christchurch. Joshua was being well entertained by

Nikki, Kat and Callie. Dom heard his childish squeals of laughter and smiled to himself. Oh yes, he and Josh had settled really well, and it was nice going out with just a few friends, maybe they could do this again.

Once Christopher was airborne, his nerves vanished and he felt really at home flying this wonderful machine. Oh yes, he really blessed the day that he had been approached by Jeff Tracy.

Nikki, Callie and Kat were eagerly discussing what the latest fashions would be. They fully intended to have some serious retail therapy, once the essentials had been bought.

Christopher handled the controls of Tracy One with deft hands, pride still lingering from the thought of flying the Tracy fleet's flagship. He was looking forward to a jaunt around Christchurch again; anything that could take his mind off the ruined meal was gratefully accepted.

Beside him, Dominic kept an eye on the controls and gauges, every once in a while glancing back to look at Joshua. Christopher shook his head very slightly; he couldn't even imagine having a child now, never mind when he was even younger. Dominic must have caught the subtle movement, and his gaze turned on the Brit.

"What's up?" He asked.

Christopher waved it off and grinned.

"I was just thinking how strange it would be to have a kid. That's not really the life I want right now."

Dominic chuckled and turned his eyes forward, sitting back in the chair.

"Wasn't exactly on the cards for me when it happened, believe me. But you get used to the, and then you suddenly realize that you would lay your life down for this little red, screaming ball of human." He shook his head. "Just you wait."

"Hopefully it'll be a long wait, mate."

The rest of the journey passed with idle chat, talking about home, and learning to fly, jobs, and seemingly every generic topic they could think of. It was an amiable time, indeed. Soon enough, it was time to request clearance for landing; it was given; and Tracy One had touched down, and its passengers got ready for their trip.

"Right," Callie said. "What does everyone want to do?"

"I need to purchase some rather personal items, plus I have to buy the things on Elise's list." Nikki added.

"I need to buy some essential items as well." Kat added. "What about you guys?"

"Well," Dom added shyly. "I want to buy something to decorate my apartment."

"I suggest we split into two groups, we will concentrate on buying for ourselves and Elise." Callie suggested. "While maybe you guys could get the things on Brandon's list?"

This was agreed on and Callie, Kat and Nikki headed for the shopping mall, whilst Christopher joined Dom and Joshua.

"I think that maybe we could all meet back here at the airport restaurant in, say three hours time, to have a meal before we head back for Tracy Island." Christopher suggested.

This was agreed and the two parties waved goodbye and went their separate ways.

Post by Tawnyangel22 and ArtisticRainey on 15/03/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:24:45 GMT

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Friday, April 6, 2068, 9:30 p.m., London, England

"How much longer?"

Desdemona Hightower looked up at her brother with irritation. "As I told you five minutes ago, I don't know. Now shut it and let me work." She turned back to her computer screen.

Giles smiled as he walked away from Desdemona's computer station. He sat down on one of the antique Queen Anne chairs that made up the decor of her large office and put his left ankle on his right knee. He did so love annoying his sister and after long practice knew just how far he could push her. Taking a sheet of paper from inside his suit coat, he unfolded it and began to read.

"Tch. Poor lamb."

Dez squelched the desire to roll her eyes, and asked, "What now?"

"Seems my Miss Kyrano has a local swain. He asked her to dinner at his place, wherever that might be. It was not a pretty sight. Disastrous, in fact. A cat was involved."

Dez smiled grimly. "You have competition? Why am I not surprised? What the girl sees in you, I do not know."

Giles didn't let his sister's gibe get to him. "My wit. My courtly manners. My affable good looks... the list goes on."

His sister snorted in disgust. "What are you going to do if this doesn't work, Giles? I understand that Tracy Industries has some of the best virus detection software in the business world; this

might get caught. How will you explain it to your little Miss Kyrano?"

"Oh, I will apologize profusely and tell her that I was the victim of a self-replicating virus that sent itself to her automatically. Then I will invite her to meet me on some neutral ground. I just have to decide where; she has been cagey about where she lives," Giles said, waving a flippant hand. Then his eyes narrowed and his voice became cold. "You're sure this won't be traced back any farther than my 'Giles Tallman' identity?"

"Yes, I'm sure," Desdemona said. She hit a key emphatically, sat back, and her shoulders slumped. "I think I have it. I will go over it again in the morning to see that it is complete. But for now, dear brother, I am through." She got up, unpinning her golden hair and fluffing it out. "Now, go away. I shall see you in the morning."

"Yes, my dear sister, you shall," Giles said with a speculative look and a lopsided grin. He slipped the folded paper back into his jacket and rose from the chair. As he passed his sister, he raised a hand to her cheek and let it slide off under her chin as he moved. "Say 'hallo' to Karen for me."

Dez scowled at him. He laughed unpleasantly and closed the office door behind him. "Someday, dear brother, you will go too far," she muttered. "But then, if you fail at this, Jacques will deal with you." She stretched, fluffing her hair out some more, then activated the vidphone. She smiled seductively and said, "Hello, luv. I am on my way. Have the bath ready for me, won't you, ducks?"

Post by Tikatue on 15/03/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:25:52 GMT

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Tracy Island, Saturday 7th April 2068, 1.00pm

Hours had passed by the time the two men and the baby had gotten everything on their lists, as well as Brandon's. Christopher had discovered that strollers were very useful for carrying wares; it was surprising how much stuff Dominic had managed to hang or stow on the small frame. In fact, all of their baggage was burdened by it, and as such, Christopher felt obliged to push the stroller for half the time.

They were on the outskirts of the main shopping area by now, and Dominic was buried in a map, trying to figure out how they could get to the DIY store a friendly New Zealander had recommended. Christopher wasn't entirely sure where they were, although he was fairly confident he could find the way back if he put his mind to it. The other man was murmuring to himself, engrossed in the map, and Christopher glanced down at his young charge. Joshua was playing with his favourite teddy, although to him it seemed less like playing and more like beating the stuffing out of the poor old thing.

Their pace was slow, and Christopher was glad to take in the urban air. It was nice to be off the island for a while in something other than a rescue situation. They rounded a corner just as Dominic muttered something like, "We're really in the wrong place, mate," when Christopher

caught a glimpse of exactly what they were looking for.

"Dom?" He asked.

No answer; more muttering.

"Dom?" It was louder this time.

"Hmm?" Dominic was still engrossed in his map.

"Look up."

He did, and a sheepish grin broke out across his face.

"Joyous rapture," Dominic said with mock reverence, but there was true glee in his grey eyes.

Before them loomed a huge warehouse, grey, silver and white, with large, luminescent green lettering above sliding glass doors, that read, 'DIY WORLD'.

"I'm sorry, Joshua," he said, "but I may have to forsake you for more space to carry my bounty."

Christopher snorted and shook his head; mad didn't quite cover it. The child merely continued to shake his teddy up and down and gurgle what to Christopher seemed like gibberish, but was apparently English.

"How long do we have left?" Dominic asked, folding the map back up -- slightly untidily, but oh well, he thought -- and stowing it in the stroller.

"We've to be back in about an hour and a quarter, and it'll take at least twenty-five minutes to get to the airport from here."

"All I need is half an hour," Dominic said with a wink, before setting off into the store with Christopher close behind.

Post by Tawnyangel22 and ArtisticRainey on 15/03/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:26:03 GMT
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Tracy Island, Saturday 7th April 2068, 2.30pm

Christopher, pushing a very crowded stroller, and Dominic carrying Joshua on his shoulders, entered the airport restaurant.

"Now, where are the girls?" Christopher murmured, looking around the crowded restaurant.

"Hi, guys, over here!" Callie called. Heads turned in the direction of her shout.

Joshua wriggled on his father's shoulders. "Okay, little guy," Dominic said as he stooped and placed his son on the ground.

Joshua toddled to the table where Nikki and Callie were seated, while the two young men followed.

"Where's Kat?" Christopher asked.

"Gone to the little girls room." Nikki giggled.

"So, then successful purchases?" Callie queried.

"Yes, thanks, and you?" Dominic replied nodding at the overburdened stroller.

Kat joined them. "Hi, guys, get all that you wanted?"

Christopher smiled at her. "Yes, I think you can safely say that it has been a very successful trip."

Callie laughed. "We did a fair amount of clothes shopping." It was only then that Christopher and Dominic noticed the amount of large bags, all bearing well known clothes shop names.

"Except that Kat had to shop in the children's department." Nikki said with a smile.

"I did not, well, not in every store." Kat retorted. "I just think that the sizing over here is so much different to ours at home."

"Well we all found some bargains, didn't we girls?" Callie looked at her two friends.

Nikki and Kat both nodded.

"Are we all ready to order then?" Christopher asked, as he lifted his hand to call a waitress over.

"I'll have a cheese omelette and salad." Kat said. Christopher chose steak and French fries, whilst Nikki and Callie both opted for lasagne, and Dominic chose a vegetable casserole. Joshua was served well by the surprisingly nutritious children's menu choices.

When their orders had been taken, Callie sat back and sighed.

"Boy, am I glad to be sitting down. Talk about power shopping, eh girls?" She winked at Nikki and Kat, who chuckled.

"Indeed," said Kat, "I managed to get everything I needed, and even a little more!"

Nikki eyed up the packed pushchair and cocked an eyebrow at the two men.

"It looks like you've got even more than us," she said, laughter in her voice.

Christopher shook his head and rolled his eyes at Dominic, who merely shrugged.

"What can I say? I needed a lot of decorating things. Paint, paper, paste, brushes... I could have bought more, but..."

"I didn't fancy having to push any more around," Christopher said. "It's bad enough you took the poor lad's pram away."

"He'll thank me for it when he's not looking at blank walls anymore, just you wait, Jordan."

"We'll see, Kelly."

Christopher winked at Dominic, who grinned back. The rest of their wait passed in friendly conversation, and soon enough, the food arrived. Everyone, famished from their long day of shopping, was very grateful.

Having thoroughly enjoyed their meal, it was soon time to head back to the plane.

"Hey, Dom," Christopher looked at Dom, shouldering Josh, who was looking distinctly sleepy. "Care to pilot the plane home?"

Dominic grinned and nodded. "Sure, if you don't mind."

The little group settled themselves back into Tracy 1, and once given clearance headed back to Tracy Island. Once they had unbuckled their safety belts, Joshua toddled towards Kat and climbed on to her knee, and resting his head against her shoulder, fell sound asleep. Kat placed her arms around him, and she too, fell asleep. Callie and Nikki chattered in low tones, about their purchases for a while, when they too succumbed and fell asleep.

Dominic noticing the silence behind, asked Christopher to check. Christopher returned smiling broadly.

"All four are fast asleep. You should see Joshua snuggling in Kat's arms. She seems to have a way with children," he told Dominic.

The flight was uneventful and in no time, Dominic was requesting permission to land back on Tracy Island. As he brought the plane down, the passengers began to rouse themselves. The landing was smooth, and Dominic grinned. Here's the end of a fun day out, he thought, and I'm very glad we did it.

Post by Tawnyangel22 and ArtisticRainey on 15/03/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:26:11 GMT

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Saturday, April 7, 2068, 10:30 a.m., London, England

"Here I am, sister dear," Giles called out cheerily as he entered Desdemona's office. "Are we ready to storm the castle?"

If looks could kill, Giles would be cold and lifeless on the floor with the glance that Dez gave him. "Yes," she said, her tone icy. "We are ready. I have an email prepared, one that will look like it came from you, but also can be attributed to a self-replicating virus. All I need from you is the email address."

"Ah, yes!" Giles said as he looked over her shoulder. "Now, tell me what this is supposed to do? Make her screen turn purple with a big clown face on it?"

"Giles! You know the plan. Don't act the idiot with me!" she shouted angrily, turning to him with fury on her face. She turned back to the screen. "It will slip past the Tracy Industries anti-virus detection and firewalls and record the keystrokes from your little girlfriend's computer."

"Is that all? How boring." He yawned, patting his open mouth.

She clenched her teeth and ground out, "The address. Now."

"Move over." He all but pushed her out of her chair and, with his long fingers poised over the keyboard as if playing a piano, he quickly typed in the address then hit "enter" with a flourish. "It is on its way."

"Good. Now get out of my office." Desdemona crossed to the door and opened it.

"Poor child," Giles tsked. "Things not go well with Karen last night?"

"OUT!"

Giles knew he was too near the edge. He left the office, wagging his fingers at his sister and making kissing motions with his lips. Desdemona gave a frustrated shriek, and slammed the door behind him. Taking a few deep breaths, she crossed to the antique desk that dominated the room and pulled out a bottle of spirits and a shot glass. She poured herself a shot, kicked it back, then followed that with another. When she was done, she picked up the phone and pressed a button.

"Jacques? It is done. Now we shall see where this girl has gotten the Penelon formula and maybe even find a back door into Tracy's domain."

Post by Tikatue on 16/03/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:26:27 GMT

Saturday, April 7, 2068; Silver Springs Maryland, 4 PM

Lena was relaxing with a book, when there was a knock on the door. She answered it to find a messenger with a package for her. She signed for it, and took it back to where she'd been sitting to open it. It was a PDA and there was a note with it, from Brains.

Lena,

I'm sure you must already have a PDA, but this is also a telecommunications device for whenever we need to get in touch with you (or vice-versa) outside of Tracy Industries business. Instructions for activation of that function are included with this note. Please keep it with you at all times.

Hiram Hackenbacker

PS. Please destroy this note. We don't want anyone finding it and getting suspicious, do we?

Lena chuckled when she read the PS, and turned to the instructions, which told her how to know when there was an incoming call, how to use that part of the PDA both as an A/V unit and for text messaging. She'd just finished familiarizing herself with the procedures, when she was startled to see a call coming in to the unit.

She touched the pad with the stylus, entering the code given her in the instructions, and Brains' face appeared on the screen. "Well, hello dere, Brains. Dis is quite a surprise."

"Hello, Lena. I take it you are alone?"

"Yes; I was just relaxing."

"Well, we make sure all of our agents have a secure way to communicate with International Rescue at all times. As you know, your office phone now has a secure line for that purpose, but there are times when you aren't near a phone or a computer. Various things have been used, that fit the lifestyles of those who use them. This seemed appropriate for you."

"It'll work just fine. My old one is just dat - old. Your timing was perfect. How rugged is dis one?"

"Why?"

"Two traits of my twin great-grandchildren are poking into bags and boxes, and banging tings on de table. So if I'm visiting, you can be sure one of dem will find dis in my purse, and demonstrate some drumming techniques wit it." She grinned at him.

He laughed. "Well, it is pretty sturdy, but I don't know if it would survive persistent drumming. So it might be wise to keep it out of reach of little hands."

She chuckled. "Okay, I tink I can handle dat."

He asked her if she had any questions about the functions, and she mentioned the emergency

signaling device. He told her that it was a feature built into every agent's communication device. Finally, satisfied that she understood every unique feature in the PDA, and amused at her half-joking indignation that he thought she wouldn't, they disconnected.

Post by Hobbeth on 16/03/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:26:48 GMT

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Sunday, April 8, 2068, 8:05 a.m., Tracy Island

Tin-Tin booted up her personal computer as she towed dry her luxurious black hair. A click here, a button pressed there, and she was into the portion of the Tracy Industries web server that had been reserved for the family. She keyed in her password, and waited for the home page to come up.

She smiled as a chime told her that she had mail. There were several emails, one from Eddie Houseman, updating her on his latest venture, one from an old school friend who was trying to keep in touch, one from François Lemaire's secretary, answering a question about a new fashion she had seen.

"Ooh," she said softly. "There's one from Giles here."

Indeed, a file with the email address of her acquaintance from Kabul, Giles Tallman sat waiting for her to open it. She wanted to know what he thought of her distasteful dinner with Christopher, so she opened it up.

~Odd, she thought. ~There's not much more in here than a "hello, how are you". Usually he has something devastatingly witty to say. She shrugged. ~Maybe he was in a hurry. I'll write back later and ask him about it.

She closed her email program and signed off the server. Then she got dressed for breakfast with the rest of the family. But the damage had been done. Desdemona's little worm had slipped past and into her computer memory.

Post by Tikatue on 16/03/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:26:55 GMT

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Tracy Island 8.15am Sunday 8th April 2068

Christopher looked down at Asterix, who was sniffing at his dish.

"Are you going to eat that?, he asked.

Asterix just looked up and mewed, before winding himself around his master's legs.

"Oh alright", Christopher chuckled before opening the cupboard in front of him and getting a tin of the 'premium stuff'.

Getting another dish, Christopher forked the cat food out of the tin before putting the dish on the floor.

"You always know how to get round me don't you?," he smiled as Asterix tucked in.

"Now if you don't mind, I'm going to go and have my breakfast with the others", Christopher stroked the little cat's head, "I'll leave the balcony open so you can enjoy the sunshine."

"Mrrow", Asterix cleaned his face, then trotted outside.

"Have a nice sleep", Christopher said as he left the flat.

Post by The_Wrong_Trousers1 on 16/03/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:27:07 GMT

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Tracy Island, Sunday 8th April 9.30 a.m.

"Hi, Brandon!" Gordon called to the dark haired young man. "I'm taking the boat out to do some scuba diving. Want to come along?"

Brandon smiled. "Yeah, that would be great! Just give me time to get my gear."

"No problem," Gordon replied. "Meet you back here."

As the two young men headed for the monorail to the boat pen, they saw Callie and Kat approaching, deep in conversation.

"How about some female company?" Gordon grinned. "Hi, girls! Care to come sailing with us? We are going scuba diving."

Callie looked at her friend. "What do you say, Kat? Should we go?"

Kat smiled. "Why, not? Sounds like it could be fun."

"Okay, Gordon, we're game," Callie announced. All four made their way to the boat pen. Soon they were skimming over the waves, in the small four-berth cabin cruiser. It was very exhilarating.

Kat sat alongside Gordon as he steered the boat. "This is great, Gordon!" Kat shouted over the noise of the engine and the rush of the waves.

"I'll have to take you out in my speed boat sometime, Kat," Gordon replied

"Great! I'll look forward to that!" Kat sat back enjoying the exhilaration. "Are there dolphins in these waters, Gordon?" she asked.

"Yep, sure are," Gordon replied.

"Oo, I'd love to see the dolphins. Can we swim with them?"

"Hm, I'm not sure. Let's see what happens," Gordon answered, smiling at her enthusiasm. "Guess you are used to these babies," he said, indicating the boat.

"Well, only really from working on them. I never got to sail FAB 2, you know."

"Gee, it's nice spending some time with you and Callie and Brandon. Guess I didn't see much of you, being stuck in New York," Gordon grumbled.

"Oh, yes, how is your back now?"

"Better, thanks. Guess that will teach me not to hide anything from Mom."

Kat laughed. "Yes, I guess she can be very forceful when she wants to be."

Just then Callie and Brandon joined the two.

"This is great! I really missed all this being on Thunderbird Five."

"Well, we missed you too," Brandon replied, and Kat nodded in agreement. "Callie and I were just discussing the last rescue," Brandon remarked.

"Oh, please," Kat said, looking at the others. "Let's not mention that today. Let's have a break from rescues, and just relax."

Gordon nodded in agreement. "Kat's right; today is for relaxing and having fun, so let's anchor up and have a swim."

Gordon and Brandon went below to change in their wet suits. They emerged back on deck, carrying their canisters of air, and masks. Once they were kitted up, they sat on the deck rail, and tipped backwards into the water. Callie and Kat leaned over the rail and watched them descend.

"Gee, I wouldn't mind trying that," Callie said.

"Don't you need special training?" Kat queried.

"Yeah, I guess so," Callie replied.

"Oh, look!" Kat pointed out to sea. "Aren't those dolphins?"

A large pod of dolphins were leaping out of the waves and gracefully returning to the water.

"They're so beautiful," Kat murmured.

At that moment, Gordon and Brandon emerged from the water.

"There are your dolphins, Kat!" Gordon shouted.

"Yes, we see them," Callie called back.

Gordon and Brandon scrambled back on deck, and stripping off their air canisters, and wet suits, dived back into the sea.

"Come on, you two," Brandon called. "Let's all have a swim."

Not needing a second bidding, the two girls dove into the sea. For the next half hour, the four had a great time, swimming, dunking each other under the waves, and generally messing around.. Suddenly something smooth and cold touched Kat's legs. Looking around she saw a dolphin moving away from her on the water.

"Looks like he is laughing at me," Kat called.

"Maybe the way you swim is amusing him," Gordon called back. Kat turned and lunged at Gordon, trying to push him under the water, but Gordon grabbed her and took her down with him. They both surfaced, gasping for air and laughing.

Soon Callie and Brandon were heading back to the boat, and Gordon and Kat followed. All four lay sprawled on the deck.

"Grandma has packed a picnic basket. Let's see what she packed," Gordon said, dragging the picnic basket over to where they were sitting. After they had all eaten and drunk their fill, Kat said, "Golly, Gordon, your Grandma sure packs a great picnic basket."

Callie and Brandon nodded in agreement.

Callie and Kat began to doze.

"Care to try some fishing, Brandon?" Gordon asked.

"Well, I haven't tried deep sea fishing, but okay, I'll give it a try."

They headed for the other side of the boat, where fishing tackle was stored. Half an hour passed with no bite for either Brandon or Gordon. Just as they were going to call it a day, Gordon felt a tug on his line.

"Hey, hey, hey, what have we here?" he called, reeling in his line. On the hook was a small fish and an amount of seaweed.

Brandon laughed. "Is that the best you can do?"

Gordon smiled back. "Yes, and I know exactly what I am going to do with it." He tossed the fish back into the sea, and with the seaweed in his hands, crept back to where the two girls were still dozing. Gordon carefully placed the seaweed on Kat's stomach. Kat woke with a screech. Both Brandon and Gordon laughed.

"Just brought you a little present." Gordon grinned.

"Gordon Tracy!" Kat shouted, as she leapt to her feet and seaweed in hand, chased him round the deck. Callie and Brandon watched in amusement. Finally Kat and Gordon returned. Kat was grinning but of the seaweed there was not sign.

"That should teach you not to play tricks," she said, glancing at Gordon.

"Where's the seaweed?" Callie asked.

"Oh, Gordon has it," Kat said innocently. "But I guess he will not be telling where I put it."

The sun was beginning to sink to the horizon, as they made their way home.

"That was such fun, we should do it again." Callie remarked. They all nodded in agreement.

As they disembarked, Gordon grinned and whispered to Kat, "I'll get my revenge."

"Gordon Tracy," Kat replied in mock severity. "Since you started it, I got my revenge."

"We'll see," Gordon remarked. "Two can play at mischief."

Callie looked at Kat. "What were you and Gordon whispering about?"

"Oh, who can play the last trick. I guess I haven't heard the last of Gordon and his tricks."

Post by Tawnyangel22on 16/03/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:30:48 GMT

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Sunday, April 8th, 2068.

Dianne sat at her desk in the infirmary finishing up some tedious paperwork before joining Jeff and her 3 children for a relaxing afternoon.

She stopped writing as her mind thought back to a conversation that she, Scott and Virgil had had concerning Elise. Dianne's suspicions about Elise having Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome had been confirmed by what Virgil had told her.

".....She's totally convinced she flew into a mountain in the simulator, and like I told Scott, there was no mountain, just flat land. Add that to the state I found her in, I'd say it was definitely PTSD."

"So where do we go from here?" Scott asked. "We know she's got the skills, and I practically talked Dad into taking her on..."

"Scott, you're not the only one who's concerned, but right now, we need to get her through this," replied Dianne.

"How?" asked Virgil.

"Well, it could be extensive, depending on how severe it may be. It may involve a drug regime, behavior therapy and possibly psychotherapy."

Both boys exchanged worried glances.

"What?" Dianne asked. "Is there more? Because Ah will need to know everything." She added, with emphasis, "And Ah do mean all of it."

Virgil told Dianne as much as he remembered from the night he'd comforted Elise after her nightmare; and went on to mention Elise was confused about the crash, and kept saying something about water and helping someone. It was at that point that Scott remembered something he'd read in her Air Force records about her parents dying in a boating accident when she was about 9. What he had not learned is that Elise was there.

"Was she with her parents when this happened?" inquired Dianne.

Scott thought for a moment and then, as if a light had gone on in his head, he realized she must have been.

Virgil, ever astute, read the look that came across his brother's face. "Oh God, Scott. She lost both of her parents at the same age you were when we lost Mom," muttered Virgil.

Scott said nothing. He remembered only too well the grief and pain that he as a 9 year old had gone through.

"Boys, if this is what happened, that girl has possibly been carrying survivor's guilt all these years. This crash may have caused it to resurface."

Dianne snapped back to the present and stood up, It's time Elise and I talked. She straightened up her desk, and left, heading towards the apartment complex. On the way she called Jeff and promised she'd be there but might be a little late.

Post by FrankieCTB2 on 19/03/2005

Sunday, April 8, 2068, 10:30 a.m., Tracy Island

Kyrano was in his garden, pruning the flower bushes, when the all-too-familiar pain struck. He sank to his knees, holding his head and moaning a bit. Then, fighting against the pain, he straightened and gathered his own strength, putting up walls in his mind to shut out the pain and the presence that called so maliciously.

~Hello, brother....

~Depart from me, evil one. You will gain nothing from me.

~Are you so sure?

The pain intensified, and Kyrano felt his walls beginning to crumble. ~I will not give in. I cannot give in. He felt as if there was a hot knife in his brain as his enemy pressed the attack.

~You will find, my brother, that I have grown more powerful since last I touched your mind. Now, what news have you of the accursed Tracys and their pet project?

Kyrano moaned aloud, and reached for something under his tunic, even as he felt himself falling to the ground. Images of the new recruits flitted across his mind as he clutched the alarm pendant, activating it.

Dianne, on her way to the apartments, jumped as her watch buzzed loudly in a peculiar and familiar alert. She gasped, turned around and sprinted back to the infirmary. Jeff, playing a game with the children while waiting for his wife, looked up at the alarm and got up from his seat, hurrying to the portraits. Opening communications with Thunderbird Five, he asked without prelude, "Alan! Where is Kyrano?"

Alan activated the locator screen, homing in on more and more detailed maps until the Island's contours and the Villa's environs were revealed. A gray dot showed clearly. "He's in his garden, Dad."

"Thanks, son." Jeff turned and ran for the garden area. He met Dianne on the balcony and shouted, "The garden!"

Together, they pelted down the path and found Kyrano on the ground, moaning, "Too much. Too much!" Suddenly his eyes opened wide and a look of intense concentration passed over his face. "No. I will not."

Dianne took out a hypospray, but before she could administer the drug inside, Kyrano shouted, "NO!" and collapsed, breathing heavily. She moved in, but Kyrano waved her away.

"I have... dealt with him... for now," he panted.

As they waited for Kyrano to compose himself, Jeff glanced over at his wife and sighed. "It's been a long time since this has happened. I wonder what brought it on?"

"He has gotten more powerful...", Kyrano gasped. "I was barely able to drive him off."

"What did he learn?" Jeff asked anxiously.

"He knows about the new recruits, but no more," Kyrano said, slumping back.

Husband and wife exchanged glances. "What can we expect from him?" Dianne asked.

"I do not know, Doctor," Kyrano replied, "All I know is that I must strengthen my own defenses." He began to climb to his feet. Jeff reached out to help him, but once he was standing, Kyrano gently shook off his assistance and headed back into the house.

Post by Tikatue on 19/03/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:32:20 GMT

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Sunday, April 8, 2068, 7:30 p.m., Tracy Island

After Kyrano's emergency situation, Dianne had gotten distracted. First by Jeff, who wanted to discuss with her the ramifications of this attack, then by the children, to whom she had promised her time for the afternoon. Then there were the meals, and a long discussion with Emily about the needs of the pantry and the day slipped away before she knew it. Finally, after supper, she headed down to the infirmary again. Taking out her data pad, she looked over Elise's medical records.

~Hmm. No drug allergies. Good. That will make this easier.

She exited Elise's records and wrote up a prescription for the pilot. While the printer was creating the bottle label, Dianne unlocked the meds cabinet with her thumbprint and combination. Reaching inside, she pulled out a large bottle of anti-depressants. ~I'll need to reorder soon, she thought sadly. At one time or another almost all of the International Rescue team had been on some sort of anti-depressant as a part of dealing with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. The drugs were used infrequently now as the Tracy men, Brains, and Tin-Tin had learned better, non-pharmaceutical ways of dealing with the stress of their jobs. But still, there were times... like the aftermath of Jeff's accident. At that point, she was the one dealing with the stress... and dealing with it well, she thought. Her quick reaction to her own problem made it easier to deal with Jeff when he began to process everything that happened.

She counted out the number of pills needed and slipped them into a brown bottle, capping it and wrapping the prescription label around it. Then she wrote up another prescription for a week's worth of sleeping pills. ~My first priority is to get this woman a good night's sleep. The antidepressants will be used once the sleeping pills are gone, Dianne reminded herself. When the

bottles were ready, she pocketed them and her PDA, then resumed her interrupted journey to the Cliff House apartments.

Post by Tikatue on 23/03/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:43:16 GMT

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Tracy Island, Monday April 9th, 9.00 a.m.

Kat left her apartment and headed for Thunderbird Two's hangar. Brains had explained that he wanted to work on all the auxiliary vehicles, showing her how each of them worked.

"After all, Kat," he had explained, "ultimately it will be your responsibility to do the maintenance work on them."

Kat hurried into the hangar, where Gordon was talking to Brains, as they studied some plans.

"Hi, Brains, hi, Gordon." She looked at Brains. "What have you got for me today? Please, no more hands on making sure everything works. I think you see me as a guinea pig."

"Certainly not," Brains said. "You know that you need to be up to speed on the vehicles as part of your job."

"Well, I seem to be learning the hard way sometimes," Kat said with a 'hmpf'.

Gordon watched with interest the conversation between the two. "Well, actually, Kat, it's you and me today," he said.

Kat stared at the auburn haired young man. "I'm working with you today?"

"Yep, that's right." Gordon grinned back. "Today I'm going to show you the ins and outs of Thunderbird Four," he said as he handed her a diagram of Thunderbird Four."

Kat glanced at Brains. "Oh, I'm not going to be expected to pilot Thunderbird Four, am I?"

Gordon shook his head. "Of course not, Kat. Brandon will be learning how to pilot Thunderbird Four. He is the aquanaut. From your point of view, all I need to do is to show you how it works, so that you can carry out maintenance on it." He led Kat to the pod which housed Thunderbird Four.

Kat glanced sideways at Gordon. "It seems a long time since our first meeting, I don't suppose you remember Lady Penelope's New Year's Eve party?" Kat asked.

"Oh, yes, I remember that party very well. We had quite a few fast dances, as I recall."

Kat smiled. "Yes, we did. It seems such ages away, and yet it is only three months."

Gordon looked at Kat. "Yes, a lot has happened since then. And now you and the other recruits are really settling in and being an active part of International Rescue."

"I'm feeling more confident about everything. The last rescue I actually attended was fine, but of course I was only watching. I was really there to make sure that the DOMO was okay, as it hadn't been checked and Brains wanted to make absolutely sure it was in top working order."

Gordon nodded. "Yes, that may be your major role, making sure that everything is in good working order, although there may come a time, like in Russia, when a small person is needed." Kat wrinkled her nose at him and he laughed. They finally arrived at the pod containing Thunderbird Four.

"Okay, right first some facts: length, 30 feet, width, 11 feet, weight, 16 tons, underwater speed, 160 knots, surface cruising speed, 40 knots, emerge....." Gordon saw at the look of disbelief on Kat's face and smiled to himself. "Sorry. Am I going too fast for you?" he asked innocently.

"Gordon!" Kat exploded. "How am I going to remember all that information?"

Gordon grinned. "You won't and I wouldn't expect you to. I was just playing a joke on you, you were looking so serious."

Kat smiled weakly. "Guess I fell for it, didn't I?" She looked at him, ~Mm, it may be fun getting to know him better, we both seem to have the same kind of humour, maybe we could play one or two tricks on the others.

"Ready, Kat? Okay, then, let's get down to the workings of Thunderbird Four. It would be impossible to teach you everything about Thunderbird Four in just one morning, so we will start with the front today and maybe work on the rear tomorrow, or whenever Brains can spare you." Kat nodded and followed Gordon to the front of the submarine.

"Okay, at the front we have the Parabolic reflector trough, housing the Halogen lighting bar. This is used under water to find submerged boats or anything else that has fallen overboard."

"That must give out quite a long beam."

"Yes, it does, and it picks out objects, no matter how cloudy the water is." Kat nodded, totally absorbed in what Gordon was telling her.

"Here is the laser cutter build in to the starboard ram. This has proved helpful in the past, to enter submerged vehicles. This," he indicated inside the engine, "is the automatic missile reload system, and this," he pointed to an arm like structure, "is the servo mechanism in each arm, which controls the position of the lighting trough."

Kat looked at the plan in her hand, trying to match the diagrams with the actual mechanics. She was amazed, and a little worried. "Gordon, would I be supposed to work on this at the moment?"

Gordon shook his head. "No, you will need more training sessions with me before you will be asked to work on the sub."

They walked round to the other side. Gordon pointed out the missile tube, the hydraulic rams, the oxygen tanks and the life support unit wing with zylithic crystals to eliminate the build-up of carbon dioxide in the cabin. He noticed that Kat was frowning.

"Let's go inside and take a look at the console operating the sub." She followed him in through the telescopic airlock. It was very small inside, with only room for one pilot. "Because it is so tiny with only room for one, the control console is ergonomically simplified. Behind you is the life-support and engine systems diagnostic computer."

Kat looked at it with interest. "What are those?" She pointed to some more instruments.

"Those are the airlock control systems and air regulator."

Kat was trying hard to appear as if she was taking everything in. Gordon glanced at her "Hey, I think that, that is enough information for one session. Let's leave the rest for another day."

Kat sighed with relief. It was such a lot to take on board. "Thank you Gordon, it's been really great, can I keep this diagram, so that I can try and remember what I have seen?"

"Sure, of course you can. Now what have you planned for the rest of the day?"

"Oh, er, well, I must go and report back to Brains, and check if he wants me to do anything else."

"And if he doesn't?"

"Probably go and collapse on the balcony of my apartment, and have a long cold drink."

"Why not join me at the pool? You can collapse and have a long cold drink there as well." Gordon grinned.

Kat smiled. "Okay, why not,"

"Great," Gordon mused. "I really want to get my own back on Tyler."

"Oh, no, Gordon, don't include me in your practical jokes."

Gordon rolled his eyes. "As if I would."

On finding that Brains had nothing further for Kat that day, she accompanied Gordon back to the house. They walked together in companionable silence until Kat suddenly asked Gordon how often Thunderbird Four had been used on rescues.

"Well, actually, there was one time, although it was not strictly a rescue," Gordon replied. "It was one time when we finally persuaded Dad to visit Lady Penelope on her sheep farm in Australia to have a short holiday. He had been rather reluctant to leave us with Scott in charge. Whilst being

tested a missile malfunctioned and crashed into the sea bed, causing the seabed to erupt and flames leapt above the sea."

"Golly," Kat said.

Gordon continued, "Thunderbird Four had to go on to the seabed and seal the off the flames. Yes, that one exciting time."

Kat looked at Gordon in admiration.

"Of course, there was the time when I had to carry out a rescue all on my own." He glanced at Kat and could see that he had her complete attention. "Virgil and Scott had been returning from a rescue, Thunderbird Two was shot at by the Navy, and only just managed to get home, on fire, and crash-landed. Brains told Dad that it would be at least two weeks before Thunderbird Two was operational again.

"Was Virgil hurt?" Kat queried.

"Oh, he was okay. But, you see, they had been moving the Empire State Building which had toppled off its carrying trailer, and two men were trapped underground with water rising all the time."

"You didn't pilot Thunderbird Four all the way to New York, did you?"

Gordon shook his head. "I did offer to, but Dad said it would have taken too long. Instead I hitched a ride on the ship that had fired on Thunderbird Two. But it was me alone who rescued those guys." By this time they had reached the pool.

"You look pleased with yourself," Scott remarked to his brother as Gordon arrived with Kat in tow.

"Ooh, Scott. Gordon has just telling me about some of the rescues he has undertaken in Thunderbird Four. He is so daring."

Scott raised his eyebrows, "He has, has he? He is, is he?"

"Well, Kat asked and I just told her how it was," Gordon replied, handing a glass of orange juice to her.

Post by Tawnyangel22 on 23/03/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:43:29 GMT
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Monday, April 9th, 9:30 AM; Tracy Island

Tin-Tin smiled at Brains as she entered the lab and walked over to her computer. She turned it on

and started to bring up a window, when it signaled her that there was a security problem. "Brains, look at this. Something's gotten into the system."

He hurried over to look. "That's strange; it didn't show up when I started my computer. Let me see." She relinquished her chair to him and stood behind, watching as he entered a few commands. "There, I've isolated it. I'll transfer it to my computer and check it out." He got up and she sat back down to continue what she had been doing.

Two hours later, Brains said, "Tin-Tin, what were you doing when you got the security notification?"

"Opening my email. Why?"

"This appears to be a self-replicating virus that copies whatever you type and can be retrieved by whomever sent it. And it seems to have entered through one of your emails. When was the last time you checked your mailbox?"

"Yesterday morning. I was so busy the rest of the day, and so tired last night, I didn't look again. Oh dear, could it have spread to--"

"Don't worry, Tin-Tin. For some reason, it wouldn't infiltrate anything until you went on the computer again. But it's a good thing you didn't try to log onto the IR server. What a security breach that would have been!"

"Then it isn't a threat any longer?"

"No, but I need to find out how it got past my virus scans, and where it came from. What emails did you open yesterday?" She told him and gave him the addresses. He sighed. "I have so many other projects to do, but this one has a high priority. I'll never get all of it done."

"Isn't that why Mr. Tracy recruited Lena? Why don't you give her a call and have her look at it. She might even have a way to keep it from happening again."

Brains looked at Tin-Tin with admiration and gratitude. "I'm so glad you're here to remind me of things I should remember myself. I can't imagine why I didn't think of that. Especially when I just spoke to her yesterday morning."

"You did? Why? How is she?"

"She's fine. She was sent her new communications device, put into a PDA. I called her to get her used to it and answer any questions she might have had."

"Questions? I'd be surprised to hear she had any."

He chuckled. "Only one, and of course it wasn't technical. She just wanted to know why there was an emergency signaler in it. She'd already been over pretty much the whole thing, including the instructions for activation of the different features, standard and non."

"Well, I'll leave you to give her a call. I didn't eat much breakfast; I was worried about my father. And now, I'm starving, so I'm going to get some lunch. Will you be coming after your call or shall I bring you something?"

"I'll come, I'll come. I'll need to apprise Mr. Tracy of this new development. Don't say anything to him. I'll want to give him a full report -- or as full a report as I can, later."

Tin-Tin smiled at him, then left for the Villa. Brains watched her go, then turned to his phone, and after calculating the time differences, remembering that it was Daylight Savings Time in the United States, placed the call.

Post by Hobbeth on 24/03/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:43:39 GMT
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Monday, April 9, 2068, 11:45 a.m., Tracy Island

"Hey, Kat!" Scott called. "Since Gordon is done with you for the morning, and Brains doesn't seem to need you right now, you should report to me in the flight simulator at 1330 hours. Don't want your flying lessons to lapse, especially since you seem to have the time."

Kat frowned. "Must I? I have a lot of studying to do, and I am taking those scuba lessons with Brandon."

Scott smiled slightly. "Yes, you must. Look at it this way: your flight training will give you time to digest after lunch. You'll even have time to say goodbye to Lady Penelope before using the simulator."

"Hey, Scott!" Gordon called. "Isn't the simulator reserved in the afternoons for Chris, Elise, and Brandon?"

"Yes," Scott said, his tone suddenly sharp. "But one of our pilots has been grounded. Brandon is scheduled for 1630 hours, so he'll still be able to teach his scuba lesson." With that, the lead Thunderbird pilot turned on his heel and left the pool area.

"Wonder what's got him so hot 'n' bothered," Gordon said, irritated.

"I wonder who's been grounded?" Kat thought aloud. Then she shook her head. "Did he say that Lady Penelope's leaving? Oh dear! Then I must tell Kyrano that I will eat with the family for lunch. I would like to spend the last little bit of time that I can with her!" Kat wrapped her towel around herself and sprinted up the stairs to the villa.

"Well, Gordon, old boy," Gordon muttered. "Lunch will be served soon and you'd better get dressed for the occasion." And he, too, went up to the villa, leaving the pool to sparkle and ripple in the sun and wind.

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:43:52 GMT

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Sunday, April 8th, 8 PM DST; Silver Springs, Maryland (April 9th, noon, on TI)

Lena had just said goodbye to her grandson, David, and his family when she heard a phone ring. It took her a minute to identify it as the secure line from Tracy Island, and she hurried into her home office to answer it. As she suspected, it was Brains.

"Lena, are you alone?" he said, sidestepping the formalities.

"Yes. My grandson and his family just left. What's wrong?"

"A virus got in through an email to Tin-Tin, bypassing all my virus scans. Although it is a benign one, it could have compromised International Rescue's anonymity, if it is what I suspect it to be."

"What would dat be?" she asked, intrigued. Brains' virus scans were the most stringent she'd seen.

"I'd rather show you its program and have you make your own judgment. See if it concurs with mine. I've managed to isolate it so I can send it to you without it harming your system."

"All right." She turned her computer on and readied it for the transmission. "Go ahead; I'm up and running. Or rather, my computer is."

Brains smiled at her choice of words and said, "Sending now."

Within moments, the transmission had completed. Lena isolated it with her own program (not that she didn't trust Brains' isolation, but one couldn't be too careful, especially when it affected something as important as International Rescue), then opened it. She started to do a quick scan, but something caught her eye and she scrolled back. A few seconds later, she gasped. "Brains, whoever sent dis could have found out about International Rescue!"

"Exactly. But unless they already knew, I don't think that's what they were after. It's more likely they want Tracy Industries secrets."

"Industrial espionage? Well, I guess I shouldn't be surprised. Any company, even one half as successful as dis one is, is subject to..." She stopped suddenly as she noticed something else.

"Lena? What is it?"

"Hold on. Someting looks familiar..." She kept scrolling and studying the virus program. "Someting about dis looks very familiar. Wait! Now I remember."

"Tell me."

"Since I've been de head of de D.C. I&M department, two similar viruses have nearly made it into de computer systems dere. Now, you know as well as I do dat programmers have dere own unique styles, like writers. You know, signatures. Whoever wrote dis program also created dose otters."

"Do you know who?"

Lena sat back, thinking. "No. Our department isolated de viruses, which were fortunately discovered almost immediately, found how dey got in, and sent dem to de security department to trace deir origins. I don't know what happened after dat."

"You're sure this was created by the same person?"

De signatures are de same. I wouldn't forget dat. It's part of my job not to. But you said it was sent to Tin-Tin. Do you know who sent it?"

I haven't told her yet, and I don't want to until I have more evidence. It was attached to an email from Giles Tallman, a man she met when she was in Kabul recently. There seems to be some mild flirtation going on between them."

"Ah. Den dat's why you haven't told her. But maybe you can enlist her help anyway."

"How, without telling her?"

"Does she know anything about dis?"

"Well, yes, since it was when she began working in the lab on the computer that we caught it. Wait a minute. You want her to bait whoever did this?"

"Sort of. Dis person apparently hasn't been caught yet. So I suggest you isolate de virus to one computer, and have her use dat for innocuous work, or come up wit a phony formula dat looks real, to buy time so dis can be traced to its exact point of origin."

Brains sighed. It seemed that no matter how many people there were to help him, his workload seemed to grow and expand. "How would you isolate something like this to one computer?"

She smiled. "You work too hard. De last time we talked, it was Sunday morning dere. Did you work all day?"

"Oh, no. I took a long break and puttered around."

"Puttered around? Doing what?"

"I have a robot I created. Braman. Hopefully, I'll get his response times down. I'm also teaching him chess and we played a few games. He'll one day be able to replace people in Thunderbird 5, in case of problems or if there's a special event that requires all humans to be here. In fact, he has

been tested up there successfully - on a limited basis."

Lena shook her head. Even his recreational time often seemed to be geared toward providing IR with better tools. But she didn't tell him that; instead she reminded him how to isolate the virus, putting it on one computer and keeping it from spreading. She heard the chagrin in his voice, as he realized that he should have thought of it, himself.

"Look," she said, "I'll check wit security tomorrow morning, and let you know what dey found. You take care of de isolation and getting Tin-Tin to help. Maybe dis time, we can catch whomever is doing dis."

"Okay. But email me as soon as you know anything, and flag it as a priority message. We need to take care of this as soon as possible. I need to see if I can find a way to keep this kind of virus from getting through." He sighed. "As if I didn't have enough to keep me busy."

"Hello, Brains. Didn't Mr. Tracy ask me to be an agent to help you wit computer upgrades and de like?"

"Of course! What is the matter with me? Lena, would you mind?"

"Don't be ridiculous, young man. That's what I'm here for. I'll need you to send me de program for your current virus scans. I'll see where dey can be altered to include dis type of ting."

"I have it on a CD. I'll have to locate it and send it to you later."

"Dat's fine. Now, don't you go losing sleep checking your email every few minutes for my message. I promise you, dere won't be anyting from me before noon my time tomorrow, and more likely later dan dat. Dat would be -- let me see -- 4 AM your time, or later. In fact, I tink I'll check wit de otter I&M departments to see if dey have had anyting like dis happen to dem in de last few years. I'd be surprised if dey hadn't, especially de New York office. So don't expect anything before 6 AM tomorrow, your time at de earliest."

"Okay, Lena. I promise to get a good night's sleep tonight. Now I have to find that CD with the virus scan program on it. I'll be in touch."

"Dat's fine, Brains. Goodbye." As Lena hung up, her thoughts were spinning. To quiet them, she looked closer at the virus program. Poor Tin-Tin. A young girl as pretty and intelligent as she is shouldn't be subject to dis kind of ting. Whoever dis Giles Tallman person is had better watch his back. Dere are several people who would want to get back at him for dis. He'd better watch his back.

Post by Hobbeth on 24/03/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:44:02 GMT

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Monday, April 9, 2068, 1:15 p.m., Tracy Island

"It's been such a lovely vacation, Jeff," Lady Penelope said. "I feel so refreshed, and I am ready to go back to work. And the best part has been seeing you so fully recovered from your accident."

"It's been wonderful having you here, Penny." Jeff smiled and hugged the London Agent, accepting a kiss on the cheek.

"And Dianne, you've done so much to make me comfortable. The renovations to the Round House are simply superb!" Penelope took Dianne's hands in her own and smiled widely.

"I'm so glad you were comfortable there, Penelope. You weren't the first to test out the renovations, but you're the first who knew what it was like before," Dianne said. The two women exchanged small kisses, then Tin-Tin stepped forward.

"Now, Tin-Tin darling. Should you get any more emails from that Giles Tallman fellow, you tell me. I'm not well pleased that he used you to plant a virus and I will want to investigate him fully."

"Thank you, Lady Penelope," Tin-Tin said, sighing. "I feel like a fool for trusting him."

"Now, my girl, don't write the man off yet. It could have been a mistake. But I'm sure our new Agent 62 will get to the bottom of that. Brains, darling? Would you keep me apprised as to that agent's findings? I may be able to do something from my end if I am kept au fait with the investigation."

"Of course, Lady Penelope. I will forward anything I learn from Agent 62 on to you."

"Thank you, Brains."

Now it was Kat's turn to say goodbye. She and Penelope embraced. "Now, don't you worry, my dear Kat. I shall make sure your parents are informed as to your well-being, to a certain point. It has been wonderful to see how well you are adjusting to your new position."

"Oh, Lady Penelope, I am so sad that you are leaving," Kat said. "But I know that you must. Please say hello to Lil and Lofty for me?"

"Of course."

Virgil and John came to say their individual goodbyes, as did Alex, who had been late to lunch. The other Tracys had made their farewells at the meal.

"Well, we must be going. Parker!"

"Yus, milady?"

"It is time."

Parker helped Penelope up the steps to her pink jet then took the pilot's position. "G'bye, Mister

Tracy, Doctor Tracy!" he said as he climbed in. "Tell that young master Tyler that Oi'll be h'expectin' a rematch."

"What did he beat you at?" Alex asked.

"Foosball," Parker replied succinctly.

The jet's engines came to life and the family stepped out of the way, waving as the plane taxied down the runway and into the blue Pacific sky.

Kat glanced at her watch and her eyes opened wide. "Oh dear! Please excuse me, Mr. Tracy, Dr. Tracy! I'm going to be late for simulator training!" And with that she ran off, ducking into the freight elevator entrance to Thunderbird Two's hangar.

Dianne looked at her watch. "I have an appointment, too, dearest. Would you be so kind as to drive me to the Round House? We really need to come up with some interior access to the Round House from the other parts of the complex."

"I will keep that in mind, love," Jeff said as he took charge of the hover cart. Virgil and John got in back for the ride back up to the Villa, but Alex followed Kat, looking for his hover bike. Jeff dropped his wife off at the guest quarters and headed back up to the main house. Dianne took out her master key and used it to enter the building. It was quiet and she made her way to the first floor lounge, sitting in a comfortable armchair as she waited for her newest patient... Elise.

Post by Tikatue on 24/03/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:44:28 GMT

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As she waited, Dianne went over the notes she had made the evening before when she spoke to Elise in the pilot's apartment. She remembered how she had entered the apartment house lift and crossed to the opposite door, ringing the bell. It took a few moments, but a tired-looking Elise eventually opened the door. She was surprised to see Dianne.

"Dr. Tracy? What brings you here?"

"May I come in?" Dianne asked, schooling her face to a pleasant, non-committal expression.

"Oh, sure," Elise said, stepping back to allow the doctor to enter.

Dianne looked around at the decorations that the pilot had used to brighten up her apartment.

"This is nice." She turned to Elise. "You do know that you can paint if you like."

"Yeah, so I was told by Dom. I just haven't decided what to do." Dianne nodded, and Elise looked at her quizzically. "So, I'll ask again: what brings you here?"

"You... and yesterday's simulator exercise," Dianne said softly.

Elise groaned. "So, what did Virgil tell you?"

"What went on. And he let me look at the session as well." Dianne indicated a chair, asking with her motions if she could sit. Elise nodded, and Dianne sat down, pulling out her PDA. "He's concerned, as is Scott... and as am I." Elise walked over to the French windows as Dianne continued. "It's my job to make sure that all of our team members are fit in every way. Physically, mentally, and emotionally." She paused. "Virgil believes you have Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. With possibly another component."

"How would he know? He's no doctor!" Elise spat from her position at the windows.

"He knows because he's seen it before," Dianne said calmly. "And has dealt with it himself."

That got Elise's attention. She turned her head slightly. "He has?"

"Yes. This life is a very stressful one. There are rescues where you go out and try your hardest and still can't save everyone. Or where you make an error and someone dies." Dianne looked thoughtful. "Probably just about all of the veteran operatives have had to deal with it at one time or another. Myself included."

Elise ran her hands through her hair and turned to Dianne. "So. What do I do?"

"First of all, we sit and talk about the incident a little. I need to be sure of my diagnosis." Dianne smiled slightly. "You were right when you said that Virgil's not a doctor. But I am and I need to do some probing."

The pilot took a deep breath and let it out. "Then what?"

"Then we work on getting you back on track. It will mean some limited drug therapy, some behavior modification, and probably some psychotherapy as well."

"With you?"

Dianne nodded. "With me. One on one sessions."

Elise's shoulders slumped. "When do we start?"

"Well, we need to determine what the problem is now. Then you need a good night's sleep and we'll start to actually tackle it tomorrow."

Elise turned away again. "Do I have any choice?"

Dianne shook her head slowly. "No, not really. You can't go out on rescues the way you are now, Elise. In fact, until this is well on the way to being dealt with, I am grounding you. From the simulator and from flying."

The pilot rounded on Dianne. "You can't do that! You don't have the authority!" she shouted.

Dianne sat impassively for a moment, then said softly. "Yes, I can in my capacity as a physician with Tracy Industries and as CMO of International Rescue." She got up and approached the angry younger woman. "Elise, I saw the simulator recording. I can't risk something like that happening when you're in the cockpit. Not here. Not anywhere. Please. Let me help. Let me help get you back in the air."

Elise's head dropped and she said in a tear-filled voice. "I am just so tired. The nightmares... the simulator... I can't cope." She raised her eyes to meet Dianne's gaze. "Please help me."

"I will." Dianne said as she guided the distraught young woman to a chair. She opened a file in her PDA, and they began to talk.

Elise described her nightmares, and Dianne asked questions about the rescue of Jeff. Then she asked about Elise's parents.

"We were in a boat during a storm. The boat capsized and broke up and both my parents drowned. I was nine," Elise said, her voice going suddenly emotionless.

"So you were the only survivor?"

"Yes," she whispered.

"How do you feel about that?" Dianne asked.

"How am I supposed to feel?" Elise asked angrily. "Happy? Glad to be alive?" Dianne just looked at her. "Okay. I feel miserable. I feel like... like... like I should have died with them. Then I wouldn't have this huge hole in my heart."

Dianne nodded. She looked over her notes. "Elise, I think we are dealing with a case of PTSD compounded by a strong case of survivor's guilt."

"Survivor's guilt?" Elise asked. "I've never heard of that."

"Well, it's an overwhelming sense of guilt that survivors of traumatic and fatal events often feel. They wonder why they were spared when others, perhaps loved ones, died. It is something we can deal with in conjunction with the PTSD because the two seem to be intertwined."

"Okay," Elise said, sighing. "You've made your diagnosis. Now what?"

"This." Dianne took out the little bottle of sleeping pills. "These will make you sleep for at least eight to ten hours. We have to build up your physical stamina a bit, get you clear headed. You are to get dressed for bed, and I will give you one now. Then you're to go directly to bed. It doesn't take long for them to take effect. One per night for the next five nights. Then we'll determine if you need more, or a lower dose, or if we can switch you to another medication altogether. Then you are to see me tomorrow at 2 p.m. in the first floor lounge of the Round House. Neutral ground as it were."

Elise sighed again. "Okay. You're the doctor." And she went off to get ready for bed.

Dianne's musings were interrupted by the arrival of Elise. The younger woman looked around. "This is nice."

"Thanks. I just had it redecorated a few months ago. Please sit down." Dianne opened another file in her PDA. "How did you sleep?"

"Surprisingly well," Elise replied. "I don't think I dreamt at all."

"Good." Dianne said, rearranging herself in the chair. "Then let's get started, shall we?"

Post by Tikatue on 24/03/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:45:09 GMT

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Elise took a deep breath, then suddenly jumped up, shaking her head.

"I'm sorry, I can't do this. I'm not...I mean...", she began to fluster. "Dammit!" I have NEVER been like this is my entire life!"

Elise's anger started to surface. Dianne patiently watched as the young pilot started to pace and wrestle with her emotions.

"I am a professional pilot! For Pete's sake, I served in the Air Force. I've flown high tech jets and helijets for years without any incident and I didn't fall apart, so why now, why this now!" Elise turned pleading, frightened eyes to Dianne.

"We talked a little about your parents and the accident that claimed their lives," Dianne began carefully. "You survived while they did not. Tell me: before you were hired at Tracy Industries, did you ever have any other similar situations? Where you were the only one or one of just a few to survive while others around you died?"

"No... not that I was involved in. But there were some that I knew who didn't make it back from a mission."

Elise had now sat down and spoke quietly. "It's tough, losing your buddies, but you just get it on with it, you know?" She looked at Dianne as if the other woman knew what it was like. "It was the military, you just followed orders. You weren't given time to think about what happened, so I didn't." Elise smiled sadly, remembering things she had since long forgotten. "Ask Scott; he'll tell you how it was," she added softly.

Dianne nodded and scribbled some notes. Elise watched her and then asked, "Has Mr. Tracy gone through anything like this since the accident?"

Dianne nodded. "Not so much about his own experience; he doesn't remember much about that. But it did bring forth a lot of memories of his first wife, of situations that his sons have been in where they've been close to death..."

She looked Elise in the eye, and suddenly the pilot noticed how very tired the doctor looked. "It's brought up a lot of grief for me as well. I, at least, am trained to handle it. But I won't tell you it's easy."

"It seems nothing in my life has been 'easy' since that crash. The last 3 months have seemed like years. My whole life has been turned upside down, and I'm not sure... I can get through this." Elise bit back the threatening tears. She turned away from Dianne and spoke so quietly that the doctor strained to hear her. "What happens if I can't get over this? What if I can't ever fly again?"

Dianne watched as Elise fought the turmoil inside her. "Elise, we are going to take this one baby step at a time. Now is not the time to think about flying. Right now, you have to think about you, and only you." She smiled softly. "You are not alone Elise, not this time."

She reached over and took Elise's hand, gently squeezing it to reassure herself as much as the pilot that they would get through this.

"The one thing that you will learn as we progress is that this wasn't your fault. Not what happened to your parents. Not what happened to Jeff. It wasn't your fault!" Dianne emphasized the last four words.

"It's something that everyone here has either had to learn, or will have to learn." She paused, and gazed at Elise. "But first, as I said, we need to make sure you're getting the rest needed to deal with daily living. And we will work on taking command of those nightmares as well. One step at a time."

"Now, you need to relax. I'm going to teach you a relaxation technique that Kyrano taught me. Come join me."

Dianne put down her data pad and, after moving a chair or two, stretched out on the floor. Elise watched feeling a little unsure and nervous.

"Trust me." Dianne smiled at her.

Elise joined the other woman on the floor, not sure what was going on, but willing to try nonetheless. Once they were both positioned on their backs, Dianne began.

"First close your eyes, and breath in through your nose and slowly out of your mouth." They both did this a few times and then Dianne added, "Now lay your arms flat by your sides, palms facing up as you continue to breathe."

Elise obeyed and felt herself starting to relax. "How are you feeling?" Dianne asked.

"Okay, I guess. It feels weird, but nice."

"That's good. Now flex your right foot down and then up. Do it 5 times and relax. Then we'll do the same with the other foot."

As they continued, Dianne opened her eyes and looked over at her patient. Elise still had her eyes closed and was following along.

"Okay, Elise. Next we're going to flex the lower leg, in the same way as our feet." The two women continued in this way for some time, flexing each part of their bodies and then flexing the same parts in an alternating pattern. "It's time to open your eyes, Elise." Dianne said after they had lay motionless for a few moments. "Roll to your left side like this and sit up, legs crossed."

Elise followed Dianne's example and they were now sitting 'Indian style', both facing forward. "How are you feeling?" asked Dianne.

"Better." Elise smiled slightly.

"Good."

They remained sitting as they continued some deep breathing exercises, relaxing each muscle as they did so. When they had finished Dianne told Elise she wanted her to practice the relaxation exercises on her own, as well as doing them at her therapy sessions.

"It will help Elise. I know from experience, they work." She paused, then said, "The sleeping pills I prescribed will only last you for five days. By that time, we'll re-evaluate your physical condition and see what else you may need in the way of pharmaceuticals." Dianne smiled. "Expect to do a lot of talking and listening."

"It's going to be hard, but I'll try. I have to; I want to get back in the air. Flying is all I know, and besides, I have no place else to go," Elise replied.

"You won't need to worry about that, you have a home here, Elise. Granted it's not your 'average' conventional type home, but it'll be home to you eventually!" Dianne chuckled as she thought to herself This place is anything BUT conventional!

Before the session was completely over Elise had one more question.

"Dr. Tracy?"

"Yes?"

"Umm...you told me yesterday that I was grounded from the simulator as well as the air; so...umm... what do you suggest I do in the meantime, outside of these sessions, that is?"

Dianne thought for a moment. "There are some other skills that you need to learn, such as rock climbing and rappelling, that you could work on. And you could also begin familiarizing yourself with the auxiliary equipment. Ask Scott. He'll know if there's anything else he feels you could be learning while you're grounded."

She wagged a finger at Elise. "But for the next five days, you need to relax. Your body is healed from the accident, but your spirit needs time to do so, too. So, no alarm clocks." She cocked her head at Elise. "Do you keep a journal?"

"No...Should I?" Elise answered, puzzled by the question.

"I would like you to. Especially if you have any nightmares, or just thoughts you feel could be relevant during our sessions. And I want you to rate your mood when you write. Rate it from one to ten with one being extremely sad or angry and ten being extremely happy or hopeful. That way, we'll have something to refer to. Do you mind?" Dianne asked.

"No, I mean, sure, I'll write stuff down. I used to keep a diary when I was about 12, just the usual stuff, boys, school, that kind of stuff."

"Yes I know!" Dianne smiled, thinking about her own daughter.

"Well, I need to check on Jeff and you need some rest, young lady. I will check in with you tomorrow, okay?" Dianne stood up to leave, and Elise walked with her.

"Thanks, Dr. Tracy." Elise said.

"You're welcome. It's what I'm here for," Dianne responded.

She gave Elise one last encouraging smile, and then headed back to the Villa on foot.

Back in her apartment, Elise got a glass of water and headed for bed. She took the sleeping pill and nestled down into the covers. Before turning out the light she reached over to the photo of herself and her parents, lovingly running her fingers over it.

"I love you both, and miss you so very much." she whispered. "Please help me to be strong. I need you to get me through this."

As a few tears trickled down her cheek, she softly kissed her parents then, replacing the photo, she turned off the light and closed her eyes, desperately wanting the sleep that Dianne had promised would come.

Post by FrankieCTB2 on 29/03/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:45:37 GMT

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Monday, April 9th, 2068; Tracy Industries D.C. offices

Lena arrived in her office at 7 AM, as usual and went through her usual routine of checking her voice and email messages. She found one from Brains, who sent his email scanner program

attached to it. Before she looked at it, though, she composed an email of her own, and sent it to the other I&M supervisors in the states. She asked them to check over the last five years for viruses that were caught bearing a certain signature (which she described to them).

She downloaded the program and began going over it. She'd gotten about a third of the way through it when she heard the team arrive and went out to speak to them.

"I got a call from Mr. Hackenbacker yesterday evening, saying dat a virus had gotten tru his email checks at de Tracy residence. It was caught immediately afterwards when de person who got de email started to work on someting else, and he isolated it. He sent it to me, and I recognized de signature as being de same as dat on two viruses we caught during de time I've been head here." She described the program to them. "Does anyone remember any otter time a similar virus was sent?"

The others looked thoughtful, and one by one, shook their heads. "No, those were the only two times," said one of them.

"Not many viruses get through the checks that are in place, so we would remember any that do," said another.

Lena smiled. "Dat's true enough. I didn't tink so, but I wanted to check wit you all. Okay; let's get to work, den. I'll be in my office until just before 10, when I have anotter meeting to go to. I should be back after lunch." She turned and headed back to her desk.

She called the security department and told them what she wanted to know. The person she spoke to told her they'd have to check into it and get back to her. She asked them to leave a message if she didn't answer, and gave them her extension number. After she hung up, she turned back to her computer and Brains' program.

When she left for the meeting, she still didn't have a way to modify the program to block viruses such as the new one. But she felt that she was on the right track. She had also received answers from three of the other I&M offices around the country. Only the New York office had been sent any viruses like the ones she mentioned to them, so far. They had been hit three times. She was still waiting for an answer from the security department. Hopefully I'll have a message from dem when I get back.

The meeting didn't end until 12:30 and a few of the other department heads suggested they go out to lunch together. Lena agreed; it was a good way to establish and continue a rapport; besides, useful information was sometimes obtained this way. It seemed, though, that she was the one being questioned. Word of her visit to the Tracy home had gotten around, and the others wanted to know what it was like. She had to choose her words carefully, keeping things very general and not revealing the true location of his residence. But she managed to satisfy their curiosity and, when they returned to work, agreed to try to have lunch together more often.

She went to her office and started, as usual, with her voice messages, of which there were only two. One of them was from the security department there, and it wasn't quite what she'd hoped. But it was a start. She saved the message until she could convey the information to Brains.

Then she went to her email, and found more messages from the other I&M departments. She opened them one by one, and found that the Los Angeles, Juneau, and Denver locations had also been hit, each by a single virus with the same signature. She sat back to think.

All but de Honolulu offices have been heard from. But it's, and she did a swift mental calculation, not quite 8AM dere. Dey won't have had time to check, yet. But dat's seven -- no eight -- so far. Someone really wants to get at Tracy Industries information. Interesting, dough, dat de security departments constantly communicate wit each otter. It sure helps.

Her next order of business was to email Brains with the information she'd gotten. She compiled the facts on Notepad, and then opened an email window. It took her a while, but she finally was satisfied that he had as much accurate information as she could give him.

She wrote:

Although it is too early to have heard from the Hawaiian branch, I'm reasonably sure any virus from this person has never hit them. However four others have, for a total of 8 hits, including the ones that were sent to this location. That's in the last five years.

The security departments in the various locations keep in touch with each other regularly, especially about something like this. They confirmed the hits, but were unable to trace them back to their point of origin. It seems that they would get to a certain area, then something would happen and the trail would vanish. That sounds to me like an alarm flag is sounded at the point of origin and whoever is creating these viruses is able to block any further attempts to trace them.

Interestingly enough -- but not surprisingly -- traces of all the hits led to one area in the world, the British Isles. I suspect you have people over there who can take this information and track the perpetrator(s) further. Perhaps the London offices have more information you can use.

I have not had the opportunity to go completely through your program. I am working on it still, and will contact you when I have any suggestions.

Lena

She sent off the email, and turned to help one of her staff members who came to her with a personal problem.

Post by Hobbeth on 29/03/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:45:47 GMT

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Monday, April 9, 2068, 8 p.m. local time, London, England

The black shiny stretch limo drove up Downing Street, stopping at Number 10. Almost immediately the door was opened by a butler, and the Prime Minister, her husband and two

teenage sons came out and got into the limo.

"Good evening Madam Prime Minister, Mr Baker." The chauffeur touched his cap to the two sons. He glanced at the itinerary in his hand. The plan was to leave Downing Street, cross over Westminster Bridge and head east towards Guys Hospital, where the Prime Minister was to open the new burn unit. Then the party would travel across Tower Bridge to the Tower of London, where a reception was being held for the new Indian Ambassador and his wife.

Further downstream a large cruise ship was making its final voyage and would be anchored off the Embankment, to be hired for entertaining groups or parties of people.

As the Prime Minister's party reached Guys Hospital, dark clouds were gathering over the Thames estuary, and low rumbles of thunder could be heard in the distance. Large spots of rain began to fall as the party, under large umbrellas, headed for the Hospital entrance.

The Captain of the Cruise ship, an elderly man with a grizzled grey beard and bright blue twinkling eyes, also observed the threatening storm. "Looks like we're in for a storm," he observed to his second in command.

"Aye, Captain Drew," the young man replied. "Still we are safe enough in the Thames. We are quite sheltered from any rough weather."

"Well, we are nearing Tower Bridge. I have radioed ahead, they should be lifting the bridge for us. But just in case, you had better sound the siren." The siren gave out a mournful sound in the gathering gloom of the coming storm.

Having made a brief appearance at the hospital, the Prime Minister's party were saying their farewells and were once again getting into the limo to begin the short stretch to the Tower Bridge.

Out in the Thames, the ship was steadily forging through the water. Suddenly, there was a vivid streak of lightning, followed almost instantaneously by a loud clap of thunder. The heavens opened and an absolute deluge of water fell on both the ship and the limo carrying the Prime Minister's party. Visibility was cut to absolutely nil. Another bolt of lightning seemed to make direct contact with the ship, knocking out the computer system. The ship was plunged into darkness. The Thames was becoming decidedly choppy. The ship lunged and swung over to the left bank, seemingly out of control, and hit the bridge support tower. Unfortunately the Bridge Control had been in a quandary. They had not wanted to stop the Prime Minister's party, and had radioed to the ship to hold back until the bridge was raised. However, due to the storm and the computer crash, that message had not been received.

The tower shuddered under the impact, causing the raising mechanism to start. The limo was at the center point of the bridge, and as it began to rise, the long luxury car found itself rising with it. The edge of the bridge caught it between just so, and it balanced there precariously. There was a horrible crunching of metal sound, screams and shouts of help, and then there came a smell of petrol. The bridge lifted to its fullest height, leaving chaos and carnage at the bottom on each side.

The Prime Minister calmed her frantic children. "Do not move, boys or we shall either go into the

river or smash at the bottom of the bridge."

"Then what can we do?" her younger son asked, his face pale.

"Just sit quietly and wait, son," Mr. Baker said. "Sit quietly and wait for rescue."

Post by Tawnyangel22 on 30/03/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:46:10 GMT

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Tuesday 10th April 2068 Tracy Island.. 8am

Christopher whistled as he emptied the contents of his saucepan on the plate.

Asterix purred and wound himself around his legs.

"You don't know how long I've waited to have another one of these", he smiled at the cat, "a full English!"

Putting the plate on the table, which was already laid with cutlery and condiments like HP Sauce and Heinz Tomato Ketchup, he sorted Asterix's breakfast out next.

Sitting down, he picked up the knife and fork and attacked the feast in front of him.

"I've got a good feeling about today", he said as he stroked Asterix's head. The little cat was now sitting on the table, cleaning himself.

"Maybe I can try with Tin-Tin again", he looked Asterix in the eye, "but not before I pack you off to be looked after by Dom and Josh or Kyrano".

He tickled the cat's chin, "I don't want interruptions next time."

"Mrrow", Asterix licked his master's face.

He was about to plunge his knife into a big fat sausage, when the alarm sounded, the IR alarm.

Asterix looked at Christopher.

"Maybe I spoke too soon." Christopher got up from the table and got two slices of bread then put the remains of his breakfast between them.

Checking that he had remembered to open the balcony door he headed out of the flat, egg yolk dripping out of the butty.

Post by The_Wrong_Trousers1 on 31/03/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:46:25 GMT
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*****Tuesday, April 10, 2068, Tracy Island, 8 a.m.*****

Callie awakened from her sound sleep with a long yawn. "Oh, boy. I have to work on the Thunderbird Three simulator today with John."

She pulled herself out of bed and grabbed her box of cereal upon entering her small kitchen. "Mmm, this should be a good morning for some corn flakes."

She poured skim milk over her cereal and took in the first bite when she suddenly heard the alarm going off. The loud alarm caused her to spit out her cereal, creating quite a mess on her counter. She frantically grabbed a paper towel and wiped it up. She then saw that her nighty had some of the mess, forcing her to hastily get dressed.

"I wonder how often this happens when there's an emergency," she said. Callie got dressed in a sweater and comfortable slacks and left for the lounge.

Post by TracyFan4Ever on 02/04/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:46:34 GMT
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Tuesday, April 10, 2068, 8:00 a.m., Tracy Island.

"Tyler, please don't stuff your face like that," Dianne said impatiently as Tyler cut a much too big piece of waffle and stuffed it in his mouth, his little cheeks bulging.

"Thorry, Ma," he said as he tried to chew.

"And don't talk with your mouth full!" Jeff and Dianne corrected in unison. They glanced at each other and both smothered a smile.

Suddenly, the emergency signal went off. The adults glanced at each other again as the older members of the Tracy family rose from the table. Jeff wiped his mouth and followed his sons from the room, no crutches, just a slight limp betraying his nearly healed foot. Dianne shot a glance to Emily, who nodded and moved closer to the children, as the doctor got up and followed the rest of the family out.

In the lounge, Jeff activated the communication system. Alan was already calling, "Base from Thunderbird Five, do you read?"

"Thunderbird Five from base. We read you five by five. What do you have for us, uh, Indy?" Jeff gave a quick glance at his code name cheat sheet as he searched for Alan's new code name.

"We've got a priority one situation, Boss. A cruise ship has collided with the Tower Bridge and it's malfunctioned." A gasp went up from the British members of the team as they filed in. "The Prime Minister's car is perched on the top of the drawbridge and is in a very precarious position. Several cars have smashed at the bottom of the bridge as it's risen on both sides." He turned. "Wait, I've got an update. The side of the bridge opposite the one where the Prime Minister is perched has slammed back down. The cruise ship is taking on water, but it has no passengers, just crew. I think the Royal Navy is taking care of that. The RAF put out the call because their big hover plane is in repairs. The weather isn't cooperating either."

Jeff blew out a breath. "Okay. Scott, you take Christopher. Give him a try at running the rescue from Mobile Control." He fixed his eyes on the former RAF pilot. "Understand that Scott has experience that you don't. If he sees that your decisions aren't working, he has the authority to pull you off. It is not to be taken as an insult if he does. There are lives at stake and there's no room for pride when you're on a rescue. Understood?"

Christopher's eyes were wide during this instruction and he gulped, squeaking out an "F-A-B." Scott took that as his cue to pull on the Brit's arm and draw him along to the entrance to Thunderbird One.

"Virgil, take Gordon, Brandon, and John, along with Four and Seven. Seven may be the key since it's a hovercraft. Dom, how are you on Seven's controls?"

"I've been working on them." Dom replied. "I don't know if I can do anything fancy."

"Then John can pilot and you can act as medic if necessary. Brains, you go along, too. They may need engineering help." Jeff looked around the room, seeing Dianne's arms folded and a specific look in her eyes. "Sorry, ladies. It's the men's turn." Dianne rolled her eyes and gave her head a little shake.

He avoided her gaze and instead said, "Thunderbirds are go!"

Post by Tikatu on 04/04/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:46:44 GMT
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Monday, April 9th, 9.45 pm, Tower Bridge, London

At home in Creighton-Ward Manor, Lady Penelope was reflecting on her visit to Tracy Island. It had been good to see Jeff so very much better, and she had enjoyed Kat's company again. She turned on the television, and her attention was immediately taken by a news flash.

There has been a terrible accident at Tower Bridge. A cruise ship heading upstream has collided with the structure of the bridge, setting off the rising mechanism. The Prime Minister and her family were travelling over the bridge, and are caught up in the disaster. We will bring you more

news as we receive it.

Lady Penelope instantly thought of contacting Tracy Island, but then decided not to. If International Rescue were to be called out, she didn't want to get in the way of any signals. She rang for Parker.

"You rang, m'lady?"

"Yes, Parker, there has been a terrible accident at Tower Bridge. I am considering going along to see if I can be of any assistance."

Just as Parker was about to reply, the programme was switched to the BBC News.

"We are going live to the scene of the accident, to our Reporter at Tower Bridge, Fiona Brotherton. What can you tell us, Fiona?"

"Well, Martin, it is total carnage here at the Bridge. As you can see the weather is appalling, and we have been told that a freak bolt of lightening has knocked out the electronic computer system of a cruise ship heading up river."

Lade Penelope watched with interest.

Fiona Brotherton continued. "We have been further advised that Bridge control tried to contact the ship, asking them to hold back until the Prime Minister's party had travelled across the bridge, but that message did not get through. Consequently the ship continued on, and due to the heavy weather, collided with the infrastructure of the tower, releasing the rising mechanism."

"What is being done as regards rescue?" Martin asked.

Fiona continued, her umbrella buffeted by the high winds. "At the moment, the police are trying to instigate some sense of calm, but as you can see," and here the cameras swung round, "there is panic setting in. The fire brigades and paramedics have arrived." Suddenly the camera moved towards a group of officials standing to one side of the group of reporters.

"Martin, the Chief of Police is just issuing a press release."

Chief Inspector Mason raised his hand. "Due to the enormity of the rescue, International Rescue has been contacted, and are on their way."

"Well, you all heard that. We are awaiting International Rescue."

Lady Penelope watched with horror as the scene on the TV screen before her unfurled. Once more the pictures flashed to the scene of devastation. People in cars were crushed by heavier vehicles. Several cars had rammed into the vehicles in front of them. Some victims had managed to escape their vehicles and were wandering around in a dazed state. The sound of screams and shouts for help were heart-breaking. The ship itself lay gently tossing on the tide. Being a tidal river the incoming tide would raise the ship, causing it to jam further under the part of the tower it

had struck.

Fiona joined a jostling crowd of reporters, trying to talk to the Chief of Police. Pushing herself forward, she shouted above the clamour. "Fiona Brotherton, BBC News. Tell me, how are the Prime Minister and her family?"

"We are very concerned for the safety of the Prime Minister and her family. At the moment the car is caught by the front wheels over the edge of the raised portion."

"Where are the RAF?" another reporter shouted above the noise.

"I am afraid that the main piece of equipment that they would normally use in a situation such as this is elsewhere. They are not able to help," the Chief replied.

There was more pushing and shoving as more reporters and cameramen tried to film and get answers to their questions.

"What about the ship? Are the crew in danger?" Fiona asked.

"There are just a pilot and his second in command aboard. We are doing all we can to assist them," another member of the Chief's party replied.

Suddenly the roar of rocket engines could be heard.

"It sounds like... Yes, it is! International Rescue has arrived. What a marvellous sight; a huge blue and silver rocket winging through the air!"

The camera swung round to focus on Thunderbird One. Scott's voice could be heard. "Sorry, no pictures please!"

Fiona came once more into view. "Well, you all heard that. We will abide by what they want. I will, of course, talk you through what is happening."

Suddenly there was much pushing and jostling as reporters, film crews, and interested spectators all tried to get a glimpse of Thunderbird One. Fiona side-stepped a French film crew, intent of getting close ups of the Thunderbird craft. "It looks like, yes, the magnificent Thunderbird One is flying about the area of the bridge. They are obviously deciding which is the best way to rescue the Prime Minister and her family."

Suddenly the screen went blank. The scene switched to Martin Jacobs in the newsroom. "We seem to have lost contact with Fiona Brotherton. We will try and reconnect to her as soon as we are able."

Lady Penelope nodded her head. ~Good! The camera fogging device seems to be working well.

Post by Tawnyangel22 on 09/04/2005

Washington D.C. offices; Monday, April 9th, 5 PM

Lena heard her staff finishing up for the day, and went out to see if there was anything they had to relate. Tom told her that Michelle had gotten a last minute call and was staying to help get the problem corrected. She nodded.

"I have a few tings to clear up, myself. So I'll be here for a while longer." She saw that the young woman was deep in conversation. "If she gets off de phone, or has a minute before you go, please tell her."

"Oh, did you hear?" said Louise. "There was a news report on the radio that a ship collided with the Westminster Bridge. The Prime Minister and her family were crossing it at the time, and the mechanism that raises the bridge started on its own. The car is caught on the edge and is barely holding on. International Rescue has been called in." She paused for a moment. "Boy, it must be exciting to work with them. I wish I could. And it seems to me that they have expanded. In the reports I've seen or heard, it sounds like there are more people working for them now, especially women. In that one rescue in Argentina, one of the victims tried to sue a woman for hitting him, but couldn't find out who she was. It was suppressed pretty quickly, though, when one of his friends said the girl probably had to do so, since the guy wouldn't leave his apartment, which was about to collapse." She shook her head. "The stupidity of some people. They just don't want to be helped."

"I hadn't heard about dat, or about de current rescue. I'll have to check into it. Dat bridge is about two hundred years old, and a landmark. I hope it isn't destroyed."

After a few minutes more conversation, all the staff except Michelle headed home for the night. Lena went back to her office and checked the internet news services for information about the rescue, then returned to her work. She'd completed her regular tasks and was attempting to add a block to Brains' email virus scan for anything bearing the signature of the one that had gotten through.

Half an hour later, Michelle knocked on the open door, then said, "All done. Problem resolved, and I'm heading home. How about you?"

Lena looked up and smiled at her. "I'll be leaving in a bit. You go on and I'll see you tomorrow. Have a good evening."

"You too, Lena. Goodnight."

Lena worked a little while longer, then sighed and saved what she'd done. She knew she could access it from her home computer, but she was feeling tired. I'm glad I decided to take de train in today. I wouldn't want to drive, especially at dis hour. She checked the news on her computer once more, gathered her things together, went through her usual checks of the electrical outlets, and left.

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:47:10 GMT

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Across the Atlantic, the wind began to gust with relish, and Thunderbird Two, as far as Dominic was concerned, was only kept in their air by the genius of Brains and the excellence of Virgil. The crew had been kept up to date via Alan -- Mental note, Thunderbird Five for today. How'm I gonna remember all these code names? -- and the danger zone was nearing. They were flying above the English Channel; Virgil assured them that London was only minutes away.

"I've never been to London before," he commented. "Never been much of anywhere, really. It's a pity that I'm seein' these places under such bad circumstances."

There was a general murmur of agreement, and beside him, Brandon nodded, his mouth in a firm line. His arms were crossed across his chest, and when Dominic stole a glance, his eyes were hard and steeled.

"Thunderbird One from Thunderbird Two," said Virgil, and all eyes in the cockpit swung towards him. "What's the situation?"

"Thunderbird Two from Thunderbird One, we've found a place near the bridge to set up mobile control; we'll be setting down imminently. What's your ETA?"

"ETA two and one half minutes, Thunderbird One. What's our plan of action?"

"I'm going to have to stabilize the limo with the lances," Scott said. In the background they heard the telltale roar of TB1's VTOL jets. "After that, we're going to need people up there to get the PM and company out of the limo. There are fires at the base of the bridge, which is going to make things harder, and then we've got the cruise ship to worry about. It appears to be taking on water. But not only that, there are reporters on top of the bridge trying to get in on the action." Scott chuckled, but the sound was dry. "This is going to be a tricky one, folks. I'll keep you apprised, Thunderbird Two. Thunderbird One out."

Gordon whistled through his teeth and shook his head; John crossed his arms with wry grin.

"Let's get to it then, guys," said Virgil. "Gordon, Brandon, prep TB4. John and Dom, the same for TB7. Brains, you're with me. We'll be landing any minute now. But remember when we're out there: code names!"

"FAB!" Said Gordon.

The crews piled into the passenger lift down to the pod bay. John gave Dominic a slight pat on the arm and a quick nod. It was time to get down to business.

Monday April 9th, 10.30 p.m. Tower Bridge, London

Fiona Brotherton looked in dismay as she realised that she was unable to send either sound or visual recordings back to the studio. She looked at her cameraman, Eddie. "Now what?"

"Guess we had better call it a day and return to the studio," he replied, beginning to get his equipment together.

"No, wait! There is a member of International Rescue over there. I'm going to try and get an exclusive interview."

"You can't! You won't get near," Eddie called, as she headed towards Christopher.

"Nothing ventured, nothing gained," was all that he heard her call back to him.

She edged along the Thames, moving in the opposite direction of the crowds, who were all watching the IR craft. A loud, "OOH!" went up behind her, and she briefly turned to see that the lead IR ship had fired some sort of golden lances, using them to stabilize the Prime Minister's car. She took a deep breath, and forged ahead. There was a cordon of police around a large, red control station, and a young man, wearing what she supposed was IR's new uniform sat there, speaking into a microphone. Worming her way past the police, she approached from the shadowed side of the control station.

"Hi, there, Fiona Brotherton, BBC News."

Christopher looked in amazement, as the young reporter held a microphone towards him. "Hello there," he remarked, smiling at her.

"Oh, you're English! I heard that International Rescue had taken on some extra recruits. It must be so thrilling to be a part of the most famous rescue team in the world. How did you come to be recruited?"

"Uh, yes. It is quite thrilling. As far as being recruited goes," Christopher, replied modestly, "I guess you could say that I was in the right place at the right time."

Fiona persisted. "But how were you recruited? I'm sure our viewers would love to know all about your life with International Rescue. Are you the only English member?"

"Oh, no. I'm not the only one... there are others...." Christopher said, not wanting to be rude, but not quite equipped to deal with a nosy reporter.

Up in Thunderbird Five, Alan couldn't believe what he was hearing. "Base from Thunderbird Five."

"Base here. Come in, Indy,"

"We have a security problem...."

Jeff listened in horror to what Alan was telling him about Christopher. "He is doing WHAT!?" He scowled. "I will deal with this." Toggling a switch, he shouted, "Mobile Control from Base. Asterix, what in hell do you think are you doing? This is a secret organisation! I don't want the world's media been given little titbits of information! GET RID OF HER!"

Christopher winced at the anger in Jeff's voice, and nearly took the earphone from his ear at the volume. "But, but, Sir," he began to protest.

"YOU HEARD ME! GET SECURITY TO GET HER OUT OF THERE!"

Jeff slumped back into his chair. Dianne tried to soothe him.

"And here I thought that I had chosen my new recruits well," he muttered.

"And you have, dearest." Dianne replied.

He looked up at her. "None of my sons would never dream of doing what he has just done."

"No, of course they wouldn't. They're used to handling the media, and maintaining the secrecy of International Rescue. I guess that Christopher has never been in this situation before. He has to learn."

"All the same, he should never have been in a position where he could be approached. Mr Jordan is going to have a very serious dressing down when he returns. He has to learn that no matter who approaches him, he must never, never talk to anyone except for those designated as liaison, and certainly not to members of the press."

Back at Tower Bridge, Christopher was still reeling from the blasting given him by Jeff Tracy. He just hadn't thought, and she had seemed so nice. He turned to her. "The interview is over." he said icily, his welcoming smile turned now to a stony face.

"But, surely the country is entitled to hear how their Prime Minister and her family are being saved, especially by a fellow countryman."

"SECURITY!" Christopher shouted to the police standing. A bobby rushed over at his call. "This Reporter shouldn't be here."

Fiona found herself being unceremoniously bundled away. She was angry and upset. "Okay, I'm going! No need to get heavy!" Calling over her shoulder; she almost spat out the words. "I won't forget this incident, or you, either!"

"Everything okay now?" another policeman asked Christopher kindly.

"Yes, thank you," a slightly shaken Christopher replied. He was, however, dreading his return to Tracy Island and Mr Tracy's wrath.

Post by Tawnyangel22 on 14/04/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:47:31 GMT
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Monday April 9th, 10.32pm. Tower Bridge, London..

"You stupid idiot!," Christopher hissed under his breath as he busied himself at Mobile Control.

His eyes flickering over all the various screens, he also looked up at Tower Bridge and went through various ideas in his mind.

"Thunderbird Five from Mobile Control", Christopher flicked the appropriate switch, "come in please".

"Thunderbird Five receiving you over", Alan's voice came over his headset.

"I require a weather update please Thunderbird Five", Christopher turned his gaze to the bank of monitors in front of him.

He heard the whine of Thunderbird One's engines as it came into land.

And as Alan relayed the weather details to him, he sank lower in his seat and got on with things.

"The best thing to do", he whispered to himself, "is to keep my head down and don't muck it up again".

Post by The_Wrong_Trousers1 on 14/04/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:48:14 GMT
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Tracy Island, Tuesday April 10th, 8.30 a.m.

Nikki and Kat watched as the men headed for the Thunderbird crafts.

"Nikki," Kat said. "I guess I won't be doing any training today. How about coming back to my apartment for breakfast?" Nikki nodded and the two young women headed back for the Cliff House.

"Do you want cereal, or toast and marmalade, or," and Kat laughed "both?"

"I can go for toast and marmalade." When breakfast was served, the two girls sat down to enjoy it.

Nikki asked, "So how are you going to enjoy your time off training? Gonna be lazy and spend it all relaxing on the beach?"

Kat smiled. "It will be kind of nice to have a whole day just relaxing and doing what I want. Although," and she grimaced slightly, "Scott has lent me a manual on Thunderbird One. I really should be reading it. But hey, when the cat's away, the mice will play." She got up to refill the coffee cups. "How about you? Will you miss the excitement of a rescue?"

Nikki took a sip of her refill before answering. "I don't know. I'll miss it in the sense that it's happening back home. I kinda miss England a bit. Along with my friends and family." Nikki smiled as she remembered them and her old home. Even if I do enjoy living in paradise, I still miss my old home. "So, are you bummed out that you didn't get to go?"

Kat looked slightly wistful. "I did enjoy the Russian rescue, but I guess that there will only be limited occasions where a mechanic is actually needed. But knowing that this is taking place in England kind of brings back feelings of homesickness that I am trying to overcome. Before you joined International Rescue, did you have any serious boyfriends? I didn't. I seemed too preoccupied with college and working for Lady Penelope. Although there was one young man that I dated for a short while. Nothing serious though and we parted as just good friends. Actually, I met the Tracy family before I came here, at a New Year's Eve party Lady Penelope held for her friends. Of course, I didn't realise at that time that I would be seeing a lot more of them."

"I didn't have any serious boyfriends for a while before joining International Rescue. The last really serious relationship ended during Uni. I mean, sure, I dated after him, but none were as serious." Nikki bit into her toast. "So what were your first impressions of the Tracy family when you first met them?"

Kat thought for a moment. What are my thoughts about the Tracy family? "The first member of the Tracy family I met was John. He came to Creighton-Ward Manor to bring me down for an interview with Mr Tracy. He was very caring and considerate." She hesitated, thinking of the time when he had told her the real reason for her visit. "I was so nervous when I met Mr Tracy. I wonder now how come he actually agreed to me being a member of International Rescue. Then it was poor John who had the task of letting me know the real reason behind my being interviewed. Boy, was I angry and hurt. But he was so patient that even now I feel guilty at the way I spoke to him." Kat had coloured slightly while speaking. "So what about your first impressions?"

"I think it took me a while to get over the fact that I was actually going to meet the Tracy family. Never met anyone famous in my life. You know, most of the first meeting is a blur at the moment; it happened so fast. Coming out here, being interviewed, and then finding out why they really needed me. I've got to admit, finding out was a shock and a half."

Seeing that Nikki had finished, Kat suggested that they sit on the balcony. "I really haven't had much experience with Scott or Virgil yet. Virgil was very complimentary when I helped him repair the winch and Brains is very good at training me, but I seem to be doing a lot of 'hands on' and he is so serious. Gordon on the other hand is totally different in every way. Callie, Brandon and I joined him on a fishing trip." She thought about the seaweed episode and smiled to herself. "But when it came to training me on Thunderbird Four, after playing a small trick on me, he was very good and patient. Yes, I like Gordon." Kat looked out to sea so that her friend couldn't see her

face. "And I like John as well," she added, more to herself than Nikki.

"I'm sorry, what was that? Did my ears pick up that you like John?" Nikki smiled. "He's nice. So are you going to actually ask him out? Not that you can get out too often with rescues and all and him being up in Thunderbird 5 sometimes."

Kat coloured even more. "Oh, gosh, I don't know. I don't think it's the done thing for a woman to ask a man out, unless it's a leap year. And as you rightly say, where can you 'go out to'? I can hardly say, 'Hey John, how about going to the pictures, or for a meal?'," She laughed and then changed the subject "Anyway, do you fancy any of the Tracy Brothers?"

"No. I just see them as friends. I get on really well with Gordon and Alan." Nikki then thought about her last conversation with the young blond. "Well, sometimes Alan."

Kat looked keenly at Nikki. She remembered the little incident at Alan's birthday and Jake. "So, is there something more than friendship starting with Alan? After all he is free." Kat chuckled to herself. "I think the whole family are very nice. Though I have to admit that I have not had much to do with Alan. Nor John, come to think of it, except for our date on the roof looking at the stars. Now, I would love to do that again. Yes, guess most of my time has been spent with Brains, and sometimes with Virgil and Gordon. I am going to have some training with Scott in Thunderbird One, and for the first time I am feeling very nervous about that."

"I doubt there would be more than friendship with Alan, especially with his thoughts on women. You know, staring at the stars with someone you like sounds very romantic." Nikki watched the waves roll in before speaking again. "So why are you feeling nervous about training with Scott in Thunderbird 1? He's a good teacher and he wouldn't rush you to get everything right first time around."

Kat nodded her head. "Yes, he was certainly very patient when I was learning to fly in the simulator. I did have major problems. It brought back to me the problems I had learning to fly when I was working for Lady Penelope." She hesitated. "It's just that Scott is the main Thunderbird pilot. When I was training with Brains and Gordon, and working with Virgil, yes, we were working hard, but we had some laughs, and everything was relaxed. I have a fear that with Scott it will be serious all the way. Also, when I get nervous I chatter too much. I am afraid of saying and doing all the wrong things." She looked at Nikki, "Does that make sense to you?"

"Yeah, I think so. But judging from Scott's paintball birthday, I'd say he isn't as serious as you are making him out to be. I'm sure he'll understand that you're nervous. For all we know, he was nervous when he first learned to fly Thunderbird 1 or any other plane." Nikki thought about Scott being nervous during flying, but she couldn't see it for some reason. "If you're not totally confident, let him know during the session. He's a teacher; he's there to help, not to judge."

"That's true," Kat agreed. She glanced at the rather heavy manual on the floor by the door to the balcony. "Look at that. That's what I am supposed to be reading. I will just have to read as much as I can, and try to overcome my nervousness. To be honest, these Thunderbirds and the auxiliary vehicles are so complex, I think I shall have to have several training sessions before I feel really confident. How are you coping with Dr Tracy and working in Thunderbird 7? It must be totally different to anything you have done in the past."

"I'm still getting used to working out in the field," Nikki replied. " But I'll get there; I know I will. I'll need a lot more training with driving Thunderbird 7, that much I can say. I'm used to working inside it now. Once the job has started, I don't really think about the technical things of it. Now, Dr Tracy? I've got to admit, Dr Tracy is extremely good at what she does. I've seen doctors work under pressure, but her job is... I think... more demanding is the right way to describe it. She's out there on the front line, the only doctor in the fleet. I've got so much respect for what she does. In fact, I have respect for the rest of them too." Nikki shifted slightly to get comfortable again.

Kat looked out over the sea. The sun was high in the sky. "I can't think of anything nicer right now than a swim in the pool. How about you?"

Post by Nikki-browneyes1 and Tawnyangel22 on 15/04/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:48:23 GMT
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*****Tuesday, April 10, 2068; 10:30 a.m. on Tracy Island*****

Callie was not scheduled for training on the Thunderbird Three simulator until that afternoon, but with John away on the current mission, that left her with almost nothing to do.

Dressed in her bathing suit and robe, she walked towards the swimming pool when she was surprised by the presence of Alex and Tyler at the top of the steps. "Hi, guys. What's up?" "All the guys are away on a mission," said Alex. "We don't have anyone else to play pinball with us."

"I'm a pretty decent pinball player, but it's been a while. Will you guys give me half a chance?"

Tyler smiled. "Okay, Callie. Come on, let's play!"

They all passed by the lounge when they heard Jeff's tirade on Christopher.

Tyler's eyes widened with surprise by the yelling. "Uh-oh, Daddy's mad at somebody."

Callie gulped. "I have never heard him like this before." When she heard the details of Jeff's angry words, she knew he meant business. Oh, boy, I do not want to get on Mr. Tracy's bad side, especially when it comes to security. I have a pretty good idea this is going to become part of the training when they return from England.

"I think it'd be best to go to the swimming pool," Alex suggested.

Callie and Tyler both nodded, and soon all three went down the stairs to the swimming pool.

Alex and Tyler played in the pool while Callie swam some laps on the other side, but she kept hearing Jeff's anger in the back of her mind. I know he did this for a good reason, but I just hope

Mr. Tracy won't be too hard on Chris. He was just caught up in the moment and made a rookie mistake. It happens to the...

She was interrupted with a splash of water in the face. "What the--?"

"Gotcha!" yelled Alex and Tyler.

"Oh, you two are gonna be sorry!" Callie joined in the splashing game with the boys. Thanks. It's just what I needed to clear my mind for a while.

Post by TracyFan4Ever on 16/04/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:48:47 GMT

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The great door of the pod opened, and with practiced hands John manoeuvred Thunderbird Seven out into the open. The sky was almost black and the rain slashed through the air, shining gold as the lightening hit. Winds buffeted the hovercraft, and John's face was stony as he kept control of it. Just behind them, they saw the Thunderizer trundle out and begin to follow. The plan was to use it to launch climbing cables, and he and Dominic were to climb up to the limo.

"Thunderbird Two from Thunderbird Seven, come in Thunderbird Two," he said.

"Receiving you, Seven," Virgil replied.

"We're heading towards the bridge now." Another bolt of lightning hit one of the towers. Beside him, he saw Dominic flinch. "There are a lot of people; it's going to be tricky. Can you get Mobile Control to arrange us a security detail? Seven's going to be on her own when we head up the bridge."

"Done and done, Thunderbird Seven." As he spoke, they saw a group of police persons beginning to disperse the crowds. "It's going to be one hell of a climb, guys, in this weather. Be careful."
"FAB."

John resisted the roll of his eyes that strained to break through. Brothers, he thought, all overprotective. Including me, he added with a grin.

Dominic noticed without relish the crowds that were gathering to watch them, pointing and gaping. It's like some perverse theme park or something. But I can understand the attraction. He pulled his cap down further and kept his eyes forward.

"Ready for some climbing?" John asked.

"Definitely."

"Have you had much experience? I know Gordon's been training you on the island cliffs."

"I was a climber in university, and believe me, this weather is nothing compared to a bad climb up Slieve Donard back home. Scary stuff."

They reached the bottom of the bridge, where several cars were wrecked. Fire crews were dealing with ravaging fires on both sides of the bridge, but had cleared a narrow gap in the wrecks for the Thunderbird machines to get through.

"Thunderizer from Thunderbird Seven."

"Receiving you, Seven. Getting in place to fire the cabling," said Gordon.

"FAB." John turned to Dominic. "Go and get your medical bag and whatever else you need now. I'm going to get the climbing gear."

With a nod, Dominic went to open the cab door.

"And remember...Dak," John said with a grin, "Codenames."

"FAB, Quasar. See? I remembered."

Dominic nimbly hopped out into the driving rain, and John followed suit.

In the cab of the Thunderizer, Gordon swiftly manipulated the controls so the machine was facing in the right direction, and the cannon was at the right angle. He smiled. Piece of cake, he thought. He saw his crewmates hop out of the cab, wrapped up in their waterproofs, and run into the medical car behind. He checked his co-ordinates again, and toggled the comm.

"Mobile Control, Thunderbird Two, and Quasar from Thunderizer."

"Receiving you," Christopher, Virgil, and John replied, almost in unison.

"Ready to fire the cables."

"FAB."

Man, multiple communications are strange, he thought. He pressed the fire button, and two metal grips shot out of the cannon. A loud, "Ooh!" sounded from the crowd around them. He tracked their progress on the screen in front of him, and let out a quiet 'yes' when they hit their marks on target.

"Quasar from Thunderizer, the cables are up. Am heading back to Thunderbird Two. Good luck!"

"Thanks, Gor... Err, Cousteau."

Gordon backed the bulky craft out of the cleared area and headed back to Thunderbird Two. In

this weather, brother, you're going to need all the luck you can get.

John winced as Dominic slapped his helmet down tightly over his head as he checked the couplings of Dominic's gear. He smacked Dominic's helmet back, and almost displaced the man's glasses.

"Contacts might be in order," he commented.

"I was thinking that myself."

Dominic fixed his glasses and then tightened the fastenings of his medical backpack.

"Ready?" John asked.

"As ever," was the reply.

They stepped back out into the freezing weather, the winds catching their clothes. They were glad for the amount of layers they were wearing. John signalled for one of the police to come over. A tall woman jogged towards them.

"Make sure no one gets near this craft. No pictures, nothing," John said, and the woman nodded. "Thanks."

"No problem, guv, it's us who should be thanking you," she said with a wink, and then set about organizing her people.

"Let's get to it," Dominic said, and the men went to affix their cables, and start the arduous ascent.

Post by ArtisticRainey on 17/04/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:48:56 GMT

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Monday, April 9, 2068, 10:50 p.m., local time, London

Christopher studiously tried to ignore the man who came striding over from Thunderbird One, but when said man was standing behind him and nearly breathing down his neck, it was hard to keep up the pretense. He sat for several miserable minutes, waiting for the same kind of blast from Scott that he had gotten from Scott's father. But none came.

He hesitantly looked over his shoulder and his eyes met the smouldering blue orbs of the senior field commander. Scott stood behind him, arms folded, face looking like one of the thunderclouds that still rained water and electric fire on them. Christopher squared his shoulders and turned around fully, standing up, though his shorter height gave him a disadvantage when it came to staring Scott in the face.

"Obviously you've heard," Christopher said, no hint of fear in his voice (though truth to tell, there was a thread of it running through his gut).

"Yes. I've had an update," Scott said, his voice sending the air temperature in the vicinity down a dozen degrees.

"Well? Go ahead. Let it out," Christopher replied. "Whatever you dish out can't be as bad as I've already had."

Scott shook his head. "No. Not here. Not in public. Besides, it's not my prerogative. I'll leave you to the Boss's tender mercies." He motioned his head in the direction of Mobile Control. "Get back to work. But just remember, I'm watching."

Christopher huffed out a breath, half in relief, then turned around to sit down at the console again. ~As if I could forget where you are and what you're doing, he grouched to himself. He tapped his earpiece as Brandon asked for an update, and tried to forget the blue eyes that were watching his every move.

Post by Tikatu on 18/04/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:49:06 GMT

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Brandon watched as Gordon maneuvered the Thunderizer out of the pod bay, following Thunderbird Seven into the maelstrom.

"Man, I haven't seen weather like this before, not even in San Diego. I hope the guys will be all right." Brandon cringed as another bolt of lightning struck the tower. "Damn, that was close," he said as a deafening clap of thunder followed closely on the heels of the lightning. Giving one last look at the weather, he said a silent prayer for his friends before going back to check the gear.

"Let's see," Brandon said, mentally going through every possible scenario that could come up. "We'll need dry suits, air tanks and cutting torches." He went to the respective storage lockers, getting the necessary equipment and giving it a thorough examination. He pulled out more gear that he thought they needed, checking it as thoroughly as he did before.

The sound of the Thunderizer got his attention, and he looked up as Gordon parked the machine back in its pod.

The two men walked back to Thunderbird Four together. Gordon noticed all the stuff that Brandon had laid out and smiled. "You were busy while I was gone, weren't you?"

"I guess I was. I didn't know what we'd be getting into, so I covered all possibilities."

"Why don't you contact Mobile Control and get a progress report. That way we'll know what we're

getting into."

Brandon nodded, going to the radio. Please, let me get this right. "Mobile Control from Big Mac. Do you copy?"

Christopher was surprised by the sudden sound of Brandon's voice. "Big Mac from Mobile Control. Reading you five by five."

"Need progress report concerning current situation with cruise ship."

"Big Mac from Mobile Control, stand by. After a few seconds, Christopher returned with the information. "Be advised, Big Mac, that the cruise ship is being battered against the bridge support and is rapidly taking on water."

"FAB, Mobile Control." After signing off with Christopher, he informed Gordon of the situation.

"That's not good," Gordon said grimly. "If the ship keeps battering the support, it could weaken, causing it to collapse. We need to get the ship away from the bridge to prevent that from happening. We also have the Prime Minister's car to think about, not to mention John and Dom."

"What are we hanging around here for, then? The sooner we get the ship moved, less chance there is of the bridge collapsing."

"Slow down, Brandon. The first thing we've got to do is seal the leak. Then we can tow her to a safe location."

"Sounds like a plan. What did you have in mind?" Brandon asked, feeling the familiar surge of adrenaline

"First off, we have to stabilize the ship so that it doesn't smash us to a pulp as we make the down and dirty repairs. Probably have to get Four between the ship and the support; she can take the abuse. We'll use the laser cutters to shear off any rough edges, then fix a sheet of Brains's miracle polymer to cover the hole. It's stronger than polyhexane. We haven't used it much but this would be a good time. It's lighter than even a cahelium plate and if we lose our grip on it, we won't have to go diving to retrieve it." Gordon began to flex his muscles to loosen up. "Once we've got the hole sealed, one of us can climb aboard and get the bilge pumps to working. Then Four will tow it away." He gave Brandon a keen glance. "How are you at night diving?"

"I've done it a few times before. It's been a while, though."

"Then maybe you'd better work in Four, keep her situated between the support and the ship so I can work outside. We'll need her lighting trough anyway."

"You got it, Gordon."

"Let's get moving, then." Both men suited up and prepped Thunderbird Four for launch.

Post by MagicMaster8 on 18/04/2005

Torrents of water gushed at their feet, and even their gripped IR-issue boots had some trouble getting grip. The rain slashed their faces like a million jagged spears, and they battled their way up the roadway, barely able to see through the thick rain curtain. The rope was slick beneath their gloves, and water ran off their helmets and into their faces.

"Some weather, eh?" John said, and narrowed his eyes against the wind.

If not for their helmet intercoms, Dominic wouldn't have been able to hear him over the roar of the wind.

"You're tellin' me! Shall we get the PM first?" Dominic asked.

"Definitely!"

They managed the slope without too much difficulty, and John was eternally grateful for the experience of his companion. The limo, even though it was held in place by the golden lances, was still in a precarious position. Carefully John opened the back passenger door. Inside sat the Prime Minister and her two children. In the front were her husband and the driver.

"International Rescue at your service," he said.

Dominic nodded, and began to ready the second harness he held.

"Ma'am," John said, getting his own harness ready, "We'll take you down first."

"You will not!" She answered. "Take my sons first."

"Ma'am - "

"I refuse to go until you take my sons!"

The Prime Minister's husband leaned into the back seat and frowned at the two IR men, shaking his head.

"She won't budge," he said, "Why do you think she's the Prime Minister?" He added with a grin.

"Gerard! This is not the time for jokes," she said sternly, and then looked back at John. "Take my sons. That's final."

With a sigh, John acquiesced, and held out the harness to the younger looking son.

"Let's go then. What's your name?" He asked.

"Toby," he said.

There was a slight tremble in his body, John noted; he couldn't have been more than fourteen. He

strapped the boy in the harness, secured tightly to himself, and patted his shoulder.

"Alright, Toby, let's go. It'll be over soon."

He nodded at Dominic and then began his descent, and Dominic did the same for the older son.

"And your name is, my friend?"

"Alexander, not Alex," he said.

"Well, Alexander-Not-Alex, ready for a free trip?"

The boy rolled his eyes at the quip. Dominic grinned. Someone doesn't want to show his fear! Then, he too headed down the slope.

John landed gently and released the harness enabling Toby to stand free on terra firma. Immediately paramedics rushed across and wrapped a warm blanket around the young boy's shoulders. Dominic landed beside John and after releasing Alexander's harness, the paramedics immediately did the same. Toby and Alexander were put on board a waiting ambulance, which speeded away, sirens blaring, announcing their departure. John looked at Dominic

"Okay, Dak, now the Prime Minister and her husband."

The two young men carefully climbed up to the trapped limo. They saw that Gerard had clambered into the back. Not the smartest of ideas considering the precariousness of this thing's position, thought John.

"Ma'am," John approached the Prime Minister. "We are ready to take you and your husband to safety."

Just as he spoke these words, the car, now more unstable with two passengers missing, moved, forcing the Prime Minister's husband against the limo door, which threatened to fling open. The PM let out a shriek, and reached out for her husband. Their hands clasped as the door opened, and the man yelled as he was tossed out into the storm. The PM slid forward sharply, and Dominic leapt into the car and grabbed her waist. They slid together, Gerard slipping down towards the churning waves below. Dom jammed his feet in behind the seat as he felt John grab him tightly, yelling something in his ear that he didn't fully hear; all he was conscious of was the PM and the water below. Yells and shrieks were travelling up on the winds.

"Help me, help me!"

Gerard screamed and the PM yelled out to him, telling him it would be alright. I thought that was our job, Dominic thought, although the frivolity was lost in the danger.

"Dak!" John yelled. "I'm going to pull you back out. Try and lever yourself backwards. Hold on tight everyone!"

With incredible effort, the two men managed to drag Gerard back up into the relative safety of the limo. It creaked and moaned, and Dominic quickly began to harness up the Prime Minister, while John reached out for Gerard. He glanced over at the driver, and was about to speak when the man held up a hand.

"Don't worry about me. I'm patient."

John nodded at him, and he tipped his cap. With all the speed they could muster, they began their descent. Dominic held the PM tightly to him as the rain battered them from every side, and the winds whipped around them. The bridge beneath was increasingly slippery as torrents of rain flowed down in a never ending river. He tried his best to keep balance in the wind with the water at his feet, but the burden of the woman with him and the strength of the winds proved too much. Suddenly he heard two voices yelling, a scream in his ear, and found himself twisting around with his eyes shut, arms tightening around the PM. His back struck the concrete below, and he felt the sharp wrench of the safety rope stopping their descent. When his eyes opened he felt a burst of panic flare up inside him. I can't see! My glasses! Where are they?

"Anna! Are you alright?" Gerard called out.

"Dak!" John shouted over the winds.

Dominic fought down the panic and pulled himself and the PM to their feet, pulling heavily on the rope. The world was a swirling mass of grey and black. He could vaguely make out a blur that was the PM's face, and smiled grimly in its direction.

"Sorry about that, ma'am. We're nearly there."

His fingers were like steel around the rope as he began to let it out. His heart beat in his mouth, and he tried to keep his face still and calm. It's okay, it's fine, don't freak out, you're nearly at the bottom. Feeling like a child taking its first steps he edged his way down the rest of the bridge. He let out a breath when he felt level ground once more, and he stopped for a moment to centre himself. He could hear people all around them, and could feel the icy wind and rain whipping around.

His numbing fingers fumbled with the catches on the harnesses, and suddenly he felt another set of hands on them. He squinted his eyes and tried to focus, stilling and clenching his fists.

"It's me, Dak, Quasar."

He allowed the touch and felt the harness disengage, and the PM's presence disappeared.

He could hear paramedics coming over, talking to the PM and her husband. John briefly tapped his shoulder.

"I'm going back up. Don't go anywhere."

"I don't intend to," Dom said.

He was conscious of the slight hitch in his voice. It was more than disconcerting. It was like being

a child. He counted down the seconds until John was back at his side, warding off paramedics who tried to wrap him up, too. Before they were taken away the PM and her husband fought their way back to the two men.

"Thank you so much. You're wonderful people, all of you."

They were whisked away again, and John placed a hand firmly on Dominic's shoulder.

"Can you see at all?" He asked.

"Not a bean," Dom answered, squinting again. "Shall we get back to TB7, then?" John nodded. "Lead the way, then."

Post by Tawnyangel22 and ArtisticRainey on 19/04/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:52:16 GMT
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Monday, April 9, 2068, 11:45 p.m., local time, London

"Mobile Control and Thunderbird Two from Thunderbird Seven," John intoned. "I'm putting this baby to bed."

"F-A-B," Christopher replied. "Be aware that the pod has shifted position somewhat. Thunderbird Two should have new coordinates."

"I have new coordinates, Thunderbird Seven," Virgil piped up. "Downloading them to your guidance computer now. You may still have to compensate for the tidal drift."

"F-A-B, Thunderbird Two." John watched as the coordinates appeared on the computer, and he busied himself setting powering up the hoverjets in preparation for meeting up with the pod. The door slid open behind him and Dom entered the pilot's cabin, dressed in dry scrubs. He walked slowly over to the copilot's seat and sat down, buckling himself in.

"I think I'll need to talk to Doc about contacts," Dom said conversationally.

"Yes, she'll know what to do," John replied. He looked out the window as a motion caught his eye. "Oh God. Look at that."

Before them, the raised part of the bridge that still held the Prime Minister's limousine began to shift, falling rapidly toward the water. Since the bulk of the limo was supported by the lances, it didn't move forward to slip off into the river, but instead was smashed between the two parts of the drawbridge. Dom, squinting, could barely make out the action through the rain and in the light of the fire vehicles and news helicopters. He let out a low whistle.

"I think we got there in the nick," he said.

John nodded. "I just hope that jolt didn't affect Thunderbird Four. They're working in a very dangerous situation."

"Amen to that," Dom replied.

"Let's get this Bird in the pod," John said, backing the hovercraft up and pulling it off the bridge. Then he slowly eased it down the bank as the police made the crowds pull back, then out onto the surface of the river, heading for the pod.

Post by Tikatu on 24/04/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:52:26 GMT

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Monday, April 9th, Tower Bridge, London

Fiona angrily shook herself free from the police officer. "Okay, okay! I'm leaving!"

"Just remember if you are found here again, you will be arrested," he warned.

Fiona managed to struggle through the sightseers and emergency services. She knew she shouldn't have tried to get the interview, but in her line of business, there had to be risks, and after all a scoop was a scoop. She was sure that the viewers would like to know that there were English recruits among the International Rescue personnel. She paused for a breath, and looked up at the walkway connecting the two towers. ~I wonder. Turning round, she bumped into a young man carrying a camcorder.

"Sorry," he mumbled.

"No, I should be the one apologising." Fiona smiled at him. "That's a nice camcorder you have."

"Yes, it is," he said, smiling proudly. "Top of the range." Then he added glumly, "But at the moment, I can't use it."

Fiona nodded. "Yes, International Rescue seems to have some sort of jamming device." She thought for a moment, and then said, "Would you like to try and get some pictures?"

The young man's eyes lit up. "Yes, rather!"

"Let me introduce myself. I'm Fiona Brotherton from the BBC. I tried to get some pictures, but like you, found it impossible. My cameraman, Eddie, has returned to the studio. Would you come along and see if we can get something on film over the other side of the bridge?"

The young man nodded. "By the way, I'm Tommy. I'm a student, currently on holiday. This is the most exciting thing that has happened to me."

"Well, come on, Tommy! What are we waiting for?"

Fiona and Tommy entered the Tower and climbed the steps to the walkway. Once outside, the heavy rain and strong winds made progress very slow and dangerous. Luckily for them, the police had moved all the sightseers on the walkway away. The wind was blowing from behind the two. One constable was lounging against the walkway rails. Approaching him, Fiona smiled and said. "I think that there is a young man in the middle of the walkway with a camera."

"Thank you Miss," he looked at her, "You know you shouldn't be walking along here don't you?"

"Oh., I know, officer. I guess I was just being nosy. I couldn't resist climbing up to the top here."

"Well, you take yourself down again and be careful. This is no place for a young woman.. Thanks for the information about the photographer."

Once the Policeman had left, Fiona and Tommy walked down the stairs, leading to the other side of the raised bridge. Fiona asked Tommy to try and film the rescue.

"It's rather a fuzzy picture, but I am sure that if we go a little further away, I should be able to pick something worthwhile using my zoom lens."

The pair scrambled hastily down the steps in the Tower, and out on to the road leading to the raised portion. Tommy managed to film the limo, balanced precariously on the edge of the raised section. Suddenly he gasped.

"What have you seen?" Fiona asked.

"Looks like someone has fallen out of the limo, and, oh good, is being rescued." He panned the camcorder round, filming Thunderbird 2 dropping the pod, and Thunderbird 4 emerging.

"Oh no," Tommy groaned. "Everything is very fuzzy at the moment."

Damn, Fiona thought. I must get more for the viewers.

Tommy tried once more, and this time, he managed a brief film of Thunderbird 7. Then there was nothing more he could film.

"What are you two up to?" a gruff voice said as a policeman came into view.

Fiona linked arms with Tommy. Smiling brightly, she remarked, "We are just two students, studying history, and the Tower Bridge and the Tower of London are among two of the buildings we have to write about."

"We are actually on our way to the Tower of London to attend a lecture." Tommy added.

Fiona flashed Tommy a grateful smile.

"Well, on your way, you shouldn't be here, you know."

Fiona and Tommy hurried away. Once out of earshot, Fiona asked Tommy if she could have the film.

"Oh gee, do you really want it?"

"I'll pay you well for it."

Tommy hesitated.

Fiona tried to reason with him, "Look Tommy, this film is of national interest. How about I make a copy and send it to you?"

After giving her his address, Tommy handed over the film.

Fiona reached for her two-way radio. She smiled to herself. I've got an interview, albeit a short one. Nevertheless, I have found out that there were English recruits in International Rescue. That would be of interest. Plus, I have some footage of the Thunderbirds and International Rescue in action. Maybe she would get promotion, which would be very satisfactory.

"Martin, this is Fiona Brotherton, reporting from Tower Bridge. I have an exclusive on the rescue. I am heading back to the studio."

Lady Penelope sat watching in dismay, as Martin advised the nation that their reporter at the scene of the accident had some exclusive film. "Parker? Fetch the Rolls. There is a certain young woman I have to find before that film is broadcast."

Before she left, Lady Penelope contacted Jeff. "Base from Pink Lady, we have a security alert." She explained to Jeff what had happened. "Don't worry, Jeff, I have my contacts at the BBC. Ms Brothertons's film will never be broadcast."

Post by Tawnyangel22 on 23/04/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:52:35 GMT

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Monday, April 9, 2068, 11:45 p.m., local time, London

"How much longer, Cousteau?" Brandon asked through the communications system. He was watching as Gordon attached the tough polymer sheet over the gash in the hull of the stricken cruise vessel.

"Nearly there, Big Mac," came the answer. Brandon frowned. Gordon's voice sounded strained and when he checked the water temperature, it was cold... too cold for Brandon's liking.

"Let me come out and give you a hand," he suggested.

He could see Gordon shake his head in the light of Thunderbird Four's lighting trough. "No need...."

His words were cut off as a shockwave shook Thunderbird Four. A distant booming could be heard and the view from the front port was obscured by a wall of bubbles.

"Aggh!" Gordon's cry of pain came over the communicator loud and clear.

"Cousteau from Mobile Control! What's your status?" Christopher's voice came in from his post. Scott leaned in close over his shoulder, a concerned frown on his face, as the Englishman continued to call.. "Thunderbird Four from Mobile Control. Status report!"

"Mobile Control from Thunderbird Four," Brandon's voice cut in, terse and tense. "Cousteau is injured. I'm going out after him."

"F-A-B, Thunderbird Four. Update as soon as you can." Christopher looked up over his shoulder at Scott. "Sorry, mate. I hope he's okay."

"So do I," Scott replied. "You'd better alert Seven that there's a casualty coming."

"F-A-B," Christopher said smartly as he turned back to notify the mobile hospital of an incoming patient.

Beneath the waters of the Thames, Brandon had quickly finished suiting up and swam out the airlock toward his injured partner. Gordon was cradling one arm with the other. The laser welder hung, deactivated, from a tether at his waist.

"Cousteau!" Brandon called, approaching. "What's wrong?"

"Tha... that shockwave... slammed me hard against th-the hull. I've hurt my arm... my shoulder."

"Okay. Let's get you back to Four and I'll finish the job."

"No need..."

"Yes, I need to get you back."

"N-No. No need to... finish... welding's... done."

"Great. C'mon. Let's get you back. The Royal Navy can take care of the ship now."

Brandon helped Gordon swim back to the submarine, then helped him off with his equipment and wrapped him in a blanket. He was concerned about Gordon's temperature; the redhead's lips were blue and he was shivering. His right arm from the shoulder to the elbow was red and beginning to swell a bit. ~Looks like just a big bruise, but Dom will be able to tell for sure if there's anything broken.

"Mobile Control from Thunderbird Four. Preparing to leave the Danger Zone. The ship is patched. The Royal Navy will have to take it from here."

"F-A-B, Thunderbird Four. Head directly to the pod. Seven is on alert and waiting for you."

"F-A-B, Mobile Control. Will do." Brandon looked around outside and muttered to himself, "Now I just have to figure out how to get out of here."

"Take on ballast," came a weary, painfilled voice from behind him.

"Oh. Good idea. Thanks." Brandon opened the ballast vents, letting the air out of the tanks and filling them with river water. Slowly, and with an alarming scraping sound, Thunderbird Four sank deeper and deeper until she was finally free of the cruise ship's keel. "Activating engines," he said, fitting action to words. "Destination, pod four." He turned his head slightly to speak to Gordon. "You think the Navy can get hold of her before she bashes another hole in her side?"

"They'd better," Gordon said, his voice a little stronger. "Or we'll bill them for repairs."

Brandon chuckled as he turned the battered Thunderbird around and headed for the surface and the waiting pod.

Post by Tikatu on 25/04/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:52:47 GMT

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Tracy Island, Tuesday April 10th, 2068. 12:30pm.

Walking lazily along the soft stretch of almost white sand had definitely been a good decision. The warm breeze and the constant swishing of the tide lapping the edge of the beach had a calming soothness to it, and it was here that time was forgotten.

~Well, almost, thought Elise as she squigged her toes into the sand. Things had been fairly quiet since the team left for the rescue in London. Those not going had wandered off to busy themselves with other things, but Elise had taken the opportunity to be alone, and just try to relax.

A movement on her left interrupted her thoughts, and as she turned towards that direction, a small object flew past her and landed with a 'plop' into the water. It was shortly followed by another, then another. As she began to walk towards the source of the 'popping' objects, another flew by and this time, its flight was accompanied by an angry "Hurumpf!"

Curious, she walked up a small sand dune, and there, sitting on the other side, was Tyler. He had a very scrunched up, angry look and he seemed determined to launch all the small things in a pile beside him into the vast ocean beyond. Elise watched him for a moment, then spoke.

"You know, if you stand up, you might be able to throw them farther."

Tyler didn't turn towards her, nor did his expression change as he replied, "I don't care!"

"Tyler, isn't it?" asked Elise. She'd seen him around often, but usually from a distance, and had never really spoken to the younger siblings.

"Yeah, so?"

"Would you mind if I joined you? I kinda sometimes feel the way you are."

This time Tyler did look at her, although his face was still scrunched up, with eyebrows firmly pointed down, and his forehead wrinkled. Elise sat down next to him, absently looking at his pile of things. Small rocks, twigs, pieces of old toys and broken shells made up most of the pile. She leaned back on her arms and quietly watched as Tyler threw some more stuff at the waves.

"Why are you so mad, Tyler?"

"What's it to you!" he shot back defensively. Almost immediately his small shoulders slumped, and looking down at his pile he mumbled, "I got grounded."

She thought for a moment, and then trying to hide a small smile, said, "Really? Join the club, little guy. I got grounded, too."

Tyler's head shot up and he looked puzzled. "You? You got grounded?"

"Yep!"

"But you're a team member! How did you get grounded?"

Elise had to let the smile out. His little face was so innocently bewildered. He was thinking she had been 'grounded' the same way he had!

Bless him! she thought. "Long story. How about you? What did you do?"

Tyler looked at the waves again. "Fighting with Alex over the stupid games in the game room. It was my turn, and he ALWAYS butts in, and then I get the blame, and then Mom comes in and then...."

He was becoming quite agitated and Elise held up a hand. "Hey, slow down there!"

The boy relaxed a little. "So, then what happened?"

"Alex blamed me and so I told him to shut-up and he was mean, and then we started to argue and Mom grounded us both." He was now pouting. "I wish I didn't have any brothers or a sister sometimes. Then I wouldn't get grounded."

"When I was your age, Tyler, I always wished for brothers and sisters."

"Why?"

He looked up at her, and returning his look, she simply replied, "So I'd have someone to play with, and fight with." Tyler almost smiled at that last remark.

"I guess it's sometimes tough, being part of a big family, isn't it?" she said, thinking more about herself fitting in with the Tracy clan, but also understanding the little boy's frustration.

"Sure is. Ms. Collins? Who grounded you?"

Biting back a laugh, she put on her most honest face and said, "Your mom."

Tyler's eyes widened to the size of small saucers. "MOM?! Wow!"

"Yep! Your mom grounded us both, tough guy!" she ruffled his hair until he actually laughed, and then the two sat and quietly threw the remains of his pile out to sea.

Post by FrankieCTB2 on 27/04/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:52:55 GMT

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Tracy Island, later that same afternoon.

Journal Entry #1.

Well, here we go. Today I actually feel rested. The sleeping pills Dianne gave me worked, thank God. I don't know how much more of those nightmares I can stand. I guess I would rate how I feel around an 8, if I'm to stick to Dianne's instructions. I guess if I write all this stuff down, she'll be able to tell if the meds and therapy are working! Well, half the team is gone out on a call to London and so it's quiet at the moment. Later, I will talk to Scott about alternate training that I can do while I'm grounded. Note: no reactions to meds at this time.

Elise put down her pen and closed the journal. Stretching, she walked over to her balcony and looked out over the island. It was quiet. Soon the team would return and all the hustle and bustle of the de-briefing would liven things up for a while.

She walked back into her bedroom and flopped onto the bed. Looking over at the photo of herself and her parents, she smiled.

"I promise I'll get over this, and I WILL be the pilot I once was. I miss you guys." Turning her head away, she closed her eyes and drifted off to sleep.

Post by FrankieCTB2 on 27/04/2005

Tuesday, April 10, 12:02 a.m. local time, London.

"Call stand down," Scott instructed.

Christopher took a deep breath and said into his mike, "Base, Thunderbirds Two and Seven from Mobile Control. Stand down operations at zero-zero-zero-two hours, local time."

"F-A-B, Mobile Control." "Mobile Control from base, F-A-B on stand down." "Mobile Control from Two, F-A-B." The three acknowledgments were followed by Virgil's adding, "Heading back to base. ETA, 15:00 hours base time. See you there."

"F-A-B, Thunderbird Two. Mobile Control out." Christopher blew the remainder of the breath out and looked up at Scott. "Now what?"

"Now we break down the equipment and pack it up," Scott said.

"Good thing we had this tent thing," Christopher said as he stood and stretched. "Things would have been much wetter if we hadn't."

"Mobile Control is built to withstand some pretty severe conditions," Scott replied as he began to fold the unit into its more portable shape. "Especially after B... Einstein had to rebuild and redesign it."

"Why'd he have to do that?"

"Rock slide took it out." Scott refrained from saying that the rock slide almost took him out as well.

Together the two men maneuvered the now packed up Mobile Control machine into the belly of Thunderbird One. Then they came back and took down the cabana-like Penelon tent. It had been open on one side and the other three sides were of a light gauzy material that stopped the elements but the operator inside could see through to an extent. Scott indicated that he would get Thunderbird One prepped while Christopher went and thanked the Chief of Police for his help in providing security. He tried to downplay his accent when he did, but the Chief said, "It's good to know that a fellow countryman is looking out for us."

Inwardly, Christopher groaned. This was just what he didn't want: recognition.

He climbed into the cockpit, and strapped in beside Scott. The lead Thunderbird lifted into the air and Scott radioed to base. "Base from Thunderbird One. We are en route. ETA: 13:47 hours, base time."

"F-A-B, Thunderbird One," Jeff's voice came over the air. It prompted Christopher to think about what he'd been trying to avoid in the midst of all the hubbub of the rescue: his own failure at keeping things secure. The thought of impending doom kept his mind occupied for a large part of the trip. ~I'm for it when we reach base. Might as well take it like a man, though. Mr. Tracy will

expect nothing less.

Post by Tikatu on 27/04/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:53:11 GMT

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April 10, 1:15 p.m. Tracy Island,

At the present time the island was peaceful, but the rescuers would soon be coming home. Tin-Tin entered the lounge, acknowledging Jeff at his desk and her father talking to him.

Kyrano turned to Tin-Tin and said, "Daughter, you seem quiet. Is there anything bothering you?"

"No, Father," she replied. "I am just going to work on tweaking my formula and try and arrange to get the rest of the uniforms made up in the new fabric."

Kyrano noted that Tin-Tin was carrying her laptop computer. "You are not working from your desk?"

Tin-Tin hesitated for a moment and then remarked, "I am hesitant to send e-mails at the moment. Especially after the recent virus that attacked my computer."

Jeff looked at both father and daughter. "I think you are very wise, Tin-Tin. Until Lena has established the source of the e-mail you should be extra cautious."

Tin-Tin nodded to him before heading out towards the balcony. She settled down at a table on the far corner of the balcony and opened her laptop. Hearing shouts coming from the pool, she watched some of the new recruits who were left behind, swimming and relaxing around the pool. Resisting the urge to join them, she settled down with her formula.

Cherie, seeing Tin-Tin heading for the balcony, followed her. "Hi, Tin-Tin, need any help?"

Tin-Tin smiled at the young girl and, noticing the books she was carrying, said, "Looks like you should be doing some work of your own."

Cherie wrinkled her nose. "Mom has assigned me some homework, but I would far rather help you. I really want to be of help to Dad and Mom and my brothers, but all I keep getting is 'you're too young'."

"You will be of help one day, Cherry, but you really must do your lessons first, you know," Tin-Tin replied, smiling at Cherie.

"Then if I can't help, please may I watch?" Cherie added, pulling up her chair alongside Tin-Tin's.

"Okay, you may, but you must get your work done as well. I don't want Dr Tracy accusing me of

keeping you from your lessons."

Cherie grinned at Tin-Tin. "I will keep my books open, and if Mom or Dad come out here, it will look as if I am doing homework."

"Very well," Tin-Tin agreed. "This is my current formula, and these are the parts of the uniforms which need to be made up in the new fabric."

Jeff put his head out and looked along the balcony. Both Tin-Tin and Cherie looked busy. Cherie had her books open, and Tin-Tin was writing something on her laptop. Satisfied that Cherie was doing her mother's bidding, he returned to his desk to take a call from Scott.

Post by Tawnyangel22 on 28/04/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:53:22 GMT

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Tuesday 10 April, 01.35pm Tracy Island time, Thunderbird Two.

The world had degenerated into a nauseating mass of blurred colours. Blues and greys dominated, with the occasional splash of something brighter, all swirling and throbbing and as if in a mist. His head was thumping despite keeping his eyes closed as much as possible, and his stomach was beginning to churn. He sunk down as far as the seat harness would allow, his forehead resting in one palm. 'I can't believe my glasses are gone,' he thought. 'They cost over a hundred dollars! Another sucky thing about having God-awful eyesight. And I don't have another pair! Man, that was some bad luck.'

"We're nearly home, Dom," John said from across the cockpit.

"I'm countin' down the seconds."

Dominic opened one eye to look at him, and give him a smile, but it proved unwise as the churning and pain increased. For a moment he thought the would be sick, and that would be a terrible occurrence for all concerned. It passed, however, and he rubbed his eyes, squeezing them shut.

"Guys, eat your carrots," he said, "'cause you don't want to have to go through this."

"How long have you needed specs?" Brandon asked.

"Since I was about Josh's age. Notice how he has my curse as well. Bad eyesight is about the only thing he inherited from me, it seems."

Soon enough, Virgil was requesting permission to land. Gordon, too, was relieved. Dominic attempted to hoist himself up, and turned to where he thought the redhead was sitting, still with closed eyes.

"How's my patient?" He asked.

"I'm over here." Dominic turned; he could sense the smirk in Gordon's voice. "Better than the nurse, I'd reckon," he said.

"That's not unlikely," Dom said.

They felt the familiar smooth landing of Thunderbird Two, and Dominic sighed with relief. 'At least now I'll be able to go curl up in a corner,' he thought, 'even if it'll only be a short respite.'

Post by ArtisticRainey on 30/04/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:53:33 GMT

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Tuesday, April 10, 2068, 3:30 p.m., Tracy Island.

Dianne was waiting for them at the monorail terminus. Gordon groaned. "Mom...."

She was not to be dissuaded. "T' the infirmary with you, Gordon Tracy. Dom, do you have th'... what happened to yoah glasses?"

Dom, who had a hand firmly on John's elbow, smiled weakly. "I lost them."

"How much can you see?"

The Irishman colored. "Er... little or nothing?"

Dianne sighed. "Oh deah. Do you have th' scan results?"

He held forth a data pad, and Dianne took it as the lift rose. Dom swallowed deeply and paled. After the flight home, his stomach was none too steady and his head still pounded.

Dianne watched both men, looking up from the data pad as she skimmed over the contents. Finally, the lift deposited them on the lower level of the villa, and she offered her elbow to Dom. She said to the other three men, "Yoah fathah's waitin' foah you up in th' lounge. Scott 'n' Christophuh should be theah already foah debriefin'."

"F-A-B, Mom," said John as he leaned over and gave her a kiss on the cheek. Virgil followed suit, leaving Brandon feeling as if he should, too! She gave him a look as if to say, "Don't even think about it" and he grinned, saying, "See you later, Doc!"

"Do y' have an opthamologist?" Dianne asked Dom as they entered the infirmary.

"Yes, I have one back in Kansas."

"Well, then. We'll just make an appointment and have someone fly you over there," Dianne said. "Ah'm not fully equipped foah opthamalic exams heah. Besides, it's not mah specialty." She watched as he sat carefully in one of the examining room chairs. "Got a headache?"

Dom sighed. "Yes. And my stomach..." He made a face.

"Ah kin imagine," she replied. "Now, Gordon, get up on the examin' bed. Dom's done a good job with the scans, an' yoah arm's not broken. But Ah want t' see how deep th' bruisin' is on the shoulder. While you do that, Ah'll get Dom something foah his head and stomach."

She opened one of the cabinets and pulled out a hypospray. Frowning, she searched through the drug ampules stored there until she found what she needed. "Looks like Ah've got t' order some moah painkillers," she muttered as she loaded the hypospray. Crossing over to Dom, she said, "This should do th' trick. But you might want t' lie down foah a bit an' let it do its job." She pressed it up against his neck and the drug hissed its way into his bloodstream.

"Lying down sounds good right now," Dom admitted. "I can make it over to the other bed by myself."

"Okay. You know, you might want to consider contacts..."

"I am. Believe me, I am." ~Though what they might cost doesn't bear thinking.

Dianne examined Gordon, and saw how his upper arm, once red and puffy, was now turning an interesting purple in splotches. She shook her head. "That shoulder joint is bruised and it's gonna hurt foah quite a while. Yoah gonna need some painkillers and some light physical therapy to see you through this one." She favored him with a rueful smile. "We just can't send you anywhere, can we?"

Gordon rolled his eyes. "That's what John said."

She chuckled, and went about getting a painkiller for her redhaired stepson.

Post by Tikatu on 01/05/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:53:56 GMT
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*****Flashback: Tuesday, April 10, 2068; 2:25 a.m. Somewhere over Germany; Thunderbird Two en route back to Tracy Island.

Gordon was still wincing from the pain in his left shoulder. "Oh, man...I didn't think this would happen to me, not with Thunderbird Four."

"Hey, I don't think anybody, not even you, could have predicted what happened." Brandon shook

his head sympathetically. "Look on the bright side; at least it wasn't broken."
Gordon snorted derisively, "You call that a bright side?"

"Sure. You wouldn't be able to get back on duty fast enough if it were broken. You already suffered enough with your back a couple of months ago."

"You've got a point there, Brandon." Gordon grimaced as another sharp pain stabbed through his shoulder.

"So, sit back and enjoy the ride." Brandon grinned. "It's not like you can do anything else." When Gordon finally settled back, Brandon allowed himself to relax and reflect on the rescue and, most of all, what needed to be done once they arrived back on the island.

Tracy Island: Same day, 3:30 p.m.

Kat was on the balcony of her apartment in a deep conversation with Elise and Callie when she heard Brains's voice over her communicator. "Kat from Brains."

"Yes, Brains, what is it?"

"Can I have a word with you?"

She hurried down the stairs to meet Brains. "What's wrong?"

"Thunderbird Four has been badly damaged. We need to work on it immediately when Thunderbird Two is back in the hangar. Gordon has a shoulder injury, so Brandon will be working with us. Can you give me a hand in gathering the equipment we'll need to start the repairs as soon as we can?"

"Sure thing, Brains. Just tell me what I need to get, and I'll find it."

They gathered blowtorches, airbrushes, and the riveting equipment and were ready to work on Thunderbird Four as soon as the opportunity came.

Post by MagicMaster8, Tawnyangel22 and TracyFan4Ever on 03/05/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:54:07 GMT
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Tracy Island Lounge. April 10th, 4:45pm.

A weary John, Virgil, Scott, Brandon and Christopher were already in the lounge awaiting the arrival of Gordon and Dom, who were in the infirmary the second they'd arrived home at the insistence of Dianne.

"Where's Dad?" asked John.

"He'll be here soon. I think he went to the infirmary," answered Scott.

The team made themselves comfortable, and moments later, Jeff appeared with Gordon and Dominic following closely. Gordon winced as he sat down, and Dominic was in no rush to get to his seat either.

"You guys okay?" asked Brandon, concerned.

"Yeah, we'll live," replied Gordon.

Jeff seated himself behind his desk and spoke. "Okay, boys, I know each and everyone of you is tired, so we need to get on with this debriefing. Scott, will you get your written report to me first thing tomorrow?"

"Sure, Dad, no problem," his eldest replied.

"Good, then let's get started."

Jeff glanced over to Gordon to make sure he was still awake and hadn't fallen asleep from the medication his wife had administered.

Scott began first. "Thunderbird One arrived at the Danger Zone at 10:00 pm, local time. Immediately noticed that the bridge was unstable and the Prime Minister's car was barely hanging on. The opposite side of the bridge had dropped on its own and local rescue authorities were working on putting out the fires. I noticed a group of people, possibly reporters, and asked Christopher to turn on the camera defogger. I located a place to land and set up Mobile Control. Christopher and I then engaged the local police to assist. Once Christopher was set up with Mobile Control, I returned with TB1 to the bridge, then contacted base concerning the reporters. I used the loud speaker to advise the victims in the car what was going to happen. Then I deployed 5 lances to secure the underside of the car until we could get up to rescue them."

Scott then looked over at Virgil, who picked up the cue and continued.

"Thunderbird Two arrived at the Danger Zone after Mobile Control was set up. Scott advised us of firing the lances, the fires below and the reporters."

"He also gave us an update on the condition of the ship," added Gordon.

"Right. It was then that Brandon and Gordon left to prepare Thunderbird 4 and John and Dominic, Thunderbird 7," finished Virgil.

As an afterthought, he added, "I then landed Thunderbird Two in a clearing and opened pod for the Thunderizer to go and secure the cables John and Dom would need."

"Any problems firing those cables, Gordon?" Jeff asked.

"No sir, none at all. The Thunderizer performed brilliantly."

Jeff smiled. It was good to hear that the equipment worked when it was needed as a failure could mean life or death.

"Anything to add at this point, Brandon?"

Brandon looked up at Jeff and then at Gordon. "Well, while Gordon was securing the cables, I checked and double-checked the equipment on TB4 and called in for an update from Mobile Control. They advised us that adverse weather conditions were battering the ship against the bridge supports and that it was taking on water. Gordon came up with a plan to get close enough to get the welding done. Under Gordon's guidance, I took Four down to 10 meters. The ship appeared okay at first but was listing hard to starboard. Gordon was able to gauge the time the current took the ship to and away from the bridge and used Four as a buffer in there and Gordon proceeded with the welding."

Brandon paused, looking at Gordon as if waiting for an approval to continue. Jeff spoke first.

"Then what happened? Gordon?"

The red-haired shifted uncomfortably and picked up where Brandon had stopped. "We felt a loud vibration, then a shockwave slammed me up against the hull. Hence the injury." He moved his arm in indication.

"This was about 11.45 pm. Brandon alerted Mobile Control, then came out assist. I had finished the welding, so we headed back to Four, called Mobile Control, and were advised that the Royal Navy was to take over. We surfaced and returned to Pod 4."

"Thank you, son. Why don't you go and get some sleep and rest that arm? Brandon will fill me in if there's anything else."

"Thanks," Gordon replied softly, grateful for the early dismissal. He slowly got up, bid his goodbyes, and headed for his room.

"Well team, so far so good." Jeff turned his attention towards Dominic and John. "Okay John, what have you got for us?"

The blonde spoke up clearly. "Once we left the pod, we advised local authorities of security measures, secured Seven, checked our harnesses and proceeded. By now the weather was torrential and it made for a hard climb. Once we reached the Prime Minister's car, we counted 5 occupants. The Prime Minister and two children in the back seat and her husband and the driver in the front. She was very insistent that her sons be taken down first, not her. Dom and I each took a boy and descended to awaiting paramedics without any problems. As we readied to take down the Prime Minister and her husband, the car shifted and threw him against the door."

Dominic jumped in at this point and John let him, figuring he needed to get used to speaking up at debriefings. Everyone's account was of equal importance.

"The Prime Minister panicked a little, and grabbed towards her husband, and then he, unfortunately, flew out the door with her holding him. I instinctively grabbed hold of her and jammed my feet behind the seats to stop us all from falling. John helped hoist us back, we then harnessed the both of them and I took her down, slamming into the bridge surface on the way. That's when my glasses fell off. John managed to get the husband down and look out for me in the process." Dominic gave John a grateful smile. John returned with a kind one of his own.

"I returned for the chauffeur. We radioed Thunderbird Two at 11.45 pm and headed back for the pod," John added, noticing his father scribbling down notes.

There was a few moments of silence and then Scott added the final statement. "I called stand-down at 12.02 am local time, we packed up Mobile Control and headed for base."

Jeff finished his notes and looked up. "Great job team, looks like this rescue was a success. I for one am glad no harm came to the Prime Minister. Thank you everyone. you're dismissed."

Various bodies stretched and yawned, and one by one they started to trickle out of the room. As Christopher turned to leave, Jeff called to him. "Christopher, I'd like a word with you. Privately."

Christopher knew what was coming. "Yes, sir." Christopher sat back down.

Scott was the last one to leave and indicated to his father that he would lock the doors on the way out.

"Thanks, Scott." Scott merely nodded and, with one last look at Christopher, he departed. Locking the doors behind him.

Post by FrankieCTB2 on 07/05/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:54:17 GMT

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April 10, 2068, 5:30 p.m.

Now that the debriefing was over, the majority of the rescue crew was off to shower and get a bite to eat before doing post-rescue maintenance.

Christopher, however, remained in the lounge waiting for Jeff to speak. He stood there, face impassive. Inside, though, he was shaking like a leaf. He thought back to the last time this happened. Flight Commander Harris had hauled him over the coals for going against his orders.

Jeff looked at Christopher, studying his face. His blue eyes stared at the man for long moments, assessing his first reaction and what it should be. He remembered times when he had been in a similar situation, and the few times when his sons stood before him like this, at strict attention and trying very hard to hide their anxiety. He took a deep breath and huffed it out through his nose. "What is the one thing that makes us capable of carrying on our work without hinderance from

governmental intervention?" he snapped.

"Secrecy... Sir!" Christopher groaned inwardly as old habits kicked in. "I'm sorry, Mr. Tracy. I made a serious mistake," he continued, "and I accept any punishments you see fit."

Jeff ignored his apology... for the moment. "What allows us to be personally safe, and to keep our tech out of unfriendly hands?"

"Discretion." Christopher paused. "And not opening our mouths to all and sundry." He licked his lips, his mouth was dry. And Jeff Tracy's eyes were boring into him.

"If you understand this," Jeff said calmly. Then he raised his voice and slammed a fist on the desk, shouting, "Then just what the HELL were you doing talking to a damned reporter?!" Having said that, he sat back, scowling and waiting for Christopher's answer.

"I made a mistake." Christopher did not show any emotion. "An inexcusable mistake, which no amount of apology can change. It will not happen again." He looked at Jeff, his eyes bright. "I have been given a great privilege to be working with you, and I will not make this mistake again."

"You'd better damn well see to it that it doesn't," Jeff replied hotly. "But you haven't answered my question. What made you talk to the reporter instead of calling security and having her hauled away?!"

"The lure of a pretty face, Mr. Tracy. Plain and simple," Christopher replied.

"Are you going to be spilling your guts to every pretty face that comes along? Because if you are, I can't use you!"

"I will not, Mr Tracy." A flash of anger appeared in Christopher's eyes and voice.

Jeff sat back in his chair and said in a less bellowing tone, "See to it that you don't." He steepled his fingers, and continued to glare at the former RAF pilot. "As for 'punishment', it's time to recalibrate the communications masts. Then Mobile Control needs a thorough cleaning, as does Thunderbird One's cargo bay. After that, I'm sure Scott can find some other chores for you to do. You may continue your simulator training, but you are not allowed to work Mobile Control or pilot any of the Thunderbirds for the next three months. You will be assigned to rescues at my discretion." He paused, then stood up and leaned over his desk. "Oh, and if this ever happens again?" he said. "You will find yourself back in England... and unemployed... so fast your head will swim. Is that understood?"

"It is, Mr Tracy." Christopher nodded, his face still blank. "Thank you." He stood there at attention and held his breath for any other pronouncements.

Jeff waved a hand irritably. "Get showered and eat. Dismissed."

Christopher nodded then left. Once he got out of the area, he let out a long held breath.

Post by The_Wrong_Trousers1 and Tikatu on 08/05/2005

*****April 10, 2068; Pod Repair Bay; 6:15 p.m.*****

As soon as they finished dinner, Virgil and Brandon went down to the pod repair bay next to the lab, where they noticed Brains and Kat had returned to finish sorting the equipment needed to repair Thunderbird Four. Brains saw the two men approaching. "Ah, good, you're both here. I need you two to handle the exterior while Kat and I look at the interior."

"You got it, Brains." Brandon looked down at the equipment they'd be using remarking, "Looks like we've got a bit of work ahead of us, Virgil."

Virgil shook his head. "I've never seen Four look this bad." He took a turn around the little submarine. "Looks like most of it is cosmetic, though." He glanced at Brandon. "We'd better do a very careful job on this or Gordon will ask for our heads on a platter!"

"Oh, don't worry about that. I have EVERY intention of staying on his good side." Brandon smiled as everybody laughed.

"I think we all want to stay on his good side, Brandon," Brains remarked.

Brains and Kat climbed into the upper hatch to enter the sub. When they both were inside, they looked around. "Hmm," said Brains, "there doesn't appear to be any damage done in here, but just to be sure, we need to run the diagnostics." He led her to the control panel. "I'll enter the sequence to begin the check."

Kat became curious. "How do you do that in Thunderbird Four? I haven't had time to go over that with Gordon."

Brains showed her where the diagnostic activation buttons were on the control panel. "If it runs smoothly, it should be done in about five minutes. While that's going on, we'll check the rest of the interior." Brains showed her around, checking hatches, seats, and lockers for structural damage. "We'll need to check all the outer mechanisms, too, and make sure they weren't damaged. I'll show you how to operate them."

While Kat and Brains were working inside, Brandon and Virgil got started on the exterior of the craft. "Okay, Brandon, the first thing we have to do is replace the damaged panels. Would you hand me the oxyhydrite torch?"

"Sure thing, Virgil."

"Virgil from Brains," sounded Virgil's communicator.

"Go ahead, Brains."

"I need you and Brandon to do me a favor. Can you take a look at the front end and tell me if anything has been damaged?"

"Okay, Brains. Brandon, you may want to watch this part, since you'll have to learn the proper diagnostics eventually."

"Yes, sir." Brandon shifted to the front of the little sub and watched carefully as the grabs slid out of their housing. "Looks good so far... wait, the grabs are about to hit the lighting trough. Can you swing it upward?"

Brains tried to activate the trough's positioning arms. "Hmm. They seem to be stuck," he replied.

Brandon moved around to the side and noticed the lighting trough's supporting arm on their side of the ship. "Brains from Brandon. We have a problem with the lighting trough on the port side; the arm appears to have jammed." He looked over at Virgil, who nodded at him.

"Same thing here, Brains," Virgil added

"Hmm, this is serious," Brains murmured. "Can you see what the problem is?"

"There could be something wrong with the socket, but I can't say for certain. Mechanics aren't exactly my specialty," Brandon said as he walked back to the front end of the sub.

Brains looked at Kat. "Ready to put your mechanical skills to work again?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Very well. The rest of the interior is all right, and the diagnostics program shows no damage to the computer. Let's get out there and fix that trough."

As Brains and Kat started working on the lighting trough, Brandon shook his head. "I'm surprised the damage wasn't more than what it is. Four took a really hard beating out there."

Virgil concurred with him. "That's why we built Thunderbird Four out of cahelium. She was made to withstand almost anything thrown at her."

"Shall I give you that oxyhydrite torch you requested earlier?"

"Thanks, Brandon. Let's get to work on those panels. There's enough space for us to do our job without interfering with their work."

Brandon and Virgil went to work on the right side of the sub. Virgil said, "Looks like we'll have to change two panels on this side, one over the nacelle."

"Yeah. The panels aren't that big. This won't take too long."

"No, but then comes the hard part...repainting the sub, hence the airbrushes."

For the next four hours, all four people worked hard to fix the damage done to Thunderbird Four's port side. Brains and Kat finished repairing the lighting trough at about the same time Virgil and Brandon completed replacing the damaged panels.

They stood back, looking at the work they'd done. There were bare spots of metal where the repairs had been made and the things they had used were scattered on the floor.

"Nice job, everyone," said Brains. "Too bad we still have painting to do. Grab some primer, and let's get started." The other three groaned at his remark but understood that the job was still not complete. "Relax. Once we get through with the primer, we'll stop for tonight. It's getting late, and it'll need all night to dry anyway."

They each grabbed a can and started working on the paint job for Thunderbird Four before calling it a night.

Post by MagicMaster8, Tawnyangel22 and TracyFan4Ever on 09/05/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:54:39 GMT
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10th April, BBC Television Studios, London, 4.00 a.m.

Fiona Brotherton showed her pass to the security guard at the entrance to the car park and parked her car. She smiled to herself and patted her bag where the Tommy's tape lay. Oh, yes, she was very happy. Hadn't she just got the scoop of the year? She could almost see the headlines.

FILM OF THE CENTURY! BBC Reporter, Ms Brotherton has International Rescue on film!

Fiona headed for the morning edition director's office and knocked on the door.

"Come in."

"Greg!" Fiona entered and looked excitedly at her boss. "Here is the exclusive film!" She handed him Tommy's tape.

Greg looked at the memo on his desk from Sir Charles Barclay-Stewart, the head of the BBC. It gave instructions concerning Fiona's tape, and had attached to it a copy of the letter that Sir Charles had received.

Sir Charles, the tape that Ms Brotherton has in her possession, has been filmed against the wishes of International Rescue. As you are aware, complete secrecy must surround these rescues, therefore this tape must be destroyed.

Greg faced Fiona across the desk. "Hm, thank you, Fiona. I will send it to the film editor, so that it can be broadcast on the morning news bulletin."

"Is it possible that a copy could be made? I did promise the owner that I would send him a copy."

Greg looked aghast, but soon recovered. Heavens, I thought that she had filmed it. He smiled and murmured, "Well, let's see how it looks first shall we?" He pressed a button on his desk, and Marcia, his Secretary entered.

"Sir?" she queried.

"Marcia, please take Ms Brotherton's film down to the film editor." He looked at her. "And hand it to Michael; he'll know what to do." Marcia smiled as she took the film, and left the room.

"Now, Ms Brotherton, would you like some coffee?"

Back at home, Fiona settled down to watch the morning news, content in the knowledge that she had some groundbreaking footage for the nation. The day's stories droned on: war in the far east, employment figures were up, and so on. But there was no mention of International Rescue or of the film she had taken. Angrily she telephoned the BBC. After explaining who she was and what she wanted, she was finally put through to the morning director.

"Greg!" she almost exploded. "Where was the news item about International Rescue, and my film of the rescue?"

Greg's sympathetic face stared back at her in the vidphone screen. "Oh, my dear, I'm so sorry. There was nothing on that film at all."

"Nothing on the film!" Fiona was furious. "But... but both Tommy and I saw what he had filmed! It was there! I know it was!"

Then realisation dawned. That dratted outfit has out-manoeuvred me! She thought for a moment, then she realised that she was completely helpless. Someone must have destroyed that film, someone working for International Rescue.. but who? She thought about Tommy. He had been so excited. She suddenly felt sorry for him. How was she going to explain? Maybe if she had allowed him to keep the tape, then possibly he could have found a way of making the contents known to the country.

Don't worry, Fiona vowed to herself. Someday, somewhere, I will get my scoop.

Post by Tawnyangel22 on 09/05/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:54:56 GMT
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Wednesday 11 April, 09.30am, Tracy Island.

Living without glasses was something that Dominic had done before. He could handle it -- for about half an hour, because then he usually found the stupid things. But this was different. He was bereft of his sight, almost blind, totally dependent upon his ability not to trip over every bump in the floor -- which was questionable at times -- and it was killing him. The pain meds had stopped the discomfort and nausea, but feeling helpless, on top of only seeing a round, pink blur

when he looked at his son's face, made him depressed.

Joshua was in the capable hands of Cherie, who had valiantly given up her morning to keep an eye on Joshua -- Because I sure can't do that now, can I? -- while he went to see Dr Tracy to organise a trip to the mainland. He suspected that she didn't trust him to get by on his own. He wasn't a total invalid....

"Just here, Dominic," Cherie said when he almost walked past the sickroom door.

"Thanks, pet." He groaned inwardly. So much for that, then.

He could make out Dianne as she stood up, even if she was only a blur, and allowed her to help him to a seat. He allowed the touch; a broken tail bone would not be a good thing.

"How're you feeling today? Any headache, nausea, dizziness?"

"I'm doing all right. No pain," he said quietly, squinting in vain.

"I've been thinking a little about what we're going to do about your eyes. Contacts might not be the best option. On the bridge, from what you've described, the force of the impact might have jarred them out, and you'd be in the same predicament that you are now."

Dominic nodded, though he wasn't quite sure where this was going.

"I was thinking, how would you feel about corrective surgery?"

He paused for a moment. Surgery was dangerous... But then, what had he got to lose? "At this moment, I think I'd try anything. I would never have considered it before. But isn't it risky?"

Dianne shook her head. He imagined she was smiling. "Not anymore. LASIK surgery was perfected years ago. There are rarely any complications. I was reading up on it," she reached for a few pages on the desk beside her, "and it says here that the procedure now takes as little as ten minutes for each eye, and after a few hours, your vision will be as good as twenty-twenty. What do you think?"

Dominic couldn't stop a wide grin. "Twenty-twenty? I've been almost blind since I was twelve. Let's do it!"

He got the impression Dianne was taken aback at the sudden change of heart, and he winked. "Hey, isn't the IR motto, 'Not to give up at any cost?' I don't want to have to leave. I love this job. I'll do anything."

Dianne clapped his shoulder lightly. "Excellent! I'll talk to Jeff about getting an appointment. I'm sure he'll be able to pull some strings and get you in at the Tracy Industries hospital back in Kansas ASAP."

"Sounds good. Hey, I could call in on Tommy-boy and show off my new eyes." Dominic stopped for a moment and shrank back into his seat. "There's one thing we're forgetting: the cost. I was

barely going to be able to afford contacts. I haven't the money for surgery."

Dianne chuckled. "Don't be silly, Dom," she said. "Jeff will take care of everything. If it makes you feel better, say it comes under the IR health plan."

Dominic let out a breath, and smiled. "Thanks, Doc," he said. "Seems like things are looking up, right?"

Post by ArtisticRainey on 14/05/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:55:06 GMT
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Wednesday, April 11, 2068, 10:45 a.m., Tracy Island

Jeff walked into the infirmary for his appointment with his wife, the doctor. He didn't find her in the examining/infirmary room so he poked his head around the door to her office. She was on the phone, talking to some woman who he didn't recognize.

"I need the appointment as soon as possible," she explained. "The young man has lost his glasses and does not have a spare pair. He's walking around nearly blind, and this makes both his work and his family life more than difficult."

"I think we can squeeze him in on Monday the 16th," the appointment scheduler said.

"That's not good enough," Dianne answered. Jeff's eyebrows went up. He could tell by her tone that she was getting irritated by the woman on the other end.

"I'm sorry, Doctor, but I just can't...."

Dianne shook her head and cut the woman off. "Let me talk t' th' chief surgeon."

"I'm sorry, but he's very busy."

Dianne leaned in close. "You tell him, hunay, thet Dr. Dianne Tracy, as in Mrs. Jefferson Tracy, wants to speak with him now. Unless, o' coahse he's in suhguhry. Then he may return mah call."

"Dr. Tracy! I'm so sorry! I didn't catch your name..." the woman was all over herself with apologies. "I'll put him on right away." The screen flashed "Transferring Call".

Jeff slipped up behind his wife and put his hands on her shoulders. She looked up at him, a mixture of annoyance and frustration in her expression. "Whah is it thet Ah've always got t' drop yoah name befoah people give me th' time o' day?"

"The idea that I'm married is still new to a lot of people," Jeff murmured, bringing his face down next to hers and resting his chin on her shoulder. "And not too many people know you by name or

by occupation. Give it time, love, give it time."

The phone flashed the words "Connection made", and Jeff stood back up, smiling at Dianne as he left to wait for her in the surgery. He could hear her voice, still using that thick drawl, as she talked to the chief surgeon about Dom's predicament. Finally, she came out, smiling a bit, rubbing her hands together.

"I have an appointment for him on Friday, the 13th. I still have to figure out when we'll need to leave, and I should tap someone to fly shotgun with me, too," she explained. "Lie back please."

Jeff did as she said, and she ran the surgical scanner over his foot. As the images processed, she worked his foot around with her hands, making him press down on her hand against pressure, asking him if he felt any pain. She poked him with a safety pin, eliciting an "Ouch!" from the very first poke. Then she told him he could sit up and she went to the computer to check the images.

"Y'know, Di," he said as he sat up and leaned back on his arms. "I could fly shotgun with you to... wherever you've set up this appointment."

"The airbase in Kansas," she said absently. "Sounds like a good idea... if your foot passes muster today. Have you been doing your therapy exercises?"

"Religiously," Jeff answered. "If Gordon hasn't been on me about them, Alex has been. I think he deputized the boy to act in his stead about the therapy."

She sighed, then looked up at him with a smile. "Well, I think you can dispense with them now, Jeff. I like the way your foot looks and your muscles are strong. You haven't been limping, have you?"

"Not too much. Just when the foot feels stiff," he admitted.

"Then loosening up exercises for a week or so. And... I think I can clear you to fly, too."

"Fly? When?" Jeff asked eagerly.

"This weekend. You know I'd love to have you in the cockpit with me."

"I'd love that, too, dearest," he replied. Then he frowned. "But I told Callie and Kat we'd have a meeting on Saturday about how to handle media attention...."

"You can postpone that, can't you? Dom will need to be there anyway."

"Yes, you're right. And it's not like I've told everyone we were having it or when it was going to be. Okay. I'll set it for Monday the 16th. That should be soon enough." Jeff hopped down from the table. "I'll get an email out right now about it."

"And I'll start making preparations for our trip to Kansas. Maybe we could stay overnight at the old farmhouse," Dianne suggested.

"A good idea. Will you make the arrangements?"

"Of course." Dianne stood and came close to Jeff. Her hand reached out to touch the side of his neck. "Y'know, if you and I didn't both have things to do... Ah could lock the door..."

Jeff smiled and brought his lips down to hers. "Tonight, my love. Tonight I will give you a most romantic evening in the privacy of our own suite."

"Ah'll hold yew t' thet, Jeff Tracy," she breathed as she kissed him tenderly. They left the surgery together, hand in hand, and as he walked out the sick room door, she sighed heavily, then turned back to her office to make travel arrangements.

Jeff went upstairs to the lounge and wrote up a quick email to send off to the IR operatives, making a special note to Kat and Callie about the rescheduling of the meeting. Then he walked back down to the kitchen to have a word with Kyrano about a special dinner... for two.

Post by Tikatu on 15/05/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:55:21 GMT
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Wednesday 11 April, 08:30pm, Tracy Island.

In the quiet of her friend's apartment, Nikki watched as Dominic tucked Joshua into bed, after having enlisted her help to do so. She had actually done little, as Dominic was able to go through the evening routine, glasses or no, and thought herself more of a safety net than anything else. Dom knelt down and pawed at the wall until he found the socket where the night-light was plugged and turned it on, before slowly making his way to the door. Nikki switched off the light.

"Fancy a cuppa?" Dominic asked, and she nodded.

She hovered about the little kitchenette and helped where she was needed; a lack of sight and boiling water was not the best of combinations, and soon they sat down on the sofa. Dominic kicked off his sneakers.

"Thanks, luv," he said.

Nikki sipped her tea and glanced around the apartment. There was a residual odour of paint hanging in the air.

"How's the decorating going?" she asked.

"Slowly, slowly. I enlisted the aid of one Gordon Tracy, but every time I try to find him, he magically disappears." He chuckled. "Well, now that he's injured I'll have to continue without him. After I get my new eyes, of course."

"Did Dianne get you an appointment?"

"Yes, for -- get this -- Friday the 13th. Wonderful, eh?"

"Oh no! Well, at least that's just silly superstition."

"Yeah. Makes me feel uneasy, though. Another thing that makes me uneasy is the fact that both Doctor Tracy and Mister Tracy are going with me. I swear, if I say something daft..."

Nikki chuckled and shook her head. "Don't worry about it. You'll be fine. They're not that scary, really."

Dominic nodded thoughtfully and finished off his tea, before setting down the mug. "Oh, did you get that e-mail about the media meeting?" he asked.

"Yeah. Not looking forward to that one. I never really thought before about how easily we could mess things up. Poor Christopher."

"It was a damn fool thing to do," Dom said, "but a damn fool thing any one of us could have done. I tried to talk to him, but he wasn't having any of it."

Nikki finished her tea, collected the mugs, and set them in the sink. "I'd better be going. I want to catch up on some correspondence."

"Cool. Thanks for your help, Nik. Goodnight!"

Post by ArtisticRainey on 18/05/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:55:30 GMT

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*****Wednesday, April 11, 2068; Tracy Island; 9:45 p.m.*****

Callie completed her Thunderbird Three simulator training with John and went back to her apartment. Her training had been delayed several hours due to a fault in the simulator's systems. She took off her shoes and got herself a glass of cold water. She had stretched out on the couch when she noticed her diary lying on the floor, left in the rush to make it to her training at the original time. "Wow, what a day." She grabbed her diary and started writing.

So far I'm doing well with the flight controls on Thunderbird Three, but I need to improve on landing it properly in the bay upon returning. John said that could be attributed to flying space cruisers during my time in the WSA. He also knows I'll get the hang of it in time. I'm glad he's flying me to Thunderbird Five next month, when I get to do my first solo stay up there. Hopefully within a few weeks I'll master the landing part.

I'm also looking forward to this meeting on Saturday morning. It's so important that all of us come

up with ways of coping with media pressure. I'm about ready for a snack, but I'll check my e-mail first.

She closed her diary and went to her computer to open her e-mail. "Hmm, I have two e-mails from Mr. Tracy."

The first one was for all the new recruits:

[i]New IR Recruits:

I have learned that the security breach in our recent rescue brought up an important matter for discussion. Therefore, pending any rescue missions, I want all new recruits to report to the lounge on Monday the 16th at 1 p.m. for a meeting concerning media pressure. I expect all of you to be there at that time.

Thank you,

Jeff Tracy

"Monday? I thought it was going to be on Saturday." She saw the next e-mail subject: "Callie and Kat."

Callie and Kat:

I know you both assumed the meeting was still scheduled for Saturday morning, but Dominic has to go to the mainland this weekend for corrective vision surgery. Since I hadn't mentioned it to anyone else, Dianne suggested to move it to Monday the 16th, when everyone was available. I will see you at the meeting.

Jeff

Callie smiled. "He's got a point. Why call a meeting if nobody else even knows about it ahead of time?" She walked to her refrigerator and took out some strawberry gelatin for an evening snack.

Post by TracyFan4Ever on 18/05/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:55:59 GMT
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11th April 2068, 10pm Christopher's flat

Christopher yawned as the film he had watched that evening was coming to an end. Beside him, Asterix was stretched out, his head on his master's lap. Looking back on the day, indeed the last few days, he felt increasingly discontent. His faux pas in London was continuing to haunt him.

At breakfast that morning he had braved the family table only to get the feeling, from Jeff and

Scott mainly, that he wasn't welcome. Of course, all his colleagues living at the Cliff House had tried to humour him. The thing that hurt the most though, was that he had tried to talk to Tin-Tin. Only small talk mind, but Alan stuck his oar in and the atmosphere had become a lot frostier.

He worked through the list of tasks for that morning, then reported to Dianne to see if there were any jobs for him. He helped to scrub off Thunderbird Seven, and had contemplated asking her some questions, but he thought better of it.

He had a sandwich in Kyrano's kitchen, and the old gentleman listened to Christopher's woes. But he couldn't offer any advice.

"You must make your own decisions, Mr Jordan." He smiled as he put some chicken in a dish for Asterix.

Christopher chuckled to himself; he loved talking to the old man. He had just left the kitchen to go to the main hangar when Tin-Tin appeared. She looked so happy, so carefree, so beautiful. He wanted to say something, to tell that he loved her. But he didn't have the confidence to do so. So he walked away, and got on with his work.

Which brought him back to the present. He had decided not to eat with the family that evening, preferring to eat at home. Asterix loved the chicken.

"Home!" he muttered as he scratched Asterix under the chin, "I'm not sure if it is home anymore." Getting up from the settee, he made sure that Asterix was comfortable before going to his desk and turning on the computer. He started up the word processing package, and set it up for a letter. He sat there for a while, composing his thoughts, before bringing himself enter the words on the keyboard.

"I am writing to you to offer my resignation from Tracy Industries," he said to himself as he typed, "In adherence with company policy, I will work the full month of notice."

He continued typing for a while, finally putting things down that had been troubling him for a while. Belinda had been a factor, plus the fact that sometimes he didn't feel like he fitted in.

He asked the computer to go through the words, doing any grammatical corrections, and adding all the pertinent standard attachments. Finally the letter was ready to send in an email to Jeff Tracy. Opening the page to send the letter, he noticed an email addressed to him from Mr Tracy.

There was to be a meeting regarding the handling of the media during rescues and, the email continued, Christopher must attend as part of his 'punishment'.

Christopher sat there for a moment, before turning the computer off and going to bed.

Post by The_Wrong_Trousers1 on 18/05/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:56:09 GMT

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Thursday 12th April 2068, 8:00 a.m, Tracy Island

As Nikki got ready for the day, she thought back to the last rescue. She hadn't taken part in it but she wished she had. It would've been good to see ol' England again. For the first time after a rescue was completed, Nikki had to do clean up in Thunderbird Seven without Dominic or Dr. Tracy.

Flashback

Nikki began work on Thunderbird Seven. Dom wouldn't be helping this time since his glasses were lost during the rescue. It felt weird doing the checks without Dom. Usually they would split the minor tasks and tackle the big ones like disinfecting the surgical bay together.

To begin with, Nikki checked that all the medical equipment were catalogued and put in the right place. It wouldn't be good if they were low on supplies while out on a rescue. After making sure the medical supplies were stocked, Nikki moved on to the medical instruments. She checked them over, making sure they weren't damaged in any way and were in top condition.

While working, Nikki began to wonder what rescues were like before Thunderbird Seven and before Dr Tracy came into the mix. She guessed that one of the boys had to use their basic medical knowledge to keep the patients stable until they got them to paramedics or until they got to the hospital, using the sick bay aboard Thunderbird 2.

Time seemed to move slower as she was working alone. Usually the work seemed to flow by if she was talking to someone or if there were other sounds, like music. So as she worked, she began to hum various songs. There was even a spring to her step as she hummed.

Nikki's humming was interrupted by Christopher's arrival to do his punishment chores. She really felt for him for what he had to do. His slip up was a mistake and he regretted it. While Christopher washed down the Thunderbird, Nikki moved onto her next task. The diagnostics on the biobeds needed to be run.

Soon all the work was complete. She double-checked to make sure she hadn't missed anything.

End Flashback

Nikki looked in the mirror as she put her hair up in a ponytail. The weather was lovely outside and she wanted to make the most of it.

Post by Nikki-browneyes1 on 19/05/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:59:01 GMT

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Tracy Island, April 12th 9.00a.m.

Kat sat at the controls of Thunderbird Two in a kind of daydream. Yesterday, Brains had told her that it was time that she learnt the maintenance work on the Thunderbirds themselves. That night she had dreamt about trying to fly Thunderbird Two and Scott shouting, "No, no! You are doing things completely wrong!" She had awoken with a start; the dream had been so realistic. Having washed but still in her nightwear, she made herself some breakfast and headed on to the balcony to enjoy the sunrise while she ate. Later, dressed in her overalls, she headed for Thunderbird Two. Finding no one around she climbed inside the huge vehicle and sat down at the controls. Mm, I certainly don't envy Elise trying to fly this craft.

"Want to have a go at flying?" Virgil's voice broke into her daydream.

Kat spun round, a guilty look on her face. She felt like a young kid who had been caught sitting at the wheel of her parents' car, imagining she was driving.

"Oh, no, that is, I don't think so. I think that would be better left to Elise and you."

Virgil leaned against the doorway and looked at her. "Seems we are both waiting for Brains."

"Yes, I am going to be shown the maintenance work on the Thunderbirds," Kat answered with a smile. "And what's more, I can't wait!"

"Well, while we are waiting, let me show you the inside and the controls." And for the next fifteen minutes, Virgil showed an interested Kat the cabin's environmental and life-support control console and the hover jets holding bay. He took her through the door from the pilot's cabin into the central corridor. He showed her the starboard storage bay, which held the rescue equipment, oxygen cylinders, cutting tools, lasers and thermic lances.

"The port side bay contains first aid and medical supplies." He grinned at Kat trying to take all this in. And not for the first time, Virgil noted how professional Kat was in her questions.

"You really get involved in your work don't you?" he said smiling at her.

"This is a dream come true, working on the Thunderbirds! I would never had imagined that working for Lady Penelope would have led to all this!" She said as she spread her hands out.

Just then Brains arrived. "Sorry I'm late."

"That's okay, Brains," Virgil remarked. "I was just showing Kat some of the interior workings. Now, where do we start?"

"Oh, are you coming along as well?" Kat asked.

Virgil nodded. "Yep, Brains thought that since Thunderbird Two is my baby that I should help as well."

The three climbed down and headed for the rear of the craft. Virgil handed Kat a large manual.

She gasped. "Am I supposed to carry this around with me?"

"No, of course not," Brains answered. "That's for you to read to help you when working on Thunderbird Two. Every Thunderbird has its own manual. You can leave it here to refer to, or if you like, you can take it to your apartment if you want to read more about TB2."

"Now," Virgil began. "In the fin there are variable-cycle turbo-ram jets. Ram-jet turbine provides emergency electrical power." He pointed to the front of the fin. "Behind those grills are the tailplane air intakes."

Kat nodded.

"At each end is the ram jet thrust pipe," Virgil continued. "Here also is the nacelle, housing booster rockets used in emergencies and also in launching from Thunderbird Two's launch ramp."

"It looks so strange with no pod," Kat remarked.

Virgil smiled in agreement. They wandered through and stood looking at the rear. Virgil pointed out the atomic generator which supplies heat to jet exchanges and turbo electric generators, the magnetic bolts which secure the rear of the pod during flight, and the main body-based polarised electro-magnetic pod lifting system, used if Thunderbird Two needs to lower the pod to sea level without disengaging it.

Kat wiped her forehead. It was very hot in the hangar and her T-shirt was sticking to her back. She followed Brains and Virgil as they headed for the front of the craft. Suddenly she felt very faint. She came round lying on the ground, her head on a folded up shirt.

"Are you okay?" Virgil sounded concerned.

"What happened?" Kat felt foolish, lying alongside Thunderbird Two.

"You fainted," Brains replied.

Kat struggled to a sitting position.

"Sorry, it has been a long time since breakfast. I suffer from a low blood sugar condition, and need to eat regularly. I usually carry some glucose with me, but must have forgotten it."

"Should I call Mom?" Virgil asked.

"No, no I shall be okay. All I need is something sweet to eat or drink."

"Then I think that we shall call it a day. Now I am going to take you back to your apartment," Virgil said, ignoring Kat's protests that she would be okay on her own.

Once back in her apartment, Virgil poured her a glass of orange juice. "Are you quite sure you are okay?"

Kat smiled. "Quite sure. Thank you, Virgil."

"Is there anything else I can get you?" Virgil asked, still feeling slightly concerned.

"Honestly, I am okay. I shall have something to eat and have a rest."

Reassured that she was all right, Virgil headed back to the villa. All the same, he thought. I'll make sure to tell Mom about that little incident... Fainting on the job, not good!

Post by Tawnyangel22 on 19/05/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 23:59:40 GMT
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Thursday, April 12, 2068, 3:30 p.m., Tracy Island.

Virgil was heading back up to the villa kitchen to snag himself something to drink, taking a break from the maintenance he and Brains had been doing on Thunderbird Two. As he walked down the hall toward dining room and kitchen, he saw lights on in the infirmary and the door open. ~I wonder if Mom's in there? This would be a good chance to talk to her about Kat's problem.

He stepped inside and saw the figure of Dianne sitting in her office, working at her computer. She looked up at him as he entered, giving him a smile. "Well, Virgil, what brings you here? Are you feeling all right?"

"Uh... yes, I am. Why would you ask? Do I look sick?" Virgil asked in consternation.

Dianne chuckled. "No, you don't look sick. It's just that you boys come down here with great reluctance and only when you're at death's door it seems. Or when you are ordered to be here. Finding one of you here without being deathly ill is an unusual event."

"Oh, okay," Virgil said, wiping of the imaginary sweat from his brow. "Whew! I thought maybe you saw some illness in me that I hadn't seen myself."

"Nope," Dianne said. She saved her file of equipment inventory and gave him her full attention. "But something has brought you here..."

"Yes," he admitted. "When Brains and I were showing Kat around Thunderbird Two this morning, preparatory to her starting to learn how to maintain it, she fainted."

His stepmother frowned. "Fainted?" She reached over to the computer and began to bring up Kat's medical history. "Could she tell you why she fainted?"

"Yes, as a matter of fact, she did. She said she had a low blood sugar problem and that it had been too long since breakfast."

Dianne glanced at the screen, and made a little "mm-hmm" noise. "How long did it take for her to come around?"

"No more than ten minutes or so. We had just made her comfortable when she began to stir."

"Okay." She glanced at Kat's chart again, transferring it to a data pad so that Virgil couldn't see it. "What did you do then?"

"Helped her back to her apartment and poured her a glass of orange juice. I remembered that fruit juice is good to give a diabetic patient if their blood sugar drops too fast."

"Precisely right." Dianne said, looking up at him with a smile. "It looks like I need to have a little chat with our Ms. Williamson. It may have to wait until after the trip, though."

"What trip?" Virgil asked.

"We were going to tell you this evening at dinner. Your father and I are flying Dom out to Kansas for corrective eye surgery. We'll be gone for a couple of days."

"Oh!" he exclaimed. "Dad's been cleared to fly again?"

The doctor's smile grew wide. "He most certainly has. In fact, he's down in the simulator refreshing himself on procedures and he might take Tracy 1 out for a little spin later on. With John as back up, of course. We'll be discussing who is in charge of what at dinner."

"Great! It's wonderful that Dad's back in the cockpit again!" Virgil enthused. "It has felt like such a long haul for him to heal completely."

"Earlier in the century it would have been longer, a lot longer," Dianne admitted. "But we've made so many advances in medicine. Dom's surgery is a good example of that. He'll be done within a half-hour and be able to see without glasses the very same day."

"I bet he'll love that!" Virgil rose from his seat. "So, you'll take care of things with Kat?"

"Yes, I will. Leave it with me."

He leaned over to give her a kiss on the cheek. "Thanks, Mom."

"You're welcome," she said with a smile.

Virgil left the infirmary with a lighter heart, safe in the knowledge that his stepmother would take care of Kat.

Dianne sighed and began to compose an email, summoning Kat to the office at a convenient time after she and Jeff returned from Kansas with Dom.

Post by Tikatu on 19/05/2005

I see Tom hasn't gotten into the habit of answering the vidphone promptly. Dominic drummed his fingers as he waited for the call to connect; Joshua, sitting on his lap, did the same. If you don't answer quickly I'll hang up and turn up on your doorstep uninvited... He was just reaching for the disconnect button when a tousled blond with wide eyes appeared on the screen, blinking.

"Hello? What the -- DOM! Jesus, where've you been? Well, not so much where've you been as how've you been, and why haven't you called sooner, and hey it's my favourite nephew! How are you? Wait a minute, where are your glasses? Can you even see me? Helloooo?"

Dominic sat back as Tom's tirade rolled over him. He hadn't changed at all. Joshua tried to claw at the screen; for the other side, Tom lifted his fingertips to reach for the child's.

"Thomas Eugene," Dom said firmly, trying to curb his half-brother's enthusiasm, "I'm where I said I was going, in the South Pacific; I've been fine, except for now; I have called, but you've never answered, you lazy sod; my glasses are gone, which is why I'm calling you; and yes, I can make you out, so stop sticking out your tongue at me!"

The little pink blob retracted, replaced by the gleam of white teeth.

"It's good to see you, bro. So, what's happening? What did you do with the specs? I bet you lost 'em again, huh? Man they must've cost, like, a hundred bucks or something."

"I did lose them, and can't for the life of me I find them, so I'm heading back to Kansas for a few days."

"COOL! Man, that rocks! Where're you staying? Come here! Stay with me! I'm between housemates at the moment. Well, apartment mates really, but that doesn't sound very good, does it? Are you bringing Josh? I still have the fold up crib you left here. Well?"

"That's what I was going to ask you. Thanks, Tom. My appointment is for 9am on Friday, and I'll be in Kansas for around 2.30am-ish, I'm not sure exactly. No need to ask if you'll still be awake because from the looks of it you only sleep during the day."

Tom chuckled and shrugged.

"Meh, I don't really care. I am a writer; the rules of time and space do not apply."

"Yeah. Right. So, will you have me for a few days then?"

"Definitely! This is so cool. Hey, can I tell Dad? I'm sure he'll want to see you. And everyone else for that matter. And they'll kill me if they found out I didn't tell them. Especially Mom. She keeps asking where exactly you've gone and why."

Dominic shrugged and shook his head.

"Sure, tell Matt if you want, and the rest."

"Hey, Mom'll be glad that you've stopped wearing your nose ring, 'cause you're not wearing it now, and you probably haven't been since you started this high-flying job of yours. Not appropriate, I expect. It's always the way."

"Something like that," I just don't want them to think I'm some kind of rebel or anything. I miss that ring... "Anyway, Tom, I'm going t' have to go. Thanks for this. I mail you the final details, alright?"

"No probs, Dommie. Let me know! Can't wait to see you guys! See ya!" With a little salute, Tom signed off.

Dominic had to sit back for a moment. How on earth did I manage to live with that child? He stood up and started to tickle Joshua lightly.

"Now, we should start planning what we're taking, right? Which cuddly do you want, Ducky or Squeaky Bear? What do you say, my little man?"

Post by ArtisticRainey on 20/05/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:00:35 GMT
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Tracy Island, April 12th 5.30 p.m.

Kat had rested for a few hours after fainting in Thunderbird Two's hangar. Walking out on to the balcony, she breathed in the fresh, warm air. It was such a lovely place. Over and over she thanked her lucky stars that she had been taken on as a mechanic to the Tracy Family.

Wandering back into her apartment, she went into her small kitchenette, made herself a snack and poured herself an glass of orange juice, then sat down at her computer. She opened her e-mails and saw that she had three new ones.

One was from her brother in Washington, a newsy e-mail full of family interest. She sat and composed a reply. The second was addressed to her and Callie from Jeff, advising of the change of date for the meeting with the new recruits.

The third one was from Dr. Tracy asking her to attend the doctor in her office, when she returned from taking Dom to the eye specialist. Kat slumped at the desk. Virgil must have told his mom about the fainting episode.

I hope they don't decide that I am not fit enough and send me home. She felt she couldn't bear that. She replied to Dr. Tracy's message, and then closed her computer down. Wandering back on the balcony, she thought about the episodes of fainting. True I haven't fainted for ages, but I have had several light headed spells. She had always been thin. Her mother had

insisted that even though she was a vegetarian she should eat nutritious food. She just did not put on weight. She was just like her Gran. Granny Johnson was a sparrow of a woman, tiny but full of vitality. Kat smiled to herself remembering spending holidays with her grandparents. Mrs. Johnson ruled her family with a rod of iron although she was also very caring. There was nothing that she wouldn't do for Kat and her brothers. Kat's grandfather was 6ft, but Grandmother was the boss.

"Hi, Kat," Nikki called from her balcony. "Fancy a swim?"

"Love to. Give me a few minutes to get my swimming costume on."

Kat and Nikki headed for the pool.

"I had an e:mail today from Dr. Tracy," Kat told her friend. "She asked me to meet her in her office after she has returned from taking Dom to the eye specialist."

Nikki raised her eyebrows. "What have you been doing?"

Kat looked at Nikki. "When I was learning about Thunderbird Two with Brains and Virgil, I fainted."

"Oh," Nikki replied.

Kat continued. "You see I have a low blood sugar problem, and if I don't eat regularly or have some sugar, like glucose, my blood sugar levels drop suddenly, causing me to pass out. I guess Virgil told Dr. Tracy. Oh, Nikki, I am so terrified that Dr. Tracy will not think me fit enough to be a member of IR and send me home."

"I can't see Dr. Tracy sending you home. You are a very good mechanic, and Dr. Tracy is at the moment helping Elise. She's not being sent home. I am sure that there is something that she can do to help you as well."

Both young women arrived at the pool. Virgil and Gordon were already swimming.

"How are you Kat? " Virgil called.

"Better now, thanks," Kat called back as she slipped off her t-shirt and shorts and dove into the pool.

Post by Tawnyangel22 on 26/05/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:00:49 GMT

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Thursday April 12th, 2068 11:45pm

It was late and the denizens of the island had retired for the night; everybody save one. Brandon was sitting out on the balcony, taking in the night air, a thoughtful look on his face. It had been two

months since his fateful meeting with Jeff and only now was the impact of his job sinking in.

"I can't believe what's happened to me in such a short time. I never realized I could make such a difference saving lives." He sat back in the chair thinking about some of the rescues he had been on, helping rescue Jeff and Elise from a helijet crash, saving Captain Bowers from an icy death in the North Sea and assisting in the rescue of the Prime Minister and her family from the Tower Bridge.

"Mom and Dad would be so proud of me and the work I do for International Rescue. I just wish I could have told them the truth before I left." After a few more minutes reminiscing, he got up and went inside. However, instead of going to bed, he went to his desk and sat down. Booting his computer and opening the word processor, he began writing.

"Dear Mom and Dad," he began, "I hope this letter finds you both doing well. I apologize for not writing in a while but my job has been keeping me really busy.

Remember when I told you I got a job with Tracy Industries in Hawaii? Well, I wasn't being honest with you that day. I'm not in Hawaii, and I'm not testing new marine equipment. The truth is I'm an aquanaut in training with International Rescue. Mr. Tracy was looking for some good people to help in the organization and my name came up along with a few others. When I decided to take the job, Mr. Tracy swore me to secrecy and keeping everything from you is the hardest thing I've ever had to do." Brandon stopped and looked at what he had written. Satisfied with what he had put down, he continued typing.

"Man, you would not believe some of the rescues I've been on. The first one happened not too long after I had arrived. A helijet, carrying Mr. Tracy and a pilot, Elise Collins, crashed on a mountainside, and we were pressed into service to help rescue them. I didn't do very much that first time; it was mostly passing the equipment along to Doc or Gordon Tracy, one of Mr. Tracy's eight kids. That rescue was hard on all of us, Mr. Tracy being our boss, but it was particularly hard on Doc, whose real name is Dianne. Besides being International Rescue's chief medical officer, she's also Mr. Tracy's wife." Brandon shook his head, recalling that rescue and realizing how lucky Jeff and Elise were. He then went on, describing, in detail, the North Sea rescue and the heroics at the Tower Bridge.

"I tell you, the last rescue was really scary. It was my first time solo at the controls of Thunderbird Four and I had to keep her between the cruise ship and the bridge support. It wasn't easy with the storm tossing us about like a roller coaster."

He continued typing, telling his parents about the Thunderbirds, life on the island and his new friends. Finally his eyes became too tired to look at the screen.

"Well, it's late and I need to go. I'll try not to wait so long to write you next time. I love you both and miss you a lot.

Take care,
Brandon"

Brandon looked at the letter, a tear falling down his cheek. "Maybe someday I'll be able to tell you the truth." He reached out, saving the letter to his journal.

Post by MagicMaster8 on 26/05/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:01:03 GMT

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Friday, April 13, 2068, 8:15 a.m., Tracy Island

Cherie made her way to the dining room, stretching and yawning. She had spent the past couple of afternoons helping Dom with Joshua, and was surprised how tired it had made her. She said, "Good morning," to the family members still at the breakfast table, and when Kyrano approached, she asked for maple and brown sugar oatmeal.

She watched as her father worked diligently at something on his data pad, so diligently that he hadn't noticed her arrival or her greeting. As he finally sat back, she asked, "What are you doing, Dad?"

Jeff looked over at her and smiled. "Well, good morning, Princess," he said. "I'm just working out the final details of our flight plan to Kansas. We'll be leaving this evening around 6:30 and with a stopover in L.A. for a stretch and refueling, should make it in time for Dominic's appointment at 9 a.m." He cocked his head at her. "Can you tell me what time it will be here at home if we get to Kansas at 8:30 a.m. their time?"

"Let's see. They're on US Central time..." She stuck the tip of her tongue out the side of her mouth as she tried to do the math in her head. "I'd say 2:30 a.m. on the 14th. Am I right?"

"Very close. It would actually be 1:30 a.m. on the 14th because Kansas would be on Daylight Savings Time."

"Oh yeah! I forgot about that. It really confuses things more, doesn't it? Trying to keep track of both the IDL and the Daylight Savings time stuff. Makes my head spin sometimes."

"Mine, too, Princess."

Kyrano appeared with a bowl of oatmeal, and Cherie thanked him, then asked for the insulated carafe with the milk in it to be passed to her. As she poured some milk on her hot cereal then into her glass, she asked, "How long will you be gone?"

"Not long. I have to be back for a meeting here on Monday. I expect we'll get back some time late Sunday night. We'll be staying at the farmhouse."

"I wish I could go and we could visit the ranch so I could ride the horses. Seems ages since we've been there. Hey! Maybe we could go for my birthday!"

"That's a good idea. I'm sure your friends would love the ranch. But I have something special planned for your mother's birthday."

Cherie's face took on a sly, conspiratorial look. "Do I get to know what it is? Maybe I can help with it."

Jeff laughed. "No, you don't, and no, you can't! If I told you, your mother would know all about it by the end of the day today!"

"No, she wouldn't!" Cherie protested. "I can keep a secret!"

Jeff just looked at his teenaged daughter, one eyebrow up in challenge. Finally she sighed, and said, "Okay. You win. But don't think that I won't be trying to find out!"

"Just don't try too hard, okay? I want this to be a total surprise for your mother." He rose from the table. "I've got to file this flight plan and check with Marion about the farmhouse." He leaned over to give her a kiss on the cheek as he passed. "Have a good day, sweetheart, even if it is Friday the 13th."

"I will, Dad. You, too. And watch out. You never know when something weird will happen."

Jeff just chuckled as he left the room. Cherie watched him go and shook her head. ~I have a feeling that strange things are going to happen today.

Post by Tikatu on 26/05/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:17:35 GMT
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Tracy Island April 13th, 4.30 pm

"Kat," Brains addressed his young assistant. "I think we should finish for the day. We have both worked extremely hard. I will see you back here tomorrow morning, just after breakfast."

"Okay, Boss." Kat grinned. "See you tomorrow." She continued tidying up and putting her tools away.

"Hello, Kat!" John said as he made his way over to where the young mechanic was clearing up.

"Oh! Hi there," Kat answered. "If you wanted to see Brains, you've just missed him."

"No, it's you I have come to see," John replied, leaning on the worktop. "Brains asked me to show you the Jet Packs. Would now be a good time?"

"Why, yes, of course, John. Just give me about ten minutes to finish here first."

"Okay," John replied. "See you outside the entrance to Thunderbird Two's hangar in about ten minutes."

John whistled as he left the work place, not realising that Gordon had been listening to the conversation. With a wicked grin on his face, the aquanaut headed to where the Jet packs were stored.

Kat joined John at the entrance to Thunderbird Two's hangar. "Ready, John." He led her to where the Jet packs were kept. Lifting down the two nearest, he handed one to her.

"These are really quite simple to use," he explained. "Just strap yourself into the harness." Kat did as she was told, with some help from John.

"Now," John said, indicating the front mounted controls on the harness. "This button is for UP, this is for DOWN..." He indicated how to direct the Jets so that they could be manoeuvred to the right of the left.

"Okay, Kat." John turned to her. "In your own time, try to lift off from the ground."

"Aren't you using one yourself, John?" Kat asked.

"Once you've got the hang of the Jet, Kat, I'll follow," John replied, reaching for the other harness.

"Nothing seems to be happ... Whooooooooooooo!" Kat was suddenly catapulted into the air.

"Hey, that's very good! Well done!" John called from the ground.

"John, I hate to say this, but I was not instrumental in getting this thing airborne!" Kat called. "I don't think I actually pushed any buttons. It seems to have a life of its own!"

From his hiding place, Gordon laughed to himself. He had originally planned that John would be in the jet pack that he had under remote control, but it seemed even funnier to have Kat under his control.

John was finding it hard to conceal his amusement. It was funny to see Kat being carried along, seemingly without control, but on the other hand he was a little worried. I hope she doesn't get hurt he thought. "Uh, Kat, are you okay?" he called, as he tried to keep her in sight. She was rapidly moving out of view.

"What do you think?!" Kat sounded angry, but she was really quite frightened at the thought of what might happen. How will I ever to come down to earth?

John stepped back involuntarily at the anger in her voice. It's not like this is my fault, he thought. Suddenly, he heard a loud guffaw from the bushes close by. Getting closer, he parted the bushes and saw Gordon, holding a remote control.

"Oh, Gordon!" John said, rolling his eyes and folding his arms.

"Gee, John, don't you think it's funny?" Gordon laughed at his brother. "I bet Kat's wondering what's happening to her."

"I don't think it's very fair on her," John said.

"Relax, will ya? She won't fall," Gordon replied. "I'll bring her down safely."

"We can't even see her. We'll have to go after her," John said.

Soon the brothers were airborne. John seemed to be trying to suppress a smile, and he shook his head.

"You know, Gords, it is kind of funny, but I don't think she'll take it too well."

Ahead of them, Kat was struggling with the straps that held her securely. If only I could free myself! She looked down. But right now, the landing would not be too gentle.

The view was rather spectacular. She was heading over the beach, where she could see Nikki and Elise looking up as she sailed overhead, heading for the swimming pool. She tried to appear cool as she waved to her friends, trying to act as though this was a regular occurrence.

The pool seemed her only chance of a relatively safe fall. As she struggled with the straps, they suddenly gave way, and she dropped like a stone into the pool. Somehow the jet pack once released shot away heading for the beach. Virgil and Scott looked on in amazement.

Looking very much like a drenched kitten, Kat scrambled out of the pool. She tried to keep her voice level, but tears were beginning to form. Oh, Gordon! You're so cruel!

"Hi, guys," Kat said shakily. "I've just dropped into say hello."

Virgil offered her a hand, and she emerged, shaking her hair out of her eyes. Just then John and Gordon landed. They jogged over to her. Gordon did his best to act sheepish

"Gee, I'm sorry, Kat." Gordon looked at the dripping wet girl. "I really intended for John to put on that pack."

"Gords, really," Scott said, exasperated. "Kat could have been hurt."

"Aw, come on! I bet you all saw the funny side," Gordon chuckled.

Kat looked at all four brothers and tried to keep the tears at bay.

"That was a silly trick. What if, like Scott had said, I had been injured? Why, I could have been out of action for ages! I won't forget this Gordon," she added. "You had better watch out. And now I am going to get dry. This is the last time I test-drive any equipment without Brains supervising things."

At that, she turned on her heel and ran towards the Cliff House, leaving a trail of pool water behind her. Gordon shrugged.

"Some people ust can't take a joke."

Post by Tawnyangel22 on 27/05/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:19:37 GMT
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Friday, April 13, 2068, 4:00 p.m., Tracy Island

"Daaaaaad!" Tyler called as he burst into the lounge from the study, followed closely by Alex.

Jeff looked up from his last-minute attempts to get some work done before he left. "Son, what have I said about knocking?"

Tyler stopped before his desk, breathless, and drew himself up to attention. Alex stood behind him as if using his younger brother as shield from their father's possible wrathful reaction.

"I know, sir, and I'm sorry, sir, but... but..." Tyler said, his words tumbling out one after another. "But this is an emergency!" he finally spit out.

"What kind of emergency?" Jeff asked, getting up from behind his desk.

"A BIG emergency!" Tyler cried, waving his skinny arms.

"Alex? Do you know what he's talking about?"

Alex looked rather sheepish, and scratched the back of his head. "Yes, sir. I do. He's kinda blowing it out of proportion."

Jeff stopped in his tracks and put his hands on his hips. "Okay, boys. Before we go any further, what is the problem?"

"It might be better if we show you, Dad," Alex said.

Jeff sighed. ~So much for getting anything else done. "All right, all right, show me."

Tyler grabbed Jeff's hand and started pulling him from the room. They descended the stairs to the lower level and turned in at the door to the family game room. The younger boy dropped his father's hand and ran over to the two pinball machines that stood against the far wall.

"Look, Dad!" he said as he turned the machine on.

"What am I looking at?" Jeff asked. He played pinball with his youngest sons on occasion, but not

enough to know all the ins and outs of the machine.

"The high scores, Dad," Alex said, coming up behind him. "Tyler's initials were on top and he's had the highest score... until today."

The pinball machine was cycling through its enticement blurbs one by one and finally, the top three scores and their owners flashed up on the small screen. None of the initials were Tyler's, in fact, they all seemed to be... words. Three letter words. "CAT, DOG, BUS..." Jeff chuckled as he read them. "Looks like you've got a 'ghost in the machine'."

Alex's eyes widened, then narrowed. "Yeah, Dad. And I think I can name him, too."

"Who?" Tyler asked, frowning.

"Gordon!" Alex said firmly. "Dad? Am I right?"

"Very likely, son," Jeff affirmed. "I guess he decided that Friday the 13th was a better day to pull pranks than April Fool's Day."

"Wait until I get my hands on him!" Tyler cried angrily.

Jeff laughed. The boy sounded as if he could actually do something to Gordon.

"Don't worry, Tyler. I'll have a word with him. I'm sure he has a plan to put things back to normal afterward if that's possible."

"No, Dad," Alex said, a sly smile spreading over his face. He glanced at his younger brother. "We'll take care of it. You and Mom just enjoy yourselves in Kansas."

Jeff's eyes flicked from son to son. "Why do I have the feeling that the minute my back is turned, all hell is going to break loose?"

Alex's expression became angelic. "Oh no, Dad. We're just going to get Gordon to change the scores back... that's all."

"That's all?"

"Yeah, Dad. That's all," Tyler told him. He didn't know what his next oldest brother had in mind, but he wanted in on it. And very likely their father would stop it if he knew what it was.

"Okay," Jeff said, taking the plunge and hoping that he wasn't going to regret his decision. "I'll leave it to the two of you."

"Thanks, Dad," they chorused. Alex nudged Tyler. "C'mon, let's go outside and see if we can find Gordon." Tyler nodded, and the two of them bolted from the room.

Jeff watched them go, then looked back at the pinball machines. ~Gordon, I hope you are ready for your younger brothers' wrath. They're getting to be just as inventive as you are.

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:20:06 GMT
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*****Friday, April 13, 2068, Tracy Island, around 5 p.m.*****

Callie walked along the beach to unwind after another busy day in the Thunderbird Three simulator. She saw the waves coming in under the cobalt blue sky. For her, the beach was her place of calm and serenity amidst the chaos of being part of International Rescue. She was on her way back to her apartment when she saw John picking up something heavy from the white sand. "Hi, John!" she yelled.

John heard Callie calling him and stopped his task at hand. "Oh, hey, Callie!"

She walked up to where he was and asked, "What's going on?"

"Oh, Gordon played one of his pranks, but he got the wrong victim."

"Gordon's a prankster?"

"He's not a prankster. He's the prankster."

"I see. I guess I need to be on guard for him, won't I?"

"Right. He fooled everyone in the family when he didn't pull any April Fool's jokes, so he obviously wanted to save them for today." He went back to pulling out the heavy object.

Callie saw something familiar about the object. "Hey, that looks like a jetpack. I remember using a few of those in astronaut training. Need a hand getting it out?"

"I wouldn't mind the help."

It took only a couple of minutes for them to pull the jetpack from the sand.

"Thanks, Callie."

"No problem. What are you going to do with it?"

"I'm going to have Brains remove all the circuits relating to the remote control Gordon used to control the pack. Kat could've been hurt."

"Kat? Kat was the one strapped to this pack!?"

"Yeah, but I was supposed to be the victim. Needless to say she is not very happy with Gordon

right now."

"I wouldn't be, either, if I had been in this jetpack. Is Kat doing okay now?"

"Yeah, she's fine, but she's really shaken after that experience. When she was finally able to get unstrapped, she took a pretty decent dive into the swimming pool."

"I'll go see her after dinner to make sure she is doing okay."

"Okay, Callie. I'll see you later."

She went to the airstrip entrance and took the elevator up to the Villa to get to her apartment faster. When she exited, she walked to her apartment and quickly closed the door. "Ugh," she said, "I can't believe Gordon would do something potentially dangerous." She grabbed some okra and chicken from the refrigerator and started cooking it on her stove.

Post by TracyFan4Ever on 30/05/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:20:15 GMT

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Friday, April 13, 2068, 5:45 p.m., Tracy Island.

"Where are they?" Gordon muttered under his breath. He had come back to his room to escape the wrath of his little brothers, who he was sure were still looking for him, and John and his older brothers, who were still probably angry at him, for his mis-aimed prank. Now he was looking for his personal music player... or at least the batteries for it. So far everything he owned was missing their power cells.

"What's going on?" he growled. He kept looking, throwing things aside as he searched. He threw his pillow on the floor and a note flew up into the air as he tossed it.

He grabbed the note and read. It was in Alex's neat handwriting.

"Your batteries are being held for ransom. Fix the scores and they will be returned to you."

Gordon shook his head. "How did those little twerps get in here?" He sighed and shook his head. "I'd better get to it... before Dad hears about everything."

He left his room, and headed down to the game room, not hearing the giggle of two little boys or the triumphant high fives they gave each other.

Post by Tikatu on 30/05/2005

Friday 13 April 2065, 10.45am local time, Tracy Airbase Hospital, Kansas

The day had gone in far too fast. Since when did it take five minutes to fly from the South Pacific to Kansas? And at what other time had been seen right away in a hospital? Wasn't this sort of thing supposed to take hours? But no, having the Tracys on your side apparently meant swift service. He wasn't sure whether it was a good or a bad thing. Body surgery was one thing. Eye surgery was something entirely different.

"You look a little scared, if you don't mind my saying," Dianne said from her seat beside him.

Dominic shrugged and tried to loosen the death grip he had on the chair's arm. It wasn't happening.

"I've never had surgery done before. I mean, I've assisted thousands of times but I've never actually gone under the knife, as the saying goes. And my eyes... I keep saying to myself, what if something goes wrong? But then, they're a bit useless as they are, so it wouldn't make much of a difference."

"Nothing will go wrong, Dom. These are trained professionals who've been doing this for years. It'll be fine, I promise you."

A young nurse appeared from inside the surgery room and glanced down at her notepad, and then over at them.

"Dominic Kelly?" Dom nodded, and the nurse looked at Dianne over the top of her glasses, a slight twist in her lips. "Ah, yes, the observer. Well, come on through. Doctor Houston is ready."

Dominic caught the slightly offended look on Dianne's face, but said nothing. She assisted him into the surgery room, because he very nearly walked into the wall, and he squinted and tried to make out the surgeon.

"Ah, hello there my friends."

Dominic spun around and saw a white blob behind him.

"I'm Doctor Houston. You've made a good choice with surgery. We'll have you seeing as well as anything in just one hour!"

Something about the man made Dom feel uneasy. Why does he remind me of someone... He shrugged aside the thought and climbed up onto the bed when he was told to.

"Thank you very much for allowing me to observe this surgery, Doctor Houston," Dianne said. "I've never seen this kind of thing done before."

"For a doctor of such renown, how could I have refused?" Ha said. "I've heard a lot about you,

Doctor Tracy, and all of it good."

Dianne graciously took the compliment, and Dominic tried to remember who he sounded like. If only he could see him!

"Well, I assume you were briefed at your earlier appointment with the optometrist, so I won't bore you with the details again. Just to recap, I'm going to cut a flap in your cornea, and you'll be seeing wonderfully afterwards. We're actually going to have another observer in. She'll be along in a moment. A trainee, you know. My daughter, actually! Now, for the aesthetic."

Soon, Dominic found himself practically strapped in to the reclining chair, with the monstrous machinery pulled around and ready to go. Doctor Houston had numbed him eyes and cleaned the area, and they were waiting. Thoughts were rushing around his mind, and he gripped the chair more out of fear of the identity of this woman, than fear of the surgery. His heart pounded; he could feel sweat upon his face. It can't be, It can't be, it can't be...

"Ah, here she is. Doctor Tracy, Dominic, meet Margaret Houston, my daughter. She's training to be an optical surgeon too."

"Good morning," the woman said.

Dominic's heart broke. It was her. How could he forget that voice? Those dulcet tones, that gracious voice. If only he could see her properly, if only he could know for sure.

"Let's crack on, shall we?"

The surgery was over before Dominic knew it; only ten minutes per eye. He had barely even noticed. Everything had fallen away from him except the ache in his heart. It was her. It was her.

"Now, I'm just going to put these protectors over your eyes. We don't want you straining to see and undoing all my good work now do we? Come back in an hour and we'll remove them, and then, you'll see!" He chuckled at his own joke.

Dominic cursed the wait. He needed to see now, he needed to know. Dianne helped him up and took his elbow, leading him out of the room.

"Dom?" She asked. "You don't seem too happy here. What's wrong?"

"What did she look like?" He asked, more sharply than he had intended. "His daughter, Margaret, what did she look like?"

"Uh, long blonde hair, skinny, big eyes. And one thing: a big meteor of an engagement ring on her finger." Dianne said. "Why?"

"Did she have a beauty spot on her left cheek, just on the bone, down from the corner of her eye?"

"Why, yes, she did. How did you...?"

Dominic hung his head, wishing he could press his palms to his eyes.

"Dom? You're scarin' me a little heah."

"That was Margaret Houston, my wife."

There was stony silence between the two of them. Dominic threaded his fingers through his hair and tugged, trying to force the sick fear and abject sorrow back down where it had been before.

"Oh my," Dianne said at length. "Ah c'n see it now. She's Joshua's mother, isn't she? Ah c'n see it now. Oh Dom, Ah didn't know. You nevah told us."

"I know, I know," he said. "I was trying to forget it all. She only married me because she was pregnant, and her parents would have killed her. I was head over heels for her. She asked me to propose and I did. Bought her the biggest rock I could afford, which wasn't much. We got married without them knowing. Her plan was to bring me home as the love of her life, and hopefully they would understand. But she knew deep down that they wouldn't, and asked for a divorce six months into the marriage. A few weeks later she had Joshua, packed up her things, and walked out on me. She didn't even care about the baby. At least I got the ring back. I should have sold it, but I still have it." Dominic tugged harder on his hair and shook his head. "That was the first time I ever met her father. They still don't know we were ever married." His lips curled in a snarl as anger flared up. "Part of me wants to blow it all, reveal her little secret, let her see Joshua so she knows what she's missed. But... I can't. I...I still love her. I'm such a fool."

Dianne placed a hand on his shoulder and squeezed.

"Yoah not a fool, Dom. Love does this t' people. Ah'm a little overwhelmed by all this," she said, and said no more.

The hour passed in a moment, and when Dominic found himself in the room again, he was trying to sense Margaret's presence. It'll be better if you don't see her, Dom, he thought, because otherwise you'll just make a fool of yourself.

"Ready to see?" Doctor Houston asked. At Dominic's nod, he began the removal of the protective shields. It was painstakingly careful work, and seemed to take an age. Dominic's heart was pounding so hard he thought it would burst out of his chest. Just concentrate on what's happening here, he said, you'll be able to see, at long last. No more glasses. He felt Houston cover his eyes with his hand, shading his vision.

"Now, I'm going to very slowly take my hand away. Ready?"

Dominic nodded, and as the hand was removed, the world exploded into shape and line, detail and sharpness that he could never remember seeing before unaided.

"Oh my God. Oh my sweet Jesus. I can see!"

He could make out everything, and touched his face to make sure the glasses weren't there. But

the joy was only pure for a moment, and he found himself searching for Margaret. She wasn't there. He turned to the Doctor Houston and smiled at him despite the pain and his resemblance to his daughter.

"Thank you, Doctor," he said, though he wished he could say, I hate your daughter, I hate her. "This is... This is fantastic."

Houston beamed and clapped his hands.

"Ah, always the best part of the job, am I right, Doctor Tracy?"

"Absolutely," Dianne said, smiling at Dom's joy.

"Margaret!" Houston called. "Come in here! This is the real payment."

Margaret walked in. Dominic seriously thought he was going to throw up. There she was, his only ever love, the woman who had tramped all over his heart, used him, left him. She didn't even seem to know him. She had always been a good actress.

"You see that joy, Margaret? Some day you'll be able to give that to someone."

"Yes, Doctor," she said. Her eyes lingered on Dom for a moment, but she had to look away.

The nurse from earlier popped her head around the door and adjusted her glasses.

"Your twelve-thirty is waiting, Doctor," she said.

"Very good, very good," Houston said, and stepped forward to shake Dominic's and then Dianne's hands. "As I'm sure you were told already, there may be some slight pain. Ah, I see you've got some weeping. That'll clear up in a few hours."

"Thank you, Doctor," Dominic said.

Houston smiled widely, and showed them back out into the waiting room. Dominic didn't stop walking, and Dianne hurried to catch up. Finally he could see, at last he had what he had always wanted. And what was one of the first things his new vision brought him? An aching heart, a broken spirit. It was her. It was her. It was her.

"Dominic, wait up!" Dianne said.

He slowed down and wiped the tears from his face. He wasn't sure if he was crying or if it was from the surgery. Either way, he didn't like it.

"Are you okay?" She asked.

He shrugged, and then sighed.

"I don't know," he said. "I really don't know. I think I just need to be with Josh right now, you know?"

I'll finally be able to see his face again. Even though he looks so much like her... I don't care. He's my son, not hers. He's the one thing she didn't take away."

Dianne nodded, and without another word they walked to the exit where Dom said Tom would be waiting. Sure enough, there he was, with Joshua in his arms. Dominic said nothing and took the child from him, holding him tight. It was one thing she could never take away.

Post by ArtisticRainey on 31/05/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:21:27 GMT
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Friday, April 13, 2068, 1:15 p.m., the Tracy farmhouse, Kansas

Dianne slammed the door on the sports car she had driven back from the airbase. It felt strange to her to be driving from one place to another; usually they flew or had limousines available. But not in Kansas. Not at Jeff's old home.

Dom was safe in the hands of his half-brother, and she hoped that the family contact and the joy of having his sight would help erase the deep sadness that the nurse felt at having seen his ex-wife again. ~I hope she doesn't get any ideas about taking that little boy away from his father. If she does, she'll have us to deal with.

Jeff came to the porch of the farmhouse to meet her. "How did things go?" he asked as he put an arm around her waist. "How is Dom?"

"His vision is good; the procedure went smoothly," she told them as they entered the house where Jeff had grown up and where he had spent several years after Lucille's death, trying to raise his boys with the help of his mother. She dropped her purse onto a small table, then sat down in one of the easy chairs. "But... there was a complication."

"What kind of complication?" he asked as he stepped into the kitchen to fetch her something cold to drink. He returned to the living room with a tall glass of iced tea for them both. Marian, the caretaker, had made sure there was plenty of food and drink in the fridge for them, even though they were only staying overnight. He handed the glass to his wife and sat down next to her.

"An... emotional complication. Seems that I wasn't the only observer. There was a young woman, daughter to the doctor doing the procedure." She sighed heavily. "Seems the woman was Dom's ex-wife..."

"Ex-wife?" Jeff asked, surprised.

Dianne nodded. "Yes. Joshua's mother. Dom was pretty broken up about her being there, but they didn't say anything to each other." She sipped her tea. "Well, he's with his half-brother now and hopefully putting the unpleasantness behind him as he enjoys his new outlook on life."

"Hmm. I wonder if little Joshua will need that kind of surgery?" Jeff commented.

"I'm sure he will, but not until he's older. Don't want to potentially damage still-growing tissues." Dianne answered.

The two of them sat quietly for a few moments, finishing their cold drinks, then Jeff stood up. He took Dianne by the hand, pulling her to her feet.

"What do you have in mind, Mr. Tracy?" she asked.

"Oh, a little bit of lunch, then maybe a little bit of fun... if you're in the mood," he suggested with a smile.

"Lunch sounds wonderful. And I know just what can get me in the mood," she replied.

"Oh?"

She let go of his hand and walked over to the music player. Flipping through some of the discs, she pulled one out and slipped it in. A mellow orchestra began to play, and she turned to hold her arms out to him. He smiled, and came to her, clasping her waist with one hand and her hand with the other. They swayed together to the slow beat of the music, drawing closer with each song until they were cheek to cheek.

Jeff leaned down, and their lips met softly. "I thought you wanted lunch?" he breathed.

"You're my lunch," Dianne replied, her eyes shining. He smiled back at her and, leaving the music on, led her upstairs to the room that had been his and was now theirs.

Post by Tikatu on 01/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:21:37 GMT

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Friday, April 13th; 7 PM; Lena's home

Lena had finished washing up after dinner, and was working on Brains' email virus scanner, when she heard the doorbell ring. She frowned, wondering, Who could dat be? She saved her work and closed it, then went to open the door. Standing on her door was someone she hadn't seen in over twenty years, and never expected to encounter again.

"Hello, Lena. How have you been?"

"James Matumbo. What are you doing here?"

"Relax, woman. I'm not here to ask for money. I have a meeting tomorrow morning in D.C. with someone who'll be flying back to Europe in the afternoon, and then I'm leaving for the West Coast

as soon as it's over. But there isn't a hotel or motel room to be had there -- some convention or other is going on, I think. Since I'd planned to stop by for a visit anyway, I decided to take the Metro to Silver Springs and a cab here. Maybe you could recommend a place I could stay at for the night."

She studied him for a long moment and he waited, keeping his expression non-committal. Finally she said, "You can stay here, but only for one night. However, don't expect me to play hostess too much. I'm working on a special project for my job and can't spend time with you."

"On a weekend? Tracy Industries must be run by a bunch of slave drivers," he responded as she stood aside to let him in.

"How do you know I work for Tracy Industries?"

"Lena, I might not be around all the time, or even welcome, but I am part of this family. I've kept track of you all, as much as I could."

"I see," was her only reply as she led him down the hall to the guest room. She left him there, while she went to put a washcloth and towels in the bathroom for him. When she returned, he was no longer in the room. She headed to the living room, to find him sitting on the sofa reading a magazine.

"Have you eaten?" she asked.

"Yes; I'm fine. Don't worry about having to entertain me. You've got some interesting reading material. Since you've got something else to do, and I interrupted, go ahead. I'll be okay."

"All right. I shouldn't be too long -- about an hour or so -- and I'll join you. If you do get hungry, you can fix yourself a snack." She turned and headed into her office. He watched to see which room she went into, then returned to reading the magazine he held, a small, smug smile on his face.

She was eager to get back to her computer. She had figured out the key to modifying Brains' program, and wanted to finish it. She worked steadily and when she got it done, she installed it on her computer. She sat back and sighed. Looking at the clock, she thought, I'm too tired to run the tests now. And I've been here more than an hour. Who knows what James has been up to while I was in here? I'd better get out there and play hostess, even if it's only for a short time.

She shut down her computer for the night, and did her routine check. When she left the office, James looked up.

"Lena, I want to apologize for not contacting you when Mark died. I didn't find out until months later; I was out of touch with everyone for some time. But I still should have tried to get in touch with you; after all, he was my brother. What happened?"

She told him and he made all the proper comments, even relating a few anecdotes about things that happened when they were kids. She listened, not believing him; Mark had already told her about a couple of them, and there were a few important differences in the two versions. However, she refrained from commenting on that.

They were silent for a little while, then he asked, "So tell me, how is everyone? How many grandchildren do you have now?"

"Five. And tree great-grandchildren."

"No. Really? I haven't been keeping track as well as I thought. Tell me more."

She spent the rest of the evening catching him up on the marriages and births that he was hadn't heard about. He told her a little -- a very little -- about his life over the last twenty odd years. They watched the news and finally said good night and went to bed.

Post by Hobbeth on 01/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:22:03 GMT
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[i]Friday 13 April, 10.05pm, Kansas

"Dominic, darling, how wonderful to see you!"

Dom lay back on the couch in Tom's apartment -- his old home -- and massaged his temples.

"My, aren't you quite the handsome man without those glasses. You look wonderful!"

Listening to Elizabeth Hawkins, his father's wife, had been like having his head repeatedly jammed into a tumble dryer. She was the most sickly sweet, fake woman he had ever met in his life. She gave him chills. Her long fingernails had scratched up his arms as she held him to get a better look; the fragrance of her perfume had been overpowering. He hated her, although he had no reason to. Apart from the fact she's Matthew's wife. You hate this, don't you? You hate Matthew for leaving, and yet you begrudge him for getting on with his life. Dominic sighed. I don't know what to think. At least now the visit to his father's house was over.

The day had been more than overwhelming. All of the travelling, the nerves from the surgery, the Margaret incident... He tucked his feet up under him and closed his eyes. It had been a day of such conflicting happiness and sorrow that it had left him bone-tired, yet unable to rest.

He hadn't been able to let go of Joshua all day. The young child seemed so happy; travelling never bothered him. Must get that from me mam, Dom thought, She couldn't stay still. Now he was asleep in his old room, weary from the excitement. Dominic was glad Margaret hadn't spoken, hadn't asked about Joshua, where they were and how they were doing. He didn't want her anywhere near his son. Just like Mam never wanted me near Matthew; not that he ever made the effort to contact me till after she was dead. It was strange and chilling the way his life seemed to be mirroring his mother's, in a way. I just don't want to end up like her.

He looked up as the front door swung open, and Tom bustled in, a pizza box balanced

precariouly on one arm. Dom jumped up to catch it before it fell. Tom swung the door shut and shrugged at his brother's glare.

"It didn't fall. Chill, man, you've gotten so uptight since you left -- although I guess I can let it slide for today, am I right?" He said with a kind smile and a wink.

Dom shook his head, and went to the kitchen to cut the pizza. Tom lifted some soda and glasses and headed into the living area. Dom followed, and they said nothing for a while as they devoured the savoury delight. Tom sat back eventually and took off his glasses to rub his eyes.

"I'd like to get that surgery done. I hate glasses; they just get in the way. I wouldn't wear them but then I wouldn't be able to see what I was writing, would I? Wish I had some high-flying job like yours. What is it you do again? Obviously nursing, but what else?"

Dominic chewed with deliberate care and took a sip of his drink.

"I'm a nurse with the family doctor on Jeff Tracy's island," he said. "It's a pretty big community; they need basic healthcare." He said.

Technically he hadn't lied. Tom seemed to buy it.

"Cool," Tom said at length.

Dominic looked up, surprised by the time and monosyllabic answer, and caught a fleeting worried glance on Tom's face that the blond had tried to hide.

"What?" He asked.

Tom shrugged.

"What? Thomas Eugene, what is the matter?"

Tom shrugged again and took another piece of pizza. Dom could see him staring out of the corner of his eye, and he scowled. Tom conceded and set the slice back down.

"I just... Man, I feel so stupid saying this, but I just..." He sighed. "I miss you," he said quickly.

Dominic chuckled and patted Tom's shoulder.

"Is that all? I thought you were going to drop another bombshell on me. I miss you too, but this is what happens when you grow up, right? I know you wouldn't be familiar with growing up, only being twenty and all."

Tom punched his arm and shook his head, an embarrassed pleasure on his face.

"Shut up, Dak, you can't pull that stuff on me. Unless you want me to call you [i]old man[/i] from now on."

"You dare," Dom said.

"I will."

Dominic sat back and folded his arms. The smile on his face seemed unnatural, and yet felt right. Despite the major bad point, the day had been good, when he thought about it. Once I'm out of here, I'll never have to see her again. Good luck to her new husband, he thought, chafing slightly at the memory of the huge engagement ring on her finger, I hope he can give her what she wants.

Post by ArtisticRainey on 01/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:22:14 GMT
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Saturday, April 14th; 5:30 AM; Lena's home

Lena found herself wide awake and thought that, since she probably wouldn't be able to go back to sleep, she'd work on Brains email scanner program. She put her robe and slippers on and quietly proceeded (so as not to awaken her guest) down the hall to her home office. But when she opened the door, she found she hadn't needed to be quiet.

"James! What are you doing in here?"

The man at the computer jumped, startled by her exclamation. He turned and looked at her guiltily. "I'm sorry, Lena. I know I should have asked, but I didn't want to wake you. I couldn't sleep -- never could for more than a few hours at a time. I've been using computer games to help me when I feel the need to gamble. It's been working so far. And I didn't think you would mind."

She looked at him sternly as she walked over to the desk to see what game he was playing. "You should have told me dis last night. Did you try to go online?"

"Well, yeah, but I couldn't figure out your password."

She snorted a laugh. "I should tink not. I often use it for my work."

"You know, you work too hard. You should think of changing employers."

"I'm happy wit my job. I enjoy it."

"But you could do better. Forgive me for saying this, Lena, but you aren't a young woman any more. Tracy Industries is taking advantage of you. Now . . ."

"James, I tink we should have dis conversation in de living room where we can talk comfortably." She thought she saw a look on his face as though he was going to insist on staying in the room, but it was gone so quickly as he glanced at the computer screen, that she decided she imagined it.

She closed down the game and put the computer on standby, then turned and headed to the door, not noticing that he turned back to the desk for a moment, then put something in his jacket pocket. He stood up and followed her into the other room, where they took the same seats as the night before.

"Okay, James. I tink you have a sales pitch you want to give me. Let's hear it."

"Oh, c'mon, Lena. You sound as though you've got your mind made up already. I prefer to say what I have to say to someone more receptive."

"You may be my brother-in-law, and as such, a member of the family, but I remember what you were like de last few times I saw you, and I don't know dat you've changed much since den." She paused. "But okay, I'll try to keep an open mind."

He settled himself more comfortably. "That's better. Now then, about two months ago, I was in London. Through a series of what turned out to be some very fortunate circumstances, I met a man named Giles Hightower. Since then, I've become pretty intimate with the family. I've seen their business, and I found out their needs. I told them about you, and they agree that you could be a vital part of it, perhaps as a link between their European and American interests. Your paycheck would probably be doubled, even tripled. And your workload would be much lighter. You would travel in style and be housed like royalty."

"What about my computer work? What kinds of challenges would I be given?"

"Challenges? Haven't you had enough of those? You're near retirement age, after all, although I know you have no intention of doing that. But working for Stellar Consulting would give you more time to relax, to spend more time with your family."

"I spend plenty of time wit dem. I don't need any more time to relax. It could be bad for my healt. I trive on challenges. I have no intention of dwindling into an old lady in a rocking chair, to be visited by one or anotter group of family members on rotating Sundays."

He held up his hands as if to ward her off. "Okay, okay. I just thought you'd be interested in having more of a personal life. I didn't mean that you're too old to keep doing the computer work you love. I'm sorry if you felt that I had implied that."

She calmed herself down. "I'm sorry, James. Look, are you hungry? I'm beginning to be, and I can make us some breakfast. I expect you at least want some coffee."

He thought about pursuing his pitch, but realized she probably wouldn't let him. So he agreed and she went into the kitchen. Soon the pleasing aroma of the coffee brewing wafted its way through the house. He'd gone into his room to shower, shave, and dress. By the time he went into the kitchen, she had breakfast ready.

They sat down and ate while chatting about nothing in particular. Lena offered to take her brother-in-law to the train station. He accepted and went to his room to get his things together. She put the dishes in the washer, and the food in the fridge, then went to her room and threw

some clothes on, and they left ten minutes later.

When she returned, she showered and dressed, then cleaned up the kitchen. Finally she took the last cup of coffee, went into her home office, and restarted her computer. Now to test de modified program. But I'd better do my usual checks first. She started her virus checks to verify that nothing else had snuck into her computer and was startled when something was found.

She quarantined the program and found that Brains' modified scan was the one that caught it. Opening it in the isolated area, she began to study it. The discoveries she made within a short period shocked her. My God! Dis has de same signature as de one from Tin-Tin's email! She did a quick check and found that the virus had been planted that very morning.

James! she thought. But how? Why? Then she remembered something he said about the Hightowers.

Since then, I've become pretty intimate with the family.

She thought about it for a while and decided that James' gambling addiction was what had brought him to the Hightowers' attention. And that was why he tried to get her to leave Tracy Industries. Dey must have put him up to it. I know he can't create a basic program, let alone one as complex as dis. It sounds to me like de Hightowers aren't very etical people.

To corroborate that the two viruses were created by the same person, she installed the one Brains had sent her and ran it through the program she'd modified. To her great satisfaction, the program caught and isolated the second virus. She did some quick calculations and decided that everyone on Tracy Island would be sleeping. She sent Brains an email, attaching the specs of the modified program, and told him what had happened, and her conclusions regarding the creator of the viruses.

Now dere's notting left to do but wait.

Post by Hobbeth on 02/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:22:43 GMT
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Saturday, April 14th, 12:30PM; the Watergate Hotel

James Matumbo walked into the restaurant and looked around. He noticed a hand raised languidly from a table by the window, and headed over. When he reached it, he looked down at the younger man sitting there, who was looking up at him questioningly.

"Partial success only, I'm afraid. I couldn't get her to leave Tracy Industries. In fact, when I arrived, she said she was working on a special project for them. She has this crazy idea that she can continue her computer work as long as she desires."

"Did she actually say no? And what about the virus? The one we planted in another Tracy employee's computer hasn't yielded anything of value yet, and it's been several days. Oh, sit down, man. I'll strain my neck if I keep looking up at you much longer."

James sat down and a waiter walked over to take his drink order, and the other man requested a refill. When he was gone, James replied, "She didn't use the word 'no', but she made it pretty clear she liked working for them and had no plans to leave. As far as the virus is concerned, it's planted."

"And she has no idea about what you did? She didn't catch you?"

"Well, she almost did, but I took the precaution of having one of those offline games that come with all computers up and running. She did come in while I was there, but I told her I played those games to control my gambling habit. And I was able to get the CD out of her terminal when she wasn't looking."

"And she bought that explanation?" the other man asked incredulously.

"She swallowed it hook, line, and sinker. Never even blinked. She may be good with computers, but in spite of the fact that she knows a little about my somewhat checkered past, she'll believe anything I tell her."

The other man made a sound of disbelief, then turned and picked up the menu. James followed suit, and when the waiter returned with the drinks, they were ready to order their meal. For the next hour, they chatted about nothing in particular and enjoyed their food. When the waiter took their dishes away and laid a folder with the bill on the table, the younger man took it and said to James, "All right. I'll assume for now that you are right and everything is going according to plan. But you had better be right. The rest of my family isn't as forgiving as I am." He studied the bill for a few moments, then took out his wallet, pulled some money from it and laid the cash in the folder.

As the two men headed to the door, James said, "Don't worry. I'm sure she'll come around. And when she does, just think of how much she can contribute to your company. You'll be able to learn just about anything about Tracy Industries you want to know. She can show you how to get into their computers. And even if she doesn't do so right away, that virus will give you information now."

They were exiting the building by this time, and James noticed a limousine pulled up in front of it. The rear door was open and the scent of an exotic perfume wafted out toward them. "Giles, come on. We don't want to be late, do we?"

He leaned in. "Ah, my dear. Prompt as ever, and more beautiful than before, if that is possible. Don't worry. They wouldn't dare leave without us. One moment."

He straightened up and said, "You'd better pray that it does, Mr. Matumbo, or the next time we meet might not be so pleasant."

Before James could formulate a response, Giles Hightower got into the limousine and the chauffeur closed the door. A minute later, it glided away from the curb.

Post by Hobbeth on 03/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:22:50 GMT
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Saturday 14 April, The Journey Home

Dominic sighed in relief as Joshua finally nodded off, cuddled up to his chest, clutching his 'blankee' tightly. He didn't dare to move at all, even though his position in the seat was uncomfortable. Joshua had just spent the last fifteen minutes in full-scale tantrum. He didn't want Ducky, he didn't want a story, he didn't want to look out the window. Eventually the get-out-the-blanket-and-hold-him-tight tactic had worked, and now the toddler was asleep, and the hum of the engine could finally be heard again.

"Sorry about that, folks," he said.

"Don't worry about it," Jeff said with a smile.

Dianne nodded.

"We both know what it's like," she said, and turned back to give him a wink.

"Every road trip I ever took the boys on, someone always had a problem," Jeff said, and chuckled. "Boredom, feeling squashed, starting to fight... Ugh. That's something I wouldn't like to do again."

"At least I'm lucky in the sense I only have one," Dom said. "Though to be honest, I'd love more."

Dianne chuckled.

"Feeling broody?" She joked, drawing a lopsided grin on Dom's face, but he said nothing.

By the time Jeff was requesting permission to land, Joshua was awake again, but in slightly better temper. When Dom hopped off the plane, just standing up felt wonderful. Before they parted, Dominic called his two companions.

"Thanks for this," he said, waving a hand in a futile effort to convey the wonder at being able to see. "It's...amazing. Absolutely wonderful. Thanks."

Jeff reached forward to pat his arm.

"Enjoy the world," he said.

Post by ArtisticRainey on 05/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:23:03 GMT
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Sunday 15th April. 6am Christopher's flat.

"Mrrooowww!!" Asterix howled as he circled Christopher's legs.

"Asterix!" Christopher snapped at the little cat, then his face softened as he picked his pet up. Asterix began purring loudly and rubbed himself up against his master's chin.

Christopher looked at Asterix, tears rising unbidden to his eyes. "I'm not going away," he said, smiling. "I'm just going to do some extra work."

He stroked Asterix's head before putting him down on the floor again. Opening the cupboard, he opened a tin of cat food, and forked it into Asterix's bowl, then put it on the floor. The little cat began eating.

Christopher smiled. He would have gone completely mad if he didn't have Asterix. Sighing to himself, he went over to another cupboard. He pulled out a tin of tuna, and a large bottle of salad cream. Asterix looked up as Christopher opened the tin, emptied it into a bowl, then opened the bottle and shook a large dollop into the bowl. Using a fork, he mixed it all together. Then, getting the slices of bread that he'd already buttered, he spread the sticky mixture around the slices. Placing the 'lids' on, he sliced the finished sandwiches.

After putting the food into his rucksack, he knelt down and picked Asterix up. "Why don't we sit for a while and relax?" He tickled Asterix's chin. "I can tell you about my old cat Monty, who loved Marmite".

"I miss that," he said as he carried Asterix to the settee and let the little cat jump down. "Wonder where I can get some outside of the UK?"

Post by The_Wrong_Trousers on 06/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:23:11 GMT
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Sunday, April 15th; Tracy Island; 9 AM

Brains checked his email every day; he knew if he didn't, his many associates and peers from all over the world would fill his mailbox. When he saw the one from Lena, he smiled. He enjoyed her messages; she wrote the way she talked (although she used the "th" in her writing.). So he opened it.

Less than a minute later, his smile disappeared. Although he was glad she'd found a way to modify his virus scan, what happened with her brother-in-law disturbed him. This could be a

problem, especially if this James Matumbo starts making a habit of crossing her path. And he's brought her to the attention of the Hightower family. That can't be good, both for her and for us. I'd better bring this to Mr. Tracy's attention as soon as possible after he returns from Kansas.

He reread her message and had no fault to find with her reasoning and the conclusions she had come to. He also began uploading the modified scan to all servers, and sent an email out to everyone asking them to download it immediately.

Then he remembered Tin-Tin. Poor girl. Now that we've confirmed that Giles Tallman is Giles Hightower, and that the virus was deliberately planted by him - if not created by him - she's going to be devastated. I know she really liked him and enjoyed his messages to her. I hope she can find someone to confide in, who can sympathize with her. I would, but I don't think she'll confide in me.

He saved Lena's message to show Jeff at the earliest opportunity and went on to the other messages in his box.

7 PM

"Mr. Tracy? I need to see you. I'm sorry, Dr. Tracy, but it is important; otherwise I wouldn't have interrupted."

Jeff was sitting at his desk, with Dianne nearby. They looked up as Brains entered and spoke, and Dianne said, "Is this something private? Do you need me to leave?"

"N-no, Dr. Tracy. You would probably hear about it anyway. I got an email from Lena this morning and she was able to successfully modify my scan. But she also found out who probably sent the virus -- and who created it, as well."

"She did? That's fine work," replied Jeff. "And I presume she is well?"

"Yes, sir. But what worries me is how she figured out who the perpetrator was."

"What do you mean?" asked Dianne.

"Let me bring up her email to me on your computer, so you can read it for yourselves."

Jeff nodded and moved out of the way so Brains could access the keyboard. Less than a minute later, Brains had the message up on the screen. He moved to one side and Jeff pulled his chair back up to the desk. Dianne moved around behind him, and they both read the missive from their newest agent. The expressions on both faces changed from interest to concern as they went through it.

"Oh, mah," said Dianne. "This can't be good."

"No, it isn't," replied Jeff. "The Hightowers' business has been trying to steal Tracy Industries' secrets for years, and we've been successful in keeping that from happening so far. But now they are after Lena."

"And Tin-Tin. Don't forget her."

Jeff smiled up at his wife. "And Tin-Tin. This has opened a can of worms for us all." He looked at his engineer. "Brains, what about the modified scan?"

"It has been uploaded into the servers and I've sent an email to everyone requesting they download it to their computers ASAP."

"Very good. Thank you for letting us know about this. I'll have to consider what my next step will be."

"And someone will have to tell Tin-Tin that Giles did deliberately send that virus to her." Dianne sighed. "Ah s'ppose Ah should be the one."

"Thank you, Dr. Tracy," Brains said. "I was going to do it, but I think it would be better if the news came from another woman. If you two will excuse me," and he left them to their thoughts.

Post by Hobbeth on 07/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:24:26 GMT
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Tracy Island, Monday, April 16th 9.30 a.m.

Kat looked at her watch; it was time to go. She made her way towards the villa, and paused outside the sick room's office door. She took a deep breath, wiped her clammy hands down her overalls and knocked at the door.

"Come in," Dr Tracy called.

Kat opened the door and entered, closing it behind her. "You wanted to see me, Dr Tracy?" she asked.

"Yes, Kat. Please, sit down," Dianne said with a smile, indicating a chair. She pulled out her data pad, which she had prepared with Kat's medical history. "I asked you to come to see me because of your fainting spell last week."

Kat looked surprised. She wasn't quite sure just what Virgil must have said. "I have a history of fainting, although I haven't actually passed out for a few years. When I was in my teens, I began to have these fainting fits. Mother was quite anxious and took me to see my GP. I had several tests, and the outcome was that I had a low blood sugar problem."

"So I see," Dianne said as she scanned the pad again. "Now, what was it that caused you to faint this time? Do you know?"

Kat looked down at her feet. She didn't want to let Dr. Tracy think that she was in any way irresponsible. "Well, my GP told me that as long as I didn't go too long between meals, and always kept something sweet on hand, such as glucose, I should be okay. There was a time a few years ago, that I went on holiday with my parents. It wasn't a long flight, and I didn't feel very hungry, but when we arrived it was so hot, I felt myself passing out. One of the Reps gave me Coke watered down. That certainly seemed bring me round. I guess that on this occasion in Thunderbird Two's hangar, it was a culmination of breakfast too early, no glucose to hand, and the heat in the hangar."

"Were there any warning signs? Did you know that the fainting spell was coming on?"

Kat looked unhappy. "Yes," she almost whispered. "I felt clammy and light-headed. Sometimes, when I feel like that I don't actually pass out, and that makes me feel worse. I was feeling clammy in the hangar, but I didn't like to stop Virgil and Brains. Besides it was very interesting." She looked at Dianne. "You won't send me home, will you?"

Dianne took in a deep breath and let it out through her nose. "No, I don't think so. But you've got to make sure you're eating your snacks during the day and that you have your glucose on you. We can't have you fainting in the middle of a rescue or when you're working with some delicate equipment."

Kat looked relieved. "Dr Tracy, I promise that I shall eat small regular meals, and I will always make sure that I have glucose wherever I go. I admit that I was silly, having my breakfast so early, but I wanted to make sure that I arrived at the hangar on time. I guess I rushed out, not realising that I had no glucose with me. It won't happen again. But I think that I shall mention to Brains that maybe we should have a small break when we are working, at mid-morning and mid-afternoon so that I can snack."

"And I will make it a medical order," Dianne said, making a note with her stylus. "Now, you are aware that there are MRE's in the various Thunderbirds, aren't you?"

Kat looked a little unsure. "Sorry, I am not sure what you mean?"

"Oh, I'm sorry. MRE is the military term for 'meal, ready to eat'. There are some stored in every Thunderbird, particularly in Thunderbird Two. You should become aware of where they are so you can grab one if you need it."

Kat smiled. "That's good to know. Could I put my own meals there, along with some glucose tablets and sweet soft drinks? If I could, then I would know that I would always be okay."

"As long as they aren't too perishable," Dianne said, nodding.

"Oh no, they won't be perishable, I would just have some muesli bars, and biscuits and maybe some small packets of cereal. Maybe I could have small cartons of long life milk." She looked at Dianne. "Unless you think that that would be too much, in which case I shall stick to the muesli bars and biscuits."

"That sounds feasible. Put them in one spot, and tell the pilots that those are your emergency

cache." Dianne waved her stylus at Kat. "Now, if there is another fainting spell, I'm going to put you on glucose monitoring. Something I don't think you'll want to do. So, keep that blood sugar level up where it belongs."

Kat smiled, feeling more relaxed. "I will, I promise, Besides, I don't want to faint again. I shall arrange my emergency snacks in the appropriate Thunderbirds." She paused. "Dr. Tracy, do the others need to know about my problem? I know Virgil and Brains know, and I suppose, Gordon, John and Alan should be told and of course, Mr. Tracy, but somehow, if it is possible I would rather the others not know. But of course you feel that they should know, then would you be the one to tell them?"

"Truthfully, Kat, I really can't tell them," Dianne explained. "I'm now your physician, and I'm bound by ethics to keep your confidence. However, it would be wise for your teammates to know. That way they can help you when you need it."

"I can see your point, Dr Tracy, and I shall tell them, but can I tell them in my own time? I am not going to make an announcement. I shall just tell them as and when the occasion arises. Obviously I shall let them all know as soon as I can. Do I need to tell your sons as well? And I am not too sure when or how to tell Mr Tracy."

"Mr. Tracy is aware of your problem," Dianne said. "It was part of the information that Lady Penelope sent on. She wanted us to be fully briefed on the mechanic we were getting."

Kat smiled slightly. "Of course, you must be aware of my problem, and I promised myself that it wouldn't bother me again. I think I have been trying too hard, not wanting to miss any of my training, to the extent where I have overlooked my health problem. I know now that I have learnt my lesson. I hope that once my friends know, they will nag me to eat and remind me that I must carry my glucose tablets."

Dianne chuckled. "From what I've learned about this bunch, I'm sure they will. Is there anything else I can help you with?"

"There is one other thing I would like, a repeat prescription of my contraceptive pill. I have almost finished my last supply. It helps me to control my hormones each month. I used to have such pain."

Dianne scrolled down the pad in her hand. "Right. I see the prescription. I think I have it in stock." She glanced up at Kat. "I ordered more medications for those who are taking them as soon as I did the baseline physicals. Let me see..." She got up and went over to a cabinet that was locked with a thumbprint scanner. Putting her thumb up to it, the little machine scanned it and then a loud "snick" told those in the room that the cabinet was unlocked. Dianne rummaged around and finally pulled out a flat, foil-wrapped package. She compared the label on the package to the prescription on the pad, and then nodding, she handed it over to Kat.

"There you go."

Kat took the small package. "Thank you, Dr Tracy. I do feel happier now, knowing that there are things that I can do to help myself. And thank you for this new prescription."

"You're welcome, Kat. Come to me anytime you've got a medical question, or just need some advice."

"I will, and thanks once again." Kat left the office feeling secure that she wouldn't be going home, and that once her friends knew her problem, she would have a good backup from them.

Post by Tawnyangel22 and Tikatu on 11/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:24:36 GMT
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Tracy Island, Monday April 16th 10:15 a.m.

"Come in!" Dianne called out to the knock on the infirmary door.

The source of the knock entered and closed the door behind her. "Elise! How are feeling? We didn't have a session, did we?" asked a slightly confused Dianne.

"No, we didn't and I'm feeling okay. Thanks for asking," replied the other. "I actually have a couple of questions about the meds I'm taking."

"Oh, sure, I understand. Go ahead and sit down." Dianne indicated a chair with her arm.

Elise made herself comfy and then asked her questions. "How long does it normally take for someone going through what I'm going through to notice a change?"

"Well, amazingly enough, the meds I prescribed for you will take only about a week to start making a difference."

"Really? That fast!" Dianne smiled at Elise's almost shocked expression.

"Yes! Nowadays, with the advancements that have been made in the medical and pharmaceutical industry, drugs can take effect more rapidly than they used to. Six to eight weeks was the norm about 50 years ago."

As Elise digested the information, Dianne continued, "Are you noticing any difference yet? It's been over a week."

"Yes...actually I am. I'm sleeping better, but I also feel more in control of things. Does that make sense?"

"Yes, it does. It means it's working!"

"How long will I have to stay on these meds?"

"That depends entirely on you, Elise. Let's just take things one step at a time for now."

Dianne noticed the downfall in the young woman's expression. "I will tell you though, that I myself would like to be the one who takes you up for your first flight before I release you back to the team."

"Sure, I can deal with that." Elise smiled back at Dianne.

"Do you have any other questions right now?"

"Umm... no, I don't think so."

"Good. Now tell me about this rock climbing training I heard about? Somethin' about killing each other?" Dianne asked, trying to suppress a smile.

Elise rolled her eyes. "Oh that. Nothing stays secret around here long, does it?"

This time Dianne laughed. "No, it doesn't I'm afraid."

Elise went on to tell Dianne that she had followed her suggestions and, the day after the Tower Bridge rescue, had asked Scott about various training she needed to get done. He knew she was grounded and it was not brought up, instead he was very professional in assisting and teaching her the art of rappelling. Professional that is, until they got into a fight over how she was proceeding.

"He told me I was going down too fast. I told him I was FINE and carried on, then he got all huffy on me and yelled for me to stop."

Elise paused for a moment, before adding, "So... I-I threatened to throw rocks at his head."

"While you were both half way down the cliff face, you threatened bodily harm?" Dianne asked, rather surprised.

"Well... yes! He was being ... SCOTT!" Elise blurted, for lack of a better word.

Dianne nodded in understanding. She knew only too well how Scott could be, the boy was just like his father! "Well, I'm glad you didn't throw any rocks at him. From what Gordon told me, you two were going to kill each other!"

Now Elise laughed. "Yeah, that would be Gordon's take on it! He was at the bottom, being our checker, so he got to hear the whole exchange. But Scott and I made our peace and all is well. So, when do you want to check me out in the cockpit, Doctor?"

"Do you think you'd be up for it this afternoon?" Elise didn't expect it would be that soon but readily agreed. "Okay then, let me talk to Tin-Tin about using her Ladybird, and I'll call you later."

"Okay, I'll be ready." Elise answered. I hope.

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:27:35 GMT
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Tracy Island, Monday April 16th 11.00 a.m.

Kat was walking towards the monorail to take her to Thunderbird Two's hangar, carrying a large bag.

"Hey, Kat, wait up," Nikki called and turning, Kat saw her three friends, Nikki, Callie and Elise.

"How did your meeting with Dr Tracy go? And what have you in your bag?" Nikki asked.

"Meeting? You've had a meeting with Dr Tracy?" Elise enquired.

Kat smiled at her friends, as they fell in step with her.

"My meeting with Dr Tracy went very well." Then for Callie's and Elise's benefit she explained.

"When I was last training with Virgil and Brains in Thunderbird Two, I fainted."

Callie gasped, "Fainted! You're not -- you know - are you?" And she gestured as though she was cradling a baby.

Kat laughed. "I know what you are trying to say and, no Callie, definitely not."

She continued. "I have a low blood sugar problem and when I haven't eaten for a while, my blood sugar can drop, causing me to pass out. I guess Virgil told his mom. Anyway the upshot is that Dr Tracy has told me to make sure that I have a good breakfast, and that I carry some glucose with me wherever I go. She has also advised me that in every Thunderbird craft there is a MRE, 'meal, ready to eat', and I have to make sure that I have a stock of food in each craft, hence my bag here. Though to be honest, I should really only need stores in Thunderbird Two."

She watched her friends. "I also hope that you will maybe nag me, to make sure that I have eaten and that I have my glucose with me."

Her three friends nodded. "Consider it done; we will certainly make sure you are okay Kat," Nikki replied.

"So what's in the bag?" Elise queried.

"Oh, Muesli bars, biscuits, boxes of cereal, cartons of long life milk."

"You had better make sure that Virgil knows that they are your special cache." Elise laughed.

"Oh, I will." Kat laughed as they parted, and she headed for Thunderbird Two.

Virgil was still working on Thunderbird Two when the young mechanic arrived. "Hey, are you bringing me a snack?" He joked.

"No, sorry; this is purely for me."

"What, all that?" he asked, staring into her bag.

"This is my MRE, as advised by Dr Tracy." Kat replied.

"Then Mom has had a word with you?"

"Yes, she has. I did think that she would send me back, but thankfully, I can stay. However, I have to promise to eat regularly and have a store on board Thunderbird Two."

"I'm glad to hear that," Virgil replied. "I am sure that Brains would not want to lose his best assistant."

Virgil showed Kat where she could store her provisions, putting up a notice explaining what they were, in case someone else ate them. Once they were stored away, Kat left calling goodbye to Virgil, who continued working on his baby.

Post by Tawnyangel22 on 12/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:27:46 GMT

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*****Monday, April 16, 2068; Tracy Island; 12:45 p.m.*****

All the new recruits finished their individual lunches and made themselves presentable, then they met downstairs at the monorail. "Hey, Elise!" said Callie.

"Hi, Callie. Ready for that meeting?"

"I think so. I hope it won't be just Mr. Tracy and Doc."

They mingled, making small talk, while waiting for the monorail. When it arrived, they all entered. Christopher arrived late and ran in just as the doors began to close. His presence muted all conversations.

The silent ride lasted just a few minutes, but it seemed like an eternity to the riders. When they arrived at the villa, they were greeted by Virgil. "Good, everyone's here. Let's get to the lounge for the meeting." As he led them to the lounge, he gave some reassuring words. "Don't worry; no one's going to bite. This is just to help you deal with the media and anyone else trying to get information from you. Just relax, and if you have any questions, don't be afraid to ask. That's what

we're here for."

Nikki breathed a sigh of relief. "That's good to know."

Christopher lagged behind the others. He hesitated slightly, but he took a deep breath and walked into the lounge. He looked around and took a seat apart from the others.

They were all greeted by Jeff, Dianne, Scott, Virgil, John, and Alan (via communications from Thunderbird Five). Jeff said, "Welcome to the meeting, everyone. As you all know, we had a minor security breach in our recent rescue mission at the Tower Bridge. It's been brought to my attention that not all of you have had to deal directly with the media before. With the media becoming more clever at every turn, we need to discuss ways on effectively dealing with them.

"Now, I know that Dominic has had previous experience as a member of LifeFlight. However, things are different because this is a top-secret organization. I understand that some of you are concerned about revealing information by mistake, so now's the time to ask questions."

Kat jumped right in with the first question. "What can we do to avoid the media in the first place?"

Scott answered, "When we're within 20 minutes of the rescue zone, we always ask for security to surround our vehicles. This way, no one can get close enough to the Thunderbirds in the first place."

Brandon asked, "What about people trying to take pictures?"

"We use the photo detector," said Virgil. "Thunderbird One and the Mobile Control Unit are both equipped with the automatic camera detector. When Scott is alerted, he can use a device to electromagnetically wipe regular camera film blank. Brains upgraded the system to work for videotaping and digital cameras also. Videotape is also wiped blank, and memory cards are wiped only from the point the vessel arrives to an hour after we leave."

"How do we keep them away without being rude?" Callie asked. "I'm pretty positive courtesy is part of the IR image."

Scott said, "Whenever someone is approaching you, just say, 'I'm sorry, but you'll have to leave. You're interfering with a rescue.' You can easily do it without facing the person. Then call for security and have them take the offender away." He grinned. "If that offender says, 'How rude,' you simply reply, 'Yes, you were.'" This made everyone, including Christopher, laugh.

Kat asked, "John, have you or Alan ever had to deal with security issues involving the media whenever you're up on Thunderbird Five?"

"Well, we have to keep transmissions to a minimum. We always give our highest priority to anyone needing rescue. If someone's asking for a rescue but stalls, we tell them we'll get back to them and immediately end the transmission. In those cases, it could be someone trying to trace us. What we do at that point is check for other emergency signals in that area. If there are, we continue. If not, we end the transmission. When it's someone just wanting an interview, we calmly decline them and end transmission immediately."

"What can you do when someone being rescued won't cooperate?" Nikki asked. "I'm not sure my hand could take punching someone out again."

Alan laughed. "You're only the second person to knock out someone during a rescue. I was the first. Seriously, though, you have to use your best judgment by how serious the emergency is and how much time you have."

Elise asked, "What happens if we can't find a security person?"

"Then as Field Commander," said Scott, "I haven't done my job. I must make sure security is around during the entire rescue. If you run into the situation where there is no security, contact Mobile Control immediately."

After a few moments of silence, Jeff asked, "Are there any more questions?" When no one answered, he said, "This was a very productive meeting. I think we've all learned something."

Scott glanced at Christopher, who noticed and nodded with a look of determination.

"If there's nothing else," said Jeff, "you're all dismissed. Thank you very much."

Post by TracyFan4Ever on 12/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:28:00 GMT
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Tracy Island, April 16th 2:45pm.

Dianne found Tin-Tin in the garden where she was helping her father. "Those look lovely, Tin-Tin!"

The pretty Malaysian looked up smiling. "Yes they are, aren't they?" Father is so proud of the lilies this year, they have really taken!"

"And so he should be, He spends enough time out here with them!"

"Yes, he loves it here. What can I do for you, Dr. Tracy?"

"I wanted to ask permission to use Ladybird this afternoon for a little island hopping."

"Of course! You don't need to ask; the plane is always available for you."

"Thank you Tin-Tin; I appreciate that."

Kyrano approached the two women, carrying a basket of cuttings. He politely nodded and acknowledged Dianne.

"Dr. Tracy it is good to see you in the garden; you must visit more often."

"I shall try Kyrano. You really have done wonders with it."

"I see you are busy, so please excuse me." Kyrano padded softly away, Tin-Tin staring adoringly after him.

"Will you be taking Ladybird on a pleasure flight, Dr. Tracy?"

"I'm afraid not. It's for some training time with one of the new team members."

"Ah, I see. Then please, use her for as long as you need." Dianne smiled her thanks and headed back towards the villa, as Tin-Tin returned her attention to the flowers.

Elise waited inside the hangar admiring the red sleek jet. "Ah"m sorry for being so late!" an out of breath Dianne spoke as she jogged to a stop beside the jet.

"It's okay; I was a little early anyway."

"Well, what do you think of her?" Dianne asked, still trying to catch her breath.

"Impressive. But then again, everything I've seen around here since I arrived has been impressive!"

The women exchanged "Know what I mean" glances. "Okay, Let's take her for a ride then," Dianne said.

They both climbed into the cockpit and made themselves comfortable. From here on out, it was all business and Elise knew it.

"Before we start, Elise, I want you to tell me right now, that any time you feel uncomfortable, or a bad memory surfaces, you will let me know immediately. Do I make myself clear?"

"Yes, Dr. Tracy. I understand."

"Good, then we're set. Take your time, there's no rush. I thought we'd just take a leisurely flight around the islands and have you land. Does that sound okay?"

Elise nodded as she placed the small headphones over her baseball cap, and put on her sunglasses. Having done the pre-flight walk around the jet she felt a little more at ease now that she was in the cockpit. As she ran through the preflight checklist verbally, Dianne checked off everything on the sheet and confirmed with a verbal 'check' each time.

Elise started the plane and listened to the engines purr. Sounds good. she thought as she called in for clearance.

"Flight Control this is Ladybird, requesting permission for taxi and take off."

"Granted, Ladybird. Proceed to the runway and you are clear for take-off. Have a safe trip ladies."

Elise smiled. "Thanks, John!"

"Hey! For you ladies, anytime!"

Dianne rolled her eyes. Elise felt good. None of the anxiety she had felt in the simulator was present and her palms weren't sweaty. She had to admit she was apprehensive though, this being her first time back in the air. She gave the plane full throttle and eased her off the runway into the clear blue sky.

Dianne carefully watched her 'patient', noting how she handled the controls; how she paid attention to details; how her body language registered any distress. "Okay, level her out now, I want to show you something," Dianne spoke into her headpiece. Elise nodded and leveled off easily.

"How are you doing Elise?"

"Great! She handles like a dream; I feel really comfortable with these controls."

"Good!" Dianne smiled. They flew around Tracy Island and then over Mateo Island and off towards a small cluster of islands towards the west.

"Look down there." Dianne pointed as she spoke, down towards the ocean.

Elise banked to the left and grinned when she saw what Dianne had been pointing to. A group of dolphins were skimming the surface and jumping in and out of the breaks in the waves.

"Oh, that's awesome! Look how many there are!"

Elise's reaction pleased Dianne. She'd been hoping the young pilot would be able to cope and knew getting her in the air sooner rather than later, would benefit her. Flying over the ocean on a clear day left no doubts there could be any mountains anywhere on the horizon, and Dianne had planned it that way. They continued on their way, Dianne pointing out some of the wonders of the South Pacific and carefully monitoring Elise's reactions.

They'd been out for about an hour when Dianne said, "Well Elise, I am very pleased with your confidence and skills as a pilot, and from what I've seen here with you today, you'll be back in form in no time."

"Thanks, Dr. Tracy; that means a lot to me."

"There'll still be a lot of simulator training to do, as well as weather conditions to train in. You understand that, don't you?"

"Yes, I do."

"I will still monitor you on those flights, okay?"

Elise agreed. She knew she had a way to go, but this flight was a step in the right direction.

"What do you say we head on back, nice and easy?" Dianne smiled.

"Yes Ma'am!" Elise turned the plane to the right and lined up onto the flight path for the runway. "Flight Control, this is Ladybird requesting permission to land, over."

This time Virgil's voice replied, "Permission granted; welcome home ladies."

"Thanks Virgil; where's John?" asked Elise.

"Bathroom."

Both women laughed at his answer. "By the way, you're looking good on approach; bring her down easy and you'll have no problems."

"Thanks. Appreciate you looking out for me."

"You're welcome, honey."

'Honey?' Elise mouthed the word to Dianne.

"He calls everyone that's female "honey". I swear he doesn't know he's doing it!" she replied.

Elise landed the jet as easily as she took off, and taxied into the hangar as if she'd done it a hundred times before.

"Thanks Dr. Tracy, for everything...I needed this."

"You're welcome Elise, and I know you did." Dianne gave the pilot a quick hug before leaving. "You'll be fine, you'll see."

They smiled and went their separate ways back into the villa complex.

Post by FrankieCTB2 on 14/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:28:21 GMT
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Later that same evening, the strains of an old Kenny Chesney song drifted from the apartment as Scott approached the door. He smiled, fondly remembering that whenever she was in a good mood, country music would be heard. He'd watched her fly earlier that day, noticing instantly the moment she took the controls from Dianne; after all, he'd taught her to fly like that, so he damn well should be aware of when she took over! He knocked and waited.

Inside, a very satisfied, happy young pilot swayed around to the music. Dressed in baggy

sweatpants and a t-shirt that said "Cowgirl-Up" on the front of it, Elise was feeling as if the world and its misery had been lifted from her shoulders. Flying had got her right back where she needed to be. Well, at least a starting point anyway. For the first time since coming to this island she felt confident, able to face her fears and ready for a challenge. She was ready. She also knew it wouldn't be easy.

As she started for the kitchen, she heard the knocking. Padding over to the door, she opened it, never thinking that Scott Tracy would be on the other side of it. "Oh!" she blurted out.

Scott smiled. "I'm sorry to disappoint you. Were you expecting someone else?"

"Er, no. Er, not at all. Please...come in," she indicated. Scott casually entered and turned to her, smiling.

"I take it you're in a good mood?" he asked, tilting his head to indicate the music.

Elise laughed and replied "Yes!" as the words "I go back to the pew, preacher and choir, singing 'bout God, brimstone and fire....."

"Nothing like Kenny to get the mood going!" she added as hit the remote to turn down the volume. "Have a seat. What brings you over here?" she asked.

Scott sat down. "I wanted to congratulate you on your flying this afternoon."

"You were watching?!"

"You betcha! Anything flies on or off this island, and I know about it!" They both laughed.

"You haven't changed a bit, have you, 'Captain Tracy'?" This time she meant it affectionately. The last time she'd referred to him by his rank, she'd almost torn his head off.

"Ouch." He winced, mockingly. He hadn't forgotten either.

"I was about to get a glass of wine; can I get you something?"

"Sure, whatever you're having is fine."

She poured the wine and bringing the bottle and two glasses over to the couch, she made herself comfy as she handed him one.

"Mmm... good," Scott said appreciatively.

"I'm glad you approve; it belongs to your dad." Scott raised an eyebrow in a silent question. "Don't worry, Kyrano let me have it. He said it wouldn't be really missed."

"He's right. Father has a collection you wouldn't believe."

Elise decided to cut to the chase, and asked, "How was my flying today?"

He looked at her, pausing for a brief moment. "I've never thought there was anything wrong with your flying, Elise. In fact you looked like you'd been landing on this island for years."

"Thanks," she humbly replied.

"I guess I came over here to find out how YOU are? Do you feel ready to get back into your game?"

She nodded. "Yes, Scott, I do. I know it won't be easy, but I'm ready. I need to be a key player in this team, and I'm ready to give it 110 per cent."

"That's my girl!" He smiled.

"Your girl? That's highly unlikely, I was under your command for what...20 seconds, so that now makes me yours?"

They both laughed and had some more wine. For the next few hours they talked about training, rescues, life in general, the good times, bad times, and even strolled down memory lane, going back to the Air Force days, laughing when one of them said, "Do you remember when..." and laughing even harder when the other did remember.

It was well past 1:00 am when Scott said he should get going. "I hadn't realized it had gotten so late. Sorry," Elise apologized as they walked to the door.

"No need to be sorry, I've enjoyed this evening."

"Me too."

As she opened the door, he turned to her. "Elise, I won't promise that being part of International Rescue is easy, but I want you to know I'll never regret convincing Dad to take you on board. I know it's been rough lately for you, but I'm proud to have you as a pilot."

Elise was taken back. She hadn't expected such a serious ending to a lovely laid back evening. "Scott, thanks. I, um, ...It means a lot to me to hear you say that. I won't let you or the team down."

They stood motionless for a few moments, just looking at each other, and then Scott spoke softly. "I know you won't Elise."

With that he bent down slightly and gave her a chaste kiss on her cheek. "Goodnight." He smiled and left.

Leaning back against the door as it closed, a stunned Elise glanced over to the two empty wine bottles. "It must be the wine. Yeah, that's it. It's the wine."

The sounds of Kenny Chesney once again filled the room... "...of the 50 yard line, a blanket of girls and some raspberry wine, wishing time would stop right in its tracks....I go back.....I go back."

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:28:57 GMT
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Monday, April 16th, 4:30 p.m., Tracy Island

After parting company with Elise, Dianne headed back up toward the monorail to the villa. She leaned against the wall of the car as it moved toward the access to the elevator that would take her back to the house. Suddenly, her discussion with Brains and Jeff about Tin-Tin's correspondent came to mind and she sighed.

"Might as well get this done now," she said to herself. Raising her arm, she called into her telecomm, "Dianne to Tin-Tin. Where are you now?"

The Malaysian girl's face appeared in the tiny screen. "I'm in the lab, Dr. Tracy. Do you need me for something?"

"Yes, there's something I need to discuss with you. Could you meet me in the dining room for a cup of coffee? Say in a half hour?"

Tin-Tin looked puzzled but said, "Sure, Dr. Tracy. I'll see you then and there."

"Okay. See you."

Dianne headed up to the house, trying to go over in her head what she needed to say to Tin-Tin. She stopped by the lounge to speak to Jeff.

"What do Ah tell her? How kin Ah handle this? It's not lahke Ah found this out mahself."

Jeff sighed. "I'm sure you'll come up with something, love. But if it will help..." He clicked on a file, sending it to the printer. "Here's a copy of Lena's memo to Brains. It contains all the proof of Tallman's true identity."

Dianne took the paper and glanced over it, then sighed deeply. "All raht. This should convince her if nothin' else does."

She gave Jeff a kiss on the cheek and turned to leave when he stood and caught her by the wrist, pulling her to him for a much deeper kiss. "Good luck, love," he said softly. She nodded, then left the room.

Tin-Tin found Dianne waiting for her at the dining room table, a cup of coffee already at her right hand. She looked up from the paper she was studying to give the younger woman a soft smile. "Come an' join me," Dianne offered.

"Let me just get a cup of tea. Does your coffee need freshening?" Tin-Tin asked.

"Yes, but Ah can get it."

The unexpected drawl startled Tin-Tin, and she knew that whatever they had to discuss was upsetting to the doctor. So it was with some trepidation that she joined Dianne at the table. They sat quietly for a few moments as Dianne searched for a way to bring up the subject. Finally, she took a deep breath and plunged in.

"Tin-Tin, Ah unnerstan' that you've been writin' back an' forth to one Giles Tallman. Sendin' him emails and such. Is this true?"

"Why, yes, Dr. Tracy," Tin-Tin admitted, both confused and defensive. "I met him in Kabul. He seemed like a nice enough man. I assure you that I haven't told him anything about International Rescue. I've been most careful about keeping things discreet."

"Ah'm sure you have been, Tin-Tin, and Ah'm not heah to tell you that you've done anythin' wrong. But..." Dianne paused. "But somethin's come to our attention concernin' Mr. Tallman that we felt you should know about. An' both Jeff an' Brains felt it best if it came from me, woman to woman." She slid the paper over to the puzzled young woman. "Please read this. It's a memo from Lena Matumbo about an incident of attempted hackin'."

Tin-Tin sat back and read the memo through once, then again. She lifted her eyes to Dianne. "Giles Tallman is actually Giles Hightower? What does that mean?"

"Jeff says that the Hightowers are the head of a cartel specializin' in industrial espionage," Dianne explained, stirring her cooling coffee. "They've tried t' steal from Tracy Industries befoah, but have nevah managed to make any inroads. Ouah security is tight an' our employees are, for th' most part, loyal. We're not sure why they targeted you, but it maht have somethin' t' do with th' Penelon formula. No one else has been able t' get hold of it outsahde of François himself. Plus there are othah innovations that th' Hightowers would love t' get their filthy hands on."

Tin-Tin sat quietly for a bit, then swallowed and said in a teary voice, "And here I thought I'd found a friend." She looked down at the paper again, then up at Dianne. "What do you want me to do?"

Dianne sighed. "Ah suppose you should block him. It wouldn't be a good ideah foah him t' know that you know who he is; a block could be explained away by computer network troubles. Ah don't know what Jeff and Brains have in mind, nor Lena. It seems theyah targetin' her, too." She reached across to touch Tin-Tin on the hand. "Ah know this is a shock, and not somethin' you want t' heah. But... it was necessary."

"Thank you, Dr. Tracy," Tin-Tin said softly. She hesitated, then asked, "Do you think I could talk to Mrs. Matumbo myself? I'd like some more details on what happened with her."

"Ah'm sure you could," Dianne replied. "Just ask Jeff foah her number."

"I will." Tin-Tin pushed away her barely-touched tea, and rose from the table. "I'd better get back to work."

"Okay. If'n you want t' talk about it moah, just come t' me."

"I will," Tin-Tin promised. She put her hand out to pick up her tea, but Dianne waved a hand at her.

"Ah'll take cayah of th' dishes."

Tin-Tin nodded, then turned and left, taking Lena's report with her. Dianne sipped a bit more coffee, then picked up the cups and saucers and took them into the the kitchen for cleaning. I just hope she can deal with this betrayal and doesn't go off the deep end or anything. She really seemed to like the man and he's clever enough to use that against us.

Post by Tikatu on 16/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:40:21 GMT
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Tracy Island, Tuesday, April 17th - 5.30 p.m.

Kat looked at her computer screen. She had read the message once; the words seemed to be blurred and dancing in front of her eyes. She blinked, and realised that it wasn't the words that were blurred and dancing; the effect was caused by tears in her eyes. She wiped her hand across her eyes and reread the message.

Darling Kat, her father had written,

There is no easy way to tell you this. Your mother has been suffering with chest pains for quite some time now. She didn't want to tell you because she felt that it might compromise your decision to work with Tracy Industries. She knew how much that job meant to you.

~Oh, Mum, Mum, Kat thought. ~I was entitled to know, wasn't I?

To cut a long story short, her father continued, she complained of severe chest pains, and collapsed at a friend's house. She was rushed to hospital where she was diagnosed with heart disease, and has just undergone a heart bypass operation. She is recuperating well, and I am hopeful that she will be fit enough to return home sometime next month. She is in the very capable hands of an eminent cardiac surgeon. Please try not to worry.

~Try not to worry, Kat thought. ~How on earth can I not worry, when I'm so many miles away?

The message went on. Your brother and sister-in-law are currently over from the States, and your mother has expressly wished that you not drop everything and fly home. There is really nothing you can do at the moment, and she would love to see you later in the year, when she is feeling fitter.

Kat continued to stare at the screen. She suddenly felt so alone. Who could she turn to? There was nobody there to whom she felt she could open her heart. Suddenly, the chiming of her door brought her back from her thoughts. She opened the door and there was Nikki smiling.

"Hey, are you ready to go to Callie's? It's almost time."

Kat shook her head. "Sorry. Nikki. I won't be very good company tonight. I'll have a snack here."

Nikki saw how sad Kat looked. "What's wrong? Have you had bad news?"

Kat nodded, unable to speak for fear of crying.

"Oh, honey; can I help?"

"It's my mother. She's had a serious heart operation. I've just received an email from Dad."

"Shall I tell the others at dinner?"

"No, Nikki. No, I don't want to cause a fuss. I'll just stay here for the evening, and will probably reply to my Dad."

Nikki looked rather doubtful about leaving her friend alone. "Are you are sure you want to be on your own?"

Kat nodded, and reluctantly Nikki left her alone in her apartment. When Callie opened her apartment door, she noticed that Nikki was alone and asked, "Where's Kat?"

"Oh, she has had some bad news. Her mother's had a serious operation and she felt that she wouldn't be very good company at the moment.."

Callie looked thoughtful. "Maybe Dr. Tracy should be told. After all, Kat shouldn't be alone at a time like this. I'm sure that Dr. Tracy will be able to comfort her and maybe give her something to help, like she did with Elise."

Nikki nodded, and went to ring the villa. Grandma Tracy answered the phone.

"Mrs. Tracy, do you know where Dr. Tracy is?"

"At the moment she is tending to Alex and Tyler. Can I be of any help?"

"It's Kat. She has had some rather bad news; her mother has had a serious operation. She was supposed to be having a meal with Callie and myself. But when I went to get her, she wouldn't come along, saying she wouldn't be very good company at the moment."

"Leave things to me, Nikki," Emily replied. "I'll take her something to eat and see if I can't snap her out of it."

"Thank you, Mrs. Tracy." Nikki replaced the receiver.

Emily headed for the kitchen to dish up some food, and left for the Cliff House apartments.

Kat answered the door, and was surprised to see Emily carrying a plate covered with a cloth on a tray. "Why, Mrs Tracy! What brings you here?" Then remembering her manners said. "Won't you come in?"

"Kat Williamson, you ought to eat something. Nikki has just told me that you have had some bad news from home. You really need to eat to keep your strength up."

"Mrs. Tracy, it's very kind of you," Kat said, cross that Nikki had told someone about her news, "and please don't think I am not grateful, but I was planning on having a snack later."

"Well," Mrs. Tracy replied. "This will save you having to make yourself a snack, and I have specially brought you a vegetarian meal."

"Oh, Mrs. Tracy, I didn't mean to offend you, and it is very kind of you," Kat said, setting the plate on one of the kitchen counters.

"Now, what bad news have you had?" Emily asked. "Nikki said something about your mother having had an operation."

Then it all came out in a jumble. "Oh, Mrs. Tracy. Before I came down here, Mum was suffering from chest pains. She didn't tell me because she knew how much I wanted this job. She thought that if she told me, I would have stayed at home." Kat paused for breath. "She collapsed at a friend's house and was rushed into hospital, where she was diagnosed with a heart condition, and has had a by-pass operation."

"Well, I'm sorry to hear that, Kat," Emily said. She put her arms around Kat's shoulders, while the young girl just sobbed. "I know it's hard, being away from loved ones, especially when they are ill. You feel so helpless," she said. "Believe me, I went through that enough with Grant."

"You are so kind." Kat smiled a watery smile and sniffed to clear the snot from her nose. How un-ladylike, she thought.

Emily held Kat at arm's length and gave her a stern but friendly look.

"Now, I know you've had bad news," she said, "don't forget: you need to be strong, y'hear? No shutting yourself away and moping alone. That's not going to help you and you know it. Now, eat up and then go to Callie's apartment; it'll help take your mind off things."

"O-okay," Kat said. "Thank you, Mrs Tracy."

Emily smiled and tweaked Kat's cheek.

"You're welcome," she said, before she gave the woman one final smile and turned to leave.

Post by Tawnyangel22 on 17/06/2005

Tuesday, April 17th, approximately 600 miles north of Samoa; 3:30 AM (2:30 AM April 18th on Tracy Island)

Deep within the Central Pacific Basin, there was a rumbling and a shaking. It increased with every passing second, causing ridges to break up and troughs to either drop or fill with falling rocks. All marine life had fled the area long before, instinctively sensing the danger that was coming. None were there on the spot to observe the tremors or the shifting tectonic plates that were thought to be stable.

However, in Brisbane, Australia, a geographic research station's alarms went off. The night crew came instantly alert. "Looks like a big one," shouted one man.

"Where?" his supervisor asked, rushing into the main area from his office.

"Central Pacific Basin. It appears to be right in the middle of the Phoenix Trough."

"What?? That can't be! Check again."

"Confirmed," said a woman, manning another block of machines recording the event.

"Approximately 600 miles north of Samoa. It's registering 7.8 on the Richter."

"My God," breathed the supervisor. "We've got to warn the inhabited islands. They've got a tsunami heading their way. Get on it, stat!"

They got on the radios, the wireless, every piece of communications equipment they could use to contact the islands. As each one was informed, one of the workers put a colored pin in the map at that location. Slowly the pins covered them -- American Samoa, Wallis and Futuna, Western Samoa, and Fiji to the South; the islands of Polynesia, the Cook Islands, and Tonga to the Southeast; Melanesia and the Solomon Islands to the West...

"Sir, the seaquake has subsided, but the warning buoys are starting to go off."

"How bad?"

The man who spoke straightened up and turned. Everyone stopped what they were doing and looked at him. His face was pale as he spoke.

"It looks like it will sweep over Samoa and Wallis and Futuna to the South, and head straight into the Fiji basin. The Cook Island to the East and the easternmost islands of Melanesia to the west will also be hit hard."

The supervisor leaned heavily on the desk behind him, shaking his head. "Send out a general call for rescue teams immediately. And that includes International Rescue. We're going to need all the help we can get!"

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:42:50 GMT

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Wednesday, April 18, 2068, 2:55 a.m., Thunderbird Five

"Calling International Rescue! Calling International Rescue!"

Alan woke out of a sound sleep and sat bolt upright. Jumping out of bed, he headed up to the control level, taking the ladder two rungs at a time and skidding into the main control room on bare feet. He fumbled with the microphone as the distress call continued to play. "International Rescue! Do you read me? Come in, International Rescue!"

"International Rescue, here. We read you five by five. What is the nature of your emergency?"

"Oh, thank God! International Rescue, this is James Manchester of the geographic research station in Brisbane, Australia. We have registered a seaquake of 7.8 on the Richter scale approximately 600 miles north of Samoa. Our sensors are also registering a tsunami wave that will spread out from that point and envelop Samoa and Wallis and Futuna to the South, then head straight into the Fiji basin. Cook Island to the East and the easternmost islands of Melanesia to the west will also be hit hard. We're putting out a general call for rescue teams. Can you respond?"

"Yes, sir. We can respond. Where will the tsunami hit first and hardest?"

"First and hardest?" Manchester stopped for a moment. "The Samoas, Wallis, and Fortuna, I should think. They're closest in any direction. Fiji would follow. "

"Do you have a time frame for its arrival, first at Samoa then at Fiji?"

"Yes. It should arrive at Samoa and the other islands within the hour." Manchester said. "I have a projected path and arrival map available. Can I upload it to you?"

Alan thought for a moment. "I think our scientific staff will be able to oblige me." ~Once I wake him up, that is. "Don't worry, we're on it, Mr. Manchester. If I have any questions, I'll radio you at this same frequency."

"Roger, International Rescue. And thanks."

"International Rescue, out." Alan turned immediately to his connection to the island, and activated the emergency signal. "Thunderbird Five to Base, Thunderbird Five to Base. We have an emergency!" ~And what an emergency! This thing is headed for the island!

XXXX

Meanwhile, down on Tracy Island, a loud chiming sounded through Brains's room. He groaned, turned over, and squinted at the clock. Reaching out, he pulled on his glasses. "What the... oh no!"

He swung his legs over the side of his bed and grabbed his dressing gown as he ran for the lab. "That's the tsunami alert! We are in the path of a tidal wave!"

Post by Tikatu on 20/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:43:01 GMT
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Tracy Island, April 18th - 3.10 am

The insistent buzzing of her telecomm woke Kat. Sleepily she turned to answer it. She had been having such a lovely dream, but now Brains's face brought her back to reality.

"Kat." Brains looked serious. "We have an emergency. It looks as though the island is in the direct path of a tsunami. I need you now to help with the Thunderbirds."

Kat gasped. She had read all about tsunamis and the devastation they caused. To think that such a wave was due to hit Tracy Island seemed almost unbelievable.

"Okay, Boss, give me a few minutes to dress. Are we meeting in the lounge or in the Thunderbirds hangars?"

"Meet in the lounge, and then we shall see what happens. It may be that some will have to go out on a rescue, leaving just a few behind to batten down the hatches," Brains replied.

Kat struggled into her overalls. Oh, more haste, less speed, she thought, as she fumbled with the buttons. Once dressed, she headed for the monorail, joining her other equally sleepy colleagues.

Post by Tawnyangel22 on 20/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:43:08 GMT
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Wednesday 18 April, 3.15am, Tracy Island

Dominic slipped into the elevator, wearing only a pair of hastily thrown on jeans, bouncing a screaming Joshua in his arms, trying to calm the child down. Nikki jumped into the lift before the doors closed, and when they reached the foyer, they met Callie, already heading for the monorail.

"What's going on?" She asked.

Dominic managed a shrug around the armful of screaming child, and Nikki shook her head.

"No clue," she said, "Hoped you would have an idea."

As they were about to climb into the monorail car, Brandon appeared from the lift and ran over to jump in.

"That alarm doesn't sound normal," he said. "What the hell is going on?"

Dominic stroked Joshua's head and held him close, but the screaming didn't abate. As his feet hit the cold, hard monorail car floor, he wished he had remembered his shoes. He team-mates gave him awkward smiles that told him they wished Joshua was being his normal good self. Dominic agreed.

The ride was short, and soon they found themselves in the lounge, waiting for the news.

Post by ArtisticRainey on 20/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:43:18 GMT
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Wednesday 18th April 3.20am Tracy Island.

Christopher was shocked awake by his telecomm.

"Wha?," he looked around groggily, he had been having a very inappropriate dream about Tin-Tin when the alarm had sounded.

"Yes?," he flicked the comm switch.

"Christopher", it was Brains, "you must go to the lounge straight away, we have an emergency."

"At 3.20 in the morning?," Christopher was feeling irritable.

"We have a tsunami alert", Brains continued, "and it is heading for the island".

"Right!," Christopher swung himself put of bed and chucked some clothes on.

Putting his slippers on, he left his flat and made his way to the monorail.

Which wasn't there. Christopher pressed the button to call it.

"Gone without me", he huffed, "that's nice."

The car appeared and he got inside. After the short journey, he arrived.

Walking to the lounge, he saw the other recruits there. They all looked at him.

"What?," he smiled a cold smile, "not my fault I couldn't get here on time".

Post by The_Wrong_Trousers1 on 21/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:43:27 GMT

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"What?" said Christopher. "Not my fault I couldn't get here on time."

Callie looked at him rather coldly. "Didn't you hear the alarm, Chris? There was no way to miss it. We're all new recruits, but we have to understand the alarm can go off at any time, even in the middle of the night. Mother Nature has no time table, you know."

"Calm down, Callie," said Jeff. "We've got no time for arguments or excuses. Now that everyone's here, go ahead, Alan."

"I received a call from the geological research station in Brisbane, Australia." Alan explained the seaquake and the tsunami, along with all the locations being affected. "They've put out a call for anyone and everyone to come, including us."

Post by TracyFan4Ever on 21/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:43:38 GMT

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Brains listened closely to Alan's information. "Alan, is there any estimate on how high the wave will be when it hits Samoa?"

Alan looked down at his padd. "Not yet, but-- Wait! There's more information coming in now." He paused, listening. "My God. It's hitting Western Samoa now, and it's estimated to be 50 feet high!"

The crew in the lounge gasped and exchanged glances. Jeff's face became solemn. "Brains, what can we expect? Where will it hit us, and how high will the wave be?"

Brains did some rapid calculations on his ever present lap computer. "Well, Mr. Tracy, the islands of Samoa and Fiji, as well as the South Fiji Ridge, will diminish it. My best guess is that it will hit on the northeast part of the island, and the wave will be approximately fifteen to twenty feet high." He looked up at the older man. "But there are variables, so I can't be 100% sure. I also estimate that it will reach Tracy Island in one hour, maybe less. But no less than forty-five minutes from

now."

"Hmm. The northeast part? That means it will hit the headland, and probably some of the eastern end of the island. Not where the habitations are. Good."

"Dad," Gordon raised his voice. "The boat pen..."

"I know, son. The boat pen will be hardest hit. " He paused for a moment and looked around. "Okay, here's the plan. Scott, off you go to Western Samoa. We start there since they'll be hardest hit."

"F-A-B, Father," Scott said smartly, moving through the crowd and over to the entrance to Thunderbird One's bay.

"Next, we need a team to clear the boat pen and move the crafts either out to sea or to the southern tip of the island, where they'll be sheltered." He looked around the room. "Gordon, you're still on stand down. You'll head up the team. Christopher, Elise, Callie, you're with him. Somebody wake up, Cherie. She'd be a help here."

"I'll go," Emily volunteered.

"Wake up the boys, too, Mother. I think that Kyrano should fly you and the boys out and over to Bongo-Bongo. " He turned to Dom. "Including Joshua, if you're okay with that."

"But, Jeff," Emily countered. "If they're not in any danger..."

"I don't want to take any chances, Mother. And... you never know what will wash up from a tidal wave."

Kat said, "You don't want me to help them?"

"No," replied Jeff. "You will be needed on this rescue, along with Brains and Tin-Tin. They have requested all available generators, and you will need to get them up and running. If they find any in the debris, you will need to work on them, too."

He turned to Dianne. "Thunderbirds 4 and 7 will also be needed, as well as all medical personnel.

"Brandon," he said, glancing in that direction, "do you think you can handle Thunderbird 4 alone? I'll want you to take her there yourself, freeing up space in the pod for other necessary equipment."

"Yes, sir!" the young man replied, sitting up straight. He glanced over at Gordon, who had a look of shock on his face. "Don't worry, I promise to bring her back without a scratch."

"You'd better, or I'll have you cleaning it with a toothbrush, inside and out!"

"Enough," Jeff warned. "Virgil, get going. Bring along the mobile crane, too. We won't have elevators available to get us up where we need to be. Plus, there may be victims stuck up in

trees."

"F-A-B, Dad," Virgil said, as he stood by the painting, letting it tip him up so he disappeared.

"The jet air transporter might be a help there, too, Dad," John said.

"How will we transport the generators?" Kat asked.

"We'll load the transporter, any available generators and an antigrav float into the pod along with Thunderbird 7 and the mobile crane. I will have more generators helijetted from Hawaii and Sydney.

"Tin-Tin, you go with Brandon. Your language and engineering skills will be needed there. Off you go now. There's no time to lose." The two young people hurried out of the lounge, heading for the minisub. Jeff turned to his wife. "Do you need any supplies other than what's already aboard 7?"

Dianne sighed. "More black tags and body bags. Ah'm not going intuh this with any high expectations." She shook her head. "We'll do ouah best, but it won't be enough."

"All right. You three get going and take anything you need or feel might be needed. If you think of anything else on the way, let me know, and I'll get it for you somehow." He smiled briefly at her, and she did the same at him, then signaled Dom and Nikki, who followed her out of the room.

"John, Brains, Kat, you will go in Two with the others. Go help them get things loaded, so you can take off ASAP." They nodded at him, and headed in the same direction as the medical team.

Jeff turned to the others, including Cherie, who had just joined them, yawning, but appeared to be awake and alert. He smiled at her and indicated that she was to sit down. Then he began to tell them his plan to save the boats.

"Gordon, you'll pilot the Lucille out of the pen. Christopher, Callie, you'll have to take the smaller cabin cruisers out. If you don't know how to sail, then we'll rig towlines from the Lucille to help guide you. Cherie, you and Elise will help load the Lucille and the cabin cruisers up with as much of the smaller personal craft as possible."

"What you can't get on the boats, haul out through the monorail. Then seal that hatch!"

"What about the catamaran, Dad?" Gordon asked solemnly.

Jeff shook his head. "Batten it down in the cavern the best you can, but... it's expendable and replaceable." He gave Gordon a sympathetic look. "I'm sorry, son."

"What about the seaplane?" Cherie asked suddenly.

"Kyran? Get down to the pen right now and take that out of there. You can use it to fly to Bongo-Bongo. There's a lake not too far from there that should suffice as landing."

"Very good, Mr. Tracy. I believe your mother and young sons are ready to leave now. I will contact Lady Penelope's foreman that we are on the way as soon as we are airborne." The retainer

picked up a now quiet Joshua and left.

"We don't have much time before the wave hits. You five had better get going."

Post by Hobbeth and Tikatu on 21/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:43:44 GMT

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Nikki looked toward Dianne as Thunderbird 2 approached its ramp to launch. "What do you think we can expect out there? It's going to be as bad as that Russian rescue mission, isn't it?" she whispered.

"Worse, Ah'd think. Ah believe we have our work cut out for us on this mission." Dianne sighed, thinking about what was ahead. "Ah'd expect more injured and fatalities during this rescue. Are you going to be all right?"

"Yeah. Just a little nervous. I've only heard about these things on TV and in history books. Now I'm actually going to witness the devastation they cause." Nikki looked down at her intertwined fingers. "I guess once I get into the work it will become easier."

Dianne laid her hand on Nikki's shoulder briefly as Thunderbird 2 roared away from its ramp.

Post by Nikki-browneyes1 on 22/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:43:51 GMT

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Tracy Island April 18th 3:30am

Brandon and Tin-Tin hurried to Thunderbird Four. As they strapped themselves in for the trip to Samoa, the young Malaysian glanced over at Brandon and noticed his nervousness.

"Are you all right?" she asked as Brandon finished up the prelaunch check.

"Not exactly, Tin-Tin. To be honest, I'm nervous as all get out. This is only my second time solo in Four and I don't want anything to happen to her. You heard Gordon. If anything does, I'll never hear the end of it from him."

Tin-Tin smiled. She knew what he was going through and sought to calm his jitters. "Relax, Brandon. Just remember your training and you'll do fine."

"Thanks a lot, Tin-Tin. I appreciate the words of encouragement. Right now we better get moving. Those people on Samoa need our help."

"Control from Thunderbird Four," Brandon's voice said over the radio. "Standing by to launch."

"Thunderbird Four from Control, permission to launch granted. Good luck, Big Mac."

"FAB, Control." Brandon flipped the switches that activated Thunderbird Four's hover jets. Taking a deep breath, he pushed forward on the steering yoke, sending the compact sub forward and into the lagoon. Relieved, Brandon let out the breath he'd been holding and turned his attention to the controls. Activating the engines, he pointed the sub out to sea.

"Thunderbird Four from Thunderbird One, do you copy?"

"Thunderbird One from Thunderbird Four, receiving you five by five."

"Since the tsunami is already heading towards Tracy Island, I need you and Sweet to keep an eye out for large pieces of debris that could cause damage to the island."

"FAB," Brandon acknowledged. "Anything else?"

There was a long pause, then Scott replied quietly, "Yes, there is. You need to be alert for bodies as well as possible survivors. I'll let Van Gogh know what's happening and as soon as he's through offloading the pod he can return to pick you up along with any survivors you find."

"FAB Thunderbird 1."

As Brandon navigated Thunderbird Four through the water, Tin-Tin kept an eye on the sonar, alert for anything that could be a hazard to the island. Suddenly, she turned and looked up through the clear top hatch, seeing the shadow of the seaplane as it took off from the island and flew over their position, heading for the safety of Bongo-Bongo.

Post by MagicMaster8 on 22/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:46:23 GMT
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Kat ran after Brains and John as they headed towards the passenger lift to take them down to Thunderbird Two. She was a little apprehensive, but at the same time excited to be going on a rescue again. On arriving in Thunderbird Two, Kat immediately excused herself, saying that she was going to eat

Brains nodded in agreement. "I guess everyone should eat a little."

Kat was gone for quite some time. John went looking for her, followed by Brains

When both young men entered the crew's quarters they saw, much to their amusement, Kat already seated, tucking into a large bowl of cereal and a mug of milk.

John raised his eyebrows. "Gee, Kat, where did you find that?" Before Kat could answer, he clicked his fingers. "Blood sugar, right."

Kat nodded, her mouth full.

As the others began to join them in the crew's quarters, Brains began handing out food and drinks, telling them that they should all have something to eat.

Once everyone had eaten, they all settled down as Thunderbird Two headed for the disaster area. Everyone seemed to be fully wide-awake, even though they had all been sound asleep just a short while before. Kat looked around at her colleagues. Some were trying to rest, others were chatting quietly. Suddenly she tried to remember the code names; she hadn't used the new ones yet. Thinking hard, she remembered Brains was Einstein, Dom was Dak, Nikki was Angel, Brandon was... oh well, she was sure that she would remember. She settled back in her seat to rest for the remainder of the journey.

Post by Tawnyangel22 on 22/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:46:27 GMT
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Silence had descended upon TB2's cockpit like a stone veil. The impending disaster weighed on their minds; the wait was always the worst. Nikki's eyes were fixed squarely on one of the windows. Beside her, Dianne's were closed, as if in meditation. Brains and John were sitting together, conversing in low tones. Dominic glanced out of the side of his eye at Kat, who was peering up at Virgil and the controls.

"Nervous?" He asked.

Kat gave him a small smile.

"A little. I don't know what to expect."

Dominic nodded brought a hand to his face, still feeling bereft without his glasses.

"Don't think about it," he said. "You learn not too, so. When I was with LifeFlight... God, it was awful sometimes."

Kat looked as if she was waiting for elaboration, but none came. No point in giving everyone anything else to think about, Dom thought.

"How and ever, the point is, if you don't think about it, you've no expectations. And when you get there, don't think about it. D'you get my drift?"

"I do," Kat said. "Although I doubt if it will be easy."

"No, love, it won't be."

They were silent again, and Dominic slid down a little in the seat. Now I'd better hope all this bravado pans out, eh?

Post by ArtisticRainey on 23/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:48:31 GMT
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With several people helping to load the pod, they were able to launch Thunderbird 2 in record time. During the journey, John went to sit in the co-pilot's seat, leaving Kat and Brains to their thoughts. He and Virgil didn't speak to each other; they were both too concerned about what lay ahead.

Kat sat deep in thought. This rescue was so totally different from the Russian one. On that one she had just been there initially to make sure that the winch worked okay. She was going along on this rescue with Brains to help with the generators. She glanced at Brains, who also looked deep in thought. "Boss?"

"Yes, Kat."

"Is there anything that I should know before we land, which will help me to be really useful? I know so little about generators."

"You don't have to worry, Kat," he replied. "Generators are basically engines, which provide electricity. And you know how to maintain engines. Our first priority will be to hook up the ones we brought where they will be needed most. Then, if there are any still basically intact, but not running, we will see what can be done to repair them."

He sighed. "I don't like not knowing exactly what we are getting into. It keeps us from having a plan ready to go when we arrive. But we'll have to wait until we get there."

Kat nodded. Brains seemed worried. ~I just hope that I won't let him or the rest of the crew down. She fumbled in the pocket of her uniform, brought out a muesli bar and began to eat. The two sat in silence, then suddenly Scott's voice broke into their thoughts. "Thunderbird Two from Thunderbird One; what is your ETA, Van Gogh?"

"ETA fifteen minutes, Maverick. What's the situation?"

"Not good. Right now, I don't see any place to set Two down so you can unload the pod. And

you'll have to do that fast, so you can go back and pick up Four."

John and Virgil glanced at each other in concern. Before they could reply, Scott spoke again.

"Wait! They have a couple of tractors coming out. There is a place that's partially clear and they are heading in that direction. They will have a clearing large enough for you to set down. I'll see what I can do to hurry them along. When you arrive, do a circuit of the islands."

There was another pause, and he continued. "I've gotten a communication from the island. Their one hospital is out of commission -- took severe damage, including their generator. They've set up a field hospital, but the small generator they are using isn't nearly enough. Have Einstein and MGM set up the ones we brought there, then head to the hospital to see if they can repair theirs."

Scott's voice was strained, as the sight of all the devastation was affecting him, but he was trying to keep from letting it overwhelm him. John realized this and said, "Hang in there, Maverick. We'll be there to help keep the death toll from rising much more. And if we can give the Boss a detailed report, he can have people there quickly to help them rebuild."

"Thanks, Quasar. I needed that. Thunderbird One out."

"I'm going below to warn the others what to expect," John said to Virgil. "If it's affecting Scott that much, who knows how much it'll affect the others?"

"Good idea," Virgil replied as John unlocked his harness and headed out of the cockpit.

He entered the crew quarters. "Brains, Kat," he said quietly, "there is no easy way to say this; there is total devastation out there. We are approaching the island, and there is a clearing where Virgil can land Thunderbird Two. The pod has to be released very quickly, in order to get it unloaded so Virgil can return to pick up Thunderbird Four. Brains, I want you and Kat to set up our generators at the field hospital they've created, then make your way towards the hospital, which is almost completely destroyed." He looked at Kat who was white faced. "Okay, MGM?" he smiled, using her code name.

Kat nodded, "FAB, Quasar."

John smiled at her, and headed toward the others, to let the medical team know what was in store for them when they disembarked. Brains swallowed hard, and turned to Kat. "Do you think you're ready for this? Complete devastation isn't a pretty sight."

Kat looked at Brains. "To be honest, Brains, I don't know. I have never witnessed anything like John has described. But," and here she hesitated, "I am a member of International Rescue, I managed to cope with the Russian rescue, and I guess I shall cope with this one. But may I ask on thing?"

"Sure, Kat," Brains replied.

"Please can we stick very close together?"

Brains nodded, looking slightly perplexed. "If you want, Kat," he said.

Post by Hobbeth and Tawnyangel22 on 23/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:48:39 GMT

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"Mrowww?" Asterix stopped eating suddenly and listened. He went back to his breakfast for a moment, then he stopped again. He paced about, uneasy.

Something was wrong; he just knew it. Something horrible was coming.

Asterix suddenly became very frightened. He ran into the living room looking for his master. He howled for him, but his master wasn't wasn't around.

He decided there and then to hide. Then he ran into the bedroom and under the bed, where he sat, shivering, his eyes wide.

Post by The_Wrong_Trousers1 on 23/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:49:20 GMT

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*****Meanwhile, at the Tracy Island boat pen...*****

Gordon and his team arrived at the boat pen. After he gave the assignments, everyone immediately got to work.

Callie looked at him. "Gordon, uh, I know this isn't exactly the right time to say this, but I haven't done any sailing since I was a child."

"Well, then we'll just do as Dad suggested and attach a line from the cruiser to the Lucille and--"

"Hang on," interrupted Cherie. "Callie, I'll help you out. We'll take one of the cabin cruisers together and maybe Chris and Elise can take the other one?"

"Sounds good to me." Chris replied. The others nodded and looked toward Elise for her agreement. None was forthcoming.

"Elise? Are you okay? What's wrong?" Callie asked worriedly.

"Um... no, not really. I, well... look guys, I'm not getting in the boat. I'll do what Mr. Tracy

suggested and secure the monorail with the equipment you can't get on board the boats." Elise's words tumbled out and she barely stopped to breathe.

Gordon said, "Good. Callie, you'll get refresher lessons after we take care of this situation. Right now we've got to get things loaded and batten down the cat. We're running out of time."

Gordon and Chris loaded the small craft into the cabin cruisers while Callie, Elise, and Cherie worked on loading the monorail of the loose life jackets. As Cherie scrambled around securing items, Callie took an opportune moment to quickly talk to Elise.

"Are you afraid of water, Elise?" Callie wasted no time in getting to her point.

Caught off guard Elise stopped what she was doing and turned to glare at Callie who wasn't backing down and waited for an answer. Elise averted her eyes and spoke quietly, she didn't want Cherie to hear.

"Yes. I hate it. My parents drowned in a boating accident when I was 9. I was with them." She looked back at Callie.

"I'm so sorry," Callie said.

"Thanks. Listen, we better get this done or Gordon will be on to us."

At that moment, the red-head ran over to them. Callie saw Gordon favoring his shoulder. "Gordon, are you all right?"

"I'm fine."

"No, you need to rest that shoulder. I'll help Chris load up the rest onto the cruiser."

"None of us can rest until all the boats are out of the way of the tsunami."

"You're right. Then I'll do the best I can, but you have to promise me you'll be careful sailing the Lucille."

Everyone completed their tasks less than 20 minutes later, and they did the best they could to save the catamaran by tying it down tightly. Elise ran as fast as she could to the monorail as the others took to the sea. Gordon took the controls of the Lucille, and Chris piloted one of the cabin cruisers while Callie sailed the other with assistance from Cherie. All three craft moved toward the southern end of the island.

Post by TracyFan4Ever and FrankieCTB2 on 25/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:49:35 GMT

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Christopher whistled an old sea shanty to himself that he'd learnt at school when he was a boy.

For all the seriousness and urgency that the approaching tsunami brought, he felt rather happier than he did earlier that morning.

"I feel useful again", he thought, as he kept a steady hand on the tiller.

Seeing Gordon gesture to follow him, he changed course as Callie did the same, then continued to follow in the dark of the early morning.

Post by The_Wrong_Trousers1 on 25/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:51:53 GMT

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As Virgil circled the island, everyone went to the windows to see what they were up against. There were several low gasps as they surveyed the destruction. Very few buildings were still standing. The hospital was one (they could tell which one it was by the large caduceus hanging askew on it), but it had suffered extensive damage.

Moments later, they saw the clearing where Thunderbird Two was to land. They headed for the pod, ready to start the moment the pod was down.

Kat felt a little unsure, as she followed Brains and John down towards the pod. However, she listened intently when John began to organize the movement of the equipment. "MGM, Einstein, I suggest you start getting the generators ready to be offloaded." "FAB, Quasar," Brains confirmed. He and Kat hurried to where the small generators were stored and began to unfasten them from where they had been fastened for security during the journey. Kat found that suddenly her adrenaline was beginning to work, and her nervousness began to fade, as the pod door was lowered.

John brought the antigrav unit over for them to put the generators on, and went over to Dianne, who was preparing to enter Thunderbird 7. "As soon as the generators are offloaded, take Seven to a spot halfway between the field hospital and the regular hospital. A large space has been cleared for it, and you can set up and start there. Because facilities on it are much superior to anything they have working right now, the most extreme cases will be brought to you. We've been told that any bodies they find will not be brought to our area. One of the other buildings still standing has a large shaded area that was undamaged. They will go there."

They all nodded and took their places. Soon they felt the gentle bump that let them know that Thunderbird Two had landed. They waited for the go ahead.

Kat helped Brains to load the generators on to the antigrav unit. They were not too heavy but very bulky. She struggled with the unfamiliar weight and size of them. The pod door slowly descended and Kat gazed out on a scene such as she had never seen before. Uprooted trees, vehicles on their sides, up against trees. People wandering around moaning and crying. Children calling for their parents. Mothers and fathers looking desperately for their children. She blinked, ~mustn't

show any weakness, not now, she thought. Stoically she moved outside alongside Brains, heading towards where the generators had to be set up.

Behind her, she heard Thunderbird Seven's engines start up. "Let's get out of their way. They need to get over to the clearing and start setting up," Brains said.

"Right, Einstein," she replied. "Lead the way."

They headed over to where there was a small old-fashioned generator running. But from the sound of it, it was on its last legs. In fact, just as they arrived, it sputtered and died.

"Quick. Let's unhook this and get one of ours connected and going." He grabbed the toolbox and knelt down beside the defunct piece of machinery. "Okay, hand me the tools as I ask for them, and watch how I do this. That way, you'll know what needs to be done to get these babies up and working."

Kat knelt beside Brains and handed him the tools as he asked for them. After some time, he pressed a button and the generator spluttered into life. "Phew," Brains wiped a damp hand across his equally damp forehead. "Now to get the other one up and working."

Kat put the tools back in to the box. Looking around, she whispered. "All this devastation caused by a tidal wave."

Brains nodded. "Yes, it will be a long time before this area is cleared, and families can return to live here."

Kat turned and tripped over something lying on the ground. She looked down to see what it was, and found a stuffed dolphin, half buried in the sand. She reached down and pulled it out. Tears started falling as it finally hit her that children had been affected by the tsunami. She looked around and noticed that some of the body bags being carried off were too small for adults. "Oh no," she breathed.

"MGM." Startled, she jumped as Brains put a hand on her shoulder. "I know this is hard, but you have to put your feelings aside for now. I need you to concentrate on what we have to do, in order to keep any more people - adults and children - from dying. It's your job."

Kat gulped and wiped her eyes. "Sorry Einstein; of course you are right. I must put my feelings to one side. Now where are we going with this one?" Brains took the lead and slowly they moved the generator, and connected it up, so that it was working the other equipment. Looking round she noticed that Thunderbird Two was taking off and heading out to sea. "Looks like Van Gogh is headed out to pick up Thunderbird Four," she commented. Looking ahead, she noticed that Thunderbird Seven had stopped. ~Wonder how Nikki and Dom are coping~.

Brains wiped his hands and put the last tool back in the box, closing it up. "That's that. They have plenty of electricity. They can even hook up a refrigeration unit here, and not begin to overload these." He picked up the toolbox and said, "Now for the hospital. Let's see what we can do for their generators."

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:52:08 GMT

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Almost as soon as Thunderbird Seven had stopped, injured people were being rushed up to the vehicle. Stretchers began to line the clearing; calling the situation 'tough' would be an understatement. Dominic set about tagging and prioritising the casualties. The ground began to turn red.

"Dom! Ah need you here! Get a pressure bandage, stat!" Dianne called out.

Dominic fetched one, running as fast as he could, and crouched over the stretcher. A middle aged man was groaning, practically screaming; it took them both to keep his hands from clutching his wounds. His belly was a mess of blood; his hands were slick, and his eyes were rolling back in his head. The bandage was saturated in a matter of moments.

"Let's get him into Seven; we need to work fast to get this bleeding under control or we'll lose him." Dianne said.

Together they hurried him up to the surgical bay, which was already prepped and ready to go. They worked deftly and quickly; Dominic could practically predict what Doctor Tracy was going to ask for. Just like old times...in a way, he thought.

"Pack it off for me," Dianne said at length. "That's all we can do for now. I need to get back out there." Dom could see the encouraging smile under her mask; it was clear in her eyes.

"Yes Doctor," he said.

Dianne shucked off her gloves and reached for some antibac/antiviral gel on her way out.

"See you out there," she said.

Post by ArtisticRainey on 26/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:58:03 GMT

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Brains and Kat headed for the hospital. It was clear that these generators had suffered water damage. Neither of them was working; a panel had been broken off of one unit and was hanging by one bolt, and the other had a side badly caved in. As they descended the few steps into the room, they found that the water was up to their knees. Brains went over and began trying to remove the damaged panel on the first one and asked her to do the same to the other. Kat moved

over to it, and began unscrewing the bolts that held one panel in place. As she removed it, a rather large fish leaped out at her, knocking her down. It landed in her lap.

This time her scream made Brains jump. "What on earth, MGM?"

Kat managed to flip the fish away from her now sopping wet uniform. "Ugh, what a horrible thing," she exclaimed.

As the fish tried to swim away, one of the locals who had been helping move patients out of the hospital passed by. He glanced in and, seeing the fish, exclaimed loudly in his own language. He rushed in, and grabbed it, holding it up by the gills.

He looked at the puzzled faces of the mechanic and the engineer and said in his broken English, "Food. Good eating. Feed many little ones." Then he hurried out with his prize.

Brains and Kat looked at each other, and both began to chuckle. He said, "We live to serve, wherever and however we can."

Kat started laughing harder. "And this time we're serving a fish course."

The interlude relieved some of the pressure they'd been under, and they turned back to the task at hand with renewed energy. Brains got the panel off the generator, examined it, and said, "Before we can do any repair work, we need to get the water pumped out of here, so we can dry things off." He looked around the room, and spied a hand pump. "Let's get this contraption over to where we can start removing the water. We'll take turns operating it, so neither of us gets too tired. Boy, this is an old one! I only saw one of these in a couple of books, and once in a museum in the States."

So taking it in turns, they had the old machine pumping out the water. The level slowly dropped, but the ground under their feet was slippery from the silt that had accumulated with the water. Kat began slipping and sloshing, and struggled each time it was her turn to operate the antique device.

They switched places, but Brains found out the hard way that there was also seaweed on the floor. One second he was passing her and the next he was sitting in the water, and his glasses had fallen off. He moved to get on his hands and knees so he could fish around in the water to locate them, and felt rather than heard the crunch. "Uh oh. I found my glasses."

"That's good," replied Kat.

"Not so good. They're under my knee. And they're now broken. I can't see a thing without them."

"Oh no! Brains, now what do we do?" she asked anxiously.

"You'll just have to be my eyes for the moment," he answered. "Now tell me, is the water low enough to work on the generator?"

"Not quite." she replied, cranking the handle as she talked. Eventually it was low enough. Brains

told Kat what to do and she managed to work, using the dry rags they'd brought on the connections and the generator, until it spluttered into life. "There!" she said, "looks like that is working okay. But now what about you? I suppose we had better head back to Thunderbird Seven."

"No, Kat. We still have the other one to do, and it's worse off than the first. Plus all the cloths you used are now too wet. I think you should return to Thunderbird 7 and get the spare pair of glasses I keep there in case of something like this," and he lifted his broken glasses, "happening. And bring back more dry cloths, if Doc can spare them. Okay?"

"Okay Einstein, will do, but will you be okay here while I am gone, I may be some time?"

"I'll be just fine, MGM."

Kat waded through the water and headed for the surface. Once out in the open, she thought, not for the first time, how much work would be needed before anyone could ever live there again. Suddenly she saw a familiar figure heading towards her. "Hi J.. Quasar, how's things?"

"Not too good, MGM, but what are you doing alone? Where is Brains; is there a problem?" John sounded concerned.

"Brains slipped and dropped his glasses and broke them. I have been sent back to Thunderbird Seven for his spare pair and some more dry cloths, if Dr Tracy can spare any."

John looked at the dripping wet mechanic. "Seems that you need to dry off, yourself."

Kat looked down at her uniform and smiling ruefully, said, "There's a fish around here somewhere that will be a good meal for several people. Somehow it got into one of the generators during the tsunami, and it happened to be the one I was working on, removing the panel. It knocked me down into about eighteen inches of seawater."

"Both of you fell in there? And you're okay?"

"Oh yes! I guess the only thing that got damaged - other than Brains' glasses - was our pride. But the other generator was damaged more, and Brains needs to be able to see to get it fixed, and we need to wipe down the connections."

"Well, I need to go to Seven so I'll walk with you," John said, falling in step with her. "Let's hurry."

Post by Tawnyangel22 and Hobbeth on 27/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:59:40 GMT
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As John and Kat approached Thunderbird Seven, they were greeted by Nikki, who was preparing the next triaged patient for treatment. She looked at them critically, running her experienced eyes

up and down. "What do you need?" she asked bluntly. "Are you injured?"

"No, uh, Angel," Kat said, a bit stung by Nikki's abrupt question. "Einstein has broken his glasses and we need some dry clothes for our work with the hospital's second generator."

Nikki gave both of them a strange glance. "Well, why didn't you call Mobile Control and let... Maverick know? Or call us directly? We could have had them ready for you."

Kat blinked then smacked her forehead with her hand. "I didn't even think of it. Neither did Einstein." She glanced up at John, "Why didn't you think of that?"

He held up his hands in a defensive gesture. "Don't look at me! I assumed you'd already done it."

Just then, Dom came to the entrance. "Doc is ready for the next one." Nikki activated the antigravity stretcher on which the patient lay and began to push it up the ramp. Dom took control of the head, and pulled. The stretcher floated easily up and into the cabin. The dark-skinned nurse stopped at the top of the ramp and shucked her gloves, then called into her hands-free unit, "Doc, does Einstein keep a pair of spare glasses aboard? He does? Where are they? Oh, Okay. And can we spare some clean, dry clothes for the mechanical team? Okay. I'll get them." She glanced down at John and Kat and motioned to the control cabin. "I'll meet you in there."

The two of them climbed into the cab, and John opened the cooler. He grabbed a bottle of water then looked down at Kat and said, "Looks like you've got things under control here. I'm going to head back to the Mobile Crane."

"F-A-B, Quasar. See you later," Kat replied. She pulled out a bottle for herself, and one for Brains, pocketing them as Nikki came out with a bag of clean rags and a small, hard-sided case.

"Here's what you need, MGM," she said with a sigh. "Next time, give Mobile Control or us a holler and we'll get things ready for you."

"I'll remember that," Kat said as she took the item. "Good luck here, Angel."

"Thanks, MGM," Nikki sighed again, looking out the viewport and adding softly, "We're going to need it."

Post by Tikatu on 27/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 00:59:47 GMT

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Alan, who had been listening to the many transmissions having to do with the latest rescue, called down to Scott. "Mobile Control from Thunderbird Five, do you read?"

Scott switched over to the secure circuit that would patch him through to the space station. He held up a finger to quiet the group of men and women who were hovering around, asking

questions. "Go ahead, Thunderbird Five."

"An update for you, Maverick," came Alan's voice in his ear. "The local airstrip has been cleared enough for VTOL craft. A team of doctors from Doctors Without Borders is within five minutes of landing there to join the hospital's operations. Their head surgeon has asked to speak with Doc to see how we can cooperate."

"F-A-B, Indy. Tell them thanks, and give them the coordinates for Thunderbird Seven. I'll let Doc know so she can make the call one way or another. Do you have an ETA on Thunderbird Four?" He squashed the inclination to ask for news about the Island. ~We need to focus on the here and now. Base will tell us what's going on when we need to know.

He brought his attention back to the here and now just in time to hear Alan say, "... twenty minutes."

"Come again, Indy?"

Alan frowned. He didn't usually have to repeat himself to Scott. "Thunderbird Two gives an ETA of 20 minutes. Thunderbird Four is ready to load."

"F-A-B," Scott replied. "And thanks, Indy. Mobile Control out." He switched over to the frequency that could be heard within Thunderbird Seven. ~I'd better hail Nikki; she's less likely to be in the middle of surgery. She can warn Mom just as well.

Post by Tikatu on 27/06/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 01:00:06 GMT

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Andrew Carmichael strode briskly along toward the place where he'd been told International Rescue's medical contingent had set up. He was looking forward to seeing what he could of their technology and speaking with their physicians. Doctors Without Borders had sent along a crack team, and were liaising with the field hospital, hoping to take some of the burden from IR so they could go on to other places where they were needed.

As he came upon the clearing, he stopped and stared at the large, white vehicle that stood before him. The size of it fascinated him, and he wondered if he would be allowed inside. ~They certainly have tremendous equipment available to them, he thought.

Nikki, who was checking on some of the previously triaged patients, saw this seemingly able bodied man, with a caduceus on his polo shirt, staring at Thunderbird Seven.

~This must be the representative from Doctors Without Borders that I was told would be coming, she thought. One little tweak to the temporary bandage on the yellow tagged patient she was helping, then she straightened and approached the stranger.

"Sir, may I help you?" she asked politely.

Andrew started, then smiled at the dark-skinned woman in the soiled, light blue scrubs. "Yes, I think you can. I'm Dr. Andrew Carmichael, from Doctors Without Borders. I'm here to meet with your head physician to see how we can coordinate our efforts."

"Yes, sir. We've been expecting you. Let me tell our CMO that you're here."

Inside Thunderbird Seven, Dianne was gluing up a long gash in a man's leg, using her surgical laser to set the glue. Dom had just come in with fresh bandages for the wound when Dianne heard Nikki's voice in her ear phone.

"Doc?"

"Go ahead, Angel."

"Dr. Carmichael, from Doctors Without Borders, is here to see you."

Dianne suddenly stopped what she was doing, and her eyes went wide. Dom was concerned when he saw her pale.

She took a deep breath and asked, "Dr. Andrew Carmichael?"

Outside, Nikki frowned a bit, looked up at the man standing beside her, and replied, "Yes. Dr. Andrew Carmichael."

Dianne breathed out heavily, and swallowed hard. She hefted the laser again, and went back to finishing the job. "Tell him that Ah'm in th' middle of a procedure an' Ah'll be with him in a few minutes."

"Yes, Doc," Nikki replied. She relayed the message to Andrew, who nodded, then she said, "If you'll excuse me, I need to get back to work."

In the surgical bay, Dom asked, "Is there something wrong, Doc?"

She shook her head. "Nothin' Ah can't handle, Dak." Standing up, she looked critically at her work. "If you'd be so kind as t' finish with th' dressin', Ah'll tend t' owah visituh."

"F-A-B," Dom said. They switched places, and Dom began to dress the wound as Dianne took a moment to wash her hands and arms thoroughly. She then reached into her locker and pulled out her cap, turning it in her hands, her eyes unfocused as if she had something important to think about. Then she nodded, put the cap firmly on her head, and left the surgical bay, striding across to the operator's cabin.

Andrew frowned a bit as he watched Nikki work. He has assumed that IR had several medical personnel, but so far all he had seen was the one nurse. He looked up as the doors slid open and a black-haired man, pale of skin, and wearing the same scrubs as "Angel" came out, supporting a man with a dressed leg, helping him to the ground level where a woman and two children waited

for him. The male nurse went back inside, and came out with a stretcher, and between them, the woman and the man helped another victim into the confines of the white vehicle. The dark woman returned to the triage area, then stood suddenly, putting a hand to one ear as if listening, and approached Andrew.

"Our physician will see you now. If you'll climb into the control cab..." She indicated one of the doors marked with a large red "7".

"Thank you," Andrew said, nodding again. He strode over to the machine and climbed the rungs. The door opened for him with an audible swish, and he stepped into a cool, air conditioned pilot's cabin.

There was someone sitting in the central chair, with the back of the chair turned to him, and he approached, only to be halted by a raised, gloved hand.

"I'm Dr. Andrew Carmichael of Doctors Without Borders," he said firmly. "I've come to offer our help."

"Ah know who you are, Dr. Cahmichael," said a raspy, but strangely familiar voice. "An' Ah know why you're heah. Ah'm not sure we can be of assistance t' each othuh."

"Now, wait a minute," Andrew began, his temper rising at this woman's - for he could tell the doctor was female - high-handedness. "I'm sure we can be of help to you. Just tell us what you need, and we'll provide it. We may not have the wonderful equipment you have, but we do have manpower, which you seem to be sorely lacking."

"We do fahne with what we have, suh," the woman replied.

"I'm sure you do, but..." Andrew's voice trailed off as his mind, which had been trying frantically to place the voice, came up with an insane, impossible answer, one that made him feel like he'd been hit in the stomach. His eyes widened, his face took on an expression of incredulity, and he took in a sharp, deep breath, letting it out all at once.

"Dianne?" he asked, softly and hesitantly.

There was a sigh, weary beyond belief, and the chair turned towards him. The woman removed her cap, then her visor, and looking up at him with a resigned expression was his own niece, Dianne Tracy.

"Hello, Uncle Drew."

rewritten and posted by Tikatu

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 01:00:18 GMT
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Alan opened communications with Mobile Control once again. "Maverick, what's your status?"

"The worst of it has been taken care of, and now with Doctors Without Borders here to help, we can pack up and go wherever else we're needed. I presume, Indy, that you've gotten word that we're needed somewhere else?"

Alan grinned. "You've got that right, Maverick. Word has come from Fiji that they are in need of assistance. They want people for medical help as well as search and rescue, and mechanical. More generators need Einstein and MGM's assistance, I expect. You'll need to reconnoiter."

"F-A-B, Indy." Scott returned his smile. "I'll let them know, so they can get ready to relocate. We'll let you know when we are underway. Uh, Indy, any word from Base?"

"No injuries, minor damage only. That's all I was told. We'll get the full scoop once this rescue is over and you're all safely back at base. But I bet you'll all have some clean up chores waiting when you get there."

Scott grimaced. "As long as we have a chance to rest, first. But I'm glad to hear that everyone's okay. Mobile Control, out." He called John next. "Quasar from Mobile Control."

"This is Quasar, Maverick. Go ahead."

"I've gotten word from Indy that some of us are needed in Fiji. Return to Mobile Control and take over here, so I can fly over and check things out there."

"F-A-B, Mobile Control. I'll be there in a few minutes."

Scott shortly turned over command to John and headed to Thunderbird One. Moments later, he took off and headed west, toward their next rescue site.

Post by Hobbeth on 03/04/2005

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 01:01:05 GMT
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Drew gasped, staring at the woman before him, trying to understand her presence in the Thunderbird.

She sighed again, then said, "Sit down before y' fall down, Drew."

He looked around and saw a co-pilot's chair. Turning it to face her, he dropped into it. "Dianne..." he began, his hands spreading out as he leaned forward. "How... when...?"

She held up her hand. "Look, Uncle Drew. Ah don't have much tahme, but before we go any further, you have t' make me a promise. What Ah'm gonna tell you, you can't tell to anybody else. Includin' Aunt Maggie. Ah have to have your word that you'll keep this a secret. The security an'

safety of owah organization depends on it."

He shook his head. "Dianne... I..."

"You have to promise me, Uncle Drew. Or Ah can't answer your questions."

There was a moment of silence, then Drew nodded his head. "All right. I'll keep it to myself. I promise."

She looked at him gratefully. "Thank you. Now take a deep breath, then ask your questions."

Her straightforwardness caught him off guard, but he blurted out, "What the hell are you doing here?"

She looked surprised. "Ah would have thought that'd be obvious. Ah'm heah to rescue people, save lives."

"But..." He stopped for a moment, gathering his thoughts, beginning to frown as the myriad implications of her presence there and in that uniform began to crowd in and become clearer. "That nurse out there -- Angel -- she called you the CMO. The chief medical officer. Is that true? Are you the CMO of International Rescue?"

Dianne looked away for a moment, then took in a deep breath and huffed it out. Her eyes met those of her uncle and she said, "Yes, Ah am."

He paused. "How? How did you come to be the CMO of International Rescue? And what does Jeff have to say about all this? Why the hell would he let you go out and risk your life like this? Does he even know?" His voice began to rise in volume.

She waved her hands in a shushing motion. "Shh!" she said, frowning. "Theah are patients beyond that door." She pointed to the door between the control cab and the medical cabin. Taking a deep breath, she sighed again. "Of course Jeff knows, an' he's okay with it."

"But... I don't understand. How does Jeff have contact with...." Drew's voice trailed off as the logical conclusion to his question came to mind. "My God. Jeff's part of International Rescue, too."

"He's moah than that, Uncle Drew," Dianne said quietly. "Jeff - and the Tracy family - are International Rescue."

Andrew's eyes widened at this, and he suddenly sat fully back in his chair, stunned. "The family? The whole family? The boys? Cherie? Emily? Kyrano? Tin-Tin? Brains? Everyone?"

"No, not everyone," Dianne answered, slightly irritated. "Em and Kyrano are too old to be on active duty, and mah three kids are much too young. But the five oldest boys, yes. Tin-Tin, yes. And Brains... well, he designed all th' Thunderbirds. Jeff commands everything from th' island."

"Oh my God," Drew said, passing a hand over his face. He scowled and asked in an angry voice, "We've been friends for years; good friends. Why the hell didn't he tell me?"

"He has his reasons, Uncle Drew, and they are good ones," Dianne answered wearily. "The only reason Ah'm tellin' you now is that Ah knew you'd recognize mah voice, an' Ah figured that if'n you knew, you wouldn't be speculatin' about it out loud t' anybody. Ah 'spect t' heah from mah husband foah tellin' you when Ah get home."

She sat up straighter and put a hand to her ear when she heard Dom call, "Doc? We're ready for you."

"F-A-B, Dak. Ah'll be right with you." She turned back to her uncle. "Ah have a patient." Licking her lips, she said, "Listen. We may be needed elsewhere real soon. Go on ovah t' owah Mobile Control unit. It's a red computer thing. Scott -- whose code name is Maverick -- should be theyah. Coordinate things with him. If yoah people could take most of th' yellow tags off owah hands, that'd be a big help."

Drew sighed heavily. "All right, Dianne." Both of them rose to their feet. Dianne put her visor back on, but not her cap.

"Ah'm sorry we couldn't talk about this moah, Uncle Drew. But Jeff'll be in touch, you can be sure of that."

"If he's not, I'll be in touch with him," Drew warned, pointing an emphatic finger at his niece.

"Ah don't doubt it." She moved over to the cooler and grabbed two bottles of water. "Heah. Give one o' these t' Scott. An' tell him from me that he's not t' spread it around that you know. Tell him Ah'll deal with his father mahself."

Drew took the cold bottles. "I will, Dianne." He leaned over and gave her a small kiss on the cheek. "Be careful."

She opened the door to the medical cabin. "You too, Uncle Drew," she said softly. Then she stepped through and was gone.

Andrew shook his head for a moment. He glanced around the pilot's cabin, then turned and left, climbing down the rungs. Outside, he spotted Angel again.

"Where can I find... uh... Mobile Control?"

Nikki stopped long enough to point. "Over that way. Look for the green Thunderbird."

"Thank you, Angel." And with that he went off in search of his old friend's oldest son.

rewritten and posted by Tikatu

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 01:01:13 GMT
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John was busy, coordinating the data from Scott, who was flying over Fiji, and the others who were scattered around Samoa, uploading it to Alan, who was passing it on to Jeff. He had tuned out his surroundings a bit, and so was surprised when a hand waved a cold bottle of water under his nose. He glanced up, and paled at the familiar face who looked down at him, a wry smile on his face.

"You don't look like a 'Maverick' to me," Andrew said.

"Oh, uh, I'm not. I'm Quasar," John replied, his eyes wide.

"Ah. A much more appropriate name," Drew said. He waved the bottle again. "Doc sent this for Maverick. Where'd he get to?"

"Uh... he's gone at the moment."

"Then you'd better take it," Andrew advised. "You look like you could use it."

"Thanks." John took the bottle but didn't open it. "Uh... Doctor? What...?"

"I've had a talk with your CMO. She's asked for my crew to take the yellow-tagged patients, which we will do. And she says that you're not to tell anyone that she and I have talked. She says she will tell your... commander herself."

"Ah," John said, reading between the lines. "How much...?"

"As much as I need to know at the moment," Andrew replied. He sighed. "I wish that I had known before. I expect to hear from your commander... and soon."

"I'll pass that along... if Doc doesn't do it herself," John replied. He made motions toward the Mobile Control. "I'd better get back to work."

"So should I." Drew took a gulp of his own water bottle, then waved it at John. "See you around... Quasar."

John watched his father's old friend go. Drew broke into a trot as he headed toward where his crew was waiting for him, and was soon out of sight. The International Rescue operative sighed heavily as he turned back to Mobile Control.

~I wish I could be a fly on the wall when Mom tells Dad that she just caused a security breach as big, or bigger, than the one Christopher made!

rewritten and posted by Tikatu

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 01:01:29 GMT
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It didn't take Brains and Kat too long to discover the problem with the generator at the water treatment plant once they arrived; in fact, it was Kat who found it. A vital part was rusted and crumbling. Fortunately, a spare was in stock, and Brains let her install it herself, wanting her to get more experience, only occasionally making a suggestion.

Half an hour after she started working on it, she was done. "Now to see if it will run, and if it does, we can go on to whatever's next." She hit the "Start" button, and instantly it began to work. She smiled at him as she heard the satisfying hum of the well-tended motor, and began to reattach the panel.

"Well done. You are now a generator pro, MGM." Brains activated his communicator watch and told John that they were finished. "Where do you want us to go next?"

"Return to base, Einstein. The most vital equipment on this island is now operational, thanks to you two, but Fiji is reporting they need assistance with some of their generators. So we're having Van Gogh take you and MGM there, along with Thunderbird Seven and the medical team, as soon as you get here."

"FAB, Maverick. I'll check on the transportation and give you an ETA as soon as we're underway. Einstein out."

Kat put the last screw in the panel, and put the tools away. She turned to Brains and said, "That's it. We're done here. What's next?"

"Fiji is next, according to Quasar. It seems they need our help. Let's go find our transportation and head back to base."

He picked up the toolbox and they left the building. Soon they were on their way to Thunderbird 2, and the next island.

a collaboration between TawnyAngel22 & hobbeth

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 01:01:37 GMT
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Brandon was quiet as he made his way through the water. Mobile Control had informed him that a bus had been swept into the water and he was to find it and mark it for the recovery team. As he approached the coordinates he was given, he kept his eyes on the sonar. Soon he spotted the location and carefully approached the mangled wreckage.

"There it is," Brandon said to himself as he looked out the view port at what was left of the bus. One side of it was caved in, the windows shattered. The young aquanaut swallowed hard, thinking of the lives that were so tragically cut short. He contacted Mobile Control, informing Scott that he had arrived at the scene and was going out.

Brandon swam up to the bus and looked through the shattered window and what he saw tore at

his heart. The bodies were in a heap in the middle of the aisle and Brandon could just make out the small body of a child, its hand still clutching a teddy bear.

"I wonder what went through their minds before the wave hit them?" Brandon thought as he deployed the buoy, marking the location for the recovery team. He turned and was heading back to Thunderbird Four when his keen eyes spotted something else in the water. After some thinking, he contacted Scott.

"Mobile Control from Big Mac."

"Big Mac from Mobile Control, go ahead."

"I've spotted something floating in the water. It could be another victim. I'm heading over to check it out."

"F-A-B."

Brandon swam towards the form he had spotted in the water, hoping it wasn't another body. As he approached the object, he smiled in relief as the 'body' he thought he had seen turned out to be a floating piece of seaweed.

"Mobile Control from Big Mac. It was a false alarm. My 'victim' turned out to be a piece of seaweed."

"Say again, Big Mac," Scott replied, unable to hear Brandon's reply over some nearby noise.

"I said false alarm. My 'victim' ended up being a piece of seaweed."

"Thank goodness for that," Scott said in obvious relief.

"I hear ya there Maverick. Where to now?"

"Return to Thunderbird Four and proceed to Fiji immediately to help with rescue efforts there."

"F-A-B, Maverick. I'm on my way."

post written by Magicmaster8

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 01:01:50 GMT

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There was a shout and Tin-Tin looked up to see a large group of people hurrying into the general area. One man seemed to be leading them, and shouting instructions to them, because several separated from the group and went off to help with searches, while others headed to the field

hospital. The man saw Tin-Tin moving toward him and quickly closed the distance.

"I am Reverend Eugene Anderson. I have a church on the lower slopes of Mount Silisili. We went farther up the mountain to escape the tsunami and once it was safe, started back down to see if we could help. As you must have realized, it was slow going. Some of us are helping out further inland, but most of us knew that the greatest need would be along the coast. So here we are."

"I'm sure a lot of people will be glad to see you. There's a great deal of work to be done, moving people and... and bodies, helping out in the hospitals, searching and clearing. Why don't we go over to the field hospital. I believe the local officials are there."

They headed in that direction, then Tin-Tin's watch-com activated.

"Sweet from Mobile Base. What's your location?"

"Just arriving at the field hospital with some more help." She smiled. "It seems that the local cavalry has arrived."

She heard an answering chuckle. "F-A-B, Sweet. Then return to Mobile Base. Two is taking Four to Fiji and I want you to go with Big Mac. This time, you'll stay in Four and work with him."

"F-A-B, Mobile Base. Will be there in three minutes."

She walked up to one of the officials she had met earlier and introduced him to the minister. Then, saying goodbye and accepting their thanks, she hurried over to John.

"Help me pack up Mobile Control. By that time, MGM and Einstein, as well as Thunderbird Seven will be aboard Two," he told her. "It'll take us to Fiji, then go pick up Four and transport it to our location, so you can board it. Most of the islanders there speak English fairly well, so we need your help underwater with Big Mac."

"What about American Samoa?"

"Word is that they weren't hit quite as hard as here, and most of the people were able to get to high ground in time. Other assistance has gone there, and more groups are heading to the other islands as we speak. Now, we'd better get a move on, before Van Gogh decides to leave without us."

Tin-Tin giggled. "F-A-B, Quasar," she replied as she began to assist him in getting the field base ready to load aboard Thunderbird Two.

Virgil returned to his pilot's seat once Kat and Brains were aboard. After collecting Thunderbird 4 and returning to Samoa, he now needed to fly Brains and Kat to Fiji and their next broken generator. He powered up Two and started to take off.

Looking out the window at the devastation, he let out a sigh. This is going to be one helluva long day. He started thinking back over the events so far.

None of team had really had enough time to digest the fact that not only were they going out on a horrendous rescue, but also their home base was going to be hit. The moment Thunderbird Two left her launch pad, the crew on board had become almost silent. John had been in the co-pilot's seat and he and Virgil only exchanged worried glances every now and then. Words weren't needed. Their minds were on the job ahead of them, but their hearts were back home with those left to ride out the waves heading toward the island.

Then Scott called, and Virgil replied, emphasizing his brother's code name. Scott heard it, but ignored it and instead appraised Virgil of the landing situation, or lack of it, and then continued to give a run down of what needed to be done. All of it, of course, had to be done at the speed of light.

Virgil looked at John with a lopsided grin and rolled his eyes. John chuckled at both of his elder brothers. They all knew Scott's "Field Commander Mode" was in full swing. When he was finished, John went to advise the others.

When they arrived, Virgil banked the transporter slowly around the island, searching for the clearing that Scott had told him people were creating for them. It took him two times around before he was able to get a clear shot at landing. He radioed back to the others that he was preparing to land. The tell-tale bump indicated they'd arrived and Virgil immediately raised the legs and released the pod door. The generators were unloaded first, then came Thunderbird 7.

"How's it going, Quasar?" Virgil called his brother on their commlinks.

"Okay, so far." John heard Virgil sigh and asked "What's wrong, Van Gogh?"

"Oh, nothing. Just looking at this disaster zone and wishing we had Frankie along. She could've taken over handling Two and I could've been an extra pair of hands down there."

"I know. Frankie's working on it, she'll be with us soon; and even though it'd be great having you down here, you're needed to retrieve Thunderbird Four."

"Yeah, you're right. See you soon." As Virgil took off, he still wished he was down there helping. Right now, he was flying 'milk runs', fetching and carrying equipment, and although he loved flying like he loved breathing, he still liked being in the thick of things.

As he flew towards the pick-up point for TB4, he began wondering how things had fared for Brandon and Tin-Tin. He wasn't worried so much about Tin-Tin as she could handle anything, but his concern was for Brandon and Thunderbird Four.

Oh boy, if there's one tiny scratch on Four, Gordon will have your hide, Brandon! That lead to Virgil's next thought...~I hope everyone's okay back home. I hope Gordon's all right....[i]

post written by FrankieCTB2

"How're we doin' foah three by three gauze?" En route to Fiji, the medical crew was doing a down and dirty inventory.

Dom rifled through the open box. "We've got a full box, and a partial one. I'd say it was half full."

Dianne frowned at her data pad. "Looks like we're gonna have t' use th' two by two instead. Ah think we have plenty o' that." She glanced over at Nikki. "Do we have all th' charts back?"

"Yes, we do," Nikki said from the monitoring station. "I'm just downloading the last two. The others are already wiped and ready to go."

"Ohh-kay," Dianne drawled. "Dom, would you an' Nikki please get th' patient beds wiped down and made up? We don't have much tahme, but Ah have a job t' do that won't wait."

"Sure, Doc," Dom replied. He followed Dianne from the surgery area to the medical cabin, picking up the stack of charts as he passed Nikki. "We'll get it done."

Dianne smiled slightly, gratitude in her expression, and she sighed. "Ah'll be back as soon as possible." Then she turned and walked into the control cab, closing the door firmly behind her.

"What's bothering her?" Nikki asked, frowning.

"I don't know for sure, but I think it had something to do with that conversation she had with the rep from Doctors Without Borders," Dom replied, looking at the door between the cabins. "She was drawling before it and she hasn't stopped since."

"Well, whatever it is, I hope she can put it aside soon," Nikki stated.

"I'm sure she can, Nik," Dom said calmly as he began to put the charts into their slots on the biobeds. "She's as professional as they come."

Dianne sat in the pilot's chair, looking at the panels in front of her and not really seeing them. Then she took her communicator out of her ear, reached over and opened up a private channel to the island.

"International Rescue CMO to Commander. Come in, Commander."

In the lounge, Jeff hung his towel around his neck and headed for his desk. He'd changed over to dry clothes, but didn't get a shower; that would come later when all was said and done. He frowned when he heard his wife's voice, the drawl heavy in it, and her formal manner of speech. ~What the hell is going on?

"International Rescue CMO to Commander. Come in Commander."

"IR Commander here," Jeff said, toggling a switch. He frowned more when he saw his wife's pale face. "Go ahead, Doc."

Dianne took a deep breath and let it out slowly. "Ah regret t' inform you, Commander, that we have had a security breach."

Jeff's eyes widened, and he sat down suddenly. "A security breach? What kind of security breach?"

"Ah regret t' inform you, Commander, that Ah made a decision t' tell an outsahder about owah operations."

"What?" Jeff cried, incredulous. "Why?"

Dianne paused to gather her courage, and her words. "Ah had a meetin' with th' representative from Doctors Without Borders, a Dr. Andrew Carmichael. He wanted t' discuss how we mahte best help one another. Ah knew that Dr. Carmichael would recognize mah voice, so... instead of leavin' him guessin' an' allow him t' speculate aloud elsewheah, Ah revealed mah identity t' him... an' th' fact that owah family is behind International Rescue."

Jeff sat back fully in his chair. "Andrew? You met with Andrew?"

"Yes, suh. Ah did," Dianne said softly. "Ah didn't see how Ah could have avoided it. An' Ah had mah reasons foah tellin' him. Reasons above an' beyond his recognition of me and mah voice."

"Reasons I hope you will share with me when you return," Jeff said coldly. He shook his head, his face stern. "I can't believe you did this, Di... Doctor, especially after the fiasco in London. Be assured that we will discuss this as soon as you get back to base."

"Ah unnerstand, suh," Dianne replied, lifting her chin a bit, her voice level.

"Is there anything else?"

"No suh, there is not."

"I will see you later. Base out."

He closed communication, and huffed out a breath of air. "What the hell does she think she's doing?" he asked himself. He slammed a hand down on the desk top. "Damn! We do not need this!"

When communications winked out, Dianne sagged a bit, closing her eyes against the sting of tears. Then she sat up straight, wiped her eyes, and breathed deeply for a bit. There was a hesitant knock on the door, and she rose, opening the door.

"Are you all right?" Nikki asked. "Virgil says that we're landing at Fiji momentarily."

"Ah will be fahne," Dianne replied, sitting back down in the pilot's seat and buckling in. Nikki took the seat on her left, while Dom sat down at her right, fastening safety straps.

Dianne put her communicator in her ear again just in time to hear Virgil say, "Landing at Fiji in two minutes, Thunderbird Seven. Are you ready back there?"

"We are ready," she replied crisply, as she prepared Thunderbird Seven for another mission of mercy.

rewritten and posted by Tikatu

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 01:10:44 GMT

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When Brains and Kat had arrived at Thunderbird Two, Virgil greeted them, saying "It's a good thing Thunderbird Seven hasn't arrived yet. They're coming, too. So you have time to clean up."

"Uh," Kat had commented, "In all my years as a mechanic, I have never, ever, been as dirty as I am now. Heaven knows what my parents would think, if they could see me."

She'd headed for the crew's quarters and, taking off her cap and boots, tried to wipe as much mud as she could from her uniform. Looking at herself in the mirror she saw, in her reflection, a tousle haired, mud-streaked face. She'd had unaccounted for scratches down one cheek. Her once spruce uniform was damp and muddy. Hastily she'd managed to clean some of the mud from her face, and hands, and dunking her hair under the water, managed to wash off the mud. Still feeling hot and sticky, she reported back to Virgil on the flight deck.

"Okay, Van Gogh," she'd said, ignoring the frown that Virgil gave over the use of his nickname. "I'm ready. I hope I didn't keep everyone waiting too long."

"Seven arrived only a few minutes ago. But get strapped in; we're taking off in two minutes."

Brains had joined her, and Virgil had manoeuvred the huge green craft, taking off once more, headed for Fiji. They hadn't seen the medical team, who remained in Seven. During the flight, Brains had in contact with Scott. "Exactly where do they need us?" he asked.

Scott had replied, telling them that they would be needed to work on another generator at the island's hospital.

"Thunderbird One from Thunderbird Two. Where do I set down?"

"Van Gogh, I've been informed that there is a clearing not far from the hospital." Scott gave Virgil the coordinates. "Set Two down there, then Einstein and MGM can walk over. Seven can set up in the same clearing. While you go get Four, Sweet can help Quasar set up Mobile Control. I'll join you as soon as I can."

Brains looked at Kat. "Looks like more walking through muddy terrain." She nodded.

Once Thunderbird Two was down, Kat and Brains grabbed the tool boxes and headed out

towards the hospital.

"Good luck," Virgil called as the two reached the exit. "Contact Mobile Control when you are finished."

"FAB, Van Gogh," Brains answered, and they hurried out as the medical vessel powered up.

"Okay, Boss," Kat said. "Here we go again."

written by TawnyAngel22

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 01:11:48 GMT
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Nikki and Dom were maneuvering an antigrav stretcher into the medical cabin, and they paused at the top of the ramp when they heard the shouting. Someone was upset, that was certain, and Dom's eyes narrowed as he saw that whoever it was, they were towering over Dianne.

"If you'll get this one inside, Angel, I'll go see what's wrong," Dom told his companion.

"Okay, Dak. But be careful!" Nikki replied. "It doesn't sound good."

"F-A-B," Dom said as he headed down into the crowd surrounding Thunderbird Seven.

He came up on the source of the shouting: a huge Fijian man, with forearms as big around as Dianne's thighs. He was shouting in her face, poking her in the collarbone with a thick finger. She was trying to calm him, but it wasn't working.

Frowning as he approached, Dom tapped his communicator and said, "Mobile Control from Thunderbird Seven, we have a security issue here and need some back up."

Scott's voice sounded in his ear. "F-A-B, Dak! We're on our way!"

Dom sped up, and insinuated his thin form between Dianne and her attacker. "All right, Sunshine. What's the problem here?"

The Fijian backed off for a split second, but before Dom knew it, the man's meaty hands were on his shoulders and he was being shaken, hard. "I want my son!" the man shouted angrily. "Where is my son?"

The world spun in Dom's vision, but suddenly, the shaking stopped. The man had been knocked to the ground by a running Virgil, who had tackled the man in fine linebacker style. Then the Fijian was grabbed and held by a small group of his countrymen, who had been alerted to the fracas, and Scott came up at a run, weapon drawn. Dom found himself falling back against Dianne, who caught him and set him upright.

"Are you two all right?" Scott asked the medics.

"I will be, once the world stops spinning," Dom said, shaking his head lightly, and groaning, making a mental note not to do that again.

"Ah am," Dianne drawled, rubbing her shoulder. "Dak, you'd bettuh lie down for a while. You're gonna have a nasty headache."

"And a pair of black eyes," he added with a rueful tone. "At least things are settling down and I'm not seeing stars anymore. I'll take some pain killers now, and lie down later. We still have work to do."

Dianne huffed out a breath, then put her hand on Dom's back, guiding him over to Thunderbird Seven. "You let me be th' judge o' that," she said firmly.

Scott walked over to where the man now sat quietly, sniffing, his head hanging down. Virgil was standing there, his arms folded, scowling, his weapon drawn.

"Listen carefully to me," Scott said to the man, crouching down so that they were at eye level. "I don't know what your beef is, but don't even think about threatening our people again. If you do, we'll shoot first and ask questions later. International Rescue protects its own."

"I want my son," the man murmured, tearfully now. "I can't find my son."

"Then go over to the missing persons station and start there," Scott told him.

"We'll take him there," one of the other Fijians said. "And we'll make sure he doesn't bother your people again."

"Thank you," Scott replied. He stood, holstering his gun. Virgil followed his lead.

The man stood up, helped by his countrymen, and was led off toward the missing persons station. Scott shook his head. He glanced over at Virgil, and made a motion with his head toward Thunderbird Seven.

"I've got to get back to Mobile Control. See if Doc could use some help, and let me know. Dom may be down for the count after this. I'll send Quasar along so you can get back to Thunderbird Two."

"F-A-B," Virgil responded. He turned and jogged off in the direction of the medical unit.

Scott glanced around the clearing at the people who were waiting for treatment. Some of them looked up at him with expressions ranging from awe to fear. He sighed, then headed back to his station.

rewritten and posted by Tikatu, based on a post by ArtisticRainey

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 01:11:56 GMT
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As Alan listened to the various communications, his emotions ranged from concern to frustration. He was glad to hear that the island was not hit hard, and that all the team members were doing their job well, but he wished he was with them. I wonder if this is how John feels when he's up here. I'll have to remember to ask him some time.

He communicated with Scott again, and learned that everyone had arrived in Fiji. His thoughts strayed to the new recruits. He had to admit that recruiting more personnel had been absolutely necessary. They were a great bunch, and had all settled in really well.

"Thunderbird Five and Base from Mobile Control."

"Go ahead, Mobile Control. Reading you five by five." The reply came from both locations almost simultaneously.

"Calling stand down at 1300 hours. Thunderbirds One and Two will be leaving shortly. Thunderbird Four is already heading back to base and will be picked up once the pod is offloaded there." Scott sounded relieved.

"Mobile Control from Base."

"Go ahead, Base," Scott replied.

"Maverick, bring Doc back with you," Jeff told his son.

There was a slight hesitation, then a puzzled, "FAB, Base."

Alan heard the exchange. Mm, wonder why he wants Mom back before the rest, he thought.

"Once all the crew members are back at base, we can begin clearing up," Jeff advised his fifth son. "And we will arrange to get the others back home to help."

Alan heaved a sigh of relief. His family and his new friends were all heading back, relatively uninjured, after another completed rescue.

Based on a post written by Tawnyangel22

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise
Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 01:12:08 GMT
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"Base from Thunderbird Two," Virgil said into his microphone. "Requesting landing clearance."

"Clearance granted, Thunderbird Two." Gordon's voice came over the speaker, startling his

brother and causing the others who sat behind him to glance at each other. "The boss has left orders that everyone is to clean up then meet in the dining room in forty-five minutes for debriefing over a light meal."

"F-A-B," Virgil replied.

He landed Thunderbird Two as flawlessly as ever, and headed up to the villa with John, Brains, and Tin-Tin. But instead of going to his quarters to shower and change, he went to the lounge. He was curious, and he knew he wouldn't relax until that curiosity was satisfied.

"Hey," he wearily said to Gordon as he entered the lounge. "Where's Dad?"

Gordon sighed from his position behind the commander's desk. "In the Round House. As soon as Scott got back here with Mom, Dad dragged her off for a 'discussion'." He crooked his fingers as he emphasized the last word.

"Oh! One of those!" Virgil replied, his eyes widening. Jeff and Dianne often used the Round House when they needed to "discuss" anything and they didn't want the family to hear or see their argument. "Any idea what about?"

Gordon shook his head. "Nope. And I don't think I want to know. Dad was pretty angry."

"Well, I'm sure we'll hear something about it. In the meantime, what's for dinner?"

Gordon responded. "Cherie and Callie have been preparing a salad and sandwich buffet. Cherie's idea, actually."

"Sounds good," Virgil said. "I'll get that shower, now. Just wanted to know what was happening with Dad and make sure he was okay. See you later."

"Later," Gordon replied, wearily waving his hand.

In the Round House, things were getting heated. Jeff hadn't allowed his wife to even remove her uniform. As soon as she stepped into the lounge from Thunderbird One's silo, he was there, ready to herd her out the door to the balcony and down the steps. He told Scott, "Get cleaned up. Debriefing in the dining room forty-five minutes after Thunderbird Two touches down. Gordon, take the desk. Dianne and I have something to discuss." Then they were out the door and heading for the Round House.

The Tracy sons looked at each other. "Any ideas?" Gordon had asked.

Scott had shaken his head and replied, "None at all."

The couple entered the Round House and went to one of the common rooms. Dianne wearily removed her jacket, draping it over the back of a couch, and set her visor and cap on a coffee table. Then she dropped onto the couch herself as Jeff waited, pacing up and down before her. Finally, he could contain himself no longer.

"Dianne, what the hell did you think you were doing?!"

She sighed, leaning her head back and pressing the heels of her hands to her eyes. "Ah was headin' off a potentially bigguh breach. You know as well as Ah do that Drew would've recognized mah voice, an' that if he saw me, well, that would be all it would take. He'd know. Ah took th' chance that revealin' mahself would keep him from speculatin' aloud elsewhere. Ah made him promise t' keep what Ah told him quiet before Ah answered any of his questions."

"So, he said he'd keep it quiet?"

"Of coahse, he did," she said irritably. "An' Ah trust him t' do that. He's mah uncle. He's not gonna do anythin' t' hurt me or mine."

"Why didn't you call and tell me what you planned to do?" he asked. "I might have agreed with you."

"Because Ah didn't have time," she replied. "We were up t' our elbows in patients, and he showed up without much warnin'. Besides, we'd have been spendin' valuable time discussin' th' same things we're discussin' now." She sat up and looked at him. "Y'know, he was really upset that you hadn't told him befoah this. You've been good friends for a long time."

"I have a lot of good friends that don't know," Jeff grumbled.

"Ah know that. Ah know your reasons for that, an' Ah agree with them. But in Drew's case, Ah think he should know. All of yoah family knows, but when it's come t' mine... it's been pick 'n' choose. Mah mothah found out foah herself a long tahme befoah you decided it was safe t' tell her."

"What?" Jeff exclaimed, scowling, stopping his pacing. "You want me to tell all your family about our secret?"

"No!" Dianne replied, standing up. "Mah brothers don't need t' know... not now anyway. But Drew..."

"Why him and not the rest, Dianne?" Jeff asked angrily. "Why just him?"

Dianne glared at him, and spread her arms wide. "Because Ah want you to make the man a damned agent!"

This brought Jeff up short. "An agent?" he asked, sounding a little more calm, and puzzled.

She took a deep breath to calm herself. "Yes, an agent." Taking a step toward him, she put a hand on his folded arms. "He'd make a good one, and you know it. Besides, he's got access to the best medical equipment in case..." Her voice trailed off.

"In case of what, Dianne?" Jeff asked, his voice softer.

"In case something happens to me," she said, looking down. "Out of all our operatives, I'm the

most vulnerable. There's no one to patch me up if I'm injured. Dom and Nikki are great nurses, and they can do some procedures, enough to keep me alive until I got some better care. Same with Brains. But if it's something serious, there's no one else in the world that I'd rather have working on me. And no other place where I'd rather go for treatment." She raised her eyes to his again. "He'd be the perfect person to help if we ran into an emergency where we needed more than one doctor, too. And if he already knew, then he wouldn't be asking a lot of uncomfortable questions. He could arrange things so our security wasn't threatened."

Jeff sighed. "Did you think of all of this before you told him?"

"Yes, I did. I just sort of seized the moment, as it were," she said. "I'm sorry I couldn't tell you, but as I said, there just wasn't time."

"I understand now, and I forgive you," Jeff said. "But that leaves us with another problem."

"What is that?" she asked.

"Christopher." He sat down on the sofa, and took her hand, guiding her down to sit beside him. "He created a security breach, too. I've disciplined him as I saw fit, but... I can't play favorites. You caused one, too, even if it wouldn't have the same repercussions as his would have had."

"I'm willing to take any disciplinary action you think is appropriate," Dianne said softly.

Jeff breathed in and out deeply, putting an arm around his wife. "I don't know that I can discipline you. You are the CMO; it was your call to make. Even if it technically was a security breach, it was a planned one to some extent. Still..." He drew her closer, and she leaned into his embrace. "I guess that - to be fair - I'll have to back off on him; shorten his period of discipline." Looking down at her, he asked, "Who else knows about this?"

She sat up a bit. "I'm not sure. I sent Drew off to coordinate with Scott at Mobile Control, but Scott looked mighty puzzled when we arrived at home."

"You're right, he did," Jeff said. "I wonder if he was even at Mobile Control when you sent Drew there. I know that John was on duty there while Scott did a recon at Fiji." He shook his head gently. "I guess I'll have to sound them out, see which one was there. Or maybe ask Drew when I call him."

"You are going to call him? To make him an agent?"

"Yes, I'll call, but I think it's something I need to do face-to-face. I'll make arrangements to visit him and Maggie as soon as possible."

"Good. I hope he accepts. And make sure you talk to Maggie, too. She has a right to know."

"I suppose she does, at that." He pulled her close again and kissed her hair. "Hmm. You need a shower." He glanced at his watch. "I wonder if Thunderbird Two is back yet. You might have time for one."

"You'd better check. We've been here for a while," Dianne said, putting her arm over his chest.

"Hmm. Do you think we're done here?"

"With our discussion? I think so."

"Then let's head back to the house." Jeff released her and they both sat up. "If Thunderbird Two is back, then we can get some food and debrief."

"Sounds good to me. I'm hungry and tired." Dianne looked up as he stood, offering his hand to her. "You?"

"The same. It was a close thing with that wave," Jeff said. "I'll tell you all about it over dinner."

She took his hand, and he pulled her to her feet, and into his arms. There he held her for a bit and they kissed deeply before they left the Round House, hand in hand.

rewritten and posted by Tikatu

Subject: Re: Learning to Live in Paradise

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 01:12:31 GMT

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~With that we end Chapter Five: Learning to Live in Paradise~
