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Subject: Re: Winds of Change  
Posted by [Tikatu](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 00:32:48 GMT  
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From: Tikatue Sent: 3/10/2007 8:16 PM

Thursday, August 16, 2068, 5:30 p.m., Tracy Island

The working day over, a freshly showered and clothed Kat made her way to the Round House, where Lady Penelope was staying. She climbed the steps to the balcony, and entered the large, high-ceilinged lounge. She gazed up at the smooth beams that looked as if they supported the roof, their light colored woods adding to the spaciousness of the room. The floor to ceiling windows that made up one wall and looked out toward the sea gave the whole room an airy, fresh feeling. She sighed, contented, and passed through to the inner hallway.

She followed the curve of the round hall to the left, pressing the buzzer at the first room she came to. The door slid aside to reveal Parker.

"Ello, Miss Kat," the chauffeur said amiably. He gestured her inside. "Milady is h'expectin' you."

"Kat, my dear!" Lady Penelope, looking fresh in a light blue linen suit and her signature pink pearls, rose from her seat to give Kat a quick kiss on the cheek. "I am so very glad to see you. Please, sit down. Have you had your tea?"

"No, I haven't. Tea sounds lovely," Kat said, smiling as she sat across from her friend.

"Parker? You may bring in the tea things, and we two shall have a nice chat."

"Very good, Milady."

Parker brought the tea cart in, laden with small cakes, tiny sandwiches, scones with cream and jam, fruit tarts, and a fresh pot of fragrant hot tea. He let Penelope pour out, and allowed Kat to fix a plate of goodies for herself. Then he retired to let the ladies talk.

"These rooms are so pleasant, don't you think?" Penny said, indicating her surroundings. "Jeff and Dianne are planning on reserving a suite for me when I come to visit." She leaned over and said in a conspiratorial tone, "I believe Jeff thinks it will cut back on the amount of luggage I carry if I leave a few things here between visits."

Kat giggled, and Penny sat back, smiling. "I am to have the choice of rooms, and decor. Although I appreciate how close this room is to the lounge, I believe I shall choose the rooms further down the hallway. The view of the island is far more pleasing from that angle."

"It sounds lovely," Kat said. She sipped her tea and added, "The view of the Pacific from my apartment is quite stunning, especially in the evenings when the sun sets. The colors are so vivid; it makes me wish I could paint." She glanced down at her plate. "I should like to invite you up, but I haven't painted the walls yet, so I feel it is still unfinished somehow."

"Then I shall see it when I next come to the island," Penelope promised. She sipped her tea, and asked, "Now tell me, what has kept you busy today?"

Kat sighed. "Brains and I are trying to pull as much salvageable material from Thunderbird Seven as possible, and determining what systems may still be in working order. To be frank, it is a depressing job, but Brains is of the opinion that we may be able to use the medical cabin in some capacity until a new one can be built." She shook her head sadly. "The cockpit is beyond repair, I fear, and I find it disquieting to work in. The thought of what happened that day... I saw the inside, you know, with Dr. Tracy still fastened in the chair, which was on the ceiling at that point." She shuddered. "They were all so lucky, Dom and Nikki especially."

"Yes, they were fortunate," Penny murmured. "Very fortunate to be alive and recovering... though I fear the long road to full recovery still lies ahead of them all." She took a bite of scone, and looked thoughtful as she chewed. "How does Brains feel the medical cabin could be used?"

"His plans seem to revolve around putting the cabin on caterpillar tracks and towing it with one of the pod vehicles. We must rebuild the back corner entirely; it is quite beyond simple repair."

"Ah, I see. Well, if Brains feels it can be done, he will find a way to make it so. That is his genius."

Kat snickered. "Would you believe that Brains has a sense of humor?"

Penny waved a hand. "My dear Kat, I know he does. A particularly peculiar brand of humor and whimsy all his own. I should tell you sometime of the Christmas when he made it snow here on Tracy Island." She smiled widely. "But I gather from your comment that you are thinking of a particular instance. Tell me all!"

"Well," Kat began, "This afternoon during our lunch break, he brought me a present..." She then went on to relate the gift that Brains had given her as International Rescue's official 'fisher woman'. "I'm afraid I couldn't help myself, but my first impulse was to push him into the pool, so I did."

"Ah, I see," Penny said with a sage nod. "I was sure it was you the native referred to in his narrative of the incidents surrounding the tsunami. You are by far the tiniest lady to wear an IR uniform. But how did you catch the fish?"

"We were in a water-filled basement and it must have been deposited there by the wave. It gave me quite a start! The native man was the one who grabbed it and took it away."

"It sounds like quite the adventure." Lady Penelope poured more tea into her cup to freshen it, and asked, "More tea?"

"Yes, please," Kat held out her cup for Penny to refill, then sat back. "Besides Virgil's splendid birthday party, what brings you to the island? What adventures have you had recently?"

"Well, I was in Los Angeles for a time to oversee some of the security around Jeff and Dianne during her stay in hospital, both as IR and as her own self. I met and became acquainted with Dr. and Mrs. Carmichael, and looked in on the children while I was there. I saw John, Virgil, and Mrs.

Tracy both times they stopped in Los Angeles on their way to and from the farm in Kansas." She sighed. "Mrs. Tracy had such a terrible time of it, trying to sift through the remainders of that house. I could not begin to imagine what it would be like if I had to do the same at Foxleyheath." Penny smiled slightly. "I was very surprised to see that she brought a mother cat and her kittens back with her. I don't believe there had ever been a cat on the island until Kyrano's Durian."

"Who was Christopher's Asterix," Kat was quick to point out.

"Ah, yes, I remember now. But there are now six, taking all into account." She cocked her head at Kat and smiled mischievously. "Have you seen them yet? I understand that they are all very pretty, and will need good homes and people to love them."

Kat shook her head. "I haven't yet had the opportunity. Perhaps I may ask Mrs. Tracy for a peek tomorrow after work. I should love to have a kitten."

"Then perhaps you shall," Penny said. She bit into a cucumber sandwich, and when her mouth was clear, asked, "Have you heard from your parents lately?"

Kat nodded. "My mother has been in touch via email, keeping me au courant with my brother Andrew's wedding plans." She smiled. "I am to be a bridesmaid as Melanie -- my brother's fiancée -- has two elder brothers and no sisters." She sighed happily. "I have had pictures of the dress; it is a lovely aquamarine velvet..." Kat went on to describe the dress in detail.

"It sounds exquisite, Kat," Penny said, nodding her head. Then she hesitated. "I wondered if you'd heard from them because three weekends ago your father and brother came to drive your car to their house. He knew you'd driven it to Foxleyheath after your birthday and said he did not want to impose upon me more than had already been done. I protested, of course, but he smiled and thanked me for my generosity, insisting that since Foxleyheath was no longer your home, he would take it to his. Since the car was not mine, I allowed him to do so."

Kat sat up in alarm. "Oh, dear! I hadn't heard!" Her face took on an angry frown. "I should think he would have consulted me before doing such a thing! I shall ring him tonight and demand to know why he didn't ask me first."

"I am so sorry, Kat," Penny said quietly. "I should have rung you myself, but he implied that you knew of the transfer and indeed had asked for it. I could not understand why you did not tell me yourself." She sighed. "Yet, when I recall the weekend, I had been in Paris all week, and had only come in an hour or so before. I wonder how he knew I was home."

"I wouldn't know, but I shall find out," Kat said decisively. She glanced at her watch. "I will have to wait to ring him up at work, it's early in the morning there."

"True, it is."

The two women sat quietly for a while, finishing their tea, then Kat smiled and asked, "What did you think of Virgil's party?"

Penny put her empty cup and saucer on the tea cart. "It was a very nice party, though I'm sure it

would not have compared to Paradise Peaks, had we gone." She smiled back at Kat. "You did very well with the song you chose."

Kat blushed prettily. "Thank you. You should have had a go; I'm sure you would have done well."

Penny shook her head and looked skyward. "Had I done so, Alan or Virgil would have been falling over themselves to remove the microphone from my hand. I once posed as a torch singer at Paradise Peaks, it was -- and it became abundantly clear that I did not have the voice for it."

"Ah, yes, Tin-Tin told us about that when we picked out our dresses. It's too bad that you didn't go over well," Kat said. She shook her head. "Neither did Cherie or Alex last night, I fear."

"No, they are like their elder brothers in that respect; no Tracy son can carry a tune, not even Virgil. Though Gordon quite surprised everyone with that duet he sang," Penelope explained. "I understand that young Tyler has a nice voice. It is a shame he didn't sing last night."

"Perhaps he was shy," Kat said, quietly. Evidently I missed quite a bit by leaving early. "With whom did Gordon sing a duet?"

"He sang one with Ms. Kennedy. A current country music favorite, or so I gathered." Penny smiled dreamily. "She wore such a lovely Lemaire frock; I shall have to see François and request one for myself."

"She seems to be well-acquainted with the latest fashions."

"She does, does she not? I think that perhaps we two will become friends in time."

Kat fidgeted a little. "Yes, I'm sure you will." She smiled shyly. "As John and I are becoming."

"Ah, yes, John," Penny replied. "Such a pity that he could not attend the party last evening. But I am certain he will enjoy the recording of it when it is sent to him." She smiled at Kat. "Did you record a special message for him?"

"I did," Kat said, nodding. "I told him that I missed him and looked forward to seeing him again next month, and that I had a surprise for him when he returned home."

"A surprise?" Penny sounded a bit disconcerted.

"Yes! I thought I might prepare a dinner for him and give him clues to guide him to the location. A sort of mystery for him to solve."

"Ah! What a unique and clever idea!" Penny said, her face clearing. "If I know John, he will be intrigued by your little mystery game."

"I hope so. I also emailed him about the party. He said he was glad to hear from me," Kat said with a pleased sigh. She suddenly glanced at her watch. "Oh dear! It's much later than I expected. I should go; Brains wants us to get an early start tomorrow since we had such a late one today."

"I understand." Lady Penelope rose, putting aside her plate, and Kat followed suit. "This has been such a nice chat. Perhaps we can have another before I leave for home."

"I would like that," Kat said, smiling. The two women walked together to the door leading from the lounge to the balcony. "Goodnight, Lady Penelope."

"Goodnight, Kat, and take care."

Kat left, turning to wave goodbye to the aristocrat, who stayed within the Round House. The younger woman hurried down the stairs, and onto the packed pumice pathway. Lights hidden in the bushes and foliage along the path winked on as Kat walked briskly back toward the Villa. The air was cool, and the skies above clear and full of stars. She glanced upward, not knowing exactly where Thunderbird Five was amongst all that glory, but she smiled, and whispered, "Goodnight, John," on the evening breeze.

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