
Subject: Re: Winds of Change
Posted by [Tikatu](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 00:59:39 GMT
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From: Tikatue Sent: 3/18/2007 3:01 PM

Friday, August 17, 2068, 10:30 a.m. Tracy Island

Dianne lifted her head as the mail plane zoomed away, watching it fly off over the ocean, the sun glinting on its wings. She breathed a little sigh, adjusted the light sweater she wore, and went back to the book in her lap. A family picture looked up at her; her mother, brothers, sister-in-law Angela in bridesmaid's dress, her uncle and aunt, her newly minted in-laws... all smiled widely for the camera. But the focal point was the woman in white, and the man in silver gray tuxedo beside her. I keep forgetting what he looked like before he grew the beard.

The sound of a door opening behind her made her turn her head. She couldn't quite see the door, or who came out, but a warm hand sliding across her shoulders as he passed told her who it was. She smiled as Jeff pulled up a chair to sit beside her. He kissed her before he sat down, and carried a book in his hand which he balanced on one knee.

"Maggie told me where to find you," he said, taking her hand. "She also told me you weren't in a good mood."

Dianne made a little "humph" and looked down. "Just a bit melancholy, I guess. It suddenly hit me that today would have been our 18th wedding anniversary if Rick had lived." She indicated the album. "Decided to relive a few memories."

"So I see." There was a pause, then Jeff ventured, "I don't remember you doing this last year."

Dianne smiled a little. "Last year I was busy training for Thunderbird Seven's debut and still enjoying being a newlywed. I didn't have time to think." Her smile faded. "This year, I've had nothing to do but think."

"Ah," Jeff said, nodding sagely. "Now I understand." He scooted his chair closer and looked over at the album. "Hm. I think I recognize everyone in this picture but this guy. Who is he?"

"Rick's brother, Walter."

"The one who lives in China?"

Dianne nodded. "I should probably should make some arrangements for the kids to visit with those cousins, or ask Charles and Martine when they'll be back in the States..." She sighed. "It's hard to keep in touch."

"I know," Jeff said. He pulled out the book he'd brought. "You made me think about my wedding to Lucy."

"Is that your album?" she asked, closing her book and looking toward his.

"Yeah, it is." In fact, it was his mother's copy of the album; his own was buried somewhere in a box that hadn't been gone through in years. He opened it at random, and happened upon a picture of the wedding party.

Dianne chuckled, then glanced at Jeff's hair. "It's odd seeing you with such dark hair. You look so much like Scott!"

"That's what most people say," he replied wryly. "Though they usually put it the other way around."

She chuckled again, then her voice got soft. "You wore your uniform."

"I was still in the military. It was appropriate." He glanced over the faces, struggling to remember names. "This is Tim Casey. I still keep in touch with him from time to time. In fact, he was the reason for one of our more covert rescues." He shook his head. "I've lost touch with the others. So many years have gone by."

"How many?" she asked. "I know it's at least thirty-three... unless Scott was born before you and Lucille got married."

"Thirty-five," he said, drawing in a deep breath and letting it out, somewhat shakily. "Can't believe it's been that long."

"You've never mentioned your anniversary or wedding to Lucille before."

He squeezed her hand. "Like you last year, I've often been too busy to remember." He sighed a little. "And I've had more practice pushing the memories away."

They sat in silence for a few moments, then Dianne reached over and turned the page. "Is that Lucille's family?"

Jeff nodded. "Yes, it is. There's another example of a relationship falling by the wayside. Though I can't take all the blame; they've not exactly tried to keep in touch with me or the boys either -- even when Lucy was alive."

"Why not?" she asked, frowning.

He sat back in his chair, letting go of her hand and draping his arm over the back of the wheelchair. "I've never been sure. Lucy once told me that her father was a very competitive and possessive man. The fact that I 'won' her and that she became 'mine' galled him, it seems. He was pleasant enough to me whenever we met... but no real relationship developed. The fact that the Air Force, then the WSA, moved us around several times early in our marriage didn't help either. We exchange Christmas cards and that's about it."

"That's sad," Dianne said, still looking at Lucille, radiant in her wedding dress. "Means the boys missed out on a set of grandparents."

Jeff agreed. "Sort of like the way the young ones are missing out on knowing their maternal grandfather..."

Dianne suddenly sat up straight. "Jeff, don't go there. Just... don't."

He held up his hands. "All right. I won't mention it again." There was a pause, then he said, "But we do have to make a decision concerning your family. Namely, what do we do about the vacation we'd planned."

She sat back suddenly. "I guess we cancel or reschedule it or something. I know I'm not ready to travel."

"So Andy has said. We'll need to tell the children. And we should do that together."

"I agree. Tell them after lunch?"

"Sounds like a plan. Then I'll call the Killdeers and your brothers to let them know."

Dianne looked at him with a troubled expression. "Don't you think I should call my brothers?"

He shook his head. "No. You don't need the stress right now. I'll be the bad guy and call." He smiled. "I've already been promised backup from Andy."

"And Mom will ream Dougie out if he needs it," she added.

He chuckled. "I hope it doesn't come to that. We'll make other arrangements for the kids to see each other. I'll just have to give it some thought."

"All right."

Jeff glanced at his watch. "Speaking of lunch, it's nearly time for it. Here." He put his photo album in Dianne's lap. "Let's go inside and put these away."

"Good idea."

He rose, and she reached an arm up, indicating she wanted him to lean over. He obliged, and she kissed him softly. "Thanks," she said.

"For what?"

"For sharing. And for cheering me up."

He kissed her again, and said, "Anytime, love." Then he moved behind the chair. "Hang on." And with that, he wheeled her back inside.
