
Subject: Re: Winds of Change
Posted by [Tikatu](#) on Thu, 26 Jul 2012 01:17:23 GMT
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From: susanmartha Sent: 3/18/2007 7:48 PM

Tracy Island, August 17th, late afternoon

Lady Penelope came out of the house and looked down at the pool. Anna was lying in the sun with her eyes closed and a book on the table next to her. Penny sat in a lounge chair near her and put her drink on the same table. She lowered the back of the lounge a few notches and sat down leaning back and relaxing in the sun.

Anna gave a contented sigh and opened her eyes.

Penelope smiled at her. "Ms. Hanson. I didn't get much of a chance to talk to you last night. Do you prefer Ms. or Mrs.?"

"I'll answer to either. Or just Anna, as long as I'm not working. I somehow don't think you are likely to become a patient of mine."

"Since I don't live here, I doubt I ever shall. How is Tyler doing? And of course poor Elise?"

Anna hated hearing anyone being referred to as 'poor' so-and-so. To her it felt patronizing, as if the person was a lesser being because of their problem. "You would have to ask his parents about Tyler. And Ms. Collins is capable of speaking for herself."

"I see. Patient confidentiality. But Tyler is just a child."

"Confidentiality is even more important to a child. It is extremely important that he feels he can trust me. In fact, even if Tyler was my patient and I had reason to believe you already knew Tyler was my patient, I wouldn't confirm it."

"Why would you think I already know?"

"Jeff told Dianne you were coming while I was visiting her. I gather you are a good friend of the family?"

"Yes. And I know about Jeff's 'family business'."

"Indeed." Penelope waited for Anna to continue, but Anna didn't say anything more. She simply leaned back in the chair and closed her eyes again.

Penny watched her and waited. When no further comments were forthcoming she decided to try again. "I understand you are retired?"

Anna didn't open her eyes. "Sort of. I retired from the city of Christchurch last month after 30 years of working for the government. I was setting up a private practice when Jeff contacted me. I

understand you are also retired?"

Penny's eyes narrowed. Parker wouldn't have said anything. Is she fishing or does she know about my work for the Federal Agents Bureau? Out loud she responded, "Oh, no. I still model for dear François sometimes. I enjoy it. You've probably seen me in some of the latest fashion magazines."

Model. Right. Read anorexic/bulimic. Now be fair, Anna. She doesn't show any signs of any eating disorders. She's not underfed. And she ate sensibly at Virgil's party.

"I don't follow fashion much. I'm afraid the last time I looked at a fashion magazine I was 15. My mother bought it for me. Were you around then?" Anna, get a grip on yourself. That was uncalled for. Why does this lady set your teeth on edge? She seems nice enough. Mr. Tracy obviously likes her and he's no fool.

Penelope's lips thinned. She was past thirty, but really. "I noticed you didn't have anything appropriate for the party." Her voice hadn't changed in the slightest. A lady never loses her cool.

Anna never claimed to be a lady. "I only brought one suitcase when I came. I hadn't expected a party. When do the rest of your things arrive?"

"The rest of my things?" Penny put a look of mild interest on her face.

"Yes, from the amount of luggage brought to the Round House, I assumed you were moving here." Anna had finally figured out what was bothering her. She reminds me of Shelly. That 'I am a lady, you are a peon' manner.

Shelly had been the bane of Anna's high school existence. She didn't look at all like Penelope but had carried herself with the same 'admire me' air. As if the adoration of all the boys, including Anna's older brother, was simply her due. No, not her due. More like it was the natural order of things. If she'd been empty headed or even just average Anna could have stood it.

Unfortunately, she was just as smart as Anna and could beat her in several subjects. They could have been friends; they shared several classes each year. But Anna was already plump and Shelly despised anyone who 'let herself go' and she didn't mind saying so to Anna's face. She also said it to her brother where Anna could hear. Anna was simply not worth knowing. If there was one thing Anna had never been able to stand it was being dismissed as unimportant.

She undoubtedly is a nice person. Jeff likes her. So do Dianne and Alan. Apologize and start over. She opened her mouth to do just that.

Unfortunately, she'd waited a bit too long. Penny was fed up with comments about the amount of luggage she carried with her. "Oh, my luggage!" She smiled. "I had been traveling before this; it seems Tracy Island is my final stop, though I had been given to understand that I would leave for England from Paradise Peaks. I do like to be prepared for every contingency, and it is so difficult to find a good dry cleaner when one is traveling. Don't you agree?" She decided it was time to take Ms. Hanson down a peg. "If you'd like help choosing clothing, I'd be happy to be of assistance."

Anna's lips thinned. Penny had just said, almost word for word, what her mother had said every time she wanted Anna to go shopping. The tone of voice was the same, too. Somehow everything Mom insisted on buying wound up making her look either fatter or washed out. Then Mom complained that she never wore what she bought. A counselor in college once asked her if her mother had ever actually looked at her and seen what she really looked like instead of what Mom thought she should look like.

I can't afford the type of clothing that she wears. And I don't want them. Sorry dear, but I work for a living. Out loud she replied, "I wear clothes appropriate for what I'm doing. Part of my old job included helping the families with whatever they needed help with. Sometimes that included watching the kids while mom and dad were seeing the doctor, mowing the lawn, fixing dinner or whatever. Pant suits are simply needed for some of the things I did. They made me look more approachable to people. And more trustworthy."

"I see. Lure them into a sense of security."

Anna had used that phrase herself several times. But when Penelope said it, Anna felt she heard a note of scorn in her voice.

"I'm here to help them in any way I can. To do that, I need people to trust me. And I need to be worthy of that trust. Moreover, I need to be reliable. I can't leave after a few years just because I get bored. I am still occasionally seeing patients from ten years ago."

"Ten years? And they still need help? I hope you don't take that long with Tyler. He'll need to leave for college before then."

Anna thought about the multiple rape victim whose husband couldn't figure out why she wasn't over it after a month, whose parents said it was her fault, and whose sister wanted her to 'just forgive' i.e. pretend nothing happened. She was one of the most incredibly courageous people Anna had ever met. It took a lot to make Anna lose her temper but Penny had just managed. "It shouldn't. He is usually surrounded by a very supportive family and has made friends with almost all of the other inhabitants of the Island. You don't visit too often, do you?"

Penny didn't usually lose her temper either. At that comment, she started to. "Jeff and the entire family are old friends. I normally trust his judgment." The anger in her voice was obvious.

"Dianne interviewed me, and Jeff agreed with her assessment after meeting me. He trusted me enough to show me around." Anna kept enough of her cool to not be more explicit about Thunderbird 3. You never confirm private information, even if someone apparently knows about it.

"Well, I am not sure I agree with him telling someone about International Rescue without my doing a background check. Particularly someone who had a breakdown for no apparent reason, even if it was twenty years ago!" Penelope's voice was icy.

Anna went white. She stood up, shaking, and stared down at Penny with a look between fury and pain. "You know, Jeff doesn't strike me as a man who normally hires incompetent people. He must have been very lucky to not have any security breaches while you've been around. If you

want to know what caused my 'breakdown' I suggest you read the newspapers!" She turned and stalked off towards the beach. Penelope sat frozen, watching her.

Thanks for Tiquatoo and Liz for help with Penny's dialog
