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Subject: Re: Winds of Change  
Posted by [Tikatu](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 19:04:38 GMT  
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From: Tikatu Sent: 4/4/2007 5:47 PM

same day, 5:30 p.m., Wellington, NZ (3:30 p.m., Sydney)

Dianne looked at her watch again, and peered in the mirror. She picked up her brush and ran it through her hair... again. Where is he? Why is his errand taking so long? Reservations are for six; at this rate, he'll barely have time to get dressed.

There was a sound at the door, then it slid open and Jeff walked in. Dianne let out a sigh of relief.

"I'm sorry, love," he said as he crossed the room, dropping something on the bed as he did. "Things took longer than I expected." He put his hands on her shoulders, and kissed her cheek, then her lips as she turned toward him.

"I was getting worried," she said, looking up at him with an anxious expression. "Did you get everything done?"

He smiled, kissed her again, and began to pull at his tie. "I most certainly did. There'll be a safe on its way to the island in a few days. I think I've been inside every security system place on the North Island! And what a pain trying to get it shipped! You'd think they didn't want to take my money or something!" Well, that wasn't quite true; he'd worked with the purchasing department in the Tracy Industries Sydney offices to buy the safe and arrange for shipping. He shook his head as he pulled his shirt from his trousers and began to unbutton it. "Then I had a couple of other small errands to run, including looking for... this!"

He handed her the package he'd dropped on the bed, and continued to divest himself of his clothes as she opened it up. Her eyes grew wide as she pulled out... a cane. Collapsible for easy carrying, the straight metal tube was covered with a dark, paisley print, and had a simple though elegant handle of carved mahogany.

"Do you like it?" he asked, moving over to the garment bag to fetch a shirt. "I know you won't be using it for long..."

"It's lovely!" she said, reaching out for the cane she had been using. "I'll have to adjust it."

"I can do that." Jeff shrugged into his clean shirt and took a few steps in Dianne's direction.

"Nonsense. You finish getting dressed. I can fix this myself."

They were quiet for a few moments, but finally Jeff was putting on his shoes, and Dianne stood, using the new cane for the first time. She had a necklace in one hand. "Would you please help me with this?"

"Of course, love." Jeff stopped tying his shoe and came to her. She turned, taking little steps, and

he took the necklace from her hand, drawing it up to fasten. He kissed her lightly on the neck and sighed heavily, his warm breath tickling the hairs at her nape. She looked over her shoulder at him and their lips met once again.

"You'd better finish getting dressed," she murmured. "We're going to be late."

"All right," he replied softly, kissing her once more. He moved back to put on his other shoe, thinking about the velvet box that rested in the hotel safe, and trying to figure out how to retrieve it without his wife knowing.

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