
Subject: Re: Winds of Change
Posted by [Tikatu](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 19:05:57 GMT
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From: Hobbeth Sent: 4/4/2007 7:24 PM

Monday, August 20; Murray Gill, Kansas; 4:30 PM (9:30 AM August 21 on Tracy Island)

Michael Hart sat in the back of his limo, on his way to the Valerian residence. He would have preferred to drive himself, but his left leg was still in a cast - although it was a shorter, lighter one -- and he was still susceptible to headaches that made driving out of the question for the time being.

He thought back to the day Mrs. Valerian -- Carol -- came into his room, three days after he'd made the bet with Peter.

"Hello, Michael. May I come in?"

He put down the newspaper he'd been reading. "Carol! Please do.

I'm glad to see you. How's Peter?"

"He's much better, thanks in part to you. And you?"

"I've been told that I can get out of here and go home in a couple of days."

She smiled mischievously. "That's great! But I'm afraid that means you lose the bet you made with my son. He's being released today. And he's already got the restaurant picked out. It's been around for decades." She sobered. "It's the one his father took him to once a month for a father-son dinner."

"Are you okay with that?" he asked, concerned about the look on her face.

"Y-yes, I think I am. I'm sure I will be, by the time you two are well enough to go out together. As a matter of fact, I came here to give you our address and phone number, so you can let us know when that day will be." She handed him a card. "And don't try to rush it; we're patient."

"Carol, I want to put one condition on my paying off the bet."

"What's that?"

"That you come, too. Have you ever been to this restaurant?"

"Oh, yes, several times, though not since my husband died. It's very good."

"What's it called?" She told him. "Ah, I've heard of it. Are their fries as good as they claim?"

"Better. They aren't as greasy as you get in those fast food places. They're crisp and golden

brown on the outside, and tender on the inside. My husband used to say that they were so good, putting ketchup or anything else on them would spoil the taste."

"Well, I'm certainly looking forward to dining there. So you'll come, too?"

She smiled. "Yes, I accept. But now I have to go. They were getting Peter ready to leave, but he wanted me to let you know right away." She turned and headed toward the door, then looked back. "See you soon, Michael."

"Bye, Carol. I'm looking forward to it."

His reminiscences ended as they pulled up in front of the house. The driver got out and helped Michael emerge from the vehicle. It was a special one, able to handle someone in a wheelchair as well as on crutches. But I'll be glad when I can get rid of these things, he thought. He hobbled up to the front door and rang the bell.

Carol opened the door and he saw Peter in the living room beyond her, wearing his Special Olympics medal over his tee shirt. But what Michael noticed even more was the big grin on the boy's face. "Hey, Peter. I hope you're hungry. I sure am. Ready to go?"

Peter nodded vigorously, and both adults laughed. With the driver's help, everyone was soon in the vehicle and on the way to the restaurant. Michael and Carol chatted like old friends, and he found himself able to correctly interpret some of the expressions on the boy's face.

"Hey, Peter, isn't this some fancy limo for people like us?" The boy nodded, but looked sad. "Oh, come on now. I know you don't like the thought of being in that chair, but I also know that if you work at it, some day you'll be walking and running like most other kids. Of course, that would mean that you couldn't compete in the Special Olympics any more, but maybe you could compete in the regular ones then. What do you think?"

Peter looked at him, surprised. Then he began to smile tentatively, and looked questioningly at his mother, then Michael.

"Sure you could. Why not? Let me tell you something I read about. There was a woman whose name was Wilma Rudolph. When she was a little girl, she suffered from double pneumonia, scarlet fever, and even polio, which was a crippling disease. But she overcame all that and won a bronze medal in 1956 and three gold medals in 1960 in track competitions. That was over a hundred years ago. I bet that now you could do something like that. Am I right or am I right?" Michael told him.

Peter's smile grew to a grin and he wiggled all over with glee.

Michael was about to say something more, but the limo drew to a halt and the driver got out. "We have arrived, sir," he said as he opened the door.

Soon they were outside looking at the restaurant's sign.

Liz's Broadway Burgers
