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Subject: Re: Winds of Change

Posted by [Tikatu](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 19:18:50 GMT

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Dressed in a black dancer's leotard and leg warmers, Amy walked into the living room, hearing the slam of a receiver down on its cradle. Carrying her gym bag on her arm, Amy saw her mother looking about the sumptuous soft blue living room with crystal based lamps and marble chess set sitting upon its white and black marble stand. Two Louis XVI chairs of blue and coral paisley embroidery on taupe silk, supported by ornate legs, sat on opposite sides of a comfortable off-white sofa. Above the fireplace, across from the sofa hung paintings of James and Martha together. Heather's hung above them. Donny was on James' left and Amy was on Martha's right.

"Mom--?" Amy began. "Why are you--?"

"Mother!" Martha snapped at her 17-year-old daughter. "Have you seen the keys to the Mercedes?"

"No, Mother," Amy corrected herself. "Who was on the phone?"

Martha looked at Amy with narrowed, angry eyes and then walked over to where Heather's picture hung and yanked it off the wall.

"Never mind. I just figured it out," remarked Amy. "How's she doing?"

"I'm writing that girl out of my will!" Martha explained as she hurried over to the rolltop desk and shoved it open. "She hung up on me! She said I've never said 'I love you'! I'm absolutely done with that girl!"

Amy groaned to herself. Heather was right. Their mother never said those endearing words to Heather or Donny, and Amy heard it once in a great while, whereas their father, James said them constantly. He would hug each one whenever he came home, showering them with little gifts he found on his travels. When they went to bed, Jim would come out of his den to wish them good night. He would correct them when any of them needed it, and would play ancient boardgames like Monopoly with them. He had endless patience for all of them. I can totally understand why Heather ran off to the Navy. Geez, Mom!

Martha stole a look at the coffee table that sat in front of the sofa where Amy sat down. "In fact," Martha said with such firmness that Amy felt chilled, "After I drop you off, I'm going to my lawyer. I. Am. Through!"

Amy thought to herself, She's really going to do it! She's threatened to kick Heather out of the family!

"Mother, calm down," Amy said carefully.

"Where did I put them?" Martha said to herself, looking at the mantelpiece. "What did I do with them? Amy, call Rosemary upstairs and see if I left them in the bedroom."

Sighing, Amy took out her satphone and touched a button which switched the signal to the electronic intercom system. "Rosy? Pick up, please."

A bright, cheery voice answered, "Yes, Miss? What can I do for you?"

"Rosy, have you seen my mother's keys?"

"Oh no, Miss Amy. Not so far."

"Rosy, would you do a thorough check of the 2nd floor and see if Mother's keys are up there somewhere?"

"I surely will."

Setting their maid on a detailed search, Amy looked around, noticing that Martha was no longer in the room. "Mother? Rosemary is looking upstairs for your keys!"

"Good!" Martha called back on the intercom from the dining room. "I've got to find them! If we don't get on the road soon, we'll be late for your dance class. Are you ready?"

Mom always dresses as if she's going to a dinner party!

"Yes, Mother." Amy sighed, touching the bun in her hair. "Mom, I want to quit ballet."

"Quit?" Martha said with surprise. "Oh no, you're not. With the money I'm spending, you should be as good as Ms. Kovnakova."

"Mother, Ms. Kovnakova is the finest Prima Donna in the world. I have no talent for this. I'd rather be in gymnastics--"

"Gymnasts have to take ballet, so you'll be ahead of the game," Martha said firmly. "Ah, there's Rosemary. Did you find them?" she asked the maid who stepped down the stairway.

I wonder if Heather has room for me? Maybe Donny, too. Donny's a different person around Heather, thought Amy.

Rosemary walked in at that moment, dressed in a crisp gray dress with a white apron and a fresh carnation pinned above the right breast pocket. Her attire was set with a bright, sunshiny smile that frustrated Martha. Amy was grateful Father found Rosy. Many times the chestnut haired older woman gave Amy and Donny both plenty of hugs, and reassuring advice, applying both liberally whenever possible and when Martha wasn't around. It was Martha's opinion that the hired help should do their job and should not be treated like the member of the family.

"Here they are, ma'am. I found them in the bathroom upstairs." From her apron pocket, she pulled out the tinkling set of keys.

Taking the keys, Martha hurried out the door to the Mercedes waiting for her.

"Have a nice time at dance class, Miss Amy," said Rosemary, giving Amy a kiss on the cheek.

"I'll try, Rosy. I'd rather go into gymnastics."

"Come home safely."

With the beep of a car horn, Amy raced out the door which Rosemary closed behind her. "Lord have mercy!" exclaimed Rosemary as she watched the Mercedes roared off.

Once out of the long drive, Martha guided the silver Benz out onto the paved two lane road leading to an exit that would take them to the highway.

"Mother, what is it about Heather that ticks you off so badly?"

"Amy, you were taught to speak better than that. I have told you and your father over and over again what's wrong, but neither of you listen--"

"Well, I'm listening now," Amy said with a slight amount of impatience.

"For years, since the day she was born, Heather had fought me in everything! When I wanted her to go take ballet, she took ice skating instead. When she was all dressed to go to a party, she ended up going to a baseball game! Her ball gown was destroyed!"

Amy turned away, laughing silently. Heather and her date, Brad Meyers, ended up on televid because of the way they were dressed. They'd been asked if they were getting married. Father laughed till his sides hurt, while Martha was mortified.

As they drove, Martha found the exit and sped up to match the highway traffic.

"Not long after that, she was on a hiking trip and almost died from that rattlesnake bite! If she had been doing what she was supposed to be doing, it wouldn't have happened! Then she takes her round the world trip a year early, skipping her debutante season. After that she winds up joining up in the Navy! Of all things! What man is going to marry her now?"

Certainly not the ones you want us to marry! Praise God for that! Amy thought to herself. Neither of us deserve men like Mom wants unless he's like Dad.

Her mother's words pushed Amy to the end of her patience. For many years, Amy had chided Heather for not falling in with Martha's plans. Observing her mother's behavior, Amy realized what Heather had to have known from the beginning. As the Mercedes pulled into the busy traffic, Amy spoke her thoughts. "Mom, you're jealous of her!"

Hearing the words spoken for the first time, Martha shifted her gaze off the busy traffic and over to her daughter. "I'm what?!"

"Mom!" Amy said with a swallow of breath.

Martha brought her attention swiftly back to the traffic ahead, straightening the car in time. Behind them was an 18-wheeler with MACK welded on the front of the grill. A Ferrari convertible whizzed

passed them on the left.

"Me? Jealous of Heather?! That's ridiculous!"

"The more independent Heather became, the nastier you became! She's doing all the things you wished you were doing!" Unaware of her mother's anger and her own frustrations, Amy continued on, venting the feelings that everyone had expressed in one way or another. "She does all the things polite society says a woman isn't supposed to do! For Pete's sake, women's liberation was a hundred years ago! She didn't put up with a man who mistreated her just to please a bunch of old women-Mom! Look out!"

Amy screamed. Martha had turned her attention back to Amy and the car followed her. They hit the guardrail with a scream of steel against steel and a massive crunch when the MACK truck slammed into the back of the car, going too fast to stop. Car after car piled into each other when the MACK jackknifed.