
Subject: Re: Winds of Change
Posted by [Tikatu](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 19:26:05 GMT
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From: AmandaTracyandFred Sent: 4/17/2007 5:39 PM

A few minutes later, there was a chime at the door. Gordon hollered, "Come in!" hoping that whoever it was had a key. They did. Jeff came into the room, followed by Dianne with Virgil bringing up the rear.

"Hello, Heather," Jeff said, his voice solemn but comforting. He took a seat in one of the comfortable chairs, while Dianne sat on the sofa, flanking Heather on the side Gordon wasn't shoring up. "Virgil tells me that you may have gotten some bad news. Is this true?"

"Yes, it's true. My mother and sister are in intensive care in Richmond. Father called to say she was in a 25 car pileup. Sounds like more may have been involved. Anyway, he told me that they were pulled out of the wreckage in critical condition--" Heather explained, her face ashen.

Jeff's eyes widened, and Dianne gasped. Virgil, who had been looking out the French doors toward the sea, spun around on one heel, his face full of surprise and disbelief. Gordon swallowed, and gave Heather a strong hug.

There was quiet for a moment, then Jeff said, "Do you mind if I call your father? I'd like to see what we can do to help you and your family right now."

Heather nodded. "I know he'd appreciate that, Mr. Tracy." Taking a deep breath, she continued, "He thinks very highly of you."

Virgil dug into his back pocket and pulled out his satellite phone. "Here, Dad. Use mine." Jeff nodded, took the phone, and got the number from Heather.

While Jeff was making his call, Dianne was taking Heather's pulse, and checking her skin for shock. She smiled at the younger woman, hoping to be a comfort. "We'll work things out, Heather. Whatever you need, we'll provide."

In the ICU in St. Catherine's Hospital, Jim checked his cellphone and was surprised to see Virgil Tracy's name appearing on the screen. Tapping the screen directly, Jim had instant connection with Jeff. "Virgil? Virgil Tracy?"

"Jim? It's Jeff." Jeff got up and turned away from the people on the sofa. "Heather's just told me what happened. How can we help?"

Jim sighed heavily. The news so far had been dismal. "Jeff, I'm surprised to hear from you, but glad of it. I have no idea what can be done right now. I saw the accident on televid first thing. It was absolutely horrific. My wife--oh God, help me--Martha caused it--"

Dianne motioned to Virgil, who stepped forward. "Go find a blanket," she murmured as she studied Heather intently. Gordon let Heather sit up, but kept a protective arm around her

shoulders.

"Why do you say this is your fault?" he asked. Out of the corner of his eye, he watched his brother go into the second bedroom in search of a blanket.

Meanwhile, Jeff was trying to figure out how to calm his friend down. "I'm sure it was an accident, Jim. I don't think your wife would do such a thing deliberately. In any case, do you want Heather to come home? And is there anyone else who needs transport?"

Rubbing his face with one hand while holding the satphone in the other, Jim held off the normal negative response and said, "Martha's sister, Jennifer, is packing right now to come here. Then there's Heather. Our maid, bless her heart, is looking after my disabled son, Donny--"

"All right," Jeff said. "I'll arrange for a private jet to fly your sister-in-law out from wherever she is. Heather... we'll get her there, but it may take longer than you expect. We don't live in Kansas anymore."

Virgil came from the second bedroom, a comforter draped over his shoulder. Between them, Gordon and Dianne managed to wrap it around Heather. Virgil gave his mother a questioning look, as if to ask, "What now?"

"Get Tin-Tin up here," Dianne said quietly. "I'm going to make some strong coffee."

"F-A-B," Virgil murmured as he headed for the elevator.

Gordon hadn't forgotten what Heather said earlier as Jeff talked to Jim. "Heather, what happened? Why in the world would you think you had anything to do with this?"

"My relationship with my mother has been near to impossible. She's the reason I ran into the Navy. I know she loved--loves--me in her own way, but she believes in arranged marriages--if you can believe it. She wanted a high society life for me and intended for me to marry into some prominent family. I couldn't even imagine it. That isn't all of it by far. But I believe I was her last call and we argued to the point where she told me she didn't want to talk to me ever. She hung up on me after that."

Gordon whistled, a low, quiet sound. "Wow. Arranged marriages. I mean... wow."

"Gordon, you wouldn't believe it. She got worse the older she became." Heather sighed.

Jeff was getting information from Jim on where Jenny was living. "Wichita's the nearest jetport? Hm. I could even have someone from the testing grounds fly her out. Okay, I'll ask Heather if there's anyone in particular she recommends."

He turned to the young woman. "Heather, I'm having your aunt flown out from the testing grounds. Anyone in particular I should ask for, or will any of the pilots do?"

"Myuh--supervisor, Blake. Aunt Jenny's met him previously. She likes him a lot."

Jeff nodded. "Got it." He turned back to his conversation.

Heather turned back to Gordon. "Gordon, I know I have to leave, but--I don't want to. I have never in my l-l-life e-ever b-broken an agreement!" Heather said before rubbing her face in her palms. Her hands' tremoring slowed slightly.

Gordon just held her and murmured, "It's okay. It's okay. This is a special circumstance. Besides, you don't know what's going to happen. Your mother and sister may come out of this just fine and you'll be back before you know it. Everyone has a tendency to exaggerate facts."

The door chimed, and Jeff hurried over to open the elevator, his ear still to the phone. Tin-Tin hurried in, followed by Virgil. The Malaysian quickly made her way to the sofa, while Jeff had a quiet word with his son, who nodded, and left again.

"Oh, Heather!" Tin-Tin cried. "Virgil told me what happened! Are you all right?"

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Jeff finished his call, and folded up the phone. "I need to get back up to the lounge and make arrangements with the testing grounds." He glanced at his watch. "I don't know if I'll catch someone there, but I won't stop until I've made those arrangements." Stopping suddenly, he came over to crouch down before Heather.

Taking a deep breath in through his nose, he let it out slowly. "Heather, I don't want to sound like I'm pushing you, but... time is of the essence. Even at Mach 3 it's going to take you four hours to get to Richmond." His face was solemn as he added, "There's no guarantee that your mother and sister will survive that long."

"What Dad's trying to say is, you do have to go, and go quickly," Gordon said softly.

Swallowing hard, Heather knew he was right. Her instinct was to go hide in the deepest part of the island, but her father needed her, too. "I understand Mr. Tracy. I'll get started right now."

Jeff patted her knee. "You won't be going alone." He turned his gaze to his engineer. "Tin-Tin, you'll go with her. We'll figure out the details on getting you home a little later."

Tin-Tin's eyes widened. "Yes, sir," she said.

"But before you go haring off," came a voice from the kitchen, "come get this cup for me. I don't want to spill it."

"Of course, Dianne." Tin-Tin got up and went to fetch the mug of hot coffee.

"Now, you drink that. I made it sweet on purpose," Dianne said as she limped back to the sofa.

Smiling a little, Heather accepted the mug. "I have to admit, it smells wonderful." The warmth of the mug radiated down her fingers. She felt better already. Taking a sip, Heather looked at Dianne oddly. "You said 'on purpose'. Why specifically, if I may ask?"

"Because you've had a shock, and your system needs the energy that sugar provides," Dianne explained as she eased herself to the sofa. She glanced up at her husband. "Where's Virgil?"

"Prepping her plane," Jeff said as he stood. He gave Heather a grim smile. "I'll head up to my office and make some calls, then come up with a flight plan for you to look over. Would you like someone to help you pack?"

"Let me help you," Tin-Tin volunteered.

I want to be alone soooo bad, but there's no time! And I have to get going. The fact that it was her mother who brought about the situation inflamed her anger once more. "That would be great. I'll have to get in the air pretty quickly."

"Jeff," Dianne said. "You get moving." She glanced over at Tin-Tin. "You, too."

"I'm going," Jeff said, heading for the elevator.

Tin-Tin paused long enough to offer her friend a warm embrace. "You will get through this," she murmured.

"I hope so, Tin-Tin. I really hope so," Heather whispered. "Honestly, I want to just scream."

Forgetting Tin-Tin was supposed to help her, Heather shook her head and walked into her bedroom, closing the door.
