
Subject: Re: Winds of Change
Posted by [Tikatu](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 20:05:38 GMT
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From: Tikatu Sent: 5/17/2007 5:42 PM

Friday, August 25, 2068, 3:17 a.m., Tracy Island

"Oh, man," Callie moaned as she got up from her seat in Thunderbird Two and stretched. "All I want is a shower and my bed."

"I'll second the shower," Nikki said. She yawned widely. "What time is it here, anyhow?"

Virgil glanced at the chronometer on Thunderbird Two's control panel. "Three seventeen a.m.," he said. "Let's get the pod vehicles cleared out before we go up for debriefing."

The thought of debriefing made the others groan, but Brains merely said, "Right. I'll want to run a diagnostic on the Firefly later since it got banged around out there."

"Then we might as well drive it up to the repair bay now," Alan said. "I'll take care of that."

Thunderbird Two lifted smoothly off the hangar floor, leaving behind the pod. Virgil opened it from the inside, and there was the roar of engines as the fire fighting vehicles prepared to roll out. Alan was first, and made a left hand turn toward the smaller aircraft hangars and the access ramp to the repair bay. He frowned as he noticed something out of place.

"Hey, Brains?"

Brains tapped his hands-free communicator. "Yes, Alan?"

"Did you leave the lights on in the repair bay?"

The engineer's eyes widened, and he hurried from the pod to see what Alan was talking about. Sure enough, there was a glow emanating from the access ramp. "Alan! Stop for a moment and let me catch up to you. I know I turned off the lights before I left the lab for the evening."

"Okay, Brains." The Firefly came to a grinding halt and Brains ran to it, making a mental note of the noise it had made. He climbed aboard, accepting a hand up from Alan at the last bit. Once he was settled in the copilot's seat, Alan released the brake, and the Firefly rolled on.

"I can't understand it," Brains said, a puzzled frown on his face. "I know I turned the lights off."

"Maybe Dad needed to come down for something and forgot to put the lights out," Alan suggested as they chugged up the inclined pathway.

Brains shot Alan a disbelieving look. "Do you think that's something your father would do?"

Alan thought for a minute, then said, "Uh, no. Not really."

They lapsed into silence as they came to the top of the ramp and to the flat, wide area where the engineering and repair crew worked on the pod vehicles. Alan expertly pulled the Firefly in beside Thunderbird Seven.

"Alan!" Brains cried, as he glanced out the window. "It's Dianne!"

"What the hell is she doing down here?" Alan muttered as he secured Firefly. Brains had started climbing out before Firefly had come to a stop. He tapped his communicator. "Father?"

In the lounge, Jeff frowned, and glanced at Scott, who had arrived home fifteen minutes before Virgil. They were no longer on open communication with John; Jeff had temporarily dismissed the space monitor so they both could prepare for the debriefing. Elise had a cup of coffee in her hand, provided by Kyrano, who had been up preparing a snack and providing Jeff with coffee since shortly after the rescue started.

"Alan...", Scott began, tapping his own communicator.

"Father," Alan said again, using the title succinctly. "Dianne is down here in the vehicle repair bay, and something's wrong."

Jeff's eyes widened in concerned confusion. "What's she doing there?"

"I have no idea, Dad." Alan climbed out of Firefly, grabbing the vehicle's medikit as he did so. "She's sitting in the cockpit of Seven. She's... I don't know. There's just something wrong."

"I'm on my way," Jeff said. He headed for the study, and called over his shoulder, "Start the debriefing without me if you have to. And wake Mother and Lisa; we may need them both."

"Yes, sir," Scott said.

Meanwhile, in the repair bay, Brains approached Dianne gingerly, quietly calling, "Dianne? Dianne? Can you hear me?"

Somewhere, far away, someone was whispering her name...

He was concerned because she was wheezing; she was breathing as if it were hard to do so. Her arms were wrapped tightly around her abdomen, and she was staring at some point that he couldn't make out from his position on the floor.

"Brains?" Alan joined him, looking up at his stepmother with concern. "Dad's on his way. What can we do?"

Brains had moved to see if he could see what Dianne was looking at. "I'm at a loss, Alan. She's obviously not exactly with us, but I'm not sure how to bring her back to the here and now." He stood on tiptoes, peering up and around. "I think I see what she's looking at, that dark spot on the ceiling... the bloodstain."

Someone was outside somewhere, talking softly. Who's there? Help me, please! I can't breathe!

My leg! Who's there? Dom? Help me, Nikki!

"Maybe if we knew what happened during the whole thing we could bring her out of it," Alan suggested as he put the medikit down and began to rummage around in it. "Or maybe a sedative? Knock her out and pull her down from there?"

"A sedative would work to get her out, yes, but at what price? This is something she's got to work through..." Brains climbed up and reached for her neck, taking her pulse. "She's cold. Is there a blanket in the kit?"

"Yeah, here it is." Alan pulled out the shiny Penelon blanket, and was about to hand it to Brains when the door from the lab slammed open and Jeff barreled through. He took the stairs down two at a time, and vaulted over the railing when he got halfway down. He was followed by a dressing gown clad Lisa, who bustled after him at a less explosive pace.

Jeff skidded around the far end of the medical cabin and ran up to the cockpit, slowing only as he got near. Alan had handed the blanket off to Brains by this time, and the scientist was trying to tuck it in around her.

More voices were murmuring around her. Is that you, Dom? Please help! Get me down from here! I can't move! I can't breathe! Lean the chair back! My leg -- cut it free!

"What's the situation?" he asked, slightly breathless.

"She hasn't responded to us," Brains replied. "She's cold; she's been overbreathing; her pulse is up."

"Damn," Lisa said, coming up behind Jeff. "Why'd she go an' do this? Ah meant t' come with her when she wanted to come. Give her someone t' lean on."

"I don't know why she chose to do this now, but I'm sure she had a reason," Jeff said. "Once we get her out of there, we can ask. Right now, let's concentrate on first things first." He walked up and gently touched her dangling leg, rubbing the knee, then the calf. "Di, honey? Come on back, love. Come on back to us."

She could feel a bare touch on her leg. That's it, Dom! Cut it free! You have to cut it free! I can't move! I can't breathe! Nikki! Help me!

"Brains, let me get up past you."

Brains obligingly slid down to the concrete floor as Jeff took his position, facing Dianne. "Come on, love," he cooed, putting a hand on either side of her face, trying to turn it gently away from the stain. "Look at me, dear heart."

Someone was there, touching her face. Who's there? Nikki? Is that you? Get me out of here! I'm so cold! I'm so scared! Please, get me down!

Her neck was stiff, and he didn't want to force her to turn her head. Instead, he moved over so his

body was directly in her line of sight, keeping his hands cupped to her face. "Dianne! Look at me. It's Jeff. Come on, love; look at me!"

Someone now stood between her and the dark. Scott? Is that you? Have you come to get me out? Gordon? Are you cutting the door? Scott? Get me down from here. Please. That's it, Gordon, cut the door. Dom, cut the metal... yes! Get me out of here!

She began to blink, once, twice, and her head moved downwards, enough to break her vision's lock on the ceiling. Her wheezing began to ease. "That's it, love," Jeff called in encouragement. She's not seeing me, not yet, but at least she's not looking at that damned spot anymore! "Come on, love; that's it. It's over now."

She looked up at him, her eyes still unfocused, her voice confused. "S-S-Scott? Scott? You've come to t-take me out... thank God! You've come to g-get me down... I...I can breathe... now."

"You're safe, love; it's all over," Jeff murmured again and again. He pulled her as close as he could, and kissed her on the forehead.

At last she squeezed her eyes closed tight and whimpered a little. She raised her face to him, and opened her eyes, half-lidded. "J-Jeff?"

"There you are," he murmured.

She started to glance to her right again, and Jeff intervened. "No, look that way. Your mother's here; she's worried about you."

"Di, sweetie." Lisa stood on the bottom rung, reaching up to rub a hand across Dianne's arm. "C'mon out o' theah, honey. C'mon out." Dianne nodded, and Lisa took the Penelon blanket away, then stepped down and back a little. "Alan, give her some help, please."

"Sure, Grandma." Both Alan and Brains stepped forward. Brains offered a hand, while Alan reached up with both hands to steady her. Jeff helped her turn slowly. She put a foot down on the top rung, and reached down with a hand to Alan... then slipped and fell with a little cry.

"Oof!" Alan staggered under her sudden weight, but he didn't fall. "Gotcha, Mom."

"S-Sorry 'bout that. M'legs are numb," she murmured.

Jeff dropped down behind her as Alan helped steady her and set her on her feet. Lisa came up with her lost moccasin and helped her put it on.

"C'mon, love," Jeff said, wrapping the Penelon blanket around her shoulders. "Let's get you upstairs." He leaned over as if to pick her up, but she shook her head.

"Don', Jeff. Ah c'n walk."

Jeff and Lisa exchanged glances, and Lisa shook her head slightly. Jeff sighed; he took Dianne's arm, draping it over his shoulder and putting a firm arm around her waist. "Alan, head on up to the

dining room and see if Scott's started the debriefing. If not, tell him to start."

"On my way, Dad," Alan said. He hurried off up the stairs and disappeared into the lab.

"Brains, will you come up to the sick room and give Dianne a once over?"

"Yes, sir," Brains said. "I'll go prepare the sick room now. Will you want one of the nurses to help?"

"Em is getting the sickroom ready," Lisa said as she picked up Dianne's cane.

"It's up to you if you want to call one of the nurses." Jeff started toward the staircase, walking slowly, matching Dianne's shuffling gait. She leaned on him heavily as they took the stairs one at a time. Lisa followed, her eyes widening as she saw the sharp slits in the back of Dianne's thick robe.
