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Subject: Re: Winds of Change  
Posted by [Tikatu](#) on Fri, 27 Jul 2012 21:09:22 GMT  
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From: Tikatu Sent: 5/26/2007 7:34 PM

Tuesday, Aug 28, 12:30 pm, Tracy Island (Monday, Aug 27, 8:30 pm, Md; 6:30 pm, Denver)

"So, when is Tin-Tin coming home?" Gordon asked. He took a sip of his iced tea, and looked to the head of the table where his father sat, a data pad in hand.

"Tomorrow, our time," Jeff said, distractedly, waving a hand. "After the funeral."

Those at the table sat up straighter, glancing at each other with looks of shock and surprise.

"Funeral?" Tyler asked, sounding concerned and scared. "Did Miss Heather die?"

Dianne put a hand on the data pad, getting her husband's attention. "Didn't you tell 'em?"

Jeff glanced up, blinking as he thought for a moment, then he sighed heavily. "No, love, with everything going on, Luke moving to the island and all... I'm sorry." He turned his attention to the rest of the family. "I'm sorry that I didn't tell you this before. Heather Kennedy's mother and sister died the other day. The funeral is on Tuesday in Virginia; I don't have any more details than that. I asked Tin-Tin to represent the family. She's staying with Lena for a couple of days, and will fly via commercial airlines as far as Wellington. I'll designate someone to pick her up there."

"So, Miss Heather didn't die?" Tyler asked, sounding as if he didn't quite believe.

"No, son, Miss Heather didn't die," Dianne assured him. "She went home 'cause her mother an' sister were in a very bad car accident. The doctors tried to help but..." she smiled sadly, "... they were hurt too bad." Cocking her head to one side, she asked, "Do y' unnerstand?"

Tyler considered it for a moment, then nodded solemnly.

Dianne nodded back, then turned to her husband. "Do th' recruits know about this?" When Jeff shook his head, she continued. "They should. They may want t' send condolences and show theyah support. It'll help with th' team bondin' when Heathah returns."

Jeff nodded. "I'll make sure they do once lunch is over."

"Is Miss Heather coming back?" Alex asked.

"As far as I know, she will be, Alex," Jeff said, "though it will take some time for her to be up to returning to work. This was a very sad thing to happen to her, especially since it was so sudden."

"Maybe we can cheer her up when she comes home," Tyler said, thoughtfully. "I wonder what she likes?" He turned to his grandmother. "Do you think she'd like a kitten?"

"Hm. I don't know. Why don't you give that some more thought, Tyler?" Emily said. "Not everyone likes kittens."

Dianne smiled softly at her youngest. Brains cleared his throat and everyone's attention turned to him. "Uh, if you don't mind, Mr. Tracy, I'd like to be the one to pick Tin-Tin up at the airport."

Jeff glanced up from his data pad again. "Brains? Oh, yes. Fine. That'll be fine, Brains. I'll forward her itinerary to your email."

"Thanks, Mr. Tracy." Brains turned back to his meal, a slight blush covering his cheeks. Gordon gave him a strong nudge in the ribs, followed by a saucy grin and a knowing wink.

"What's got you so distracted?" Dianne asked, peering over to try and view the data pad.

Jeff shook his head. "Just some notes from the debriefing. I'm going to talk with a few of the people who went out on the rescue. I need some more information." He turned to smile wearily at her. "Don't worry about it. I can handle it."

"Can you handle th' recruits an' tellin' them about Heather?" she asked. "Or would it be easier foah me t' do it?"

"I'll do it. I'll have them gather in one of the lounges at the Cliff House. Let them know about Heather's family and about Luke's arrival, too." He put down the data pad to tend to his food. "Anna will be here soon and you have an appointment."

"Yoah right," Dianne said with a sigh.

Jeff glanced at her briefly as she went back to her lunch.

She's been using that drawl of hers entirely too much lately. She's upset, and that accent tells me just how much.

"May I please be excused?" Gordon asked. "I need to get back to the Round House. Anna's suite won't be quite ready for her this trip, but it won't be from lack of trying."

"I'm right behind you, Gords," Alan said. "Please excuse me, too." He glanced over at Scott. "You coming?"

"Let me finish my lunch, guys; I'll be there soon," Scott said.

"Okay, but you'll have to walk," Gordon warned.

"No, Gordon," Jeff said. "Leave the cart here so I can get Anna when the mail plane arrives. Scott will catch up."

"All right, Dad," Gordon replied with a small sigh. "You ready, Alan?"

"Yeah." Alan nodded. "Dad?"

"Go ahead," Jeff told them. Both young men stopped to kiss their grandmother and thank her for the meal, then they headed out the door and off toward the Round House.

"Those summers the boys spent on the farm making repairs to the house sure paid off, didn't they, Jeff?" Emily said wistfully.

"Yes, they did, Ma," he said, giving her a sympathetic look. "You and I need to sit down and figure out what to do with the property. I know that it'll never be the same again..."

"We can discuss it later," Emily told him, waving a hand. "When you're not so busy."

"I'll make time for you, Ma; you know that," he said, his tone soft.

Emily looked down at her plate. "I know. I'm just not ready to deal with it yet, that's all." She stood up suddenly, and picked up her plate. "If you all will excuse me, I'm going to start cleaning up." Glancing over at her youngest grandsons, she asked, "Alex, Tyler, please help me clear the table. Then once we get the auto-washer running, we can go see the kittens."

"Okay, Grandma," Alex said. He got up to take his plate, and stacked it on Gordon's. Tyler did the same thing, and reached for Alan's plate, then asked his mother for hers. The three of them quietly cleared the table, piling the dirty plates on a cart. Alex carefully pushed it into the kitchen.

"I'm off to the Round House, Dad," Scott said as he rose.

"An' Ah'm goin' upstairs t' see t' the guest room," Dianne said, taking her cane in hand. "Anna may as well stay heah in th' house this time; we have the room an' it'll be too noisy in th' Round House with the boys workin' theyah."

"Where do you want to meet Anna?" Jeff asked, frowning slightly.

Dianne paused for a minute. "Mebbe out on the deck at the back o' the house. Nice an' quiet out theyah an' it's neutral," she replied. "Ah'll see about brewin' a pot o' coffee or somethin' when she gets heah."

"Sounds like a plan," Jeff said, his frown clearing into a smile. She smiled back, gave him a kiss, and hobbled out to the hallway. Jeff noticed that she wasn't limping quite as strongly as before.

"See you later, Dad." Scott gave him a wave as he headed out.

"I've work to do in the lab," Brains said as he finished off his iced tea. "I'll take this into the kitchen, and Scott's plate, too."

"Let me contact the recruits and then we can travel in the monorail together," Jeff said. He took a last gulp of water, and lifted his wrist communicator to his lips. "Dom? This is Jeff. Please meet me in the A lounge of the Cliff House in fifteen minutes. I have some news..."

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