
Subject: Re: Winds of Change
Posted by [Tikatu](#) on Sat, 28 Jul 2012 00:34:28 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

From: susanmartha Sent: 5/29/2007 11:18 PM

Wednesday, August 29, Tracy Island, late afternoon

"Hello. Can you tell me how to get back to the Cliff House?"

Anna looked up from her book. The young man before her smiled. The large dog seemed to be smiling too. "I'm not sure. I don't live here. You're Luke and this is Rommel, right? I'm Anna Hanson. We met at dinner last night. Is it ok to pet him or is he working?"

"Go ahead. He's off duty. We were just exploring."

Anna held out her hand, palm down, and let Rommel sniff it. She then moved the other hand to scratch behind his ears. He moved over and put his head in her lap. She responded by scratching down his back. "Oh, you are such a big handsome fellow, aren't you? And you know it too."

"Yes he does. Rommel, you ham." Rom looked up at him. "You're nothing but a hand slut, you know that, don't you? He's really got you figured out," Luke added looking at Anna.

"It's the bright neon yellow "Sucker" on my forehead. It's visible to all kids and animals."

Luke chuckled and sat down as Anna continued to ruffle Rommel's fur. "He's got my mom so well trained, he just looks at her and she gives him a cookie."

Anna grinned. "Spoiling her grandchild?"

"Yeah, that's what she claims. She has three human grandkids that she doesn't spoil as much though."

"Does she get to see them as often as Rommel?"

"More often, actually. They still live in Montana."

Anna looked up, surprised. "What part of Montana? I have relatives all over there."

"My parents own a sporting goods store in Bozeman. My brother lives in Great Falls, so they see each other a lot."

"About a three hour drive then. Or less in the land of no speed limits. Do they still put the white crosses up?"

Luke nodded. Montana technically had no speed limit other than "whatever is reasonable under the conditions." However they put a marker with white crosses by the road for each fatal accident. There was one corner on the state highway near his parents house with 3 markers -- one with five

crosses and two with three. Luke slowed down every time he drove past them.

"Are you from Montana?" It would be nice to meet someone from home here. He was feeling a little lost.

"No, I'm from Seattle. My grandmother was from just outside of Great Falls. She had 4 brothers and 4 sisters and they all still lived there and so did most of their kids and grandkids. They would come out to see us and to catch a Mariners game."

Luke grinned. The nearest professional sports teams to Montana were in either Seattle or Denver. Most people who followed baseball in Montana were fans of the Seattle Mariners.

"How did you wind up out here?"

"The usual way. Met a guy in college and followed him home. I decided he was well trained so I kept him. I still maintain my US citizenship but my kids are New Zealanders. They've only been to the States once."

Luke was comfortable. Rommel had settled down between them, having realized there was no food to con anyone out of. Dinner was still a couple of hours away and he really didn't feel like returning to his apartment. "How many kids do you have? Any grandkids?"

"Three kids, one grandkid. Terry's my oldest, he and his wife have one kid. David's married, he and Charlie are considering adopting. Mary's still in college, studying music and computers."

"David and Charlie can't have kids of their own?"

Anna looked at him and smiled. "I'm sure they could but I think neither one of them could carry to term. And they haven't figured out how to use sperm from two people instead of sperm from one and an egg from the other yet."

Luke gazed at her for a second, then chuckled. "Yeah, I can see that could be a problem." He frowned thoughtfully. "Is marriage legal here? I mean Gay marriage and in New Zealand."

"No, just civil commitments. But I'm a lay minister in the Episcopal Church and can bless the marriage. I've done it seven or eight times. The church doesn't recognize them but it doesn't push the issue either. The biggest problem I have is figuring out what to say at the end."

"What?"

"Well I can't say 'I now pronounce you man and wife. You may kiss the bride' to two Army officers in dress uniforms."

Luke chuckled again. "No, I don't suppose you could. What did you say?"

Anna grinned at him. "I now pronounce you married in the eyes of God. In case you haven't already, you may now kiss." She went on, remembering. "Their commanding officer was there along with most of the squadron. I could see him trying to suppress a chuckle. We wound up

spending most of the reception trying to figure out how to get them into married officer housing instead of the barracks."

They laughed together, then Luke asked, still smiling, "I take it your family approves of David and Charlie's marriage?"

"My family here, yes. They think the world of Charlie. As for the rest?" Anna shook her head. "Not so much. My mother has never seen anything she didn't expect to be there in her entire life. It's one reason I really don't want to go back and visit. I didn't send her any pictures of David and Charlie's wedding either."

Luke settled his hands behind his head and was quiet for a while. His next question was hesitant, as if he were weighing his words carefully. "Do you know of anyone on the island who might have a problem with someone who is gay or lesbian? Or someone transgendered?" He glanced over at her. "Just... anyone outside the traditional sexual or gender norm?"

She sat back for a minute considering. His questions made her suspicious. If he is gay or transgendered, he needs to feel comfortable enough to tell me. I can't push. "Hm. My impression is no. I don't think there is anyone here who would cause any problems for someone like you've described."

Their eyes met for a moment. Luke nodded emphatically. "Good. Glad to hear it." He sat back, smiling. "I'm looking forward to working with this bunch." With a huff, he added, "My previous supervisor... well, let's just say he didn't like the way I did my job." In more ways than one.

"Is that why you left?"

"Because of him? Yes. And because I didn't like the way he did his job either."

Anna looked up and noticed Gordon walking toward the pool. Nikki was just coming out the patio door. "Time for the afternoon swim." Luke looked at her. "It's not official but a lot of people take a dip when the day's jobs are over. Prepare to get splashed."

A yell of "Gordon! Swim!!" heralded Dom and Joshua's arrival.

"If I can figure out how to get back to my apartment, I might change and join them."

Anna noticed someone else coming outside. "Virgil. Come here for a second." Virgil obligingly started walking toward them. Anna turned to make a final comment to Luke. "If you're ever interested in introductions to the LGBT community in Christchurch, let me know. David still lives in town and he and Charlie can show you around." Then, turning back toward Virgil she asked "Virgil, do you have any maps of this place?"