
Subject: Re: Winds of Change
Posted by [Tikatu](#) on Sat, 28 Jul 2012 01:19:05 GMT
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From: Tikatu Sent: 6/1/2007 8:20 PM

Thursday, August 30, 2068, 2:15 p.m. Thunderbird Five

"Hand me the laser welder, Alan?" John reached out a hand, and Alan put a pencil thin instrument into his brother's palm. "Thanks."

"So, how many of these monitor bubbles will be installed?" Callie asked, turning away from the radio console for a moment, frowning at the little black ball that John was busy installing.

"Two per cabin, four in each control room, one in every bathroom..." Brains began to list the all the places they'd be installing the monitor bubbles.

"Wait," Callie broke in. "You mean we'll be monitored in the bathroom? Nobody mentioned that to me!"

Alan and Brains exchanged slight smiles. "They say that the most dangerous falls take place in the bathroom, Callie," Alan said.

Brains shook his head slightly. "It won't be invasive, Callie, not unless it absolutely has to be. Just a general reading of body temperature, pulse, heart rate, and physical movement. If something happens, say you fall in the shower and hurt yourself, the resulting changes in your condition will signal Dianne, or whoever's on duty in the sick room that something's gone wrong. You can even call for help; the sensors are attuned to a small vocabulary of distress words, and will activate the audio automatically. I assure you that the visual portion won't be turned on unless Dianne, and Dianne alone, considers it necessary. The only ones who would see you at all in such a... ahem... delicate situation would be Dianne or Nikki." He raised an eyebrow and made a rueful face. "I've also built in a heavy duty security system; Gordon will not be playing voyeur."

"If he tried, Dad would skin him alive and Mom would rub salt into the wounds," John stated, his voice very matter-of-fact.

Callie's face went from very concerned and disbelieving to pensive to shocked at all the men had to say, especially John's last comment. She hadn't expected something so forthright and visceral from him.

"So, the little monitors will be all over the place, monitoring my vital signs for Dianne to see," Callie said slowly. "Then what's in the big boxes?"

"New biobeds," Alan told her. "Damn!" He shook his finger. "Got a little too close with that welder."

"Come with me, Alan, and let's get that fixed up." Brains cut off Alan's protest before it could form, and herded the young astronaut off to the sickbay.

"Biobeds? Like the ones in Seven?" Callie asked.

"A couple like that, and one that has the full scanner option. Ah. There." John stepped down from the small ladder he'd been using to reach the corner of the ceiling. He crossed over to pick up the data pad that had the instructions telling where the monitor bubbles were to be installed. "Looks like the next one goes... here!" He compared the spot he was looking it with the schematics on the pad, and marked the spot. "Looks good."

Brains came out of the sickbay. Alan followed, his fingertip covered with both a clear salve and a protective film. He picked up his tools as John moved the stepladder over to the next installation point.

"So, two biobeds like Seven has, and a scanner bed." Callie kept half an ear on the incoming transmissions. "How are we supposed to get to them if something's happened to us?"

"Well, if you can get to it, that's good. Dianne will be able to monitor your vitals with far greater accuracy from there than with the sensors. And..." Here Brains sighed. "If your injuries are so great that you need surgery, Dianne will be able to perform it here, instead of waiting to get back to Earth." He raised his hands and shrugged. "It's far from perfect, Callie, but it's better than what we have now, which is little to nothing."

"Hey, Brains," Alan asked, suddenly sounding concerned. "I know it's a long shot with the power setup we have, but what if there's an outage of some sort?"

"These little sensors are all battery-operated. There'll be a diagnostic program for them to be performed at least once a week. As for the biobeds, they'll have a separate power line of their own, and the scanner bed will feed into emergency power if necessary." John shook his head and let out a sigh. "Working up here is dangerous, far more deadly than any rescue on Earth. We're surrounded by airless space, and protected from it and decompression by what is, proportionally, a thin metal skin." He glanced over at Brains, who, like the others, had become sober. "But we've done everything to minimize the risk, starting with the C/31 cahelium outer hull. This is just another way to keep us safe, and hopefully healthy up here."

John went back to his work, the control room silent except for the muted babble of the audio monitors. He broke it himself with a satisfied, "There! Done!" Turning back to Brains, he asked, "Is that the last one in here?"

"Once Alan's finished the one he's working on..."

"I'm done, Brains," Alan said.

"Good!" John folded up the stepladder and pocketed his laser welder. "Where to next?"

Brains consulted his data pad, then glanced up at Callie with a sly grin. "Alan, you can take the passageway and airlock to the left, while John works in the washroom on this level. Might as well get this out of the way, right, Callie?"

Callie rolled her eyes and made a little face at him. John and Alan both chuckled as they collected up their gear and moved out of the main monitor room.

Once left alone, Callie gave a little huff. "I'm going to have a good long talk with Dianne about this bathroom thing."
