
Subject: Re: Winds of Change
Posted by [Tikatu](#) on Sat, 28 Jul 2012 04:17:49 GMT
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From: Tikatu Sent: 7/21/2007 7:36 PM

Virgil watched as Thunderbird Four launched from the dropped pod and eased over to the plane. He saw Tin-Tin hoist herself out of the top hatch and inch her way across the wing, then disappear inside. "Now what?" he muttered to himself.

"Thunderbird Two from Thunderbird One." Elise's voice called in the cockpit. "Sweet has a plan. We'll need to move the pod closer to the plane. She wants to use one of the emergency ramps as a bridge across to the pod."

"It sounds like that would work, but what about the pandas? Is there any word on them?"

Inside the hold, Jiao and Zhen looked on in growing concern as the lights dimmed and water began to seep slowly into the hold. "You had better tell the attendant," Jiao said, unbuckling her safety belt and going across the wet floor to the pandas' cages. "I will check on the pandas. They may need another dose of sedative."

"I will." Zhen unbuckled himself, then reached for the intercom, and clicked it twice as he'd been instructed. "Hello, hello?"

There was no answer, and Zhen glanced over at Jiao.

"Go up and find someone," she told him. "The plane's electrical systems are probably not operating since we are in the water."

"I'm sure you're right. I will go." He hurried to the steps leading upward, wishing he could take them two at a time, but they were far too narrow to do so.

Once there, he looked for Xiong, who was asking an elderly passenger if she was all right. It seemed that the lady was breathing hard, and Xiong was worried about a panic attack.

"Han Xiong," Zhen said quietly, beckoning the attendant close. "We have a problem." His voice dropped to a near whisper. "There is water seeping into the hold."

Xiong's eyes opened wide, and he nodded sharply. "Wait here." He turned and without another word hustled off down the aisle.

When he returned, he was followed by a young woman in a scuba suit, an IR insignia emblazoned on her snug wetsuit. There was a cry of relief all along the aisle as she strode purposefully down it, her flippers and mask attached to her belt; a visor and cap obscuring most of her head, and a tank attached to her back.

"Miss Sweet, this is Lang Zhen, one of the pandas' keepers. He reports there is water in the hold." Xiong made the introduction in Mandarin.

"Please, show me, Lang Zhen," said the young woman in English. A moment later, a slightly

mechanical voice repeated her words in Chinese.

Xiong nodded and smiled slightly, and Zhen, somewhat awestruck, led the IR operative down into the hold.

Jiao was inside one of the transport cages when the newcomer was brought down. Her eyes widened at the sight of the girl in the scuba gear. Zhen said, "This is my wife, Lang Jiao, the veterinarian. Jiao, do the pandas need more sedation?"

"Y-Yes," Jiao said. She turned back to her work, inserting a rather large needle into a panda's rear haunch. She looked up to find the girl walking slowly around the cages, noticing the metal skids that the cages rested on, the water that swirled around, covering the bottom slats of the skids, and the construction of the cages themselves.

Tin-Tin smiled at Jiao. She said, "We have just the thing. We will make the cages watertight, and once the plane is evacuated of people, we will open the hatch and remove the cages." Her speech, in English, was translated into Mandarin, then she tapped her earpiece. "Van Gogh? We need that blue goo. You might want to send Quasar along with it. We could use his help in translation."
