

Title: Changing Tack

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Rating: Teen

Characters: Margaret Murphy

Word count: 349

Author notes: Apropos of nothing and inspired by rewatching the entire series. Margaret's change in attitude toward Tara from season 2 to 3 always baffled me. Thanks to Tanaqui for betaing.

Summary: After Tara beats her up, Margaret takes a moment to reflect on her choices.

Changing Tack **By: Scribblesinink**

Margaret squinted at her reflection in the bathroom mirror with dismay. How was she going to explain the black eye to Dave? Or to the kids? Would they believe her if she said a distraught patient had freaked out and accidentally clocked her?

She winced as she prodded at the swelling on her left cheek. Tara Knowles certainly had a mean right hook on her. Then she gingerly placed the instant ice pack she'd brought from the pharmacy to her face, relishing its numbing coldness.

One thing she now knew for sure: she'd been going about it all wrong. She'd thought—hoped—to scare Tara straight, by demonstrating the cost to her promising career if she insisted on remaining involved with those leather-clad thugs and outlaws. But instead of pulling Tara out, her attempts had only driven Tara deeper into the arms of the MC, into a world of fists and violence. As Margaret's jaw had recently discovered.

Unconsciously, Margaret's free hand lightly touched her lower back, where the inked reminder of her own wild days seemed to sting with resentment, echoing the pain in her face. She'd gotten lucky: she'd received her wake-up call in time to change. She wanted the same thing for Tara. She'd known too many good women who'd wrecked their lives over no-good bad boys for her to let a damned fine surgeon make that same mistake without putting up a fight.

She chuckled ruefully. She hadn't quite counted on getting into a literal fight with Tara. But she also knew that, once Tara realized the mess she'd gotten herself in, she'd need help to get clear of the MC's clutches. So, from now on, Margaret would be supportive,. She'd watch and wait, and protect Tara from the

professional consequences of her actions where she could, and make sure Tara knew she had a friend, someone she might eventually dare to confide in. Lord knows, Tara was gonna need someone like that in the months to come.

And then, when the time came, Margaret would be ready to do whatever it took to help Tara escape.

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