

Episode 3
Edison's HQ, Manhattan
Monday, April 3rd 1882



Several weeks after Edison told former President Hayes about hiring Nicola Tesla, he stopped by Edison's Manhattan headquarters to meet him.

As Tesla told Hayes and Edison the sad story of Hungary's bloody occupation of his homeland, Edison was suddenly called away to deal with a fistfight between his engineers, leaving Hayes and the brilliant immigrant alone.

"This country is so wonderful; I am becoming a US citizen as soon as possible."

"That's a great move, son!"

“In Croatia, an American is still an American, but here, a Croatian can also be an American.”

“So true, son. That is because almost every American family came from somewhere else. My grandfather came from Scotland.”

“I would have been happy remaining in Croatia, but the Hungarian King only wanted me working on weapons that oppress my home.”

“Son, all kings, Popes, and dictators fear the independent inventor. They worry you would invent their demise.”

“Indeed.”

“We do not have those issues here because our citizens elect our leaders. We see independent inventors as national treasures instead of unknown threats.”

“This is the most technically advanced country because independent inventors are given the marketing rights to their creations here,” Tesla added.

“Nicola. Do you know that 75% of new technologies come from the USA, with only 3% of earth’s population?”

“I have never read those percentages; however, they seem correct.”

“Nicola, the US Constitution is based on all men being equal. That no one is above the law. Even the poorest orphan child is legally as important here as a congressman, senator, or president.”

“What a wonderful country!”

“Yes. Last year (1881), my great friend President Garfield and I founded The National Orphan Relief Agency, or NORA for short.”

“NORA is now providing emergency medical aid to the nation’s orphan children. Over a million orphan children have been recently dumped into our loving arms by European kings.”

“I am amazed by such compassion,” Tesla responded.

“I wanted to discuss helping these poor immigrant orphans with you. I am currently building a hospital for them.”

“Here in New York?”

“No, on Sullivant’s Hill, seven miles west of Columbus, Ohio.”

“Why such a remote place?”

“Most orphan immigrants are fostered by farm families scattered around the country. Mathematically, Sullivant’s Hill is dead center of the nation’s railroad network.”

“This spot minimizes the average time to reach more innocent orphan farm babies.”

“In the country’s eight largest cities, NORA pays hospitals to cover these orphans.

“What a wonderful program! What a wonderful country!”

“Nicola, private companies have installed more rails over America than in all other countries combined,” Hayes added.

“Traveling at 40 MPH is so exciting; I’ve read everything available on the technology,” Tesla replied.

FYI: From 1879 to 1903, the “official” land speed world record was 82.5 miles per hour, set by a locomotive.

“Al (Edison) thought you would be ideal for designing NORA’s special orphan ambulance trains. The faster we can reach these poor injured babies, the more lives we can save.”

“Absolutely.”

“Currently, we are using passenger trains that still stop at every train station, slowing down how many innocent orphan babies we can save.”

“That is an issue.”

“Yes, that is why we approved funding for a small fleet of powerful ambulance trains, so we can save lives by bypassing most stations.”

“How fast do you intend them to move, sir?”

“All the speed we can safely achieve.”

“But son, you can feel free to call me Rud.”

“Okay, but that would be like calling King Charles, Chuck.”

“My term as president ended; that is how this country works. So now I am Rud, the director of America’s orphan aid program.”

“Anyways, before I start spending taxpayer’s money on these special trains, Al convinced me to meet you first.”

“Fascinating, but faster trains are not just about more speed; they must also stop quicker and stay glued to the rails around curves.”

“Oh yes, of course; we just can’t do enough for the nation’s orphans.”

“How many cars will each ambulance haul?”

“Four to six, but a few more regular train cars if necessary.”

Tesla answered, “May I have a few days to sketch some ideas before I answer your question?”

“Of course, son.”

“What large is your budget?”

“We have an unlimited budget to help these poor orphan babies.”

“Sir, I will need direction. Should I start with a clean sheet of paper to design these ambulances from existing components?”

“I need three right away. So, to save time, you will have to use existing components. But eventually, all new designs.”

“That's good. How many train ambulances does NORA need?”

“Ten to twelve.”

“By when?”

“Twelve by 87” (five years).

“I am almost overwhelmed; this sounds like delightful work. “However, I have already committed my time to Mr. Edison.”

“That is why I am here. He has cleared most of your time for NORA.”

“Excellent.”

“Have you ever heard of George Westinghouse?”

“Certainly, his air brakes and cut stopping distance by 70%!” Tesla responded. “Dynamos could cut that by another 70%.”

“George is a close friend. He has designed hundreds of train components. He is a big fan of yours.”

“He is!”

“Your dynamo also allowed him to design a revolutionary air compressor.”

“He owns a facility a few miles from here where you and he can build these ambulances. He said he would love to work with you on them.”

“You give me hope for humanity,” Tesla responded as tears began streaming down his cheeks.

The sobbing young genius then stood and saluted the former president. “I can’t imagine ever leaving America!”

Still saluting, his head bowed down, “It is almost unbelievable to find a nation writing a blank check for the unwanted children of the world! What a wonderful nation this is!”

Even though Hayes was a strong General and a highly respected governor and president, he could no longer look Nicola in the eye. He suddenly felt like a giant jerk for pushing that poor-orphan crap.

He rose from his seat, “Sorry to run, son, I need the restroom!”

He yelled, “I can’t wait to see your first concepts. I will return on Friday!” as he ran out of Edison’s office.

“Thank you, sir! It’s three doors down, on the right.”

April 4th, 1882
Edison’s HQ, Manhattan

Nicola Tesla was excited to show his Boss (Edison) his first Orphan Ambulance sketches for Hayes.

While looking them over, Edison asked Nicola, “How did you hide the cannons, flamethrowers, and Gatling guns?”

“What?” Tesla responded.

Edison studied the sketch and added, “All three systems need instant release and continuous mechanical or maybe even magnetic reloading.”

“All three systems must be controlled, aimed, and fired by a single agent inside a control car or from the locomotive.”

“Why would NORA want war weapons hidden in an ambulance for small children?”

Edison suddenly realized that Hayes only discussed rail ambulances with Tesla.

“Ha, ha, I was just pulling your leg, son; these are fine renderings,” Edison tried to recover.

“Pulling my leg? You did not touch me.”

“That means I was just joking around with you, Nicola.”

“Oh.”

It took Tesla less than one second to see the facts. He realized that former President Hayes was being careful, as he should.

Friday April 7th, 1882
Edison's HQ, in Manhattan

Hayes returned to Edison's headquarters on Friday to see Tesla's first rail ambulance concepts.

Before Edison called Nicola to his office, he apologized to Hayes: “Sorry, old friend. I assumed you had told Nicola everything about your special NORA trains. I misspoke, and he figured out the rest.”

“That's fine, Al. He needs to know.”

When Tesla entered Edison's office, Hayes said, “Nicola, please forgive me for not going into detail about the special features our Orphan Ambulances will need.”

“No problem at all, sir.”

“These Orphan Ambulances will rescue gravely injured orphan children. Because they should be the swiftest machines on rails, they can help protect all Americans and our national security.”

“I fully understand, Sir.”

“I'm even more thrilled to develop the intense spy equipment.”

Tesla had spent two days imagining being an ORPHAN agent, using these super-speed machines on covert missions.

Edison added, “Nicola, NORA reimburses me for setting you up with a private laboratory so you can spend most of your time on these trains.”

This relieved Edison's stress. Tesla could have worked out better than Edison envisioned.

After studying Edison's D/C transmission components over his first few days, Tesla told him, "Direct Currents are far too inefficient for large networks."

"This system will lose far more power than it can provide. I don't think this planet has enough copper to electrify New York City using your direct current."

"My alternating current is for large networks. It will use tiny components that can deliver a hundred times more electricity, a hundred times farther. You need to junk this heavy direct system in favor of alternating current."

Edison was not willing to even consider this. He had already spent millions of JP Morgan's dollars developing his direct-current system. He could not admit that all this work was wasted, so he went into complete denial.

Their A/C-D/C conflict was just one of many problems between them.

While recruiting Tesla, Edison agreed to let him take a 40-minute nap each afternoon and a full hour for lunch.

Tesla's deal caused some of Edison's other engineers to ask for similar benefits. So, putting Nicola where he would work alone offered some relief.

However, this compliance fell apart after Hayes introduced Tesla to Westinghouse. These two found inventive compatibility, so Tesla and Edison broke up hard.

Just weeks later (late 1882), Nicola, George, and his crew began building ORPH One inside Westinghouse's rail foundry.

Westinghouse's Train Factory New York

March 7, 1885

When Ivonta called Tesla at Westinghouse's Foundry at 6 a.m., he ran a final test on ORPH SIX's oil-burning steam engine. It was almost complete; it just needed paint.

All ORPHS had been painted white with big red crosses. Well, for at least this mission, ORPH Six would be wearing dark primer.

Tesla moved into this ORPH's medical car five weeks earlier to save time.

While building it, he decided that the steam engine's water tank wasted too much space, so he gave it two uses.

He cut off the tank's top and turned that piece into a sliding hatch. Pulling one lever, it opened, turning the tank into a small swimming/pool. He kept the water warm using the steam engine's hot exhaust.

This new ORPH also had an intercom, which was four telephones. When plugged into a landline, it could make outside calls. While under construction, Westinghouse's switchboard kept it connected to NORA.

Twenty minutes after receiving that call from Ivanta, Nicola took off for Sullivant's Hill alone.

Before ORPH Six, it was impossible for one person to pilot a train that ran over 500 miles nonstop. However, this was the first steam engine that did not need boilermen to shovel coal.

Tesla set this ORPH up to burn oil instead of coal. A tiny dynamo pumped the fuel into the firebox instead of strong men with shovels.

Its 1000-gallon oil tank also occupies less than half the space of the coal bins on earlier ORPHS. One thousand gallons of oil would also provide up to four times more fire than a full coal bin.

ORPH Six was the first dual-drive train. The locomotive still applied steam power, but Nicola installed dynamos (motor/generators) inside the wheels of this ORPH's five permanent cars, which more than doubled the power from the steam engine.

A lever on the dual commander's console applied these dynamos. Pushing it forward increased the electric power. Pulling back reversed the polarity, turning the dynamos into powerful brakes that also recharged the batteries.

Tesla had already verified that ORPH Six would stop in 30% of the distance that air brakes required.

For high-speed stability around curves, Tesla invented what he called "Magnetic Glue." It used 'centrifugal force switches' to activate electromagnets along the inside rail of curved tracks.

George Westinghouse was in Detroit; Tesla was the only person in New York who could operate ORPH Six, so he launched for Columbus alone.

He would average ninety-six miles per hour between New York and Sullivant's Hill (155kph). But on a flat stretch between Zanesville and Columbus, he reached 149.5 MPH, nearly doubling the official world speed record of 82.5 MPH.

However, outsiders would never know; ORPH stats were official secrets.

When reporters asked Hayes, "How fast are Orphan Ambulances?"

"Oh, crazy fast! Our newest one just hit seventy-five miles an hour during testing!"

Sullivant's Hill,
6:34 am, March 7, 1885

After they had contacted Colonel Sanders and Captain Crocket, Colin called Mic Mechanic, who ran the ORPH garage 30 feet above.

“Mic, how soon can you have ORPH Three ready for launch?”

“At least an hour; I'm in the middle of reloading Number Four.”

“ORPH Four is here?”

“Yeah, it's here.”

“Is it ready to go?”

“Just about.”

“Heat it, don't bother with number Three.”

“Give it fifteen minutes, Colin.”

“Thanks, Mic.”

Colin and Lemont then returned to the war room.

The room was dark, so Lemont pulled the string to turn on a 100-watt, basketball-sized light bulb in an Edison ceiling lamp.

Commander Hayes was slumped over the table, napping. “He's asleep,” Colin whispered to Lemont.

“I'm awake,” Hayes said as he sat up.

“Mr. President?”

“Yes, Colin.”

“We are ready to go. ORPH four will be hot in about ten minutes.”

“You are not going anywhere yet.”

“If nothing changes, you will leave with science engineer Tesla this afternoon.”

Colin shrugged, “Mr. President, this may be our most dangerous mission yet. We can’t risk it by dragging that bookworm along!”

“Boss, he is a lab rat, not a field operator,” Lemont added.

“He can’t keep up with us athletes! He’ll bog us down,” Colin added.

“He won’t be in your way, boys.”

Lemont added, “Boss, I’ll bet he has never thrown a punch or shot a gun! Most Croatians are not even allowed to have guns.”

“Isn’t he in New York? We will lose another day waiting for him to arrive here,” Colin stressed.

“He’ll arrive this afternoon,” Hayes replied (and hoped).

“Wonderful.” Colin sarcastically reacted.

“You’re underestimating him, just as I did. That bookworm is like a superhuman. He earned some of the highest scores on the Secret Service’s examinations.”

“Yeah, that is because he’s from Mars,” Colin added.

As Hayes’ head shook, “No,” he said, Trainer Butkus told me that Tesla is a physical beast. He said that he exercises in water every day.”

“In water?”

“Yeah, you boys are getting a little flabby; maybe you can pick up a few wet tricks from him. You might even smell better.”

“He can get tips from me,” Colin replied, flexing his impressive arms over his head, “I know how to build a powerful body.”

“Put them puny things down; you are embarrassing yourself!” his enormous partner, with arms like tree trunks, advised.

Hayes added, “Nicola has better things to do than stroll around all flexed like you muscleheads.”

“No one notices this powerful physique through his baggy lab coats and bulging pockets.”

“Why would you send him through agent training?” Colin asked.

“He wanted to go on missions. He wants some action.”

“So does every little boy,” Lemont added.

“I told him that field agents had to pass our physical training program before I could send him on field missions. I assumed he could never run five miles under forty minutes.”

“He broke thirty! Only two other agents have ever done that.”

“Me, I did!” Colin reminded them.

“We know, Colin.”

“That was the one hundred and eleventh time he reminded us, Boss.”

“Oh, Mr. President. I forgot. Do you remember Lemont’s time?”

“Shut up, Colin! I broke forty minutes,” Lemont growled.

“Oh, that’s right. I remember now. You broke it with two big seconds to spare.”

“I pace myself! I don’t waste my energy like a fool. That’s why I was undefeated” (as a boxer).

“Boss, he used to be a nice guy. But after he joined that band, he turned into a prima-donna.”

While flexing his arms again, Colin replied, “Does this look like some girl named Donna?”

“Yes, a very wimpy one,” Lemont responded.

“Tesla also won the class sharpshooter award and nailed a perfect score on the written test.”

“You only got ninety-eight out of the hundred questions,” Hayes said while glancing at Lemont.

“The test had two incorrect answers; I just corrected its mistakes,” Lemont replied.

Colin added, “I heard the human brain will explode once it hits a hundred miles an hour; we reached ninety-two in number Five. So, we won’t be able to reach New Orleans any faster without killing ourselves.”

“Boss, he leans science from skanks at Flanagan’s Pub” (where his band plays).

“Nonsense. Six will still reach New Orleans faster than if ORPH Four launched right now.” Hayes boldly said. “ORPH Six is the fastest machine ever built!”

The agents looked at each other, hoping to devise something.

Finally, Colin suggested, “Let’s just send Tesla back home with ORPH Four. Have him install his new speed pieces into it while we run down to New Orleans in Six.”

“Good idea,” Lemont agreed.

“All right, I will send him back to New York if either of you can tell me how to operate Magnetic Glue.”

“Magnetic Glue?” Colin asked.

“The stuff that keeps ORPH Six glued to the rails.”

The two agents just looked at each other.

“That settles it.”

“I need you two to make sure that nothing happens to him. Nicola is a national treasure.”

Their mouths hung open as they looked at each other.

“He can stay with the ORPH when we rescue the girls,” Colin added.

“This moment, that bookworm is moving faster than any man ever has!” Hayes hopped.

Both agents simultaneously said (almost in harmony), “I WANT TO DRIVE!”

“It's 800 miles to New Orleans; you both need time piloting. Just clear that with Captain Yeager. He and Cochran will be the pilots.”

“Where are they?”

“Yeager and Cochran arrived a couple of hours ago in ORPH Four. Ivonta put them to bed in the clinic,” Hayes said as he pointed up. “

“Since Nicola is five hours away, have her put you to bed so you will be well rested?”

“I sleep like a baby on trains. Hanging around here leaves time for a fine lunch downtown,” Aunt Jemima’s gourmet son mumbled.

Columbus’s best restaurants loved her and Lemont so much that they would feed them in their kitchens.

“Oh, that reminds me,” Colin, the frontman for the *Irish Orphans*, said as he pulled a piece of folded paper from his back pocket.

“Yesterday at lunch, the words to your theme song came to me,” Colin said as he handed the lyrics to his partner:

*Oh, I just can't wait, every single day,
for that super special time. I get to break away.
To fulfill my desires, for what I hunger for.
It's my favorite time of day; ain't no time I love more!*

*Oh yes, it's lunchtime! every single day!
Oh yes, it's lunchtime! having it my way!
Oh yes, it's lunchtime. Gotta be first in line!
Oh yes, it's lunchtime cause it's my favorite time!*

The Phantom Train - Northern Georgia
March 7th, 1885

At 10:00 AM, the six beautiful captives were still dreaming when a relatively high male voice from the hallway suddenly sang:

“♪ Yoo-hoo, girls, it’s time to rise♪.”
“♪ Don’t be shy, don’t ask why, ♪
♪it’s all for fun until we're done. ♪”

Cameroon flipped all their bedroom lights as he frolicked down the sleeping car’s hallway.

All six still somewhat drugged dancers were thrilled that their new jewels were not dreams.

♪ “Because it’s too early for beer. ♪”
♪ “Coffee, juice, milk, and tea are out here. ♪”

Several minutes later, all six beauties were gawking at each other’s new jewelry in this windowless car’s electrically illuminated hallway.

They had all spent some time in New York City, where they saw things that would give a bible-thumping Ohioan a heart attack. But this was their first time seeing such a muscular fellow wearing lady’s bloomers.

And these were not run-of-the-mill bloomers either.

They started six inches above his knees, which would have been shocking on ladies in 1885.

They were also colorful. One leg was green, the other red; the glossy gold material that tightly wrapped Cameroon's butt matched his high-heeled boots.

If not for the silver-dollar-sized holes freeing his hairy nipples, his red, gold, and green muscle shirt/sports bra hybrid. His nails were Polished rainbows as shimmering ceramic cherries dangled from his ear lobes.

The ship anchor tattoo on his right forearm seemed out of place.

You would think six Buckeye victims would pounce on the first English-speaking person. But these girls, with towels still crowning their heads, were far more excited about their new jewels than his.

Cameroon stood dejected, arms crossed, and his right foot tapping impatiently, as they paid no attention.

He finally clapped his hands and said, "Okay, girls! I have a wonderful day planned for you!"

He then pulled six one-piece silk outfits out of a small blue bag. He passed them out as he sang:

“♪Now, you need to put these on♪
♪So you can start having fun. ♪”

They were the same vibrant blue as the rugs, tablecloths, and silk sheets. They looked like modern one-piece bathing suits.

Instead of demanding, "What the hell is going on here!" Elizabeth asked, "Where is the rest of this?"

Cameroon answered, "It will be hotter than an Ohio summer in a few hours. Yawl will be far more comfortable in these."

“You can’t expect us to parade around in these?” Sara said.

“What is wrong with them? You girls will look amazing in them. These are all the rage in the South of France, Monaco, and Sicily.” He replied.

“Yeah, so is being naked.”

“No one else, besides your masseur, manicurists, dentist, and little assistants, will see you.”

Dotty flashed a wondrous expression at Dorothy as she whispered, “Did he say, “masseur and manicurists”?”

“Yes.”

As Dotty fantasized about a massage, Sara asked, “Who are you?”

“I’m Cameroon.”

“President Cross wants me to train you, girls, for the next two weeks.”

“These charming outfits allow me to see where your flawless bodies need work without having to see more than I genuinely want to.”

Cameroon held one outfit against his body. “President Cross wants me to ensure you look and feel like the world’s most beautiful performers When you entertain the world’s leaders.”

“Do you mean Ty Cross, the President of Tyberia!” Sara asked.

“I thought you knew; he is such a fine man; everyone adores him!”

“Girls, you remember Ty Cross?” Sara asked.

“Oh my god!” Dorothy responded, “He is the hottest billionaire on earth! I could barely speak to him.”

Although Ty Cross was the president of Tyberia (the 36 Eastern Caribbean Islands he also owns), he was born in Corpus Christi, Texas.

When he was 21 in 1854, he inherited the world's largest shipping company, Cross Shipping International (CSI), plus hundreds of international enterprises from his father.

Three years later, once war seemed inevitable, Cross bought these thirty-six Eastern Caribbean islands from France for a million and a half US dollars in gold.

He named his islands "The Republic of Tyberia" and appointed himself president. He then moved the US registrations for 731 international cargo ships to Tyberia.

President Cross announced that Tyberia would not take sides in America's war." If he kept his ships registered in the South, the Northern Navy could legally seize or sink them in neutral water once the Civil War began.

However, Tyberius Cross spent most of his time at Crosswinds, Italy, Cypris, Tyberia, or on his massive yacht, The Maximus V. Not only was it the world's swiftest ship, but many seamen thought it was the most beautiful vessel on the sea.

Ty appointed his oldest son, Maximus Claudius Cross (Max), Prime Minister of Tyberia. Max spent most of his time running things from Sainte Marguerite, Tyberia's capital island.

Besides not yet sporting Ty's gray temples, Max could pass as his daddy's twin.

In September 1884, eight months before Edison's Light Cannon was revealed, Ty Cross spent three nights in the Columbus Neil House's presidential suite. He held the annual shareholder meeting of Cross Railroad Systems Inc.

CRS was an Ohio-based corporation that customized trains. Cross was its founder and majority stockholder.

On his last evening in town, he visited the Opera House to catch its final gas-lit play, *Lady's Come First*, which Sara co-wrote.

When she sang her song “Big Daddy,” he was more than enchanted. Even though she had no clue who he was yet, he had no doubt that she wrote it about him.

Being Ty Cross, Producer Peter D. Legend invited him backstage after the show.

Ohio's sweeties could do little more than giggle and melt as that handsome gazillionaire gazed into their eyes and kissed the backs of their hands.

His hand kisses also came with sweet comments for the first five Buckeye Beauties.

When he reached Sara, he said, “You are mesmerizing,” but then he choked up when she smiled at him. After an awkward moment, he could only muster a “Lovely meeting, y'all” as he rushed away.

Do you know how a song will sometimes keep playing in your mind? Sara's sweet voice did not stop in Ty's.

Weeks later, the last week before the old opera house closed for its electric light rebirth, Cross sent a team of engineers with a half dozen of Edison's phonographs to record her show “*Lady's Come First*.”

It's hard to believe today, but Edison's hand-cranked music players played and recorded music. They played and saved sound from or on soft wax tubes, which rapidly wore out.

These recordings just intensified his infatuation for Sara. For the first time in Ty Cross's fifty pampered years, he had fallen for someone besides himself.

Even though he had six ‘confirmed’ children and over a dozen “maybes,” he had never considered himself the marrying kind until he heard and saw Sara.

Sara was an adorable, pampered sweetie from birth (July 4th, 1857). She was from a small upper-class settlement five miles north of Columbus called Worthington.

Sara never made her bed, cooked a meal, or emptied her chamber pot, as her father employed servants to deal with that crap. She first used a broom during rehearsals for the Maids of Armando.

Lemont’s mother, Jemima, also prepared breakfast, lunch, and dinner at her family’s home every Wednesday.

However, unlike the typical deva, Sara never acted superior to everyone. She treated her servants like family, so they adored her.

At age six, her beautiful singing voice motivated her to practice daily. By twelve, her private Worthington school had her teaching music and dance to other children.

Two years later, producer Peter D. Legend, from the Cotton Block and Cornstalk Opera House, offered her a bit part in a musical, and she stole the show.

In his next musical, she played a significant part. Even though that show was not one of Peter Legend’s legends, Sara still packed the house on weeknights. Soon, she became Columbus’s hottest entertainer.

Sara thought Ty Cross could be a fantastic catch for one of her girls.

All six lovely jaws dropped open when Elizabeth asked Cameroon, “Is President Ty Cross aboard this train?”

“Oh god!” Dorthy screamed, with her hair still wrapped and no makeup on. She could not want Ty Cross to see her like this.

To great relief, Cameroon replied, “Oh no, President Cross is not on this train; he is waiting for you at Crosswinds.”

Being hostages did not even enter their thoughts.

“Where?”

“Near beautiful New Orleans, my home.”

“We are going to your house?”

“Oh, no way! I have a one-room flat in Centertown.”

“We would all have to sleep in one bed!” Cameroon replied with a look on his face somewhere between frightened and disgusted.

“You will be President Cross’s guests at Crosswinds, his stunningly beautiful plantation.”

“Is that where we will be performing?” Dorothy asked.

“Possibly, all I know is it will be in a warm location.”

“When?”

“My work with you is over in two weeks, so likely then.”

“After you put on your practice suits, your assistants will serve your breakfast. You do not need to be modest around me; you are my inspiration but not my type,” he said as he twirled his long hair around his index finger.

He again held one of those silky blue suits up against his torso as he sang: “♪I have one that fits me too, if not an issue for you. ♪”

“Oh no, I might confuse you with my girls,” Sara responded as the others giggled.

With a sad sigh, still holding the tiny garment, he sang:

“♪Oh, how I wish! ♪”

Then he whirled his way out of their bedroom car, singing:

♪ “Okay, Girls, that went well.” ♪

♪ “When you want anything, just ring this bell. ♪”

After another hour of inspecting each other’s wardrobes and jewels, they concluded that President Cross must genuinely love them. “What a great guy,” They thought of their abductor.

At about noon, they rang the bell. Mee, Wee, and Pee appeared so rapidly; they must have been waiting on the other side of the door.

They led the beauties into the next car, which had two rooms. The first was a small dining car with genuine windows on both sides, exposing the beautiful Allegheny Mountains.

The table held a variety of tropical fruits, milk, six small biscuits with country gravy, and three thinly sliced smoked fish. It also had coffee, hot cocoa, and tea pitchers, all spiked with natural tranquilizers.

As soon as they finished, their attendants led them into the next car, which looked like a tiny beauty salon in Caesar’s Palace.

“Washy-washy,” Pee, Wee, or Mee said as they led the girls into this car’s second room.

This white marble room featured a clear exercise tub. Imagine a 5ft by 5 ft-by-5 ft square crystal jar with a turquoise base. It had brass plumbing that also served as the pool’s entrance ladder.

Cameroon was in this see-through tub, now wearing what we call a speedo today, a shiny gold one.

As he modeled his hairy muscular body at them, only Dolly stared. The other five either looked away or covered their eyes.

“I wanted to dress just like you, but you said, “NOOOOO!”
“So, this is what you get.”

Still staring, Dolly asked, “Aren’t you a bit overdressed?”

“Don’t encourage him,” Sara whispered to her.

Cameroon began flexing his muscles as their assistants rushed them into the next car with two rooms.

The first room was a luxury lounge. It had big, cozy chairs, stools, game tables, and another restroom. A complete set of Edison's music tubes and his fanciest phonograph sat on (and in) a walnut cart latched to the wall.

Mee Wee and Pee brought more deliciously spiked beverages when the ladies looked comfortable.

Suddenly, a very tall, hairless man resembling Rob Gronkowski (Gronk), without personality or eyebrows, appeared in their room.

He wore black dress pants, a white shirt, and a black bowtie.

The girls might have freaked out, but Mee, Wee, and Pee ignored him as they continued pampering them, so they remained calm.

Then, several octaves deeper than Cameroon, he spoke, "I am Animus, your masseur."

"Animus?"

"Animus."

"Is that your name or how you're feeling?" Sara joshed, causing a five-girl giggle.

Without expression, he slid a colossal index finger over his lips and blew that "shush" sound. He gently took Sara's hand and smoothly led her into the car's next room.

This small room had a massage table, a freestanding phonograph, and a stand holding several bottles of scented oil.

Animus handed Sara a bath towel and said, "Undress, then cover yourself with this. I will return in two minutes."

Two minutes later, he returned, tapped the massage table with one of his dinner plate-sized paws, and Sara climbed aboard. She then received a masterful massage. Animus repeated that “shush sound” every time she spoke.

“Not much to say,” She thought.

She had no idea about Animus’s many skills, ranging from murder to hijacking coaches and trains without being seen.

After her body-melting massage, Animus left for several minutes for her to dress. When he returned, he led her back into the lounge car. He then repeated this procedure for the other beauties.

“He’s no conversationalist,” Sara told Dotty as he escorted Elizabeth into the massage room. Yet he almost smiled when she added, “But he has magical hands!”

Afterward, the beauties played music tubes on the phonograph.

They would only meet one other person while aboard this train. This was a small, bent-over fellow who looked older than Methuselah.

Unlike Animus, Dr. Levi knocked before entering. “Hello, girls. I am your dentist. My job is fixing, cleaning, and whitening your teeth before we reach New Orleans.”

One at a time, he led them into the first room of the next car. It was a tiny dentist's office where he expertly cleaned their teeth and filled their cavities with silver.

Once finished, he offered each dancer this unique opportunity: “Hey, Sweetie, let's slip into my room for real fun. It's just on the other side of that door.” Each girl reluctantly declined.

Around sunset, Cameroon returned for “Announcements.”

“♪We will arrive with the morning sun ♪”

at Crosswinds Plantation, where everything is fun♪.”

“♪Then Ty Cross, such a lovely man, ♪will sail in around ten ♪
♪ Since he is your biggest fan, you must look as fine as you can ♪
♪To look your best, go to bed, and get plenty of rest♪.”

“At least he tries,” Elizabeth sympathized.