

Episode 6
North Orleans Naval Base
March 8th, 1885, 8 AM

Several hours before Ty met his pampered pretties, Marshal Clyde Dupree pounded on the caboose door for several minutes. “Hey, y’all, it’s 8:03; the whole plumb day is wastin’ away! He-he, ha-ha!”

Before Colin and Lemont responded, Tesla met the Marshal outside.

“Marshal Dupree?”

“Yes’um, last time I checked.”

“Who might you be, fine sir?”

“Last time I checked Nicola Tesla.”

“You don’t look girly. Mind if I call you Nicky?”

“Yes, I do,” Tesla replied, which Clyde somehow took as, “Fine, call me Nicky.”

“Goody-goody. I like get’n off to a fine start.”

Clyde stepped back and gazed at the ORPH’s five extra-low cars.

“Dang beat the Dutch!”

“Did dem big wigs in Washington build des fancy roll’n wonder for you?”

“Well, they own it, but I built it.”

“You built this, Nicky?”

“This is my sixth one.”

“It’s slicker than a row of greased piglets!”

“Why is it so low?”

“To move around curves at higher speeds, without derailing.”

“You’re not from New Orleans, are you?” Tesla asked.

“How could ya tell?”

“A guess, I ‘spose,” Tesla answered as his eyes rolled.

“Iz from Mountain City, Tennessee, bout ten miles south of Damascus,” Clyde replied as if everyone knew Damascus, Tennessee.

“Been here’n Norleans since 67.”

“I’m the first Confederate soldier to become a US Marshal after the war.”

“Good for you.”

Still staring down the ORPH, Clyde said, “Dang, Nicky, you’re one smart feller. My mama, Tilly, invents stuff, too.”

“My mother, Duka, also invents. What did your mother Tilly invent?” Tesla asked.

“Ah, mostly new vittles.”

“Vittles?”

“Her upside-down lemon cake is world-famous.”

“Oh, how clever, Marshal.”

“Yes, sir, mama is the real deal! She even invented the upside-down cake by accident!”

“What did your mama invent?”

“Mostly appliances.”

“Appliances?” Clyde, who had never heard that word before, asked.

“Cooking equipment,” Nicola answered.

“Like what, Nicky?”

“Have you seen a hand-cranked batter-beater?”

“Dang! Small world! Mama uses dem doohickies!”

“Anywho, why do you need a train that moves so fast?”

“Sixty miles an hour for too long encourages venereal diseases.”

“I did not know that.”

“These trains are designed to rush damaged orphan children to the hospital in a big hurry.”

“Dang, Washington gives you fellers the fastest-speed machine while they give me a rotten wagon and an old mule.”

“This ORPHS has many hidden surprises, like an upside-down lemon cake,” Tesla almost sarcastically replied.

“Hidden layers?”

“ORPHS could hide systems that could wipe out a full regiment.”

“Why would they want sick orphan babies blasted full regiments?”

“Not sure, Marshal; I’ll keep that in mind as I build number seven.”

Clyde whipped out his pencil and notebook.

“Does ya spell Tester, t-e-s-t-e-r?”

“That’s close enough.”

“You any relation to dem, Tester glue people?”

“I don’t think so.”

“Dey make glue out of old horses.”

“Oh, I ’spose’ that’s better than making glue out of dead people,”
Tesla played.

“Hum, human Glue? You got something there, Nicky.”

“Really?”

“When dey buries dead folks round here; damn-dest thing, they float
back up. Like God himself spits’em out.”

“I learn something daily; I can now retire.”

“You’re funny, Nicky.”

“Wait till you meet these characters.”

“Okie-Dokie.”

“On the Telly-bone, Commander Hayes said yawl, undercover
chase’n hot girls.”

“That’s a way of putting it.”

“But wheels like des going to attract eyeballs everywhere.”

“True, but this mean-looking black is about to be painted white with big red crosses and the words Orphan Ambulance. It keeps them away.”

“Ha-ha-ha,” Clyde chuckled.

“Bama boys be hunt’n hot Norleans girls since little Georgie chopped that cherry tree. They’d stone dem dirty boys in Mountain City with brick bibles.”

“These girls we hunt are not here by choice.”

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“I know dey was nabbed; just pulling your leg, Nicky.” Tesla now knew what that meant.

Suddenly the caboose door pooped open, then Colin and Lemont stumbled out.

“Double Damn Dang! You must be Mr. Freeman.”

“Yes, I’m Lieutenant Commander Lemont Freeman.”

“Ohhhh, your Commander said yous a biggin’!”

“I’d bet you dangle a trunk.”

“What?” Lemont responded.

“Jest thank’n out loud.”

“I’m Marshal Dupree of the Norleans Federal Office.”

Then he turned to Colin. “Howdy, who might you be?”

“McLaughlin, Colin McLaughlin,” Lemont said before whispering to Nicola, “That is not a Norleans accent.”

“You one of dem vagitarians?” Dupree asked Colin.

“No, I eat meat like a real man.”

“Dat's what I said! He-he-ha-ha!”

“Mind if I call you Cole?”

“No!” (Meaning yes, I mind).

“Goody, I know yawl here vestogatin’ some snatched girls.”

“If they are here, I know who knows where.”

“Well, let's go squeeze him!” Lemont replied.

“He is she; making her talk is like as milk’n a bull.”

“She?”

“Yes’um. A Cajan priestess, tied to almost every big-time crime tween here and Jamaicer.”

“How has she not been locked away?”

“Cause she casts vile curses. No one will testify.”

“Vile curses?” Tesla asked.

“Oh, yes’um.”

“How is she connected to these kidnappings?”

“Dat hair-doer lady worked for her. She used that old fort you fellers blasted this morning to spruce up some girls 12 days ago. Likely dem girls ain’t the ones you’ll seek since yours was just nabbed the night before last.”

“A reasonable deduction,” Tesla offered.

“We did not blast anything; we just arrived here an hour ago,” Colin blurted.

“Okie-Dokie. If you say so.”

“Anywho, Hayes says all des ladies are connected.”

“Just tell us what you know,” Colin prodded.

“Nearly two weeks back, the 8th precinct coppers picked up dat Jamaican hair-due lady on suspicion of mug’n an old bitty in the Frenchy.”

“A what, in what?”

“A granny in the French Quarter. Dats a Norleans ward,” he answered.

“Okay.”

“The bitty was clunked from behind, so nobody saw the culprit. When da local cops arrived, dat hair lady was the only suspicious individual in the area.”

“They searched her for da old lady’s ring and the dollar and forty-four cents.”

“Da lady had no ring, but she had \$200 cash.”

“Dat’s a year’s pay for dem-kind down here.”

“Dem local boys smelled foul, so they called me in. My federal office is right next door.”

“Da victim was recovering, but dey told er dat she was murdered for her \$200. Dat if she cain’t explain how she had it, she’d hang,” the constitutional approach.

“She say’d a masked man paid her to do up four ladies. She had to act like she cain’t speak English.”

“Like most non-Ohioans,” Colin thought.

“She said he locked her in a cargo coach; she could not see until he let her out already inside an old jail an hour later. She doesn’t know where she was, but one cell had a full lady parlor.”

“Dey wez four white ladies, three was yellor, one was rusty, and all were Yanks.

“I got the Yanks part,” Lemont said.

Tesla translated, “He meant three bonds and a redhead.”

“Dat’s what I said.”

“Oh, the masked man brought in one girl at a time.”

“Den, afterward, the masked feller took her home.”

“Dem local cops did not charge her with murder since she did not harm old bitty. But locked-up Yankee girls sound like a state line crossing, so dey asked ta see if I wanted to interrogate.”

“Instead, I had dem order her to stay in town so I could tail her. Dats my specialty.”

“Anywho, I followed her to dat Cajun witch’s house.”

“The next day, I went by her hair shop and apartment; dey both was empty and up fer rent.”

“But guess who owns that property?”

“That Voodoo lady,” Nicola responded.

“Yes’um, Lady Azacca.”

“Magic almost works by tricking people,” Tesla added.

Lemont responded, “When I was ten, I lived in the French Quarter behind a huge mansion. Cajan witches were scaring the crap out of people around here back then.”

“Anywho, when your commander said northern girls, I made this connection.”

“I’d bet my wife dat Lady Azacca knows where your girls are. But milking gators is harder den squeez’n facts from Lady Azacca.”

“You can’t milk gators; they are not mammals,” Tesla remarked.

“Dats, why it’s so hard. Da cops fear her. They say she can turn men into lizards.”

“Just tricks,” Tesla repeated.

“Ain’t heard no tricks. If yawl’s ladies are here, I recon she knows where.”

“I just hope y’all bought enough Yankee magic to make her talk.”

“Our tricks came from Croatia,” popped Colin.

“Where?”

“A magical kingdom in the old world.”

“Alrighty, Cole, hope dey work.”

While pointing at Lemont, Tesla asked Clyde, “Why did you not give him a new name?”

“Lemont is a manly name; nothin’ ta fiddling with.”

“What’s wrong with my name?” Colin asked Lemont.

Lemont replied, “Calm down there, Cole. If you were named Clyde, you would also take it out on others.”

“Dang! Mr. Lemont,” Clyde said as Lemont stretched and yawned.
“You’re big enough to be a circus lure!”

“The Freak Show,” Colin whispered.

“You could probably carry Old Tinker,” Clyde said as he pointed at his old mule.

“Good thing we ain’t in Mountain City. He could only go downhill, hauling us.”

“Good thing.”

“Tinker should be fine fer today; he’s only going bout a mile with ferries. I reckon Norleans has more ferries den any town in America.”

“Ferries?” Colin asked.

“I think he means Ferry boats,” Tesla remarked.

“Yessum, ferry boats.”

“Azacca lives a half a block from da dock. If the ferries ain’t backed up, we’ll be there in 45 minutes.”

“Me and da Tinkster are ready.”

“I need breakfast,” Lemont demanded as Colin prepared to take a leak beside their low-slung caboose.

“Stop, don’t piss on those wheels! Two hundred volts can instantly cook Tallywackers!” Tesla warned.

A moment later, Lemont and Colin were back inside the caboose.

“I can’t believe you did not have food service repair the ORPH. That’s not like you!” Colin told his partner.

“I never tell them to stock ORPHS; that’s their job; they just do it.”

“There is a case of canned fish; it must be Nicola’s,” Colin said as he grabbed a can.

“I love red salmon from the can; what kind is it,” Lemont asked.

“Just says, ‘Fish,’” Colin answered as he removed a couple.

Lemont gagged as one of Duka Tesla’s can openers then penetrated the lid.

“How can he tolerate this stench?” Lemont asked as he gagged.

“That smells delicious; I think it is Scioto River carp. I grew up on it,” Colin replied.

“Makes me gag.”

“Eat up, my man. Carp is good for you,” Colin said as he took a big bite, which made Lemont heave.

“Yum-yum, this will also make you grow big and strong, just like me.”

“I think you mean smelly and shriveled.”

“Look, Nicky also left a can of crackers on the floor,” Colin said as he handed Lemont that gallon-sized container.

“I don’t care for crackers,” Lemont added.

“Complain, complain. They don’t care for you either.”

“Just hold your nose and pretend it’s your mama’s buttery flapjacks drenched in maple syrup!” Colin suggested.

“Your breath reeks.”

About three minutes later, Yeager entered the caboose. “God, this car stinks. You need to air it out!” He said as he frantically fanned his hands.

“We got Tesla’s fish and crackers; help yourself,’ Colin told Yeager.

“Oh, hell no, he doesn't eat that crap; he feeds that to stray cats at the Westinghouse factory.”

“Too bad you boys got to run off to find those girls.”

“That’s what we do, man?”

“Admiral Forti invited all of us to his Saturday officer’s brunch.”

“It has waffles, pork chops, beef steaks, omelets, sausage, country gravy, biscuits, shrimp, crawfish, and pastries.”

“Let’s eat before we leave. I function far better that way,” Lemont decided.

Yeager asked. “He said it opens at 10:45. When will you return?”

“When is it over?” Lemont asked.

“Noon.”

Lemont opened the door and asked Clyde, “How long will this take?”

“Oh, I spose 3 to 4 hours, any-who.”

Lemont then dumped Tesla’s crackers and handed the can to Yeager. “Fill this with biscuits, sausages, and maybe some steak when we return.”

The cocky pilot responded. “I’m not your assistant. I got you invited; it’s not my fault if you don’t show up.”

Clyde added from the doorway, “Don’t worry, Norleans has plenty of great restaurants.”

“In our rush to leave yesterday, I left my wallet in my locker,” Lemont commented.

Colin added, “I’ve never seen you forgetful. Don’t worry, I have a crisp hundred-dollar bill in my boot.”

“We’ll get the finest lunch in town after we shake down that voodoo witch.”

“I’ll pay you back.”

“My treat.”

As he squeezed his nostrils to down a whole can of fish, Lemont told himself, “If Michigan and Kentucky were the cookies, Ohio would be the tasty cream filling in between.”

“Good. Now that’s how you do it!” Colin responded.

As Clyde, Cole, Nicky, and Lemont climbed aboard Old Tinker’s wagon, Colin asked, “Are you sure this is a federal issue?”

“The wagon or Tinker?”

“Both!”

“Yessum, dey belong to Uncle Sam.”

Looking back at their ORPH, then down at his wagon, Clyde added, “Dang, well, your rail ride looks angry. Does it bite?”

“Only if agitated,” Tesla replied.

“Dem Washington boys are still pissy bout the war they started. You Yanks get sweet rides while I get an old mule.”

“I’d bet they even pay y’all more than \$20 monthly.”

“Well, they adjust for Ohio’s high cost of living,” Lemont offered.

Once seated, Clyde asked, “Y’all want to take the scenic route?”

“What on the scenic route?”

“Yesterday, a parade of naked ladies protesting popped up.”

“What were they protesting?”

“I wasn’t checking out da signs, He, He, Ha, Ha.” Clyde chuckled.

Since this was Nicky and Cole’s first time in ‘Norleans,’ they agreed on the scenic route.

Clyde was pulling legs; there was only one direct route to Lady Azacca’s home. About ten minutes later, Tinker pulled them aboard a ferry boat.

As they cruised, “Hey, Nicky?”

“Yes, Marshal.”

“You done been round the world, right?”

“Well, I’d say halfway, but I’m done.”

“Been to France?”

“I’ve spent several months there.”

“I heard dey got feller, can fart at will, over and over and over again.”

As Freeman and Mclaughlin cracked up, Tesla calmly responded.
“Yes, Le Pétomane.”

“Lee Peterman?”

“Close enough, he is the inventor of the ‘Anus Flute.’”

“Angus Flute?”

“No anus, as in butthole; he is the only man able to play one, so it has no market potential.”

“Valuable stuff, Nicky,” Lemont injected.

“Don’t be so negative, Big Boy; I bet you could play one,” Colin responded.”

“Le Pétomane is one of the biggest stars in Paris.”

“I saw him perform his Colonic Concerto at the Hôtel de Bourgogne’s theater,” Tesla added. “He sells out every show, weeks in advance.”

“Must be a tightly packed house,” Colin inserted, breaking Lemont up.

Clyde responded, “I’d like to see dat.”

Anyways. Lady Azacca’s French Quarter home was close enough to see the river from her balcony. This large square house was covered in ornate wrought iron inside and out.

Because local and federal marshals have never been able to get information from her, they decided to use the semi-valid excuse of an Ohio musician trying to find his abducted girl.

Lady Azacca knew Clyde, so he and Tinker parked beside the river (a block away) as the three men from ORPHAN walked to her house.

Clyde used a bible to cover his face as he napped.

After several minutes of pounding on Lady Azacca's iron security door, they finally heard, "Go Away!" from the other side.

"Lady Azacca, if you help me find my abducted girl, I will pay you!"

"Go away!" She repeated.

"Look, here is a one-hundred-dollar bill for the information I need," Colin offered, causing a concerned look on Lemont's face.

No reply.

He offered it again.

"Is it real?"

"As the sun."

"Hold it against the window."

About 10 seconds later, she opened the solid oak inner door to face them through the bars of that ornate iron security door.

"Slide the money through the bars," she said, "then I will tell you what you need to know."

“Tell me first, then I will slide it through.”

“I’m not the fool here! Pay first!”

Colin made a whopping income for 1885 so that crisp \$100 bill wasn’t important, so he slid it through the bars.

“With the bill in hand, she looked Colin up and down, and revealed, “Even fools come in pretty packages!” The inner door slammed, then bolted.

Colin looked at Lemont, “That turd just stole my money!”

“My lunch!”

He looked at Lemont, “Your turn, Hercules. Go get her.”

“Stay out here, Nicola,” the giant agent warned.

His cigar-sized fingers wrapped around the iron bars (molded into snakes with snapping jaws). He then tore that wrought iron door up as if it were made of glass.

Nicola slipped a wrought iron snakehead into a pocket as Lemont’s vast left shoulder flattened the thick oak inner door.

Colin and Lemont then entered with their fancy new guns in hand.

Lady Azacca seemed alone in her main room, seated on an ornate gold-plated iron throne. She appeared in a trance, mumbling something that made no sense to either agent.

Then she looked through them and yelled, “Cops! Leave or die!”

“No cops here; we are musicians.”

“You lie!”

“Look, lady, we are trying to find his abducted girlfriend. We mean you no harm. Our music raises money for poor orphan children,” Lemont claimed.

“Lies! I can smell cops from a mile away.”

“No, that is canned carp.”

She reached into a shelf beside her and grabbed a crate packed with little dolls. She grabbed the biggest one and then started reciting something in French.

The doll was a thick, dark fellow with brown pants and a beige shirt, which Lemont and thousands of other Big Black men wore in 1885.

She held it out for Lemont to see as she yelled (in English), “This proves I knew cops were coming!”

Then, she removed a long, sharp needle from the box. “Now, die like a pig!” she yelled as she stuck the doll in its back.

A crushingly intense back spasm suddenly bent Lemont over. “Get me out of here!” he yelled to Colin.

He helped Lemont out the front porch, and Tesla helped him straighten up. After seeing him improve, Colin headed back in.

“Look, lady, we did not come here to harm you; I must rescue my girl. You said you would give me the information I need for my money, so keep your word.”

“I told you what you need to know—that you are a fool!” she said as she shuffled for a doll that resembled Colin. Get out; your fat friend

got lucky. That needle was dull and did not penetrate. This one is new—it will slide all the way through!”

“Please, be reasonable; just one simple question. I gave you a hundred dollars!”

She held her big needle up like a dagger, “LEAVE NOW OR DIE!”

“All right, all right! Calm down, lady! Give me a few seconds.”

“You have five! Four, Three,” Colin ran back out the front door.

“We are not going to get anything from that wicked bitch,” Colin told them.

Tesla asked the upset agents, “Would you gentlemen mind if I take a shot at her?”

Lemont, who could now stand upright again, looked at Colin and Tesla. “Sure, professor, go for it.”

“I know you’re hungry; I should be quick,” he told Lemont as he confidently approached the door.

“He’s kinda cocky,” Colin told Lemont.

When Tesla entered her space, he stood before her, pleasantly smiling at her as she swore a storm.

After 30 seconds, his happy expression turned into an angry scowl.

Then he growled: “Vous etes un-Faux Mambo! Si tu étais vrai, tu saurais qui je suis!”

(You are a fake Priestess! If real, you would know who I am!)”

She went silent as she stared at him, but nothing registered.

He then slowly raised his arm, sort of like a Hitler salute.

Both tough former prize fighters, still crouching in the doorway, nearly squirted when they heard the blast from Tesla's hand firing a lightning bolt into the fancy iron molding above her head.

About a second later, the Cajun crime queen was on the floor kissing Nicola's shoes, pleading, "Zula Merveilleux, pardonne mi!"
(Wonderful Zula, forgive me).

Still in French, he told her, "The truth brings you forgiveness. A lie will be your end! Tell me where this man's lady friend is right now!"

"She is at the Crosswinds Plantation on Lake Pontchartrain!"

Tesla stepped back, dropped the smoking iron snakehead from his still outstretched arm, turned, and walked out.

From the floor, she cried, "The Truth is Told! The Truth is Told!"

"Your girlfriend is at Crosswinds Plantation, on Lake Pontchartrain," he told the squeamish superspies from ORPHAN.

"Where is Lake Pontchartrain?" Colin asked.

"About five miles north of here. It's about twenty-five miles across; you had to see it on the map of New Orleans if you looked," Lemont scolded.

"Oh yeah, right, that big lake," he said before asking, "Nicola, did you get my hundred dollars back?"

“You did not ask me to retrieve anything more than location information. But since you have such a tough time handling that 90-pound old woman, I’ll go get your money.”

“Never mind, we must get to that plantation before they move them.”

“Damn,” Lemont said as his stomach growled. “What did you do to make her talk?” he asked Tesla as they started jogging back toward Clyde and Tinker.

“She did not know who I was, so I called her an imposter.”

“An imposter?”

“Yes, an imposter.”

“That made her talk?”

“That plus draining a battery into the iron molding above her. She suddenly realized I’m the Wonderful Zula, the god in charge of lightning bolts.”

“Damn, wild man.”

“It’s a prehistoric trick. The first guy to start a fire played pranks on everyone until he burned his forest down. I just updated it.”

“How did you make lightning bolts?”

“You know those snaps you get when pulling off a sweater?”

“Yeah.”

“I just amplify them a few thousand times.”

“Where did you learn how to do that?”

“When I was seven, I devised it to keep bullies away.”

“Did it work?”

“I stopped getting wedges, and they started soiling themselves.”

“How does he know this stuff?” Collin asked Lemont.

Lemont tossed his hands and said, “Ask him.”

As they approached Clyde and Tinker, the hungry agent instructed, “We call Hayes first.”

“We’ll need a swift boat. You think they have boats at the navy base?”
Colin sarcasm.

“Hayes is not going to be happy about you blasting that fort. He does not even want us to display our pistols unless we are threatened.”

“Not if we are attacked, first.”

“No one attacked you; you just blasted Morocco’s property with a howitzer.”

“I opened one little gate with no one around. No one was hurt, and I proved we were on the right track. Look how much we learned.”

“Hayes should give me an award. He won’t even know unless someone here tells him.”

Lemont said, “Don’t be so sure. Clyde knew when we got here.”

“A lucky guess.”

At 11:43, they woke Clyde back up.

Tinker and the ferry boat had them back at the navy base at 12:15 AM, fifteen minutes after the Officer's brunch was cleared.

ORPHAN Control
March 8th, 1885, 11:15 AM

“YOU BOMBED A FOREIGN CONSULATE! WHAT THE HELL DID YOU THINK YOU WERE DOING!” Hayes's first words after answering Lemont's call.

“There was no one there. We proved that those big men and some northern ladies were recently held there. We could not have discovered this unless we entered.”

“Did you forget the lessons on picking locks?”

“That supposedly empty fort has a fresh beauty salon inside a cage. We also found a box of old corroded shackles that Colin's hands could break.”

“That answers some questions.”

“The only person there was an old guard at its riverside gate. Colin made up a story trying to enter. The guard did not care; he only allowed authorized people to enter.”

“What cover?”

“He said his Chihuahua ran under the gate. So, he asked the only guard there to let him in to find it. It did not work.”

“How lame. That guard would not have let him in even if he believed that crap.”

“Well, he had a better shot of asking that than asking for missing girls.”

“Indeed.”

“We got in and proved that you were correct. All we did was break a gate, which was not even guarded.”

“I’d bet you didn’t know about Colin blasting that fort until you heard it happen.”

“What makes you think so, Boss?”

“You would have called me first. Colin can be a loose cannon; this case is too personal. I should have kept him here.”

“Boss, since the Moroccans appear chin-deep in this, I doubt they will ever mention it.”

“Ah, we would just deny involvement.”

“What else have you found?”

“You know the old pun, so close yet far away?”

“Sure, what do you mean?”

“I believe ah, Nicky, figured out where they are.”

“Who’s Nicky?”

“That is what Marshal Clyde calls Nicola.”

“Where are they?”

“A plantation called Crosswinds on Lake Pontchartrain. It is about three miles from here. The place has a private train station.”

“What is so far away about it?”

“It's on the other side of the river, 436 miles away by rail.” The nearest bridge is over two hundred miles north of here. We crossed it early this morning to be on the side of that fort and this navy base.”

“Son, they have something down there called boats. Admiral Forti will get you across the river. ORPH Six is so loud it couldn't sneak up on the deaf asylum.”

“It does scream like an angry beast, sir.”

“I recall Crosswinds. When I was president, I approved it as Tyberia's US embassy; they only run a tiny office in DC.”

“Anyways, Crosswinds is where Tyberia's President, Tyberious Cross, directs his American interests.”

“I've read his dossier. He inherited the world's largest shipping company and dozens of industrial enterprises. He was suspected as a major Confederate contributor during the war,” Lemont recalled.

“Before the war, he bought three dozen Eastern Caribbean islands from France. He renamed them after himself (Tyberia) and then appointed himself president.”

“There is a story that his great-grandfather buried a massive load of treasure on those islands,” Lemont recalled.

“Up here, Cross is the CEO of Cross Rail Car Corporation,” Hayes inserted.”

“Anyway, we have a big problem if they are at Crosswinds. We cannot blast our way into an embassy; that is an act of war.”

“Boss, if another nation kidnaps our citizens in our country, is not that an act of war?”

“That is for judges to determine.”

“If he is abducting Americans, the US Navy could sink his islands,” Freeman suggested.

“Admiral Forti will supply all the water transportation you need. And Marshal Doofus will provide city transportation.”

“You mean Marshal Dupree?”

“That’s what I said.”

“He has a rotten old wagon with a matching mule.”

“Great, you have already handed city transportation.”

“Hum.”

“I need full reconnaissance of Crosswinds before we can plan a rescue. You must verify the girls' presence before I would consider that.”

“Certainly.”

“I recall that Crosswinds has a ship dock along the river. I don’t have my map in front of me; I’m at Ivonta’s desk.”

“Dupree says it has a two-level dock. But on that lake, not the river. There is a canal from the river to Crosswinds.”

“Do they fish that lake?”

“They did when I lived here.”

“We need a good look at that Crosswinds from the water.”

“As soon as I get upstairs, I’ll call the Admiral.”

“I’ll have him set you up with a civilian boat and sailors who know the area.”

“Before Colin even thinks of blasting his way in, I want to hear your report.”

“Yes Boss.”

“Hopefully, Admiral Forti can provide a fishing boat immediately.”

“Yes, Boss.”

“Since it’s just you three agents and the marshal, any raid should be conducted by Admiral Forti’s men if we get that far.

“Yes, Boss.”

“Call me as soon as you check Crosswinds out.”

“Yes, Boss. I better run!”

“I’m heading upstairs to call Admiral Forti right now. Hayes out.”