



## The Pursuit Continues

**September 25, 1860**

The night is a mighty cloak and I take great advantage of it in order to evade my pursuer. I cut through Reverend Geddes' property on Colborne Street and hide myself in the nearby wood at James and Lind Streets. The stranger pauses at James and turns about, unsure of my path. A twig snaps under my foot, the sound carried on the wind. His head pivots in my direction and I see a metallic glint at his hand. I head deeper into the small wood then emerge on Hughson Street, aiming for the stable just beyond Juson's Nail Factory. I must confound my dark gentleman. Time, time, stay your hand!



## The Dismal Hour

**August 4, 1854**

Flies are the angels of death. They are on the eyelashes and lips of the recently deceased. They huddle and crawl at the edges of sick room windows and fill the grief-stained air with a maddening drone. They cling to my soiled hands as I care for patients stricken by the cholera that came ashore unbidden two scant months ago. So many patients, so many flies. This morning Thomas O'Shea, a fine Irish tinsmith, was hale and ruddy-cheeked. This evening his body – spent now of spasm – is stiff, his skin blue and taut on his face. His death is certain – all but the last of his bodily fluids have fled, as will soon his soul. I have done all I can do, but my bleedings and compounds have been of little use. I am of little use. Outside his Corktown dwelling a hasty coffin leans against the wall, ready. I note it when I leave, his family's lamentations in my ears. In the coming days, many of them will also fall, as quickly, as dreadfully, with fewer to mourn the emptying abode of the innocent and doomed. I ride to the northwest through the choking dust of the dry summer streets. A dull patina covers this cursed city like a shroud. Out on York Road, a steady procession of wagons filled with the wrapped dead slouches towards the lime pits of Burlington Heights. There, the bodies are dumped and

quickly covered before the pestilence can make its way back along that weary road. I pause, my hat upon my heart and turn away. One more patient, his only hope his Redeemer, awaits, then I head home to my good wife and my darling daughter – two bright doves in this dismal hour.



## The Chess Game

**September 8, 1858**

I moved a pawn of my own forward, black to MacDonald's white. "And what is it that you wish to say?" I asked, though I feared I knew the matter.

"Your theories, Tiberius," MacDonald said. "How far have you taken them?" Another pawn advanced.

"My calculations ..."

"Please," he said, "your move."

"Sir," I said, for I could not contain myself in the presence of my great friend. "I have designed the most remarkable gearing, built upon the Fibonacci series." I brought a knight forward.

"And these gears are capable of what, in theory?" My mentor countered with a knight of his own.

"Offsets of space, and time. These devices, I call them nautilus gears, are meshed. The left rotates at a constant rate, the right skips forward in perfect synchronicity, never losing contact with its twin, but jumping harmonic to harmonic!" I brought a bishop into battle. "Provided, of course, that sufficient electrical forces might be brought to bond the gear pair to the ebb and flow of our normal time and space." The good doctor mirrored my bishop, then lit a fresh cigar.

"Hickson knows what you are about," he said through a wreath of smoke. "It was as plain as the ruddy nose on your face. So let us abandon this game and I will ask you directly. When did you first let the gears dip into the stream of time and space?"



## The Last Doll

**August 5, 1854**

The morning following the death of Thomas O’Shea, I awoke to my daughter Miranda playing with her two porcelain dolls, Alice and Jane, from which she was inseparable. My wife had already been out delivering a wholesome broth to a neighbour on Catharine Street. She was removing her bonnet as I came into our small kitchen. She sat heavily at the table and smiled at Miranda, who was hosting a tea party for the dolls. Then she closed her eyes, shivered and slid sideways on the back of her chair. I was at her side in an instant. I caught her as she turned away from the table and was ill upon the floor. Miranda dropped the dolls in horror, shattering Alice’s head. I carried my poor wife to bed and closed the curtains. It was, I told myself, her exhaustion, something she ate. “Mama is poorly,” I told my daughter, frozen at the doorway. “Fetch my bag from the hallway, then go see Mrs. MacKenzie and visit a while.” The dear child returned with my bag, clutching solitary Jane in her other hand.

I stayed with Adelaide all that day and into the evening. It was happening, but I could not bear to acknowledge it was happening. It tore my heart to tatters to perform venesection on my wife, to see her precious life blood fill my metal bowls, to watch the calomel and quinine perform their brutal alchemy on her frail, failing frame. But it was all the physic I could muster from my savage art – that and my prayers to a God I saw receding with each mumbled syllable of desperate pleading.

Near 11 p.m. she rallied a little and beckoned across the room. “In the drawer,” she said with great effort, as if dragging stones from a deep ocean. “Bring it to me.” I opened the drawer. In the back was a small dove-tailed and mahogany box I had not seen before. I quickly pressed it into her hands. She smiled, her lips thin and pale against the blue-tinged skin of her lovely face. “It was for your birthday, two months hence. Take it with you always. Heed it.” She handed me the box. Inside was a golden pocket watch. I opened it and saw a photograph of my darling pressed into the lid. A half-hour later she was still and I was alone and adrift, my sobbing head upon her chest and the watch clasped to my heart.

Oh reader, my grief crushed me like a giant’s hand and wracked my body with spasms I could scarce control. Later, I know not how long exactly, I heard a sound at our bedroom door. Mrs. MacKenzie was there, Miranda’s last doll hanging from a pale hand. The good woman met my gaze, a wail beyond redemption filling the room like the buzzing of flies.



## Endgame

**September 8, 1858**

I abandoned all pretense of the chess game and slumped in my seat. “Not time and space, no – space only,” I offered weakly.

“I thought as much,” said MacDonald. “You did not speak as a man of theory earlier, but as a man of action, a foolhardy man of action.”

“It works, sir, it works!” I replied. “I have crafted small, crude nautilus gears, induced them with electromotive force and have shifted a small device a full inch across my lab bench! First it is here,” I grasped a pawn and propelled it forcefully a square forward, “and then here, in the blink of an eye, with no intermediate motion!”

“Instantaneous transportation across space!” exclaimed my mentor, excited despite himself. “But here I must concur with Hickson. It seems impossible! You claim to journey in time as well! I fear for your sanity, sir!

“Fear not, my friend, it is as I have said, and my grey matter is sound. One day soon I will show you.”

“Until that day I shall have to trust your word. But, Tiberius, you have tipped your hand about this supposed miracle of science to a man of war and a friend of one of our country’s great railway barons. And, angered him in the mix. Think what you have done. If it works, your scheme could unseat the entire transportation industry at a single blow!”

“Spatial transference is a mere side effect,” I argued. “I aim to conquer time itself. I care not a fig for Hickson or Buchanan nor their hulking metal beasts of burden and infernal devices!”

“Nevertheless, Tiberius, I have heard that Hickson, though a lumbering old soldier, is still a crack shot. And you, sir, have placed yourself squarely in his sights.”

