

Thursday, May 31; London; 10 AM

Giles stood outside his brother's office, wishing he could be somewhere else -- anywhere else. He remembered his brother and sister's rage when they realized that Lena had slipped through their fingers once again.

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When they had regained consciousness, it took the three of them to realize what had happened. He was all for calling his brother there and then, but -- as usual -- Desdemona had overruled him. She told the driver to get them to the compound as fast as he could; they would call Jacques from there.

Once they arrived, he went to his quarters, leaving his sister to break the news. He freshened up, then went to the study, and found Dez there, her back to him, still on the phone, whining that it wasn't her fault. He could hear his brother's voice all the way across the room and knew that he was furious. He quietly left before she could discover his presence and try to make him talk to Jacques.

He went to the library where the staff brought him some coffee and crumpets. He helped himself, and sat in his favorite chair, to await his sister. Ten minutes later, she walked in and sat down nearby.

"Jacques is furious, and it's all your fault."

"My fault? How on earth could it be my fault?"

"Why didn't you do something? I can't think of everything, you know."

"Oh, come now, Dez. For once in your life. . ."

"Shut up, Giles. I'm not in the mood to hear it." She helped herself to some coffee. "Anyway, Jacques wants to see you in his office tomorrow. And he wants every detail about what happened."

"You were on with him long enough. Didn't he get everything from you?"

"He wants to hear about it from you. He was so angry, he probably didn't listen to half of what I said."

Giles sighed and finished his coffee. Then he stood up and headed for the door. His sister's sharp voice stopped him.

"Where do you think you are going?"

His hand on the knob, he turned and said, "To talk to Roland. I want to get his point of view of this whole thing. Perhaps he can furnish us with a description of the cabbie. It pays, sister dear, to get as much information as possible. Oh, and I suggest you spend the night here, instead of returning to whomever your latest paramour is. If Jacques were to find out you returned -- and you know he probably would -- I wouldn't put it past him to have someone pick you up and bring you to him."

She paled at his words, but said nothing. Satisfied, he left.

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Reluctantly, he opened the door and walked in. He winced as his brother looked up at him and said, "Well?" in a clipped tone that told Giles he was still in a foul mood. Assuming an insouciance he was far from feeling, he walked over to the desk and sat down. He gave his brother a detailed -- and accurate -- version of the previous afternoon's events. He also told Jacques what their driver had said when he was questioned.

Jacques sat forward. "So, two black cabs in an area where one is seldom seen, and no one is even a little bit suspicious. And two drivers, whose descriptions would fit half the males in London -- and several females. Why on earth didn't you call from the car instead of waiting until you reached the compound? You wasted precious time by doing that."

Giles shook his head. "I know, and I wanted to, but Dez overrode me -- as usual. I've told you and told you not to mess with Lena Matumbo. She has friends. But would you listen to me? Oh, no. You two know better." He shifted in his seat. "Well, you were wrong and I was right."

"What about her PDA?"

"What?"

"Her PDA. It was in her purse. I gave it to Dez."

Giles frowned. "Whoever rescued her, must have taken it. The purse was gone when we woke up."

"Damn!" Jacques stood up suddenly and began pacing. "That's something else we need to get. That PDA has technology no one else has. I want it!"

Giles said nothing. He sat there, thinking. It was a while before his brother noticed his silence and he stopped in front of him. "Well? Are you just going to sit there like a block of wood? Or don't you have anything to say?"

"Would it matter if I did?"

"Giles." There was a warning in his brother's voice.

"Okay, okay. There is someone else we might try to get. I've heard of someone else affiliated

with Tracy Industries, and he would have far more secrets than Mrs. Matumbo."

"Who?"

"Hiram Hackenbacker."

From: Hobbeth Sent: 11/10/2005

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