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Subject: Re: Another Really Rather Marvellous Chapter...

Posted by [Tikatu](#) on Thu, 19 Jul 2012 04:50:28 GMT

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Will stood beside the control panel for the new boat pen door. "Looks like the surf is risin'," he muttered to himself. "Better get that passageway closed off."

Hitting a series of switches, he listened intently for the door's motors. There was an occasional scrape of metal on rock, and he swore he could see a distance glimmer of light under water disappearing little by little. He was so intent on watching that event, it was understandable that he jumped when the lights all around him went out.

"What the hell..." Will stood still as his surprised oath echoed around the boat pen. He peered back toward where he knew the water was lapping; there was still a sliver of greenish light under the depths. "Damn. It didn't close all the way." With a sigh, he checked his watch. "Time's running out here."

The activation of the emergency lighting didn't faze him, but he started a little at Jeff's voice. "Jeff to boat pen. Are you still down there, Will?"

"Yes, sir!" Will replied, hoping that he didn't need a microphone to respond. "I'm here."

"What's your status?"

"I'm okay, Mr. Tracy, but we may have a problem. When the lights went out, the boat pen door stopped about..." He peered out into the water again. "About three-quarters of the way down."

He could hear Jeff sighing. "Well, we'll have to deal with that later. The problem now is to figure out why the power is out, and see what we can do to bring it back online. As it stands now, the Thunderbirds won't be able to return to base."

"Well, sir, I'd say that the best place to start would be with the lab. Tin-Tin would be most likely to know what's happened."

"Unfortunately, I've tried the lab, and it doesn't seem as if Tin-Tin is in there."

Will frowned. He was beginning to get an inkling of what could have happened, and he didn't like it. "Hm. She'd told me she was running diagnostics on the household systems today, because of the storm. Maybe somethin' turned up."

"The power plant isn't supposed to break down, but that's the only possible answer I can think of." Jeff sounded certain of his idea.

Rubbing the back of his head, Will replied, "Well, sir, there might be a break in the lines somewhere. I think we should start at the power block, in any case. If it's wirin' trouble, we can track it down easier from there."

"Ah, yes. Wiring could be the culprit. Good call, Will." Jeff sounded relieved at the new possibility.

"Can you get there from where you are? There are manually-operated hatches from the boat pen to the monorail line."

Will nodded a second before he realized Jeff couldn't see him. "I can get out into the monorail system, but I'm not sure I can get to the power house from here. I'll give it a try, though." He paused, then asked, "Are you all right, sir?"

"Yes, Will. I'm fine. Callie and I are in the lounge, and we'll be bypassing the automatic doors in a few moments to get out and see who needs help."

A thought struck Will, and he glanced at his watch again. "Sir, are the wrist comms still working?"

There was a long pause, then a chuckle. "You, sir, are a genius. I didn't even think of them. I was caught up in the old intercom." He paused, then added, "The satellite phones are still working, too, but I'm not sure how well they'll do underground."

"Well, then, I'll just call Tin-Tin on my wrist comm, and see where she is. Then we can join forces to track down this outage." Will pulled a flashlight from the equipment locker, then moved toward the hatch, and spun the wheel to unlatch it. "I'm heading for the monorail now, Mr. Tracy. I'll keep you in the loop as soon as I find Tin-Tin."

"F-A-B, Will. Jeff Tracy out."

Turning on the flashlight, Will stepped out into the darkness of the monorail system, closing the hatch securely behind him. The emergency lighting there was sparse, but there was a narrow strip of concrete on either side of the tunnel. He flashed a beam at the square rail that the cars rode on.

"With a power outage, this shouldn't be live," he muttered. "Even so, it's not gonna to be an easy trek."

Lifting his wrist comm to his mouth, he called, "Tin-Tin from Will. Tin-Tin from Will. Where are you, Tin-Tin?"

Tin-Tin nearly jumped out of her skin when the call, sketchy as it was, came through her wrist comm. It was audio only; the power house was heavily shielded, and most of the monitoring equipment inside was hard-wired to the boards in the lab. She got up and moved closer to the door before she replied. "Tin-Tin here, Will. I'm in the power block. There's been an outage... the fuel mix is off."

"I figured it was somethin' like that," Will said, jogging down the grade toward Thunderbird Three's silo. "You stay put. I'm comin' from the boat pen to help."

"How will you get here?" Tin-Tin asked. "The monorail is down."

"Looks like I'll be takin' an up-close-and-personal tour of the island's innards, then," he replied, grinning. "I might need your help to get through a few tight spots."

The monorail's grade became very steep, and Will found the going difficult. Finally, he found a

thick set of sliding doors blocking his way. "Tin-Tin?"

"Yes, Will?" While he had been silent, Tin-Tin had opened up her watch and fine-tuned some controls so that the interference from the thick walls and the natural radiation in the plant would be neutralized.

"I'm at Thunderbird Three's silo, but I can't get in."

She stopped to think, picturing the monorail line in her head. "Is it at the first door from the boat pen, or the second?"

"First."

"Backtrack a little and head for the second entrance. I can help you better from there."

"F-A-B!"

He followed her instructions, backtracking until he found a tunnel that curved away to the left. Taking this route, he found himself on the line going directly from Thunderbird Two's hangar into Thunderbird Three's silo.

"I'm there, Tin-Tin. Now what?"

"To the left of the doors, there should be a manual override that will open the doors for you." She sounded apologetic. "It will mean some heavy cranking, but you won't have to open them far." There was a pause. "In fact, every door has a manual override in roughly the same place. I'll have to see what I can do with the door here."

"That's good to know." Will had managed to pop the cover off, and pulled out the crank within. "I think I need to have a word or two with Brains about this system. There... grunt... has to be a better... groan... way."

Tin-Tin chuckled. "I'm sure there is." She paused. "Once you're inside, there's a platform to your left. That will lead you down to Thunderbird Five's access tunnel."

Will swung over to a ladder set in the rock, and hurried down to the platform. There was a hatch there, not unlike the one at the boat pen. "Whew!" he muttered to himself. "This place has too many doors!" The hatch led him to a steep staircase cut into the rock itself. "Tin-Tin? Where am I going?"

His voice was muffled by the thick rock, but she could still hear it. "This takes you to Thunderbird Three's access tunnel. Just follow that until the end."

The going was easier now; the access tunnel was wide and there was plenty of room to move. Will was happy to be going this way instead of trying to walk along the monorail through Thunderbird Two's cavernous hangar. He remembered that there was no convenient platform on either end of that line.

"Here's a hatch," he said, as much for himself as Tin-Tin. "Where does it lead?"

"Into Thunderbird Two's passenger chute." Tin-Tin sounded distracted; she was busy trying to open the power house door. "There's another emergency hatch just before it enters the hangar. Take that to climb down to the floor. Then up the maintenance vehicle tunnel all the way to the power block." She smiled. "You could even take one of hover bikes. I'm sure you're tired of all this walking."

Will huffed a laugh as he climbed down the ladder to Thunderbird Two's hangar floor. "It's worth it, learnin' my way around the place like this." Now that he was close to his goal, he sprinted across the floor. "I think I will take your advice on the hover bike, though."

He chose one of the red hover bikes, detaching it from its charging unit. All three of the Tracy children had their own, individually painted hover bikes now, with Tyler's being the newest. He smiled as he saw them, then mounted his choice and zipped up the maintenance ramp toward the power block. He sped by the pod vehicle repair area, with its access to the lab. Beyond that, after a couple of sharp bends, lay the power house. There was a vehicle entry way, and after dismounting, he laid the bike down, and went looking for the manual override. "Tin-Tin? I'm at the vehicle entrance to the power block, but I can't find an override..."

Tin-Tin sighed. "There probably isn't one, Will. Not on the outside at least, not there. Probably is one up here, though." She shook her head, even though she knew he couldn't see it. "I'm having trouble with the interior override."

"Then I'll come up through the lab and try it from the outside." Will's voice hardened a little. "And if that doesn't work, I'll grab an oxyhydrite cutter and use that!"

Tin-Tin chuckled. "Hopefully it won't come to that."

Will turned around and headed back to the pod repair bay. The headlights on the hover bike picked out a side door in the tunnel, and he stopped there. "Well, here's a break!" Hopping off the bike again, he popped off the cover, and quickly opened the doors. They put him on the steps going from the lab to the power block, and he took them two at a time, stumbling at one point due to the dim emergency lighting.

"Nearly there, Tin-Tin!" he called into his watch. As he approached the power block, he slowed. He'd been past it many times since he'd started working for the Tracys, but today it was so different. Instead of the deep, throbbing hum he felt whenever he was near it, he felt nothing. Heard nothing. The machine was utterly silent. The lamp post near the monorail platform burned a silent, glaring red, as did the lights outlining the outside of the block. He increased his pace, and headed straight for the manual override panel.

"I'm right outside, Tin-Tin," he said. With a heave, he took the whole panel off bodily, and began to crank. The doors parted, and Tin-Tin appeared, looking oddly pale under the lights. She staggered, and he caught her.

"Sorry," she said, bringing a hand to her forehead. "I'm getting quite a headache."

"What's the problem?" he asked, peering into the darkened room.

"Fuel mix, I think," she mumbled. "Got some odd readings."

Will gave the air a careful sniff, then another. "Fuel leak is more like it," he said. Settling her carefully on the floor, he cranked the doors shut again, then crouched beside her. "I'll have to deal with it later, when Brains comes back. Right now, I need to get you topside, and into the fresh air." He glanced back the way he'd come. "I'd take you outside... damn, the hangar doors aren't working either."

"The sick room." Tin-Tin scrubbed her face with both hands. "It's considered an essential system. Any emergency power would be diverted there."

Will grimaced. "All right, the sick room it is. But you'll have to show me how to get there from here."

Self-guided tour by Tikatu

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