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Chapter 14

My Ticket

MUSIC: (FADE IN) BLIZZARD OF OSBORN THEME

NARRATOR (V.O)

You're listening to The Blizzard of Osborn by Michael Sheen Cuddy.
Chapter 14: My Ticket.

MUSIC: BLIZZARD OF OSBORN THEME (FADE OUT)

Scene One: Ext., railway freight yard – Night.

SOUND: Railway freight yard

CASSIE (whispering)

Quick! In here!

NARRATOR

Cassie whispered and pointed. They ditched into a shed and crouched down under a cracked window. The shed's rusty metal walls were riddled with holes. Peeping through one of the holes Cassie saw the night watchmen climb over the coupling between two tank cars.

MUSIC: (Suspense – fade in at "rusty metal walls" above)

SOUND: footsteps, voices

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NARRATOR (cont.)

One watchman carried a lantern, guiding his coworkers through the dark.

WATCHMAN

Who's there? Identify yourselves now!

NARRATOR

Holding their breath, they stared as they saw the watchmen walk past the shed, shining their lamp under train cars, their voices fading as they paced down the tracks.

SOUND: footsteps, voices fading

MEMYSELFANDI

Oh my—*that* was close! Now what do we do?

SLY

That building over there, the big one, could be a rail barn.

MEMYSELFANDI

Well—so?

SLY

Well maybe there's a vehicle inside we could hot-wire.

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MEMYSELFANDI

That sounds risky. Where there are vehicles there are people. Don't you remember the sign on the boxcar door? I don't even want to think about the punishment for stealing Empire Rail Services property!

SLY

Ever see one of those little non-motorized rail cars? A little platform on wheels, two guys work a lever back and forth see-saw style to drive the thing down the tracks?

CASSIE

I've only seen those in cartoons.

SLY

Yeah well they exist, and one would make a great getaway vehicle. Since it has no motor they might not hear us make our escape.

MEMYSELFANDI

I don't like the sound of '*might not hear us*'.

SLY

Well you don't like much of anything do you?

MEMYSELFANDI

Well I certainly don't like the prospect of 'death by agony'.

SLY

Thing is, if we want to get as far away as fast as possible we need a

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vehicle.

CASSIE

Sly's right. We could at least go over there and have a look. After all, we've got to make some kind of move!

MUSIC: (Suspense)

NARRATOR

So they crept out of the tool shed and made their way across lots cluttered with stacked railroad ties, mounds of discarded cables and heaps of scrap metal.

CASSIE (whispering)

Keep away from the light!

NARRATOR

Cassie pointed at the bright lights shining down from towering poles. So they stayed low and close to the outbuildings as they made their way over to the rail barn. The barn's tall doors were wide open but it was dark inside, too dark to see any vehicles.

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Scene Two: Int., rail barn – Night.

SOUND: Fluorescent buzz, etc.

MEMYSELFANDI

Oh my, it stinks in here!

CASSIE (whispering)

Shhhhh! Be quiet!

ASSAM

SOUND: braying donkey

SLY

Easy fella, easy, Just take it easy.

NARRATOR

Once the donkey saw it was a girl, a cat, a snake and an odd fellow who looked like a big egg he said,

ASSAM

Sorry, I thought you was the lunkheads. Who are yous?

NARRATOR

Of all the strange and wondrous things Cassie had seen since climbing out of the crashed school bus, a talking donkey was no longer remarkable.

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CASSIE

I'm sorry, we didn't mean to startle you. I'm Cassandra, but everybody calls me Cassie. This is my kitty, Jet. This is Sly and this is Memyselfandi.

ASSAM

Oh! My name is Assam. I didn't see Reza so I thought you was the lunkheads.

CASSIE

Who's Reza?

MEMYSELFANDI

And who are the lunkheads?

ASSAM

Reza brought me here, he took me in. The lunkheads? Well now they're another story.

NARRATOR

Cassie glanced around, worried they might be heard. She explained their situation, that they were off to see the Emperor and they had to escape before the night watchmen caught them.

ASSAM

The Emperor? You wouldn't get within a pylon of the Emperor's Command & Control Center!

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CASSIE

Yes we will, I've been sent on a special mission to deliver this to the Emperor.

NARRATOR

Cassie held up the silver rhombus Queen Mavis had given to her.

ASSAM (laughing)

Special mission, I'll bet!

SLY

Hey what's so funny, jackass!

ASSAM

If I had me a glunken for every time I heard somebody say they're gonna go see the Emperor well I'd be a trillionaire.

CASSIE

Well, I bet none of those people were sent by Queen Mavis herself!

ASSAM (laughing)

You have a very vivid imagination Cassie, your fantasies are quite amusing.

NARRATOR

Cassie walked up to Assam, unclasped the silver rhombus from her necklace pouch and twisted it open. Turning the stem clockwise launched a mirrored disk the size of a penny which expanded to the

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size of a quarter, a half-dollar, a silver doubloon. Then the mirror projected a bright 3D image of Queen Mavis herself bestowing the necklace on Cassie.

SOUND: blips, bleats, sproings + echo OM voice from C5-OM:
"The device has now been reset to you. From now on you're the only
one who will be able to open it.")

ASSAM

Well I'll be! I guess I owe you an apology, Cassie. I assumed you was just a dumb kid.

CASSIE

Wow! That's quite an assumption!

ASSAM

Well like I said, a lot of people talk about going to see the Emperor but almost no one ever does. So uh, what's your escape plan?

SLY

Hot-wire a vehicle so we can get as far away as fast as possible.

ASSAM

A vehicle? Now that's the fastest way to get caught! The second them night watchmen hear a motor they goin' be on you like wolves on sheep.

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MEMYSELFANDI

Well what exactly do *you* suggest?

ASSAM

Well, if you can get me to the Emperor, I reckon I can get you out of here . . . mmm, say, sometime tonight!

MEMYSELFANDI

And how exactly do you propose to do that?

ASSAM

I know this desert blindfolded. I've been on every trail from Artulis to Zedland. I can lead you through box canyons, switchbacks, quicksand pits, arroyos—places where *no* vehicle—4-wheel drive or otherwise—will ever be able to track y'all.

MEMYSELFANDI

I say, if you're so keen on seeing the Emperor why haven't you tried before?

NARRATOR

Assam glanced at Cassie, at the silver rhombus on her neck. He couldn't imagine why Queen Mavis herself had given this girl a key that could get him into the Emperor's Palace. But he knew he'd never get a chance like this again.

ASSAM

Nobody—and I mean NOBODY—ever gets near the Emperor without the

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highest level connections.

NARRATOR

Assam glanced at Cassie, and grinned.

ASSAM

Now, I finally got my ticket! (donkey laughter)

CASSIE

OK, if you can get us out of here, let's go see the Emperor!

MUSIC: (Incidental)

NARRATOR

Next: Even though Cassie, Jet, Sly and Memyselfandi are desperate to escape, the limits of their endurance are tested by Assam's crazy plan.

MUSIC: Blizzard Theme (FADE IN/OUT)

[end Chapter 14]