



Newfoundland

I WAS WEARY ON THE RIDE BACK TO CYNTHIA'S, FIGHTING the urge to sleep in the car. It was two a.m. and she was rattling on about the Sisters and their uncanny abilities. I was half listening to her and half lost in thoughts of my own, having undergone a steep learning curve regarding altered states of consciousness, witchcraft, divination, groups of naked women, and other things which I had previously known little about.

"Why Newfoundland?" I finally asked.

"How should I know?"

"Well, how should I know, either? What's in Newfoundland?"

"I have no idea, Joe. It's a long way out there, isn't it? The map showed it to be the farthest point east on the North American continent. Do you think the direction 'east' has something to do with it?"

"Hell if I know, but I can't imagine actually *going* there. Where would I go, anyway? St. John's? What's there?"

"Don't ask me."

"Well, who do I ask? A goddam crystal? What's with this crystal thing anyway?"

"The crystal is simply a tool, Joe. It is, to a diviner, or

group like the Sisters, as a hammer is to a carpenter. If you know how to use it, it gets something done.”

“I’m not following you.”

“The crystal has no power of its own, in the same way a hammer is useless without the carpenter. The people who *use* the tool have the power. Practice makes perfect. A good carpenter can wield a hammer rather deftly, don’t you think?”

“Yes, *and ...?*”

“We Sisters can use crystals as tools to focus our *own* energy. It was the focus and concentration of *our* power that has pointed you to Newfoundland. It wasn’t the crystal. That was just the tool we happened to use. People have used ritual practices and sacred tools for eons to reach into the subconscious and do seemingly supernatural things. But it’s totally natural and anyone can do it — it just takes practice. And it works. I’ve never been to Newfoundland myself. I bet it’s an interesting place.”

We bantered back and forth about Newfoundland, a subject neither of us knew anything about, and finally dropped the topic entirely and talked about our kids instead. Before we knew it, we had arrived back at Cynthia’s. I quickly offered a short good-bye, explaining that I was tired and had more than an hour’s drive ahead of me. Although Cynthia offered me the couch at her place, I politely declined and was soon fighting the late-night truck traffic on Interstate 80. I made it home to a dark and quiet house, and stumbled upstairs to bed. Annie was sound asleep. I glanced at the clock; it was 3:30 a.m.

I slept late into the morning, dragging myself out of bed around noon. “I didn’t even hear you come in last night,” Annie commented when I stumbled downstairs looking for a cup of coffee. “Where were you? Why did you come in so late? What happened?” After a few minutes of interrogation, I managed to explain the events that had transpired the evening before as best I could. A lot had happened during the night and I had to skip over some of the details. The one event of the evening that most inter-

ested Annie was the crystal, and the fact that it pointed to Newfoundland. When she heard that part of the story her face first drew a blank expression, and she stared at the wall of the dining room as if lost in a daydream. “Newfoundland?” she finally asked. “For heaven’s sake, *why?*”

We got out a map and looked up Newfoundland. From our home in western Pennsylvania, the distance to Newfoundland was equal to the distance to the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico. Not exactly a weekend getaway.

“I think we may have reached a dead end with this Newfoundland thing,” I told Annie. “I’m drawing a complete blank. There’s no way I would actually go all the way the hell up there. I don’t know a soul anywhere near that place. This is looking like it may become the world’s biggest wild goose chase!”

“Wild moose chase, I think,” Annie joked. “Maybe you don’t need to go there, anyway. Just because a crystal pointed to Newfoundland doesn’t mean you have to *go* there. Maybe something *from* there will provide a clue.”

“Such as? Last night’s cards said I had more traveling to do. That’s why it seemed to me that the message was for me to *go* to Newfoundland.” I realized what I’d just said and shook my head in utter disbelief. “I can’t believe I’m even considering for a second that a damn dumb deck of cards should tell me what to do. Or a crystal for that matter.”

“Now don’t be so skeptical. What was that Fool card all about? I think it may have hit the nail on the head.”

“Thanks a lot.”

“Seriously, though, sometimes you just have to let go and allow things to happen. You know — *trust*. You’re not always in control, and only a fool would think he was. We don’t go through life always following an exact road map. Sometimes we have to wander off the beaten path and stumble through the bushes to find the real treasures.”

“Okay, Ralph Waldo Emerson, I get the point.”

Annie’s eyes widened as if a profound thought had just

occurred to her. My brain wasn't quite working yet, but it seemed that hers was. "You don't know anyone in Newfoundland, but maybe *Lucy* did."

"What?"

"Didn't you get an address book out of her house?"

I jumped out of my chair, nearly knocking over my tea cup, and went to my office to find the address book. Back at the dining room table, I leafed through the small, black book, page by page, starting with the A's.

"Boy, I'm glad I thought of this," I said, as Annie made a face that would have turned a lesser man to stone. "Ah Ha! I'll be damned. Here's a listing in Nova Scotia!" I scanned down each page quickly. "And here's a listing in Newfoundland!" I marked the page, scanned the remainder of the book, and went back to what was the only name with a Newfoundland address: Professor Brian Gaulton, St John's. "There's a phone number." I said. I stared at Annie and she stared at me.

"Well?" she asked.

"Well what?"

"Call the number!"

"Well, I *will*. Give me some time, dammit." I hesitantly walked over to the phone hanging on the wall, and I dialed the number. It was busy.

"Maybe we should wait a minute and think about what we're going to say to this person before you call again," Annie advised.

"What's this '*we*' business? Maybe *you* should call him."

"You're doing just fine," she assured me.

"Well, I just want to get to the bottom of this. This is the only clue linking me to Newfoundland at this moment and I need to talk to this guy, whoever he is. Who knows, maybe he's expecting my call like Cynthia was." I hit the redial button. It rang.

"St. John's College," answered a receptionist's voice.

"I'd like to speak with Brian Gaulton, please."

"Sir Gaulton? One moment. I'll connect you."

(Pause) “Hello?”

“Is this Brian Gaulton?”

“Speaking,” said an amiable voice.

“Hi. This is Joe Jenkins. I’m calling from Pennsylvania in the United States. I was wondering if you would have a few minutes right now to talk.”

“Well sir, you’re in for a bit of luck, aren’t you? You caught me in my office, which is very unusual. Very unusual. I was just leaving for home. In two moments I would have been out the door. What can I do for you?”

“Well, I’m not really sure.”

“Ah. Well, that’s helpful,” he laughed.

“What I mean is, I’m in the process of doing some work for my Aunt Lucille Boggs. I think you knew her.”

“Dr. Boggs. Yes, I did. Of course.”

“Well, part of my work has something to do with Newfoundland, but I’m not exactly sure what it is. I know this doesn’t sound like it makes much sense, but I understand that you may have had some connection with Lucy.”

“Of course I did. She was a great and trusted friend of mine and a colleague, and I admired her very much. Her death was a great loss to us all.” He paused, as if considering what he should say next. “However, as far as your work is concerned, I will not discuss anything that has to do with her over the telephone.”

“Did you work together?”

“Look, Mr. Jenkins. I don’t know you or what you really want. Dr. Boggs *may* have been your aunt. Maybe she was, maybe she wasn’t. If you *are* her nephew and you really want to talk with me about her, then you’ll have to do it in person.”

“Mr. Gaulton, I did say I was calling from Pennsylvania. How can I talk with you in person?”

“My formal title is Sir Gaulton. Most refer to me as Professor Gaulton. I’m at St. John’s College. My office is in room 217. I have office hours every day from noon to 2 pm. Sorry to be this way, Mr. Jenkins, but I have little choice under the circumstances. Would you like to make an

appointment?”

“Let’s cut to the chase, Mr. Gaulton. Professor. Lucy requested of me, posthumously, to take on a project of hers. She wasn’t very clear about the exact nature of the project and I’m trying to figure out what to do. Your name has come up, via quite extraordinary circumstances, as someone who may be able to help me. So far, I’ve been running from one place to another, covering great distances, at great expense, losing sleep over this, and, as far as I can tell, getting nowhere. I don’t know whether this is all a colossal waste of my time and energy, or what. The thought of traveling yet another huge distance to talk to someone I don’t know regarding an uncertain subject seems a little unrealistic to me. I *do* have the money and I could afford a plane ticket to St. John’s, but how do I know it would be worthwhile?”

“I can’t promise you anything, Mr. Jenkins. Whether your efforts would be worth anything would be entirely up to you. I am quite familiar with Dr. Boggs’ interests. She was particularly enamored with an entomological theory of mine that she felt related quite closely to her own understanding of what she considered a dreadful human condition. I would be happy to talk with you about it — in person. I can even show you a real-life example if you have any luck at all. Remember that great things do not occur without some risk taking on the part of the participant, Mr. Jenkins. How about two weeks from tomorrow? Meet me in my office at noon? I really do need to be going now.”

“Uh, noon, two weeks from tomorrow. Alright,” I said resignedly. “I’ll see what I can do. Do you have a fax number? I’ll fax you a verification as soon as I book the flight.”

“Sure thing.”

I wrote down Professor Gaulton’s fax number, said goodbye, and hung up the phone. “Well, how would you like to go on a wild moose chase with me? To Newfoundland?” I asked Annie, who was practically hanging on me, wanting to know what plans had been made on the phone. “In two weeks.”

“See, I told you. I *knew* you were supposed to call that guy. I’ve always wanted to go to Newfoundland, too, moose chase or no moose chase.”

“Really? I didn’t know that.”

“There are lots of things you don’t know about me, dear,” she said with a cryptic grin.

“Oh great, that’s all I need right now — more mysteries to solve!”

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