



dérangement
grade nine

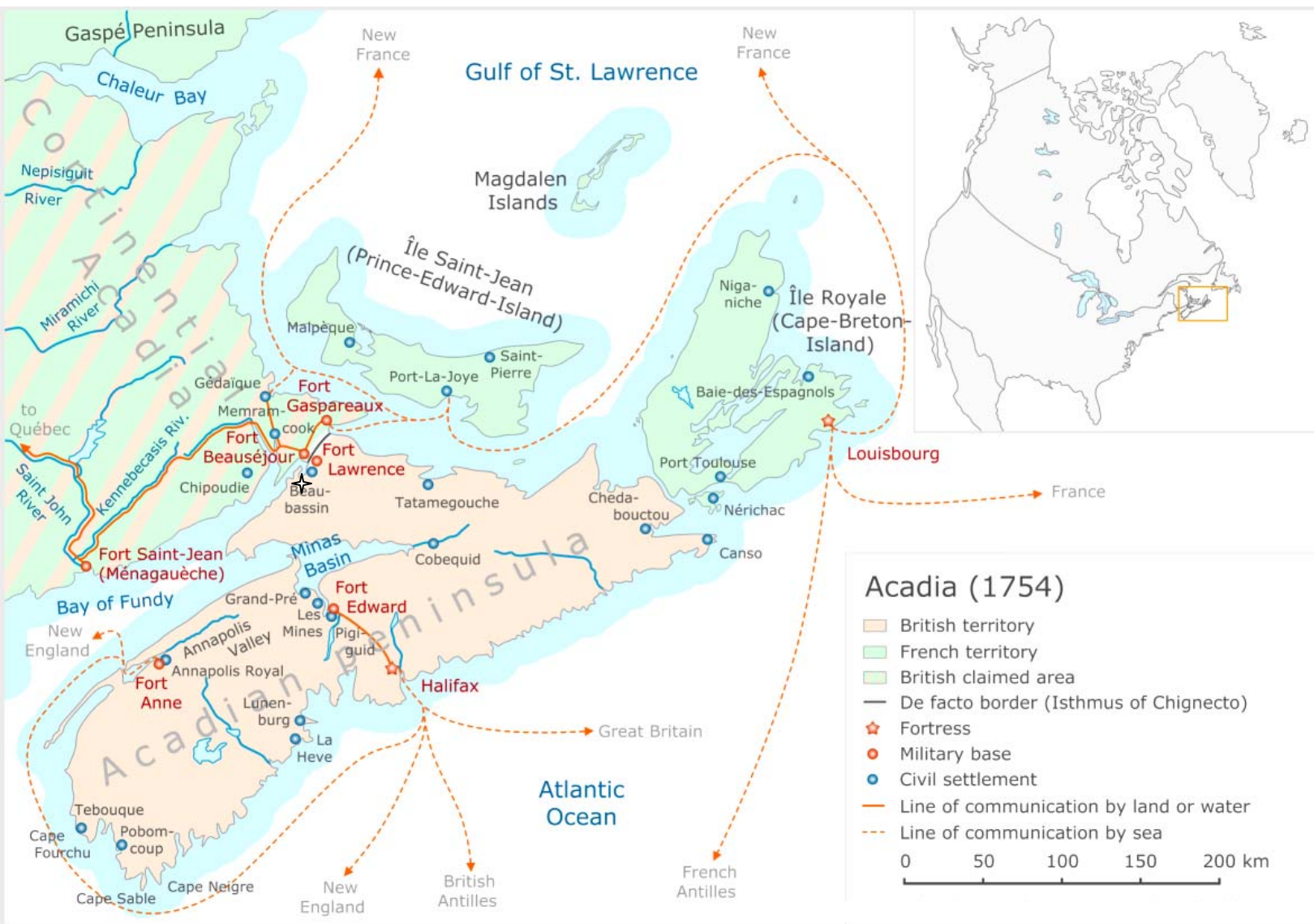
ACCADIE

LA RIVIERE DE ST-JEAN

LEBOU

Pays de St-Jean

MONTAGNE



✦ Fjord Rocheux

Fjord Rocheux, Daniel Chaisson's home village, lies close to the Isthmus of Chignecto border separating British territory and French territory. By June 1755, these borders changed.

"Isn't it beautiful, Papa?"

A soft wind trickled down the sloping hills, spilling into blossom-riddled pastures and mossy stone dikes. Rachael Chaisson's long brown hair whispered in the breeze, and as she stood facing the rising sun her small black silhouette was cast long upon the uneven ground. Daniel enveloped her in his arms and placed her on his broad shoulders.

"It is."

"Do you have to go?"

"*Oui, ma fille.* But I won't be gone long, I promise."

"You always say that, Papa."

"And it's always true. Take care of your mother for me."

"I will."

"*Au revoir.*"

* * *

The small peninsula on Canada's Atlantic coast was the victim of strife for hundreds of years. Acadia was named by explorer Giovanni da Verrazzano, meaning 'idyllic', or 'refuge.' For the French colonists who came to settle there it was indeed a place of promise and new beginnings. Together they drained the wetlands, constructing stone dikes to protect their new fields from being washed away by rising tides. Acadia soon possessed some of the finest farmland in the New World. It didn't take long for Europe to begin squabbling.

First the Dutch swept control, then again France, then Britain, then France. Finally, after the eleven-year Queen Anne's War Britain gained firm power. France signed away Acadia to save its own skin. The Treaty of Utrecht, 1713.

Peace didn't last a month. Once again France prepared to wage war on Britain. Fearful in the midst of war disloyal Acadian settlers would stab English forces in the back, Britain decreed Acadians take an Oath of Allegiance or else be deported. Instead, Acadians swore neutrality. They would neither fight for Britain nor against it.

At the breakout of the French and Indian War in 1754, Britain panicked again. They repeated their threat of deportation. Acadians repeated their rejection. They would neither fight for Britain nor against it. Governor Peregrine Hopson was replaced by Governor Charles Lawrence. Lawrence bided his time and waited.

During this time, Acadians remained hopeful France would regain control of Acadia. With France in power they were freer to practice Catholicism and continue their friendship with the Mi'kmaq. French and British territory touched on the Isthmus of Chignecto, where the French stronghold Fort Beauséjour lay. Acadians surrounding Beaubassin were determined not to let this last tie slip from their grasp. If Beauséjour fell, Britain would have nothing to stop them from penetrating deep into French territory.

* * *

"It must be defended!" Daniel Chaisson had rallied at the village gathering. "With France next door, Britain won't dare make their move against us."

Or would they.

He made his point. Along with more than three hundred men Chaisson marched to the walls of Beauséjour, bayonets resting on their shoulders and grim acceptance on their faces. French Acadian's existence depended on their victory.

Daniel Chaisson ran down the fort to Beauséjour's headquarters and knocked.

"Come in."

Commandant Vergor sat at his desk, a flurry of papers coating the floor and writing table. He looked the brink of exhaustion, dark bags forming under his bloodshot eyes.

"Chaisson, isn't it? What is it?"

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"We have just received word that reinforcements from Louisbourg will not be coming. It fears an attack as well."

"Just what we needed...bloody English."

Turning to leave, Daniel paused. "Acadians aren't going to like this, sir. I don't like it."

"Please, Chaisson. Not now. You're their leader, convince them we'll be fine."

"You know what will happen to us if they find us in here."

"I think you're overreacting," Vergor snapped.

"With any other governor, perhaps. Not with Lawrence. I'm going to speak with our division. I don't know how many will stick with you, sir, but I'm leaving. We are risking the lives of our women and children by fighting here. I'm sorry."

"What if I ordered you to stay?"

"We are French on English land. We want to stay that way. Even if you shot us as we escaped there would be that many less Acadians for the British to find when we surrender."

"Chaisson—"

"Yes."

Vergor sighed, removed his reading glasses and rubbed his eyes. "Go in peace. Pray for us."

That night, twenty-seven Acadians slipped over Beauséjour's walls to safety. Nearly three hundred remained. By the fourth evening of the siege, Beauséjour raised the white flag, conditioning the English would take no retribution on the Acadians within.

* * *

"For you see, sir, the Acadians clearly have gone behind our backs. To be found in a French fort—*defending* a French fort, sir—is utterly and irrevocably treasonous!"

"It says here they claim to have been forced to it."

"A likely story, if I may say so, sir. They held His Majesty's soldiers at bay while having sworn an oath to not take up arms against us."

"Thank you. But the decision of how to deal with the Acadians is not mine to make. Speak with Charles Lawrence, if you must—but with him as governor odds are not in the neutrals' favor, fear not."

Halifax 11 August 1755

Instructions for Major Handfield from Governor Lawrence, Commanding his Majesty's garrison of Annapolis Royale in relation to the transportation of the Inhabitants of the District of Annapolis River and other French Inhabitants out of the Province of Nova Scotia.

Sir,

Having in my Letter of the 31st of July last made you acquainted with the reasons which Induced His Majesty's Council to come to the Resolution of sending away the French Inhabitants and clearing the whole Country of such bad subjects, it only remains for me to give you the necessary orders for the putting in practice what has been so solemnly determined.

That the Inhabitants may not have it in their power to return to this Province nor to join in strengthening the French of Canada in Louisbourg; it is resolved that they shall be dispersed among his Majesty's Colonies upon the Continent of America.

For this purpose Transports are ordered to be sent from Boston to Annapolis to ship on board one thousand persons reckoning two persons to a ton, and for Chignecto, transports have been taken up here to carry off the Inhabitants of that place; and for those of the District around Mines Bason Transports are in from

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Boston. As Annapolis is the place where the last of the transports will depart from, any of the vessels that may not receive their full complement up the Bay will be ordered there, and Colonel Winslow with his detachment will follow by land and bring up what stragglers he may meet with to ship on board at your place.

* * *

Marie's eyes scanned the decree, a frown slowly creeping over her dark features. Slipping into her saddle, she galloped for home.

* * *

"All adult males are to assemble at Beauséjour—Cumberland, they call it now—on August eleventh."

"Are they now?"

Daniel stirred his coffee and gazed out at the sunrise.

"Yes."

"That's tomorrow. Not much time to host an uprising, I'm afraid."

Marie sank into her chair. "I give up trying to understand you."

"It's about choosing your battles, Marie. If we could have won Beauséjour the French would have kept their foothold in Acadia, and perhaps eventually we'd be out from under the English thumb. Now the English are angry and would like nothing better than an excuse to punish us. We need to lie low for awhile. I'm going, and you will stay home and keep house until I return."

"And what about the harvest?"

"For Heaven's sake, we won't be gone long. It's not far to Beauséjour."

"Mhmm."

* * *

Marie stood in the shadow of the doorframe and watched the cloud of dust kicked up by her husband's horse fade into the forest. At her waist stood Rachael, her hands clenching the folds of her mother's skirt.

"Come on now, Rachael. Your papa needs us," she murmured.

Snatching a cloak, Marie locked the door behind her and disappeared into the fields. Her horse Ombre whinnied and pawed the ground. Silently she set her daughter atop the stallion, quickly mounting behind her. *Avec la vitesse, Ombre*. Fly like the wind.

Mouche.

Rearing up, Ombre gathered himself and together they swept out of Fjord Rocheux.

* * *

Four hundred men trudged to Fort Cumberland, the memory of the siege still fresh in their minds. Only two months ago they'd fought valiantly inside Beauséjour against the British. Much had changed. The French were ousted and driven back all the way to Québec, leaving two abandoned forts in their wake. By gradual decrees these Acadians were being punished for their appalling disloyalty to the Crown. Indeed, more leeway had been granted for them than any other subject peoples. Look how they treated British generosity. Pure contempt. Take the Oath of Allegiance, or else. God save the King.

Daniel joined a party of men from Fjord Rocheux and together they entered the yawning mouth of Fort Cumberland.

God save the King.

"ON ACCOUNT OF PAST MISDEEDS AND DISLOYALTIES, OF WHICH MANY OF YOU HERE ARE INTIMATELY ACQUAINTED WITH, I DECLARE YOU REBELS AGAINST THE BRITISH RULING CROWN OF AUTHORITY IN NOVA SCOTIA! TO THE CROWN ALL YOUR LANDS AND CHATTEL ARE FORFEITED, AND UNTIL FURTHER ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE YOU ARE HEREBY PRISONERS OF FORT CUMBERLAND!"

Thunder erupted!

"You have our guns—"

"—we swore neutrality—"

"I never fought against the British!—"

"My wife, she's English—"

Daniel dove for the gates.

Clang.

Trapped.

Marie...Marie...why didn't I listen...

In the shadows a tall, slender figure lurked. Over its head was pulled a grey riding hood, and from behind the shroud black fire leaped from its eyes. Marie pulled the cloak slightly away to reveal her dark French features and stepped out from the darkness.

"Daniel," she whispered.

Startled, he tilted his head in her direction. "Marie?"

"Hush. Follow me. Slowly."

Letting her cloak drape over herself once more, she slipped back into the shadows and melted from sight. Daniel crept after her.

"How in heaven did you get in here—?"

"I'm French, Daniel, and my father was a soldier. I spent four years of my childhood here. There's a little tunnel and then a water gate. You'll have to crawl on your belly."

"But how did you know..."

"If it hadn't been so early in the morning you would have known too."

"And Rachael?"

"She's with Ombre, half a mile from here in the woods. Now hurry!"

Marie opened a small metal gate and entered on her hands and knees. A small trickle of water clinked through the rapidly narrowing tunnel, and before long she was sliding through the muck on her stomach. Behind her she could hear Daniel's heavy breathing and the clank as he closed the door. Almost immediately the putrid stench closed in around her.

"You found this when you were a child?" he grunted.

"Yes...the underground corridor leading to the gate has been left for years...rumor was it was crumbling...I always slipped out in the morning and didn't return till late...drove my father crazy, he never knew how I got out...we never did get along very well..."

Already the strain was building. Too low to use their knees, Marie and Daniel dragged themselves through the sewage with their hands, each effort forward reaching, seeking to find a handle to grasp. Each time they slipped further into the filth. Their chins dripped and their mouths remained a perilous two inches above the muck.

"Just a little further..."

A narrow shaft of light danced on the water. The grate was still ajar from Marie's earlier entrance, and they stumbled out gasping for breath.

Daniel shuddered and gathered himself. "We need to ride back to our farm and collect our things," he said, removing his wool jacket and placing it around Marie's shivering shoulders. "Until I can decide what to do we'll hide in the woods...it should be a few days before the British seize our lands. With the men locked up there's no way for us to resist and they can bide time till their ready... Do you think Ombre can carry both our weight?"

"He has to, unless you think we can find your horse."

Suddenly, the boom of a gunshot whizzed from the fort.

"RUN!"

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Grabbing Marie's hand, Daniel lowered himself to half height and sprinted for the woods.

Boom!

Quickly he dropped to the ground and rolled.

"Marie! Fall!"

Cry cut short, she collapsed.

"God, no! Marie!"

Fluttering, her eyes rolled back. Blood crept from her limp form.

Pulling her into a small gully, he opened the top of her blouse and turned her over. The bullet was embedded in her left shoulder. Frantically he felt for pulse. Nothing. Mary, Mother of Jesus, please, help me, help me...

Voices and the thundering of hooves poured from the fort.

I can't leave her...I can't leave her...

Rachael!

Blood and tears mingled on his face.

Oh God, help me!

Picking himself up, he ran into the woods.

* * *

"They're gone, sir."

Sheltering his eyes from the noon sun, the lieutenant gazed into the forest. "They're not worth pursuing into the forest. They'll be rounded up in the general swoop later. It was two men, a larger and smaller, you said?"

"From what I could see, sir. I can't imagine how they escaped. They were first spotted walking away from the south end of the fort."

"Then we'll have to report two missing...ho! What have we here?"

"What is it, sir?"

Dismounting, the lieutenant slid into a small gully, almost invisible from where they had been standing. A woman lay crumpled on the ground, the grass around her stained black crimson.

"Blast! Is she alive, sir?"

"It seems one of your men was a woman, my good private. The man must have fled and left her for dead..." He knelt and quickly wrapped a cloth around her wound, feeling her wrist. "I can't feel any pulse. Bring her in on your horse. The least we can do is give her a decent burial—I've never liked having women's blood on my hands."

* * *

"Papa!—where's Mama?"

Daniel sank to his knees. "Rachael! There you are—come here, baby, come here..."

Cautiously she approached her father, her wide gaze absorbing the blood and filth splattered on his face. Lifting her small fingers, she pushed away the grime from his eyes and threw her arms around his neck. "What is it, Papa?"

Daniel gently returned her embrace. "Your mother..." he whispered. "...your mother's gone to be with Jesus..."

"No, she's coming, she said she was coming..." Drawing away from him, she looked into his eyes and read their sincerity. "But...she said...she said she'd come back, she said she'd be right back. Mama wouldn't lie, Papa. She doesn't lie."

"Shh...I know baby...help me, I know...we have to ride back now...hold on to me..."

Slowly, painfully, he swung himself onto the saddle and pulled her up in front of him. She trembled to his touch.

The world flew past Daniel in a jumbled blur of harsh light. Tears blurred reality with memory. Marie...Marie...Marie...pain ebbed with the rise and fall of the saddle. Marie! God, forgive me, forgive me...

Home poured acid on his wound. Daniel stumbled inside with his head down so as not to see the womanly changes Marie had brought to their meager dwelling. His mind was on a merry-go-round, singing her name again and again. Marie...Marie... Swallowing a mouthful of whiskey, he uncovered his secret pistol and grabbed a blanket and some food provisions.

Rachael, we have to go now...Rachael! In his daze she had slipped away. Looking for her mother, he thought. He found her by the creek, curled up in Marie's favorite picnic spot. "Come on, baby, we have to go now, soldiers will be here to take the farm—" As he carried her onto Ombre she fought him, frantic, and he put her down helplessly.

"Mama wouldn't want us to leave, Papa."

"I would fight if I could," he said hoarsely, ashamed. Marie wouldn't want us to leave... "There are too many, far too many. I need to take care of you."

"Then where are we going to go?"

"I don't know," he whispered.

"Papa, I miss Mama..." Tears fell from her eyes and he reached his arms to comfort her, brushing his own away. It was nearly evening before they found the will to pack up and canter into the forest. Past their ripe fields they fled, past their sheep and cows. Daniel kept his gaze centered ahead. Thanks to ingenious French dikes the British knew Acadia lay upon some of the richest soil in Canada. The British knew what they were taking. Daniel was partly to blame for Beauséjour, it was true Acadians had defied their oath. It was also true Acadians refused to take up arms against Frenchmen and Mi'kmaq. All they ever wanted was to farm their land in peace, away from obligatory wars and in harmony with the Indians. Now they were forced to take their children and flee. Within days, soldiers would arrive to take possession of the farm and glean from it what they could.

For over a week no soldiers appeared to confiscate the farm. Daniel crept back at night to refurbish their quickly dwindling supplies. Using fallen timbers he constructed a camouflaged cabin a quarter-mile into the woods and furnished it with matches, deadwood, blankets, and all the pickled vegetables in the root cellar. For now he had little idea what they were up against, and hoped it would be possible to buy back his farm from the British. All desire to fight had drained with Marie's death.

Marking his swing on the bough of a spruce tree, Daniel raised his axe above his head and brought the blade down upon the bark. With a creak the branch swayed, hesitating but a moment before toppling to the ground. Giving Rachael his axe, he hoisted the limb onto his shoulders and carried it back in the direction of their cabin. It would serve as a roof, the thick needles protecting them from rain and insects.

Click.

Daniel started. Whirling, he grabbed Rachael and pulled her to the ground. Instantly a bullet whizzed above their heads, exploding through a nearby tree. Silently he pulled out his own pistol and scanned the waving brush, pushing Rachael underneath the tree bough. "Stay here," he whispered. Rolling away from the branch, he lifted his gun and fired. A deep groan was followed by a crash, and a British soldier's scarlet uniform peeked through the underbrush. Rising, Daniel crept to his side. His eyes were open and he was moaning as blood gushed from his upper thigh.

"Rachael. Rope," he called, binding the wounded soldier.

"Kill me quickly," the man gasped in English.

"Nobody ever said anything about killing anybody," Daniel said through gritted teeth as he removed the man's pistol. Lifting the soldier on his back, he carried him into their cabin and wrapped a cloth around his bleeding leg. Rachael watched from a distance.

"Now," said Daniel. "Please answer me quickly and honestly. What are you doing here?"

Grimacing, the soldier rested his head against the hut. "Scouring the woods in Cumberland's vicinity for men like yourself. You'd better let me go. My troop is nearby."

"We're taking that risk."

"Suit yourself. The ships arrived this morning."

"Navires – what ships?"

A slight wave of panic passed over the soldier's eyes. "Ships...carrying...British reinforcements."

"The truth, *s'il vous plaît*."

Their eyes met and wills strained. Daniel's hand strayed to the pistol. "I'm desperate," he said lowly. "I have little left to lose."

"I suppose not," said the soldier. "But it isn't wise to shoot the messenger."

"I would never shoot a messenger."

The soldier paused and nodded he understood. "After we seize and burn your properties you are to be boarded onto the ships and...relocated to several designated areas across Quebec, France, and the British colonies."

"All of us?"

"Yes."

Daniel's pistol fell from his hands and for a moment a shadow covered his face. "There is no way I can buy back my farm?"

"No."

"*Je ne veux pas partir, Papa.*" I don't want to leave.

Daniel started and looked at Rachel. He had forgotten she was still there. Her eyes were wide and her face pale. "*Moi non plus.*" Neither do I. What else could he say?

Again he turned to the soldier. "I have seen enough close-up killing this past week to last me to my death. I don't want to harm you but I will. Don't try me."

"I don't particularly want to die."

"*Bien.* Now, you said your troop is nearby. How nearby?"

The soldier grimaced.

"I advise you to be honest. You're not a very good liar."

"They're two villages away. Blue Hills."

"*Collines Bleues*, you Englishman. How soon will they be here?"

"Tomorrow at the soonest. Likely not for two days."

"Good. Then we have time. Tonight I go to Beauséjour."

"What – why?"

"You have declared war. Hope you British are trained to fight guerilla-style."

"Your daughter!"

"Let me worry about her. I'm leaving you here. If you give us away, I don't care how or why, I will kill you immediately. *Comprenez-vous?*"

"Yes."

"Good."

* * *

Slinking along the black earth, Daniel lifted his head and surveyed the night scene around him. A full moon glared through wispy clouds, casting long, flickering shadows from the forest. Beauséjour rose high before him, and soon he would be within its shadow. Wearing the red British uniform made him very visible against the silvery grass. The water gate was still over ten meters away.

He grunted and pulled himself forward once more. At least cool meadow lay beneath him, not slimy stones. Slowly, painfully, he entered the fort's surrounding darkness and a little while longer reached the water gate. Weeds spreading across the metal bars made it nearly invisible, and Daniel laughed that it had been so forgotten.

Turning the lever of the gate, he crept inside and pulled it almost shut behind him. Then came the grueling crawl through the muck. It wasn't as bad as he had remembered, the tunnel broadening instead of shrinking as he went and his mind retracing his plan, step by step. Soon he entered the fort itself.

Inside the crumbling basement it was black as blindness. Running his hands along the cold stone walls, he came to the narrow staircase. The floor was wet and twice he nearly slipped on the steps, but caught himself in time. Noise was the biggest enemy. At the top of the stairs he passed through the door and turned left, making his way through abandoned corridors to what he remembered to be the barracks. One lonely soldier stood guard. Daniel strode over to him and saluted. "Lieutenant Peters," he said with a British accent, keeping his voice low but not low enough to sound suspicious.

"Private Grey," the man returned. "Did you just arrive?"

"Just. I've been told to take a quick tally of the prisoners. May I enter?"

"Of course," the soldier replied, producing a key and turning the lock. "They're a bawdy bunch, be careful."

"They won't give me trouble. I'll need the cell keys."

Entering, he surveyed the layout of the prison. Each cell was adjacent to two others on both sides. Perfect.

Quickly he approached the first cell on his left side and woke the prisoner within softly. "*Je m'appelle Daniel Chaisson,*" he whispered. "Don't ask me questions. In a few minutes I will be blasting a hole in the side of the fort. I'm unlocking your cell now, but keep it closed. When the explosion occurs, make a mass exit for the south end of the fort. Go down this hallway, turn right at the fork, then right once more. If everything's still intact, there will be a little wooden door leading down some stairs. Follow these and you'll be in the open air. Make for the woods. Now I'm going to unlock everyone's cells. Pass this message on to the man beside you, and tell him to do the same. *Comprenez-vous?*"

The sleepy and bewildered man nodded.

Hurriedly Daniel passed to the next cell, turning the lock on each until he was finished. At last he exited the barracks and reported to the guard outside. "Here are your keys," he said quickly, before the man thought to lock the door behind him. "I'll need to borrow your services for a moment. I don't want to wake anyone up, and Cumberland has a disastrous flaw in its security. If we don't post a guard there immediately, Acadians or French may infiltrate."

The soldier hesitated.

"The door is secure, the prisoners can't escape," pressed Daniel, taking the key to the barracks and pretending to lock them.

"Quickly," the man said, following him back through the snaking corridors and down to the water-gate. Suddenly Daniel darted behind him, grabbing his pistol from its sheath and ordering him to put his hands behind his back. The soldier did as he was told and Daniel tied his arms and legs together. Gagging him, he threw a sack over his head and shoved him into a corner.

Back through the tunnel Daniel swam, exiting finally into fresh air and spreading gunpowder back into the small hole on a narrow, dry elevated ledge. Tossing a lit match on the explosive, he raced for the woods.

BOOM!

Daniel was thrown to the ground. Rolling into the gully Marie had died in, he peeked his head out and waited. In his focused state of mind it didn't seem strange to him she was no longer there.

Gradually, prisoners began to appear through the hazy rubble of south Beauséjour. With their guard sacked, the alarm they were free hadn't been sounded. For a full five minutes they streamed out of the fort, racing for the woods. At last gunfire sounded. The British were awake!

Bullets pelted the ground and men's screams shattered the air. With a tide of oncoming Acadians Daniel broke free from his hiding place and together in a surge they penetrated the

woods. Hooves thundered in pursuit, but the Acadians were too far ahead and a long night's search proved fruitless. All their casualties lay between Fort Beauséjour and the forest surrounding. Three hundred had simply melted into the night.

* * *

Daniel gathered the Beauséjour survivors around himself. They were deep into the woods, at least six miles from the fort. "I don't know how much they told you," he said. "Yesterday ships docked across Acadia, ships whose sole mission is to scatter Acadians across the New World and France. We are to be boarded like cattle and removed from our lands with nothing but possessions we can carry. Men are to go before women. Families will be estranged, members forever uncertain where their loved ones were taken."

He paused to let his words sink in. After being imprisoned these men were itching to show the British their steel. Effort required to rally them would be minimal.

"We can resist. Tomorrow you were to be boarded onto the *E.D. Cornwallis* and deported to Carolina. Your women and children were to follow in the coming weeks, scattered from Pennsylvania to Philadelphia, Georgia to Carolina. No one has been boarded yet. We can stop them."

Murmurs of agreement. One man spoke up. "How can we resist with no firearms?"

"We can't. In total I have only three. Tonight the British rest in Collines Bleues. I have quickly surveyed their setup there and it's feeble. With the Acadian men locked up, they fear no resistance and after successfully laying waste to and imprisoning the inhabitants of several villages have become careless. We're going to descend upon them Gideon-style and ransack their camp. Don't be greedy. All we need is guns and ammunition. British uniforms could prove useful as well, but don't go after anything that's not within arm's reach. We will fight for every village they try to take. Women and children remaining will be sent into the woods and women able to bear arms will do so."

"Do we have a chance?"

"Little. But we can inflict damage enough on the British that they call a truce. If they do, we will have negotiating ground to stand on. My hope is we will at least be able to buy back our farms. What say you?"

Voices swelled.

"We have nothing to lose. We'll have to hurry to stage an attack on the English tonight. Which of you can fire a weapon with good accuracy?"

* * *

By one o'clock in the morning the men had reached the British camp in Collines Bleues. Daniel stared down at the once picturesque village and the scene below made his heart ache. Farmers' homes had once dotted the meadow. Now only skeletons lingered, lit eerily in the moonlight. At the core of the village lay a splattered church, a broken cross rising from its steeple and an unearthed cemetery running along its yard. War had been declared on beauty itself. Gunfire razed all that existed. By the end of the week Fjord Rocheux would look the same.

For the first time in many days he let Marie invade his thoughts. Throbbing swept over his body and in pain he lowered himself to the ground. In his mind's eye he saw her running, running, then crumpling to the blood-stained ground...Marie...I need you beside me...I need your touch, your fearlessness...

Now Rachael took cover alone, alone beside the creek where Marie had so often brought her family together. A man who had tried to kill them both lay hidden but a quarter-mile away. Here Daniel stood, on the verge of an attack. What would Rachael do if he died? Marie, where are you...Marie...Marie...

"Sir?"

The voice shattered her image like glass. Daniel turned. "Yes?"

"We are waiting for your order."

"Forgive me. I will give it."

Slowly he rose and made his way to his men. "You know what you have to do. Tonight we hope not to drive the British out of Collines Bleues, but merely to reveal Acadians will not be as easily defeated as they hoped. We challenge them to fight for their cause. For Acadia, men, and for your families."

Daniel's plot came straight out of the Bible. By frightening the unsuspecting British into disarray, he hoped to glean what weapons he could from their camp and then fade back into the night.

Armed with nothing but three pistols in total, torches and clay pitchers, the three hundred Acadian escapees trickled down the hills surrounding Collines Bleues. Just as they entered the camp, Daniel unleashed his signal and together the company let out a loud cry that echoed down through the village like a shriek of death. Smashing their pitchers they waved their torches, and Daniel fired a round of ammunition. At that moment they swept through the camp.

Chaos ensued! British soldiers screamed and hid themselves in terror. Acadians lit fire to their tents, and on cue a quarter of them whooped, Daniel eager to play on English fears of Indian warriors. Gunshots rang through the air. Each man was charged with obtaining at least one gun and one round of ammunition. In the confusion this became simple, and within two hours the three hundred Acadians disappeared back behind the hills, carrying off all the firearms existing in the camp. Ten casualties were reported. By the end, they had collected two hundred ninety-three guns and four hundred twenty-two rounds of bullets.

War had been declared.

* * *

Colonel Monkton stood at attention and saluted. "Reporting!" he barked. The Brigadier-General didn't acknowledge him. He was angry...very angry. Sweat trickled down the back of Monkton's neck.

At last Lawrence lifted his head, focusing his hard blue eyes on the colonel. Monkton winced as a current of electricity coursed through his body. "Good evening, Colonel," the General whispered.

He was even angrier than Monkton had feared.

The General rose and began a slow, deliberate trek around the room, caressing the medals displayed on the wall, studying the military map of Acadia that hung beside the window. "Britain's military is its proudest accomplishment. The worth of one's country is measured by the worth of one's military. Diplomatic treaties and such are signed only after a great military thrust or defeat. Militaries are what move mountains, what determine the balance of power in the world. Is this not so, Colonel?"

"It is, sir," Monkton said.

"I am glad we can find common ground, Colonel. I have been in the militia for a very long time. A very, very long time. I have seen the balance of power sway from English to French, and back again. We are good enemies, we English and French. We never cease to challenge each other, to pose problems and confound each other. Thus it is so when one party holds the current ace, he holds on to it with little more than his fingernails. As such he can not afford to take unnecessary risks. Making a stupid mistake could likely swing the power in the other direction. Do you get my meaning, Colonel?"

"Yes sir," Monkton rasped.

"Good. If the power was to swing, Colonel, both you and I would be out of a job, so to speak. So it truly affects us personally. Now, when I was first sworn as Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, there existed a pesky little detail that I well knew could eventually dethrone our British stronghold here. In July I gave Acadians an opportunity to submit to British authority and

swear allegiance. They refused. I left the matter awhile. But when those three hundred Acadians were found inside Beauséjour, I knew something had to be done. Acadians have resented English presence here always. Their bitterness has grown with each passing season, and now it is like the Black Death, out of control, spreading rapidly, *gaining momentum*, Colonel. There is no doubt in my mind an uprising was soon to come. One minor, pesky detail combined with British ignorance would spell the end of our command over Nova Scotia. As Lieutenant-Governor it is my duty to eliminate any threat to the Crown."

"Yes sir," Monkton croaked. Slowly, effortlessly, Lawrence was building his case, laying the foundation for his final verdict.

"Acadians had to be dealt with. The kindest method was to relocate them. And now we come to the reason of your presence here tonight. You were charged with a very simple task. To purge the region around Cumberland of French neutrals. Surprise them. Gather all the men, spring the trap. Load them onto ships before they knew what hit them. That is what has happened all across Nova Scotia, Colonel. Everywhere but your Chignecto."

"I...I..."

"Shut your flapping mouth, Colonel. You have no excuse for what happened in Cumberland. From my reports you let a man escape the fort when you first imprisoned them, and then the same man returned and blasted a hole in the fort wall, freeing all the other prisoners within. Then the escapees formed a brigade and raided a nearby British camp, stealing every weapon in the place. You should be hanged. I am giving you one more chance, and I suggest you do everything in your power to redeem yourself. If you fail I am stripping you of your military rank and handing you to the British Supreme Court. Find out where these men are camped and overpower them. Have a ship waiting nearby. Take away their weapons and throw them onto the ships. Do anything. I don't care. Now get out of my sight, before I lose my temper."

Trembling, Monkton bowed himself out the door.

* * *

Before the wee hours of the morning Daniel's men crept into Fjord Rocheux. Faint light was gathering on the horizon, but birds remained still and stars glittered bright. Since the birth of night the men had been awake, and as they stood their eyes became heavy. Daniel had pushed past the weariness long earlier, an irrational burst of stamina coursing through his veins. Marie's blood on English hands drove him forward. He wanted to stretch out his hand and hurt them, hurt them like they hurt him. Her death sought revenge.

Yellow rays reached from the east and a fiery ball arose dripping from behind the horizon, coating the village in honey. Before word reached the British they would evacuate as many women and children as possible from the region enveloping Chignecto Bay. Daniel sent two men native to each village out to spread the warning. Afterwards they would return to Fjord Rocheux and when the British arrived newly armed they would be ready.

Immediately Daniel and another began knocking on doors, dragging out sleepy inhabitants and giving orders. Like cold water the news washed over the villagers. Women collected their children and belongings and made immediately for the woods. A few old men revealed stashes of ancient rifles, holding up the sacred treasures and basking in fleeting moments of former glory. Daniel knew news of the Acadians' escape and attack would have reached British ears. It would only be a matter of time before they tracked them down and mounted an assault. Time that would prove precious if they wished to stop the deportations.

He found Rachael sleeping among thorns and branches back on the farm. "I'll meet you back here when it's over," he said, embracing her quickly. "Stay with Mrs. Landry. She'll take care of you."

"Does this mean we don't have to leave our farm, Papa?"

"It means, Rachael, we are in more danger than ever before. I love you. Be safe."

Rachael nodded and watched him fade into the village. For a moment she was frozen. She wanted to chase after him and cry...fighting was too scary, too dangerous. They should just go back to their home and ask the soldiers to let them stay. No, no...Clasping Mrs. Landry's hand, she awoke from her deliberation and followed the woman deep into the dark forest. Papa knew what was best, he always knew...

Daniel brushed away his gnawing sense of guilt. Rachael would be safe. When it was all over she would be waiting, whether they won or lost. Marie would understand. She knew he had to fight.

But there was something else he was forgetting. In frustration he made a mental list of the necessary preparations. His prisoner! Tearing back through the woods, Daniel threw down the cabin door and found him lying awake on the floor. Unbinding his feet, he led him back to the village. "Your company will soon arrive here," Daniel said. "When they do you can join them. Until then I don't want you giving away our position."

"You should move away from here," the young soldier said, wincing as he tested his bad leg. "Fjord Rocheux is on a bit of a peninsula. They'll drive you into the sea."

"Acadia is surrounded by water, Englishman. If we can't hold you off here we can't hold you off anywhere. Maybe in a few years we'll have a large enough company we can drive you British into the sea, but right now all I care about is biding time and stopping the transports, if possible."

"What about all the people in neighboring villages?"

"Let me worry about them."

"I'm truly sorry."

Daniel turned from him. "No," he said at last. "If you were sorry you couldn't stand and watch while thousands of men, women and children are torn from their homes and each other and scattered thousands of miles apart." His voice hardened. "You killed my wife. You tried to kill me, you tried to kill my daughter. Why can't you just leave us alone?"

The young soldier looked like he had been struck. "Just shut up and don't move," Daniel snapped, running back into the village.

As the day wore on his men straggled in from surrounding villages with a few reinforcements. Women melted into the forest and waited. The noon sun rose high and hot. Daniel shone with sweat. Together he and seven of his best commanders began to make battle plans. Having sent five scouts abroad, they would soon know the size of the oncoming British forces.

Fjord Rocheux was surrounded on four sides by various landforms. The sea lay to the north, cliffs to the east, and thick, rolling woodlands to the west. On the south side of the village the hilly forest and cliffs merged to almost touching, leaving only a thin treeless chasm for easy travel to and from Fjord Rocheux. If all went according to plan, the British would attempt to creep through the valley and Daniel would lure them forward, then double back and flatten them from the shelter of the forest and cliffs. If he could avoid man-to-man fighting with his untrained "soldiers", they would have a chance.

* * *

Colonel Monkton surveyed his troops and sipped his coffee. Against trained Brits the Acadians would fall like dominos. Or so he thought. There was always a small chance their seemingly ingenious commander would rally them and put up a good fight, but even if they did it wouldn't matter. After their disgrace the night before his men were ready to atone themselves. The only tricky part now was figuring out where they had gathered.

At that moment, a scout on horseback rode into camp.

"Colonel!" he shouted, slipping out of his saddle. "I found them!"

"Good man! Come over here and show me on the map."

The scout jogged over to the chief officer's tent where the colonel had set up a table. "They're here, in a little village called Fjord Rocheux," said the scout. "It's incredible, I can't believe their stupidity. Unless their leader's Moses, they've completely backed themselves into a corner!"

"Indeed?"

The scout nodded breathlessly. "They're surrounded on all sides by cliffs, ocean, and forest, respectively, and their southern opening is a narrow canyon, three men wide at the most. As well, only a little ways into the forest is an enormous raging river. If we ride in through the valley, we'll have cut off their escape. We drive them into the sea, aboard the ships, and there—our work is done."

"Bravo!" said Monkton, slapping the scout on the back. "We'll hurry and be there within the hour."

* * *

In order to catch fish, settlers to Fjord Rocheux had dammed the large river feeding from Chignecto Bay. In addition, this made it easy to cross and gave the town its name. Daniel supervised the women and children wading through the shallow stillness.

He turned to one of his men. "If we fail the initial attack and the British persevere, they could easily cross the river and sweep up everyone hiding there. We have to destroy the dam."

"The only danger is of trapping ourselves," replied the man. "But I suppose we're not planning to run. Once they're all crossed over I'll give the order."

"Thank you." Daniel excused himself and made for the cliffs. One hundred thirty of his prize snipers lay waiting, checking the finer functions of their weapons, cleaning them, loading them. Not a word was spoken. Tension coated the air so thick it could be cut with a knife. All knew what awaited them. All waited in dread.

"Any news?" Daniel said, trotting over a midsize, stocky Frenchman. Michel Richard had helped guide the escape from Fort Beauséjour and later managed to pry over ten rifles from British hands in Collines Bleues.

"The British some five to six hundred in number have been spotted heading this way," replied Richard. "My scout said they'll be here in no more than an hour. He did some minor spying and discovered they're planning to enter Fjord Rocheux by the gorge. I don't know how else they could."

"Good. Everyone's in position in the village, and I posted some men in the forest. We unleashed the dam to prevent them from pursuing our women beyond the river. How are we up here?"

"Ready. The wait's killing us."

Daniel smiled. "My stomach's so tight I'm ready to puke."

"We're depending on you."

"I know."

Their meager attempts at conversation evaporated into the hot sun. Flies buzzed around Daniel's head, and he raised his hand to ward them off. Scanning the foliage below, he wondered where Rachael lay. Little Rachael, not yet six years old. Marie had been warned she may be barren, and Rachael's birth was no less than a miracle. Roaring guilt returned, momentarily winding him. With Marie gone he should be with her, not leave her alone with a near stranger! Oh Jesus, protect her...

Marie...I'm so sorry...Marie...I love you...

"British!"

Throwing himself to the ground, Daniel called for his snipers to do the same. On their bellies they lined up along the edge of the cliff, their guns cocked and heads hidden from view, breaths held and prayers whispered.

A company of British on horseback rumbled along the valley, towards the bait.

For a moment they halted, and Colonel Monkton's thin voice echoed through the ravine. They were directly below the snipers. Daniel didn't waste a moment. Lifting his hand, he gave the signal and in one great crash of thunder they let loose a barrage of bullets. Screams arose from the gully as black rain fell from the sky. Before the British could respond Daniel released his second wave of ammunition, then a third. In the matter of a moment two thirds of the enemy lay bloody and sprawling. Daniel waited while there was a general reload, then they finished off most of what soldiers were left. For centuries Acadians had depended on wild game for survival when their crops failed, and ammunition was expensive. From the expert Mi'kmaq they mastered the art of one shot kills.

Drained of the four bullets Daniel had rationed to each cliff sniper, he slid into the valley. His troops followed not far behind. The men posted in the village were doing battle with the survivors. Only a quarter of the original British strength remained, but they were unabated. Immediately the quality difference between trained militia and uneducated farmers began to show. Steadily they gained the upper hand, seemingly unaware they were outnumbered two to one. The first rush of adrenaline waned. Daniel struggled to rally his men. Inch by inch they were being pushed into the water. Among the lapping waves waited two ships.

Bullets flew and blood sprayed. Screams shattered the valley. Right and left Acadians were sinking dead to the crimson-stained ground, fleeing, throwing away their weapons in surrender.

Suddenly, a bullet whizzed past Daniel's head. He dove to the cover of the trees. Immediately his stomach rose to his throat and leaning over he threw up until he could throw up no more. The British were building bridges! Rachael, no!

Already they had hacked down one evergreen and rolled it so it stretched over the frothing river. Daniel had no time to lose. Raising his gun, he charged the red uniforms, felling two with one bullet and the others with the butt of his rifle. Quickly he raced across the "bridge", pushing the log into the river.

Into the woods he tore. Rachael was all that mattered now. Most of his men were either dead or captured, and the rest were following suit. He would not watch them be loaded like animals onto the waiting ships. The women must move camp.

At last he stumbled upon the women's camp. "Mrs. Landry!" he cried, gasping. "Where is Mrs. Landry?"

The women pointed to a small clearing ahead. He pressed on.

"Papa!"

Rachael ran to him and he scooped her up and standing there held her to his thumping chest.

"Papa, what happened?"

"We were defeated...they know you're here, you must flee..."

Around him women sank to the ground, rocking and weeping. Daniel shook his head to questions. "I don't know who survived...I don't know."

One woman was impassive. "We can't get anywhere tonight. We'll break camp in the morning. The British won't search the forest until Fjord Rocheux is burned and they have the men safely locked up. I fled them from two villages, I know."

"We don't have that kind of time!" said Daniel, glancing helplessly around as women's shrieks crescendoed. It soon became obvious they wouldn't budge. Defeated, he gathered up Rachael and they retreated to a cluster of aspens.

"Did they burn Fjord Rocheux?" she whispered.

"Not yet," he said softly. "Not yet. But they will."

"What will they do with Ombre when they take our farm?"

"I don't know, baby."

Curling up in her father's arms, Rachael closed her eyes and soon her breaths descended into regular rhythm. For a moment Daniel wondered at her seeming unaffectedness. One day it

had to sink in, one day reality would penetrate her mind's fog. He tightened his hold and breathed a prayer of mercy.

As the shadows lengthened and the sun passed into darkness, Daniel felt his vision blurring. He hadn't slept since the night before Beauséjour. Just a few minutes...I won't go to sleep...just a few minutes...

* * *

Daniel lay asleep in his bed. Soon he would wake up and begin the harvest, but for now he was enjoying the luxury of sleeping in. Marie stirred beside him. Sunlight beamed on his face, dancing as the curtains fluttered over the open window.

He opened his eyes. Trees replaced curtains, the hard ground the mattress. Marie was dead, their home likely burnt. Rachael was asleep on his lap...no...Rachael...Rachael!

Jumping to his feet Daniel barreled through the thick brush, calling and then screaming her name. Branches grabbed and tore at his clothes and skin. Mud swirled beneath his feet. The world span. Dear Lord, what have I done!

"Rachael! Rachael!"

Silence mocked him. Swaying branches caught and muffled his voice.

Collapsing to the ground he wept. The women's camp was deserted. The British had come and gone. He was alone.

* * *

Daniel lay there unmoving for a day and night, his eyes staring fixed into the heavens. The sky clouded over and rain splattered his filthy face. Dirt streamed into his eyes and they began to sting.

The sun set and rose again. Neither did he sleep nor wake.

A lone bird dipped down to his supine form and landed on his chest. It was a brilliant orange, with a black head and wings. Cocking its head, it peeped at him. For the first time in a day there was a flicker of movement behind Daniel's eyes. Flapping its wings, the bird bounced onto his face and peered at his mouth. Slowly Daniel's eyes began to focus. The bird waited until it had his full attention, then leapt into the air and took flight. Daniel rose and watched it skip from branch to branch, then disappear into the forest.

For a moment he didn't move. He was still in a daze, his body disconnected from his mind.

Then he remembered.

Rachael. Marie. In little more than a week he had gone from having everything to nothing. Marie was dead, Rachael captured, their home burnt. All the men and women he'd tried to protect were either dead or prisoners. They had trusted him to protect them.

Picking up his rifle, he eyed it carefully. He noticed each scratch and malformation. He ran his hands along the barrel, then the trigger. Suddenly energy came to his hands. Lifting the long tube to his skull, he braced himself and pulled the trigger.

Nothing happened. A hoarse laugh escaped his throat.

Daniel checked his ammunition. Empty. He had used the last bullet on the soldier at the bridge. What a waste that was.

Slinging the rifle's strap around his shoulder, he straggled through the woods and let his feet carry him. Expertly they found a path and followed it west. He came upon a roaring river and saw a log bridge further down. Crossing, he entered a clearing. Cliffs towered ahead and the sea pounded to the north. Around him dead men lay strewn, blood caking their splitting carcasses. Daniel vomited.

One looked familiar. He was medium-height and stocky with a dark, blood-stained beard. Daniel stumbled over him and screamed as the man's white face came inches to his.

Springing away, he picked himself up and fled. Tears cut his eyes and the cold wind ripped at his throat, but he didn't stop. He ran. On and on. Until the pain became so unbearable he could run no more.

That night he rolled into a heap and slept like he hadn't slept for weeks.

When he awoke his mind was clearer. The events of the previous day came roaring back to him and the remembrance of his fallen men left to rot in the sun brought fresh guilt. After a long day's trek he made his way back to Fjord Rocheux. Where each man lay he began to dig graves. He dug with his bare hands, in his focus not thinking to retrieve a shovel from one of the nearby destroyed homes.

Nearly a hundred men lay dead in the ruin of Fjord Rocheux. His task stretched on into the night and the next day. For two solid weeks he worked, but time no longer had any hold on him. When he found a pistol still carrying one last bullet he fought every impulse not to shoot himself. He refused to think. His penance was all that mattered. He didn't dare think what would happen when he finished.

But the day came when not one dead man rested above ground. Fresh earth plots sprinkled the cleaven ground, and Daniel was beyond exhaustion. Again he struggled to fight death. Again he lifted the gun to his head, but this time he could not pull the trigger.

Autumn was coming fast, and after that winter. He would have to use everything he knew to continue to survive.

Returning to the concealed cabin he had built with Rachael, Daniel lived off the stock there and when he ran out reused old ammunition to hunt. September faded into October, then November, then December. January blasted into existence with temperatures in the negative double digits every night. Food became more and more scarce.

On January twenty-third Daniel was forced to abandon the safety of his cabin and trek further south to find food. The region enveloping Beauséjour was known to be rich in whitetail deer. Setting up camp a mile from the fort, he constructed a small blind and waited.

For days Daniel didn't leave his post, eating, sleeping, and urinating on the platform. Days passed without sight of a single deer. His stomach rumbled. Each day he grew weaker.

On the eve of the fourth day Daniel heard a quiet creak in the forest below. Instantly alert, he readied his rifle and scanned the waving foliage. Approaching from the direction of Beauséjour was the crackling of heavy, careful footsteps.

Closer and closer crept the falls. Daniel's finger closed around his trigger and he waited. At that moment, he saw red cloth flash through the brush. Daniel drew in his breath, but it was too late. His bullet rocketed from the barrel, missing the British soldier by inches. Diving out of the way, the Brit lifted his own pistol and fired. The bullet ripped Daniel's palm to shreds. Doubling over, he dropped his rifle and screamed.

Suddenly, a man leapt on his back and knocked in his skull with a harsh blow.

"By golly!" came a familiar boyish voice. "It's you!"

* * *

Daniel's eyes fluttered open. He was lying on a cot in a windowless room, chains encircling his wrists and ankles and a thick bandage wrapped around his hand. Candlelight flickered on the walls. His head boomed and he groaned. He should have known not to venture too close to Beauséjour. He should have known soldiers are rarely alone. His mouth was dry and he needed a drink.

"Marie..." he rasped.

"Good morning, Daniel Chaisson," said a soft baritone.

Daniel turned his neck and his gaze met a British lieutenant's. It was the same man he'd thought was a deer. Ridiculous, he must have been hallucinating. The man was a solid six feet.

"I gather you have a fine headache."

"*Magnifique*, thank you."

"We had no choice but to knock you out. You were putting up quite a struggle. Gave my brother a black eye."

"Give him my apologies."

The lieutenant smiled. "I was hoping we could get along. See, Colonel Monkton wants your head on a silver platter, but he owes me a great deal and has agreed I can do what I want with you."

"Wonderful," said Daniel, resting his head on the thin cot. "Why do you care? And how do you know who I am?"

"I believe my brother has met you before. Samuel Ainsworth?"

"I don't know the name."

"You held him captive back in August, before the deportations."

"I never asked him his name."

"He got yours from your daughter. We've been looking for you for months. We even put up reward signs. Your activities have become notorious in this part of Nova Scotia."

Daniel frowned. Samuel Ainsworth had kept them away from the cabin on purpose. Why?

The lieutenant studied him intently. "Who is Marie?"

Daniel wavered, and for a moment their eyes caught and did battle. Daniel broke away first. What more harm could it do, the man held his life in the balance. Blood flowed strong through his veins. He no longer had a death wish. "My wife. She was with me when I first escaped Beauséjour. You gunned her down before we reached the woods."

"I found her afterwards."

Daniel suddenly became clammy. "Dead?"

Again Daniel was unnerved by the soldier's keen gaze. "Yes."

Daniel turned away his face, struggling to conquer his swift emotion. Marie...Marie...

"I'm sorry. She was a beautiful woman."

"Yes," Daniel whispered, fighting to rid his mind of her image. He couldn't break down, not now. Quickly he groped for a new thought train. "My daughter was with the women and children in the woods east of Fjord Rocheux when you captured them. Her name is Rachael, nearly six years old, long brown hair and big brown eyes. Do you know what happened to her?"

"Deported to Quebec."

"Was she with a tall lady, spoke no English?"

The lieutenant's eyes glimmered. "Yes."

"Praise God," breathed Daniel.

Again they faded to silence. "My brother tried to needlessly kill you," said the lieutenant. "You saw he was young and foolish and forgave him. Understand our parents died in his infancy. We've only ever had each other." He hesitated. "You seem a good man. Tomorrow you will know your fate."

* * *

Daniel stood at the ship's prow, letting the cool wind float over his body and indulging himself in his first smile in months. The lieutenant lounged beside him.

Rachael, baby, I love you. I'm coming.

In the distance a city rose like a sparkling jewel. Its century-old walls stretched into the sky and its tall, proud architecture tumbled over the hills within. Québec City, Québec.

Entering the bustling port, the ship docked and Daniel and the lieutenant disembarked. Daniel's eyes gazed over the crowds, his heart rising to his throat. Rachael, Rachael! If I have you nothing else matters...Somewhere among these men and women she stood, waiting and searching, searching for him...

"Papa!"

Daniel whirled and caught her in his arms, laughing and throwing her up in the air. Tears streamed unabashed down his face.

"Papa!"

"Rachael, baby, I'm so sorry."

Rachael threw her arms around her father's neck, laughing and sobbing. "Papa."

Daniel suddenly became aware a warm, slim hand was resting on his bare arm. A shiver ran down his spine. Setting Rachael down, he turned.

The hand belonged to a tall, slender woman. Her eyes were dark and her thick black hair fell to her waist. Her belly was round with child.

Daniel sank to his knees.

"Marie."

Drawing him to his feet, she fell into his embrace. For a moment neither could speak.

"Marie." Daniel pulled her away, his eyes roving from her to Rachael to the lieutenant, and back again. "You were dead, I felt you..."

"She had no pulse when I found her," said the lieutenant, unable to follow the French but reading Daniel's astonishment. "I took her back to the fort with the intention of burying her. The doctor there used a new method to resuscitate her. She stayed in Cumberland until Rachael was brought in, then they left for Quebec together."

Daniel embraced her again, and Rachael reached her arms around the both of them.

"You're having a baby," he finally managed as his mind began to clear.

Marie lifted her sparkling eyes to his. "Yes Daniel. In April."

"My God," he whispered. "My God."