"But will it work?" the lawyer asked.Haim Clements, chief civil engineer of the Guild's

TransportDepartment, folded the blueprints. He did not enjoy beingwhere he was, speaking

to who he was, but that questionhad put him on safe ground. "Yes," he replied.

"Absolutely!It's ingenious! It will improve throughput in the networkby a factor of three or four,

without re-cabling or erectingnew towers. It's all down to the routing systems at themain

branch stations. These gyroscopic hubs areadmirable work. Where did we get it?"The lawyer

held out a gloved hand with an oily grace, andClements returned the blueprints with some

reluctance."Thank you, Mr. Clements," the lawyer said. "That will beall."Clements looked

from the lawyer to the masked mansitting behind the desk and back again. Color rising in

hiswhiskered cheeks, he left through the side door. Thelawyer closed it behind him and

handed the blueprints tothe man at the desk.Lucius Matheson, Secretary to the Governor,

put thefolded blueprints on his table, then placed a brasspaperweight on top. He saw his

own silver mask reflectedin the polished metal. "I want these put into operationimmediately.

Top priority.""As you wish," replied the lawyer, Olginous Flinch. Like allLucius' lawyers, his

deathly-pale face was fixed with apermanent, knowing sneer, and he wore an elaborate

eye-mask. Today Flinch favored a courtly design, in the shapeof two glittering, golden

swans. His long fingers curled tightas he spoke, as if he captured secrets in his gloved

palms."Our man would like to return. He frets on his safety."Lucius stood and walked over to

the window, his tall bootssilent on the thick rug, his steps weighted and precise, likea hunting

cat. He looked out over the City, following theline of the railway through its buildings, past

the NewConstruction on its way towards the mines in themountains. "There is one more task

I require of him, Mr.Flinch. And when you do speak to him, tell him we all freton his safety."

He turned his head, and although the silvermask covered all, it was clear to Flinch that

Lucius waswearing the devil's own smile. "Tell him I never ceasecontemplating the harm that

might befall him."tttFour Months LaterEarthside; Breachworks Station"You wanna see

something?" Edward Estlin asked, his bonyface sly and pale under the greasy Guild cap. "I

mean, reallysomething?"His young apprentice, John Cole, nodded mutely, eyeswide.Edward

knelt and opened the iron hatch in the roof of therailcar, easing it back silently on oiled

hinges. Impenetrableshadow hid what lay within, until the clouds parted andthe moonlight

fell.John Cole jumped back with a gasp, nearly slipping. Hecrept back to the hatch and

peered over the edge. Ashiver ran down his spine."Never seen one up close?" Edward

asked, glancingaround. The enormous, fortified railhead was never silent,not even in the

depths of night, but no one was lookingtheir way.John Cole shook his head, blonde curls

swinging."This car is full of ‘em, and the next," said Edward. "Andthe one after that."John

Cole swallowed. "They all could start a war with that."Edward eased the hatch closed. "Good

thing it's headedthrough the Breach then, eh?"ttt

Sourbreak Supply Depot, Malifaux"Message here for Master Waugh," sang out the

runner.Guild Quartermaster Leon Stubbs looked her up anddown. Small, like a wren, with

tiny, grey eyes behind hugegoggles and a thick pencil tucked in her hair. She wasdwarfed by

Stubbs' unruly bulk and more so by the vastmunitions warehouse. Not a pick on her, Stubbs

thought,nor a curve to grab. She was naught but a child, really. Heturned back to his

shipping list. "Never 'eard of no Waugh.Beat it."He thought he was imagining things, then he

realized hereally was hearing crying from the gangway behind him.He turned, angry. "That's

enough of that! Girls your ageshould be down the mines, not getting lost in munitionsyards

and bursting into tears. A spell down the mines'd dryyour eyes out for good." The sobbing

continued. "For goodand plenty! Try over at the Mast. They'll know him."She sniffed, flipped

up her goggles and wiped her eyeswith her sleeve. "Beady Simmons'll skelp me if I'm

late."She held out her message pad. "Could you? So he knows Iwas here?" As Stubbs

hesitated, she added, "I dun't wantto get skelped again, sir. Please!""Fine." It was probably

quicker than giving her the back ofhis hand, and less chance of getting covered in snot

andtears. "Give it here."The girl handed the pad over with another sniffle but gotthe pencil

tangled up in her goggles strap. It spun out ofher hand and fell, end over end, disappearing

into thetightly packed crates below the gangway.The tears started again, and Stubbs hastily

made his markon the pad with his own pencil and pushed it back into herhands. "Off with

you, you little wretch, and don't botherme again."The girl turned and ran, and Stubbs got

back to planningthe loading arrangements for the Munificent.When the girl was out of sight,

she stopped crying, threwthe pad and goggles away, and quickly made her way tothe

rendezvous point.Far below, the discarded pencil hissed so quietly that nonecould

hear.tttMalifaux City"Not that I am offering any resistance," Leroy Billings said,his trembling

hands still raised in the customary position,"but are you sure you know what you're

taking?"The masked man holding the gun said nothing, but thatdid not make Leroy feel any

better. What if they realizedwhat they'd actually stolen and in a fit of rage came backto his

shop and shot him. And his assistant, too, butprincipally him."Look," he tried again, "you

know what's in those bottles?It's not valuable. It's just--"He stopped as the masked man

pointed the gun. Hiscompatriot picked up the two large brown glass jars andleft through the

back of the shop. The gunman followed,and Leroy and his assistant were left alone

and,surprisingly, alive.“--animal medicine,” he finished in a whisper, as his youngassistant

fainted dead away.tttThe Next DayHollow Marsh MineheadEnglish Ivan looked so

aggressively out of place in theindustrial chaos of a working mine that new recruits hadbeen

known to stop working and simply stare. Their moreexperienced comrades quickly fixed that

with a belt ‘roundthe ear, and the lesson was soon learned – one does notstare at English

Ivan.Quite how he kept his black bowler and double-breastedfrock coat so free of the dust

and smoke that swirledaround the great minehead complex remained a mysteryamong the

members of the Miners and SteamfittersUnion. No matter where he went, surrounded on all

sidesby laborers blackened by oil or made ghosts by ash, hispale, flared trousers and low,

white boots seemedimpervious to insult, and even in the dullest light his blue

cravat shone like the summer sky. Outshining even thatwas the crystal clear soulstone on

the top of his ivorywalking cane.Pretty much all the workers and overseers at the mineknew

about English Ivan was his name, and even in thatthey were doubly wrong. He was not

English. As anyonewho had been greeted by him with a rousing, “Hullo!”could tell, his accent

was as Russian as a steppe wolf. Andhis name was not Ivan.There were rumors, of course,

that he worked for theWashhouse. There were rumors that practically everystranger or

oddfellow to pass through the mines workedfor the Washhouse, and most of the old mine

hands likedto hint that they had done work for the Washhouse atsome point in the past,

word-to-the-wise, say-no-more. Asfor the rumors about what the Washhouse did, well

theyventured into the realms of myth and legend.The rumors about English Ivan happened

to be true.He stopped on the sloped path leading up from PitheadFour, taking a moment to

straighten his waxed moustache.Heavy steamborgs pistoned past, their iron-shod

feetkicking up clouds of dust as miners stepped aside in frontof them. Ivan ignored them,

and the steamborgs walkedaround him. The building ahead was long, low, and tile-roofed,

and a steady stream of workers coming off shiftwere going in and out. It was, in truth, a

normalwashhouse, one of many around the mineheads. This one,however, had been built in

front of the Rising Machine.Ivan stepped past the slow-moving queues. The chatterand

splash of the washhouse quieted noticeably as heentered, and he walked quickly to a door

in the rear. WhiteEye McGee, who sat on a stool by the door, nodded blindlyto him and

stopped playing his mouth organ long enoughto flip the latch. Ivan walked out, onto the bare

rock at theback of the washhouse. The door locked behind him. Therock trembled with the

movements of the Rising Machine.It was like the inner workings of a giant's watch had

fallenfrom the sky and embedded in the earth. Jutting fromhuge notches blasted in the

mountainside, dozens of ironcogs the size of Ferris wheels rotated on deep-hidden hubsand

axles. All of them, from the point of view of theoutside observer, rotated upwards, hence the

name. Lookat it for long enough, and you would be convinced thewhole assembly was

climbing back up into the sky.The machine played a key role in the operations of theHollow

Marsh Pumping Station on the other side of themountain, but the Washhouse had gotten

involved at theplanning stage, and the Rising Machine played analtogether more

clandestine, secondary role.English Ivan drew his gold pocket watch from the breastpocket

of his waistcoat and tapped time with his cane. Atthe right moment, he stepped forward onto

one of themassive cogs. Standing comfortably in the man-sized gapbetween the iron teeth,

he rose quickly. The teeth meshedwith another great cog, but Ivan simply hummed

asymphony to himself as they approached. He passedthrough unscathed; a missing tooth in

the next, horizontal,cog ensuring that he remained unharmed. It was all abouttiming, as he

stepped off the first cog onto a hiddenplatform within the rock and straight onto another cog

onthe opposite side.So it went, from cog to cog, higher and higher, each steptimed to

perfection. If a man did not know precisely whereand when to step during the ascent, he

would be brutallycrushed by teeth that weighed more than rolling stock.The last cog brought

him to a door in a rock wall deepwithin the mountain. The sign on the door read,“Department

of Ungentlemanly Affairs”. He went in andwaited for the others to arrive.The first was Gibson

DeWalt. Very short, black, beardedand wiry, he wore oil-stained dungarees and a leather

beltslung with tools. “English,” he said in a slow drawl, beforesettling on a stool in the small

room. He glanced around,attention resting briefly on the cream envelope sitting onthe small

round table, then leaned back against the walland closed his eyes. “At least there'll be

crumpets.”Next to arrive was Hannibal Vholes. The door slammedopen, and Vholes filled the

iron frame. Even without hislifter's gear he would have been strong as an ox, but thepowered

harness that sat like a cage around his chest andshoulders enabled him to put a box car

back on the railsall by himself. At his hip was a rifle with a barrel like a stove-pipe.DeWalt

cracked an eye. “Look, English. We're saved. All weneed now is a mission that involves

lifting heavy objectsfrom down there to up here.”

Hannibal walked in, the power-plant on his back hissingsoftly. “I don't know you, little man.

Maybe you should sitthis out. The Union needs men for this one.”“That'll be our little secret.”

Eva Havenhand shut the doorbehind her. She wore a welder's smock with a length

ofelectrical cord at her hip coiled exactly like a whip.“What the hell is she doing here?”

Hannibal demanded.“Bringing a little glamor to our happy family,” she said.“Hi, English. Long

time, and all that.” She turned toDeWalt, stuck a gloved hand out and then pulled it

back.“Eva Havenhand. We won't shake, no offense. You didcome through a washhouse,

though. Just a hint. Have wemet?”“No,” said DeWalt. “But a man's luck can't last

forever.”“Who the hell is she, English?” Hannibal said.“Eva Havenhand,” she said. “I would

write it down, butthat would just embarrass you further. I like your gun. Iassume that was the

biggest they had. Might want to slingit a bit more in front, if you know what I mean.”“Eva,”

warned Ivan. “Play nice with your new friends.”“Sometimes it takes a stranger to tell

home-truths,English. That's all. You've put on weight. See? No one elsewould tell you but

me.”“And there'll be no coarse language, Hannibal,” Ivan said.“That's my number one rule. I

told you last time.”“Dammit, English, get shot of these two and--”There was a loud crack, and

Hannibal stood in open-mouthed surprise. Ivan had slapped him.“No coarse language, Mr.

Vholes. Of anykind.”Hannibal flexed his jaw. “What the hell?”Crack.“English! Stop slapping

me, dammit!”Crack.Hannibal's face darkened, and the pneumatics on hisharness whined as

his great shoulders flexed, but Ivanraised a school-masterly finger. “My number one

rule.”Hannibal's shoulders slumped, and he sat on a stool. “Byall that's – gosh

and...golly.”Ivan walked to the small table in the middle of the roomand picked up the

envelope. He read the letter inside, andthen passed it to DeWalt.“Our benefactor is upset.

The Guild has taken somethingthey shouldn't have,” he said. “So, we're going to returnthe

favor.”tttLater That EveningGuild Headquarters“They'll be arriving at Dockmast One around

midnight. Ihave already signalled for additional Guardsmen to reporthere in an hour, so you'll

have plenty of men. And nomistakes.”The Captain of the Watch nodded. “Sir, can I ask

where thisinformation came from?”The Governor's Secretary tilted his head. “It came from

farabove your pay grade, Captain. Our enemies think theyhave a little surprise in store for us

tonight, but I have eyesin places that would mortify them.”ttt11 Of The ClockIt was night, and

the stars were crisp and brilliant. EnglishIvan and the three members of his Washhouse

teamwaited quietly in the shadow of a brick wall thirty feet high.Above, gas-powered

floodlamps illuminated theunderbelly of a Guild aircar.The aircar was an armored leviathan,

with a cargocompartment of brass and wood slung beneath a bullet-shaped dirigible eighty

feet long. Guns bristled from

one-man pods all around the rigid, gas-filled balloon. Thegondola underneath was dwarfed

by the brass-ribbedenvelope above, but Ivan knew it was nonetheless largerthan most

boxcars that pulled into Malifaux Station. It too,bristled with guns and defensive netting – the

inhumandenizens of Malifaux could fly, and these aircars tookpersonnel and valuable cargo

great distances for the Guildover some of the most dangerous parts of the City.The aircar

did not float free, however. It was secured to amassive steel cable thicker than a man. The

cable ran fromthe top of a dockmast two hundred feet tall anddisappeared off into the

darkness. Other cables led off indifferent directions, connecting dockmasts all over the Cityin

a network controlled by the Guild. The cables shifted inthe wind, and the scaffolding tower

amplified the noisesand groaned them into the night like the calls of somesubterranean

monster.“Hard to believe something that big and heavy could justfloat,” muttered

Hannibal.“That's because it's not heavy, you oaf,” whispered Eva.“Or maybe it is. Maybe

they call it lighter-than-air just toconfuse deep-thinkers like you.”A door in the brick wall

opened, and a head emerged.Owlish eyes blinked.Ivan stepped forward briskly, tipping his

hat with his cane.“A grand evening to you, Mr. Pell. I hope you are well?”Mr. Pell stepped

into the lane, looking nonplussed. Hisdrooping mouth, hook nose, and bulging eyes made

himlook remarkably like a startled and ugly bird. “Ah, I am fine,thank you. Fine.” He glanced

around. “Er. How are you?”Ivan nodded soberly. “It is a cold night, and sometimes myankles

get sore, but I wore warm socks. Otherwise, I can'tcomplain.”“Good for you, English,” said

Eva. “Never ask Russians howthey are – they take it literally,” she whispered to Mr.

Pellbefore pushing past him and darting through the doorway.DeWalt and Hannibal

followed.“Come along, sir!” Ivan called to Mr. Pell, heading after theothers. “No time to

dilly-dally.”Pell closed and locked the door and chased after Ivan, whofound his team

gathered at the foot of the enormousdockmast.“Stairs?” said Hannibal, looking from the

steps to the ironframework towering above.“I knew he was the clever one,” said DeWalt.“Tell

me, Hannibal, did you ever let a graverobber spendtime alone with your head?” asked Eva.“I

meant,” hissed Hannibal, “can't we take the cargo hoist?It must be twenty five stories.”“Mr.

Pell says any use of the hoist will get noticed in thecontrol tower,” said Ivan. “We climb.

Good for the blood.”It took them a long time to reach the top, where the windhowled and the

bare metal was like ice. From there, Mr.Pell led them away from the main docking tower and

toan unlit rope ladder that hung from the rear of thegondola. They climbed one by one, Ivan

going last. As heclimbed, the main docking steps retracted into thedockmast, and the

departure sirens sounded. He climbedfaster. Once aboard the aircar, he hauled up the

ladder andspun the hatch closed.He found himself in a cramped ballast storage room.

Thewhole room shuddered briefly, and the superstructuregrumbled.“I believe we're

underway,” said Ivan, rubbing his handstogether. “Comrades, welcome to Guild

AerostatImpertinence. This is Mr. Solomon Pell, a friend of ourMovement.”“Hold it,”

whispered Pell hoarsely, “I'm no traitor. This isjust about the money. You and yours can go

hang for all Icare.”“Beg pardon. Money is, of course, a noble motive. Whydon't you tell us

about the money?”Pell's eyes lit up. “A million in mint Guild Scrip for theTreasury, coming in

tonight. The Governor's office orderedall Treasury shipments of scrip onto the aircar network

awhile back. It's a damn sight--”

Ivan held up a warning finger.“I mean, it's a clear sight more secure than trains,

armoredcrawlers or, heaven forbid, wagons.”“Unless you have an inside man,” said DeWalt,

staring atPell.“Now for your part,” said Pell to Ivan. “Which aircar is itcoming in on?”“Aerostat

Irascible.”Pell's eyes widened. “But – but she's already docked atGuild Headquarters! An

hour ago! They'll have offloadedthe money!”Ivan tapped the side of his nose. “Never fear, Mr

Pell. Youjust get us to Dockmast One at Guild Headquarters, andwe'll take it from

there.”tttMidnightDockmast One, towering above Guild Headquarters, waswhere all cables

led.Halfway up the tower, Haim Clements was quietly pacingabout the control room, from

station to station,monitoring the aircar traffic. On a large glass display thatdominated one

wall, motorised rods and levers movedbrass symbols along etched paths. Some symbols

weresmall, denoting aircar taxis that ferried small groups or VIPsaround. Larger symbols

showed Guild patrol aircars, andthe largest of all showed the mighty cargo aircars.If

Clements had been looking at this board only fourmonths ago, before the Governor's

Secretary had orderedthe cable hubs and switching systems upgraded with thestolen

designs, there would have been a fraction of thetraffic he observed. But now –“It is quite

something, Chief Engineer,” the shift supervisoroffered, her voice warmly

appreciative.Clements nodded. The brass symbols reflected in his gold-rimmed glasses.

“The operators don't need to do much, Isee.”The supervisor shook her head. “Only now and

then. Thehub gyros sense the loads automatically and distributeaccording to scientific ratios

and principles. It can bebeautiful to watch. Mesmerizing, on a busy night

liketonight.”“Security has been doubled, at least,” said Clements. “Noone is saying why, but

it explains the activity. Look – there,you can see the effects of a new departure ripple

throughthe whole system. Astonishing.”The supervisor stepped forward, putting her own

glasseson to peer intently at the glass display board. “Sometimesit feels like it’s alive. Like

it’s thinking.” She turned away.“Apologies, Chief Engineer. That is foolishness.”But Clements

was not so sure.tttDockmast One bristled with secondary berthing masts, likea crown of

thorns atop an iron tree. From below, powerfularc-lamps sent harpoons of light into the night

sky. Thegreat whale-body of the Impertinence was pinned byseveral as it floated above its

berth.Pell came back from the hatch, his face ashen. “The berthis crawling with

Guardsmen.”Ivan nodded. “They suspect something is afoot. Or theyare taking the security

of this consignment very seriouslyindeed. It was always a possibility. But do not fear, we

arenot discovered.”“But how are we to get down? We'll be seen!” Pell gnawedon an

ink-stained knuckle. “We're lost. We're doomed.”Ivan slapped him on the back and handed

him a tightlywrapped bundle. “Put this on, old chap. And keep yourchin up.”Ivan had already

put his on, and his team were nearly donewith theirs. He checked his pocket watch. Timing

waseverything tonight.

“Think of it, DeWalt,” Eva was saying as she donned hergleaming suit in elegant fashion.

“This is almost certainlythe cleanest thing you've ever worn.”DeWalt's reply was lost in the

folds of cloth, but Ivan wassure it would have broken his number one rule.“English,” said

Hannibal. “What the – er, good and gollyare these things?”The clothing was a single piece of

woven metal fiber thatcovered them from foot to head. It should have beenheavy, but was as

thin and supple as silk. Ivan felt his skintingle where it touched the metal cloth, as if

micro-currents of electricity raced through it. “DeWalt? This isyour brainchild.”DeWalt's voice

was muffled as he donned the outfit.“They're Faraday suits.”After an extended pause, Ivan

realised DeWalt consideredthat a full and complete explanation. He elaborated. “Theyare

immensely sensitive to even the faintest corpuscles oflight, and display a quite extraordinary

property when fullyilluminated.”DeWalt's head grimaced out the top of his suit. “Yeah,yeah,

English. Do the thing with the match.”Ivan struck a match. It flared brightly in the dark hold,

butas it did so, every Faraday suit lit up like a firefly. “Approachthe light, if you please.”They

took a step towards him, and he could see thesurprise on their faces. They walked as if in a

stiff gale.“These suits amplify the pressure of light, like a sailamplifies the effects of the

gentlest breeze. With a strongenough light, these suits could turn a walk into a sprint,or,” he

gestured to the hatch, “a death-plunge into a gentledescent.” Their expressions changed

from bafflement toghastly shock as they realized how he intended for themto reach the

ground. “If you would all move over to thehatch, we shall wait for one of the great spotlights

belowto play across our location. When it does so, jump. Thesuits will do the rest.”“But – but

– won't we be seen?”“You saw how the suits lit up, Mr Pell. You will be a candlehiding in a

fire. Hoods up, and let's go.”Eva was the first to the hatch. The darkness flared electricwhite

as a spotlight passed. “If I don't see you again,English,” she said as she jumped, “I just

wanted to tell youto go to--”And she was gone, her words lost to a howl on the wind.DeWalt

was next, but he was pushed aside by Hannibal(“No midget is gonna jump before I do!”).

DeWalt followedright after him (“Then you can be a midget's landingpad!”). Solomon Pell

was already backing away, but Ivanhad expected that, grabbed him by the collar, and

jumpedinto the light.tttThe Malifaux SanitariumThe door opened, and Matron Cynthia

Goodchildeentered. Before she shut the door behind her, DoctorPendergast heard the

wailing and banging from the EastWing that had been building since morning.Matron

Goodchilde bustled to the medicine cabinet,unlocked it, and started filling a box with tablets

before sheeven gave the doctor good evening. “Phlebotomy andsweating have not improved

their condition, Doctor,” sheexplained. “If anything, they grow more and moreagitated. They

need more sedatives. I have never seenanything like it, upon my word.”“A noxious miasma

from the river could be to blame,Matron.”She continued filling the box, exhaustion and

impatiencegiving edge to her voice. “The windows have been closedall day and all night.

Three of the patients have had suchexcitations of their spirits that I have had to bind

themhand and foot, but their strength is unnatural. Moresedatives are the only option left

before commotionbecomes riot.”Doctor Pendergast stood from his desk and walked overto

help her. Then he saw the pills she was stuffing into thebox. “Good lord, Matron! Tell me you

haven't given thoseto any of the patients!”

She froze. “All day, doctor. The jars are marked,'Sedatives.'”Doctor Pendergast grabbed the

box off her and closelyexamined one of the white pills. They were stimulants,given to

greyhounds and horses prior to races. He startedsweating. The worst of Malifaux's criminally

insanepatients had been receiving massive doses of these sincemorning.He heard a distant

crash, and the sound of a warden'swhistle. He and Matron Goodchilde ran from the

room,leaving behind the pills, and two large, brown glass jars.tttIt was a timeless,

otherworldly descent.Ivan's skin tingled as if electric eels swam there, while allaround him

was a blinding whiteness that the buffetingwind could not displace. He was aware of a

downwardsmotion, but gentle, like a falling leaf, and before long, eventhat sensation became

distant and unsure. He held his gripsteady on Pell's collar, and waited to touch down.His feet

bumped hard into something unyielding. He triedto stand, but lost his footing and rolled. The

surfaceunderfoot was smooth as glass and unpleasantly hot tothe touch. The lens of the

arc-lamp, he realised. Draggingan almost weightless Pell behind him, he bounced

andscrambled to the rim.The moment he was out of the pillar of light, his Faradaysuit

dimmed, and his mass returned in an instant. This timehe was surer on his feet, although

Pell landed beside himin a twisted bundle that grabbed at its bruised parts andmoaned.Two

dockmast workers who had manned the light wereslumped unconscious by a railing. Eva

stood over them,unwinding her length of electrical whip-cord from aroundtheir necks.

Hannibal and DeWalt were crouched at thetop of a flight of steps.Below lay a goods yard,

speckled with yellow pools aroundgas lamps that revealed shipping crates and

anonymouslow brick buildings. On the left of the yard were themassive feet of the

dockmasts, on the right largerwarehouses that separated the yard from the

GuildHeadquarters, and past the high wall on the other side ofthe yard flowed the river.“Just

like old times, English,” Eva whispered, securing themen's arms and legs. “Remember von

Neumann?”Ivan smiled. “The Brassheart! Yes, he had thataeronautical, robotic squid. Quite

a contraption.”“Till you blew it up. Things do have a habit of going up insmoke around you.”“I

couldn't possibly comment.”Ivan gathered his team quietly. “The money is in eightwooden

crates marked 'Billing Records', and the crates arecurrently in that hut.” Ivan's cane picked

out a red doorwith a gas-lamp above it.Pell frowned. “So what's in the Treasury boxes?”Ivan

shrugged. “I do not know. Billing records, most likely.”His eyes twinkled. “Washhouse agents

had them swappedbefore they came through the Breach, and now all wemust do is gather

them up, and then it is back to here, upto the Impertinenceagain using reverse-Faraday

suits, andwe'll be back in time for crumpets before they know whathappened.”“I said there'd

be crumpets,” said DeWalt.“The devil take your crumpets, Mr. Ivan,” said Pell. “Mybreakfast

is a one-quarter share. Do I have your word?”“You have the word of a gentleman, sir. The

Empire wasbuilt on nothing less.”Ivan led the way down the stairs and through the

goodsyard, keeping to the shadows. When they reached thebrick hut with the red door, he

waved Hannibal forward.“I have no key, Mr. Vholes. If you would be so kind?”As Hannibal

stepped forward, Eva's electrical cord lashedout and hit the gas-lamp. The light winked out.

Hannibalplaced both hands flat on the steel door, braced his feetand pushed. The

power-plant on his back hissed violently,a ruddy light glowing behind the cowling. There was

a

series of popping noises like champagne corks. Bolts ofbrick-dust shot out, and the sheared

ends of metal pinsrifled off into the darkness. The power-plant gave anominous rumble just

as the door squealed in protest, thenwith an oddly satisfying snap!Hannibal staggered

forward,the buckled door held firmly before him.Ivan's comrades filed swiftly past into the

hut, and then,once he was sure the noise had not drawn attention, hefollowed suit.“Hannibal,

the door, if you please.”The big dock worker leaned the door back in place. Ivanraised his

cane, and a soft, creamy light grew from thesoulstone atop it.The hut was empty.Pell turned,

aghast, as the others looked to Ivan in surprise.“What in the name of--” was all Solomon Pell

managed tosay before Ivan rapped him smartly on the temple with hiscane. He collapsed in

a bundle for the second time thatnight.“Secure him, please, Eva. Gently. He has done us

goodservice. Good, good, just place him over by the wall, there.He is not a sack of potatoes,

Eva. He will bruise. Thankyou.” Ivan twirled his cane and then leaned both hands onit.

“Gentlemen. Lady. The surprise has caused you greatunease, so allow me to soothe your

spirits with a dose ofthe unalloyed truth. There is no money.”There was a stunned

silence.Eventually DeWalt hawked and spat. “Figures. I knewsomething was up when you

started talking about reverse-Faraday suits. Makes no sense at all. How you thoughtanyone

would believe that bunkum is beyond me.”tttChief Engineer Haim Clements knew something

waswrong. He had always had a gift for looking at a piece ofnew engineering and knowing

whether it would work ornot. Once he had started considering the ornate glassdisplay panel

in the dockmast control tower as amechanical operation, a hideous feeling started to grow

inhis gut. If the panel had been a train, he would have saidit was about to derail.He called

the shift supervisor over, waving at her urgentlyacross the room. “Look at it! Tell me what

you see.”She perused the display for a few moments and shook herhead. “A great deal of

traffic around Dockmast One,probably the most there's ever been, but--”“Ignore the loads for

once, forget the direction they'regoing in for the moment and just look at the

destinationtags!”“But what does...” Her face went white. “Oh, my.”She started yelling orders

to the operators, but Clementsknew it was too late. Three quarters of the aircars on

thenetwork, hundreds of tonnes of steel and brass, wereabout to converge on Dockmast

One at precisely the sametime.tttEva's face was unreadable. “Care to explain that to

us,English? I don't like being played for a fool.”Ivan raised his cane. “Explanations? No.

Instead, I will dothis.” Bolts of white lightning shot from the soulstone onthe tip of his cane.

One speared Eva in the chest, knockingher backwards with a thunderclap. Another did the

sameto DeWalt. They both lay where they fell, smoke rising inthin wisps.“English?” Hannibal

said, edging towards the door. His fistscame up as his shoulder harness whined.“Put them

away, Mr. Vholes. You have no idea how muchtrouble you're in, but the Governor's

Secretary will explainit all to you when he arrives. And by explain, I mean feedyou to his

lawyers.”“What?”Ivan twirled his cane, then kicked DeWalt's body. Therewas no reaction.

“Those plans you handed over, the onesfor the autonomous hubs for the aircar network.

Theywere a plant by our friends in the Movement. They wanted

you to deliver them to the Guild, and like a stupid oaf, youdid exactly that.”Hannibal said

nothing, his expression close and wary.“Unfortunately, once I learned what you'd done, it

wasmonths after the fact. All the usual communicationchannels out of Hollow Marsh were

shut down by theMovement. I contrived this mission so that I would be senthere and I could

warn Lucius in person, but it's too damnedlate. Yes, Mr. Vholes, I work for Lucius as well.

”“Lucius didn't--”“Didn't tell you about me? Why would he? You didn't thinkhe would have

only one spy in the Union, did you? Ourcontact in the Movement doctored those plans so

that ata preset time on a preset date, the logic engines at theheart of it all would contrive a

disaster big enough to bringthe entire network down. He used you. And it is about tohappen,

right above our heads. Tell me, Mr. Vholes, whenhe arrives, whom do you think Lucius is

going to blame forthis?”Hannibal's face was sweating, and he had turned pale.

Hestammered several times, before saying, “It's not...that'snot...I can...”“You can explain? I

will certainly enjoy watching you try, aspieces of aircar rain down upon us. At best, you'll

diepainfully. At worst, Lucius will decide you are actually adouble-agent. If he thinks that,

there is no telling what hemight do to you. Who knows, he might even take off hismask and

let you see what's underneath.”Hannibal's eyes were wide. He stepped forward, reachingout

to Ivan, his power-plant whining softly. “You have tohelp me, English!”Ivan spread his hands

wide, with a 'what can I do?'expression.“You have to help me! Wait! I have this. I have it

here, holdon.” Hannibal dismantled the ammunition drum of hisrifle. Inside he pulled out a

tightly folded bundle of papersand brandished them at Ivan. “This is the proof, English! Ifyou

tell him I'm not a double-agent, and he sees these, it'llall be fine! I know it!”Ivan frowned.

“What on earth is that?”“Plans! For a prototype Leviathan! I swear it, English, onmy mother's

grave, I swear it. You have to tell him it wasn'tmy fault! I was going to break away from you

all, firstchance I got, and give Lucius these. I've been trying to gethim to let me quit for

months, and then you picked me forthis mission, and I thought if I gave these to him he

wouldlet me get out. You have to tell him!”“Yes, Hannibal. I picked you.” Before the huge

dock workercould react, Ivan snatched the Leviathan plans from hisoutstretched hand. “You

two listening to all this? Sorry,DeWalt. Apologies, Eva. Temporary paralysis only. Icouldn't

count on you not interfering. I picked you,Hannibal, because we knew you had these

planssomewhere, and our benefactor really, really wants themback, but we knew we would

never see them again if wejust asked you. But if we gave you an opportunity to deliverthem

in person, for example, if I picked you for a missionthat just happened to take you to Guild

Headquarters, whythere was a pretty good chance you would bring themalong.” Ivan slipped

them into his waistcoat pocket. “Thankyou, Mr. Vholes.”DeWalt groaned and sat up. “Could

you two repeat all thatfrom the beginning?”Eva stood, groggily, her electrical cable-whip in

her hand.“Vholes, you traitorous piece of--”Ivan raised a warning finger, just as Hannibal

raised his rifleand clicked the trigger. Nothing happened. “Youdismantled the ammo drum,

sir. And I do believe thatforcing open that door has depleted your power-plantconsiderably

for now. However,” Ivan leaned his caneagainst the wall and raised his fists, “if it's trouble

you want,I have two good friends of the Marquess of Queensburyright here.”Hannibal ran.

He toppled the door and sprinted off intothe night. DeWalt and Eva rushed to the open

doorway,but Ivan called them back. “Let him go. We have biggerfish to fry tonight.”Eva

turned. “Okay, English. You got me. What is therepossibly left to do tonight? And don't think

I've forgivenyou for shooting me with that thing.”

“Just so we're clear,” said DeWalt, rubbing his head.“There's no money, right?”From across

the river, a distant siren sounded, along withgrowing numbers of Guild whistles.“If I'm not

mistaken, and I rarely am,” said Ivan, “thatsounds a lot like it's coming from the Sanitarium. I

wonderwhat could be transpiring there at this hour.”Those sounds were almost immediately

drowned out asemergency klaxons blared into life across the goods yard,from the direction

of the illuminated dockmasts.“That's a collision warning,” said DeWalt. “Did you meanwhat

you said about those plans Vholes stole beingdoctored?”Ivan smiled. “Come, we have one

last job to do, and I amgoing to need your expertise, Mr. DeWalt.”tttThe Aerostat

Munificentwas the largest class of militaryaircar the Guild possessed. Fully one hundred feet

fromnose to stern, it carried huge cargos. At present, it wasproceeding under full automation

along the Sourbreakline, heading towards the Guild Headquarters andDockmast One. Its

captain was frantically signalling thecontrol tower as the Munificentand four other

aircarsapproached the same hub at the same time. Tethered tothe cables that were pulling

them along, there was nothingthe captains of any of the vessels could do.In the underslung

belly of the Munificent, crates ofammunition were piled high. Nestled between two of

thecrates, lodged deep where no one could see it, was whatlooked like a pencil.Inside, the

pencil was hollow, and a very preciselyengineered plate of tin separated an acid from a

liquidaccelerator. The acid had been eating through the tin forjust over a day, now, and as

the Munificent'scollisionwarning sirens blared, the tin gave way, and the liquidsmet.The initial

flare was small, but intensely hot, and the drytarpaulins over the surrounding crates quickly

caught fire.tttThe goods yard was in chaos. Dock workers and GuildGuardsmen were

running back and forth as the hugesearchlights played over the swollen bodies of the

aircarsmassing above. Already, two had collided and burst intoflames, causing burning

debris to rain down over the river.The top of Dockmast One was ablaze, and the

gyroscopichub of one of the secondary masts had failed inspectacular fashion, wrenching

the connecting cable soviolently that the mast was slowly, inexorably, falling over.The

scream of tortured iron was ear-splitting.Ivan had led his remaining team members to one of

thelarger warehouses. If there had been guards present, theyhad deserted their posts, and

Ivan and Eva were haulingopen the main doors. Loud though it was, it wentunnoticed in the

panic and confusion.Then, from the direction of the Quarantine Zone, alongthe Sourbreak

line, there was a flash that lit the night likea new sun. Ivan had to look away, and then a few

momentslater, as the afterimages still danced in his eyes, thethunderclap of the exploding

Munificent nearly knockedhim off his feet.Eva whistled. “Sweet Bayou Rose! I just know you

hadsomething to do with that, English.”The burning wreckage plummeted over the

QuarantineZone, ordnance and ammunition still cooking off as it fell.The sight would linger in

the minds of every Malifauxcitizen for a long time.“I couldn't possibly comment.”They entered

the warehouse. It was dark, and Ivan's eyesstill tricked him with white ghosts of the

explosion, so itwas Eva and DeWalt who saw the inhabitants of thewarehouse first.Eva gave

a yelp of alarm.“Don't worry – they're not activated,” DeWalt said, andthen Ivan's eyes finally

adjusted, and he gazed upon rowafter row of brand new Guild Peacekeepers. Each

machinestood twice as tall as a man, with a heavy, squat armoredbody, two legs and four

arms ending in claws that could

crush a railcar. Their heads were all looking straight ahead,but there were no signs of power

in any of them, despitethe thick cables running from iron cranium to ironcranium.“How many

are there?” Eva asked, her voice soft withwonder.Ivan grabbed DeWalt and hurried him over

to a controlpanel positioned in front of a large logic engine. The cablesburied in the skulls of

the Peacekeepers all led back to thisengine. “There should be thirty-six. They came

throughthe Breach only a few hours ago, and they haven't beenactivated yet. Security

measure. Eva, watch the door.DeWalt, I need you to reprogram these.” Ivan checked

hispocket watch, grimaced, and handed a sheet of punchedcard to DeWalt. “This. Use this.

Be very, very quick.”Ivan ran over to Eva, and peeked through the doorway intothe yard. The

secondary mast had completely collapsedinto the river, and fires and debris from the

still-collidingaircars were everywhere. It was pandemonium.“All this just to get some plans

back?” asked Eva. “Youshould keep copies.”Ivan shook his head, as still more ammunition

explodedin the distance, sending up fresh fireballs. “Yes and no. Theplans were vital, but

tonight is about Vholes. Lucius hadhim in our midst for a long time before we realized

whathe was up to. He was a member of the Washhouse. Hehad access to just about

everything. Tonight is theMovement's way of warning the Governor. Once this isover, the

Guild will blame it in public on pilot error or anengineering failure, but the point will not be lost

on theGovernor. ‘Do not cause a mess in our own backyard.’”“This is some warning.”“This?

No, this is just the distraction.”DeWalt joined them. “The engine has accepted

theinstructions, but what's the point, English? Those thingscannot be activated from here. It

needs Guild hardwareto make them initialize, and I can't fake that.”A new set of sirens

sounded, these ones coming from theGuild barracks further down the river.“You know what

that sound is, sir, madam?” said Ivan.“The skies themselves are falling right on top of

GuildHeadquarters. The hundreds of inmates of the Sanitariumhave broken out and are

wreaking havoc across the river.Taken all together, it might, to a panicked captain of

theGuard, be mistaken for an outright attack by hostile forces.Right on their doorstep. It is

time for emergencymeasures. They call out the troops. They barricade everyroad. They

fortify positions and--”Behind them, the lights came on in the warehouse. Powerhummed as

a generator in the back coughed into life.Thirty six metal pairs of legs hissed as their

pneumaticswarmed up.“--and they issue the emergency activation codes to allmothballed

Guild assets,” finished DeWalt.Ivan turned and spread his arms, welcoming the

thirty-sixarmoured heads that turned to look at him. “One musthand it to the Guild. They are

sticklers for procedure. Itmight not be a million in Guild Scrip, Ms. Havenhand.These are

worth a lot more than that. Not bad for a night'swork. Viktor Ramos does so love new

toys!”Ivan walked over to the nearest Peacekeeper. It turned itsmassive head to look down

on him, and he tapped his hatwith his cane. “Hullo.” He clicked his fingers. It reachedout a

hand and lifted him carefully, placing him atop itsgleaming red carapace.“Choose a

conveyance, Ms. Havenhand. Or, if you prefer,pick a horse, Mr. DeWalt. We have a long

ride ahead ofus.”The cables detached as the last of the new instructionswere fed to the

Peacekeepers by the logic engine. Theystomped forward, shaking the concrete floor of

thewarehouse with each step. The ones in the front rowraised their massive claws, and the

brick walls of thewarehouse collapsed before them. The ones behind,including those

carrying Ivan, Eva and DeWalt, scramblednimbly over the rubble and kept going, heading for

thestreets of Malifaux and the mountains beyond.ttt

EpilogueSolomon Pell awoke with a very sore head in a partiallywrecked brick hut as the

morning sun shed its light on ascene of destruction. Many fires still burned, and the roofof

the hut had fallen in where tangled debris had landedon it, but other than his aching head,

Pell was surprisedto learn he was unscathed.Knowing that his part in the night's affairs

would doubtlesscome to light before long, he returned to his lodgings,planning to be very far

away when the Guild came lookingfor him.So it was with even greater surprise that Mr. Pell

learnedthere had been a delivery for him the evening before. Hislandlady, who disapproved

of practically everything,including, it seemed, deliveries, reluctantly handed him anote that

had come for him just after dawn. It read simply,“A gentleman's promise kept. Enjoy your

breakfast.”His landlady advised Mr. Pell that he could find his twoboxes of billing records up

in his room.