

# The Sugar Rebellion

Lyle Garford

Except where actual historical events and characters are being described for the storyline of this novel, all situations in this publication are fictitious and any resemblance to living persons is purely coincidental.

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## Dedication

This one is for  
Graham and Kellee

Chapter One  
March 1795  
Grenada

The tension and energy in the air was tangible, a physical presence he felt he could reach out and grasp with his hand. Fedon sensed it as he came in, walking to the front of the room and stopping to face the waiting crowd. Two white men followed him in, but they turned away to stand off to the side with their backs to the wall in a deliberate effort to gain distance from the others. The waiting people ignored them and all eyes turned to Fedon in anticipation. The buzz of conversation filling the air dwindled to silence as he held up a hand and they waited for him to speak.

As the growing anger and frustration of the people slowly turned from mere talk to active thoughts and plans to act, everyone knew Julien Fedon was the man to lead them in the coming rebellion. The son of a white French father and a black, former slave mother, Julien was a well-built, handsome man with dark, curly hair flowing to his shoulders and light coffee colored

skin. This made him part of a large and growing population throughout the Caribbean of mixed race people known as mulattos. Now in his early thirties, he already had the leadership experience of running his own coffee plantation with over one hundred slaves to work it. His natural charm and respectful manner in dealing with people combined to give him a presence people deferred to whenever he came into a room. Fedon radiated strength and could dominate any conversation if he chose to.

For many years now those conversations were about rebellion and the desire to gain a share of the enormous wealth to be had from the plantations of the Caribbean. The vast majority were sugar plantations, but several owners like Fedon were growing other crops such as coffee. The plantation owners and people with French roots on the island of Grenada began to seethe with slow, growing unrest from the moment the island was restored to British rule. The signing of the 1783 Treaty of Versailles returned it to the British when hostilities finally ended in the American War of Independence. Although safeguards to the rights of the French settlers

remaining on the island were built into the Treaty, in practice they were worth little.

Roughly half of the plantation and business owners on the island were of French origin and a large proportion of these were mulattos like Fedon. Efforts to have their interests and concerns addressed by British politicians on the island were rebuffed at every turn. Many mulattos also retained their belief and ties to the Catholic faith. Ninian Home, the current Governor of the island, was a tyrant as far as the mulatto population was concerned. On taking office he shifted official policy of the British administration from one of passive acceptance of Catholics on the island to active disapproval and periodic, outright persecution.

The Governor also owned the largest number of slaves on Grenada and was well known for his paternalistic, strict treatment of slaves as little better than simple children. The entire slave population of the island knew who he was and loathed him. Grenada was a seething, bubbling pot of anger and frustration ready to boil over.

The real spur to action instilling hope a rebellion could succeed, however, was the 1789 French Revolution and its Caribbean offspring, the 1791 slave revolution in the French colony of St. Domingue. Everyone in the room was inspired by it and had worked hard ever since to find a way to make it happen on Grenada, too. Fedon took a deep breath, savoring the sensation of their collective efforts and dreams coalescing into this culminating moment. He spread his arms wide for a moment before he spoke.

"My friends. My brothers and sisters. Citizens! The time to prepare is over and it is finally time to act. We have suffered British persecution in silence for far too many years."

He paused a moment to scan the faces around him for emphasis before he bellowed out a question.

"So are we ready?"

The crowd roared with inarticulate fervor. Several people raised fists in joyous defiance. Their eyes gleamed in the light of the lanterns and candles about the room. Fedon saw some were moved enough tears were streaming down their faces.

The crowd was a curious mix of people. Most were in their late twenties or early thirties like Fedon, but all ages were represented. A small group of mulatto women was present and a few white faces were sprinkled throughout the crowd. The majority were mulatto men and this was the key group Fedon focused his attention on, for they were the backbone of the leadership cadre supporting him. Each had personal grievances with the British.

Two of his senior commanders stepped forward at the same time to speak. One was Jules Besson, a huge man with a hard face. The other was Jean La Valette, smaller with a lean, wiry frame, but an equally determined air about him. La Valette deferred to Besson.

"Julien, our people are as ready as they will ever be. Give us the signal and unleash us."

"I shall. The time has come to follow our brothers in St. Domingue and bring revolution to our island too! We must seek to be citizens of our own republic and rule ourselves. Freedom from British oppression and freedom for all people of color, like St. Domingue! Yes, we shall be citizens. Think of the meaning of the



word! But before we begin, you must know I bring good news that I believe is an omen of future success."

Fedon smiled at the hopeful looks appearing on their faces and he waved a hand in the direction of the two white men who had followed him into the room.

"You all know we have been planning for this night for a long, long time. How incredible is it then that on this particular night word has come from our friends here that the tyrant Ninian Home has left his fortress in St George's and could be within our reach?"

Fedon laughed to see the ferocious looks appear on the faces of his men. Several clamored for more details and begged to be chosen to hunt him down. Even with Fedon gesturing with both hands palm down for calm to allow him to resume, it took almost a full minute for the excited buzz of talk to subside.

"Yes, my friends. Our Governor has conveniently left the safety of Fort George and gone to the other side of the island. I have no idea why and I don't care, I just think it is a sign heaven is with us this night. My friend Besson, I

know you want the honor of capturing him, but you are needed to lead the men as planned in Gouyave. My friend La Valette, we will detach you and a small party of your men to see to the task, for the Governor has gone to Grenville. We will have to make adjustments, but I have some ideas and the time is now to strike. I am sure your junior commanders will be capable of dealing with the town of Grenville itself as we had planned you would do."

"Julien?" said La Valette. "What are your orders for him? Please, tell me we can just cut his head off and put it on display here at Belvedere for all to see?"

Fedon grimaced in response. "As much as I would love to see his head on a picket at my estate, I very much desire you to capture him. We have discussed the issue of prisoners before, my friends, and you know we may need something to bargain with. The British will not capitulate easily."

"Julien," said Besson. "We know this and yes, we have had this conversation before. The problem is this has become like a hurricane that may be impossible to avoid. The people's anger

is a wild animal. We can talk all we want about taking prisoners, but there is going to be much blood shed before this night is out."

"I know. Much blood was shed in St. Domingue and I expect in the end the outcome will be no different here. At a minimum I ask wherever possible we capture the British aristocrat owners and especially their families. Anyone with any importance will be valuable, especially Governor Home. I promise you can beat him to the point where one more blow would end his life, but we need him alive. Beyond this, I would ask we all try to spare lives where we can, especially innocent ones. We have no need to kill women and children or men who willingly surrender to us."

Fedon paused to give them chance to speak, but none did. "Very well, let us make adjustments to our plans. I want everything in motion within the hour."

Julien's brother Jean stepped forward and the two men embraced each other with hard affection.

"Julien. My wonderful brother. We know you will lead us to success!"

Turning to face the crowd, Jean grasped his brother's hand and lifted it into the air to the raucous cheers of the others. Taking this as a sign the time for speeches was over the babble of several excited conversations burst out. Fedon looked over at the two white men standing impassively against the wall and smiled before turning away and moving to join his lieutenants. One of the white men nodded acknowledgement to Fedon before looking to the man beside him. He signaled it was time to leave with a jerk of his thumb toward the door and they left unnoticed by the rest of the crowd.

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The sleepy guard standing watch at the entrance to the military barracks in the coastal town of Gouyave looked bored. The men watching him standing slumped against the wall of the building knew he likely had an almost overpowering desire to let himself slide down the wall and sit with his back to it. The guard's problem was if he succumbed and his Sergeant caught him sitting down or worse, asleep on duty, he would find himself tied to a post and his back would feel the harsh sting of multiple

lashes from a whip. As the guard yawned and shuffled to change his position and stay awake, a distant pounding of drums began.

The guard gave a start and took a few steps away from the wall to look for the source, but the brief burst of drumming ended within seconds. Despite this the man had identified the drumming came from the distant darkness of the island's interior and he remained peering that direction, but the drums didn't resume. The night sky was overcast with light clouds, making it difficult to see in what little moonlight was available.

Everyone was aware slaves used drums to communicate over long distances, but there had been minimal recent activity and the rebels were careful in the days leading to this night to give no indication of more than normal unrest in the slave population of the island. After a few more long moments to be certain the guard shrugged and turned to go back to his post, only to have the dark shape of a man loom in front of him. The guard tried to back away as the man was not alone and he opened his mouth to shout a warning, but a strong hand clamped his mouth

shut and a knife was driven deep into his back. The killer cut the guard's throat after withdrawing the knife to be sure of his work.

Besson smiled in the darkness, knowing he had taken the guard in complete silence and his victims within remained unaware. The drums were the signal to begin and the thought blows for freedom were being struck all over the island made him grin even more. He turned to find his junior commander and some of his men had crept up in silence to stand beside him.

"What fools they are," said Besson. "The only other entrance to this building is in the rear and it is both locked and unguarded. Take your men and cut them down if they try using it to escape. The windows are too small for any of them to get out that way, but they will be useful for our purpose. I will give you a few moments to get your men in place and then we begin."

As they left Besson turned to another who had remained behind. "Bring the torches."

Within moments a burning torch was brought forward, producing a flickering, garish light that reflected off the dark pool of blood drained from the dead guard. Several other

torches were soon lit and Besson signaled for the men to begin. The small, high windows lining the wall of the barracks were smashed in almost as one and a flaming torch was flung into each. From inside the barracks initial cries of surprise and alarm from the sleeping men turned into jumbled, inarticulate screams, rendering shouted orders from their officers unintelligible.

Watching the windows, Besson was gratified to see the torches were doing their work. Bright flames could already be seen flickering inside and, as he watched, long tongues of fire came licking out of the windows as it took hold, fed by the steady flow of air through the smashed windows.

Within moments the first of the soldiers struggling to escape the flames burst through the door. As he did a wickedly sharp machete dropped him in his tracks, striking him so hard his head was almost severed from his shoulders. Four more men were dead before the remainder in the barracks realized what was happening. A brief pause ensued before three men with swords at the ready tried bursting through the door at the same time. Besson had anticipated this and his

strategy to counter it was to meet their desperate charge with a forest of makeshift spears made for this purpose. The doorway was soon blocked with a pile of bodies. Screams of burning men and the stench of burnt flesh filled the night air.

Besson smiled. Unlike Julien Fedon, he had no qualms about killing the British and he didn't care if a few innocent victims were numbered among the dead. As he stood watching the growing flames his second in command appeared at his elbow to report.

"They tried using the rear entrance, but we got every one of them. The rest inside are finished. Can we proceed to deal with the rest of the town?"

Besson turned to look behind him at the town and saw it was no longer in darkness. Several lights were visible to show the alarm was raised, but the attack had come fast and he knew confusion likely reigned.

"Of course. There is no rush now. They have no soldiers to protect them. They probably still don't even realize what is happening yet. Our only opposition now will be plantation overseers if any happen to be in town, and we have enough



men they won't be a problem. You may begin. And Marcel? Remember to save a few for Julien."

The man laughed, knowing his commander was joking.

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Julien had left the town of La Baye for another of his mulatto senior commanders to take. Like Fedon, Etienne Ventour owned various properties throughout the island, but only half the number of slaves of his commander. Despite his experience in giving orders and commanding men, the situation in La Baye was on the verge of chaos. People seeking orders were tearing Ventour in multiple directions.

Several English plantation overseers were mounting a spirited, desperate counterattack on his forces, disrupting all of the careful planning. The attack was being beaten back with big losses on both sides, but Ventour knew he could afford them far more than the English. With the defeat of their resistance almost assured Ventour's men were now on a rampage through the town. Plantation owners were being dragged

into the streets and beaten to death in front of their families. In the distance he could hear the faint screams of women and children.

Ventour was grateful a few of his senior men were still with him. He ordered them to band together everyone they could find that hadn't completely lost all control and to bring the others to heel by force if necessary. As the men about him dispersed to their tasks he felt a tug on his arm. Turning, he found his mulatto sister Sophie Ventour standing beside him. Her light brown skinned, attractive face wore a desperate, anguished look.

"Etienne, my God, you must come at once!"

"Sophie, what are you doing here? You were supposed to stay behind our lines and come out only when we established control. This is not safe!"

"It doesn't matter, Etienne. You must come and stop them now. They are attacking French people!"

"What? Oh, my God! Where?"

"Follow me!" She pointed and began running down the street before he had a chance to hold her back.

Groaning, Ventour signaled for three of his men to follow him and he went after her. As they ran down the main street lit by the roaring flames of a fire started in one of the big mansions he saw it's owner and his men with their backs to the fire struggling to break free, but fighting a losing battle with his forces. The owner's wife and children huddled in a piteous group behind them. Everywhere he looked there were small knots of men struggling. Several unmoving bodies lay strewn on the ground where they had been cut down. But at least some of his men were obeying orders, pushing groups of frightened prisoners back down the street toward their temporary headquarters. His sister kept going past all of this. Ventour was angry, knowing she had strayed far from where she was supposed to remain.

She finally stopped and pointed at another mansion at the far end of the street, where the scene greeting him was appalling. A small group of his men were on the verandah of the mansion taking turns holding and punching two white men, one older and one much younger. Blood streamed down their faces and both were barely

conscious, still standing only because their captors kept them this way.

As Ventour came closer he saw another larger group of his men clustered inside the front entrance. All of them appeared intent on watching whatever was going on inside. Sophie clutched at his arm as he finally caught up with her.

"Etienne, these men are French owners! These madmen have no idea what they are doing. We must make them stop!"

Ventour recognized the older man and knew she was right. A blazing anger filled him as he strode forward and shoved one of the two black men about to strike the prisoners to the side.

"Stop what you are doing, you fools! These men are friends."

The man he shoved recovered fast and shoved Ventour in return. "Who are you to stop us? Go away or we will beat you too!"

Ventour responded with a crushing punch to the face of the man, who fell to the ground and did not get up. Pulling out his sword, Ventour pointed it at the remaining men.

"You idiots. Who am I, he says? I am your commander and if you don't release these men now I will carve all of you into scraps of meat for the dogs!"

The remaining three men in the group let the prisoners drop to the ground without a word and stepped back, sullen looks on their faces. The older prisoner moaned in pain while the other lay comatose where he fell. Ventour stooped to touch the shoulder of the older man, but once again he felt his sister tug at his arm.

"Etienne! My God, they need your help inside too!"

Ventour whipped his head about to look at the doorway and for the first time realized there were screams of pain and terror coming from inside the mansion. Ventour groaned, knowing what he would find, for the people screaming were women. The dark anger that had begun to subside flared within him once again.

Two men staring at the scene inside blocked the doorway. Ventour shouldered his way past them and stepped inside, followed close by the three men who had come with him. One of the men Ventour had shoved was angered and made

to retaliate, but was felled by crushing blows from clubs wielded by Ventour's followers.

Ventour was appalled at the scene before him, finding his worst fears realized. The owner's wife and two younger women, presumably his daughters, were all being brutally raped. Five other black men were watching the scene, waiting their turn. Ventour waved his sword and scowled at the watching men before reaching down to grab one of the rapists by his hair. The man screamed as he was dragged off the woman. Once the man was free of his victim Ventour let go. The man turned to look at Ventour, an equal mixture of anger and puzzlement written on his face. Ventour let every ounce of his frustration vent as he kicked him hard in the groin. His victim howled in pain as he crashed to the ground.

The men with Ventour had already taken their cue and pulled the other two rapists off their victims as well. The remaining attackers were furious and shouting abuse at Ventour, but they made no move to stop him.

Ventour roared out his own anger and waved his sword in all directions once again.

"Silence!"

With murderous looks they all finally complied, but the tension in the air was palpable. All of them were clutching the clubs and knives they carried hard. Ventour knew they would not hesitate to use them, but he didn't care.

"You stupid fools. These people are French! They are friends!"

One of the two rapists pulled off the other woman stepped forward. He was big, with muscles hardened from years of brutal slave labor rippling as he moved. His rage was clear as he stuck his face bare inches from Ventour.

"I should kill you for that. Who do you think you are?"

"I am in charge here, asshole," said Ventour, not giving any ground and bringing his sword point to the man's face. "And as your commander, I'm the one that can order *you* killed. So back away. Now."

The man scowled and remained where he was for a long moment before finally taking one step back. But he still wasn't cowed.

"What is the problem? We were only doing what is right. We are the victors, we have the right to do as we please."

"You are an imbecile! These people are French. They are friends and were not to be harmed."

The man snorted. "They are whites. Who cares whether they are English or French? The whites are all the same. They all keep us in chains of slavery."

"The French are supporting us. Listen to me, all of you idiots! They may be slave owners now, but they want a better future for everyone. Freedom and liberty for all! I am not going to argue this with any of you. If I catch any of you hurting our friends again you will hang. Is that clear? Now report to your leaders for orders and get out of my sight, all of you."

Several of the men remained looking sullen, but after another long moment they slowly began to comply. Within seconds the only people remaining in the room were Ventour and the three victims. Two were curled into unmoving balls of pain where they lay while the third had managed to sit up, lying slumped



against the wall. She clutched at the rags of her torn dress to cover herself.

Sophie slipped into the room and came to stand beside her brother, tears streaming down her face. Ventour slipped an arm around her shoulders as she shuddered and spoke to him.

"Thank you for coming, Etienne. I just wish we could have gotten here sooner."

"I wish that too. We must do a better job of teaching and controlling this ragtag army we have raised. Sophie, you took a bad risk not following orders. We will speak of this again, later. I am needed elsewhere. I will post a guard to ensure nothing else happens. Do what you can for them."

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Fedon was weary from lack of rest, but even if he had found time to try he knew sleep would not have come. A steady flow of reports came in from his field commanders around the island. He had remained at Belvedere, his estate located in the rough and mountainous geographic center of the island. Being roughly equidistant to anywhere on the island, it was a natural and logical headquarters. The estate was also a

convenient place to keep a small force in reserve, as reinforcements could be sent as fast as possible to bolster his men wherever necessary should they encounter stiff resistance.

They were not needed. Instead, they found themselves serving as jailers to a small, but growing stream of prisoners. By the time dawn broke Fedon had a squalling, disheveled crowd of forty men, women, and children locked in a large, unused storehouse on his estate. He had hoped for more. None had come from Gouyave and he wasn't surprised, as Besson's cruel streak was well known. Most of the prisoners had come from areas his friend Ventour and his brother Jean Fedon had led their forces to.

The one remaining town he had received no reports from was Grenville, on the windward side of the island. By itself Grenville was no more important a target than anywhere else, but the fact Ninian Home travelled there the day before for whatever reason changed everything. Fedon was desperate for La Valette to capture him, knowing his value and that the success of the entire rebellion could depend on it. The lack of news ate at him, but enough reports on the

situation elsewhere had finally arrived and Fedon knew he no longer needed to be concerned about other towns. Striding out of his mansion he signaled to a group of his men and their commander standing ready and waiting for orders.

"Louis, half of your men will remain here with you. You are in charge until I return. The rest of them are with me. We need to find out what is going on in Grenville. Let's go."

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They rode into Grenville an hour later. Despite it being straight downhill from Belvedere to the coast they pushed the horses hard, leaving them lathered with sweat. Fedon slowed them as they rode into the outskirts of the town and he sighed as he took in the destruction greeting them.

Grenville was a massacre. Dead bodies were strewn all over the streets. The stench was already bad and would soon be worse as the sun climbed higher in the sky. Buildings were vandalized everywhere he looked. They saw no living beings anywhere until they got further into the center of the town, where they found

several men milling about. In the main square several bodies were hanging from the limbs of a large tree. All were gently swinging back and forth in a strong breeze coming from the ocean. The breeze was welcome as it wafted away the reek from a large number of dead men still lying where they had fallen.

Fedon sighed and dismounted. He looked about in vain for the junior lieutenants they had designated to lead the men for the Grenville attack. He recognized none of the waiting men who were all staring at him. None of them spoke.

"Well?" said Fedon, an exasperated tone in his voice. "I am Julien Fedon. Who is in charge here?"

Once again the men all looked at each other until one finally shrugged and stepped forward.

"I am Joseph. I am not one of your leaders. All except one were killed in the fight for this town. There were soldiers here who put up a strong fight. They made a stand over there, but we overcame them all."

Fedon looked where the man pointed and saw a mansion further down the street. Fedon

realized at once an even larger pile of dead bodies was strewn haphazardly about the front verandah of the mansion. He turned back to the man.

"You say there is one leader left. Who is he and where did he go?"

The man pointed further down another street at the ocean shimmering in the distant sunshine, where Fedon knew the town docks were located.

"His name is La Valette. The old white man the soldiers were defending tried escaping by boat and he went after them. He has not come back."

Fedon sucked in his breath in dismay. He saw the men awaiting orders and knew he had to keep them occupied. He looked back at the man who had spoke up.

"I will go find out what is happening. For now, I want you in temporary charge of these men. Get them organized and lets start cleaning this up. We don't have time to dig separate graves because of the heat, so have them dig a big grave in the local cemetery and put all of these dead people in it as soon as possible."

Fedon turned to the men who had come with him to Grenville. "Follow me."

As he strode onto the main dock of the town minutes later Fedon scanned the horizon for signs of activity. One of the men with him cried out and pointed to the distant southern horizon not far out from the shoreline of the island. A smudge of white patches that could only be the sails of more than one ship was visible, but it was impossible to make out any details. Worse, Fedon couldn't tell whether they were sailing further away or returning to Grenville, leaving his only option to watch and wait. Knowing it would take time he ordered some of his men to find water and food while the rest settled down for the wait.

As the men were leaving the dock two white men rode up on horses and dismounted. The four heavily armed black men with them remained where they were. Fedon recognized the two whites as they walked toward him. The three men shook hands as Fedon greeted them.

"Montdenoix, I wondered what had happened to the two of you," said Fedon.

One of the white men, stocky and muscular and with an air of command about him, looked around to ensure they were out of earshot of Fedon's men. Seeing a few too close for his liking he motioned to Fedon and his companion to step further away. When he finally appeared satisfied he turned back to Fedon with an exasperated look.

"Julien, please be careful. We do not want the names Hubert Montdenoix or Flemming Linger to be known around here. In fact, we don't want anyone to know we were within a hundred leagues of this island."

Fedon bowed his head in contrition for a moment. "I'm sorry, you did tell me this. Lack of sleep is affecting me."

"We understand," said Montdenoix, a grimace appearing on his face. "And yes, being white we thought it prudent to disappear until things settled down. A few of our own men to guard us also helped matters. But enough, the town has obviously been taken. What news is there of the Governor?"

Fedon explained the situation and as one all three men turned to look at the sails in the

distance. Flemming Linger, taller and thinner than his superior, peered hard into the distance and was the first to speak.

"I think they are coming closer."

"You are right," said Fedon, exhaling the breath he was holding with relief. "I wasn't sure, but they are definitely closer than they were a few minutes ago. God, let's hope they caught him."

Montdenoix pulled a flask out of his pocket and after taking a long drink of the contents offered it to the others.

"We may as well enjoy ourselves while we wait."

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An hour later a motley collection of ships were finally close enough details of the people on board could be seen. Fedon's spirits soared, as he was able to make out La Valette prancing about with a huge grin on his face on the deck of a small cutter. One other ship of similar size and design was with them along with a larger sloop, but the only one showing any damage was the cutter La Valette was on. An entire section of the starboard railing was gone and shot holes



could be seen in the sails. What could only be dried blood had run down the side of the ship in two places. As soon as they were close enough to be heard La Valette shouted across the water.

"Julien! We have him!"

Fedon breathed a sigh of relief and Montdenoix slapped him on the back in congratulations. As they waited for the ships to be secured to the dock Montdenoix spoke close to Fedon's ear, ensuring he would not be overheard.

"Well done, Julien. You have succeeded with everything you planned so far. My colleague and I must now take leave, for we have other tasks here in the Caribbean. We want the British to lie awake at night in fear everywhere, including even places they think are invincible like Jamaica. But we will be back. In the meantime, you know what to do."

"I do. We will not let up."

Montdenoix nodded and the two men left as a gangplank was put in place. Within minutes a dispirited and disheveled group of thirteen prisoners were being led onshore. Two of them were badly bruised and wounded white soldiers,

but the rest were white men, women, and children. The oldest was a grey haired male with a massive bruise and dried blood on the side of his face. Julien knew the man was Governor Home, having seen him before at events in the capital of St. George's. La Valette preceded them and reached Julien first.

"It was hard fought, Julien, but we have him! The Governor had several soldiers with him, but our men fought well. I wanted more prisoners for you, but the soldiers made that impossible. As you can see he tried escaping with this ship, but soldiers know nothing of sailing and they didn't have enough men that knew what they were doing to be effective. I, on the other hand, had plenty of people that know how to handle a ship."

As he finished speaking the guards made the party of prisoners shuffle to a stop in front of Fedon. Governor Home saw they were being deliberately led to Fedon, an obvious signal he was someone of importance. As the Governor stepped to the front of the crowd a sense of recognition appeared on his face. Standing as

stiff and straight as he possible he mustered a show of outrage.

"Who are you? Damn me, I've seen you before. You are a plantation owner, aren't you? Are you in charge of this gang of murderers and cutthroats?"

Fedon laughed. "Governor Home, to me they are just people fighting for their freedom and liberty, and I hardly think that makes them cutthroats. Who is right? Well, since I am in charge here I'd say I am, while you are no longer Governor of anything. I am Julien Fedon and you are all my prisoners."

Governor Home scowled. "It's the Goddamn French behind this, isn't it? They're using the free mulatto population as puppets. We should have packed all of you bloody spawn of frogs back to Africa where you belong long ago. Well, you have me, but are you civilized enough to show mercy to the women and children and set them free?"

"I'm afraid no one is going free, Governor. You may all be valuable to me at some point in the future. But not to worry, I am certain my people will be civilized enough to treat them at

least as well as you barbarians treat your own slaves."

Governor Home's face suffused with outrage. "You, a slave owner yourself, dare to call me a barbarian?"

He shoved away La Valette's man standing guard at his side and swung a punch at Fedon that never landed. Another of La Valette's men anticipated the move and drove the cudgel he was holding hard into the Governor's stomach. The Governor doubled over, clutching at his belly and gasping in pain. Another made to strike the defenseless man, but Fedon called for him to stop.

"There will be plenty of opportunity for that later. We have too much else to do for now. Take them to Belvedere and put them with the others. La Valette, I need to question the Governor later about a few things like the defenses they have in St. George's and I need him capable of responding, so please restrain the men for now. We have done well this day, but we still have to make our final effort and take St. George's. Once I am my answers and we know whether I can use him as something to bargain

with, I will consider turning him over to you to do as you please."

"I pray that day comes soon, Julien."

"And Jean? I congratulate you and your men. Well done."

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Situated on a prominent, hundred-foot high hilltop right at a point of land jutting into the ocean, Fort George dominated everything in the capital of Grenada. The point effectively created the St. George's inner harbor as well, providing excellent shelter and a deep-water port for ships of all sizes.

As Kenneth MacKenzie made his way almost two weeks after the rebellion began to the Governor's office in Fort George he had no interest in enjoying the excellent view of the Caribbean sunset the Fort offered. He and the three other men with him had far weightier matters on their minds. Their distress over what was happening was etched in the men's faces. An Army Lieutenant was standing with the guards at the entrance to the Fort awaiting their arrival and he escorted them direct to the Governor's meeting room. Another officer was

already there, rising to greet them as they came in.

While the Lieutenant stepped into the background and began pouring a glass of wine for each man the other officer stretched out his hand. This man was tall and imposing, sporting a broad moustache stretching well beyond the corners of his mouth.

"You are Colonel John Walter, I assume?" said MacKenzie as he walked up and shook hands with the man.

"Sir, I am."

"Thank you for meeting us. I am Kenneth Mackenzie, senior member of the King's Council for Grenada and these men are my colleagues on the Council."

MacKenzie introduced the others and motioned for everyone to sit around the meeting table.

"Colonel, we understand you have been rather occupied with the military situation. We also understand you arrived just in time to be appointed senior Army officer for this island at the worst possible moment. But we have heard disturbing rumors about the status of Governor

Home and we felt we could wait no longer. Is it true he has been captured?"

The colonel sighed. "Gentlemen, it appears to be true. We believe he is still alive and being held captive, but cannot be certain as we have not received any communication from these rebel slave scum."

"Have you made any attempts to actually communicate with them, sir?" said one of the Council members.

"Good God, no," said the Colonel, with an incredulous look on his face. "Don't know why we would do anything like that and we won't be, either."

"Colonel," said MacKenzie, with a sharp tone to his voice that made the Colonel's head snap back in surprise. "That is not your decision to make, sir. If the Governor is indeed a captive then that means my Council members and I are in charge here. As senior member of the Council I am assuming the role of Acting Governor as of now. Given the circumstances it was acceptable to let the military take the lead on dealing with the situation and military matters will continue to be your domain. But this has gone on long

enough and you need to understand we are in charge here. Am I making myself clear?"

The Colonel paused for a long moment, before offering a curt nod. "Sir, you are."

"Fine. We would now like a full report on the situation, please."

The Colonel paused once more before stiffening in his chair as he began to speak, sitting as if he was standing on a parade ground being reviewed.

"Gentlemen, as I expect you know by now a full scale rebellion was launched in key centers in the north of the island on the night of March 2nd. I am sorry to tell you we have reports of total massacres of the British population in some places. We also believe they have taken a number of prisoners, but we are not certain who they are or how many."

The faces of the men on the Council grew grim as the Colonel related what little news they had of the Governor's capture. He had little to offer as to who was behind the rebellion, other than word Julien Fedon seemed to be a prominent leader.



"In the two weeks since this blew up the rebels have continued to make gains," said the Colonel. "Unfortunately, we lost several members of the Grenada Garrison defending the Governor when he tried to escape from Grenville. The animals also trapped several others in their barracks in Gouyave and proceeded to burn them to death, if you can believe it. I have lost well over a hundred and fifty valuable soldiers. I have been forced to deploy several men to try and help refugees that escaped the rebels gain the safety of St. George's. There were numerous attacks in the south of the island soon after this began, too. Effectively, we have been in fights on several different fronts with fewer resources than necessary for such a fluid situation. I deemed it appropriate to fall back and establish a defensive perimeter around the capital. As I expect you know, they made several determined assaults on our positions, but we have beat them back with heavy losses on their part each time. Unfortunately, though, the only part of this island we now control is St. George's itself."

"Yes, yes, you were quite right to fall back," said one of the Council members. "Colonel, what are your sources of information? Do they have anything more than just a name to give us as to who is behind this and what they seek to achieve?"

The Colonel raised his eyebrows in disbelief he was unable to hide, before turning to the waiting Lieutenant standing silently to the side.

"I haven't spoken to anyone personally so I wouldn't know. Lieutenant Ramsay?"

"Sir, I believe what little we have comes from the house slaves of our plantation owners who escaped or were let go because of their status as slaves. As for what the rebels want, we have no idea. It is clear they are targeting British plantation owners only, so some obvious conclusions can be drawn from that."

"This man Fedon, his name rings a bell," said MacKenzie. "Isn't he a colored owner with an estate somewhere in the north?"

"Look, ah—Governor MacKenzie," said the Colonel. "What does it matter who they are or what they want? These animals are killing our people. As soon as we have consolidated the

situation to a point I am satisfied we will strike back to repay them in kind. We are already working on a draft plan that I hope will be ready soon."

MacKenzie remained still for a few long moments while he thought about a response. He glanced around at the other members of the Council. One of them spoke up.

"I think we should proceed as discussed, Kenneth."

As the other two men nodded agreement, Mackenzie turned his gaze back to the Colonel.

"Colonel, has it occurred to you there may be more going on here than meets the eye? It is not lost on us that French owners are not being attacked like us."

"Oh, bloody—look, sir, with respect. I will be launching an attack very soon. We will capture enough of these bastards you can spend all the time you want talking to them for information."

"Colonel, please proceed with your plans, but you will not proceed to the attack until we give you the word. We will be making some effort on our own to find out what we want to

know and we will also be attempting to communicate with this Fedon, if he doesn't contact us first. We need to know more about what is going on here. More importantly, do you have sufficient resources to get the job done, sir?"

The Colonel chewed on a corner of his moustache for a moment and shrugged. "I've never met an officer that thought he had enough men to work with in situations like this. Look, as I told you, we've lost some men, but overall I'm quite certain we will find a way to make do."

"Colonel, do you know how many men the rebels can field?"

"Well, no, but I am confident every one of my men is worth a hundred of theirs."

"I see. Well, I think that will be all for today, Colonel," said Governor MacKenzie. "We have a few matters to discuss among ourselves and perhaps we can meet again tomorrow, sir. Please carry on."

The Colonel remained sitting stiff where he was for a few long moments before nodding to the Council and standing. He waved for the Lieutenant to join him and the two officers

locked eyes briefly before leaving. As the door closed behind them MacKenzie sighed and turned to the other men in the room.

"Well, gentlemen. What do you think? Is he the buffoon I think he is, or am I being too pessimistic?"

"You are not being pessimistic, Kenneth," said one, while the other two nodded.

"Well, we feared this would be the case," said MacKenzie. "We should have stepped in sooner. The man has no idea what forces his opponent can muster, how they are deployed, or anything of what their strategy may be, but he blithely assumes it'll all be just fine once he has at them. I fear there are far more enemies facing us than he thinks and at a minimum we should seek to have our losses replaced."

"Kenneth," said one of the Council, a worried look on his face. "Are there any soldiers to spare anywhere? This situation with the Maroons on Jamaica growing restive sounds dire. If our political masters face a choice between saving Jamaica or saving us, we all know what the decision will be."

"I know. We can but ask. We may be forced to keep this fool in check and fight a siege until help can be freed up. Well, I shall be up half the night writing letters, so let's end this now. We can figure out how to make some contact with our foes tomorrow."

As they rose to their feet MacKenzie sighed one last time and lifted his glass.

"We may be deep in the shit, gentlemen, but we are not without help. If we have to be in what is effectively a siege here, at least we have the comfort of knowing there is one thing we can rely on without fail. Thank God for the British Royal Navy."

Without a word the other men raised their glasses and drained the remaining wine in silent agreement.