

# CHILDREN OF TIME



By  
Michel Poulin

# **CHILDREN OF TIME**

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A SCIENCE-FICTION NOVEL

BY

**MICHEL POULIN**

## **WARNING TO POTENTIAL READERS**

**THIS NOVEL CONTAINS GRAPHIC DESCRIPTIONS OF WAR, VIOLENCE AND SEX AS WELL AS COARSE LANGUAGE AND CONTROVERSIAL SUBJECTS UNSUITABLE FOR CHILDREN. WHILE THIS NOVEL DEPICTS MANY HISTORICAL PERSONS AND EVENTS FROM THE PAST, THIS IS A WORK OF FICTION AND WORDS OR DEEDS ATTRIBUTED IN IT TO PERSONS WHO EXISTED DO NOT REFLECT HISTORICAL EVENTS AND ONLY DESCRIBE ALTERNATE HISTORICAL SCENARIOS. RELIGIOUS-RELATED EVENTS DEPICTED IN THIS NOVEL IN NO WAY REFLECT THE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF THE AUTHOR.**

### **ABOUT THIS NOVEL**

This science-fiction novel is the third installment in a collection of five novels depicting the adventures through time of Nancy Laplante, a female Canadian war correspondent from the year 2014 and the chief of operations of the Time Patrol, an organization originating from the 34<sup>th</sup> Century. Those novels were written prior to the fictionalized events of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century depicted in them, and thus should be treated as novels about alternate realities. The year in the dates shown in the headings are followed by the letters 'A', 'B' or 'C', denoting in which timeline the action is happening. Timeline 'A' is the original historical line, while Timeline 'B' is a parallel alternate history created accidentally by Nancy Laplante when she was transported against her will from 2012 to the year 1940 and changed history by her actions. Timeline 'C' is a second parallel alternate history created from 1941 'B' when enemies of Nancy tried to kill her and thus change history in their favor. The fourth novel in the collection, TIMELINES, will be published in 2013.

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## **CHAPTER 1 – BE FAMOUS OR INFAMOUS...**

**10:28 (Standard Eastern Time)**

**Saturday, November 8, 2014 'A'**

**Hélico Pro flying school, St-Mathieu de Beloeil**

**South shore of Montreal, Province of Quebec**

**Canada**

Nancy landed the Hughes MD-500 light helicopter as smoothly as she could, then throttled down the engine to idle before looking at her flight instructor and speaking to him in French.

“Should I take off again and do another landing, Régis?”

The instructor, scribbling a few last notes on his pad, shook his head and smiled to her.

“No need to, Nancy: your landing was near perfect. In fact, you proved to be a talented student from the start. You have first class eye-hand coordination and sense of equilibrium, which helped you a lot in your flying lessons. You said before that you practice skydiving and pistol shooting, right?”

“Correct! I also practice gymnastics.”

Régis Tremblay nodded once his head while discreetly admiring Nancy Laplante. She was tall for a woman, measuring a full 183 centimeters, and had a strong, athletic body and wide shoulders. She however also had very feminine curves, with a generous, firm chest, wide hips and long legs. Her face was more than pretty, with sparkling green eyes and long, silky black hair, but it also reflected assurance, intelligence and strength of character. She in fact reflected perfectly her reputation as a woman of action and incredible courage. Apart from having seen many of her reports as a war correspondent from various war zones around the World, Régis had also seen last July the movie ‘CROSSROADS’, in which she had performed a mind-blowing stunt as part of her first cinematic role in her new career as a part-time actress. There were in fact many rumors floating about her second movie, which was due in theatres next Spring.

“Well, Nancy, I can tell you right now that you passed your final flying test brilliantly and just earned your helicopter private pilot license. Congratulations!”

“Thanks, Régis!” She replied with a big smile while shaking hands with her instructor. “I have wanted that license for quite a while now. It will complement nicely my light aircraft license.”

“Are you planning to eventually buy a helicopter of your own, Nancy? Your new career in Hollywood should give you the means to do so now.”

Nancy grinned and pointed an accusing finger at Régis.

“You are trying to milk information about my new film, right, Régis?”

“Me? Never!” Lied the instructor. “Just out of curiosity, how much did they pay you to play the role of the Shadow Dancer in CROSSROADS, if I may ask?”

“Not that much, really. Don’t forget that it was my debut as an actress and that I was a total unknown in Hollywood, with no training in acting at all. The reason I was approached for the role was because of my physical combat abilities and athletic looks. I could also thank that BBC news video that showed me shooting down those Taliban bastards in Afghanistan, when I was still an officer in the Canadian Army.”

“I saw it on YouTube.” Said Régis, grinning. “That was some pretty incredible pistol shooting, in fact. May I say that I loved watching you in CROSSROADS: for a beginning actress, you played very professionally, in my opinion.”

“Thank you!” Replied Nancy, her pride swelling. “I must say that reporting from the field and interviewing various warlords, politicians and generals accustomed me to work in front of a camera.”

There were also other factors at play to explain her ease in front of a camera but she was not about to talk to Régis about them. In truth, her life as a war correspondent and part-time actress in this century took less than half of her time, the rest being spent either in the future, in the 34<sup>th</sup> Century, or in various periods of the past, as the senior field agent and co-founder of the Time Patrol. Thankfully, the genetic longevity treatment she had received in 3384, a treatment standard for all the citizens of the Global Council, the civilization that spanned the whole Solar System in the 34<sup>th</sup> Century, allowed her not to burn herself quickly despite living two widely separated lives. This was not however her only secret. Thanks to a profound, life-changing experience in the year 1941 of Timeline ‘B’, one of the two parallel timelines that now existed besides the original timeline of Humanity, Nancy held a number of fantastic mental and physical powers. As a Chosen of The One, the immensely powerful, nearly omnipotent spiritual entity that had been shepherding Humanity for millions of years, Nancy possessed incredible strength and speed, could fly, move objects with her mind, communicate

telepathically and heal herself and others by the touch of her hands, among other things. Her mind had also been opened by The One to the souvenirs of her past incarnations, which covered 92 past lives spread over 9,000 years. Her linguistic talents, which had already been formidable as a normal girl thanks to her I.Q. of 153 and phenomenal memory, now included knowledge of over eighty languages and dialects, most of them forgotten in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. A number of her past lives had been as a musician or a dancer, thus giving her an experience as a public performer that was now proving invaluable in her new, part-time career as an actress specializing in action roles.

Shutting down the engine of the helicopter, Nancy closed all the circuits before unbuckling her harness and stepping out on the concrete pavement of the tarmac. She then accompanied Régis Tremblay towards the club house of the flying school. Régis was however not giving up on his attempts at learning more about her second film.

“So, now that you proved your worth in CROSSROADS, I hope that Disney is paying you a decent salary for your second role, Nancy.”

“I effectively was able to get a good sum for playing in AVENGERS 2, Régis. While my salary is still small compared to that of my main costars, it is in the high six figures. Mind you, I am not in it strictly for the money: acting is for me a way to earn a living while cutting down a bit on the amount of insane risks I took in various war zones as a war correspondent or, until I left the Canadian Army early this year, as a military officer. I am still in top shape at the age of 32, but I have to start slowing down a bit if I want to survive in one piece more than a few more years.”

“So, you intend to leave for good the business of war reporting, Nancy?”

“I didn’t say that, Régis. War reporting will always be in my blood. While few people realized it, my military career as a reserve military intelligence officer took a lot of my time, much of which was spent on overseas deployments and operations. I was however coming to the point as an officer where I would have been mostly stuck behind a desk, something I positively hate. Since I also hate being idle, I took the chance of a career as an actress as a way to fill my life after leaving the army.”

“And AVENGER 2, is it still scheduled for a May release?”

“It is! The production and filming are nearly completed and the film will soon be in the editing stage. I think that you will like it, Régis.”

“I’m sure I will, Nancy: I loved the first AVENGER, as well as your playing in CROSSROADS, so I certainly am waiting impatiently to see you in AVENGER 2.”

Nancy smiled and patted his shoulder as he opened the door of the club house for her.

“I will make sure to send you two tickets for the advanced premiere in Montreal, Régis.”

That apparently pleased the flying instructor to no small degree. Going to the reception counter of the flying school, Régis spoke briefly to the secretary, getting from her a pilot certificate that he dated and signed before making a couple of copies of it, then giving the original to Nancy while shaking her hand.

“You are now officially a qualified helicopter pilot, Nancy. Congratulations!”

“Thank you very much, Régis. You were a very nice instructor, truly. I certainly intend to come often to rent a helicopter and practice my flying skills.”

“Just call in advance and we will have a machine ready for you, Nancy.”

After putting her precious new license in the briefcase she had left with the secretary before going for her flying examination, Nancy left the club house and went to her red Mitsubishi OUTLANDER 2010, parked nearby in the parking lot of the flying school. Feeling happy about herself, she decided to go celebrate her new pilot license in Montreal and, starting her V6 engine, backed out of her parking spot and left the small local aerodrome, taking the nearby highway leading towards the island of Montreal. She soon was crossing the St-Lawrence River, using the Louis-Hyppolite-Lafontaine tunnel-bridge, to finally park in the large lot of the Place Versailles commercial center, in the East end of Montreal. Locking up her car, Nancy then walked to the nearby subway station, going down the steps to the underground quays. Thirty minutes later, she was going off the subway at the McGill Station, in downtown Montreal. Emerging in the open air on a sidewalk of Ste-Catherine Street, the main commercial artery of the city, she walked briskly along the shops and clubs lining the street, her long silky hair flying in the cold wind. Despite the cold of November, a dense crowd of pedestrians was walking along the sidewalks, gazing at the shops' windows or going into the various shopping plazas, restaurants and cinemas lining the street. Nancy finally pulled open a door and went down a long, steep staircase, entering the underground dining room of the REUBENS delicatessen restaurant, one of her favorite eating places and justly famous for its smoked meat sandwiches. A few persons were already waiting in line to be seated in the small, popular and often crowded restaurant. Nancy waited patiently a few minutes and was finally led to one of the rather tight alcoves, sitting down at a two-seat table. She immediately gave her order, knowing in advance what she wanted: a juicy,



mouth-filling smoked meat sandwich with a poutine, a plate of French fries topped with cheese and gravy that was a Quebec specialty. That was not exactly a healthy menu but today was an occasion worthy of indulging. She also ordered a beer to go with her order.

Her order was delivered quickly and she eagerly grabbed the thick smoked meat sandwich, with the piled slices of smoked meat literally overflowing from the two slices of rye bread. Opening her mouth wide in order to be able to bite in the more than eight centimeter-thick sandwich, she closed her eyes to savor fully the juicy, spicy meat. She was taking her third bite in her sandwich when a Haredim Jew, easily recognizable by his black hat, long black coat and twin side braids, stopped near her table to glow at her, hatred in his eyes. His tone was definitely unfriendly when he addressed her in a loud voice, making the other customers and the waitresses around turn their heads.

“Are you Nancy Laplante?”

Already seeing where this could lead, Nancy calmly put down her sandwich and wiped her hands with her napkin while answering the man, returning his stare.

“Yes, I am. What can I do for you, mister?”

“You could choke on your sandwich and die, you Jew hater and stooge of Iran!”

Anger filled Nancy as the manager of the restaurant started hurrying towards her table, intent on restraining the ultra-orthodox man before he could start a serious incident. There had been bad blood between Nancy and the Israeli government since November of last year, when the Israeli secret service, the Mossad, had learned by sheer luck that she was a time traveler and then had kidnapped her during a visit by her to Israel as a war correspondent for CNN. The Mossad had been fully prepared to torture her to get the secrets of time travel out of her, then to kill her and make her disappear. Nancy had however turned the tables on her captors, killing two of them before escaping and continuing her reporting trip despite the best efforts of the Mossad to capture her again. Out of frustration, the Israelis had then publicly accused her of being a supporter of terrorist groups and a murderer of two Israeli officials, something that had briefly put her on the Interpol international wanted list. Her reports from Lebanon and then Iran, where she had been able to secure interviews with many high-level officials and even make officially-sanctioned visits to secret Iranian uranium enrichment facilities, had subsequently earned her a high-level prize in journalism. However, those same reports had seriously embarrassed the Israeli government, which was at the time at war with

Iran after bombing repeatedly Iranian nuclear facilities. It had also invaded Southern Lebanon for the fourth time in history, after the Lebanese Shiite Hezbollah organization had retaliated for the airstrikes on Iran with a barrage of rockets and missiles against Israel. The American CIA, which had learned about Nancy's special talents through a mole inside the Mossad, had managed to have Nancy taken off the Interpol list and other no-fly lists, mostly by pretending she was a CIA agent, but the Israeli government was still after her, doing its best to smear her name, especially via the various Jewish lobbying groups in Canada and the United States. While Israel had been forced to sign an armistice with Iran and Lebanon, thanks partly to Nancy's reports that had discredited its arguments to attack Iran, it was still very much an enemy of Nancy. As a consequence, this was not the first time, by far, that she had to confront persons accusing her of being against Israel, or worse, of being a friend of Iran or of terrorist groups.

"Listen, mister. You are free to believe the lies told by the Israeli government about me, but here in Canada we have something called the freedom of the press, contrary to Israel, where the medias are subject to military censorship. What I reported were the simple facts, no more, no less."

"YOU REPEATED THE LIES OF THE IRANIANS, YOU BITCH!" Shouted angrily the Haredim before grabbing her glass of beer and splashing its content in her face, soaking her T-shirt. Now truly angry, Nancy jumped up on her feet and grabbed the man by his collar, then forced him down on his knees with a strength that left the man stunned with surprise and fear.

"I am getting seriously tired of ignorant and intolerant morons like you, mister. Get out before I am tempted to give you the lesson you richly deserve."

She then violently pushed him back, making him fall on his back in the narrow alley between the rows of alcoves. Before the man could get up again and attack her, the manager, a tall, big man, grabbed him from behind and forcibly turned him towards the exit.

"Get the hell out before I call the police, you idiot!"

"How could a Jew like you allow this woman in your restaurant?" Replied the Haredim while being pushed towards the exit. "She's a murderer of Jews!"

"Shut up and leave!" Said the manager before forcing the man up the stairs. He was back two minutes later, obviously frustrated, then going to Nancy's table to present her his excuses.

"I am deeply sorry for this, miss. I will get you a fresh beer right away. The bill for your meal is on the house, of course."

"That won't be necessary, mister: you were not at fault here. I will pay my bill but will accept another beer. Now, if you will excuse me for a minute or two, I'm going to clean up a bit."

Going to the women's public washrooms situated just outside the underground level exit of the restaurant, Nancy took off her soaked T-shirt and bra and splashed water on her head and torso, trying to remove as much as possible of the beer covering her. She however still had a slight smell of beer coming from her hair when she was done and her T-shirt, which she had washed and dried as best she could, was now wet all over. Sighing with frustration at that Haredim idiot for spoiling what should have been a happy day for her, she made her mind to go to a nearby shop after her meal to buy a new T-shirt: going around Montreal in November with a wet T-shirt, even with a coat over it, was a good way to freeze. Putting back on her bra and moist T-shirt, Nancy returned to the restaurant, to find that her food had been replaced by a fresh sandwich and poutine, along with a new beer. Smiling and nodding to the manager, she sat down at her table and finished her meal, this time without being further disturbed. As she lined up at the cashier to pay her bill afterwards, the sight of big briskets of smoked meat put on sale by the restaurant, which cured its own smoked meat, convinced her that now would be a good occasion to replenish the cold storeroom of the Time Patrol's main base cafeteria. That base, situated in the future location of the city of Auckland, in New Zealand, was also located five millenniums in the past of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, far enough back in time to be able to escape the effects of most potential attempts at manipulating and modifying history. This way, if someone would, say, go to the past to kill Napoleon and thus change history for whatever purpose, the Time Patrol would still be able to react to that, instead of being erased and rewritten like all the historical events in the future of the manipulative action. True to the diversity of its members, the Time Patrol cafeteria and bar regularly stocked up on various specialties from around history, of which smoked meat was a popular item. Nancy thus forked up over three hundred dollars to buy four big smoke meat briskets wrapped under vacuum in plastic, apart from paying for her meal. On second thought, she also bought three complete cheesecakes, another favorite of Time Patrol members, two strawberry ones and one blueberry. Such acquisitions for the Time Patrol was common for her and she was not worried about

getting reimbursed for that expense. Now feeling better and having mostly forgotten the Haredim idiot, she left the restaurant, returning to the sidewalk along Ste-Catherine Street.

Her next stop was at a nearby shop selling a variety of T-shirts and which also made T-shirts with custom messages or pictures on them. Browsing through the racks and tablets, Nancy grinned when she saw a particular T-shirt with a five-word message. Grabbing two similar T-shirts in her size, she paid for them and, to the surprise and delight of the male customers in the shop, promptly took off her wet T-shirt and put on one of her new T-shirts before dumping her old one in a garbage can. On a sudden impulse, she then went back to the racks to buy another similar T-shirt, but of smaller size, for her adopted daughter, Ingrid Weiss 'B', who was living and working at the secret Time Patrol base. Now wearing proudly her new T-shirt proclaiming 'BITCH AND PROUD TO BE', she put back on her coat and walked out of the shop with her bags to continue on her shopping excursion.

Her arms were full of shopping bags when she came back to her condominium suite in Boucherville in late afternoon. She had however left in the back of her car the cases of beer she had bought, beer made by a Quebec micro-brewery whose brands were very popular with the members of the Time Patrol. Putting the lot on her small dining table near the kitchen corner of her lounge, she stored the perishable items in her refrigerator, then went to check her telephone answering machine. Next, she went to her computer to check her emails. The only messages of importance waiting for her were hotel and plane tickets reservation confirmations for her incoming trip to Japan, where she was due to pass her official examination to qualify for the sixth Dan to her black belt in Kyokushin karate and to compete in a karate kumite, or full contact fight competition. Printing copies of those confirmations, she next prepared herself a light supper, which she ate while watching the latest news on television. She was nearly done eating when a piece of news from Israel on the BBC News channel made her put down her fork and stare at her television set. It was a small news clip, nearly drowned in the middle of other pieces of news, but it was one that reverberated deep inside her: the body of a man bearing horrific torture marks had been found near Tel Aviv two days ago and had now been identified as that of an Ukrainian ex-arms merchant living in retirement in Israel. While the nature of the man's past had prompted the news report

about his death, which would not otherwise have attracted much attention, the death by torture of the said Victor Medveyev meant a lot for Nancy. For one thing, the Israeli Mossad had learned that she was a time traveler through Medveyev, from which Nancy had clandestinely bought sixty AS Val silenced assault rifles in 1992, going back in time to effect that buy in order to equip her newborn organization. Unfortunately for Nancy, Medveyev had seen in 2012 the news clip from Afghanistan showing her shooting down three Taliban extremists and had realized that she had not apparently aged one bit in twenty years. Now worried, Nancy thought about who could have tortured and killed Medveyev. She doubted very much that the Mossad had done this: Medveyev was one of their informants and had already sold most of his secrets to the Israelis. The possibility that the CIA would have done this brushed her mind but she dismissed that nearly immediately: the Americans would have been more discreet about it and would have used methods that left little physical marks. If anything, this looked like an execution meant both as a revenge and as a warning to others. In Nancy's mind, one group popped up as a most probable culprit: the Russian secret services, or SVR. Medveyev had dealt mostly in the past in stolen or rerouted Soviet and Russian weapons and had been on the Russians' wanted list for years. In fact, he had retired to Israel precisely to escape Russian justice, making a deal with the Mossad in order to buy his safety there. With the way that Medveyev had been tortured, Nancy had no doubt that he had told everything he knew to his captors before dying. That meant in turn to Nancy that the Russians now possibly knew her to be a time traveler. Now feeling depressed, Nancy thought about what she could do about this. The short answer was however that she could do little indeed, except avoid as much as possible future travel to Russia. She then realized something that made her swear quietly. By demonstrating her mental powers in a brutal way to the Israelis in Tel Aviv, she had been able to convince them that her ability to travel through time was strictly mental. This had deterred the Israelis from further trying to steal her secrets, even though they still wished her dead. However, Victor Medveyev didn't know about her show of mental powers and probably told his tormentors that she had to use a time machine of some sort. She was thus now back at being somebody's potential prize for kidnapping and interrogation. At the least, the SVR could legitimately charge her with illegal acquisition of Russian military weapons, but Nancy doubted that would be the main thing on their minds.

Her day mostly ruined now, Nancy finished her meal, then washed her plate and utensils while still thinking about how to react to this bad news. At the least, she would have to warn Farah Tolkonen 'A', the gentle giant from the 34<sup>th</sup> Century that had co-founded the Time Patrol with her, in order to discuss possible counter-moves and security measures against this new threat against her. Nancy was not worried about the Russians finding something in her condominium suite, it not containing any future technology. She could not jump by herself all the way five millenniums in the past to the secret base of the Time Patrol, her implanted time distorter inside her body being limited to jumps of about 2,000 years at a time, but she had access to a hidden time scooter. That machine, what the Israelis had been really after without knowing about it, was in a deep subterranean module buried under her cottage by the shore of Lake Manitou, in the Laurentian hills northwest of Montreal. A robotic construction crew had dug up a big hole all the way into the rock layer, then had installed the self-contained module, a cylinder with a diameter and height of fifteen meters, before burying it back, with no cable or pipe leading outside it to give away its position. While that work had been done only two years ago by Nancy's relative clock, in reality it had been all done in the year 3,000 B.C.E., thus leaving ample time for the vegetation to grow back and cover the work site. The final installation of internal systems had however been done in 2012 'A', with robots jumping space-time directly into the millenniums-old buried module to put in the air and water recycling systems, the power generators and the various electronic equipment. If Nancy wanted to effect a really long jump to the past or future or, like today, wanted to carry through time a heavy load, she only needed to mentally activate her implanted time distorter, jump to the buried module and then use the time scooter parked there. With the bulk of her lakeside cottage sitting above the module, even seismic sensors could not detect the module without first destroying utterly her cottage. Her mind made up, Nancy gathered in a large ice box the smoked meat and cheesecake bought in Montreal, then grabbed the ice box in her two hands to jump to her Laurentian module. The cases of beer in her car would have to wait for her follow-up trips. Giving a mental order to the implanted computer incorporated to her time distorter grafted against the inside face of her spine, she disappeared from her condominium in a brief flash of white light.

**19:11 (New Zealand Time)**

**Monday, July 18, 3000 BCE (Before Common Era)**

**Scooter Hall, Time Patrol main base**

**Future site of Auckland, New Zealand**

Nancy appeared in her time scooter in the middle of a big dome-shaped hall, then moved immediately her scooter to a parking area on the periphery, to let the space empty for other scooters to appear. She knew that the base main computer, via its numerous internal sensors and surveillance cameras, had already recorded her arrival, but she still went to the duty desk of the hall, where a man from the Global Council was sitting. Like all the adults from the 34<sup>th</sup> Century, he was over two meter-tall, was totally bald and had six fingers per hands, the results of a racial genetic mutation effected in order for the Human race to survive the long term radiations from the catastrophic 2052 Nuclear Genocide that had nearly wiped out Humanity. The man smiled with genuine happiness at seeing her as she approached.

“Hello, Nancy! How are things in Montreal?”

“Well, Jens, until I caught some bad news on television. Where could I find Farah ‘A’ at this hour?”

“I believe that she is at the Timeless Club, with Mike and Ingrid ‘B’.”

“Perfect! Could I borrow a cargo plate, so that I could unload the beer, smoked meat and cheesecake I bought in Montreal?”

Jens’ eyes widened at the mention of ‘smoked meat’.

“Yes! We were out of smoked meat at the cafeteria. I will call in a robotic cargo plate.”

“Thanks, Jens.”

A robotic cargo plate showed up in less than a minute, allowing Nancy to transfer her beer and foodstuff from her scooter and onto the plate. Using one of the elevator cabins of the Scooter Hall, she first went up to the level of the main cafeteria, dropping her smoked meat and cheesecakes in the hands of the chief-cook there, then went on up to the level of the Timeless Club, the social club used by the members of the Time Patrol. Her entrance with her cargo plate in tow inside the large room attracted welcoming waves of the hand by Ingrid Weiss ‘B’, sitting at a table with Nancy’s husband, Mike Crawford ‘B’, and with Farah Tolkonen ‘A’.

"NANCY, WE'RE HERE!"

Nancy smiled to her adopted daughter, a very beautiful teenager with reddish-brown hair and big blue eyes.

"Let me just drop these cases of Unibroue brand beers at the bar first, then I will be with you."

"DID YOU GET SOME CASES OF 'MAUDITE', NANCY?" Shouted from another table Otto Skorzeni 'B', who was having a beer with two other members of his assault team. Nancy grinned, knowing that the big, ex-Waffen SS officer particularly appreciated that brand of Quebec beer.

"I GOT FOUR OF THEM JUST FOR YOU, OTTO."

The big, powerful Austrian grinned and made a thumbs up signal at those words. Taking three minutes to unload her cases of beer behind the bar, Nancy then sent away the robotic cargo plate and walked to the table occupied by her family and Farah, hugging and kissing all three occupants. Mike Crawford 'B', a tall American from Montana with the build of a professional football player, squeezed her in his powerful arms while kissing her.

"Are you done for your period in 2014 Montreal, Nancy?"

"Not yet, Mike. I came by to drop some beer and smoked meat I bought in Montreal and to give Farah some news."

"Good or bad news, Nancy?" Asked cautiously Farah Tolkonen 'A', knowing too well how trouble followed Nancy, through no fault of her own. Nancy made a grimace.

"Potentially bad, Farah: the Russians may now know about me being a time traveler."

Nancy then spent two minutes telling Farah about the demise of Victor Medveyev, with Mike and Ingrid listening on with growing alarm. At the end of it, Farah shook her head in discouragement.

"If this keeps going on, I am going to have to design special robotic bodyguard probes just for you, Nancy. Look, if the Russians try to play rough with you, I won't mind if you deal decisively with them, as long as it is made discreetly and without leaving a suspicious trace. While we don't want to interfere with the history of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century of Timeline 'A', I can live with secret spy wars. Just don't go and kill the head of the Russian secret services, please."

"Don't worry about that, Farah. I am not that crazy."



"That should reassure me." Replied Farah, making a face that made Ingrid giggle.

"Nancy, crazy? Never! She's just an adrenaline junkie mixed with a sex maniac."

"Look who's talking!" Replied Nancy, smiling. "Haven't you burned out yet your nice young husband?"

"Tom is doing just fine and keeps asking for more, thank you very much. In fact, I arranged a special night for his last birthday: I invited my timeline twin, Ingrid 'A', to gang up with me on him, so he got double pleasure that night."

Mike Crawford 'B' made a face at that.

"I don't know if I could survive a night with two Nancy. I'm tough, but not that tough."

"You will have to wait another seventeen year before trying that, my dear husband: Nancy 'B' is still only one year old."

The mention of little Nancy Laplante 'B', saved on her first day in life from CIA assassins intent on preventing the rise of the British Empire in the now rewritten Timeline 'B', made Ingrid 'B' remember something that saddened her.

"And Nancy 'C' lived for only a fraction of a second, time to be killed by an Imperium guard in 1941 'B' and thus cause the creation of Timeline 'C'. My timeline twin there must have been devastated when she learned of Nancy 'C's death."

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