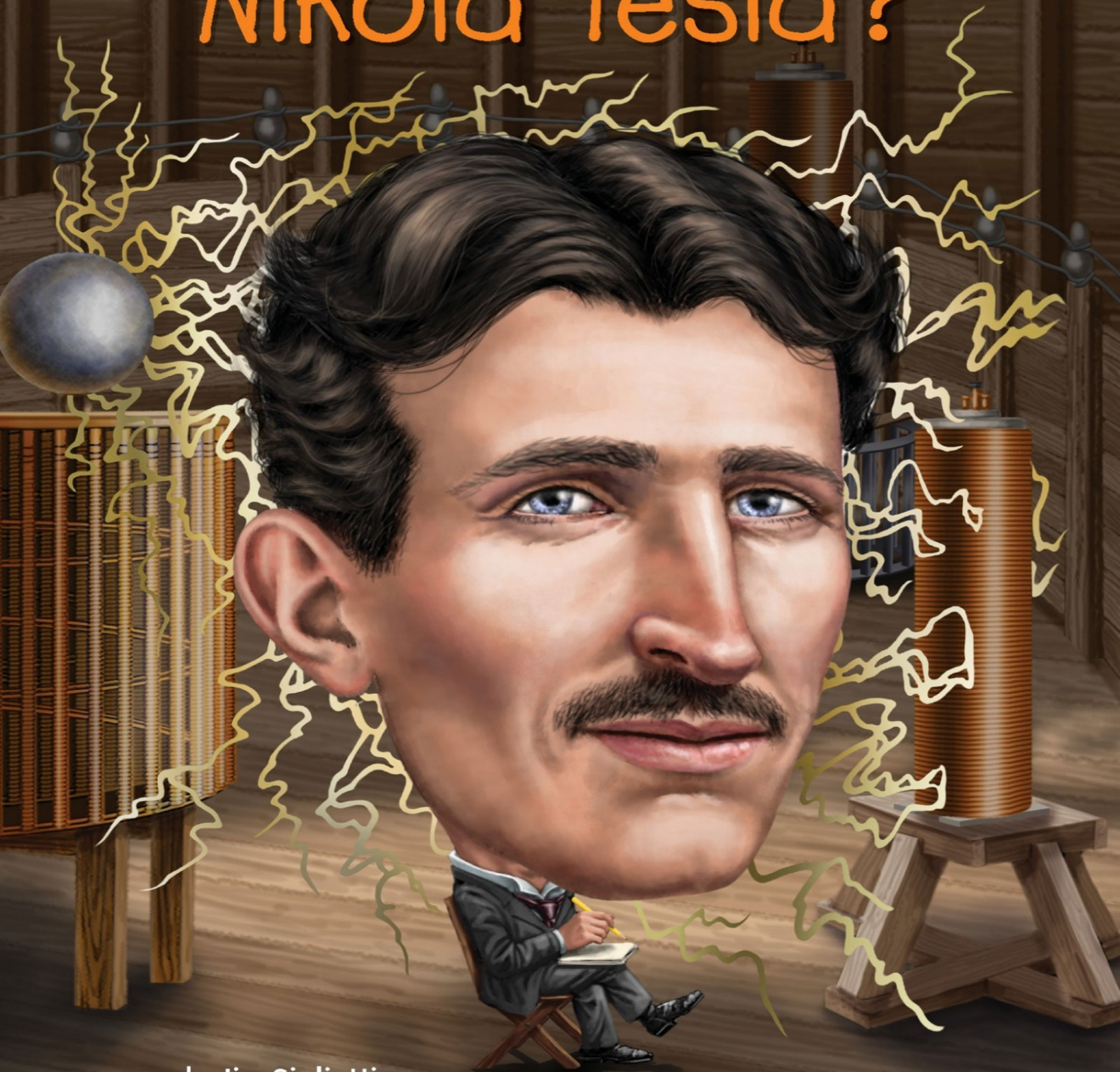


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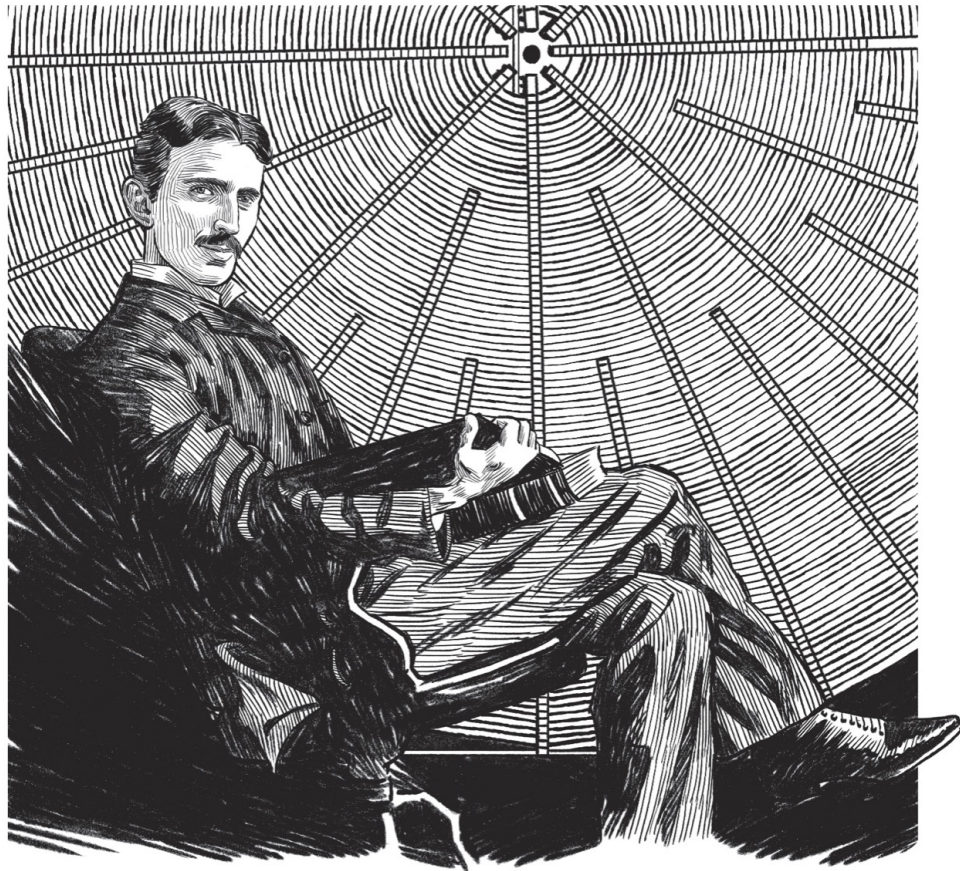


Who Was Nikola Tesla?



by Jim Gigliotti

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illustrated by John Hinderliter

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available.

ISBN 9780448488592 (paperback)
ISBN 9781524788544 (library binding)
ISBN 9781524790134 (ebook)

Version_1

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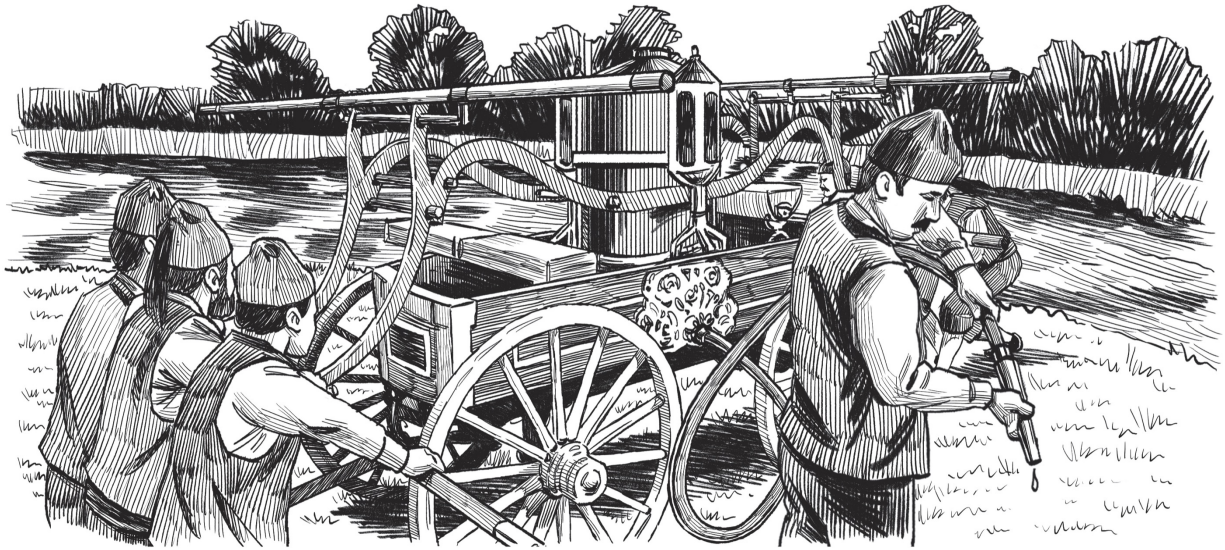


Who Was Nikola Tesla?

Nikola Tesla was seven years old on the day the people of Gospić, in what is now modern-day Croatia, received a brand-new fire pump. The town had organized a fire department for the very first time. The firefighters trained hard to learn to work together. But it was the fire pump that everyone wanted to see. It was a really big deal. The pump let firefighters move water from the local river and direct it onto flames, in order to put out fires quickly.

The leaders of the town organized a celebration to show off the fire pump. Everyone in Gospić (say: GAH-spich) put on their best Sunday clothes. They gathered around when the machine was brought down to the river. There was a ceremony, and several people gave speeches. Then came the big moment: a demonstration to show how the pump could spray water.

The new machine was painted black and red. It needed sixteen men to work it. They took their positions, turned on the hose, and . . . nothing! No water came out. The pump didn't work!



None of the grown-ups was sure what to do. But young Nikola (say: NEEK-oh-la) had an idea. “I know what to do, mister,” he told one of the men in charge. “You keep pumping.” Nikola jumped into the water and felt for the hose. There was no pressure. He tried to picture the reason in his mind. He thought something might be blocking it.

Quickly, Nikola found the problem. The hose had bent sharply in one spot and stopped the pressure from pushing the water out. He straightened out the line, and water surged through the hose! The crowd cheered. Many of the people got wet! But they didn’t mind. Nikola was a hero. They carried him on their shoulders.



Before Nikola jumped into the river that day in the early 1860s, he didn't know anything about fire pumps or water pressure. He just knew there was some reason

the machine was not working properly—and he knew he could figure out a way to fix it.

Nikola never lost his gift for figuring things out. He grew up to be one of the most important inventors in the history of the world! He helped create the technology that led to radios and remote-control devices. He imagined cell phones and the Internet many years before anyone heard of such things. He created a motor that helped power machines around the world. And he is most famous for helping to bring electricity into homes everywhere.

Nikola had a talent for picturing a problem in his mind and figuring out a way to fix it. Luckily for us, he loved to develop new and better ways of making things work.