

PENROSE: *(to MORGAN with a smirk, a little flattered)* How do you do.

MASTON: *(pointedly moving on)* And of course the Bloomsbury sisters-

BLOOMSBURY: *(looking up from her work, pumping PENROSE's hand)* Nice to meet you! Bloomsbury. Explosives! *(BLOOMSBURY returns to her work with just as much cheerful gusto.)*

PENROSE: *(a little stunned)* Oh!

BILSBY: *(more calmly than her sister)* Don't mind her. I'm Bilsby née Bloomsbury. My sister and I specialize in powder and other reactive substances.

BARBICANE: Well, I'm sure we're all pleased to have you aboard.

PENROSE: You're too kind. *(to ALL)* I'm just here to observe. Pay me no mind!

BARBICANE: *(seeing MASTON is distracted by PENROSE)* We will try, won't we Maston?

MASTON: Hm? Oh! Y-yes, of course.

(MASTON looks once more to PENROSE before directing his attention to BARBICANE. PENROSE grins a little at MASTON's poorly-concealed interest.)

BARBICANE: *(getting down to business)* Now. I believe that it is logical to first consider the projectile rather than the cannon that propels it, since the former must dictate the parameters of the latter. As this is a scientific endeavor, we must be able to monitor our projectile's progress via telescope.

MORGAN: Then you must be proposing an enormous projectile! To be seen from a telescope, the shell would need to have dimensions of-

BARBICANE: My friends, let me finish. The best and newest observatory on Long's Peak in Colorado is able to resolve an object as small as nine feet wide, which I propose as the diameter for the projectile. Such a shell could weigh ten tons, which should be manageable-

MASTON: *(superiorly confident, chuckling)* Impey, my friend, you never were quite as good a calculator as I. Now, given your parameters, the weight of the shell will be... *(calculating rapidly, to himself)* multiply by pi, carry the one... now, the density of cast iron is-

BARBICANE: *(gently)* Did I say it would be made of cast iron?

MASTON: *(startled)* What, then?

BARBICANE: A suitable nineteenth-century metal to represent our planet... Aluminum!

BILSBY: Aluminum?! But that's more expensive than gold!

BARBICANE: It *was*. Now, however, it can be produced for \$9 a pound, which *is* costly-

MASTON: But not prohibitive for our purpose! To aluminum!

CLUB MEMBERS: (*raising their teacups*) To aluminum!

MASTON: Motion carried!

BARBICANE: Adjourned! Splendid work today! I look forward to seeing you all bright and early tomorrow to continue our planning.

(*BILSBY, BLOOMSBURY, and MORGAN exit.*)

BARBICANE: (*to MASTON, with a nod towards PENROSE*) Although I believe you may still have some business to take care of? (*HE pats MASTON on the back and nods toward PENROSE as HE exits.*) Good evening, Miss Penrose.

PENROSE: (*packing her things*) Good evening.

(*PENROSE begins to exit but MASTON crosses to HER quickly.*)

MASTON: (*approaching PENROSE*) Ms. Penrose- uh, Phoebe.

PENROSE: Yes, Maston, J.T.?

MASTON: (*HE laughs nervously.*) I was wondering, that is I was hoping- Would you care to-

PENROSE: (*kindly, understanding*) J.T., would you like to join me for dinner?

MASTON: I- Of course! Yes. That is, if you-

PENROSE: I'd love to.

MASTON: (*with a sigh of relief, returning her smile*) Good.

PENROSE: (*with a smirk*) Good.

MASTON: (*Beat. Then quickly again, nervously.*) It's not an issue, is it? I mean with you being a reporter here, and me...

PENROSE: You mean, is it wise? Mixing business and pleasure?

MASTON: (*a nervous attempt at flirtation*) Could be... dangerous.

PENROSE: (*smirking*) Could be. Could be fun. (*Beat, then playfully persuading.*) We both know we want things from each other professionally, no pretense about that.