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.