

ARDAN: *(calling out)* Captain Nicholl?

PENROSE: *(calling out)* Barbicane?

*(PENROSE and MASTON come together. SHE rests a hand on his arm and gives a hopeful but worried look; THEY split and head off in opposite directions in their search.)*

ARDAN: *(calling out)* Barbicane?

PENROSE: *(calling out)* Nicholl?

*(PENROSE exits, eyes peeled.)*

MASTON: *(shouting, desperate)* Impey?! Where are you?

*(MASTON and ARDAN exit, searching. BARBICANE enters, writing in a small notebook, deep in thought. PENROSE enters again and sees HIM.)*

PENROSE: *(rushing to BARBICANE and embracing HIM)* Captain Barbicane! Oh! *(calling out)* J.T., Ardan, over here!

*(MASTON and ARDAN enter, holding NICHOLL by the arms.)*

ARDAN: We found Nicholl!

NICHOLL: Let go of me, I say!

*(MASTON drops NICHOLL's arm and rushes to embrace BARBICANE. ARDAN holds NICHOLL firmly, on her own.)*

MASTON: Barbicane!

BARBICANE: *(crushed by MASTON)* I say-

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NICHOLL: Where have you been? *(sardonically)* Avoiding our meeting?

BARBICANE: *(stiffly)* I was attempting to solve the problem of the projectile's initial jolt.

NICHOLL: *(breaking free of ARDAN, smugly responding to BARBICANE)* Of course you can't figure it out.

BARBICANE: I'm sure it's trivial. The solution will come to me.

NICHOLL: It never will, my former friend, because you never spent a minute of thought on how to slow anything down!

BARBICANE: (*frustrated, angry*) I'll figure it out, in due time!

NICHOLL: (*with acidity*) Time which you, sadly, won't have. I believe I'm owed a duel.

BARBICANE: Indeed.

(*BARBICANE and NICHOLL quickly pace out the required distance for a duel, sharply turning back around with guns drawn. MASTON, PENROSE, and ARDAN leap in between THEM to keep THEM apart. During the ensuing scene, BARBICANE and NICHOLL periodically attempt to reposition themselves to duel.*)

MASTON: (*in unison*) No. No. No!

PENROSE: (*in unison*) That's enough!

ARDAN: (*in unison, in disbelief*) Incroyable...

NICHOLL: (*with growing hatred*) I spent my entire career trying to stop your cannons, trying to slow *you* down. But just like your artillery, you kept flying past, relentlessly. You couldn't be stopped. You could never be stopped.

BARBICANE: I seem to recall your armor fending off more than their fair share...

NICHOLL: Yes, but then you'd just come back later with something bigger and stronger.

BARBICANE: (*emphatic, defensive*) As did you!

NICHOLL: (*raw with anger*) But then it all ended. You moved on. You used me to further yourself and left me behind as soon as it was convenient. I didn't hear from you for years...

BARBICANE: (*bitingly*) I didn't know our rivalry meant so much-

NICHOLL: And then I see you're building... this *thing*. A cannon so huge, no shield could ever stop its fire.

BARBICANE: (*with anger*) Why should it be stopped? Why should *I* be stopped?

NICHOLL: Because without armor, the entire world will be laid waste. *My* work protects people.

BARBICANE: It was my artillery that won us the war. But *I* moved past all that- put the battlefield behind me. It's a shame that your rage and jealousy-

NICHOLL: (*incredulous*) Jealousy?!

BARBICANE: (*resolutely continuing*) -has driven you mad. But you will answer for your words.

NICHOLL: (*lowering his gun at BARBICANE*) Let this be your answer!