

SCENE 10

Lights up on a restless crowd of the PUBLIC; a few copies of a newspaper are passed about and huddled around. MASTON enters and is distracted by the hubbub.

MASTON: *(somewhat cocky)* Reading all about the Columbiad's grand premiere?

WOMAN WITH PAPER: It's the new interview with Captain Nicholl!

MASTON: *(stricken)* What?!

(MASTON works his way into the crowd and takes hold of the paper.)

MASTON: *(reading, surprised, in disbelief)* The Baltimore Star? *(looking at the byline)* No, no-

(MASTON rushes off, taking the paper with HIM as HE exits. The PUBLIC disperses as lights shift and the Club's offices in Tampa come into view. PENROSE is reading as MASTON enters brandishing the folded copy of the Baltimore Star, with PENROSE's new article on the front page.)

MASTON: *(incensed)* What is this? *(reading the headline)* "The Moonshot Unmasked: Exclusive Interview with Elusive Adversary".

PENROSE: *(with excitement and pride)* My article! Oh, and it's on the front page!

MASTON: So it's true then. You spoke to Nicholl behind my back?

PENROSE: *(defensively)* "Behind your back"? Don't be so dramatic.

MASTON: You know that Nicholl is Barbicane's nemesis!

PENROSE: *(dismissively)* People don't have *nemeses*, J.T.

MASTON: *(hurt)* How could you do this?

PENROSE: The public deserves to know what's going on and you weren't telling them.

MASTON: Barbicane wanted to be careful with any sensitive information.

PENROSE: I have had to fight for any real answers, even to legitimate questions.

MASTON: He tasked me with dealing with the publicity-

PENROSE: Doing his dirty work, you mean.

MASTON: (*indicating the article*) And I suppose you think *this* makes it easier for me?

PENROSE: (*with growing frustration*) At least I'm telling people something useful! Barbicane would gladly hang you out to dry if it meant saving face with the press!

MASTON: (*Beat.*) It's not as simple as that.

PENROSE: (*firmly*) It is. You have a responsibility to the public. You asked for their support. They trust you, but you wouldn't fill them in!

MASTON: And I trusted *you*! You want to talk about public responsibility? (*indicating the newspaper*) *This* is pure sensationalism!

PENROSE: How dare you! I write the truth!

MASTON: If this is just the truth, then why did you not tell me about it?

PENROSE: (*Beat.*) It's not as simple as that.

MASTON: You always wanted to make the front page, whatever it took.

PENROSE: And *you* wanted free publicity!

MASTON: I gave you exclusive access!

PENROSE: And I get nothing from it! You left me no choice. I followed a lead.

MASTON: That's all that matters to you, isn't it?

A CALCULATED RISK (p. 172)

MASTON: I WAS SO BLIND BUT NOW I SEE
THAT YOU WERE ONLY USING ME!
I WAS YOUR SOURCE, YOUR LEAD, YOUR STORY.

PENROSE: I THOUGHT I LOVED YOU, BUT I GUESS
YOU ONLY LOVED MY GLOWING PRESS,
TO PRINT YOUR NAME AND BRING YOU GLORY!

BUT NOW THE TIDE HAS TURNED.

MASTON: AND THOUGH IT HURTS TO LEARN,

BOTH: YOU NEVER FELT THE WAY I DID.

SO NOW IT'S TIME TO FACE THE FACT.