

FLORENCE: Our father was fond of drink as well, wasn't he, Alton?

BARTLEBY: Just as some men can hold their liquor better than others, so can some hold their drunkenness.

ALDORA: My my, I am reminded of our wedding.

SFX LAUGHTER

FLORENE: Was it as nice as mine?

ALDORA: Very similar, held at my own father's country estate.

ROBERT: Mine was nothing so spectacular, a small service at the courthouse. But that's the way we preferred it. Isn't that right dear?

ELLEN: Yes, dear.

LUTHER: Ain't nothing wrong with that.

ROBERT: Nor anything wrong with making a bit of a show, Luther.

BARTLEBY: (CLOSE) Look at the way Robert and his brother interact.

ALDORA: (CLOSE) He doesn't seem to take Luther seriously.

BARTLEBY: (CLOSE) Neither does anyone else.

ALDORA: (CLOSE) Not hard to hazard why... he's had twice to drink what you've been pretending to.

BARTLEBY: (CLOSE) And Ellen.

ALDORA: (CLOSE) He didn't even introduce her by name. Just 'the wife.'

BARTLEBY: (CLOSE) Everyone is deferring to Robert, but God, his emotional triggers are screaming at me. All it would take is a small push... his anger lies just below the surface of his gentility.

ALDORA: (CLOSE) Why are you analyzing him so keenly?

BARTLEBY: (CLOSE) Later. (OFF) What was that, Luther?

LUTHER: I was asking what you do for a living?

BARTLEBY: As little as I can get away with.

SFX LAUGHTER

FLORENCE: Alton made his fortune in the Navy.

LUTHER: Sailor man? Seen any conflict, Captain?

BARTLEBY: Conflict? Well, you know how sailors get. (OFF) A little more wine? Thank you, dear.

ROBERT: I would imagine you for an officer.

BARTLEBY: Commander at the end of my tour.

ROBERT: And what gave you cause to muster out?

BARTLEBY: You don't... you never truly muster out of the Imperial Navy. I'm on half-pay... pension, of a sort, save they're free to call you back to service if the need arises.

LUTHER: Ever kill a man?

ROBERT: Luther, manners.

BARTLEBY: (steady) Not in the service, not directly.

ROBERT: What about after?

BARTLEBY: My current vocation isn't always a safe one.

SFX TENSE SILENCE BROKEN BY A FORK
SCRAPING A PLATE

ALDORA: Pardon me.

LUTHER: And what's your current vocation?

ROBERT: Oh, now this is exciting. Mr. Bartleby is a detective. You remember when Mr. Herbert's giant airship had that trouble? What was it, five years back?

LUTHER: That thing with the Luddites, right. That was you?

BARTLEBY: I was on board, but it was mostly—

ROBERT: That's the one. Now Mr. Bartleby's come to help us find where exactly it was his sister run off to.

ALDORA: (slowly) Oh, really?

BARTLEBY: Well, I wouldn't exactly—

ROBERT: His way of making amends.

FLORENCE: Is that so, Alton? You think you can really find Sarah?

BARTLEBY: Yes. (BEAT) Perhaps.

LUTHER: Been a decade, Mr. Bartleby. No offense to your talents, but that'll be a sight to see.

ROBERT: Won't it just, though?