

*working.*) Do you know anything about sculpture, Captain Scott? (*She moves away from her work, wiping her hands.*)

SCOTT. (*Cheerfully.*) Not a blessed thing. I'm afraid I've been in the Navy since I was thirteen.

KATHLEEN. I'm not sure that's a logical explanation.

SCOTT. It means, I'm afraid I've missed out on a few things I ought perhaps to know more about. Culture—and that sort of thing. Haven't had time for 'em.

KATHLEEN. Haven't you. Well, what do you think of this? (*Scott peers at her clay piece. It is a portrait bust, which appears to be in its early stages. We can see only the back of the head.*)

SCOTT. Of that? (*Pause.*) Well, I think—it's quite interesting. And rather different, too. And altogether good.

KATHLEEN. I think it's perfectly dreadful, myself. (*Pause.*) Everyone was really quite impressed with you last evening, weren't they?

SCOTT. I suppose so. They embarrassed me.

KATHLEEN. Did they? (*She begins working again at the sculpture.*)

SCOTT. I'm not sure I like being a somebody.

KATHLEEN. Oh, I should like to be somebody. I'd like to be incredibly famous. As long as I were proud of the way I'd got there. Are you proud?

SCOTT. I suppose I am. I got closer to the Pole than anyone before me. I only fell short a hundred miles or so.

KATHLEEN. Three hundred, I thought. *The Times* said . . .

SCOTT. Yes, well, it's so difficult to measure exact distances there.

KATHLEEN. Oh, I see.

SCOTT. (*Quickly.*) Yes.

KATHLEEN. Yes. (*Pause.*) Well then, no wonder you're quite full of yourself. I hardly blame you.

SCOTT. I never said I was full of myself at all, Miss Bruce.

KATHLEEN. No, but of course you are, just the same. And where's the harm in that? Only—forgive me, but—don't you ever feel just a bit of a sham?

SCOTT. What do you mean?

KATHLEEN. For capturing so much attention with what was, after all, a kind of stunt? A bear-baiting, if you like?

SCOTT. I don't think it was a stunt.

KATHLEEN. No? Then whose life did it enrich?

SCOTT. (*Calmly.*) My own.

KATHLEEN. I mean, what value did it have?

SCOTT. (*Amazed.*) Are you always so obsequious toward visiting celebrities?

KATHLEEN. Please don't change the subject.

SCOTT. You quite dislike me, don't you?

KATHLEEN. No, but I don't understand you. (*Pause.*) To me it's all nonsense. The South Pole! But I'd hoped from reading about you in the papers that at least you might turn out to be some sort of wild romantic, a visionary, a modern Columbus in furs and wind burns. But that's not at all the man I met last night.

SCOTT. And what was he?

KATHLEEN. Oh, medium height, strongly built. Not especially handsome, but terribly well-dressed, and with the most penetrating eyes. Dark blue—almost purple. A man whose outsides are all rocklike naval dignity, quite simple to sculpt. But whose insides are altogether different. Inside is—a fearful yearning. And—I think a kind of terror.

SCOTT. Of what?

KATHLEEN. Failure. (*Pause.*) Perhaps the yearning is for failure too. (*Pause.*) I was promised a smashing celebrity, and I got a haunted man.

SCOTT. It sounds as though you were terribly disappointed.

KATHLEEN. I can't decide.

SCOTT. Perhaps you're merely jealous, then.

KATHLEEN. Jealous? Of your kind of celebrity? Don't be idiotic.

SCOTT. Of my freedom. Because I don't fit so comfortably into little rooms as you do. Because a piece of clay that size isn't large enough to hold my dreams. Perhaps that's why you feel so compelled to challenge me, Miss Bruce.

KATHLEEN. And perhaps you're merely mad! Yes, I think you might have to be, to want to go to such a boring place.

SCOTT. A place where one might be killed at any instant could be called a great many things. Boring is not one of them.

KATHLEEN. Silly is. And melodramatic. And self-publicizing.

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