

ELEANOR: I gave Abel Brown a check for a thousand — the advance for starting materials he asked for. And then I gave him a second check for another thousand — to hold for later — as a test. Honest — he'd only cash the check he'd asked for. Dishonest — he'd cash both checks and be gone. I went to the bank this morning. Both checks were cashed. And I haven't seen Mr. Brown since supper on Wednesday. *(Raising the crumpled note.)* "Something came up."

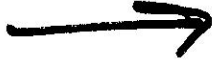
EUGENE: *(Finally understanding, adding something to his report.)* I don't know about fraud, Miss Bannister, but robbery definitely.

ELEANOR: I'm sure Miss Grimley will be very disappointed.

~~*Eugene continues writing.*~~

Eleanor takes her glass of lemonade, watches Eugene for a long beat.

START



Eugene — What was your impression of me in school?

EUGENE: Impression? You were all right. Kind'a bossy, I guess.

ELEANOR: Strict.

EUGENE: Yeah. Strict. But that's probably what we needed.

ELEANOR: I never thought of myself as strict. I tried to be constant. Many children don't have constancy in their lives.

EUGENE: You were constant with me, that's for sure. *(Thinks back, smiles, thrilled.)* Hey, wait a minute! *(Standing, reciting with exuberant emotion and pride.)* "In Xanadu did Kubla Khan a stately pleasure dome decree! Where Alph the sacred river ran, through caverns measureless to man, down to a sunless sea!"

Eugene tries to remember the next line.

ELEANOR: You —

EUGENE: “BUT OHHH! That deep romantic chasm which slanted down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover! A savage place! As holy and enchanted as e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted by woman wailing for her demon lover!”
(Aglow with pride.) That's all I remember.

ELEANOR: *(Warming.)* Coleridge. That must come in handy in your police work.

EUGENE: That's never left my head for some reason. “Where Alph the sacred river ran, through caverns measureless to man, down to a sunless sea.” Hot - dog!

Eleanor smiles softly, thinking back.

ELEANOR: Did you get from school what you wanted, Eugene?

EUGENE: Sure, I suppose. I learned what I needed. Shoot, I knew I wanted to be a cop since I was eight. You were always prodding me to think bigger — all of us — but cooped up in an office somewhere all day, *thinking?* — no thank you, ma'am. Not for me.

Eleanor is quiet, lost in thought.

Eugene senses that something is wrong, but doesn't know what to do.

But you were a good teacher, Miss Bannister. Not friendly exactly, but I never saw you lose your cool. Constant.

Eleanor has quietly started to cry.

Eugene takes out his handkerchief, hesitates, uncertain what to do in this position with Miss Bannister. He tries to lighten the mood.

(Sincerely.) You know, you should meet my girls. I have two, and one's a right little smarty. You'd like her, I bet. Straight A's in every subject. Bit of a lone star too — like you. The other one's more like me. Always up t'something.

ELEANOR: *(Slowly composing herself, drying her eyes. With sudden fondness.)* My strongest memory of you, Eugene, involves a string of firecrackers and the faculty washroom.

EUGENE: *(Raising a hand, pleased.)* Guilty. Guilty. But I was also the one who saved the Whitaker twins from drowning at the lake at our graduation picnic.

ELEANOR: *(Remembering, moved.)* I'd forgotten all about that.

EUGENE: Maybe we're not all here just to get the answers right.

They are quiet, thinking.

I guess Abel Brown fooled me too. Feel kind'a stupid now.

ELEANOR: *(Sincerely.)* I'd like to meet your girls, Eugene. Bring them by sometime.

Eugene smiles. His girls are clearly his pride and joy.

The outside porch door smacks shut.

~~GRACE: *(Crying, shouting.)* Hello Eugene!~~

END →

EUGENE: *(A bond.)* I'm sorry this happened to you, Miss Bannister.

Grace enters from the porch carrying two large tote bags, stops in the doorway. She sees Eugene. There is tension.

GRACE: Hello Eugene.

EUGENE: Mrs. Bodell.

Grace smiles at Eleanor, raises both bags in the air — a secret signal.

GRACE: *(Entering.)* Doesn't that porch look nice all cleared off? Eleanor, I'm going to get you out there today with a glass of cool tea if it's the last thing I do!