Chapter One

"Don't go running ya mouth," the maid snapped.

Miss Eleanore Léonard noticed the open door to her bathing room. They forgot their young mistress sat in the other room.

"Me don't want someone to know," she continued.

"Shh," someone else said.

Their voices hushed. *Well, that won't do,* Eleanore thought. She carefully stood in the clawed foot tub and reached for the robe. The eighteen-year-old wrapped herself and stepped with caution onto the marble floor. Water pooled in small puddles as she crept to the door. She pulled her blond hair over her shoulder and looked through the crack with her gray-blue eyes.

A plump maid dared to sit on her bed holding a wrinkled sheet. Eleanore's hand touched doorknob to swing it open and yell, but she stopped.

"I'm just saying it sounds too good to be true. My cousin went away for the very same job. We haven't heard from her."

Commented [VEG1]: Just a note after I've read Chapter 1: This is actually a scene. It happens in one place, at one time, and the characters in it are consistent through the scene. Maybe that will clarify your confusion.

Deleted: ¶

Formatted: Font: Bold

Formatted: Heading 1, Indent: First line: 0", Line spacing: Multiple 3 li

Formatted: Indent: First line: 0"

Commented [VEG2]: I love it when books and chapters start with dialogue instead of descriptions. Further, I'm especially enthralled when the second word is *not* "was." :-)

Formatted: Space After: 0 pt, Line spacing: Multiple 3 li

Commented [VEG3]: Just for grins I dumped the entire thing in AutoCrit and counted our favorite words:

Was: 347
Were: 103
Have: 206
Had: 125

Obviously without having read the manuscript yet I can't judge how well you did in your removal pass, but that'll give us a baseline to go with. :-)

Deleted: over

Commented [VEG4]: We discussed gray/grey:

Gray is the more common American usage, but both are equivalent. As a matter of style, pick one and stick with it.

Also, in some cases you refer to her eyes as blue-gray, and in some as gray-blue. Pick one and stick with it.

Deleted: ed door

Deleted: gray

Commented [VEG5]: "Landed" implies more force, which would produce a sound as the handle rattles. "Touched" implies being gentle, which might not produce a sound.

Deleted: landed on the

The other maid came into view and swatted her off the bed to straighten the sheets.

"It's four times the pay of a domestic servant. Ain't ya sick of cleaning up after 'em ace highs?"

"Watch your tongue!" The other maid pulled the pillow from the plump one. "Do you want to be out on the streets?"

"Draper offered more money than Mr. Léonard. Me better off out there."

"If you want me to keep your secret, you best be getting me a job there too. Be sure that if you don't, I'll tell Mr. Léonard myself. Now get me a fresh pillowcase."

The two women stared at one another before the plump one rolled her eyes and reached for the pillowcase. "It's not like the young miss would even know the difference. We could put the old ones back and save some time."

"You'll do no such thing," Lizzy's voice said.

Eleanore stood up straight and looked at the puddles on the floor. There'd be no fooling her longtime lady's maid. She couldn't pass up the gossip nor could she be found outside of the mineral bath her mother demanded of her. She hurried carefully back to the tub as Lizzy yelled at

Formatted: Indent: First line: 0.5", Space After: 0 pt, Line spacing: Multiple 3 li

Formatted: Space After: 0 pt, Line spacing: Multiple 3 li

Deleted: who had been with her for ever since she turned seven…

Deleted: as

Deleted: as she could

Deleted: , her lady's maid

the women, tossing the housecoat over the bench haphazardly, gripping the sides of the tub and hoping back in, nearly losing her balance on the smooth surface. Eleanore submerged herself into the water, rose petals moving across the surface to hide her fair skin beneath.

"It *will* be done right and you *will* be gone by the time my mistress enters this room. Do you understand me?" Lizzy asked. She nodded firmly and closed the door.

The short, black woman nearly slipped on the water as she took a step further into the room. Lizzy put her hands on her hips looking back at her mistress. "Your mother would faint if she knew."

Eleanore smirked. "I just wanted to know what was going on, that's all. You wouldn't tell her. You're on my side."

Lizzy fought off the smile as she approached. "You even wet your hair," she said with a sigh.

"It felt like oil."

"It had products in it."

"My hair could help smooth gears, Lizzy."

Deleted: . The young lady tossed

Deleted: gripped

Deleted: ped

Deleted: . She almost lost

Deleted: . The

Deleted: ed

Deleted: and

Deleted:

The maid picked up the pitcher and filled it with warm water from the bath. Eleanore obliged and tipped her head back. What would she do without Lizzy by her side?

Lizzy's fingers pushed something else into her hair.

"I don't want more products. My hair will be a crusted mess by bedtime."

"Let it sit a moment longer."

"Tell me the gossip?" Eleanore asked as a compromise.

Lizzy set the pitcher aside and sighed. *She never gives up,* Lizzy thought. *I'm so tired. Why does she have to push?* "There's a rumor going around. I'll tell you after you wash that out of your hair."

Eleanore dipped under the water and ran her fingers through her hair to get the oily substance out. She emerged with a gasp and parted her hair with her hands.

"Your mother would die if she saw you acting like a child." But Lizzy's mouth turned up in a smile.

"I'm very lucky you won't tell her."

"Today is your last assessment and yet you act like a small child. How will your mother ever allow you into society?" Lizzy put a hand over her heart and pretended to faint.

Deleted: Her

Deleted:

Deleted: Her companion

Commented [VEG7]: We already know that Lizzy doesn't like that Eleanore got her hair wet.

Deleted: much to her maid's dismay

Eleanore laughed. Likely, she had put the gray in her chaperone's brown coils of hair.

"You promised me gossip." Eleanore stood from the water and patted herself dry with a fresh towel as Lizzy opened one of the cabinets.

Lizzy helped her out of the tub and into a dry housecoat. At the dressing table, the maid picked up a comb and started working the tangles from her long blonde locks.

"There's been talk of corsets," Lizzy offered.

"Corsets?"

"Yes, worn right up against the skin."

"Don't be ridiculous. No one would try to put a corset against the skin. It'd cause irritation and destroy the fabric. That trend would never last. Tell me something good."

"I was trying to make you laugh," Lizzy said, fighting a smile as she dried Eleanore's hair. "They say that they might try to wear corsets on top of a bodice."

Eleanore pinched her lips together, also fighting laughter. She loved the strange talk that Lizzy always seemed to gather from far places. But there was something more she wanted. She bit her lip and asked the question that burned for answers.

"Have you heard about this Draper?" Eleanore asked.

Deleted: hairs

Deleted: re

Deleted: the other

Commented [VEG8]: In the previous construction, we were putting the housecoat on while still in the tub … which would be amusing but probably isn't what you're going for.

Deleted: into a dry housecoat and assist her out of the tub

Deleted: her

Deleted: there's talk of wearing corsets

Deleted: ,

Deleted: no

Deleted: could

Commented [VEG9]: In the previous construction, Lizzy was drying her own hair.

Deleted: fought

Deleted: her

Deleted: to keep her

Deleted: in

Lizzy's blood ran cold, and she dropped the comb. It clattered against the stone as her vision narrowed a moment. A sick knot coiled in her stomach, and she barely kept herself from doubling over. *Where did you hear that?* She wanted to scream it at her. *How do you know? Why would you ask me?*

The maid shuddered. She bent and picked it up with shaking fingers. Her body still hurt deep in her bones. Last night hadn't been kind to her. Her legs wobbled and the room suddenly seemed too warm. She forced herself to blink and ignore the throbbing pain in her core.

She took a deep breath and met Eleanore's blue-gray graze in the mirror, eyes like Mr. Léonard and his sons.

"Are you alright?" Eleanore asked.

Lizzy scooped up the comb from the floor and coughed. *It would put her life at risk,* she thought. "Where did you hear about Draper?"

"The maids were talking."

"Some things are best left alone, Miss."

"Lizzy--"

Deleted: throbbing from

Commented [VEG10]: "Eyes like Mr. Leonard and his sons." is not a complete sentence.

Deleted: .

Deleted: E

Deleted: ...

Deleted: miss

Commented [VEG11]: When used to signal that a speaker has been interrupted, as here, use an em dash or two dashes, not a hyphen (also called an en dash, note the spelling). Most word processors including Word and Docs will combine two en dashes into one long em dash that is visually distinct from a hyphen or en dash.

Chicago Manual of Style 17e, 6.75-6.87.

Deleted: -

"Did you hear that your father invited several guests to Fledington Manor for tonight's celebration?"

Eleanore opened her mouth but closed it as the comb pulled through her hair. She smiled her friend and listed the people she knew who were attending. Lizzy dried her mistress's hair with a rag and helped moisturize her skin as Eleanore babbled, her mind running over the reaction her maid had to her question.

Lizzy quietly pushed pins into Eleanore's blonde hair and held the spun strands out against her temples, creating simple low bun sat at the back of Eleanore's head, perfect for a small hat if she later left Fledington Manor.

Waiting until Lizzy finished tightening the corset over her fresh chemise, Eleanore continued. "I heard one of the maids say Draper paid four times what my father offered. Do you know what she meant?"

Lizzy flinched and pulled on the padding's cords. Eleanore looked at her maid in shock. *What is it? What's Draper? Why does it make you so nervous? Tell me. Let me help you.* Eleanore thought.

"It's not a job she'd want if she knew what it meant," her maid whispered.

Commented [VEG12]: "the Manor" or "Fledington Manor" as a proper noun, not "the Fledington Manor." Compare "the Place," "Buckingham Palace," "the Buckingham Palace."

Deleted: the

Deleted: shook

Deleted: hair

Deleted: . Eleanore

Deleted: kept

Deleted: li

Deleted: ng even though

Deleted: an

Deleted: friend

Deleted: The maid

Deleted: her

Commented [VEG13]: In the previous construction, the bun either had always been there (not true because of the washing and combing), or it magically appeared. In this construction, it came into existence for a reason.

Deleted: . A

Deleted: . P

Deleted: went out of the

Deleted: later

Deleted: She waited

Deleted: .

Deleted: of her padding

"What do—"

"Would you like a brown or grey skirt today?" Lizzy asked as she helped put the petty coat over her head to not catch on her done hair.

Lizzy stood four inches shorter than Eleanore's five foot two. It was impossible to see Lizzy's facial expression with her head ducked, but her maid's body language told her enough. *If I want more information, I'll need to get it from somewhere else.*

"The grey should be fine for my duties," she said and watched her maid's shoulders relax. She couldn't push Lizzy. Instead, she put on the thin wool blouse and got to work on the buttons while Lizzy found the skirt. "Do you think Mother will really let me be introduced to society tonight?"

Lizzy turned and smiled. It finally reached her eyes and quelled some of the panic growing in Eleanore's stomach. "You're eighteen today. I can't see her telling you no any longer."

Commented [VEG14]: This is an em dash and is used correctly here.

Deleted: was

Deleted: was at

Deleted: -

Deleted: ,

Deleted: her

Deleted: force herself to

Commented [VEG15]: Capitalize when using in place of a proper noun. "Mother is ugly."

Do not capitalize when the use is not a proper noun. "My mother is ugly."

Deleted: mother

Chapter Two

Mr. Theodore Milton cursed the heat that came with the light through the window. After days of cold rain, the summer weather lingered like an unwanted guest. He opened one eye and looked at the small beam of light not yet reaching the notch in the window sill. He groaned and pushed himself up on the thin mat atop two benches that he used as his bed. His shirt stuck to his body and the heat only grew worse as he stood up.

He peeled the nightshirt off and tossed it over the top of the desk at which he ate his meals. Theodore dunked his head into the basin of clean water his sister left for him. REaching for the soap, he pulled himself up into the oppressive heat to wash the sweat from his face. A full bath would have to wait until the evening. No sense wasting soap washing more than once.

Theodore tossed the cleanest of the four work outfits he owned, canvas trousers and light wool shirt, onto the bed as he toweled the sweat from his bare back. *Where in steam she put it?* He pulled the other shirts from the drawer, checked under the beds, and finally spotted it as he reached for his key.

Deleted: ¶
s

Formatted: Font: Bold

Formatted: Heading 1, Line spacing: Multiple 3 li

Formatted: Indent: First line: 0"

Commented [VEG16]: The use of the title isn't incorrect, but is it necessary?

Formatted: Space After: 0 pt, Line spacing: Multiple 3 li

Commented [VEG17]: I'm guessing here. What wood?

Deleted: that entered through the window. It'd

Deleted: to

Deleted: he took out of

Deleted: wood

Deleted: pushed together with a thin mat

Commented [VEG18]: Pealing is something a bell does.

Peeling is something done when things stick together, such as peeling the skin from an orange.

Deleted: pealed

Deleted: they used to eat their

Commented [VEG19]: Who is "they?" In this scene, Theodore is alone, or at least seems that way so far.

Commented [VEG20]: Basin? Bucket? Bowl? Some kind of container is needed here.

Deleted: at

Deleted: He reached

Deleted: . Once his hand found it

Deleted: with

Commented [VEG21]: I can't tell if this is character voice or if it's a mistake.

Deleted: by chance

"Why, Lizzy?" he asked the empty room.

He pulled the engineering vest from her embroidery basket, being careful of any needles. He couldn't tell if she'd finished her work or not. Interlocking gears in bright yellow and metallic brown stood out against the gray vest.

"Why," he asked again. "It just get oil on it."

He glanced at the light beam and groaned again as it reached the second notch. Theodore nearly tripped over the child sleeping on the stairs as he pulled his curly brown hair back into a tie. He locked the door and nodded to the mother who rented the landing with her children.

"Theodore!" A voice called from the first floor.

Me ain't late yet. Shut ya yap. He took the stairs two at a time to keep his long-time friend from rousing the whole building.

"Where ya goin', dressed fancy like 'at?"

"Lizzy got ambitious."

"She fast. If me give her mine, think she'd do the same?"

"Got me some bread this morning, Peter?"

Deleted: to

Deleted: ?"

Deleted: He

Deleted: a

Peter pulled a tied cloth from behind his back. “Better. Ms. Pots had some of ‘em scones this morn’. ‘Ey more crumbled bits, but nothing a bit of jam couldn’t fix.”

He pulled a deformed scone from the cloth and tossed it to Theodore. They both moaned at the flavor, a treat indeed before a day of hurried work at the factory.

“Me ask her this evening,” Theodore said as he licked last bit of jam from his fingers.

“Think if I brought her a sketch of gears, she’d do those?”

Theodore rolled his eyes, but Peter smiled. *One day, she’ll realize me the greatest man in town.* Peter imagined what it would be like to live with a woman who worked as diligently as he did. A small breeze wafted up and he wrinkled his nose the same time Theodore pulled a paisley bandana from his pocket. He tied it up over his nose, much to Peter’s enjoyment. *He lived in the slum and still can’t take the smell?* Theodore grabbed Peter by the arm and jerked him to his other side without breaking stride. The muck from a chamber pot landed where they’d been standing.

“Take some steam to ya buttocks,” Peter yelled up.

Deleted: his own with

Deleted: . A

Deleted: and

Commented [VEG22]: Who’s doing the thinking here?

Deleted: continued to

Deleted: ’s hand

Deleted: reached out

Deleted: Peter

Deleted: he’d

Theodore chuckled and dragged his friend away from the woman who screamed back at the them like they were schoolboys. Turning a corner and free of the narrow streets, they entered the main strip and followed the procession of workers.

"Ya heard 'bout the new *coves* that be missing?" Peter asked, his voice low as he looked around at the men.

"There's more?"

Peter looked around again. Talk of the missing women never ended well. They started the steep incline up to the factory. Conversation dwindled. He took a step closer to his tall friend and caught his hazel eyes. Theodore sighed but leaned in.

"Several. There be five missing from the factory's home and several *coves* not been seen since last night from the boss' house.

"I'm worried about them too," a deep gravelly voice made both jump.

"Mr. Carther," Theodore said first. "A good morning to you."

"Nay, lad. Not a good one. My brother came looking for his daughter this morning. We can't find her anywhere. Even checked the beds at the brothel."

Deleted: ing

Commented [VEG23]: I'm assuming they turned a corner.

Deleted: young men

Deleted: F

Deleted: Hazel

Commented [VEG24]: Why is this word italicized again? Beyond that, what does it mean?

Commented [VEG25]: We now have enough characters that I'm going to color code them to see who's talking.

Carther — Yellow
Peter — Magenta
Theodore — Green
Milton — Red
Leonard — Cyan

Edit: See my confusion below. I've color-coded some but not all of the dialogue lines to help me keep track of what's what. My having to do this means the entire passage is confusing. I've tried through edits to make it less so.

Deleted: out of their skins

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Highlight

"Your niece is gone too?" Theodore said and pulled the older man to a stop in the middle of the street. The man looked haunted when he turned to face the younger.

"Ya tell me what ya need with help and me will," Theodore offered.

Mr. Carther gripped Theodore's shoulders firmly,

"Keep your sister away from whoever these men are. Don't let her be taken away. And swear to me that if she's ever taken away, you'll not hesitate to get her back. Mr. Milton, I need you to tell me that. I've watched you children grow for a while and I want nothing to happen to her. I see her as my own daughter."

"Ya already know that's a promise me can make easily."

"We'll keep her safe," Peter chimed in.

"That's good enough for me." Mr. Carther continued up the hill. It didn't take long to get to the gates and see the looming building.

"Long day we got," Peter said.

"Aye," Theodore said and wished the heavy arm around his shoulders didn't make him sweat more. "Ya got a long day 'head ya, Mr. Carther?"

"Ya gotta dig more coal today than normal?" Peter asked.

Commented [VEG26]: I hadn't connected that "Mr. Milton" and Theodore are the same person, even though you have his full name at the beginning of the chapter. Calling Theodore "Mr. Milton" in a dialog tag, when you've previously been calling him Theodore in prose, is very confusing.

Commented [VEG27]: It feels like this guy aperated into the scene, except without the pop. Where did he come from?

Deleted: Mr. Milton

Formatted: Highlight

Commented [VEG28]: Which man? We now have four here — Peter, Theodore, Milton and now Cather.

Commented [VEG29]: Which younger? We're now up to three guys who are appear younger than Carther.

Formatted: Highlight

Commented [VEG31]: Cut the entire paragraph about the respect Carther has. That's a tell; convert it to a show somewhere else. Also, you have him turning twice and stopping twice, once when Theodore pulled on him, and once when he put his hands on Theodore's shoulders.

Deleted: turned to

Deleted: and gripped his

Deleted: . He stopped the twenty-three-year-olds in the middle of the moving crowd. Besides the Head Engineer, Mr. Carther held the respect of the town. He operated the Burning Rooms and if he wanted to stop and make peo ... [1]

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Highlight

Deleted: reached out and put one arm on each of their ... [2]

Formatted: Highlight

Deleted: in all her early morning light

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Highlight

Deleted: he asked Mr. Carther.

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Highlight

"Now, you know what Mr. Léonard would say about the kind of language you're using. How many times do I have to teach you to speak correctly?"

Oh no, both thought as they groaned.

"Oh my, look at the sun," Theodore said. All three looked up. "I've got to talk to Mr. Léonard. Can't be late! 'Tis quite urgent!"

Theodore pulled away from Mr. Carther before the man could tighten his grip. Peter wasn't so lucky.

"And what can I do for Mr. Milton?" asked the owner of the factory.

Peter's lips pinched and Mr. Carther swallowed a smile even though his eyes crinkled with it. Instead of moving on, they waited to see how Theodore managed. Theodore turned slowly to the very man he joked about needing to talk to.

"Mr. Léonard, sir," he started. "It's a fine morning."

"Indeed."

"I was... hoping I could talk to you," Theodore trailed off and glanced around.

"Ah, yes," the man smiled and motioned for them to walk. Theodore fell into line with the owner. "I was wondering when you would step up to challenge the Head Engineer."

Formatted: Highlight
Formatted: Highlight
Formatted: Highlight
Formatted: Highlight
Deleted: and
Deleted: , i
Deleted: t's
Deleted: , and the larger man gripped his friend
Commented [VEG33]: Who owns the factory? Here you're making it sound like it's Carther.
Deleted: he
Formatted: Highlight
Formatted: Highlight
Formatted: Highlight

Challenge? Me... no. Oh steam, what me doin'? Me don't want to make a scene.

"Do you honestly think you could finish it in six hours?"

"I... would need to see the design." *What engine can be built in six hours?*

"Of course. It would need to be finished for the musicians to string the pieces."

What we even talkin' about? Peter, so help me, me throwing ya in. "I'm sure I could get it done. Would I be working on it alone? Mr. Hall has been talking with me about working on it together."

"Mr. Hall?" he asked and looked back at Peter, walking side by side with Mr. Carther. *Bright young men. Might make Mr. Brown work a little harder if he thinks two young ones are trying for his position.* He raised his hand and called out, "Mr. Hall, I'll have a word with you, too."

Peter paled and tipped his hat to the other as he jogged over. "Yes, Mr. Léonard?"

"Mr. Milton says the two of you would like to challenge the Head Engineer. I approve of young men taking the initiative. I'm going to grant your request. I'll be up in the room shortly to give you the designs."

"Thank you, sir," both men said.

Deleted: *sense*

Commented [VEG35]: No attribution, and from voice it could be either Leonard or Carther. Who is speaking?

Deleted: Oh

Deleted: "

Commented [VEG36]: Which other? Leonard?

The moment Mr. Léonard stepped out of earshot Peter punched his arm. “What in steam did you get us involved in?”

“I have no idea,” Theodore said as he rubbed his arm.

Deleted: and

Deleted: ¶

Page 13: [1] Deleted **V.E. Griffith** **9/1/22 12:04:00 PM**

Page 13: [2] Deleted **V.E. Griffith** **9/1/22 12:16:00 PM**