

Murder Mystery

Baz's Christmas Soirée

Kruger Park Hostel

Welcome to the Murder Mystery I created for our guests at Christmas Dinner in 2025! We had an incredible time—full of fun, intrigue, and even a few history lessons. This game works beautifully whether you have a small group of 8 or a lively crowd of 40, and it's designed to be replayed as often as you like.

I highly recommend that everyone comes dressed in costume to really bring the story to life. A themed meal adds to the atmosphere as well. For our event, we served finger food, but next time I'm considering starting with a cocktail party, then sitting down for a main course, with drinks and snacks served later so guests can mingle and discuss clues as the evening unfolds.

Whether you're a seasoned sleuth or a first-time detective, I hope you enjoy the experience as much as we did



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Guest Characters

Edward, Prince of Wales

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** British
- **Profession:** Heir Apparent (Prince of Wales, future King Edward VIII)
- **Gender:** Male
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 18 years old (born 1894)
- **Fictional Age in Story:** ~18 (portrayed at actual age in 1912)

Core Significance

Edward, Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII), is historically known for the **constitutional crisis of his abdication in 1936** to marry Wallis Simpson, an American divorcée – a decision that shook the British monarchy and ultimately led to his younger brother George VI taking the throne (and thus making Elizabeth II eventual queen). As Prince of Wales, Edward was popular in the 1920s for his charm and modernization of the royal image, but his reign as King was short-lived (less than a



year) due to the abdication. His life symbolises the clash between **personal desire and public duty**. Post-abdication, he lived as the Duke of Windsor, a somewhat lamented figure. Though his direct impact as monarch was limited by the abdication, the event itself had significant historical impact, notably reinforcing the British monarchy's commitment to duty over personal preference in the generations since. Additionally, Edward's perceived Nazi sympathies during World War II tarnished his legacy. In sum, Edward VIII is significant for the dramatic abdication that tested and ultimately strengthened the British monarchy's stability, and for serving as a cautionary tale of royal responsibility.

Early Life and Background

Born in 1894 as the eldest son of the future George V, Edward (known in the family as David) enjoyed a privileged upbringing but one tightly controlled by Victorian norms. He was educated by tutors and at naval college, though he was not an academic standout. Instead, young Edward excelled in **social graces and sports**, developing a rakish charm. By 1911, he was invested as Prince of Wales in a grand ceremony at Caernarfon – a conscious effort by his father to prepare him as a unifying figure. In 1912 (at 18), Edward had begun military training at Osborne and Dartmouth, though he was deliberately kept from front-line action in World War I due to his position (which frustrated him). Early on, Edward showcased a warmth and informality that endeared him to the public; even as a teen prince he would slip out of palaces to mingle with ordinary people or sneak in jazz dance sessions (to the mild scandal of courtiers). Those early experiences – chafing under strict royal protocol, witnessing the pomp of empire tours with his father – shaped Edward's **restless, modern personality**. He learned to present a charming front but also developed a streak of rebellion against stuffy tradition. By the end of 1912, though still in training, Edward had taken on light official duties: laying foundation stones, reviewing boy scouts, etc., experiencing the first tastes of public expectations. These formative years left him both **acutely aware of his destiny** and privately yearning for greater personal freedom, foreshadowing the struggle that would later define him.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Edward VIII's legacy is defined almost entirely by his abdication. He was the first English monarch to voluntarily relinquish the crown since medieval times, and this unprecedented move **rocked the British Empire**. The abdication had significant historical consequences: it averted a potential constitutional crisis (had he tried to remain king while flouting Church and government opposition to his marriage) and put his stammering but dutiful brother George VI on the throne – who, with his wife Queen Elizabeth, skillfully guided Britain through World War II, arguably better than the flighty Edward might have. Thus one could argue Edward's abdication indirectly ensured stronger wartime leadership. Culturally, Edward's romantic choice over duty became legendary – a tale retold in films, plays and endless gossip, casting a long shadow on how the monarchy is perceived when balancing personal happiness with public role. The episode led the royal family to enforce more carefully the expectation that royals marry suitably, at least until more modern times. Outside the abdication, Edward's legacy is mixed: his **initial popularity** as a globe-trotting Prince of Wales introduced a more informal, approachable style to royal engagements (he was dubbed "the



people's Prince" in the 1920s). However, his later **suspected Nazi sympathies** – he and Wallis were cozy with Hitler's regime in the late 1930s – tarnished his image; had he remained king, this association might have endangered the monarchy or Britain's integrity in WWII. In exile as Duke of Windsor, he had essentially no impact on events, living a life of leisure. Over time, historical judgment on Edward has been largely negative regarding his sense of duty, but sympathetic regarding the constrained royal marriage customs he defied. Crucially, his abdication reinforced that the monarchy must put duty above personal desire – a principle that Queen Elizabeth II, his niece, held sacrosanct for her reign. In summary, Edward VIII's impact lies in the dramatic way he altered Britain's royal succession and set an example (however unwittingly) that **duty and stability trump individual will** in the institution of the Crown.

Achievements as per 1912

By the end of 1912, the young Prince Edward had few political or policy achievements – such were not expected of an 18-year-old heir – but he had begun carving out a role as a modern, compassionate royal figure. In that year he undertook his first solo public engagements and short tours around Britain. One could cite his successful **investiture as Prince of Wales in July 1911** (just months prior) as an early achievement: speaking a few words in Welsh and conducting himself with poise, which earned public praise. In 1912 he toured some British industrial towns – in one notable visit to the coal mines of South Wales, he descended into a pit and spoke with miners covered in soot, a gesture almost unheard of for a royal then. This was an achievement in bridging class divides symbolically; newspapers reported positively how the Prince "**showed genuine concern**" for working conditions. Edward also threw himself into military training with zeal. By late 1912 he had passed his preliminary naval examinations and begun training with the Grenadier Guards; superiors noted his **exemplary camaraderie** with fellow cadets and his enthusiasm for soldierly duties (even if they kept him from actual combat later). Another subtle achievement: he became something of a style icon among Europe's youth. His casual tweed suits and unstuffed manner – shaking hands with line workers during factory visits – started to loosen the stiff image of the royals. While harder to quantify, this contributed to the monarchy's adaptation to the 20th century. Additionally, Edward at 18 was fluent in French and improving in Welsh, showing an aptitude for languages and diplomacy. Summarily, as of 1912 Edward's "achievements" were mainly **symbolic and social**: successfully stepping into the public eye, connecting with diverse subjects, and – as intended by his father – beginning to embody the future of a monarchy that could engage with a changing society. These early efforts laid the groundwork for the extremely popular figure he would become in the interwar era (before his later controversies).

Motive:

Background:

In 1912, Edward is a young, restless heir to the British throne, chafing under the constraints of royal protocol and desperate to carve out a more modern, independent identity. He is already under intense scrutiny from his family, the government, and the press, and any hint of scandal could have serious consequences for his future and the monarchy's reputation.



Baz Rutherford, a charming and well-connected adventurer, crosses paths with Edward during a social event in London. Baz quickly ingratiates himself with the young prince, offering him a taste of freedom and excitement away from the stifling world of court. Baz introduces Edward to exclusive parties, discreet jazz clubs, and a circle of bohemian friends—including several women (and men) whose company would be considered scandalous by royal standards.

Trusting Baz, Edward confides in him—sharing letters, private thoughts, and even details of a secret flirtation with a young American woman he met at a dance. Baz, ever the opportunist, quietly collects these confidences and, when his own fortunes take a downturn, threatens to leak Edward’s private letters and stories to the press or to political rivals unless the prince does him a series of favours.

Edward is horrified. The exposure of his indiscretions would not only humiliate him personally but could also bring shame on the royal family, jeopardise his position as heir, and trigger a constitutional crisis. Worse, Baz’s threats make Edward feel trapped and manipulated, forced to act against his own conscience and the expectations of his family.

For Edward, Baz is not just a blackmailer—he is a direct threat to the stability of the monarchy and to Edward’s own fragile sense of self. The only way to protect his future, his family, and the Crown is to ensure Baz can never reveal what he knows.

Summary:

Edward, Prince of Wales, wants Baz dead because Baz is blackmailing him with private letters and secrets that, if revealed, could destroy his reputation, endanger the monarchy, and ruin his chance to shape his own destiny. For Edward, eliminating Baz is an act of desperate self-preservation and a defence of the royal institution he is destined to lead.

In-character quote:

“He promised me freedom, but instead he shackled me with my own secrets. For the sake of my family—and my future—he must be silenced.”

Sol Plaatje

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** South African (Setswana heritage)
- **Profession:** Journalist, Activist, Politician
- **Gender:** Male
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 36 years old (born 1876)
- **Fictional Age in Story:** 36 (portrayed at actual age in 1912)



Core Significance

Sol Plaatje is historically important as a **pioneering black South African intellectual and co-founder of the African National Congress (ANC)**. A journalist, polyglot, and author, he was among the first to document and voice the experiences of black South Africans under colonial rule. He travelled to Britain and the USA as part of delegations to protest racial injustices (notably the 1913 Natives Land Act which dispossessed black people of land). Plaatje's diary of the Siege of Mafeking (1899) is a vital firsthand record of the Boer War from an African perspective, and his novel *Mhudi* (1930) is one of the first English novels by a black African. He is celebrated as a **champion of African rights, a chronicler of African life, and a visionary who laid groundwork for South Africa's freedom struggle** through the ANC.

Early Life and Background

Born in 1876 in the Orange Free State, Solomon Tshekisho Plaatje grew up speaking Setswana, later mastering English, Dutch, German, and other languages – he worked as a court interpreter by his early twenties. This linguistic prowess opened doors: by 1902 he became editor of **Koranta ea Bechuana**, a Setswana-English newspaper campaigning for black rights. Plaatje's early life was defined by the discriminatory regime of the British and Boer administrations: he saw black families pushed off their land and their political voices silenced. This spurred him to activism through the pen. By 1912, Plaatje had helped form the **South African Native National Congress** (the ANC's original name) in Bloemfontein, where he was elected its first Secretary-General – a major achievement marking the formal start of black political organisation in South Africa. He was also a keen cultural preserver; in 1912 he began translating Shakespeare into Tswana to prove African languages' capability for high literature. These experiences – witnessing oppression, leading a new political movement, and striving to bridge African and European cultures – cemented Plaatje's role as a **voice for his people** at a time when such voices were systematically stifled.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Sol Plaatje's legacy lies in being a trailblazer for **African journalism, literature, and political activism**. As one of the first black newspaper editors and war correspondents in South Africa, he provided a perspective that had been missing from the public record. His detailed diary of the Mafeking Siege corrected biases in colonial accounts and stands as a crucial historical document. Co-founding the ANC in 1912, Plaatje set in motion the organisation that would eventually achieve majority rule in 1994 – an indisputable impact on South African history. Though he died in 1932, before seeing major victories, Plaatje's relentless lobbying abroad (he and others went to London in 1914 to petition against the Natives Land Act) laid early groundwork for internationalising South Africa's racial injustices – a strategy the anti-apartheid movement would later intensify at the UN. Culturally, Plaatje's novel *Mhudi* broke ground as an African historical romance told from an African viewpoint; while published posthumously, it's now lauded as a classic and studied in schools, cementing his status as a founding figure in South African literature. He also compiled Setswana proverbs and folktales, preserving indigenous knowledge for future generations. In a



broader sense, Plaatje's life – straddling eras of colonialism and resistance – symbolizes the early intellectual resistance that blossomed into full-fledged liberation movements. Towns, university buildings, and an annual lecture series in South Africa bear his name, ensuring his contributions to language, journalism, and freedom are remembered. The ANC's continued existence and success owe something to Plaatje's organisational groundwork and advocacy – making him a revered figure as **one of the fathers of South African democracy**.

Achievements as per 1912

By 1912, Sol Plaatje had already notched several landmark achievements against formidable odds. That year, he played a key role in the founding of the **South African Native National Congress (SANNC)**, the country's first national black political organisation. At the SANNC's inaugural conference in January 1912, Plaatje was appointed Secretary-General – a signal honour reflecting his eloquence and organisational talent (he drafted much of the Congress's constitution and early correspondence). Prior to that, Plaatje had made his mark as a pioneering editor: from 1902 to 1908 he edited **Koranta ea Bechuana**, becoming one of the first black South Africans to run a newspaper (printing in both Tswana and English). By 1912, he launched another newspaper, **Tsala ea Batho** ("The Friend of the People"), in Kimberley, using it to speak out against the oppressive new land segregation laws. Another crowning achievement was his work as a translator and intellectual bridge: in 1911 Plaatje finished translating Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* into Tswana – an extraordinary scholarly feat demonstrating African linguistic prowess. He even performed scenes with an African cast, to the astonishment of white audiences. Additionally, Plaatje had earned respect as a wartime hero of sorts: in 1900 during the Siege of Mafeking, he served as a court interpreter and **kept a diary** throughout, recording the bravery and suffering of African residents. By 1912 he had polished this diary into a manuscript (though it wouldn't be published until much later, it was already an enormous personal achievement and historical record). Summed up, Plaatje by 1912 was a **journalistic trailblazer, a community leader, and a cultural innovator** – he had co-founded the vehicle for African political aspirations (SANNC/ANC), fearlessly run newspapers advocating black rights, and shown that African voices could command literary authority. These accomplishments heralded the greater role he would continue to play in South Africa's journey.

Aleister Crowley

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** British
- **Profession:** Occultist, Ceremonial Magician, Poet
- **Gender:** Male
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 37 years old (born 1875)
- **Fictional Age in Story:** 37 (portrayed at actual age in 1912)



Core Significance

Aleister Crowley is historically significant as one of the most famous (and infamous) **occultists and mystics** of the early 20th century. Styling himself as “The Great Beast 666,” Crowley developed the religion of **Thelema**, which declared “Do what thou wilt” as the whole of its law, and he practiced elaborate magical rituals. He wrote extensively on magic, yoga, and esoteric philosophy (e.g., *The Book of the Law* in 1904 is a central text). Crowley’s rejection of conventional morality and embrace of sexual and drug-related experimentation earned him a scandalous reputation in his day – he was dubbed “the wickedest man in the world” by the tabloids. Despite his notoriety, Crowley’s impact is seen in the **modern occult revival**; he influenced Wicca, Satanism, and the New Age movement, and his ideas on personal spiritual freedom presaged the counterculture of the 1960s. In pop culture, he remains an iconic figure of dark magic and eccentric excess.

Early Life and Background

Born in 1875 to a wealthy, devoutly religious family (Plymouth Brethren) in England, Edward Alexander Crowley rebelled fiercely against his strict Christian upbringing. Expelled from Cambridge, he immersed himself in the occult. By his twenties he joined the **Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn**, a secret society of magicians, where he studied under luminaries like S.L. Mathers. Crowley, however, quarrelled with many in the Order (notably W.B. Yeats) and left to pursue his own path. A natural polymath, Crowley travelled the world – climbing mountains (he led one of the first expeditions on K2 in 1902), studying yoga in India, and absorbing Eastern philosophies. In 1904, during a stay in Cairo with his wife Rose, Crowley experienced what he claimed was a revelation from a spirit named Aiwass who dictated to him *The Book of the Law*. This event marked the birth of Thelema and Crowley’s self-realisation as a prophet. By 1912, Crowley had joined and quickly risen in another occult order, the **Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.)**, bringing with him his Thelemic sexual magic practices. He had also scandalised polite society with publications of erotic poetry and accounts of magical rites. Thus the Crowley of 1912 was a man **in full pursuit of occult mastery**, having founded his own Abbey of Thelema in Sicily (slightly later, in 1920) and already infamous for his libertine lifestyle and magical exploits. Early influences like Golden Dawn ceremonial magic, eastern mysticism, and personal idiosyncrasy combined to shape the self-styled “Magus” that he was by this time.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Crowley’s legacy is highly paradoxical but undeniably influential in the realms of **esotericism, literature, and counterculture**. He took the Western esoteric tradition (alchemy, Tarot, Kabbalah) and updated it for modern practitioners, effectively being a pioneer of the 20th century occult revival. Orders and magical systems he touched – like O.T.O. and Golden Dawn spinoffs – continued and flourished after him, spreading concepts like the Hermetic Qabalah widely. He inspired countless later occultists; figures such as Gerald Gardner (founder of Wicca) borrowed from Crowley’s rituals, and even Anton LaVey’s Satanism took cues from Crowley’s anti-establishment stance. In literature and popular media, Crowley appears as the archetype of the



dark magician – characters from Somerset Maugham's *The Magician* (a thinly veiled Crowley) to modern films draw on his persona. Perhaps ironically, Crowley also influenced the arts: he was admired by avant-garde artists and later by 1960s rock musicians (the Beatles put his face on *Sgt. Pepper's* album cover, Led Zeppelin's Jimmy Page was an avid follower). Crowley's "**Do what thou wilt**" ethos anticipated the sexual revolution and the hippie mantra of pursuing one's true will or path. However, his legacy is also cautionary: his personal life, riddled with excess and drug addiction, showed the potential perils of unbridled hedonism – some link his deteriorating state later in life as a lesson in overindulgence. Nonetheless, Crowley's emphasis on personal spiritual experience and freedom from conventional morality has permeated modern spirituality. Terms he coined (like "magick" with a k) and rituals he devised are standard in occult practice today. In summation, though often vilified in his time, Crowley's impact lies in **shaping contemporary occult thought, inspiring the mystical counterculture**, and iconically representing the figure of the rebel mystic who sought enlightenment in the shadows.

Achievements as per 1912

By 1912, Aleister Crowley had not yet achieved the height of his notoriety, but he already had significant accomplishments in the occult and literary arenas. He had published several volumes of poetry and mystic writings, albeit to mixed reception – notably *Konx Om Pax* (1907) and *The World's Tragedy* (1910) – establishing him in bohemian circles as an unconventional voice. In terms of occult achievements, Crowley had performed a series of advanced magical operations: for instance, in 1909 he and his protégé Victor Neuburg conducted the much-storied "**Desert Workings**" in **Algeria**, where they evoked various spirits across the Enochian aethyrs (spheres of consciousness) – a feat chronicled in his publication *The Vision and the Voice*. This was an achievement in pushing the boundaries of Golden Dawn magic into new territory. By 1912 he had also climbed several major mountains (literally an early achievement): he made a pioneering (though ultimately unsuccessful) attempt to summit K2 in 1902 and reached high on Kanchenjunga in 1905, earning respect in mountaineering logs. In the realm of secret societies, 1912 marked a peak achievement: Crowley was initiated into the **O.T.O.** and within that year was granted leadership of its British branch. He also was busy establishing his own mystical order, the **A:A: (Argentum Astrum)**, which he founded in 1907 – by 1912 it had attracted a number of students, spreading his Thelemic teachings quietly. Additionally, Crowley had by this time formulated and published the basic tenets of Thelema: *The Book of the Law* was written in 1904 (though only privately circulated initially), and he had begun promoting "Do what thou wilt" among disciples. So, by end of 1912, Crowley's achievements included **significant occult publications, bold magical experiments, leadership roles in esoteric orders, and even physical feats of exploration** – all contributing to his growing legend as a master of mysteries, poised to make an even bigger splash (for better or worse) in the years soon to come.

Benito Mussolini

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** Italian



- **Profession:** Socialist Agitator (later Fascist Dictator)
- **Gender:** Male
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 29 years old (born 1883)
- **Fictional Age in Story:** 29 (portrayed at actual age in 1912)

Core Significance

Benito Mussolini is historically known as the founder of **Fascism** and the dictator of Italy from 1922 to 1943. He established the first fascist regime, inspiring similar movements in Europe including Nazi Germany. Under the title “Il Duce” (The Leader), Mussolini turned Italy into a one-party totalitarian state, embarked on aggressive expansion (e.g., invading Ethiopia in 1935), and allied with Hitler in World War II. His rule is synonymous with **ultranationalism, suppression of dissent, and cult of personality**. Mussolini’s impact is significant both as a cautionary tale of how democracies can fall to demagogues, and as a key Axis leader whose ambitions and subsequent downfall in WWII shaped mid-20th-century geopolitics. He is a central figure in the study of authoritarianism, exemplifying the transition from socialism in youth to forging a new far-right ideology that would plunge the world into conflict.

Early Life and Background

Born in 1883 in a small town in Romagna, Italy, Mussolini was named after leftist figures (Benito after Benito Juárez) and raised by a socialist blacksmith father and devout Catholic schoolteacher mother. Fiery and intelligent, young Benito was nevertheless unruly – he was expelled from several schools for bullying and defiance. He qualified as a schoolmaster but soon gravitated to journalism and socialist activism. By his twenties, Mussolini had become a prominent **socialist orator and editor** in northern Italy. In 1912 (at age 29), he reached a high point in his early career: he was appointed editor of *Avanti!* (Forward!), the official newspaper of the Italian Socialist Party. With his forceful writing and charisma, Mussolini used *Avanti!*’s pages to advocate strikes and class revolution, gaining nationwide notoriety. He championed radical socialist causes, opposing Italy’s imperial war in Libya (1911) and agitating for workers’ rights. These experiences in 1912 – leading mass strikes in Forlì, rousing peasants with fiery speeches – honed his skills in propaganda and crowd manipulation. Ironically, the very talents that made him a socialist hero in 1912 (magnetic leadership and bold rhetoric) would later underpin his creation of fascism. But at this point, Mussolini’s background was of a **red-shirted revolutionary** steeped in Marxist theory and class struggle, forging a name as one of Italy’s most formidable young socialists, even as latent tendencies of authoritarianism and ultra-nationalism stirred beneath the red banner.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Mussolini’s legacy is predominantly marked by the creation of the **first fascist state** – he showed the world a new form of dictatorship that rejected liberal democracy and communism in favour of aggressive nationalism and corporatism. He centralized power in Italy, crushed political opposition, and indoctrinated the populace with militaristic and extreme patriotic fervour. This had



a profound historical impact: Mussolini's Italy served as a template and ally for Hitler's Germany, directly contributing to the outbreak of World War II and the atrocities that followed. Domestically, his regime undertook grand infrastructure projects (draining marshes, building roads) and initially restored order and pride for some Italians after a period of turmoil – achievements later overshadowed by war destruction and oppression. Culturally, Mussolini's bombastic style and the Fascist salute became global symbols of tyranny. His downfall – executed by Italian partisans in 1945, his body hung ignominiously in Milan – was a dramatic end that has since served as the fate of a cautionary figure. Post-war, Italy swung to democracy, and Mussolini's name became a byword for **brutal dictatorship**; yet, his impact lingered as neo-fascist movements claimed inspiration from "Il Duce" in subsequent decades. Internationally, Mussolini's fascism influenced regimes from Franco's Spain to various authoritarian governments that mimicked aspects of his rule. In historical scholarship and collective memory, Mussolini is often studied alongside Hitler and Stalin as part of the triad of interwar totalitarians – he is remembered both for his early role in destabilising the European order and for the ideology of fascism that, once unleashed, had global and devastating consequences.

Achievements as per 1912

In 1912, Benito Mussolini was at the height of his career as a socialist leader – a paradoxical success given his later infamy. That year he secured a significant achievement: at the Italian Socialist Party congress in Reggio Emilia, he so impressively made the case for revolutionary socialism that he won election to the **Party's Executive Committee** and, most notably, was appointed editor-in-chief of *Avanti!*, the influential socialist daily. Under his editorship, newspaper circulation soared as he made its content more fiery and provocative, galvanising Italy's left. He also led successful **general strikes** in the Romagna region – for example, a 48-hour stoppage in Forlì that forced employers to reinstate fired workers and raise wages. Such outcomes made him a hero to labourers. Additionally, Mussolini in 1912 helped expel the party's right-wing faction, asserting the dominance of Marxist maximalists; this internal discipline was an achievement in consolidating the Socialists under a radical program. As a public speaker, by 1912 he had polished a style of **incendiary oratory** that could hold crowds of thousands spellbound – his speech urging Italians to resist the Libyan War (1911–12) was so stirring that it prevented some regiments from embarking, an anti-war feat praised in socialist circles. These accomplishments – a top party post, editorial triumph, strike victories, and magnetic speeches – marked Mussolini in 1912 as one of Italy's most formidable young Socialists. Little could his comrades predict that these very achievements (mass mobilisation, silencing moderates, media mastery) were training for an opposite purpose in future, but within the context of 1912, Benito Mussolini was seen as a **rising star of the proletarian movement**, an achievement he would later perversely invert.

Motive:

Background:

In 1912, Benito Mussolini was a prominent socialist agitator and the editor of *Avanti!*, the official newspaper of the Italian Socialist Party. He was fiercely anti-imperialist, opposed to Italy's colonial



war in Libya, and deeply involved in organising strikes and protests against both the monarchy and capitalist profiteers.

Baz Rutherford, posing as a well-connected British adventurer and “friend of the workers,” ingratiated himself with Mussolini’s socialist circle in Milan. Baz offered to help smuggle anti-war pamphlets and funds to socialist cells in southern Italy, claiming to support the cause of international socialism and the fight against imperialist wars.

However, Baz was in fact a double agent, selling information about the socialist underground to both Italian police and foreign intelligence in exchange for money and favours. His betrayal led to the arrest of several key socialist organisers, the confiscation of *Avanti!*’s secret printing press, and the exposure of Mussolini’s plans for a general strike against the Libyan war.

Mussolini, humiliated and enraged by the loss of trusted comrades and the setback to the socialist movement, saw Baz not only as a personal traitor but as a dangerous tool of imperialist oppression. In Mussolini’s eyes, Baz’s actions directly undermined the struggle for workers’ rights and the anti-war cause, making him an enemy of the revolution.

Summary:

Mussolini wants Baz dead because Baz’s duplicity led to the arrest of socialist comrades, the destruction of vital underground networks, and the betrayal of the anti-imperialist cause. For Mussolini, eliminating Baz is not just an act of personal vengeance, but a revolutionary necessity to protect the movement and strike a blow against those who profit from war and repression.

Ernest Hemingway

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** American
- **Profession:** Writer (Novelist, Journalist)
- **Gender:** Male
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 13 years old (born 1899)
- **Fictional Age in Story:** ~19 (portrayed as a young aspiring writer in 1912)

Core Significance

Ernest Hemingway is celebrated as one of the **greatest American writers** of the 20th century, known for his distinctive spare prose and for chronicling the disillusionment of his “Lost Generation.” His novels and stories – such as *The Sun Also Rises*, *A Farewell to Arms*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, and *The Old Man and the Sea* – have become classics, defining modernist literary style with their **understated intensity, stoicism, and themes of courage**. Beyond literature, Hemingway’s adventurous lifestyle (from war correspondent to big-game hunter) made him a cultural icon of machismo and restless spirit. He won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1954. Hemingway’s influence on narrative craft – the iceberg theory of omitting detail to strengthen



impact – is immense, and generations of writers have been shaped by his clarity and force. In short, Hemingway's importance lies in both his oeuvre of enduring works and his persona that together revolutionised American fiction and embodied the **modern hero's search for meaning**.

Early Life and Background

Born in Oak Park, Illinois in 1899, young Hemingway was raised with robust Midwestern values – his father taught him hunting and fishing, while his mother nurtured an appreciation for music and the arts. By his teens Hemingway was already passionate about writing and adventure. At school he wrote for the newspaper and excelled in English. Though in reality in 1912 he was only 13 (fictionally in our story he's depicted about 19 to interact plausibly with others), he was precocious: devouring works of Twain, Kipling, and Tolstoy. He longed for wider experiences beyond Oak Park's genteel confines. In 1917, he would defy his parents and join the Red Cross ambulance service in World War I (an experience that later informed *A Farewell to Arms*). But even by 1912 in this fictional conceit, Hemingway as a late teen might have run off to Kansas City to become a cub reporter – which he indeed did at 18 in reality, covering crime scenes and learning the **terse journalistic style** that shaped his fiction. Those early influences – the outdoor toughness from his father, the artistic sensitivity from his mother, and the journalistic training on the streets – combined to forge Hemingway's unique voice: **plainspoken yet poignant, brave yet deeply observant** of life's pains. In our story's timeline he's an aspiring young writer absorbing tales from older adventurers, keen to turn truth into art.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Hemingway's legacy in literature is profound. He **pioneered a new writing style** – minimalist yet evocative – that broke from the ornate prose of the 19th century. His influence is seen in countless authors who emulate his tight dialogue and “show, don't tell” philosophy (the famous “Hemingway style”). Thematically, his works shedding light on wartime trauma, existential ennui, and stoic grace under pressure resonated through the 20th century and remain resonant today. He gave voice to the Lost Generation's cynicism in the 1920s, but also to timeless human struggles: love and loss in war (*A Farewell to Arms*), the dignity of the individual against fate (*The Old Man and the Sea*). Beyond the page, Hemingway's larger-than-life persona – bullfights in Spain, safaris in Africa, deep-sea fishing in Cuba – impacted cultural notions of masculinity and adventure. He turned life into legend, entwining reportage with myth-making. Hemingway also contributed to journalism, e.g. his Spanish Civil War dispatches set a standard for literary war correspondence. Over time, he's become a fixture in both high literature and popular culture (with his likeness in films, his name an adjective – “Hemingwayesque” – meaning starkly direct). Educational curricula worldwide include his books, ensuring new generations grapple with his ideas of bravery, morality, and economy of language. In summary, Hemingway's historical impact is twofold: he **reshaped literary craft** in the 20th century and cemented the ideal of the writer-adventurer whose own life is an extension of his art, leaving an indelible mark on both literature and the image of the modern American man of letters.

Achievements as per 1912



By the end of 1912, Ernest Hemingway's tangible accomplishments were modest (given his youth), but he was already laying foundations for his future career. In reality a schoolboy then, our story imagines him around 19: perhaps just starting as a **cub reporter for the Kansas City Star**, which in truth he joined at 18 in 1917. Nonetheless, we can say that even by his teens he had honed a crisp writing style – Hemingway himself credited the Star's style guide ("Use short sentences") as crucial training. Another "achievement" by this stage was assembling a rich store of life experiences to fuel his writing. For instance, in 1912 Hemingway spent summers in Michigan's north woods, mastering **outdoor skills and observing nature keenly**. Those days on Walloon Lake later inspired Nick Adams stories (like *Indian Camp*). It's fair to claim that by this age he had won small school accolades: he edited his high school's newspaper *The Trapeze* and published youthful writings there, receiving praise for their wit. Additionally, a formative event came in 1911 when he took a hunting trip with his father and successfully **shot a deer** – a rite of passage he described with literary flair in a school essay. Though minor, such experiences were achievements in confidence-building and gave him material infused with authenticity. In terms of personality, by 1912 Hemingway had crafted a persona of **fearlessness and curiosity**. He was the kid who would sneak into a local boxing match or be first to volunteer for a risky dare, all of which built the bold character that would draw the attention of editors and friends. In short, at this early stage Hemingway's "achievements" were **seeds of greatness**: a budding mastery of concise writing, a trove of adventurous episodes translated into juvenile articles, and a reputation among peers as a **promising young man with stories to tell** – the precocious beginnings of a literary icon in the making.

Motive:

Background:

In 1912, Ernest Hemingway was a young, ambitious writer just beginning to make his way in the world. He was fiercely proud of his work, deeply sensitive to betrayal, and already developing the code of honour and authenticity that would define his later life and writing.

Baz Rutherford, posing as a literary mentor and well-connected publisher, befriended the young Hemingway in Chicago. Baz offered to introduce Hemingway's stories to influential editors in New York and London, promising to help launch his career. Trusting Baz, Hemingway handed over a bundle of his best short stories and personal letters, believing this was his big break.

Instead, Baz vanished with Hemingway's manuscripts. Weeks later, Hemingway discovered that one of his stories had been published under a different name in a pulp magazine, and that Baz had sold his work to several publications, pocketing the proceeds. Worse, Baz had also circulated Hemingway's private letters, mocking his youthful ambitions and exposing personal details to the literary gossip mill.

For Hemingway, this was more than theft—it was a violation of trust, a public humiliation, and a direct attack on his identity as a writer. The betrayal left him embittered, suspicious, and determined never to be made a fool again. In Hemingway's code, such a betrayal could only be answered with violence.



Summary:

Hemingway wants Baz dead because Baz stole his early stories, sabotaged his literary reputation, and publicly humiliated him at a formative moment in his life. For Hemingway, killing Baz would be an act of personal justice—a way to reclaim his honour, protect his future, and ensure that no one else could ever use his words or dreams against him.

In-character quote:

“He didn’t just steal my stories—he tried to steal my future. A man who does that deserves nothing less than the sharp end of a knife.”

Leon Trotsky

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** Russian (Soviet)
- **Profession:** Revolutionary Leader, Marxist Theorist
- **Gender:** Male
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 33 years old (born 1879)
- **Fictional Age in Story:** 33 (portrayed at actual age in 1912)

Core Significance

Leon Trotsky is a towering figure in the history of the Russian Revolution and early Soviet Union. As a key **Bolshevik leader**, he co-engineered the October Revolution of 1917 alongside Lenin, and later built the Red Army which won the Russian Civil War. He is historically important both as a **master strategist and orator** of the revolution, and as a brilliant, if ultimately outmanoeuvred, theorist of Marxism. Trotsky's ideas of “**permanent revolution**” influenced leftist movements worldwide, positing that socialist revolutions must be continuous and international. Though later expelled from the Soviet Union by Stalin and eventually assassinated, Trotsky's legacy endures as the fiery intellectual voice of early Soviet Marxism and a cautionary tale of revolution betrayed by dictatorship.

Early Life and Background

Born Lev Davidovich Bronstein in Ukraine to a prosperous Jewish farming family, Trotsky became radicalised as a teenager. He was drawn into underground Marxist circles in Nikolayev and by his twenties was a committed revolutionary. Arrested for subversion in 1898, he endured Siberian exile where he adopted the alias “Trotsky” from a jailer's name. Escaping Siberia in 1902 by forging papers, Trotsky joined Lenin and others in London to edit the newspaper *Iskra* (The Spark). A gifted writer and speaker, he quickly gained fame for his rousing denunciations of the



Tsarist regime. During the **1905 Revolution**, Trotsky emerged in St. Petersburg as chairman of the first Soviet (workers' council), an extraordinary role for a 26-year-old. His leadership during the 1905 upheaval – articulating workers' demands and organising strikes – cemented his reputation as a formidable revolutionary tactician. After 1905's failure, Trotsky was again imprisoned and exiled, but escaped once more. By 1912, he was living in Vienna, continuing his agitation through journalism (he published the paper *Pravda* for a time) and acting as a unifying figure among internationalist socialists. These early experiences – prison, exile, radical journalism, and being at the forefront of 1905's Soviet – forged Trotsky's conviction in **grassroots proletarian power** and honed his skills in propaganda and organisation that would serve him in 1917.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Trotsky's legacy is significant on multiple fronts. Militarily, he founded and led the **Red Army**, transforming a ragtag band of workers and peasants into a disciplined force that won the Civil War by 1921. This achievement arguably saved the Bolshevik Revolution at its most perilous hour. Intellectually, Trotsky's writings – like *The History of the Russian Revolution* and *Permanent Revolution* – became canonical texts for Marxists dissident to Stalin's later rule. He championed the idea that socialism had to spread globally (permanent revolution) rather than stagnate in one country, an idea that put him at odds with Stalin's "Socialism in One Country" and inspired Trotskyist movements worldwide. His expulsion and exile in 1929 and eventual murder in 1940 (assassinated with an ice axe by a Stalinist agent in Mexico) made him a **martyr-figure for anti-Stalinist communists**. Trotsky's name became synonymous with **revolutionary purity and tragic downfall** – he was the arch-rival written out of Soviet history by Stalin. Yet, outside the USSR, many saw him as the true heir to Lenin's internationalist vision. His historical impact thus endures in the ideological struggles within socialism: Trotskyism remains a distinct strand of communist thought, advocating global revolution and critiquing authoritarian socialism. Moreover, in broader culture, Trotsky's dramatic life – from fiery orator to hunted exile – has fascinated historians, yielding countless books and analyses. Although he never held power in a peaceful Soviet state, Trotsky's contributions to making the revolution and shaping its early course are considered **pivotal in the creation of the first socialist state**, and his loss paved the way for the rise of Stalinist tyranny, profoundly affecting the course of the 20th century.

Achievements as per 1912

By 1912, Leon Trotsky had already established himself as a leading revolutionary intellect and organiser, even though the full storm of 1917 was still ahead. One of his signal achievements so far was his role in the **1905 Revolution**, where as chairman of the St. Petersburg Soviet he led what was effectively a parallel government of workers for 50 days. During that time, Trotsky honed the tactics of mass strikes and demonstrated extraordinary ability to articulate the grievances and aspirations of the working class. Though the uprising was crushed, his performance made him famous throughout socialist circles. In exile afterwards, Trotsky achieved a sort of reconciliation between rival Marxist factions: in 1910–1912, he convened talks in Vienna aiming to heal the split between Lenin's Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. While ultimately unsuccessful (Lenin remained wary of him), the attempt showed Trotsky's clout and diplomatic skills among émigré



revolutionaries. Meanwhile, Trotsky was a **prolific journalist and editor** – by 1912 he had edited the influential **Pravda** newspaper (though he later ceded it to Bolshevik control), and was contributing incisive essays to socialist publications in several languages. This journalistic achievement kept radical ideas alive and connected across borders. Additionally, in 1912 Trotsky published *Results and Prospects*, a work expanding on his theory of permanent revolution – a notable theoretical achievement that set him apart from other Marxists. And practically, while in Vienna, Trotsky founded and ran “**Pravda**” (**The Truth**) for Russian workers, a feat of underground publishing that linked far-flung revolutionary cells. Thus by age 33, Trotsky’s résumé included leadership in Russia’s first revolution, seminal Marxist theory, and international socialist journalism – all achievements that made him one of the most respected (and feared by authorities) socialist leaders in the world, poised to play an outsized role when the next revolutionary opportunity arose.

Motive:

Background:

By 1912, Trotsky is a leading figure in the international socialist movement, living in exile in Vienna and working tirelessly to unite the fractured Russian revolutionary factions. He is deeply aware that the Tsarist secret police (Okhrana) and other reactionary forces are constantly trying to infiltrate, sabotage, and betray the revolutionary cause.

Baz Rutherford, presenting himself as a sympathetic British journalist and supporter of the workers’ movement, manages to gain Trotsky’s trust. Baz offers to help smuggle revolutionary pamphlets and funds into Russia, and even volunteers to act as a courier between Trotsky’s group and other socialist cells in Paris and Berlin.

However, Baz is in fact an opportunist and double agent, selling information about Trotsky’s network to the Okhrana and to Western intelligence agencies for personal gain. His betrayal leads to the arrest of several of Trotsky’s comrades, the exposure of secret meeting places, and the confiscation of vital printing equipment. Worse, Baz’s actions sow suspicion and paranoia among the revolutionaries, undermining Trotsky’s efforts to build unity and trust.

For Trotsky, Baz is not just a personal traitor—he is a direct threat to the revolution itself. In Trotsky’s worldview, the struggle for liberation is a matter of life and death, and those who betray the cause for money or self-interest are enemies of the people. Trotsky is haunted by the knowledge that Baz’s duplicity has cost lives and set back the movement at a critical moment.

Summary:

Trotsky wants Baz dead because Baz’s treachery led to the arrest and suffering of fellow revolutionaries, sabotaged the socialist cause, and endangered the very possibility of revolution in Russia. For Trotsky, eliminating Baz is not just personal vengeance—it is a revolutionary act of justice, a necessary step to protect the movement from further betrayal.



In-character quote:

“He sold out the revolution for a handful of coins. For every comrade lost to his treachery, he owes a debt in blood. The cause demands justice—and I am its instrument.”

Chiang Kai-shek

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** Chinese
- **Profession:** Revolutionary Military Officer (future Generalissimo)
- **Gender:** Male
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 25 years old (born 1887)
- **Fictional Age in Story:** ~25 (a young commander in 1912)

Core Significance

Chiang Kai-shek is historically important as the **leader of Nationalist China** and a key figure in 20th-century Chinese history. He succeeded Sun Yat-sen as head of the Kuomintang (Nationalist Party) and led the Chinese government through tumultuous decades – unifying much of China in the 1920s, resisting Japanese invasion in World War II, and later heading the Chinese Nationalists on Taiwan after 1949. He is remembered for his role in the **Northern Expedition** unifying China, his steadfast (if sometimes autocratic) fight against both Japanese aggression and Chinese Communists, and for modernising parts of China's bureaucracy and military. Though ultimately forced into exile in Taiwan, Chiang's legacy looms large as a **foundational figure in the shaping of modern China** (and Taiwan), admired by some for his patriotism and criticised by others for authoritarian tendencies.

Early Life and Background

Chiang was born into a salt-merchant family in Zhejiang province. Orphaned of his father early, he grew up disciplined and ambitious. In his teens he embraced Sun Yat-sen's republican ideas and enrolled in a military academy in Japan, which exposed him to modern warfare and nationalist ideology. By the 1911 Xinhai Revolution, young Chiang returned to China to join the revolt against the Qing Dynasty. He distinguished himself in Shanghai during the uprising – at just 24, he helped capture an arsenal, **displaying bravery and tactical skill**. This brought him to the attention of Sun Yat-sen, who became Chiang's political mentor. Chiang's early influences were a mix of traditional Confucian values (respect for order and hierarchy) and the revolutionary fervour of a generation determined to strengthen China. In 1912, with the Qing empire collapsed, Chiang was a junior officer in the new republican army, sharpening his disdain for warlordism and his desire to see China united and strong under a central authority. These formative experiences – soldiering in the



1911 Revolution and observing the chaotic early republic – shaped Chiang into a **no-nonsense military man** who prized loyalty, discipline, and Chinese national unity above all.

Legacy and Historical Impact

As the decades unfolded, Chiang Kai-shek's legacy became that of a **champion of Chinese nationalism** and a central, if controversial, figure in the struggle for China's destiny. He famously led the Northern Expedition (1926–1928), smashing warlord fiefdoms and nominally unifying China under the Nationalist government. During World War II, Generalissimo Chiang was one of the Allied leaders, his armies tying down vast Japanese forces in China (though at appalling cost to the Chinese people). Internationally, he was seen as a key Allied partner in defeating fascism. Domestically, however, his regime struggled with corruption and never fully won over the populace, especially in the face of the Communist challenge. In 1949, after years of civil war, Chiang's Nationalists were defeated by Mao Zedong's Communists, and Chiang retreated to Taiwan. There, he established an authoritarian government-in-exile that transformed Taiwan with land reforms and economic growth, laying the groundwork for the island's later prosperity. Today, Chiang's historical impact is viewed in dual light: on one hand, he is credited as a **staunch anti-Communist who kept alive an alternative Chinese state** (Taiwan) and as a nationalist who strove to modernise China's military; on the other, he is critiqued for **authoritarian rule** and strategic missteps that led to the Communist victory. Nevertheless, Chiang's imprint is indelible – cities, highways, and institutions in Taiwan bear his name, and his role in World War II secured China's position among the victors. In sum, Chiang Kai-shek shaped the course of Chinese history by both unifying and then losing mainland China, and by preserving Chinese national identity on Taiwan, making him a pivotal figure of the 20th century.

Achievements as per 1912

By the end of 1912, Chiang Kai-shek was still a rising young officer, but he had already made notable contributions to the Republican cause. He had fought in the revolutionary battles that toppled the Qing Dynasty in 1911 – **distinguishing himself in Shanghai** when his unit seized the city's weapon stockpile from imperial forces. This bold action not only supplied the revolutionaries with arms but also proved Chiang's courage and leadership under fire. In 1912, with the new Republic of China established, Chiang became a founding member of the Kuomintang (KMT) and was appointed commandant of a prestigious cadet corps in his native Zhejiang: an early achievement that gave him experience in training troops. He also served as an aide to Chen Qimei, the military governor of Shanghai, wherein he helped **organise the city's defence and police** in the chaotic first year of the republic. Though junior in rank, Chiang's organisational flair and strict discipline were evident – he created drill manuals for the provincial army and enforced anti-warlord cohesion among the Zhejiang units. These accomplishments – from battlefield exploits to honing military administration – marked Chiang by 1912 as a promising young man to watch in Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary circle. Indeed, Sun took the extraordinary step of sending Chiang on a fact-finding trip to Japan in late 1912 to study modern military techniques – a sign of the trust already placed in him. All told, by age 25, Chiang had transitioned from academy cadet to a **battle-tested**



captain of the revolution, cementing his place among the next generation of Chinese nationalist leaders.

Subhas Chandra Bose

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** Indian
- **Profession/Role:** Nationalist Leader, Revolutionary
- **Gender:** Male
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 15 years old (born 1897)
- **Age in Story:** ~25 (portrayed older for the 1912 event)

Core Significance

Subhas Chandra Bose is remembered as one of India's most **impassioned freedom fighters**, a radical leader who sought to overthrow British colonial rule by force. Reverently called "**Netaji**" (Hindi for "Respected Leader"), Bose broke away from the pacifist path of Gandhi's Indian National Congress and instead formed the Indian National Army (INA) during World War II to fight the British alongside the Axis powers. His rallying cry "Jai Hind" ("Hail India") and vision of unfettered Indian sovereignty made him a heroic figure to many Indians. Although the INA's efforts did not directly win independence, Bose's actions *galvanised* Indian nationalism and weakened British resolve to hold India. To this day, he symbolizes militant patriotism and the willingness to make ultimate sacrifices for one's country's freedom.

Early Life and Background

Subhas Bose was born on **23 January 1897** in Cuttack, Orissa, into a large, well-to-do Bengali family. He was a brilliant student at the Protestant European School in Cuttack and later at Presidency College in Calcutta. Bose's upbringing instilled in him both traditional Indian values and a British-style education, giving him fluency in English and an exposure to Western political thought. Even as a teenager, he was profoundly influenced by the **Indian independence movement**, absorbing the writings of Swami Vivekananda and hearing of nationalist icons like Bal Gangadhar Tilak. In college, Bose demonstrated a **fiery temperament** against racial injustice: in 1916, he famously assaulted a British professor who had demeaned Indian students, an incident that got Bose expelled from Presidency College. This youthful act of defiance was a harbinger of the bold approach he would later take in challenging the Raj. Despite the setback, Bose completed his education, ranking high in the Indian Civil Service entrance exam in England—only to resign in April 1921 before joining the colonial bureaucracy, firmly convinced that his destiny lay in **serving India's liberation**, not the British administration.

Legacy and Historical Impact



Subhas Chandra Bose's legacy in India is **complex but deeply influential**. He is hailed by many as the first leader who attempted to organise an armed insurrection against British rule on a truly national scale. The existence of his Indian National Army in the 1940s – composed of Indian POWs and expatriates in Southeast Asia – demonstrated that Indian soldiers could be united under a national flag rather than the Union Jack. This spectacle of Bose marching troops under the **tricolour Indian flag** and his proclamation of a Provisional Government of Free India in 1943 sent electrifying hope through the subcontinent. After the war, although Britain dismissed the INA as a failed collaborationist force, the **Red Fort trials** (where INA officers were court-martialled in 1945) ignited massive public support across India's religious and regional divides. Many historians argue that this shift in Indian loyalty and unity spurred by Bose's movement hastened the British decision to quit India in 1947. Bose's slogan "Give me blood and I promise you freedom!" remains iconic, reflecting his belief in sacrifice for liberty. While he courted controversy by allying with fascist regimes (a decision born from "enemy of my enemy" logic), Bose is widely respected in India as a patriot whose extreme choices were driven by **unflinching love for his motherland**. His legacy also influenced post-colonial Indian defence strategy and inspired later nationalist and even separatist movements in different countries who saw Bose as proof that indigenous forces could challenge imperial might. In present-day India, Netaji's statues, stadiums, and holidays commemorate him, and debates about his mysterious death (in a 1945 plane crash, though some believe he survived) continue to intrigue the public. Above all, Bose's historical impact lies in showing that the quest for independence could go beyond petitions and peaceful protests – it could, if necessary, take up arms and still galvanize a nation's spirit.

Achievements as per 1912

By the end of 1912, Subhas Bose was still a young man in the throes of education, yet he had already shown signs of the leadership and rebellious zeal that would define him. In 1912 he was studying at **Scottish Church College in Calcutta**, where he excelled academically, topping his class in philosophy. More tellingly, he had become involved in student discussions about independence and was drawn to the teachings of radical nationalists like Aurobindo Ghosh. That year, Bose volunteered with the **Bengal Swadeshi movement**, helping promote indigenous products and boycotts of British goods – a cause that took him to villages to raise awareness, honing his skills as a persuasive orator in his late teens. He also organized classmates in acts of civil disobedience, such as **protests against the British partition of Bengal**, demonstrating a natural ability to inspire peers. While he held no official position yet, Bose's intellectual brilliance had earned him a mentorship under Chittaranjan Das (a prominent nationalist lawyer in Bengal) who recognized the youngster's potential. In sum, by 1912 Subhas Bose's achievements included **academic distinction**, burgeoning involvement in nationalist circles, and a reputation as a **strong-willed young patriot** unafraid to speak out – qualities that were the seeds of his future prominence.

Haile Selassie

Basic Details



- **Nationality:** Ethiopian
- **Profession:** Prince (Regent), later Emperor of Ethiopia
- **Gender:** Male
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 20 years old (born 1892)
- **Age in Story:** ~20 (portrayed at actual age in 1912)

Core Significance

Haile Selassie I (born Tafari Makonnen) is historically celebrated as the **Emperor of Ethiopia (1930–1974)** who led one of Africa's only long-independent nations through tumultuous 20th-century events. Internationally, he became the face of African resistance to colonial aggression when he appealed to the League of Nations in 1936 after Fascist Italy's brutal invasion – an iconic moment that exposed the League's weakness and rallied global sympathy. Post-WWII, Selassie was a key figure in African decolonisation and unity, helping establish the Organization of African Unity (precursor to the African Union) in 1963. He is revered in Rastafarianism as a messianic figure ("Lion of Judah"), giving him a spiritual significance beyond politics. In essence, Haile Selassie's importance lies in being a **symbol of African sovereignty and reform**, an international statesman who tried to modernise Ethiopia while fiercely guarding its ancient independence, and a global voice against fascism and racism.

Early Life and Background

Born as Lij Tafari Makonnen in 1892 to a noble Ethiopian family (his father was governor of Harar and cousin to Emperor Menelik II), he was groomed from childhood for leadership. Exceptionally bright and diligent, young Tafari stood out at Menelik's court, mastering Amharic, French, and clerical skills. In 1911, he married Menelik's daughter, elevating his royal status. By 1912 – with Emperor Menelik II deceased (1904) and his successor Lij Iyasu unstable – Tafari Makonnen, at just 20, had been appointed **Dejazmach (commander) of the crucial province of Sidamo**. In that role he showed administrative acumen: introducing modern schools (one of which he funded himself), inviting European advisers to train his army, and diplomatically expanding his influence among regional princes. Also in 1912, he gained the **title of Ras** (equivalent to Duke) and had become a confidant of Empress Zewditu (Menelik's daughter who would soon take the throne). Ras Tafari was positioning himself as a progressive voice at court, cautiously advocating for technologies like the telegraph and railway to connect Ethiopia internally and with the outside world. Surrounded by conservative nobles, he trod carefully, but by 1912 he was clearly the rising star of Ethiopia: he had successfully quelled a minor rebellion in Sidamo without excessive bloodshed – a feat that enhanced his reputation for wisdom and mercy. Thus, at 20, while not yet emperor, Tafari Makonnen had **earned respect as a capable regional governor, a moderniser with panache, and a princely diplomat** who commanded loyalty and intrigue in the power struggles of the Ethiopian Empire's twilight traditional era.

Legacy and Historical Impact



Haile Selassie's legacy looms large over Ethiopia and Africa. He presided over the modernization of Ethiopia – introducing the country's first constitution in 1931, promoting education (founding the University College of Addis Ababa), and slowly centralising power from feudal lords to the imperial government. Though his pace of reform was sometimes criticized as too slow, he took a fiercely independent, ancient kingdom and navigated it through the currents of the 20th century, keeping Ethiopia sovereign when virtually all of Africa fell under colonial rule. Internationally, his impassioned plea to the League of Nations ("It is us today, it will be you tomorrow") after Italy's invasion was a prophetic denunciation of appeasement, and though the League failed Ethiopia, Selassie's dignified fight made him an anti-fascist icon. After WWII, he regained his throne and became an active global statesman – he contributed Ethiopian troops to the Korean War under the UN flag (cementing him as a partner in collective security), and he was among the first heads of state to recognize newly independent African countries, championing Pan-Africanism. In 1963, heads of African states converged in Addis Ababa largely due to Selassie's prestige, and there they formed the OAU with him as a founding figure. This earned him the epithet "Father of African Unity." However, his legacy is not without complexity: by the 1970s, critics pointed to his autocratic style and failure to fundamentally uplift the rural poor; a famine in 1973 and discontent led to his overthrow in 1974 by communist Derg officers. Yet even in dethronement, his mystique endured, especially among Rastafarians who had since the 1930s venerated him as the returned messiah (based on his titles like "Conquering Lion of Judah"). Today, Haile Selassie is remembered as **a towering figure of African independence, a reformer-king who tried to balance tradition with progress**, and a symbol (even deified in some culture) of black pride and resilience. Ethiopia's avoidance of long-term colonization stands partly to his credit, and his words and visage remain emblematic in Pan-African forums and reggae music alike.

Achievements as per 1912

By the end of 1912, young Ras Tafari (Haile Selassie's title at the time) had already distinguished himself in Ethiopia's fractious political arena. That year was pivotal: Emperor Menelik II had died a few years earlier and Menelik's grandson Lij Iyasu was supposed to succeed him, but Iyasu's erratic rule was alienating the nobility. Tafari Makonnen, through careful networking and sagacious administration, achieved **de facto leadership among the progressive faction** at court. In terms of formal posts, in 1912 he was appointed as **Governor (Ras) of Harar**, one of the empire's most important provinces and a center of commerce and Islamic culture. Taking charge in Harar (the position held formerly by his father), Tafari effectively pacified the region and implemented new policies: he expanded the city's road networks and encouraged foreign traders (French and Indians) to settle, boosting the local economy. This appointment at just 20 was a huge vote of confidence from the regency council overseeing the empire. Also in 1912, Ras Tafari negotiated a diplomatically delicate marriage alliance: though already married, he arranged his sister's marriage into a rival noble house, which helped neutralize a potential threat to Empress Zewditu's succession. Thus, he proved his **skill in diplomacy and alliance-building**. Within the imperial court, Tafari introduced an innovative idea: sending young Ethiopians abroad for education. In 1912 he secured permission (and funding) to send a handful of students to Europe – a small step, but one that planted seeds for a modern educated class which he would later rely on. Recognition of



his growing influence came in late 1912 when Empress Zewditu (who took the throne that year) named him **Balemulu Silt'an** (Head Regent and heir-presumptive) – effectively making him next in line to the throne given Lij Iyasu's deposition. This was an extraordinary achievement for someone of his age, marking him as the highest intellectual and political authority behind the empress. Such elevation was due to his proven record: he had kept peace in his provinces, fostered ties with foreign envoys (by 1912, diplomats from Britain and France were corresponding directly with Ras Tafari on regional matters), and shown personal bravery in quelling a tribal unrest on the Somaliland frontier that year. In summary, by 1912 Haile Selassie had achieved **unprecedented power for a man of 20 in Ethiopia**, becoming the empire's key modernizer, a trusted regional governor, and the clear successor to the throne – all through shrewd diplomacy, effective governance, and a forward-looking vision that was already bearing fruit.

Fritz Joubert Duquesne

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** South African (of Boer ancestry)
- **Profession:** Soldier, Spy, Adventurer
- **Gender:** Male
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 35 years old (born 1877)
- **Age in Story:** ~35 (portrayed at or near his actual age in 1912)

Core Significance

Fritz Joubert Duquesne is historically infamous as a **master spy and saboteur** who worked against the British Empire during the early 20th century. A veteran of the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902) on the Boer side, he later became a German spy in both World Wars, earning nicknames like “The Black Panther” for his stealth. He is perhaps best known for leading the Duquesne Spy Ring in the United States (uncovered in 1941, the largest espionage case in US history at the time). Duquesne claimed to have committed daring acts, including the alleged assassination of Lord Kitchener by sinking his ship in 1916. Though some of his tales were embellished, there's no doubt he was a **consummate infiltrator and escape artist**, whose life reads like a pulp thriller. He symbolizes the lengths to which a bitter adversary of British colonialism would go – embodying the role of the relentless revenge-driven spy. In short, Duquesne's importance lies in being one of the most **colorful and effective espionage agents** of his era, operating across continents and leaving a legacy of intrigue and folklore behind.

Early Life and Background

Born in 1877 in East Cape Colony (in what is now South Africa), Fritz Duquesne grew up amid colonial conflicts. His family were well-off Afrikaner farmers. When the British scorched earth and put his mother and sister in a concentration camp during the Boer War, young Fritz's life purpose crystallised into hatred of the British. He fought tenaciously as a Boer commando, mastering



guerrilla tactics. Captured by the British, he used charm and cunning to escape prison – a pattern that would define his life. Fluent in several languages and able to adopt multiple identities, Duquesne drifted after the war, doing everything from big-game hunting in Africa to journalism in New York. By 1912, he had already been involved in a scandalous insurance fraud: he posed as a game ranger and burned down a ship (the *Tintagel Castle*) for an insurance payout, demonstrating his penchant for sabotage. Settling in the US, he ingratiated himself with high society (at one point working as a press agent). All of this was backdrop to his true calling: espionage. By 1912, though not formally employed as a spy yet, he was in contact with German agents, offering his services in anticipation of the next showdown with Britain. Duquesne's early experiences – witnessing British brutality, perfecting the art of deception for survival, and cultivating an undying thirst for retribution – forged him into a man who lived by wits and vengeful zeal. He honed skills in disguise, explosives, and manipulation. In essence, by the eve of World War I, Duquesne was a **free agent saboteur** armed with personal motive and talent, ready to be hired by anyone against the British Empire.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Duquesne's legacy is shrouded in espionage lore. He inflicted real damage as a German spy in World War I (credited with acts of sabotage in Africa and Europe) and later became the ringleader of a major Nazi spy network in the US during World War II. That 1941 FBI bust – the Duquesne Spy Ring of 33 agents – was a huge victory for American counterintelligence and put Duquesne behind bars for good, marking the end of his long cat-and-mouse game. Culturally, Duquesne's life story influenced fictional characters – he's like a prototype of the maverick secret agent, albeit on the wrong side. In South African memory, he remained a controversial figure: some Boers regarded him as a folk hero who avenged their suffering, while others felt his later alignment with Germany tainted his patriotism. Globally, his impact is a reminder that the legacies of colonial wars bled into the world wars; he personally tied the Boer resistance to later conflicts. Though not as historically pivotal as statesmen or generals, Duquesne's century-spanning spy career underscores the evolving nature of espionage – from blowing up trains on horseback to sending encrypted radio messages from Manhattan high-rises. The sheer audacity of his operations, if sometimes exaggerated by Duquesne himself, left behind a train of sensational headlines and FBI case studies. In the end, his greatest contribution to history may be as a case study in perseverance in covert war – he literally spent decades fighting an enemy by any means. The fact that his exploits fill archives and inspired spy novelists is testament to a **legacy of intrigue** that outlived the man: Duquesne exemplified the deadly spy-for-hire that thrived in the chaotic first half of the 20th century.

Achievements as per 1912

By the end of 1912, Fritz Duquesne had already achieved the stuff of adventure novels. Most notably, he had **survived the Boer War**, during which he led guerrilla raids so effective a bounty was put on his head. Not only did he evade capture for long, when the British finally caught him they sent him to a POW camp – from which he escaped (reportedly by feigning paralysis and slipping away once moved to a civilian hospital). That alone made him a minor legend among



former Boer comrades. Post-war, Duquesne carried out a personal mission around 1909–1910: infiltrating British circles by posing as a Brazilian cattle rancher, he orchestrated the destruction of the British ship *Tintagel Castle* by arson at sea (to avenge, he claimed, British atrocities and also pocket insurance money). By 1912, he had dodged prosecution for that crime, leaving investigators baffled – an achievement in elusiveness. In New York, he had established himself under alias as a **respected war correspondent and lecturer**, giving talks about his Boer commando days to rapt audiences who had no idea he was scheming against the British behind his suave storytelling. He ingratiated himself with wealthy benefactors, even reportedly charming his way into dinners (not unlike the 1912 event at hand). Thus, by this year, Duquesne's achievements included a trail of *successful conquests via deceit*: he had fooled countless people, used false identities profitably (including drawing a US government salary as a “scout” at one point), and was gathering intelligence on British shipping and defenses under the noses of those who thought him just a charismatic foreign gentleman. While he did not yet have the infamy of later years, those in certain circles whispered about the **“Boer super-spy”** – a harbinger of the extensive espionage career to come. In short, as of 1912, Duquesne had proven **uncommonly adept at guerilla warfare, escape, impersonation, and sabotage**, setting the stage for his World War roles.

Winston Churchill

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** British
- **Profession:** Politician (First Lord of the Admiralty)
- **Gender:** Male
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 38 years old (born 1874)
- **Age in Story:** 38 (portrayed at his actual age in 1912)

Core Significance

Winston Churchill is historically renowned as a **towering British statesman and wartime leader**. He served twice as UK Prime Minister (including during World War II) and is celebrated for his rousing oratory, steadfast refusal to bow to Nazism, and guiding Britain (and the Allies) to victory in WWII. Earlier, he had a pivotal role in World War I's military strategy and later helped shape the post-war world order (he famously warned of the Iron Curtain after WWII). Churchill's legacy endures as a symbol of courageous leadership, with speeches like “We shall fight on the beaches” embodying defiance. In short, he is remembered as one of the **20th century's most influential leaders**, a master orator, and a strategist whose career spanned the zenith of the British Empire through its challenges of global war.

Early Life and Background

Born into the aristocratic Marlborough family on 30 November 1874, Winston was the son of Lord Randolph Churchill and American heiress Jennie Jerome. He grew up amidst grandeur but also



parental distance, developing a bold, independent streak. After a stint at Sandhurst, he saw action as a young army officer and war correspondent – from charging with the cavalry at Omdurman (1898) to a daring escape from a Boer POW camp in 1899 – adventures that made him a minor hero and fueled his entry into politics. By 1912, Churchill had risen fast: he was First Lord of the Admiralty (appointed 1911), responsible for the Royal Navy's readiness as storm clouds of war gathered. He had already served as Home Secretary, where he garnered controversy and praise in equal measure (famously, he personally directed police during the 1911 Siege of Sidney Street against anarchists). Winston was known for his prodigious energy, self-confidence, and a certain impetuosity. At 38, he was among the youngest to hold such high office, bent on modernising the Navy (promoting the new Dreadnought battleships and naval aviation). This early life of privilege, military gallantry, and political ambition shaped Winston into a man both lionised for vision and criticised for risk-taking – traits that would characterise his long career.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Churchill's legacy is monumental. As Prime Minister in WWII, he became the **embodiment of British resistance** when Britain stood alone against Hitler in 1940. His speeches fortified British morale and famously influenced the course of the war. Beyond WWII, Churchill was a key player in the geopolitics that created the Cold War world – he alerted the West to Soviet expansionism in 1946 (coining the term "Iron Curtain"). Domestically, though an aristocrat, he presided over reforms (earlier in his career he helped establish labour exchanges and unemployment insurance as a Liberal). However, his legacy has complexity: while celebrated for wartime leadership and eloquence, he was also an imperialist who opposed Indian independence and made decisions (like the Gallipoli campaign in WWI) that are debated for their heavy cost. Overall, history sees him as a **warlord-statesman who crucially helped save democracy in its darkest hour**. Statues of Churchill abound, and his name is invoked whenever steadfast leadership is called for. His multi-volume memoirs of WWII also left a lasting literary imprint, shaping popular understanding of the war. In sum, Churchill's impact spans preserving freedom in WWII, influencing Cold War alignments, and enriching the English language with his singular rhetoric.

Achievements as per 1912

By the end of 1912, Winston Churchill had already notched impressive achievements. He had been elected to Parliament in 1900 and by his mid-thirties held major Cabinet posts. As Home Secretary (1910–1911), he had modernised prisons and confronted social unrest (albeit contentiously, as seen in the Sidney Street siege). His appointment in 1911 as First Lord of the Admiralty was an achievement reflecting his stature – essentially putting this relatively young man in charge of the world's most powerful navy. In this role through 1912, Churchill oversaw the continuing build-up of Britain's dreadnought battleships in an arms race with Germany. He also championed innovation, creating the Royal Naval Air Service and investing in new technology like gunnery fire-control systems. These pre-war naval reforms were visionary and would prove vital in WWI. Another achievement by 1912 was his role in advocating social reforms during his stint as a Liberal Cabinet minister: he had been instrumental in passing the People's Budget of 1909 that introduced the first welfare measures funded by taxing the wealthy (working alongside Lloyd George). At a personal



level, 1912 saw Churchill at the height of his pre-war influence – he was a driving force in government, confidant of Prime Minister H.H. Asquith, and a prominent voice in defence and foreign policy councils. (*It would only be a few years later, in WWI, that some of these achievements – like the naval build-up – would be tested, and missteps like Gallipoli would temporarily setback his career.*) But as of 1912, Churchill was widely seen as a rising star with a bold vision, having transformed the Royal Navy and positioned Britain strongly on the global chessboard.

Sylvia Pankhurst

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** British
- **Profession:** Suffragette Activist & Socialist
- **Gender:** Female
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 30 years old (born 1882)
- **Age in Story:** 30 years old (actual age, as she was active in 1912)

Core Significance

Sylvia Pankhurst was one of Britain's most prominent suffrage leaders and later an influential socialist and anti-fascist campaigner. As the daughter of Emmeline Pankhurst, she was part of the famed Pankhurst dynasty that fought for women's right to vote in the early 20th century. Sylvia, however, carved her own path: she broadened the suffragette movement to include working-class women, advocating not just for the vote but also for social equality and labour rights. She was a co-founder of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) and endured prison and forced-feeding for the cause. After women (at least of certain property qualifications) won the vote in 1918, Sylvia continued her activism in new arenas – championing socialism, opposing World War I, and later standing firmly against colonialism and racism (she became a vocal supporter of Ethiopian independence). In short, Sylvia Pankhurst's importance lies in her role as a **bridge between the fight for women's suffrage and broader human rights struggles**. She exemplified a tireless commitment to equality, transcending class and national boundaries in her campaigning.

Early Life and Background

Born **Estelle Sylvia Pankhurst** in Manchester to a fiercely political family, Sylvia grew up in the crucible of activism. By her teens, she was marching in suffrage demonstrations alongside her mother and sister, learning public speaking at rallies instead of making society calls. She also inherited her father's social conscience – Dr. Richard Pankhurst was a socialist barrister who taught her that the vote was just one step toward true equality. A talented artist, young Sylvia studied art in London and Venice; she even used her artistic skills to design bold suffrage posters and banners (her artistic flair distinguish her from her sister Christabel's more single-minded militancy). By 1912, Sylvia had become a leading organiser within the WSPU. She had been



imprisoned twice already for acts of civil disobedience – smashing windows and protesting Parliament – and had endured brutal force-feedings when on hunger strike in Holloway Gaol. These ordeals only strengthened her resolve that the fight must include dismantling class barriers; unlike the WSPU's high society ladies, Sylvia spent time in East London's slums and was forming her own group to specifically mobilise working women. Thus, in 1912 Sylvia was at a turning point: utterly committed to suffrage but increasingly at odds with the WSPU's exclusion of poorer women. She was also gaining renown as a fiery orator in her own right, addressing huge crowds in Trafalgar Square with her voice ringing out for votes and economic justice. Her upbringing in a politically progressive and rebellious household had set her on a collision course with the establishment – and she embraced it fully.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Sylvia Pankhurst's legacy is profound and wide-ranging. In the realm of women's rights, she is remembered as a champion who insisted that feminism must be intersectional – involving not only middle-class women but also the factory workers, seamstresses, and housemaids whose voices were often ignored. She broke from her mother's WSPU over this principle, founding the East London Federation of Suffragettes, which provided free nurseries and clinics while campaigning for the vote – a precursor to modern social feminism. This inclusive approach foreshadowed later feminist movements that linked gender equality with broader social equality. After women's suffrage was partially achieved, Sylvia didn't rest: she threw herself into the socialist movement, founding a newspaper "*Workers' Dreadnought*" that agitated for workers' rights and even aligning with communist ideals for a period. Unlike many suffragettes who eased into society life post-vote, Sylvia remained a radical until her death. Notably, she was an early anti-fascist; she loudly opposed Mussolini and Hitler in the 1930s when some in Britain were still appeasing them. In her later years, she moved to Ethiopia, championing African independence – an ahead-of-its-time stance (she was essentially anti-colonial before that was common in Europe). For this lifelong devotion to equality across gender, class, and race, Sylvia is celebrated as a pioneer who linked struggles together. She has a unique distinction of being regarded as a heroine in multiple countries: in the UK for suffrage, and in Ethiopia (where she's buried with honours) for anti-colonial solidarity. Contemporary activists often cite Sylvia Pankhurst as a model of someone who understood that the fight for justice is interconnected and never-ending.

Achievements as of 1912

By the end of 1912, Sylvia Pankhurst had attained significant achievements in the fight for women's suffrage and beyond. She was already a veteran organiser and speaker for the WSPU, known for her rousing, down-to-earth speechmaking that could move even working men to cheer for women's votes. In January 1912, she spent hard time in Holloway Prison for her suffragette activities; her letters smuggled out of jail (later published in the press) vividly exposed the cruel practice of force-feeding and garnered public sympathy – a moral victory for the suffragettes. That year she also published an influential pamphlet, "*The Suffragette: The History of the Women's Militant Suffrage Movement*," which both chronicled the cause and made a case for why militancy was necessary; it became an important piece of movement literature. Importantly, 1912 saw Sylvia take concrete



steps towards widening the movement's scope: she had set up a **suffragette branch in East London** (unofficially, since the WSPU high command wasn't fully on board) where she involved local women in tailoring banners and participating in protests – effectively politicising many who had never been politically active. It was a success, with hundreds of working-class women joining and feeling empowered to speak at meetings. This grass-roots success was an achievement Sylvia was proudest of, seeing in it the seeds of a more democratic feminist movement. Also by 1912, Sylvia had honed her journalistic voice. She was editing and writing for the WSPU's newspaper *Votes for Women*, using it as a platform to highlight issues like pay inequity and sweatshop conditions alongside suffrage news. This broad editorial approach was somewhat radical within the movement and set her apart. In summary, as 1912 closed, Sylvia Pankhurst had not only endured great personal sacrifices for the cause (prison, hunger strikes), but she had also laid the groundwork for a more inclusive suffragette campaign – a remarkable achievement in a movement often narrowly focused. These accomplishments positioned her as a rising star of the militant suffragettes, albeit one on the verge of breaking new ground in linking social justice with the fight for the vote.

Stephanie St. Clair

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** French-Caribbean (later American)
- **Profession:** Gangster & Entrepreneur
- **Gender:** Female
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** ~15 years old (born c.1897 – historical date uncertain)
- **Age in Story:** ~25 years old (portrayed as an adult in 1912)

Core Significance

Stephanie St. Clair, famously known as the **“Queen of Harlem,”** was a pioneering figure in New York's criminal underworld during the Prohibition era. As one of the few women – and a black immigrant at that – to dominate organised crime, she controlled Harlem's lucrative numbers racket (an underground lottery) through the 1920s. She built an illicit empire and *successfully* fought off incursions by Mafia leaders like Dutch Schultz, an almost unheard-of feat for that time. Not merely a crime boss, St. Clair was also an outspoken advocate for her community: she used her influence and wealth to agitate against police corruption and to uplift African-Americans in Harlem, funding legal aid and printing ads in newspapers advising her people of their rights. In essence, Stephanie St. Clair's importance lies in her dual legacy as a **shrewd criminal entrepreneur and an early civil rights defender.** She proved that a black woman could beat the odds in the harsh world of gangland, and she did so while boldly standing up to injustice.

Early Life and Background



Stephanie St. Clair was born around 1896 on the French Caribbean island of Guadeloupe (exact records are scant). Orphaned or separated from family young, she was said to be highly intelligent and, unlike many of her eventual associates, well-educated – she spoke fluent French and English. Seeking opportunity, she emigrated to the United States in the early 1910s, settling in Harlem, New York, which was becoming a vibrant hub for the black diaspora. Arriving with little more than sharp wits and fierce ambition, Stephanie quickly immersed herself in Harlem's street economy. She realised that the informal lottery (the “Numbers” game) played by poor and working-class residents could be organised into a profitable business. By the story's 1912 timeline, a slightly older Stephanie has begun working with gamblers and learning the trade. She earned a reputation for being tough but fair – an eloquent woman who could calculate payouts in her head and wasn't afraid to stand up to bullying. Her early climb in the underworld involved partnering with an older bookmaker who taught her the ropes; by leveraging her knack for mathematics and her no-nonsense personality, she was running her own small betting ring before long. Life in Harlem also radicalised her: she personally experienced the rampant racism and police brutality in the African-American community. These early experiences forged her into a figure who combined illegal enterprise with a sense of social mission – by 1912, she was already known on the streets as “Madame St. Clair,” a woman who would pay your bail or feed your hungry children if you worked for her, but who also would not hesitate to crack a knuckle or two with her brass knuckles if you crossed her.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Stephanie St. Clair's legacy operates on two levels: **criminal entrepreneurship and community advocacy**. On one hand, she was a rare female kingpin in an era of male mobsters. She proved masterful at strategy – outsmarting rivals, corrupting police on her payroll, and maintaining control of Harlem's betting rackets for years. In doing so, she kept wealth circulating within the black community when otherwise it would have been siphoned off by downtown gangsters. Her defiance of the Mafia (famously sending a telegram to mob boss Lucky Luciano telling him to stay out of Harlem) entered the folklore of New York crime – it was the story of David versus Goliath, with a black businesswoman in the role of David. On the other hand, Stephanie's fight against systemic racism left an enduring mark. She did not shy from using her platform to expose police extortion; her writings and newspaper ads demanding justice paved the way for later civil rights efforts in the city. Many Harlemites saw her not just as a racketeer but as a protector – someone who funded improvements in their neighborhood and fought for their dignity at a time when few in power cared. Though her empire eventually waned (a combination of the end of Prohibition and increased law enforcement pressure), by the time she retired she had helped mentor the next generation of black entrepreneurs (albeit in illicit fields). Today, she's remembered as a Harlem legend – sometimes romanticised as a Robin Hood figure – and as a precursor to later African-American activists who would wage war on police corruption and racial inequity. In sum, Stephanie St. Clair carved a path where there was none, demonstrating that a black woman could wield power in America's underbelly and still use that power to try and uplift her people.

Achievements as of 1912



In the fictional context of 1912, Stephanie St. Clair would have already achieved the establishment of her foothold in Harlem's underworld. (Historically, she likely arrived in New York around this time and truly rose to power in the 1920s, but our scenario accelerates her trajectory.) By this date, she had set up a modest yet thriving numbers operation on a few blocks of Harlem – a significant achievement given the male-dominated and often violent nature of such ventures. She had a small network of collectors and enforcers, mostly local men who, somewhat incredulously, took orders from this confident young woman because she proved to pay on time and defend them from unfair arrest. Additionally, Stephanie had begun her pattern of community support: in 1912 she personally paid the legal fees for a trio of young black men who had been unjustly beaten and charged by the NYPD, ensuring their acquittal. This act made the black press take note of her. Though they coyly referred to her as a “certain well-to-do West Indian lady,” the positive outcome of that case was an early accomplishment in bending the system, however slightly, towards fairness. Financially, by 1912 she had saved a tidy sum (stashed in secret locations – she mistrusted banks for good reason) and dressed impeccably with tailor-made dresses and a gold watch – visible tokens of her success. Surviving and thriving as a black immigrant woman in the cut-throat gambling rackets was itself an extraordinary feat by 1912. She had also formed alliances: notable was her pact with a corrupt Harlem precinct captain whom she discretely paid to warn her of impending raids. In effect, by 1912 Stephanie St. Clair had laid the foundation of what would become Harlem's leading numbers syndicate – she had money, respect (or fear), and even a toehold in local politics via bribes. These early achievements were the bedrock upon which her notorious empire would be built.

Marlene Dietrich

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** German (later American citizen)
- **Profession:** Actress & Singer
- **Gender:** Female
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 11 years old (born 1901)
- **Age in Story:** ~21 years old (portrayed as a young adult in 1912)

Core Significance

Marlene Dietrich rose to become one of the most influential performers of the 20th century, celebrated for her sultry voice, androgynous style, and magnetic screen presence. She was a trailblazer who challenged gender norms – famously wearing tuxedos and top hats in an era when such attire on women was scandalous – thereby redefining femininity in cinema and fashion. International stardom came with her breakout film “*The Blue Angel*” (1930), after which she conquered Hollywood. Culturally, Marlene became a global icon of glamour and sophistication, known for her languid, half-lidded gaze and aloof sensuality. Beyond entertainment, she made an impact during World War II by entertaining Allied troops and vocally opposing the Nazi regime,



showing that her influence extended off-screen as well. In short, Marlene Dietrich's legacy is one of bold innovation: she broadened representations of women, proved the power of personal branding in the golden age of cinema, and used her fame to stand up for her principles.

Early Life and Background

Marie Magdalene "Marlene" Dietrich was born in Berlin to a conservative military family. As a girl she learned violin and cultivated an elegant bearing, but she also had a rebellious spark. In her late teens, Marlene hungered for the arts and began training for the theatre, to her mother's chagrin. She started out performing in German cabarets and on stage in the early 1920s (historically a bit later, but in our story she's already active by 1912). By that year, an imagined slightly older Marlene would have been singing in smoky Weimar-era clubs and taking bit parts in silent films around Berlin's budding film industry. She quickly gained a reputation for her unique style – cutting her hair fashionably short and occasionally donning men's garments in her act for shock effect and artistic flair. Even at this early stage, she understood the power of mystique. Marlene's striking looks and confident artistry were turning heads in Berlin's artistic circles by 1912, positioning her on the verge of greater opportunities. Though not yet the international star, she carried herself with the self-assurance of a woman who knew she was destined for more than the provincial Prussian life into which she was born.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Marlene Dietrich's legacy is multifaceted and enduring. As a cinema icon, she helped shape the archetype of the strong, independent woman in film. Her roles – often portraying worldly, sensual, yet iron-willed women – differed from the meek damsels of earlier cinema. She paved the way for actresses to play more complex characters. In fashion, Marlene's embrace of trousers and tailored suits for women was revolutionary; she popularised the very concept of unisex style. Every time a woman confidently struts in a pantsuit on a red carpet, there's a bit of Marlene's spirit present. Moreover, Marlene was one of the first European stars to navigate Hollywood successfully, maintaining her thick accent and exotic image as assets, thereby broadening Hollywood's idea of a leading lady. During WWII, her fervent anti-Nazi stance (she even broadcast propaganda messages encouraging German soldiers to surrender) and her frontline morale tours earned her America's Medal of Freedom. This demonstrated that a star could also be a patriot and activist. Long after her final film, Marlene remained a symbol of unapologetic individuality – she lived on her own terms, whether that meant declining offers she found uninteresting or having discreet love affairs with both men and women at a time when that was daring. Today, she is remembered not just for her topaz-coloured glamour but for her courage to be different. Marlene's influence can be seen in entertainers who blur gender lines and in any performer who commands a stage with a mere arch of an eyebrow and a knowing smile.

Achievements as of 1912

By the end of 1912, Marlene Dietrich – in our story's slightly advanced timeline – had begun making her mark in Berlin's performing arts scene. She had secured a coveted spot in a popular cabaret revue, singing cheeky songs that showcased her smoky alto voice and wry humour. That year she



also landed a small role in a silent film produced by **Universum Film AG (UFA)**, a notable achievement for a newcomer in the German film industry. Fellow actors and directors were already noting her discipline and star quality; one theatre critic in 1912 wrote of "*Fräulein Dietrich's intriguing stage charisma*," predicting she would go far. Another personal milestone that year: Marlene honed her signature look – she had costumier friends tailor a man's evening suit to her measurements, which she first unveiled at a bohemian artists' ball in 1912 to gasps and applause. This bold fashion statement, and her ease in pulling it off, rapidly became talked about in Berlin society, effectively putting Marlene on the map as a trendsetter. Thus, by 1912 she had achieved the status of an up-and-coming talent: her name was beginning to be known in sophisticated circles, she was financially independent (still performing on Berlin stages rather than travelling to America yet), and she had carved out a unique persona that set her apart from the legions of ingénues. These early accomplishments—part theatrical, part personal branding—laid the foundation for the extraordinary career that would follow.

Motive:

Background:

In 1912 Berlin, Marlene Dietrich is a rising star in the cabaret and silent film world, known for her daring style and willingness to challenge convention. She is fiercely protective of her reputation, her artistic integrity, and her close-knit circle of friends in the avant-garde scene.

Baz Rutherford, passing through Berlin as a cosmopolitan Englishman, quickly becomes a fixture in the city's bohemian nightlife. He charms his way into Marlene's circle, presenting himself as a patron of the arts and promising to introduce her to influential producers and directors in London and Paris.

Marlene, eager to advance her career but wary of empty promises, is at first cautious. However, Baz's apparent connections and lavish gifts win her trust. He convinces her to let him arrange a private audition for a major European film project, and persuades her to pose for a series of daring photographs and screen tests—images that, in 1912, could easily ruin a young woman's reputation if made public.

Unbeknownst to Marlene, Baz has no intention of helping her career. Instead, he sells the photographs and screen tests to a scandal-hungry tabloid and a disreputable film producer, who begin circulating rumours about Marlene's "immorality" and "unwomanly" behaviour. The resulting scandal threatens to destroy her budding career, alienates her from her family, and nearly gets her blacklisted from Berlin's theatres.

For Marlene, Baz's betrayal is more than personal humiliation—it is a direct attack on her independence, her artistry, and her right to define herself on her own terms. In a world where a woman's reputation is everything, Baz's actions put her future, her safety, and her dreams at risk.

Summary:

Marlene Dietrich wants Baz dead because he exploited her trust, sabotaged her career, and tried to



destroy her reputation for his own profit. For a woman determined to live boldly and authentically, eliminating Baz is not just revenge—it is a fight for her dignity, her future, and the right of every woman to control her own story.

Clara Bow

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** American
- **Profession:** Actress (Silent Film Star)
- **Gender:** Female
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 7 years old (born 1905)
- **Age in Story:** ~20 years old (portrayed as a young adult in 1912)

Core Significance

Clara Bow became one of Hollywood's most celebrated stars of the 1920s, famously known as the original **"It Girl."** She embodied the free-spirited flapper of the Jazz Age – exuding modern femininity, sexual independence, and exuberant charm on screen. Clara's natural acting and relatability helped define a new image of women in cinema: fun-loving, daring, and unapologetically herself. Her immense popularity made her a trendsetter in fashion and attitude, and she is often credited with symbolising the roar of the Roaring Twenties in female form. In short, Clara Bow's rise to fame signalled a cultural shift towards more liberated womanhood, and her influence can be seen in generations of bold young actresses who followed.

Early Life and Background

Clara was born into poverty in Brooklyn, New York. Her childhood was marked by hardship – an alcoholic father and mentally ill mother – which forced Clara to grow up resilient and street-smart. Despite these struggles, she possessed a vivacious spark and entered a motion-picture beauty contest as a teenager, which she won. That victory opened the door to acting. By the story's timeline, a fictional older Clara moved to Hollywood around 1910 and landed her first film roles while still a teen. She captivated directors with her big brown eyes and emotive face, perfect for silent film. Clara's breakthrough (in the story's scenario) came early: by 1912 she had been cast in a couple of short silent comedies and was being hailed in movie magazines as a future star. This scrappy Brooklyn girl had begun transforming into a glamorous screen actress, carrying with her the honesty and toughness forged in her difficult upbringing.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Clara Bow's legacy endures as an icon of the Jazz Age and early cinema. At her peak in the late 1920s, she set off nationwide fads – women copied her bobbed hair, her casual speech, and her carefree fashion. She helped popularise the flapper look and attitude: confident, fun, and unrestrained by old social mores. On film, she proved that a lead actress could be simultaneously



sexy and funny, commanding audience empathy. Clara's on-screen persona – playful, even tomboyish at times – expanded the range of roles available to women. However, she also faced intense press scrutiny and moral panic; as one of Hollywood's first megastars, her personal life (wild rumours of parties and romances) became tabloid fodder, presaging today's celebrity culture. Though her career waned with the advent of talkies and she retired young, Clara Bow remains a symbol of 1920s vitality. In film history, she's celebrated for breaking the Victorian mold and ushering in a new era of the uninhibited Hollywood heroine. Generations later, she is still referenced in pop culture whenever the energies of youth and rebellion of the 1920s are invoked.

Achievements as of 1912

By the end of 1912, Clara was – in this fictional scenario – an emerging name in the entertainment world. (Historically she was a child, but in our tale she's already a young adult starlet.) She had managed to escape her rough upbringing and secure a contract with a fledgling Hollywood studio. She had a few one- and two-reel films under her belt, charming audiences on the East Coast and slowly making her way into the national consciousness. 1912 saw Clara feature in a short comedy that garnered positive notices in **Variety**, praising her expressive acting. That year, she also networked assiduously: attending industry parties (where her natural warmth won over early film producers) and even performing live skits in vaudeville theatres to build her fan base. These early achievements – a contest win, a handful of film roles, and growing press interest – positioned Clara on the cusp of stardom. Those who met her in 1912 often remarked that she had “it” – that ineffable quality of attraction – long before a clever marketing man would officially crown her the “It Girl.”

Aimee Semple McPherson

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** American
- **Profession:** Evangelist Preacher, Faith Healer
- **Gender:** Female
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 22 years old (born 1890)
- **Age in Story:** ~22 (portrayed at her actual age, a young travelling revivalist in 1912)

Core Significance

Aimee Semple McPherson was a **pioneering Pentecostal evangelist** and media-savvy preacher who rose to fame in the 1920s as one of America's first religious superstars. She is historically important for **founding the Foursquare Church** and popularising modern evangelical techniques – using radio, stage theatrics, and faith-healing demonstrations to draw massive crowds. Sister Aimee (as she was called) packed venues with her passionate sermons and was a household name, blending old-time religion with Hollywood flair. She proved women could lead megachurches and was instrumental in the rise of charismatic Christianity worldwide. Her life – marked by miraculous healings, a mysterious disappearance scandal in 1926, and relentless



charity work – made her an icon of the Jazz Age as much as any film star. Essentially, Aimee Semple McPherson is remembered as a **trailblazer of evangelical broadcasting and female ministry**, whose influence on American religious culture remains profound.

Early Life and Background

Aimee was born Aimee Elizabeth Kennedy on 9 October 1890 in rural Ontario, Canada. Raised by a devout Salvation Army mother, young Aimee grew up steeped in Christian service and the belief in direct connection with God. However, as a teen she had questions: she was fascinated by science and even briefly considered atheism, writing to a paper to ask *“Why does the Bible contradict Science?”*. Her spiritual crisis resolved when at 17 she attended a revival meeting by evangelist Robert Semple. She felt a powerful calling and soon married Semple, moving with him to China on mission. He tragically died of malaria in 1910, leaving Aimee a pregnant 19-year-old widow in Shanghai. Heartbroken but not defeated, Aimee returned to North America with baby Roberta. By 1912, now remarried to accountant Harold McPherson, she felt restless in domestic life. The call to preach that she had first experienced with Robert came roaring back. That year – much to her husband's dismay – Aimee began **travelling as a revival preacher**, driving a gospel wagon with “Jesus is Coming Soon” painted on the side. She was a one-woman show: **singing hymns, playing the accordion, and preaching fiery sermons under tents or in borrowed churches** across the Eastern USA. Though denominational authorities were skeptical of a female preacher, her charisma won souls. She prayed for the sick, claiming and indeed reporting healings. Word spread of this pretty young “lady preacher” who could make hardened sinners weep. By late 1912, Aimee had parted ways with Harold (he didn't share her calling – they would divorce in 1918) and moved with her mother and children to Los Angeles, sensing that city would be fertile ground for her ministry. So at this stage, Aimee was **an up-and-coming evangelist**, just starting to attract media notice for the enthusiastic crowds she drew in New York, Philadelphia, and now California. She hadn't yet built her famous Angelus Temple (that would come in 1923), but she was laying the foundation for her independent ministry: magazines in 1912 wrote curious pieces about the “pretty young Canadian woman who preaches.” Thus, her early life combined personal tragedy, an irrepressible spiritual drive, and the first tastes of public attention, all of which set the stage for her later renown.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Sister Aimee's legacy looms large in the realms of religion and mass media. She effectively **invented the template of the televangelist** decades before television – using radio broadcasts (she was the first woman to hold a radio licence for preaching) to reach millions. Her founded denomination, the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, spread globally and now has millions of members. Aimee normalised **women as church leaders** in Pentecostal circles; she showed that a woman could build and lead a megachurch (her Angelus Temple seated 5,000 and was filled several times each Sunday). Her theatrical style – incorporating costumes, props, and elaborate illustrated sermons – revolutionised how the gospel could be presented, making church services more dynamic and entertaining. Additionally, Aimee was a pioneer in social work: during the Great Depression, her temple's charity fed more people in Los Angeles than



the government did, establishing a model for church-led welfare programmes. Culturally, she became a household name, one of the first religious figures to achieve celebrity status beyond church walls. People followed her life like a soap opera, especially after her mysterious disappearance in 1926 (she claimed to have been kidnapped; skeptics cried hoax) which made headlines and solidified her fame. Despite controversies, or perhaps partly because of them, she kept her flock and remained influential until her death in 1944. Today, scholars credit Aimee with **shaping American Pentecostalism's embrace of media and showmanship** and with breaking ground for female evangelists (from Kathryn Kuhlman to Joyce Meyer, they walk a trail Aimee blazed). In popular culture, she's been the subject of films, plays, and novels, testament to her enduring fascination. In sum, Aimee Semple McPherson left an indelible mark as an early **Christian media superstar** and a builder of both a spiritual and literal infrastructure (her temple and radio station) that outlasted her.

Achievements as per 1912

By 1912, Aimee was just beginning her ministry and had not yet achieved the international renown she would later enjoy. Nonetheless, even by this time she had some impressive accomplishments for a 22-year-old. She had conducted revival meetings in dozens of towns across the United States and Canada, something few women (or men) her age could claim. Her “*road campaign*” of 1912 saw hundreds of purported conversions – newspaper clippings from small towns lauded the “girl evangelist” who filled local tents night after night. One tangible achievement that year was the publication of her first religious articles; she wrote columns for the Pentecostal magazine *Bridal Call*, sharing testimonies of healing and revival from her travels. These writings started to give her national exposure in holiness movement circles. Also in 1912, Aimee’s mother, Mildred Kennedy, joined her mission as an organist and business manager – effectively **establishing the administrative structure** that would later support Aimee’s ministry empire. Mildred’s involvement was key: it professionalised Aimee’s operations (keeping financial records, scheduling efficiently) and was an early achievement in ensuring the sustainability of the work. Aimee also by this point had developed her signature sermon style: she would dramatise biblical stories – for example, in one 1912 sermon in Baltimore, she donned sackcloth to portray the prophet Jonah preaching to Nineveh, leaving the audience enthralled. This creative approach to preaching was novel and itself an achievement in innovation that left local pastors copying her. Notably, by late 1912 Aimee had to hire an assistant to help correspond with the growing number of people writing to her for prayer or advice, indicating her “flock” was already spreading beyond those she could reach in person. (*Her massive achievements – founding Angelus Temple in 1923, launching her radio station KFSG in 1924, and pulling crowds of 50,000 – were in the future. But in 1912, the seeds of those were clearly sprouting: she had momentum, a swelling audience, and a vision to reach as many souls as possible.*)

Queen Marie of Romania

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** Romanian (born British royalty)



- **Profession:** Queen Consort of Romania, Diplomat, Author
- **Gender:** Female
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 37 years old (born 1875)
- **Age in Story:** 37 (portrayed at her actual age in 1912)

Core Significance

Queen Marie of Romania (born Princess Marie of Edinburgh) was a **popular and influential monarch** renowned for her diplomacy, charisma, and leadership during and after World War I. Granddaughter of Queen Victoria and Empress Maria Alexandrovna of Russia, she married Romania's Crown Prince Ferdinand and became Queen in 1914. Marie is historically important for **guiding Romania through World War I** – rallying troops as a wartime nurse-queen – and then representing her country brilliantly at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference where she helped secure Romania's expanded borders (Greater Romania). Admired for her intelligence and style, she was also a talented writer (her memoirs and novels captivated many) and a fashion trendsetter among European royals. In Romanian memory, she is affectionately called "Mama Regina" (Mother Queen) for her work to modernise hospitals, promote the arts, and bridge the gap between monarch and people. Essentially, Queen Marie is remembered as a **diplomat-queen and cultural icon**, the royal who gave a voice to her nation on the world stage.

Early Life and Background

Marie Alexandra Victoria was born on 29 October 1875 at Eastwell Park, England, to Prince Alfred (Duke of Edinburgh, second son of Queen Victoria) and Grand Duchess Maria Alexandrovna of Russia. Raised between English, Russian, and German courts, young "Missy" (as she was nicknamed) was spirited, wilful, and strikingly beautiful. She loved riding horses at breakneck speed and devoured romantic novels, foreshadowing her own adventurous life. At 17, Marie was married off to Crown Prince Ferdinand of Romania in 1893 – a politically advantageous match that whisked her to a then-remote Balkan kingdom. Initially, life in Bucharest's old-fashioned court was daunting; Marie found the manners stiff and the palace drafty. But she quickly won over both the Romanian people and her husband with her vivacity and genuine interest in their culture. She learned Romanian, dressed in national costumes at ceremonies, and traveled the countryside meeting peasants. This endeared her to ordinary Romanians who hadn't quite known what to make of this fairytale princess from Britain. By 1912, Crown Princess Marie had already become a beloved figure in Romania. She and Ferdinand had six children, securing the succession. Beyond producing heirs, Marie was not content to sit idle: she involved herself in charities (establishing the Princess's Council to coordinate relief for the poor) and took a keen interest in politics, something rare for consorts at the time. She forged close ties with influential Romanian statesmen and used her royal clout behind the scenes – for example, she mediated between feuding politicians to help form a stable government in 1912. This year also saw her publish her first book, *The Story of My Life*, in a magazine – revealing literary talents that would later flourish in published memoirs. At this point Marie was widely considered the glamorous face of Romania's monarchy: a granddaughter of



Victoria who brought a touch of modern royalty to the Carpathians, yet increasingly Romanian at heart, positioning herself as *the connector between Romania and the great powers*.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Queen Marie's legacy in Romania is profound. During World War I, when Romania joined the Allies in 1916, Marie worked tirelessly as a nurse – **dressing wounds, organizing field hospitals, and boosting troop morale** at the front. Her courage under bombardment and her appeals to the Allied leaders earned her legendary status. At the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919, Marie – fluent in English and French and a niece of Britain's king – unofficially but effectively lobbied for Romania's territorial claims. It was highly unusual for a woman, let alone a queen, to play a diplomatic role, but Marie's charm and steel succeeded: Romania gained Transylvania, Bukovina, and Bessarabia, almost doubling in size (Greater Romania). French Prime Minister Clemenceau quipped that meeting Marie was "Romania's secret weapon" at Versailles. Beyond politics, Marie left a cultural mark. She wrote dozens of books (memoirs, fairy tales, even a guide to Romanian folklore) that introduced Romanian culture to Western audiences. She also helped design the enchanting **Pelesh Castle** in Sinaia and the oriental-styled **Balchik Palace** by the Black Sea, imbuing Romanian royal residences with her personal aesthetic of East-meets-West. Her sense of style – mixing Edwardian elegance with Romanian motifs – made her a fashion icon featured in magazines. Crucially, Marie reshaped the Romanian monarchy into a more approachable, national institution: she would ride in open carriages waving to villagers, host "at home" days for the public, and send handwritten Christmas cards to schools. This endeared the monarchy to Romanians in a way that lasted generations. Even after her passing in 1938, many Romanians recalled her as "Mama Regina" who had stood by them in war and peace. Internationally, she remains one of the few royals of her era to be widely respected as a statesperson in her own right. Her statue stands in central Bucharest today, and her key role in creating modern Romania is taught in history classes. In summation, Queen Marie is remembered as **a unifying figure and a trailblazing royal diplomat**, emblematic of grace under pressure and devoted service to her adopted nation.

Achievements as per 1912

By the end of 1912, Crown Princess Marie had already chalked up numerous achievements in Romania. She had given birth to the heir (Prince Carol in 1893) and five other children, solidifying the dynasty. She had also established herself as a patron of Romanian arts and crafts – for instance, founding a guild to preserve traditional weaving and carpentry, which was crucial in an era of rapid modernization. In 1912 specifically, Marie took a bold step by attending military manoeuvres on horseback alongside King Carol I (her husband's uncle who was then reigning): her presence in field uniform stirred national pride and subtly signalled that the next queen would not be a mere figurehead. That year she also spearheaded a campaign to modernise nursing in Romania, inviting British medical experts to train Romanian nurses (an effort that bore fruit just in time for WWI). As a writer, Marie's personal notes and short stories were gaining recognition; in 1912 she anonymously published a collection of fairy tales inspired by Romanian folklore in a London journal, bridging her birth and adopted cultures. Perhaps one of her understated achievements by this time was mastering statecraft behind palace doors – she had learned how to



advise (and occasionally influence) her husband Ferdinand, who often relied on her intuition about which foreign alliances to nurture. (*The full flowering of her influence would come later during the war and peace talks, but even in 1912 politicians privately acknowledged that the Crown Princess "has the ear of His Royal Highness" on matters of national importance.*) Also notable is her rapport with the Romanian public: by 1912 she had undertaken multiple tours of Romanian provinces solo, something no princess had done before, endearing herself especially to women's groups whom she encouraged in roles like teaching and nursing. Thus, as of 1912 Marie had grown from a homesick British princess into **Romania's poised future queen**, respected for her charitable initiatives, political savvy, and the genuine rapport she built with her new people.

Elsa Maxwell

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** American
- **Profession:** Society Hostess and Gossip Columnist
- **Gender:** Female
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 29 years old (born 1883)
- **Age in Story:** 29 (same as real age in 1912)

Core Significance

Elsa Maxwell was a legendary high-society hostess and a pioneering gossip columnist, essentially the queen of parties in the early-to-mid 20th century. She is historically important for **reinventing elite entertainment**: Maxwell introduced playful innovations like treasure hunts, costume balls, and impromptu theatre games that transformed stuffy aristocratic gatherings into headline-grabbing fun. She had an uncanny talent for bringing people together – be it royalties, Hollywood stars, or business magnates – and for self-promotion. Later in life, through her newspaper columns and radio shows, Elsa became an arbiter of taste and an influential commentator on the rich and famous. In short, she carved out a unique role for herself as a facilitator of society's glitterati, making the art of party-hosting into a path to power and fame.

Early Life and Background

Elsa Maxwell was born on May 24, 1883, in Keokuk, Iowa, far from the glamorous cities she would later inhabit. Raised in modest circumstances, she had little formal education, but possessed a natural wit, a love of music, and an irrepressible social appetite. As a young woman with big dreams, Elsa moved to New York City and then Europe, initially finding work as a theatre pianist and a song composer. Her entrée into society came through sheer boldness: not being conventionally beautiful or well-born, she offered entertainment value. By the 1910s, she had begun staging small theatrical sketches and musical games at parties for the well-heeled. Her imagination and humour quickly won her friends in high places. Elsa also proved adept at networking – she befriended a sprawling array of people, from duchesses to dance band leaders,



using each connection to leapfrog into grander circles. By 1912, she was living in Europe (often in Paris or the Riviera during the season), sustaining herself by organising parties for wealthy patrons. These early years taught Elsa a key lesson: while she didn't have money or pedigree, she could trade in *curiosity and delight*. She became the person who could enliven any drawing room with a clever game, an impromptu song, or a bitingly funny anecdote. This set the stage for her later success as *the society hostess* everyone wanted to know.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Elsa Maxwell's legacy lies in the very fabric of celebrity culture and social entertaining. She was arguably one of the first modern "influencers," long before the term existed – using parties and media to shape trends. In an age when class distinctions were rigid, Elsa's parties broke down barriers by mixing nobles with creatives and even a few outsiders; this democratising touch in high society events was revolutionary. She is credited with popularising and even inventing several party staples: for example, the scavenger hunt (a game where guests raced through a city collecting odd items) was her brainchild, adding adventure to otherwise sedate evenings. Elsa's influence extended to hospitality norms; she counselled hosts to focus on guest enjoyment rather than formal display, advice that echoed through countless etiquette books. Moreover, her transition into journalism in the 1930s, writing a syndicated gossip column, helped spawn the era of celebrity reporting. Maxwell wasn't snarky in the modern sense – she often praised and promoted those she liked – but she did help create the notion that what happens at parties (who wore what, who flirted with whom) was newsworthy. In doing so, she paved the way for later gossip columnists and paparazzi culture. Another facet of her impact was the empowerment of women in social spheres; Elsa, a stout and plain woman, relied on her brains and humour to gain power, showing that a woman could wield significant social influence without marrying into it. Today, event planners look back at Elsa Maxwell as an almost mythical figure who turned party hosting into both an art and a pathway to social prominence. While not a household name to the general public now, in the mid-20th century her name was synonymous with fabulous soirées, and her innovations continue to echo in every well-orchestrated party or reality TV show centered on glamorous gatherings.

Achievements as per 1912

By 1912, Elsa Maxwell had begun to notch a reputation among Europe's elite as the **go-to organiser of diverting parties**. Though she hadn't yet achieved the international fame she would later enjoy, she had already pulled off some notable feats. For instance, in Venice that year, Elsa staged an extravagant masquerade ball for an Austrian count – it featured themed rooms (one made to look like a sultan's harem, another like an Arctic igloo) and a treasure hunt through the palazzo's gardens. The ball was the talk of the city's summer season and demonstrated Elsa's flair for theatrical spectacle. She had also started writing amusing little society tidbits for a Paris magazine under a pseudonym, her first foray into the world of print that would later embrace her. On the musical front, Maxwell had composed a few comic songs that were performed at cabarets in Paris and Monte Carlo, giving her a small footnote in the entertainment scene. Another achievement by this time was her knack for forging unlikely friendships – she'd befriended opera singer Enrico Caruso and persuaded him to sing spontaneously at a private dinner in London in



1912, to the awe of assembled aristocrats. Such coups made Elsa a sought-after guest and planner. It's worth noting that much of Elsa's success by 1912 was *intangible*: she had made herself indispensable in certain social circles. For example, the Duchess of X (one of those blue-blooded hostesses in Paris) would never dream of planning a party without consulting Elsa for ideas. That influence, albeit behind-the-scenes, was a significant achievement for a woman of her background. (*In reality, Elsa's major celebrity and her own radio show came later, but in our story she is already well on her way up the social ladder by 1912.*) All these accomplishments set the stage for Elsa Maxwell's evolution from a clever party girl into the "Hostess with the Mostest" – by 1912, she had proven her ability to transform any gathering into an unforgettable experience, a service that the rich and powerful were increasingly eager to employ.

Wallis Simpson

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** American (later British by marriage)
- **Profession:** Socialite (Duchess of Windsor)
- **Gender:** Female
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 16 years old (born 19 June 1896)
- **Age in Story:** ~20 (portrayed slightly older to fit the 1912 setting)

Core Significance

Wallis Simpson is best known as the woman for whom King Edward VIII abdicated the British throne in 1936, triggering a constitutional crisis. An American divorcée with two ex-husbands, Wallis's romance with Edward challenged Britain's rigid social and moral norms and led to the first voluntary abdication in British history. Her life symbolizes the tension between personal happiness and public duty. To some, Wallis was a conniving social climber; to others, she represented love conquering tradition. Either way, she has gone down in history as a **figure of scandal and intrigue**, the catalyst for a royal drama that altered the course of the monarchy.

Early Life and Background

Wallis was born Bessie Wallis Warfield on 19 June 1896 in Blue Ridge Summit, Pennsylvania, into an old but financially modest Southern family. Her father died shortly after her birth, leaving Wallis and her mother reliant on wealthy relatives. Raised in Baltimore, Wallis attended Oldfields School, an elite girls' academy, where she developed immaculate social graces and a steely determination to secure her place in high society. In 1916, at age 20, she married Earl Winfield Spencer Jr., a U.S. Navy aviator. The marriage was troubled by Spencer's heavy drinking and long absences at sea, and Wallis became adept at navigating social circles on her own. They divorced in 1927. A year later, Wallis married again – this time Ernest Simpson, a British-American shipping executive – and moved to London in 1929. In London, Wallis thrived: her wit, fashion sense, and bold personality made her a sought-after hostess. By 1912 in our fictional timeline, Wallis is depicted as already a



polished young socialite turning heads in Washington and New York's society salons, laying the groundwork for the adept social navigation that would later define her.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Wallis Simpson's legacy is inextricably linked to the British monarchy's evolution in the 20th century. Her relationship with Edward VIII forced the royal family and government to confront the clash between tradition and modern values. The abdication of Edward (who became the Duke of Windsor) so he could marry Wallis paved the way for George VI (and ultimately Elizabeth II) to ascend the throne. In that sense, Wallis altered the line of succession and inadvertently reshaped modern British history. Public opinion on her was and remains divided: during her life, many Britons vilified her as the woman who "led a king astray," while others quietly admired the depth of Edward's devotion to her. Culturally, Wallis has been portrayed in innumerable books, films, and series, always with an air of glamour and controversy. She's often cited as a style icon – her sophisticated fashion (indeed, she was a known client of Chanel) and penchant for luxury set trends. Even her later years in exile, mingling with the international café society, reinforced her image as the ultimate socialite who bent a kingdom to her will. In sum, **Wallis remains a mesmerizing symbol of love over duty and the changing mores of royalty**, ensuring her story is continually revisited and debated in historical discourse.

Achievements as per 1912

By the end of 1912, Wallis Warfield (as she was then) had no public achievements in the conventional sense – she was a teenager from a genteel but not prominent family. However, she had successfully cultivated the skills and connections that would later define her. At 16, Wallis's "achievements" were social: she was known in Baltimore for her impeccable manners, vivacity, and knack for making influential friends. These traits secured her a place at Oldfields School (graduating in 1914) and the patronage of rich relatives for travels and social seasons. In our story's slight aging of her, by 1912 Wallis might be imagined as a young lady-in-waiting in Washington, D.C. or New York, making a name for herself as a witty and polished presence at parties. (*Her truly consequential impact – ensnaring a king and provoking an abdication – would come two decades later. As of 1912, any "achievements" were laying societal groundwork for her future ascent.*)

Max Planck

Basic Details

Nationality: German

Profession: Theoretical Physicist

Gender: Male

Age on 25 December 1912: 54 years old (born 23 April 1858)

Core Significance

Max Planck is celebrated as the **founder of quantum theory**, one of the most influential scientific revolutions of the 20th century. His work on black-body radiation and the introduction of the



quantum hypothesis fundamentally changed our understanding of physics, laying the groundwork for later giants such as Einstein, Bohr, and Heisenberg. Planck's name is immortalised in the "Planck constant" and the system of "Planck units" that define the very fabric of the universe. He is revered for his intellectual rigour, integrity, and his role as a guiding figure in the German scientific community.

Early Life and Background

Born in Kiel, Germany, Max Planck was the son of a law professor and grew up in an academic household. He excelled in music and mathematics from a young age, but ultimately chose to pursue physics at the University of Munich and later Berlin, where he studied under some of the leading scientists of the era. Planck's early research focused on thermodynamics and the nature of energy, but it was his curiosity about the mysteries of heat radiation that would define his legacy. By the late 1890s, Planck was a professor at the University of Berlin, respected for his methodical approach and philosophical depth.

Achievements as per 1912

By the end of 1912, Max Planck had already achieved international renown. In 1900, he introduced the revolutionary idea that energy is emitted in discrete "quanta," not as a continuous flow—a concept that solved the black-body radiation problem and gave birth to quantum theory. His formulation of the "Planck constant" became a cornerstone of modern physics. Planck's work was widely recognised across Europe, and he was a leading member of the Prussian Academy of Sciences. He had published influential papers on thermodynamics, entropy, and the statistical nature of physical laws, and was a mentor to a new generation of physicists, including Albert Einstein. Although the full impact of quantum theory was still unfolding, Planck's reputation as a pioneer and thought leader was firmly established.

Motive

Background:

By Christmas 1913, Max Planck is at the height of his scientific fame, but his private life is shadowed by tragedy. His eldest son, Karl, recently died under mysterious circumstances. The official story is that Karl was killed in a university accident, but whispers in Berlin suggest something more sinister—a possible connection to espionage and the theft of scientific secrets.

The Secret:

Unknown to most, Planck's son had been corresponding with a foreign agent, lured by promises of adventure and ideology. These letters, which Baz Rutherford has somehow acquired, hint that Karl was passing on details of Planck's quantum research—work that, in the tense pre-war climate, could have immense military value. Planck, devastated by his son's death, has always feared that his own pioneering discoveries may have played a role in the tragedy.



Baz's Leverage:

Baz, ever the manipulator, approaches Planck with a chilling proposition: powerful foreign interests want early access to Planck's latest findings. If Planck refuses, Baz will deliver the incriminating letters to the authorities, ensuring that the Planck family name is forever tainted by scandal and suspicion of treason. In 1913 Germany, with war clouds gathering, such an accusation could destroy Planck's career, his remaining family, and even his freedom.

The Blackmail:

Baz's threats are relentless. He hints that he can "protect" Planck's reputation and family—if Planck agrees to share confidential research notes and experimental results. The pressure is immense: Planck is a man of principle, but the risk to his family and legacy is unbearable.

Planck's Dilemma:

Haunted by grief and guilt, Planck is pushed to the brink. He knows that Baz's demands, if met, could tip the balance of power in Europe and unleash horrors he cannot imagine. But if he refuses, he risks losing everything he holds dear. Planck realises that the only way to protect his family, his reputation, and perhaps even the fate of nations, may be to silence Baz—forever.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk



Mustafa Kemal Atatürk – Character Profile

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** Turkish
- **Profession/Role:** Soldier, Statesman (Founder and First President of the Republic of Turkey)
- **Age in Story (1912):** 31 (born 1881)
- **Historical Significance:**
Mustafa Kemal Atatürk is revered as the architect of modern Turkey. After the Ottoman Empire's collapse, he led the Turkish National Movement, defeating occupying forces and abolishing the Sultanate. In 1923, he founded the Republic of Turkey and became its first



president. His reforms were sweeping: secularisation, adoption of the Latin alphabet, modern legal codes, women's rights, and compulsory education. These changes transformed Turkey into a progressive, secular nation-state. His ideology, **Kemalism**, enshrined principles of nationalism, republicanism, secularism, and modernization.

[\[en.wikipedia.org\]](https://en.wikipedia.org), [\[britannica.com\]](https://britannica.com), [\[worldhistoryedu.com\]](https://worldhistoryedu.com)

Early Life & Military Career:

Born in Salonica (now Thessaloniki, Greece), Atatürk excelled in military schools and graduated as an officer in 1905. He fought in the Italo-Turkish War (Libya) and Balkan Wars, gaining recognition for his tactical brilliance. By 1912, he was a rising star in the Ottoman army, known for discipline, intellect, and reformist ideals. [\[ktb.gov.tr\]](https://ktb.gov.tr), [\[history.com\]](https://history.com)

Personality & Leadership Style:

Atatürk was visionary, pragmatic, and fiercely determined. He combined military genius with political acumen, inspiring followers through transformational leadership. Traits: decisive, adaptable, reformist, and achievement-oriented. He valued honour and integrity above all.

[\[ataturksociety.org\]](https://ataturksociety.org), [\[dergipark.org.tr\]](https://dergipark.org.tr)

Motive

“The Ottoman Betrayal”

Backdrop:

In 1912, the Ottoman Empire teeters on collapse. Mustafa Kemal, a brilliant officer, is fighting to preserve its dignity amid Balkan turmoil. Enter Baz—a flamboyant foreign opportunist who infiltrates Istanbul's elite, posing as a “strategic consultant” to the Ottoman General Staff.

The Crime That Sparks the Motive:

Baz sells **forged military plans** to Kemal, claiming they are vital intelligence for troop movements. Kemal, trusting the documents, nearly deploys forces into a death trap. Though disaster is narrowly averted, the humiliation is public and personal. Worse, Baz profits by leaking Ottoman weaknesses to rival powers—an act Kemal views as treason.

Why Kemal Wants Baz Dead:

- **National Honour:** For Kemal, honour is sacred. Baz's deceit endangered Ottoman soldiers and tarnished Kemal's reputation as a rising commander.
- **Patriotic Duty:** Kemal believes Baz's schemes could cripple Turkey's future independence. Eliminating Baz is not vengeance alone—it's “moral defence” of his homeland.
- **Personal Pride:** Kemal prides himself on strategic brilliance; being duped by a charlatan stings deeply. In his code, betrayal demands justice.

One-Line Motive:

“He didn't just cheat me—he tried to bleed my country for profit.”



Chief Albert Luthuli



Basic Details

Nationality: South African (Zulu)

Profession: Teacher, Community Leader, (Future) Chief

Gender: Male

Age on 25 December 1912: 14 years old (born 1898)

Age in Story: ~30 (portrayed as an adult for dramatic purposes)

Core Significance

Chief Albert Luthuli is revered as a visionary leader and moral compass for his people. Born into a respected Zulu family, he is known for his intellect, compassion, and commitment to justice.

Luthuli's early work as a teacher and community organiser has already earned him a reputation as a bridge between African tradition and modern education. He is a rising advocate for African rights, determined to uplift his people through peaceful resistance, education, and principled leadership.

Early Life and Background

Raised in the rural Groutville Mission Reserve in Natal, Luthuli was educated at mission schools and quickly distinguished himself as a scholar and teacher. He returned to his home community to teach, believing that education was the key to progress and dignity for Africans under colonial rule. Luthuli's deep Christian faith and Zulu heritage shaped his philosophy of non-violence, humility, and service. By 1913 (in your story's timeline), he is already a respected voice in local affairs, known for mediating disputes and advocating for fair treatment of his people.

Achievements as per 1912

By this time, Luthuli has established a school in his home district, mentored dozens of young men and women, and begun to speak out against the injustices of land dispossession and discriminatory laws. He is seen as a future chief and a natural leader, admired for his integrity and ability to unite people across divides. His efforts to promote literacy and self-reliance have made him a beacon of hope in a time of growing hardship for black South Africans.

How He Met Baz

Luthuli first encountered Sebastian "Baz" Rutherford in Durban in 1911, when Baz attended a public meeting on African education. Baz, posing as a philanthropist, offered to fund Luthuli's school and provide scholarships for promising pupils. Grateful but cautious, Luthuli accepted



Baz's support, only to discover months later that Baz had used the school's name to solicit donations for himself and had diverted much of the money. Worse, Baz's actions attracted the suspicion of colonial authorities, putting Luthuli's work and reputation at risk. The betrayal left Luthuli determined never to trust outsiders blindly again.

Motive

Chief Luthuli's motive for wanting Baz dead is rooted in betrayal and the defence of his community. Baz's deception not only robbed the school of much-needed resources but also endangered the future of countless children and threatened to destroy Luthuli's standing as a leader. For Luthuli, Baz represents the worst kind of colonial exploitation—one that cloaks greed in the language of charity. Killing Baz would be an act of justice, a way to protect his people from further harm, and a warning to others who would prey on the vulnerable. Though Luthuli is a man of peace, the depth of Baz's betrayal could drive him to contemplate desperate measures for the greater good.

Sigmund Freud

Basic Details

Nationality: Austrian

Profession: Neurologist, Psychoanalyst, Writer

Gender: Male

Age on 25 December 1912: 56 years old (born 6 May 1856)

Core Significance

Sigmund Freud is renowned as the founder of psychoanalysis, a revolutionary approach to understanding the human mind and behaviour. His theories on the unconscious, dreams, sexuality, and the structure of personality (id, ego, superego) have profoundly influenced psychology, literature, and the arts. By 1912, Freud was already a controversial and celebrated figure, challenging Victorian taboos and reshaping how society viewed mental health, childhood, and desire. His work sparked both admiration and fierce debate, making him one of the most influential—and polarising—thinkers of the 20th century.

Early Life and Background

Born in Freiberg, Moravia (now the Czech Republic), Freud moved to Vienna as a child, where he excelled academically and pursued medicine at the University of Vienna. Initially specialising in neurology, Freud's curiosity about the mind led him to study hysteria and hypnosis in Paris under Jean-Martin Charcot. Returning to Vienna, he developed the "talking cure" with Josef Breuer and began formulating his own theories about the unconscious, repression, and the significance of dreams. Freud's Jewish heritage and outsider status in Vienna's conservative society sharpened his critical perspective and determination to challenge established norms.

Achievements as per 1912

By the end of 1912, Freud had published several landmark works, including *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905), and *Totem and Taboo* (1913). He



had founded the Wednesday Psychological Society (the precursor to the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society) and attracted a circle of devoted followers, including Carl Jung and Alfred Adler (though both would soon break away). Freud's ideas about the Oedipus complex, dream symbolism, and the role of sexuality in human development were already causing a stir in academic and popular circles. In 1912, he was at the height of his intellectual powers, expanding psychoanalysis internationally and weathering the first major schisms within his movement.

How He Met Baz

Freud first encountered Sebastian "Baz" Rutherford in Vienna in the spring of 1912, when Baz arrived under the guise of a wealthy English patron fascinated by the new science of psychoanalysis. Baz attended several of Freud's public lectures and, claiming to suffer from recurring nightmares, requested a private consultation. Intrigued by Baz's cosmopolitan background and unusual dream material, Freud agreed. Over a series of sessions, Baz revealed a tangled web of secrets, traumas, and confessions—some so sensational that Freud considered using them (with anonymity preserved) as case studies in his next book. Baz, however, had ulterior motives: he secretly recorded their sessions and, after gaining Freud's trust, began to blackmail him—threatening to expose the most scandalous details to the Viennese press and Freud's professional rivals unless paid handsomely. The threat of public disgrace and the destruction of his life's work loomed over Freud, who realised too late that he had become the subject, not the analyst, in Baz's most dangerous game.

Motive

Freud's motive for wanting Baz dead is a potent blend of personal and existential desperation. Baz's blackmail threatens not only Freud's reputation and career but also the very foundations of psychoanalysis itself. If Baz were to publish the lurid details of their sessions, Freud would face public humiliation, the collapse of his professional standing, and the ruin of his family. Worse, the scandal would be weaponised by his many critics to discredit psychoanalysis as a whole, undoing decades of pioneering work and silencing the movement's fragile progress. For Freud, Baz is not merely a personal enemy—he is an existential threat to science, truth, and the possibility of understanding the human mind. In a moment of crisis, Freud contemplates the unthinkable: to protect his legacy, his family, and the future of psychoanalysis, Baz Rutherford must be silenced—permanently.

Princesa Isabel

Basic Details

Nationality: Brazilian

Profession: Princess Imperial of Brazil, Abolitionist, Regent

Gender: Female

Age on 25 December 1912: 66 years old (born 29 July 1846)

Core Significance

Princesa Isabel is celebrated as the "Redeemer of Brazil" for her pivotal role in abolishing slavery in the Brazilian Empire. As heir to the throne and regent during her father's absences, she signed the



Lei Áurea (Golden Law) in 1888, which ended centuries of slavery in Brazil. Her progressive stance on human rights and her willingness to challenge powerful landowners made her a symbol of both compassion and controversy. Though her actions cost her the throne—Brazil became a republic the following year—her legacy as a champion of freedom and social justice endures.

Early Life and Background

Born Isabel Cristina Leopoldina Augusta Micaela Gabriela Rafaela Gonzaga, she was the eldest daughter of Emperor Dom Pedro II and Empress Teresa Cristina. Raised in the imperial court of Rio de Janeiro, Isabel received a rigorous education, with a particular emphasis on languages, philosophy, and the sciences. From a young age, she was exposed to the debates over slavery and reform that shaped Brazil's 19th-century politics. Her marriage to Gaston d'Orléans, Count of Eu, strengthened her ties to European royalty, but Isabel remained deeply committed to her homeland and its people.

Achievements as per 1912

By 1912, Princesa Isabel was living in exile in France, following the abolition of the monarchy in 1889. Nevertheless, her achievements continued to resonate across the Atlantic. Most notably, she had served as regent of Brazil three times, during which she enacted progressive reforms and, in 1888, signed the Golden Law, freeing nearly 700,000 enslaved people. Her courage in defying the powerful plantation class and her advocacy for education and charitable works earned her admiration among abolitionists worldwide. In exile, she remained a respected figure in both Brazilian and European circles, quietly supporting philanthropic causes and maintaining correspondence with reformers and former allies.

How She Met Baz

Princesa Isabel's path crossed with Sebastian "Baz" Rutherford in Paris in 1905, at a charity gala for exiled royals and social reformers. Baz, ever the opportunist, ingratiated himself with the Brazilian princess by proposing a scheme to raise funds for former slaves in Brazil—offering to broker the sale of rare Brazilian gems to wealthy collectors. Isabel, moved by his apparent philanthropy, entrusted Baz with several heirloom jewels and letters of introduction. Months later, she discovered that Baz had sold the gems for personal profit and used her name to gain access to elite circles, leaving her reputation tarnished and her trust betrayed.

Motive

Princesa Isabel's motive for wanting Baz dead is rooted in both personal betrayal and a sense of justice. Baz's actions not only cost her precious family heirlooms but also undermined her efforts to support Brazil's freed people and damaged her standing among fellow exiles. For Isabel, Baz represents the worst kind of opportunist—one who preys on the vulnerable and manipulates noble causes for selfish gain. Eliminating him would be an act of retribution and a way to protect others from his schemes. Though not naturally vengeful, Isabel's sense of duty to her legacy and her people could drive her to desperate measures if she believed it was the only way to prevent further harm.



Yamakawa Kikue

Basic Details

Nationality: Japanese

Profession: Feminist Activist, Writer, Sociologist

Gender: Female

Age on 25 December 1912: 22 years old (born 3 November 1890)

Core Significance

Yamakawa Kikue stands as a pioneering figure in the early Japanese feminist and socialist movements. Renowned for her fearless advocacy of women's rights and social equality, she was among the first in Japan to publicly challenge both patriarchal norms and class oppression. Kikue's writings and activism laid the groundwork for later generations of Japanese feminists, and her intellectual contributions—especially her critiques of marriage, family, and labour—remain influential in the history of women's liberation in East Asia.

Early Life and Background

Born into a progressive samurai family in Tokyo, Kikue was encouraged to pursue education from a young age. She attended Japan Women's University, where she excelled in literature and social sciences, and quickly became involved in student circles advocating for women's education and suffrage. Influenced by both Western feminist thought and the growing socialist movement in Japan, Kikue began publishing essays that questioned the status quo, arguing for the emancipation of women not only from traditional gender roles but also from economic exploitation. By her early twenties, she was already recognised as a sharp critic of both government policy and social convention.

Achievements as per 1912

By the end of 1912, Yamakawa Kikue had already made her mark as a rising intellectual and activist. She contributed articles to progressive journals, participated in study groups on socialism and women's rights, and was a founding member of several women's organisations in Tokyo. Her early essays, such as those on the "double burden" faced by working women, were circulated among reform-minded circles and sparked debate in academic and political salons. While her most famous works and activism would come later, by 1912 Kikue was already a recognised voice for change—one of the few Japanese women publicly advocating for both gender and class equality.

How She Met Baz

Kikue's encounter with Sebastian "Baz" Rutherford occurred in Yokohama in the spring of 1912. Baz, ever the cosmopolitan opportunist, attended a lecture Kikue gave on women's rights, hoping to recruit her as a translator and cultural advisor for a planned expedition across Asia. Flattered by his apparent interest in Japanese reform, Kikue agreed to assist him in navigating Tokyo's intellectual circles. However, she soon discovered that Baz's true intent was to exploit her connections for personal gain—using her introductions to solicit investments and favours under false pretences. When Kikue confronted him, Baz dismissed her concerns and spread rumours that



damaged her reputation among conservative academics. The betrayal left Kikue wary of foreign adventurers and determined to expose Baz's duplicity.

Relationship to Baz

Initially, Kikue regarded Baz as a potential ally in her efforts to build international solidarity for women's rights. She was intrigued by his stories and his apparent support for progressive causes. However, after his deception came to light, her attitude shifted to one of cold resolve. At the dinner, Kikue treats Baz with formal politeness but makes no secret of her distrust. She warns other guests—especially those sympathetic to reform—not to be taken in by his charm. In private, she is quietly gathering evidence of his misdeeds, intent on protecting her allies from similar exploitation.

Motive

Yamakawa Kikue's motive for wanting Baz dead is rooted in both personal and political betrayal. Baz's actions not only threatened her reputation and safety but also undermined the fragile networks of trust among reformers in Japan. She sees his behaviour as emblematic of the broader forces—colonial, patriarchal, and capitalist—that oppress women and the working class. For Kikue, eliminating Baz would be an act of justice: a way to protect her movement, avenge her own humiliation, and send a message that those who exploit the vulnerable will not go unpunished. Though not naturally violent, Kikue's sense of duty to her cause could drive her to desperate measures if she believed it was the only way to safeguard her comrades and her mission.

Bonnie Parker

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** American
- **Profession:** Outlaw (Gangster)
- **Gender:** Female
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 2 years old (born 1910)¹ (Bonnie was a toddler in reality)
- **Age in Story:** ~21 (portrayed as an adult to fit the 1912 setting)

Core Significance

Bonnie Parker became an iconic **outlaw of the Great Depression era**, famously one half of the “Bonnie and Clyde” duo². Her life of crime – robbing banks and evading law enforcement – turned her into a media sensation and a symbol of rebellious glamour in hard times³.

She remains a **legendary figure** in American folklore, representing defiance against authority and the allure of the outlaw lifestyle.

Early Life and Background



Bonnie was born on 1 October 1910 in Rowena, Texas. After her father's death in 1914, her widowed mother moved the family to Dallas, where they struggled financially. A bright student, Bonnie enjoyed writing poetry and dreamed of adventure beyond her impoverished neighborhood. Restless and headstrong, she married her high school sweetheart at 16, but the marriage quickly fell apart. By the late 1920s, back living with her mother, Bonnie worked as a waitress and yearned for excitement. This mundane life amidst the economic despair of the early Depression set the stage for her fateful meeting with Clyde Barrow in 1930, which would propel her into a world of crime.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Though her life was cut short in 1934, Bonnie Parker's **legacy looms large** in American popular culture. Alongside Clyde, she became a folk hero of sorts during the darkest years of the Depression. The public was both horrified and captivated by the image of a petite young woman who could shoot guns and taunt the police. Their story has been immortalised in songs, books, and the famous 1967 film "*Bonnie and Clyde*," which cemented Bonnie's image as a glamorous rebel. Bonnie's legacy highlights the societal fascination with outlaw figures and the fine line between notoriety and fame. She remains an emblem of the "live fast, die young" ethos – a cautionary yet romanticised figure whose enduring myth obscures the violent reality of her crimes.

Achievements as per 1912

By the end of 1912, the **real Bonnie Parker was only a toddler** with her whole life ahead of her – she had no achievements to speak of at that tender age. (*In the fictional 1912 scenario, Bonnie is depicted as an adult outlaw. By this date in the story's timeline, she would have already fallen in with criminal elements and perhaps committed minor thefts. These early forays into crime serve as the foundation for the infamous bank-robbing spree she would undertake with Clyde in later years. In truth, Bonnie's notoriety came in the early 1930s; the story accelerates her timeline for dramatic effect.*)

How They Met Baz

Bonnie's encounter with Sebastian "Baz" Rutherford came in mid-1911 in Paris – far from her Texas home. On the run from a botched robbery in the States, Bonnie had impulsively boarded a ship to Europe under an alias. In Paris, she crossed paths with Baz at the **Moulin Rouge cabaret**. Baz, ever drawn to risk and intrigue, was captivated by the Texan girl's blend of charm and grit. He lured Bonnie with promises of a lucrative heist: the two agreed to steal the proceeds of the cabaret's cash office late one night. Bonnie, thrilled by the prospect and by Baz's suave confidence, went along as his accomplice. During the actual robbery, however, things went awry – an alarm tripped or a guard appeared – and **Baz used Bonnie as a decoy**, shoving the bag of stolen cash into her arms and slipping away in the confusion. Bonnie was caught by French police holding the money and spent a brief stint in custody until authorities, lacking evidence of her intent, deported her back to the U.S. in disgrace. In short, Bonnie met Baz as a partner in crime, but he left her **holding the bag** (literally) at the moment of danger.



Relationship to Baz

What began as a flirtatious partnership quickly curdled into betrayal. Initially, Bonnie was dazzled by Baz's worldliness and saw him as a kindred spirit – an outlaw aristocrat who could teach her the tricks of high-stakes crime. During their planning and stolen moments in Paris, she even developed a crush on him. But Baz's treachery at the Moulin Rouge – using her as a fall guy – imbued Bonnie with a bitter sense of humiliation and anger. By the time of Baz's safari dinner in December 1912, Bonnie's feelings toward him are openly hostile. She is not one for polite pretence: if she speaks to Baz at all, it's with thinly veiled contempt. Baz, for his part, regards Bonnie as a minor nuisance he once exploited and perhaps is wary that she might seek payback

Motive

Bonnie Parker has a powerful **personal motive for wanting Baz dead: revenge**. He not only ruined her first major heist, but also nearly cost her freedom. After Baz's betrayal, Bonnie was arrested – a devastating setback that she narrowly escaped by luck. She believes that Baz deliberately sacrificed her to save his own skin. Killing him would be the ultimate payback, restoring her pride and sending a message that she is **nobody's pawn**. Additionally, Bonnie has a practical reason: she fears Baz might one day resurface in her life to exploit or betray her again. He knows enough about her (including her real identity despite her alias) to jeopardise her safety if he chose to inform American authorities. Eliminating him would permanently remove that threat. Finally, Bonnie's outlaw code cannot let such a betrayal go unanswered – in her world, failing to retaliate would mark her as weak. Baz's murder, as she sees it, would be **justice served cold**. Ever since that night in Paris, she's fantasised about putting a bullet in Baz. Now, at this strange dinner in the African bush, Bonnie senses an opportunity. She would gladly be the one to end Baz Rutherford's life – avenging his double-cross and ensuring he never harms her or anyone else again.

Bonnie Parker has an even sharper, cash-on-the-table reason to want Sebastian "Baz" Rutherford dead: **the diamonds**. On the night of 14 July 1911 at the Moulin Rouge in Paris, Baz seduced Bonnie into a botched **jewellery heist** and then vanished, leaving her to face the police while **keeping a hessian pouch of loose stones** the two had lifted together. Since then, Bonnie has learned Baz didn't fence all of them—he **stashed a private cache** for future leverage and profit. Killing him would let her steal back the very diamonds they stole together, settle the score, and erase the last witness who can tie her to the Paris job.

Coco Chanel

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** French
- **Profession:** Fashion Designer
- **Gender:** Female



- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 29 years old (born 19 August 1883)
- **Age in Story:** 29 (same as real age in 1912)

Core Significance

Gabrielle “Coco” Chanel is **one of the most influential fashion designers in history.**

She revolutionized women’s fashion in the early 20th century by liberating women from corsets and introducing sporty, elegant styles that prioritized comfort – from the casual jersey dress to the iconic “little black dress”. Chanel built a global luxury brand and became a rare female titan in a male-dominated industry. Beyond fashion, her independent, entrepreneurial life and controversial wartime choices added to her mystique. She is remembered as a **pioneer of modern style and female entrepreneurship**, whose contributions permanently reshaped how women dress.

Early Life and Background

Coco Chanel was born on 19 August 1883 in Saumur, France. She endured a difficult childhood; after her mother died when Coco was 12, she spent her adolescence in a convent orphanage, where nuns taught her to sew. This austere upbringing instilled in her a disdain for excess and a taste for minimalist style. In her early twenties, Chanel worked as a shop assistant and tried her hand as a cabaret singer (singing a tune about a lost dog named “Coco,” from which she likely got her nickname). Ambitious and shrewd, she became the mistress of wealthy ex-cavalry officer Étienne Balsan, who introduced her to high society. With Balsan’s support – and later that of businessman Arthur “Boy” Capel – Coco opened a boutique millinery (hat shop) in Paris in 1910. By 1912, she had expanded into clothing, creating simple jersey dresses that shocked Paris by their lack of frills and corsetry. These early years show Coco’s resourcefulness and keen eye: from orphanage needlework to dressing the elites of Paris, she was already forging a new path with her unfussy, elegant designs.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Chanel’s legacy in fashion is monumental. She essentially defined modern women’s style: by rejecting the corseted silhouette, she ushered in the era of casual chic and made garments like trousers and knitwear acceptable for women. The house of Chanel introduced enduring staples – Chanel No.5 (the world’s best-known perfume), the tweed suit, two-tone spectator shoes – that remain synonymous with timeless elegance. She also demonstrated that a woman could run and own a major business, carving a path for female entrepreneurs. However, her legacy has complexities: during World War II she was criticized for fraternizing with the Nazi occupiers in Paris, a chapter that tarnished her reputation for a time. Yet Chanel managed a triumphant comeback in the 1950s, further cementing her influence. Today, her brand lives on as one of the most prestigious in the world, and her personal story inspires countless biographies and films. Coco Chanel is enshrined as a **symbol of enduring innovation, sophistication, and unapologetic femininity.**

Achievements as per 1912



By late 1912, Coco Chanel had already notched impressive milestones on her way to revolutionizing fashion. She had established **her own boutique in Paris (opened 1910)** and was gaining a reputation for her novel approach to women's wear. That year her simple, elegantly cut dresses made of jersey (a fabric then used mostly for men's underwear) were catching on among forward-thinking Parisian ladies – a daring achievement considering the era's love of ornate gowns. She was also a successful milliner; society women flocked to Chanel for hats that were free of the huge plumes and ornaments typical of the time. In short, by 1912 Coco Chanel was **a rising star in haute couture**, known for designs that were—and still are—considered the epitome of chic. (*Her greatest fame lay ahead; the signature Chanel suit and little black dress were creations of the 1920s. But in 1912, she had firmly planted the seeds of the style revolution she would lead.*)

How They Met Baz

Coco Chanel first crossed paths with Baz Rutherford in March 1912 at the bar of the Ritz Hotel in Paris – an elegant watering hole for the city's rich and titled. Baz, always on the lookout for lucrative angles, had learned that Chanel was seeking exotic materials for her designs (specifically, a shipment of rare ivory for handbag inlays). He presented himself as a man with **African connections** capable of sourcing the finest ivory. Intrigued by this well-spoken Englishman and keen to acquire unique materials, Coco agreed to do business. Over a series of meetings in her boutique's salon, Baz charmed Chanel with tales of elephant hunts in Mozambique and colonial trading posts, convincing her that he could obtain ethically sourced, superior ivory at a good price. Chanel, known for her astute judgement, was nonetheless taken in – Baz had the patina of upper-class credibility and even produced a sample tusk that passed her scrutiny. They struck a deal: Coco advanced him a considerable sum for a shipment of ivory to be delivered by summer. Baz spent the following weeks in Paris enjoying Chanel's hospitality (and fine champagne), ingratiating himself with her high-society friends. Only later would Chanel discover that Baz's scheme was a *ruse*: there was no ivory connection, and the sample tusk had been fraudulently obtained. In essence, **Baz met Coco as a con-man in gentleman's clothing**, engaging her in what she thought was a savvy business venture.

Relationship to Baz

Initially, Coco's relationship with Baz was purely professional, underscored by mutual flattery and respect. She found him cultured and useful; he flattered her vision and hailed her as the future of fashion. They dined together at least once at Maxim's, where Baz picked up the tab in a show of good faith. Chanel treated Baz cordially, even confiding some of her business expansion plans to him. However, once Baz disappeared – and the truth of his "ivory deal" came to light – Coco's stance hardened dramatically. By the time of Baz's dinner, she regards him with icy detachment. Chanel is not one to display rage openly; instead, she deploys **cutting civility**.

Motive

Coco Chanel's motive for wanting Baz dead centers on **revenge and protecting her business reputation**. In April 1912, Baz not only swindled her out of a hefty sum of money but also sabotaged a critical materials shipment. Because of him, her atelier had to delay a new line of



handbags – an embarrassment for a burgeoning designer. Chanel is a proud woman; Baz made a fool of her in front of her staff and investors. Eliminating him would be a form of **restoring her honor**. Furthermore, Coco knows that if word got out that she was conned, it could undermine clients' confidence in her acumen. Baz alive is a liability; he might even brag about duping “the great Mademoiselle Chanel.” From a practical standpoint, Chanel would certainly like to recover the funds he stole, and in the absence of legal means (taking a conman to court could cause scandal), she might consider *extra-legal* means. Poison, perhaps – she’s heard of exotic undetectable toxins from her friend Misia’s Russian contacts. Additionally, there’s a streak of righteous anger in her: Baz’s scheme wasn’t just a personal slight, it hurt her employees and suppliers down the chain who depended on that project. In Chanel’s calculation, **removing Baz is both retribution and a surgical removal of risk** to her empire.

Agatha Christie

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** British
- **Profession:** Novelist (Mystery Writer)
- **Gender:** Female
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 22 years old (born 15 September 1890)
- **Age in Story:** 22 (same as real age in 1912)

Core Significance

Dame Agatha Christie is **the world’s best-selling mystery writer**, creator of beloved detectives Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple. Author of 66 detective novels including classics like “*Murder on the Orient Express*” and “*And Then There Were None*”, she essentially defined the whodunit genre. Her ingenious plots and twist endings have sold billions of copies, making her arguably the most famous crime novelist in history. Beyond her writing, Agatha’s own life had moments of intrigue (she famously disappeared for 11 days in 1926, sparking a nationwide manhunt). She is revered as the **“Queen of Crime”**, whose literary legacy towers over 20th-century popular fiction.

Early Life and Background

Agatha Mary Clarissa Miller was born into a comfortable upper-middle-class family in Torquay, England. Home-educated by her mother, young Agatha was an imaginative child who taught herself to read at five and devoured detective stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. During World War I, in her early 20s, Agatha worked as a nurse and later as a pharmacy dispenser, which gave her useful knowledge of poisons (a detail that later spiced her novels’ murder methods). In 1914 she married Colonel Archibald Christie, a dashing RAF pilot, and took his surname. By 1912, Agatha had begun



dabbling in writing short detective stories for her own amusement, encouraged by her sister's challenge to craft a mystery where the reader wouldn't guess the culprit. She had also been honing her puzzle-solving mind by working in the hospital dispensary amid the chaos of the Great War. At our 1912 moment, Agatha is an unknown but keen young woman in Torquay, perhaps already sketching out ideas that would become her first novel "*The Mysterious Affair at Styles*" (which she would complete a few years later). These formative experiences – war work, a stable Victorian upbringing, and literary ambition – laid the groundwork for her future success.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Agatha Christie's legacy in literature is colossal. She is the **best-selling novelist of all time**, outsold only by Shakespeare and the Bible. Her works have been translated into 100+ languages. She established many of the tropes of the mystery genre: the closed-circle of suspects, the red herring plot device, the final reveal gathering. Generations of writers have been influenced by her clever plotting and suspense techniques. Moreover, her characters – Poirot with his "little grey cells" and Marple with her village insights – are cultural icons, continually adapted for stage and screen. "*The Mousetrap*", a play she wrote, is the longest-running play in history in London's West End. Beyond literature, Agatha's personal mystique (especially the real-life disappearance, which remains partially unexplained) has kept public fascination alive. She was honoured as a Dame of the British Empire in 1971 for her contributions. Today, Agatha Christie is not just a famous author but practically a **byword for the classic mystery** – her surname is used as shorthand for intricate, cozy whodunits. The enduring popularity of her stories, through countless film/TV adaptations (e.g., *Death on the Nile*, *Murder on the Orient Express*), attests to a legacy that firmly entrenched the detective fiction genre in global pop culture.

Achievements as per 1912

By the end of 1912, Agatha Christie had not yet published any of the works that would make her a household name. However, she had made personal strides that presaged her future achievements. She had written several short stories and was polishing the draft of what would become her first detective novel, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* (completed in 1916, published in 1920). Working in a hospital dispensary during WWI (a role she began training for around 1914) provided her with the extensive knowledge of poisons that would later be a signature element of her mysteries. In 1912 specifically, one could count her engagement to Archie Christie as a life achievement – she had found love and stability in a tumultuous era. Another subtle "achievement" was her voracious reading and analysis of existing detective fiction: by 1912 she was already formulating in her mind how a truly clever mystery should be constructed. (*In essence, Agatha's true public achievements came later; in 1912 she was laying the groundwork – writing early stories, absorbing influences, and developing the puzzle-making skills – that would eventually blossom into her record-breaking writing career.*)

Motive

The Crime:

Earlier in 1912, Agatha Christie, an aspiring but unpublished writer, completed a manuscript for a



detective novel titled *The House at the Edge of the Moor*. She shared the manuscript with Baz Rutherford, who had presented himself as a well-connected literary agent and patron, promising to introduce her to publishers in London.

The Betrayal:

Instead, Baz vanished with the only copy of the manuscript. Months later, a news article appears—just in time for the Christmas dinner—announcing the release of Baz Rutherford's debut detective novel, *The House at the Edge of the Moor*, to great acclaim. The plot, characters, and even the distinctive style are unmistakably Agatha's work, but Baz is credited as the sole author.

Agatha's Motive:

- **Professional Ruin:** Baz's theft has robbed Agatha of her literary debut and the recognition she desperately sought. Seeing her own words in print under Baz's name is a devastating blow, both personally and professionally.
- **Public Humiliation:** The news article about Baz's “brilliant new novel” is circulating at the dinner, rubbing salt in the wound and making Agatha's loss public among the elite guests.
- **Desperation for Justice:** Agatha is driven by a need to reclaim her story, her reputation, and her future as a writer. The sense of injustice is overwhelming—Baz's crime is not just theft, but the erasure of her identity as an author.

Why Would Agatha Accept Baz's Invitation?

Despite her anger and humiliation, Agatha accepts Baz's invitation to the dinner for several reasons:

1. **Hope of Confrontation:** Agatha sees the dinner as her only chance to confront Baz directly, demand the return of her manuscript, and perhaps force him to admit the truth in front of influential witnesses.
2. **Desire for Evidence:** She hopes to find proof—perhaps a draft, correspondence, or even Baz's own notes—that could help her reclaim authorship or at least expose him as a fraud.
3. **Baz's Leverage:** Baz sends a letter with the invitation, hinting that he has “information that could ruin her family's good name” if she refuses to attend. He implies that her absence would be seen as an admission of guilt regarding a “scandal” he threatens to reveal.

The Blackmail: What Does Baz Hold Over Agatha?

Baz's blackmail is twofold:

- **Personal Letters:** During their earlier acquaintance, Agatha confided in Baz about her struggles with depression and her doubts about marriage and societal expectations. Baz kept these private letters, which, if made public, could cause a scandal in Edwardian society and bring shame to Agatha's family.



- **Rumours of Plagiarism:** Baz threatens to spread the rumour that Agatha herself tried to plagiarise *his* novel, twisting the truth and using his social connections to destroy her reputation further if she dares to challenge him.

Gertrude Stein

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** American (lived in France)
- **Profession:** Writer & Salon Host
- **Gender:** Female
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 38 years old (born 3 February 1874)
- **Age in Story:** 38 (same as real age in 1912)

Core Significance

Gertrude Stein was a central figure of the Parisian avant-garde and a pioneering modernist author⁴. Through the literary and artistic salon she hosted at 27 rue de Fleurus, Stein nurtured emerging talents like Picasso, Matisse, Hemingway, and Fitzgerald⁵. Her own experimental writings (e.g. “*Tender Buttons*”) broke traditional narrative rules, focusing on the rhythm and repetition of language. Stein is credited with coining the term “Lost Generation” for the post-WWI expatriates. In essence, she is remembered as an **intellectual catalyst** of the early 20th century – a patron of modern art and literature and a bold innovator in her own right⁶.

Early Life and Background

Gertrude Stein was born in 1874 in Pennsylvania but raised largely in Oakland, California. She came from a wealthy German-Jewish family. Exceptionally educated, she studied psychology at Radcliffe under William James and attended Johns Hopkins Medical School (one of the few women of her time to do so, though she left without a degree). In 1903, Stein moved to Paris with her brother Leo, bringing their substantial art collection with them⁷. By 1912, Gertrude had established her famous **Salon on the Left Bank**. Every Saturday evening, her home’s walls adorned with Cézannes and Picassos, she welcomed artists and writers to exchange ideas⁸. She lived openly with her partner Alice B. Toklas, who had joined her in 1907 and became an integral part of Stein’s household and writing process. Gertrude’s early writing efforts (like “*Three Lives*”, published 1909) were underway, but she was not yet widely known to the public – her influence came mostly through her salon gatherings and fierce intellect. These formative years in Paris, surrounded by experimentation and genius, made Stein the linchpin of a community that was reshaping art and literature.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Stein’s legacy is profound in both literature and art circles. As a writer, she pushed the boundaries of language and form, influencing generations of experimental poets and novelists. Phrases from



her work, like “Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose,” have entered the lexicon as emblematic of her style. Perhaps even more impactful was her role as a **cultural nexus**: her salon incubated the careers of some of the 20th century’s greatest artists⁹. Picasso painted her portrait; Hemingway gratefully acknowledged her mentorship in his early years (even though they later fell out). Stein’s championing of the modernist movement helped bring Cubist art and stream-of-consciousness literature to wider attention. She documented this vibrant era in her memoir *“The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas”* (1933), which became a bestseller and offers invaluable insights into that creative community. Stein’s open lesbian identity and nonconformist lifestyle also mark her as an early icon of queer and feminist history, showing a path of independent womanhood outside traditional norms. Today, Gertrude Stein is studied not only for her own writings but for the way she **shaped the course of modern art and literature through camaraderie and example**¹⁰. Her apartment in Paris is legendary; her influence, a thread running through the avant-garde of the 1910s–1930s.

Achievements as per 1912

By 1912, Gertrude Stein had already achieved a notable place in the artistic community of Paris, though not yet with the broad public. She had published her first significant work, *Three Lives* (1909), which, while not a commercial success, was admired in avant-garde circles for its fresh narrative style. More visibly, she was the established host of a **highly influential salon** frequented by the likes of Picasso and Matisse¹¹. This was an achievement in itself: few women (or men) could claim to convene such a Who’s Who of innovators under one roof each week. By 1912, Stein had also completed the bulk of her sprawling experimental novel *“The Making of Americans”* (though it wouldn’t be published until much later). Additionally, she was assembling one of the world’s greatest personal modern art collections alongside her brother – an achievement in curatorial vision that later filled museums. So, as of 1912 Stein was far from a household name, but she was a **quiet powerbroker in the art world** and a boldly original writer laying groundwork for literary modernism. (*The giant waves of her influence – mentoring Hemingway, defining the Lost Generation – would crest later, but even in 1912 she was a cornerstone of the Paris avant-garde and a productive, if iconoclastic, author.*)

Motive

Motive: The Betrayal of the Modernist Movement

The Setup

In the months leading up to the dinner, Baz Rutherford ingratiated himself into Gertrude Stein’s Paris salon, claiming to be a passionate supporter of modern art and literature. He attended her gatherings, charmed her circle (including Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, and Ernest Hemingway), and convinced Stein that he could help secure a major exhibition of her friends’ works in London and Berlin.

The Crime



Unbeknownst to Stein, Baz was secretly working with conservative art critics and gallery owners who despised the avant-garde. He stole several unpublished manuscripts, private letters, and even a few small paintings entrusted to him for “transport.” Worse, he leaked scandalous details and fabricated stories about the artists’ personal lives to the European press, sparking a backlash that led to cancelled exhibitions and public ridicule of the modernist movement.

The Consequences

- Stein’s reputation as the “mother of modernism” was tarnished. Her salon became the subject of gossip and suspicion, with friends blaming her for the breach.
- The careers of several artists she mentored were set back by years, and the Parisian avant-garde was mocked in the press as a “den of degenerates and frauds.”
- Stein herself was accused of being complicit in the scandal, and her own experimental writings were dismissed as “nonsense” by critics emboldened by the leaks.

Why Would Gertrude Stein Want Baz Dead?

- **Defence of Her Legacy:** Stein devoted her life to nurturing new art and literature. Baz’s betrayal threatened to destroy everything she had built.
- **Protection of Her Circle:** She felt personally responsible for the harm done to her friends and lovers, especially Alice B. Toklas, who was deeply wounded by the public attacks.
- **Restoration of Honour:** In the cutthroat world of Parisian art, reputation was everything. Stein saw eliminating Baz as the only way to restore her standing and protect her community from further harm.
- **Personal Humiliation:** Baz’s manipulation made her question her own judgment and leadership, a blow to her formidable pride.

One-Line Motive

“He didn’t just betray me—he tried to destroy the future of art itself.”

Zelda Fitzgerald

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** American
- **Profession:** Socialite & Writer (Artist, Dancer)
- **Gender:** Female
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 12 years old (born 1900)



- **Age in Story:** ~20 (portrayed as a young adult in 1912)

Core Significance

Zelda Fitzgerald is often remembered as the living embodiment of Jazz Age glamour and excess. As the wife of novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald, she became the era's *"first flapper,"* celebrated for her beauty, high-spirited personality, and free-spirited rebellion against social norms. Beyond her image as a muse, Zelda was herself a writer and artist, though her creative work was largely overshadowed by her husband's fame. Her life – marked by dazzling parties, artistic pursuits, and later mental health struggles – stands as a cautionary tale of the Roaring Twenties and the constraints placed on talented women in a male-dominated society.

Early Life and Background

Zelda Sayre was born on 24 July 1900 in Montgomery, Alabama, into a prominent Southern family. A judge's daughter, she was indulged and grew up into a confident, unruly teen known for her pranks and daring behaviour. Even in high school, Zelda flouted conventions: she wore sleeveless dresses, smoked, and was the centre of attention in Montgomery's social scene. In 1918, at age 18, she met F. Scott Fitzgerald, then an army officer stationed nearby. Their whirlwind courtship was passionate and tumultuous. By the time Scott's literary career was about to launch, Zelda's independent streak was clear – she refused to marry him until he proved his success. This bold stance in her youth exemplified the daring that would later make her an icon of liberated 1920s womanhood.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Zelda's legacy has grown beyond her role as Fitzgerald's wife. In the decades following her death, she has been reappraised as a creative figure in her own right and as an early emblem of feminist frustration. Her novel *Save Me the Waltz* (written in 1932) and her haunting paintings are now recognised for their insight into the plight of women constrained by marriage and societal expectations. Culturally, Zelda stands as the archetype of the Jazz Age flapper: bold, fashionable, and tragic. Her name evokes an era of gin cocktails, jazz music, and rebellious youth. She has inspired countless books and movies (such as the novel *Z* and the TV series *Z: The Beginning of Everything*), ensuring that the Princess of the Jazz Age is remembered not merely as a footnote to her husband, but as a symbol of unapologetic vivacity and the costs that come with it.

Achievements as per 1912

By the end of 1912, Zelda Sayre had no public accomplishments to her name – she was still a schoolgirl making local mischief. (*In reality, her fame would come in the 1920s after marrying Scott.*) In our story's 1912 setting, we imagine Zelda as a young adult already dazzling those around her. Her "achievements" by then were largely social: she was the star of Montgomery's country club dances and the daring leader among her friends. She had cultivated a reputation for being unorthodox and fun-loving – for instance, performing a scandalous new dance or drinking a cheeky glass of champagne at a party. These small acts of rebellion and charisma were laying the groundwork for the larger-than-life persona she would later become. While she hadn't written or created anything of note yet, Zelda had certainly achieved local notoriety as a trend-setter – the



kind of girl who would sneak out to joyride in a new automobile or paint the town red, giving Alabama high society an early taste of the flapper lifestyle.

Motive

Zelda Fitzgerald's motive for wanting Baz dead is driven by a storm of jealousy, heartbreak, and passionate obsession. Before Baz's invitation arrived, Zelda discovered that the man who had swept her into a dizzying romance in New York had been seducing another woman at the very same time—using the same words, the same gestures, the same promises of devotion. The revelation was devastating. Zelda's pride was wounded, her sense of self-worth shattered, and her love for Baz twisted into a furious, all-consuming jealousy. She could not bear the thought of being just another conquest, discarded and mocked behind her back.

When Baz's invitation to the exclusive dinner arrived, Zelda's emotions boiled over. She saw the gathering not as a social opportunity, but as the perfect stage for revenge. The idea of confronting Baz, of making him pay for his betrayal, became an obsession. Zelda accepted the invitation with a singular, burning purpose: to reclaim her dignity and to ensure Baz could never humiliate her—or any other woman—again. Every detail of the dinner became, in her mind, a possible opportunity to strike. Her passion, once devoted to Baz, now fuelled her resolve to see him dead. For Zelda, murder was not just an act of vengeance—it was the ultimate, passionate declaration that she would not be made a fool of, no matter the cost.

Amelia Earhart

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** American
- **Profession:** Aviator (Pilot)
- **Gender:** Female
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 15 years old (born 1897)
- **Age in Story:** ~25 (portrayed as an adult pilot in 1912)

Core Significance

Amelia Earhart is renowned as a pioneer of aviation and a trailblazer for women. She became the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean (in 1932) and set numerous flight records, proving that aviation was not just a man's field. Earhart's courage and penchant for the skies made her an international celebrity and an enduring feminist icon. Beyond her flying feats, she tirelessly advocated for women's opportunities in science and engineering. Her disappearance in 1937 during an attempted round-the-world flight remains one of history's great mysteries, further cementing her legendary status. In sum, Amelia is historically important for pushing the boundaries of what women could achieve, literally soaring into domains previously deemed "for men only".



Early Life and Background

Amelia Mary Earhart was born on 24 July 1897 in Atchison, Kansas. From childhood, Amelia displayed an adventurous, independent streak. She spent hours playing outdoors, shooting rats with a .22 rifle, and gathering news clippings of successful women in predominantly male careers. During World War I, young Amelia served as a Red Cross nurse's aide in Toronto, tending wounded soldiers – an experience that deepened her resilience and sense of purpose. In December 1920, at age 23, Amelia took a ten-minute ride in an airplane over Los Angeles; when she landed, she famously declared, “*As soon as I left the ground, I knew I myself had to fly.*” She immediately started working odd jobs (including truck driver and photographer) to save money for flying lessons. **(Note: In our fictional timeline, we imagine Amelia's passion for flying ignites a few years earlier, so that by 1912 she is already a pilot.)** She cut her hair short, donned a leather jacket, and embraced the world of aviation with gusto. Amelia's early experiences – from her tomboyish Midwestern upbringing to her first thrilling moments at the controls of an aircraft – shaped her into a woman who was fearless, pragmatic, and determined to conquer both gravity and society's expectations.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Amelia Earhart's legacy transcends her records in the sky. She is ingrained in popular culture as the fearless “Lady Lindy” (echoing Charles Lindbergh) who showed that women could match men in the most daring of fields. Her life encouraged countless women to pursue careers in aviation and other STEM fields. Co-founding the Ninety-Nines, an international organisation of female pilots, she created a supportive network that still exists today for women aviators. Amelia also used her fame to promote commercial air travel, demonstrating its safety and exciting potential to a skeptical public in the 1920s and 30s. Perhaps most profoundly, she became a symbol of perseverance and equality – often quoted for saying, “*Women, like men, should try to do the impossible. And when they fail, their failure should be a challenge to others.*” Her mysterious disappearance while attempting to circumnavigate the globe in 1937 only amplified her legend, keeping her name alive in headlines and inspiring investigations, books, and movies for decades. Amelia's impact is evident every time a young girl looks at an airplane and imagines herself at the controls – she broke not just altitude records, but psychological barriers, helping to normalize the idea of women as explorers and adventurers. To this day, she remains one of the most iconic figures in the history of flight and a role model for pursuing one's passion relentlessly.

Achievements as per 1912

By the end of 1912, Amelia had only just begun to dip her toes into the world of aviation. In reality she was still a schoolgirl; however, in the context of our story Amelia is already making her mark as a pilot. She has learned to fly, having earned her pilot's license (a significant and difficult achievement for any person in that era, let alone a woman). She has performed a few exhibitional flights at county fairs and airfields, wowing onlookers with her daring loops and dives in her trusty biplane. In September 1912, Amelia took part in a small aviation meet in Chicago, where she unofficially set a personal altitude record of over 3,000 feet – the kind of feat that got a brief



mention in local newspapers. Another achievement by 1912 was that she had become an outspoken advocate for aviation's future. At a time when many still regarded airplanes as dangerous novelties, Amelia was giving informal talks to civic groups (often the only woman in the room) about how flying could shrink distances and change the world. These modest accomplishments – a license here, a local headline there – were the building blocks of her later greatness. (*Historically, Amelia's major public achievements would come in the 1930s, but in our alternate 1912 timeline we allow her some early breakthroughs.*) Importantly, by 1912 Amelia had also proven to herself that she could handle adversity in the air: she experienced at least one forced landing in a field due to engine trouble, which she managed with cool resourcefulness. That incident gave her confidence that she could face danger at 10,000 feet as calmly as she had faced it tending soldiers on the ground. In short, as of 1912 Amelia Earhart was an emerging aviatrix – little known to the world, perhaps, but already possessing the skills, courage, and vision that would later make her a legend.

How They Met Baz

Amelia's encounter with Baz came about through her aviation pursuits. In September 1912, Amelia was in **Johannesburg, South Africa**, participating in an airshow – one of the first women pilots to fly on that continent. Baz Rutherford was in town and, ever the meddler, took an interest in the exhibition, perhaps sensing an opportunity. He approached Amelia after her thrilling demonstration flight, introducing himself as a businessman with a passion for flying. Baz cunningly played to Amelia's ambitions: he claimed to have contacts in British aviation firms and dangled the prospect of sponsorship for a grand "Cape-to-Cairo" flight that would secure Amelia worldwide fame. Flattered and enthused, Amelia agreed to meet him to discuss funding. Over a series of meetings at a local aerodrome, Baz wove an enticing proposal. He promised to connect her with a wealthy patron in London who could finance a state-of-the-art aircraft for her. Amelia, who until then had been scraping together funds for fuel and spare parts, was overjoyed. She handed Baz a detailed written plan for her dream flight, which included sensitive information about fuel caches and permissions she was negotiating. Baz even convinced her to give him a **\$500 retainer** (a significant sum in 1912) as a gesture of her commitment, which he said he'd use to secure initial clearances and investors. Trusting in his polished manner and apparent knowledge of the aviation industry, Amelia shook Baz's hand on what she believed was the launch of her biggest venture yet. She left South Africa soon after, heart brimming with hope that she was on the verge of making history with Baz's help.

Amelia initially saw Baz as a supportive ally who respected her ambition to fly, praising her skills and encouraging her plans. She trusted him with a sponsorship deal and even shared her detailed flight plan. But Baz betrayed that trust—he vanished with her retainer money and fabricated contacts, leaving her feeling duped and exposed. By the time of the dinner, Amelia's admiration had turned to cold contempt.



Motive

Amelia's motive is a mix of ambition and anger. Baz stole her sponsorship funds and vanished, leaving her aviation plans in jeopardy. Worse, he took her detailed flight plan, creating the risk that he could sell it to a rival and destroy her chance at making history. His betrayal wasn't just financial—it undermined her reputation and reinforced the barriers she fought against as a woman in a male-dominated field. To Amelia, Baz represents exploitation and dishonesty. Eliminating him would secure her future, protect her dreams, and serve justice for his deceit. In her mind, Baz's death feels less like murder and more like removing an obstacle that should never have existed.

Frida Kahlo

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** Mexican
- **Profession:** Artist (Painter)
- **Gender:** Female
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 5 years old (born 1907)
- **Age in Story:** ~25 (portrayed as an adult in 1912)

Core Significance

Frida Kahlo is hailed as one of the most significant artists of the 20th century, known for her intensely personal and symbolic self-portraits. She is historically important for **bringing Mexican culture and female experience to the forefront of art**. Kahlo's paintings, often featuring herself with unflinching honesty, explored themes of identity, suffering, and resilience, all while celebrating Mexico's indigenous heritage. Beyond her art, Frida became a feminist and LGBTQ icon due to her open bisexuality, unconventional lifestyle, and refusal to conform to gender norms. Today, her distinctive look (the braided hair with flowers, the unibrow) and artistic style are globally recognised, making her not just an acclaimed painter but a pop culture legend representing empowerment and authenticity.

Early Life and Background

Magdalena Carmen "Frida" Kahlo y Calderón was born on 6 July 1907 in Coyoacán, on the outskirts of Mexico City. Her childhood was marked by both health challenges and the vibrancy of Mexican folk culture. At age 6, Frida contracted polio, which left her with a withered leg and a slight limp; cruel peers nicknamed her "Peg-leg Frida," an early experience of pain and isolation. Yet she was spirited and intellectually curious – a tomboy who enjoyed wrestling and boxing, and an avid reader of philosophy and Revolutionary tracts. In 1925, as a young woman studying to become a doctor,



Frida suffered a catastrophic accident: the bus she was riding collided with a streetcar, and she was impaled by a metal handrail. The injuries were horrific – a broken spine, pelvis, and many bones. During her months-long convalescence in a body cast, Frida began to paint using a special easel mounted over her bed. She famously said, *“I paint myself because I am so often alone and because I am the subject I know best.”* This turning point redirected her life from medicine to art. (In our story’s alternate timeline, we imagine Frida’s creative passion ignites earlier, allowing her to be an established young artist by 1912.) Frida also grew up amid the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920), which instilled in her a strong sense of Mexican identity and political activism. She embraced traditional Tehuana dresses as a political statement of pride in her mestiza (mixed-race) heritage. All these elements – pain, self-scrutiny, patriotism – brewed in Frida’s early life, setting the stage for the powerful art and persona she would later present to the world.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Frida Kahlo’s legacy looms even larger today than in her lifetime. Artistically, she expanded the realm of surrealism and symbolism, though she famously said she didn’t paint dreams but her own reality. Her work, like *“The Two Fridas”* or *“Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird,”* offers unflinching depictions of female pain (physical and emotional) and has provided solace and solidarity to generations who see their own struggles mirrored there. In the 1970s, the feminist art movement rediscovered Kahlo and elevated her to near-mythic status as a woman who unapologetically put *herself* – complete with traditionally “unfeminine” attributes like her unibrow and mustache fuzz – on canvas. Culturally, she has become a national icon of Mexico; her former home, La Casa Azul, is now a hugely popular museum. Frida’s face adorns everything from postage stamps to T-shirts around the world, a testament to her broad resonance. She stands as a symbol of Mexico’s indomitable spirit, much like the self-portrait where she presents herself wearing indigenous dress, heart split open yet standing strong. Additionally, her life story has inspired films (such as the Oscar-winning *“Frida”* starring Salma Hayek) and countless biographies, highlighting her influence as not just an artist but a feminist and bisexual figure who defied societal norms. In sum, Kahlo’s historical impact is multifaceted: she validated personal narrative as worthy subject matter in art, she championed Mexican culture at a time of intense European influence, and through her posthumous fame she has become an emblem of authenticity and endurance in the face of adversity.

Achievements as per 1912

By the end of 1912, Frida Kahlo’s real-life accomplishments were those of a very young child – naturally, she hadn’t yet created art or achieved fame. However, in our fictional scenario where Frida is about 25 in 1912, we can posit some early milestones in her artistic journey. By this time, **Frida has developed a distinct painting style** and held a small exhibition in Mexico City. Perhaps in 1911, she displayed a collection of portraits and still lifes at a local café frequented by artists and intellectuals. The reception was encouraging: a review in a local paper noted *“the bold emotion in Señorita Kahlo’s brushstrokes.”* Another achievement by 1912 is that Frida has become involved with the Mexican artistic renaissance that followed the Revolution; she has befriended



students of the great muralist Diego Rivera (whom she will famously marry later) and engaged in bohemian circles where she passionately discusses politics and art. An example of her rising profile: she was invited to contribute a painting to a group show on *Los Cachuchas* (a clique of radical students) at the National Preparatory School – an invitation normally not extended to young women, indicating the respect she's earned. In terms of personal strides, Frida by 1912 has also firmly established her signature image: she proudly wears Tehuana dresses daily and adorns herself with pre-Columbian jewelry, making her stand out in cosmopolitan Mexico City and attracting intrigued commentary (some admire it as patriotic, some gossip that it's eccentric). These choices are achievements in asserting identity; it wasn't easy then for a woman to dress so flamboyantly outside the norm. Lastly, Frida at this age has likely produced one or two self-portraits that, while perhaps not famous yet, are dearly held by those who've seen them – such as a 1912 self-portrait with her pet parrot, which she gifted to her beloved father, revealing her talent for merging intimacy with surreal touches (the parrot in the painting, for instance, might be depicted whispering a secret into her ear). (*Of course, historically Frida's major achievements – her landmark paintings and international recognition – came much later, but by 1912 in our alternate timeline she is already on the path, a promising artist carving out space in Mexico's post-revolution cultural scene.*)

Backstory for the Dinner

Frida once trusted Baz deeply. He charmed her with promises to help her art reach international fame, but his betrayal cut her to the core. Baz disappeared with her paintings and valuable jewellery, leaving her humiliated and implicated in scandal. For Frida, this was not just theft—it was a violation of trust and dignity. She arrived at the safari lodge dressed in her most dramatic Tehuana outfit, carrying the weight of anger and heartbreak. Baz's death before dinner means she will never confront him face-to-face, but the bitterness lingers. In her mind, justice has finally been served—though she might secretly wish she had delivered it herself.

Personality at the Table

Frida is fiery, witty, and unafraid to speak her mind. She wears her emotions openly, and her sharp humour often hides deep wounds. Expect her to bring colour and intensity to the evening, with stories of art, politics, and life in Mexico. Her presence is magnetic—guests will remember the woman with flowers in her hair and a gaze that could pierce steel.

Motive

Frida's hatred for Baz runs deep. He betrayed her trust, stole her artwork and jewellery, and left her entangled in scandal that damaged her reputation. His deceit wasn't just personal—it threatened her career and humiliated her family. For Frida, Baz symbolised everything she despised: exploitation, lies, and arrogance. She dreamed of confronting him, of making him pay for the pain he caused. In her mind, Baz's death feels like justice served—a final stroke on the canvas of revenge. If she had the chance, she would have gladly been the one to deliver it.



Baz is a master manipulator who values his reputation. Inviting Frida allows him to appear gracious and unbothered, as if their past conflict never happened. It's a way to project charm and control in front of other guests.

Zelda Fitzgerald

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** American
- **Profession:** Socialite & Writer (Aspiring Dancer/Artist)
- **Gender:** Female
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 12 years old (born 1900)
- **Age in Story:** ~20 (portrayed as a young adult in 1912)

Core Significance

Zelda Fitzgerald became an **icon of the Jazz Age**, often dubbed the original “flapper.” She personified the 1920s spirit of youth, freedom, and rebellion. As the wife and muse of novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald, her high-spirited antics and style heavily inspired characters in literature (notably *The Great Gatsby*’s Daisy). Beyond her muse status, Zelda was an artist and writer in her own right – authoring a semi-autobiographical novel and painting – though her creative work was overshadowed in her lifetime. Historically, Zelda’s life (from glamorous parties to mental health struggles) serves as a cautionary tale of the Jazz Age’s excesses and the limited roles available to talented women of her era.

Early Life and Background

Born Zelda Sayre on 24 July 1900 in Montgomery, Alabama, she was the youngest daughter of a prominent Southern family. Even as a girl, Zelda stood out for her daring. She was a star dancer and prankster in high school, earning a local reputation for flouting convention – drinking gin, riding in fast cars, and shocking the town elders with her bold behaviour. In 1918, 18-year-old Zelda met F. Scott Fitzgerald, then an army officer stationed nearby. Their courtship was passionate and headstrong. Zelda, ever independent, initially refused to marry Scott until he proved his success as a writer. This bold stance – rare for women then – illustrated her insistence on living on her own terms. By 1912 in our story’s frame, Zelda is imagined as a young woman already turning heads in New York with her lively wit and uninhibited charm, traits that would later define the “flapper” archetype.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Though Zelda Fitzgerald’s personal achievements were modest in her lifetime, her **cultural impact is substantial**. She and Scott came to embody the Roaring Twenties’ glamour and decadence. The term “flapper” — denoting a fashionable young woman intent on enjoying herself — could well



have been coined for Zelda. Posthumously, her novel *Save Me the Waltz* (1932) has been re-evaluated as an important work, offering a woman's perspective on the marital tumult also fictionalised in Scott's novels. Moreover, Zelda is now hailed as an early feminist icon who struggled to define herself beyond her husband's shadow. Her mental health battles (she was diagnosed with schizophrenia in the 1930s) and confining treatment spotlighted the era's limited understanding of women's psychology. In popular culture, Zelda's free spirit and tragic decline have inspired numerous books, plays, and films — she remains a symbol of both the liberating joy and the poignant disillusionment of the Jazz Age.

Achievements as per 1912

By late 1912, Zelda Sayre had no public accomplishments in the arts — she was still a teenager in Alabama. However, she had certainly achieved local notoriety as a **magnetic social figure**. She was known as the belle of Montgomery: a champion ballet dancer in recitals, the unbeatable flirt at country club dances, and a daredevil who swam and smoked with the boys. These youthful "achievements" — scandalising her conservative community and carving out a reputation for fearlessness — set the stage for her later role as the quintessential flapper. (*Historically, Zelda's true accolades came in the 1920s, after she married Scott. In 1912 she was laying the groundwork with her rebellious spirit. In our fictional scenario, we imagine her as slightly older, already dazzling New York society with her uninhibited dancing and outrageous sense of fun.*) By the story's setting, Zelda's personal achievement is that she has become the sort of young woman other women secretly want to be and men want to be around: confident, witty, and unbound by the usual rules.

How They Met Baz

Zelda first encountered Sebastian "Baz" Rutherford in **June 1912 at the Plaza Hotel in New York City**. Zelda was in Manhattan chaperoning a younger cousin's debutante season, but in truth she sought excitement away from staid Alabama. Baz noticed Zelda holding court at the Plaza's champagne bar, where she regaled a small circle of admirers with scandalous anecdotes. Intrigued by her charisma, Baz made an introduction, smoothly pretending to be a fan of Southern literature to appeal to her roots. Zelda, craving sophistication, was instantly charmed by this worldly Englishman. Over the next week, Baz swept Zelda into a whirlwind romance. He treated her to illicit gin fizzes at Jazz clubs and late-night joyrides in a Stutz Bearcat motorcar through Central Park. Zelda — who had never met a man who encouraged her wild side rather than scolding it — was completely enamoured. On Baz's suggestion, they began exchanging diary entries "as a sign of trust." Zelda, ever the open book, showed Baz her private diary — filled with her unfiltered thoughts about love, her frustrations with Montgomery's dullness, and even some barbed observations about New York high society people she'd met. Baz listened with rapt attention and insisted on borrowing the diary overnight to read more, praising her writing as "keenly observant" and hinting that he had publishing connections. Flattered and in love, Zelda allowed it. Baz left for Boston ostensibly on business the next day, promising to return soon and urging Zelda to keep their romance secret for now ("*Think how thrilling it will be to surprise everyone later, my Zelda,*" he cooed).



Relationship to Baz

Initially, Zelda's relationship with Baz was electrifying and full of hope. He was the first man she'd met who seemed to value her daring and not just tolerate it. Zelda wrote to a friend that she'd found "*a co-conspirator who makes the world dance*". However, this rosy view shattered scarcely a fortnight later. In July 1912, an anonymous column in a sensationalist newspaper published verbatim extracts from a "Southern Belle's" diary, detailing risqué opinions about New York elites and candid musings on love clearly taken from Zelda's private writings. Zelda instantly realised Baz was the source – no one else had that diary. Her embarrassment was overwhelming: family and acquaintances recognised her in the thinly veiled story, and scandal erupted. Zelda felt utterly betrayed and heartsick. Baz, of course, did not write or call her to explain. By the time of the Christmas safari dinner, Zelda's feelings toward Baz have inverted. Gone is the giddy infatuation; in its place is a mix of humiliation, anger, and lingering hurt. At the event, she treats Baz with cutting politeness. For instance, when introducing him to others she might say, "*Ah yes, Mr. Rutherford and I share an interest in literature – he particularly enjoys publishing private diaries.*" Such barbed comments make it clear to Baz that she knows what he did. In more unguarded moments, Zelda's Southern temper flares – her voice trembles as she asks him under her breath "*Why, Baz? How could you?*" Baz, practiced in evasion, perhaps tries a half-hearted apology or claims it was out of his hands. Zelda will have none of it. She needles him with sarcasm throughout the evening, and when Baz attempts his old charm (at one point he dares to compliment her dress), she fixes him with a stare and replies sweetly, "*This old thing? I save my best mask for the masqueraders among us.*" The dynamic between them is tense: Zelda's wounded pride versus Baz's self-serving nonchalance. They maintain surface civility for the sake of the host, but any once-existing warmth is stone cold. Baz senses that under the table, figuratively, Zelda's foot is tapping with barely contained ire.

Motive

Zelda has a deeply personal motive for wanting Baz dead: **he violated her trust and publicly shamed her**, nearly destroying her social standing and self-worth. The diary Baz published contained Zelda's most intimate thoughts. Not only did his betrayal embarrass her before family and friends, it also taught Zelda a bitter lesson about vulnerability. For a woman who always pushed boundaries yet remained, at heart, sensitive, this exploitation of her inner life was unforgivable. Zelda's initial heartbreak turned into seething anger. She wants revenge – plain and simple – on the man who played with her heart and then made a mockery of it in the tabloids. Crucially, Zelda also has a practical motive steeped in **fear**: she worries Baz might have withheld some of her diary pages or personal letters and could, at any time, disseminate more. The sword of Damocles hanging over her – the threat that another round of private revelations could drop – terrifies Zelda and keeps her up at night. She yearns to cut that thread forever. By eliminating Baz, she would not only avenge her humiliation but also **secure her future** from further blackmail or scandal. Additionally, Zelda's fierce independent streak contributes to her murderous intent. She refuses to be a victim or let a man control her narrative. Baz turned her own words against her; by killing him, Zelda would decisively reclaim control of her story. There's even an element of **symbolic**



justice in her mind: as Baz “killed” the romantic, trusting version of Zelda that summer, so she will literally kill him, the embodiment of treachery. Zelda’s emotional turmoil – a volatile cocktail of shame, rage, and regret – makes her perhaps the most impulsive of the suspects. If an opportunity arises (say, the men leave their guns unattended after a safari outing), it wouldn’t be unlike Zelda, famed for impulsivity, to snatch a weapon and settle the score in a dramatic fashion. In her eyes, Baz’s death would be not a crime but the belated full-stop to a sordid chapter he authored – a restoration of her *honour* and a ridding of a scoundrel who, left alive, would only hurt others as he hurt her.

Amelia Earhart

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** American
- **Profession:** Aviator (Pilot)
- **Gender:** Female
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 15 years old (born 1897)
- **Age in Story:** ~25 (portrayed as a young adult pilot in 1912)

Core Significance

Amelia Earhart is celebrated as a groundbreaking **pioneer in aviation and women's empowerment**. She achieved worldwide fame by becoming the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean (in 1932) and setting numerous other flight records. Earhart relentlessly promoted the idea that women could excel in fields once thought exclusive to men. Through her courage and charisma, she expanded the realm of possibility for half the human race. Amelia's mysterious disappearance in 1937, during an attempt to circumnavigate the globe, only intensified her legend, but her true legacy lies in the barriers she broke and the inspiration she gave to generations of women to pursue careers in aviation and beyond.

Early Life and Background

Amelia Mary Earhart was born on 24 July 1897 in Atchison, Kansas. From an early age she defied conventional gender roles: Amelia climbed trees, hunted rats with a rifle, and kept a scrapbook of great women achievers, showing her ambition. During World War I, she served as a Red Cross nurse's aide in Toronto, tending to wounded soldiers – an experience that honed her calm under pressure and compassion. Amelia's passion for flying ignited in December 1920 when she took a ten-minute ride at an airshow in California; as she later recalled, “*I knew I had to fly*”. She immediately started flying lessons (unheard of for a woman then) and saved diligently to buy her first biplane, a bright yellow Kinner dubbed “The Canary.” By 1912 in our story, Amelia is imagined to have already earned a pilot's licence and begun performing exhibition flights. She stands out not



just for being female in a male arena, but for her natural talent and daring – qualities nurtured since childhood when she built a homemade roller coaster ramp off her family’s shed. That fearless little girl has become a confident young pilot, ready to push aviation’s limits.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Amelia Earhart’s legacy is profound in both aviation and the advancement of women. She proved women could match men in technical skill, bravery, and coolness under pressure – at a time when such ideas were radical. She co-founded the Ninety-Nines, an international organisation for women pilots that still supports female aviators today. Amelia also wrote best-selling books about her flying experiences and was a regular columnist, using her platform to encourage women to pursue their dreams in whatever field. Her disappearance during her round-the-world flight attempt in 1937 turned her into an enduring mystery and cemented her status as an American folk hero. Countless airports, scholarships, and even a moon crater are named in her honour. Culturally, she remains an icon of adventure – a symbol that one should chase their passion even at great risk. Every time a female pilot takes to the skies or a little girl reads about Amelia in school, Earhart’s pioneering influence is felt anew.

Achievements as per 1912

By the end of 1912, Amelia’s true historic accomplishments were yet to come – she was still a teenager. In our fictional scenario, however, we assume a slightly accelerated trajectory for her. By 1912 Amelia Earhart would have **earned her pilot’s licence**, making her one of the very few women in the world licensed to fly at that time. She had also performed in a handful of air exhibitions, barnstorming across small American towns and impressing spectators with her skill in handling a biplane. Perhaps she achieved a personal altitude record (say climbing to 5,000 feet) during an exhibition above the plains of Kansas, winning a modest prize and a headline in the local paper. Another achievement by this date: Amelia had begun networking within the budding aviation community – she’d corresponded with famous male pilots of the day and even had her name mentioned in an aviation magazine as a “girl flyer to watch.” Importantly, she had also proven her practical ingenuity: in 1912 we can imagine Amelia modifying her aircraft’s engine to improve its reliability, surprising the male mechanics with her engineering savvy. (*In reality, Amelia’s first major record – the women’s altitude record of 14,000 feet – came in 1922. But by placing her slightly ahead of schedule for the story’s sake, we give her a foundation of early feats to justify her presence at Baz’s 1912 gathering.*) Thus, by 1912 story-wise, Amelia is already a rising star in aviation, known in select circles as a fearless “aviatrix” who might soon do something extraordinary.

How They Met Baz

Amelia Earhart met Baz Rutherford in **September 1912 at an airfield in Johannesburg, South Africa**. Amelia was there participating in an exhibition tour – one of a handful of women pilots on the circuit – hoping to raise funds for her own long-distance flight project. Baz, ever attracted to novelty and potential profit, attended the airshow and was mesmerised by Amelia’s display of aerobatics. He introduced himself afterwards as a well-connected “aviation enthusiast” with ties to wealthy British investors. Amelia was immediately interested when Baz spoke of a possible



sponsorship for a pioneering “Cape-to-Cairo” flight (a daring idea that had danced in her mind). Over several meetings in the following days, Baz poured on the charm. He shared grandiose plans about establishing Africa’s first airmail service and dangled the prospect that Amelia could be its trailblazer – *“Imagine, you’d be delivering letters by air across the continent!”* he enthused. He flattered her skills, comparing her to famous male aviators and saying she had “a larger mission” to inspire people. Flattered and optimistic, Amelia shared with Baz her meticulously kept flight logbook and a confidential prospectus she’d written outlining her project’s needs (aircraft specifications, fuel cache locations along the route, etc.). Baz offered to take these documents to London to entice a syndicate of investors he knew. In a gesture of trust, Amelia also advanced him \$500 – a significant sum constituting the remainder of her tour earnings – as a retainer for hiring an attorney in England to draft the sponsorship contract. They sealed the agreement with a hearty handshake and mutual excitement. Amelia felt on the cusp of her dream: thanks to Baz, it seemed her trans-African flight was within reach. When Baz left South Africa a week later, Amelia saw him off with genuine gratitude and the two exchanged warm goodbyes, unaware that only one of them was sincere.

Relationship to Baz

In the beginning, Amelia regarded Baz as a kindly benefactor and fellow visionary. She was impressed by how this suave Englishman didn’t blink at a woman in a leather flying jacket but instead treated her as a serious professional. However, as months passed in 1912 and Baz’s promised letters and funds never materialised, Amelia grew concerned. She wrote to the London addresses Baz had given her, only to receive replies that no one by those names had heard of her sponsorship. The sinking realisation set in: Baz had **swindled her**, making off with her money and – more distressingly – her confidential flight plan. By the time of the safari dinner, Amelia’s warm appreciation for Baz has frozen into chilly contempt. When they meet again at the event, she confronts him quietly but firmly. Amelia isn’t one for theatrics; her style is direct. *“You broke your word, Mr. Rutherford. And you still have my papers,”* she says, eyes fixed steadily on him. Baz attempts to deflect, perhaps feigning forgetfulness or claiming the deal fell through due to factors outside his control. Amelia’s jaw clenches; she famously kept her composure even in emergencies, but one can see the tension in her restrained replies. Throughout the dinner, their interactions are terse. Baz, sensing Amelia’s disgust, largely avoids her, which is just as well because she has little to say to him beyond thinly veiled sarcasm. When others at the table praise Baz’s globe-trotting knowledge, Amelia interjects mildly, *“Mr. Rutherford is certainly good at covering distances – especially when running away.”* In group discussions, she pointedly ignores his contributions, as if he simply isn’t there (a tactic that pricks Baz’s pride). The dynamic is one of **silent fury** on her part and sheepish sidestepping on his. Privately, Amelia grapples with a bitter mix of feelings: embarrassment at having been duped, anger at the lost opportunity and money, and worst of all, a lingering fear that Baz might misuse the detailed route plan she gave him – perhaps to assist a rival pilot or claim credit for ideas that were hers. This fear makes her even angrier. In short, by the time of the dinner Amelia treats Baz with professional coldness, the way a pilot might treat an unreliable instrument: as something untrustworthy that could imperil a mission if not dealt with.



Motive

Amelia's motive for wanting to kill Baz is both pragmatic and deeply personal. **Pragmatically**, Baz's theft of her flight plan and funds did tangible damage: he set back her aviation project by months or years. In 1912, being first was everything – a delay could mean someone else achieving the record or route she envisioned. Amelia knows that as long as Baz lives freely, he could sell or divulge her innovative flight ideas (like locations for refuelling across Africa or weather patterns she researched) to another pilot or investor. Killing him would ensure those plans die with him and protect her hard-won knowledge. Moreover, Baz still holds her logbook and documents; removing him might be the only way to recover or at least make sure he never profits from them. On a **personal level**, Amelia feels a profound sense of betrayal. She had encountered plenty of skeptics and chauvinists in her journey, but Baz posed as a supporter and ally – that false friendship cut deeply. It offends Amelia's sense of **fair play and decency**; she has a strong moral core and Baz's behaviour was, to her, unconscionable. There's also a subtle aspect of guilt transmuting into anger: Amelia berates herself for being conned (she "should have known better"), and some of that self-directed frustration finds release in plotting vengeance on the conman. Importantly, Amelia isn't generally violent – but she's also not one to back down when wronged. The same determination that sends her up in experimental aircraft without fear now hardens her resolve to eliminate a proven danger. She likely frames it in her mind as removing an obstacle or "*cutting out a cancer*" in the world of aviation. If Baz cheated her, he might cheat others – perhaps even sabotage the fledgling careers of other women pilots if given the chance. Amelia, who had begun mentoring young girls interested in flying, would see it as almost a duty to stop him. Finally, there is an emotional undercurrent: Baz made her doubt her own judgment, something she relies on heavily as a pilot where decisions mean life or death. That rattling of her confidence cannot stand. By decisively acting against him, she would symbolically restore belief in herself. In summary, Amelia Earhart's motive to kill Baz is fueled by **revenge, self-protection, and principle**. Removing him would avenge the setback he caused, secure her pioneering ambitions, and serve justice as she sees it. In her characteristically straightforward way, Amelia has concluded that Baz Rutherford's continued existence does far more harm than good – and as with any perilous storm cloud ahead, she is prepared to navigate right through it to clear skies beyond.

Elsa Maxwell

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** American
- **Profession:** Society Hostess & Gossip Columnist
- **Gender:** Female
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 29 years old (born 1883)
- **Age in Story:** 29 (same as real age in 1912)



Core Significance

Elsa Maxwell was the **party queen of the early 20th century**, an innovative society hostess who virtually invented modern celebrity entertaining. Not born to wealth or title, she leveraged her wit and creativity to become a power broker in high society. Elsa introduced playful party games (treasure hunts, murder mysteries, costume balls) that transformed dull aristocratic events into sensational affairs reported in newspapers. Later, she became a gossip columnist and radio personality, wielding influence with her pen by chronicling and gently skewering the rich and famous. Historically, Maxwell is important for shaping celebrity culture; she blurred the lines between high society and popular media, paving the way for today's party planners, influencers, and entertainment journalists. She proved that a woman could carve out a unique position of authority in a world ruled by wealthy men – all through charm, ingenuity, and audacity.

Early Life and Background

Elsa Maxwell was born in Iowa in 1883 and grew up in modest circumstances far removed from palaces and ballrooms. Largely self-educated, she had an innate flair for music and theatre. As a teenager she moved to New York City, where she talked her way into minor show business jobs – playing piano at vaudeville shows, writing songs, and absorbing the art of performance. What Elsa lacked in formal pedigree she made up for in **bold networking**. She ensconced herself among Europe's elite by sheer determination; one famous anecdote tells how in 1907, without an invitation, she sailed to Venice during the social season and ended up organising an impromptu concert at a nobleman's party. By 1912, Elsa had cultivated friendships with counts, duchesses, and artistes across the continent. She had discovered her talent for hosting during these years: she would convince a wealthy patron to let her arrange an evening's entertainment, then improvise spectacular amusements that left guests talking for weeks. Her early “events” in Paris and Monte Carlo were small in scale but big on creativity – one night she turned out all the lights at a stuffy dinner and had guests dine by whimsical candle lanterns, another time she staged a mock jousting tournament in a countess's garden. These experiences cemented Elsa's reputation as the go-to woman if you wanted a party that people would remember. Despite lacking blue blood, by 1912 Elsa Maxwell had effectively **launched herself as a brand** in elite social circles: the daring American who could make any party glitter.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Elsa Maxwell's legacy lives on every time a high-profile gala grabs headlines or a gossip column dishes on a celebrity soiree. She was a **trendsetter in entertainment and media**. Maxwell popularised interactive party activities – for example, scavenger hunts (she once sent New York socialites scurrying at midnight for odd items like a policeman's button) and murder mystery dinners were her inventions that have since become standard party fare. Through her 1930s gossip columns, she arguably helped create the template for modern celebrity journalism: she named names and recounted party escapades with a mix of admiration and cheek, whetting the public's appetite for the glamorous lives of others. Importantly, Elsa also broke barriers for women. She demonstrated that a woman without traditional advantages could wield power in society – she



couldn't vote yet in 1912, but she could shape the social calendar of the rich and influence who was in or out of favour. In later years, crowned heads from Queen Mary of England to the Shah of Iran attended her parties, acknowledging her influence. Many credit her with eroding stuffy class boundaries; by mixing actors with aristocrats at her events, she anticipated the more meritocratic mingling of today's celebrity culture. When we see coverage of the Met Gala or read Page Six, we see Maxwell's DNA: she turned parties into news and the party-thrower into a profession. Even in hospitality, her ideas about engaging guests (short speeches, fun themes) are now common practice. Elsa Maxwell, in essence, taught high society how to have fun – and in doing so, she left an indelible mark on social life and entertainment journalism.

Achievements as per 1912

As of 1912, Elsa Maxwell had not yet become the famous columnist she would later be, but she had already achieved remarkable feats in the rarefied world of European high society. For one, she had **established herself as a sought-after party organiser** in cities like Paris, Venice, and London. By that year she had orchestrated a spectacular masquerade ball on a Venetian barge for a French prince – a fete talked about from Rome to Vienna for its pageantry (Elsa arranged for costumed gondoliers to serenade guests under the Rialto Bridge at midnight – a flourish only she could think up). She was also informally advising wealthy hostesses on entertainment; diaries of the time show notes like “Consulted Miss Maxwell on after-dinner games – a great success” among duchesses in the Loire Valley. Another indicator of her achievement: She had begun writing witty society tidbits for a small Paris gazette under a pseudonym, testing the waters of gossip writing. And though she had no title herself, by 1912 Elsa's personal address book was a treasure – it included the private telephone numbers or telegram codes of dozens of influential people. This was an achievement in networking; it meant she could, at a whim, assemble a fascinating mix of guests. (*While in 1912 her renown was mostly within the smart set, not in mass publications, Elsa's progress even by then was extraordinary – she had effectively gone from an unknown Midwesterner to the unofficial social secretary for Europe's elite in the span of a decade.*) All this set the stage for the more public achievements to come (her widely read columns began in the late 1920s), but it's fair to say that by 1912 Elsa Maxwell had already lived a remarkable life, **creating a niche and name for herself** in a world typically closed to outsiders.

How They Met Baz

Elsa Maxwell and Baz Rutherford's paths collided in **November 1912 in Venice**, at one of Elsa's own famed parties. Elsa had arranged a grand masquerade ball for a visiting Austrian countess, transforming a Venetian palazzo into a fantasy realm of lantern-lit canals and roaming violinists. Baz Rutherford turned up uninvited, masquerading (aptly) as a masked Harlequin. Initially, Elsa took no issue – many gatecrashed her parties, and Baz was entertaining, performing a magic card trick that made a table of marquises gasp. Impressed by his élan and assuming he must be someone's guest, Elsa welcomed him. Baz seized this friendliness to get close to Elsa throughout the evening. They shared a dance – Elsa stout and exuberant, Baz lithe and mischievous, cutting a surprisingly good figure together. Over champagne, Baz flattered Elsa outrageously, praising her party as “*the most enchanting spectacle outside of Versailles.*” He also hinted that he had



connections to an Indian maharajah who “desperately wishes to meet the genius behind tonight.” This piqued Elsa’s ambition; expansion to international royalty was exactly her aim. Baz followed up the next day by calling on Elsa with a proposition: he offered to introduce her (and her party concept) to this maharajah, who was supposedly planning a huge coronation jubilee. However, he needed funds to travel to India to set things up – a trifling amount for Elsa’s wealthy backers, and surely worth the return. Elsa, ever the visionary but not keen on risking her own meagre savings, convinced one of her patronesses to provide Baz £300 for the venture. Meanwhile, Baz asked for and received from Elsa something even more valuable: her **private guest list and contacts notebook** from the masquerade, so he could demonstrate to the maharajah the calibre of people she could attract. Elsa hesitated for perhaps half a second but Baz charmed, “*It will be locked in my safe until I place it directly in His Highness’s hands – purely to impress him, my dear.*” Flattered and caught up in the excitement of a potential Indian spectacular, Elsa handed over a copy of the list, which included personal addresses and notes on several European nobles. They parted with effusive mutual praise and plans to reconnect in a few months for the “Indian extravaganza.” Elsa was elated – it seemed a new exotic chapter of her career was on the horizon.

Relationship to Baz

If one person at the dinner knows how to hold a grudge with a smile, it’s Elsa Maxwell. In the weeks after she entrusted Baz with her notebook, small disasters began to befall her. Private confidences she had noted about guests (for example, that a certain baron was having an affair, or that a princess disliked another noblewoman) somehow leaked back to their subjects. Elsa traced these breaches inevitably to Baz’s access to her contact notes. Realising she’d been swindled and her invaluable social intel misused, Elsa was furious. By Christmas 1912, her relationship with Baz had transformed from convivial to covertly hostile. At the dinner, Elsa keeps up appearances; as a consummate hostess-type, she isn’t going to cause a scene. She greets Baz with air-kisses and a joke – “*Darling Baz, still wearing masks, I see?*” – a sugary quip with a poisoned center. Baz, knowing her influence, tries to mollify her with ingratiating politeness, but Elsa’s sharp eyes and tighter-than-usual smiles betray her resentment. Throughout the evening, Elsa subtly undermines Baz’s attempts to shine. When he begins an anecdote about Vienna, Elsa interrupts brightly for the whole table, “*Oh this is a good story – I believe I told it to Baz myself!*” effectively exposing that Baz’s tale is second-hand. On another occasion, Baz moves to charm a young heiress; Elsa swiftly swoops in, “*Sweetie, could you fetch me another glass of champagne?*” dragging the girl away on a faux errand and pointedly leaving Baz standing. In side conversations with those who trust her, Elsa drops hints that Baz might not be as trustworthy as he appears, without going into details that would reveal her own gullibility. It’s a careful dance: Elsa cannot openly accuse him without admitting her mistake, but she can sure as hell *manage* him. Baz senses her animosity in a hundred tiny cuts, and it likely unsettles him more than an outright fight would – he even quips at one point, “*Elsa, you missed your calling on the stage; you’d do Lady Macbeth proud.*” Elsa beams and replies, “*Out, damned spot!*” in a way that makes Baz gulp. Their relationship by now is a brittle facade of civility covering a foundation of betrayal and tactical one-upmanship. Elsa has resolved to never let Baz get the better of her again, and he feels the power she quietly wields as others heed



her slightest cue. In sum, she treats him with a frosty faux-affection: “*darling*” this and “*sweetheart*” that, but every endearment drips with irony.

Motive

Elsa Maxwell’s motive to kill Baz Rutherford is rooted in **professional survival, revenge, and the restoration of her social power**. Baz didn’t just steal money or objects from her – he stole her *social capital*, the most valuable asset she had built. By taking her guest list and gossip notes and scattering them, he nearly **ruined her reputation** as a trustworthy confidante. In Elsa’s world, discretion is gold; Baz turned her parties’ privacy into a liability. She knows if she doesn’t completely nullify what Baz has done (and could continue to do), her budding career as a society fixer could collapse. This pragmatic need to protect her interests is a strong motive: killing him would permanently stop him from ever leaking her secrets or tarnishing her name again. Moreover, Elsa is someone who operated in high society by consent – trust from hosts, goodwill from guests. Baz’s betrayal threatened to brand her as indiscreet or, worse, a colluder. The fear that **her hard-won social access could be stripped away** translates into a cold determination to eliminate the source of the threat.

Then there is pure **vengeance**. Elsa is witty and jovial, but she’s also nobody’s fool; when crossed, she can be merciless. Baz made a fool of her by conning her with the false maharajah story. The embarrassment she feels – having to later explain to her patroness that the £300 was likely lost, or trying to smooth over awkward questions of “How did So-and-so learn about such-and-such from your party?” – each incident fans the flames of her wrath. Elsa has a long memory for those who wrong her (she famously quipped in later years that she didn’t get mad, she got even). In fantasising about Baz’s end, she likely imagines a poetic justice: the man who exploited social trust meeting a decidedly unsociable demise.

Symbolically, Baz’s removal would be a **warning to any who might undermine her**. Elsa operates in an environment of subtle power; having Baz simply vanish or turn up dead could, in her mind, restore a sense of almost *mythic respect* around her. (Not that she’d ever claim credit – but privately she’d know she settled the score.) On a more personal emotional level, Elsa is hurt. Baz pretended to appreciate her talents and to be her friend, and she welcomed him warmly – that he used her hospitality as an espionage mission is an affront she cannot let slide. The mixture of a bruised ego and genuine rage is potent.

It should also be noted that Elsa is quite practical about extreme solutions. She moves in circles where scandals are covered up discreetly; she’s seen reputations “killed” with a whisper campaign. Physically killing someone like Baz might strike her as just an analogue in the physical realm to what she’s done socially to rivals on occasion. If she were to do it, she’d do it cleverly – perhaps arranging a deadly “accident” at a party (she’s imaginative enough to pull that off). Her motive is not born of bloodlust but of **calculation**: she has determined that Baz Rutherford’s continued existence is a nuisance and a hazard to her unique position. Eliminating him would be a kind of social house-cleaning, removing a contaminant that nearly caused a stink in her carefully curated world.



In sum, Elsa wants Baz dead to **protect her livelihood, reclaim her pride, and ensure he never betrays anyone using her name again**. In her own words, delivered with a sweet smile over a glass of champagne, she might say, “*One should never waste good champagne – or suffer a treacherous guest to live.*” Those who know her would chuckle, not realising just how seriously she might mean it this time.

Frida Kahlo

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** Mexican
- **Profession:** Artist (Painter)
- **Gender:** Female
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 5 years old (born 1907)
- **Age in Story:** ~25 (portrayed as a young adult in 1912)

Core Significance

Frida Kahlo is internationally acclaimed as a painter whose work and life have made her a **feminist and cultural icon**. She is known for her striking self-portraits and surreal, yet intensely personal imagery that explores identity, suffering, and the Indigenous Mexican experience. Despite a life beset by pain from injuries and illness, Frida transformed her suffering into art of searing honesty and beauty. She also championed Mexico’s folk culture at a time when many elites looked to Europe, and she was politically active as a communist. Historically, Kahlo’s significance extends beyond art: she has become a symbol of resilience, unapologetic self-expression, and the idea that one’s heritage and personal truth are sources of strength. Her distinctive traditional Tehuana dress and unibrow have become emblematic of embracing one’s unique self, making her an icon in feminist and LGBTQ movements as well.

Early Life and Background

Magdalena Carmen “Frida” Kahlo y Calderón was born on 6 July 1907 in Coyoacán, Mexico City (though she later gave 1910 as her birth year to coincide with the Mexican Revolution, aligning herself with Mexico’s rebirth). As a child, Frida endured polio, which left one leg thinner than the other. Rather than succumb to bullying, she became fiercely spirited – climbing trees, boxing, and playing sports to prove her strength. In 1925, at age 18, Frida suffered a near-fatal accident: a bus collision that left her with a broken spine, pelvis, and a shattered foot among other injuries. Bedridden for months, she began to paint using a special easel that allowed her to work lying down. She painted what she knew – herself, her pain, her imaginings. This period forged Frida’s identity as an artist. By her mid-20s, she had joined the city’s bohemian and political circles, where she met the renowned muralist Diego Rivera (whom she’d marry in 1929). She proudly embraced her mixed



heritage, often wearing indigenous Tehuana attire – long embroidered skirts, elaborate hairstyles with flowers – making a political statement of Mexican pride. By 1912 in our fictional scenario, Frida is depicted as already an emerging art talent in Mexico City, perhaps slightly ahead of schedule. She would have had an unconventional upbringing, absorbing revolutionary ideals from her photographer father and intellectual gatherings at her home. For the story's sake, imagine Frida already painting arresting small self-portraits and stirring conversation among Mexico's avant-garde with her blend of tradition and innovation.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Frida Kahlo's legacy has only grown with time. Although moderately successful in Mexico in her life, she posthumously became one of the most celebrated artists in the world. Her paintings, like "*The Two Fridas*" and "*Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird*," are studied for their emotional depth and symbolism. She brought the **female experience and form** into the foreground of art with unflinching honesty – depicting miscarriage, chronic pain, and complex sexuality at a time when such themes were taboo in art. Kahlo also played a key role in Mexico's post-revolution cultural renaissance by blending indigenous motifs with European influences, thereby validating Mexican folk culture on the world stage. Beyond art, Frida's personal style and defiance of gender norms (she often donned men's suits in photos, and openly took lovers of both sexes) have made her a cult figure. In the 21st century, she adorns murals, postage stamps, and even Barbie dolls, symbolising strength and uniqueness. Museums and films have been devoted to her life – notably the Oscar-winning 2002 film "*Frida*." Perhaps her most profound impact is on generations of viewers who find in her self-portraits a mirror of their own struggles and empowerment; she once wrote, "*I am my own muse, I am the subject I know best*," and in doing so she opened doors for artists (especially women and minorities) to mine their personal narrative as worthy, universal art. In sum, Frida Kahlo's impact transcends art into the realms of popular culture, identity politics, and fashion – she is an **enduring symbol of fearless self-expression and endurance**.

Achievements as per 1912

As of 1912, the real Frida was only a child, so her formal achievements had yet to begin. In our creative reimagining, by 1912 Frida Kahlo – around age 25 in the story – would have already made a small but notable splash in the art world. We can posit that she held a **small exhibition of her paintings at a Mexico City café** frequented by intellectuals. Her self-portraits and surreal folkloric scenes, though unconventional, garnered interest for their originality. Perhaps an art critic for a local newspaper wrote a short review calling her work "*hauntingly candid*", marking her first press mention. By this date Frida might also have become involved with the **Mexican Communist Party**, attending meetings and sketching caricatures of capitalist politicians in the margins of pamphlets. In doing so, she'd caught the eye of prominent leftist artists – maybe even Diego Rivera, who by 1912 was an established painter (in reality they met in 1928, but here we imagine an earlier encounter). Frida's "achievement," therefore, is having positioned herself within the vibrant post-revolution cultural scene: she's that young woman in traditional Tehuana dress who shows up at poets' gatherings and modern art salons, holding her own in debates about Mexico's identity.



Additionally, she may have sold a painting or two to sympathetic patrons, giving her the encouragement that her art could sustain her. (*Of course, historically Frida's major achievements – major exhibitions in New York/Paris, sales to famous collectors – occurred in the 1930s and 40s. By accelerating her timeline for this story, we allow her to stand shoulder to shoulder with older luminaries in 1912.*) So, by this fictional 1912, Frida's achievements include being recognised locally as a bold new painter with a distinct voice, and having established her persona (floral crown, folk dresses, outspoken politics) that later becomes legendary.

How They Met Baz

Frida Kahlo met Baz Rutherford in **April 1912 at her family home, Casa Azul, in Coyoacán**. Baz had been traveling through Mexico City under the pretense of collecting Mexican folk art for a London gallery. Hearing of a lively artists' canteen at Casa Azul (Frida's home was known to welcome intellectuals and bohemians), Baz turned up with a bottle of Spanish wine and ample charm. Frida, who was hosting a small gathering that evening, welcomed the exotic Englishman into the courtyard. Baz quickly ingratiated himself by admiring a self-portrait Frida had displayed – “*Such honesty and passion,*” he praised, “*London has seen nothing like it.*” He flattered her nationalist pride, complimenting the Indigenous embroidery on her blouse and even attempting a toast in clumsy Spanish to Mexican independence. Over the next week, Baz became a fixture in Frida's circle. He showed keen (if feigned) interest in her ideas about art and revolution, which was intoxicating for Frida, used to being taken lightly as a young woman. They spent hours talking – Frida baring her soul about the trolley accident that changed her life and her inability to have children, Baz listening with what seemed like genuine empathy. One late night after the others left, their emotional intimacy turned physical. Frida and Baz began a **secret love affair**, meeting under the pretext of “painting lessons” during siesta hours. Baz encouraged Frida to write him passionate letters when they were apart, which she did – pouring onto pages her desires, her dreams of them traveling to Europe together, even sketches of herself longing for him. Unbeknownst to Frida, these letters – written in her unguarded, poetic style – were exactly what Baz had hoped to obtain. Just as their affair burned hottest, Baz announced he had to return to Europe for urgent business, but promised to arrange an exhibit of Frida's paintings in Paris. He convinced her to lend him three of her paintings to show prospective buyers, as well as the bundle of letters “*so I can read your beautiful words on lonely nights.*” Smitten and hopeful, Frida relinquished these items. Baz departed Mexico with a tearful Frida waving at the train station, believing this was merely “*hasta luego*” (see you later).

Relationship to Baz

For a brief period, Frida's relationship with Baz was one of the most joyful romances of her life. She found him worldly, attentive, and seemingly appreciative of her art – a heady mix for a young woman whose previous lovers never fully understood her complexities. Frida even confided to her sister that she might follow Baz to Europe, such was her ardour. However, in the weeks after Baz's departure, ominous signs emerged. A story appeared in a Mexico City newspaper about a European art dealer selling “remarkable letters by a Mexican artist describing scandalous affairs.” Frida was mortified to recognise lines from her own letters in the description. It became clear Baz had sold



her intimate correspondence to a tabloid or collector. Then came the worst blow: a telegram from Paris informing her that three “anonymous” paintings – unmistakably hers – were auctioned off in Montmartre for a pittance. Baz had callously sold her art. By the time of Baz’s safari dinner, Frida’s heart has hardened towards him into a ball of anger and pain. When they encounter each other again, Baz might attempt a breezy greeting — *“Frida, my darling! You’re radiant.”* Frida responds with a slap across his face in front of all, without a word. It’s an electric moment that stuns the assembly. Baz, face stinging and pride wounded, hisses an apology-cum-rebuke, but Frida has already turned her back on him. Throughout the evening she pointedly ignores his existence, refusing to speak directly to him. If forced by seating to be near him, she uses biting sarcasm: when Baz gingerly says, *“Your art has garnered attention in Europe,”* Frida retorts, *“I know. I read my reviews in the wrapping paper your betrayal came in.”* Her usual warm humour is replaced by icy contempt whenever Baz is around. At one point, Baz catches her staring at him; in her eyes he sees not the devotion of before but something feral, as if she’d like to gouge out his heart with the same intensity she once showed in love. Frida, in her diary (if she still dares keep one), has written of Baz: *“I gave him my blood and he drank it and laughed.”* Now, face to face, she regards him as *muerto en vida* – dead while still walking. The relationship has disintegrated into one of victim and violator. Baz senses physical danger – Frida’s body language telegraphs that she’s not just heartbroken, she’s enraged and unafraid. Indeed, during the safari’s rifle-shooting session, Frida made a show of examining a bullet and saying in a voice Baz could hear, *“This, for the one who betrayed me.”* Baz keeps his distance, quite unsure what this passionate woman he wronged might do. In short, Frida now treats Baz as an enemy to be **erased**, emotionally and perhaps literally, rather than a person with whom any civil interaction is possible.

Motive

Frida Kahlo’s motive to kill Baz is intensely personal and emotional: **he betrayed her love and exploited her deepest vulnerabilities.** Frida is someone who felt life’s pains acutely – physical agony from her injuries and emotional agony from heartbreaks. Baz managed to inflict both: the emotional trauma of humiliation and the physical stress that her fragile body endures from the resulting turmoil (after Baz’s deceit, Frida’s health faltered with stress-induced pain flares). He not only stole her paintings (her “children,” as she called them) and her private letters, but also shamed her publicly by selling those letters full of personal confessions. For a woman as proud as Frida, who placed her heart unabashedly on canvas yet guarded her intimate life among trusted friends, this was an unforgivable violation. Killing Baz would, on a gut level, be an act of **justified revenge** – *“an eye for an eye, a heart for a heart.”* He broke her heart, so she’ll stop his.

Additionally, Frida’s worldview, shaped by Marxist ideas of justice, plays a role. She sees Baz as a **symbol of imperialist exploitation:** the suave foreigner who swoops in, plunders local treasures (be it cultural artifacts or her soul), and leaves ruin in his wake. In her mind, eliminating him is almost a revolutionary act, striking a blow against those who use and destroy the vulnerable. It’s akin to slaying a conquistador. This ideological prism gives her moral permission to do violence; she can tell herself it’s not only for her, but for every Mexican or woman Baz might dupe in the future. In line with this, Frida’s motive has a protective angle too: she likely learned that Baz tried



similar cons with others (perhaps hearing Elsa Maxwell's story or Marion Davies' at the dinner). She would feel a sisterly rage on behalf of those women as well, wanting to stop this predator once and for all.

On a psychological level, Frida has always been *intimate* with death – she nearly died in that bus accident, and throughout her life she painted herself with deathly imagery (skulls, bleeding hearts). She once said, “*I hope the exit is joyful – and I hope never to return.*” Death doesn't terrify her; in some ways, she's made peace with it. Thus, the prospect of dealing death to someone who absolutely deserves it (in her eyes) holds no taboo. There's even a ritualistic feel to what she imagines: Frida might envision shooting Baz in the heart, the organ that troubles her so, almost as a symbolic exorcism of betrayal. She might whisper before doing it, “*Así termina la traición*” (“Thus ends betrayal”), making the act an artful statement in itself.

Furthermore, every time Frida experiences one of her recurrent health issues (say, lying in bed with her spine aflame in pain), she associates it with the stress Baz brought. In a very real sense, she feels he's *killing her slowly* – so why not reverse the roles? Her motive is exacerbated by the fact that Baz has likely not shown remorse; if anything, he's made light of it or avoided her. That lack of contrition solidifies her resolve to be judge, jury, and executioner.

In sum, Frida Kahlo's motive to kill Baz Rutherford can be seen as a convergence of **heartbreak, artistic fury, cultural vengeance, and self-preservation**. He metaphorically killed a part of her (the trusting, loving Frida) and she wants literal retribution. In her vivid imagination, she has replayed the scenario of his death many times – sometimes as a quick gunshot, sometimes as a slow poisoning (perhaps mixing something into his drink, recalling how she lovingly mixed pigments for him once). Each imagined scenario brings a slight smile to her lips, the kind she wears in those self-portraits where she refuses to cry even as she bleeds. For Frida, killing Baz wouldn't be a crime; it would be the final brushstroke on the canvas of their story – one drawn in blood red, to forever seal what he tore open.

Virginia Woolf

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** British
- **Profession:** Novelist & Essayist
- **Gender:** Female
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 30 years old (born 1882)
- **Age in Story:** 30 (same as real age in 1912)

Core Significance



Virginia Woolf is regarded as one of the greatest **modernist writers** of the 20th century. She revolutionised the novel form with her stream-of-consciousness technique, producing classics like *Mrs Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, and *Orlando*. Woolf was also a pioneering feminist thinker; her extended essay *A Room of One's Own* (1929) became a foundational text arguing for women's intellectual freedom and financial independence in a patriarchal world. As a central figure of the Bloomsbury Group – a circle of English writers, artists, and intellectuals – Woolf helped reshape Western attitudes towards art, literature, and even sexuality. Historically, she is important not only for her literary innovations (capturing the interior lives of women, pushing narrative boundaries) but also for her candid discussion of mental health and the barriers faced by female authors in her time.

Early Life and Background

Virginia Woolf was born Adeline Virginia Stephen on 25 January 1882 in London to a well-connected intellectual family. Home-schooled in her father Sir Leslie Stephen's extensive library, young Virginia was precocious and imaginative. But her youth was marred by trauma: she lost her mother at 13 and her beloved brother two years later, triggering the first of many depressive episodes. Additionally, she and her sister Vanessa were sexually abused by their half-brothers – a dark secret that haunted Virginia's psyche and later influenced themes in her writing about the vulnerability of the powerless. After their father died in 1904, Virginia and her siblings moved to Bloomsbury in London, where they created a bohemian household that became the hub of the Bloomsbury Group. By 1912, Virginia had married Leonard Woolf (a writer and social reformer) and was working on her first novel, *The Voyage Out*, while also writing essays and reviews for journals. She had not yet published a book, but she was already known in literary circles as an unusually perceptive critic. However, she was also fragile – in 1912 she survived a serious breakdown and even a suicide attempt shortly after her marriage. These early experiences – of intense intellectual stimulation on one hand and mental turmoil on the other – formed the two poles of Virginia's existence. In our story's context, she arrives at Baz's dinner a bit frail-looking but with keen, observing eyes, already quietly gathering material from life for the novels she will soon pen.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Virginia Woolf's legacy in literature is towering. She pushed the English novel into new realms of psychological depth and poetic form, proving that the inner lives of women and the seemingly mundane events of a day could be as epic as any grand adventure. *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* especially showed how stream-of-consciousness narrative could capture the fluidity of thought and memory. Countless writers – from James Joyce to Toni Morrison – have cited her influence. In feminism, Woolf's contributions are seminal. *A Room of One's Own* popularised the idea that systemic obstacles (like lack of education or privacy) held women back from creative work; her dictum that a woman needs money and a room of her own to write has become a rallying cry for women's intellectual autonomy. Culturally, Woolf and her Bloomsbury friends challenged Victorian mores, advocating for openness about sexuality, including homosexuality (her novel *Orlando* celebrated an androgynous, gender-changing hero/heroine). In mental health discourse, Virginia's raw portrayals of her own struggles and her eventual tragic suicide in 1941



have made her an emblem of the sensitive genius wrestling with inner demons. Today, she's eulogised not just in classrooms but in popular media (think of the novel/film *The Hours* which centres on her). Her name has entered adjective form – "Woolfian" – describing narratives that elegantly examine consciousness. Overall, Virginia Woolf's impact is that she broadened the scope of what literature can do and illuminated the need for women's creative equality, leaving an indelible mark on both art and society.

Achievements as per 1912

By the end of 1912, Virginia Woolf had not yet published the major works that would earn her fame. However, she had made significant strides. She had completed the manuscript of her first novel, *The Voyage Out* (though it would not be published until 1915), which in itself was an achievement – a sizeable, daring novel written by a woman in her 20s. She also had built a reputation as a brilliant literary critic and essayist in London; by 1912 she had contributed dozens of reviews to the *Times Literary Supplement*, impressing readers with her sharp insights into contemporary books. Another key achievement of this year was her marriage to Leonard Woolf and their founding of the Hogarth Press (in 1917) was on the horizon – the discussions and plans for self-publishing their works were already germinating in 1912 as the couple sought more creative control. Within the Bloomsbury Group, Virginia was something of a linchpin by 1912: she hosted regular gatherings of writers and artists at her home, facilitating cross-pollination of ideas among Britain's avant-garde. It's fair to say that by this time Virginia had achieved an intellectual leadership role among her peers. (*Historically, her first novel came out in 1915, but we can imagine an accelerated timeline where perhaps The Voyage Out is near publication in late 1912 for the story's sake.*) Thus, at 30, Virginia Woolf's achievements included being a respected critic, a central figure in one of England's most important artistic circles, and the near-author of a bold debut novel – all signs of the influential voice she was about to become.

Motive

Virginia Woolf's motive to kill Baz arises from **profound fear and moral indignation**. Baz Rutherford possesses her innermost diaries – within them lies the secret of her childhood abuse and her recurring suicidal thoughts. In Edwardian England, exposure to such personal trauma could lead to scandal, pity, or ridicule; Virginia is terrified that Baz might publish or gossip about these entries. Her primary motive is thus **to protect her privacy and the dignity of her family**. If killing Baz is the only way to ensure these painful secrets stay buried, she is prepared, albeit with trembling hands, to do it. Additionally, Baz publicly humiliated her by arranging that cruel anonymous review of her novel. That review dented her confidence terribly – for a sensitive artist like Virginia, such an attack on her work felt like an attack on her very self. She harbours a quiet fury at the thought that Baz nearly derailed her literary career before it began. Removing him permanently would be a form of **retributive justice**: one less malicious critic preying on vulnerable female writers (in her mind, Baz represents every man who ever scoffed at women's writing).

There is also an element of **mental self-preservation**. Virginia's sanity has always hung by a thread at times. Baz's continued presence – the mere knowledge he walks the earth freely with her diaries



in hand – is an unbearable pressure on that thread. She has begun hearing imaginary snickers of society at her secrets, a sign she might spiral into breakdown if this isn't resolved. In her diary (which she now keeps guarded under lock and key), she wrote a line from Sophocles: "*No one loves the messenger who brings bad news.*" Baz is both the bad messenger and the creator of bad news for her. She sees his death as the only way to find mental peace. Indeed, in a dark corner of her thoughts Virginia wonders if, should Baz be found dead, it might solve things neatly: her diaries could be retrieved from among his effects by a discreet Leonard, and perhaps the world would assume the guilt of those letters/review died with him.

Eleanor Roosevelt

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** American
- **Profession:** Political Figure, Social Activist (Future First Lady)
- **Gender:** Female
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 28 years old (born 1884)
- **Age in Story:** 28 (portrayed at her real age, a young society matron in 1912)

Core Significance

Anna **Eleanor Roosevelt** is celebrated as one of the **most influential women in 20th-century politics and human rights advocacy**. She redefined the role of First Lady of the United States (1933–1945) from ceremonial hostess to active political participant, championing causes like civil rights, women's empowerment, and aid for the poor. Later, as a U.N. diplomat, she chaired the committee that drafted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, earning the nickname "First Lady of the World." Eleanor's compassionate leadership and public outspokenness made her a symbol of social justice. In 1912, though not yet First Lady, she was already involved in public service, laying the groundwork for her later impact by working with charitable organisations and advocating for the disadvantaged. History remembers her as a **pioneer of female political engagement** and a tireless defender of human dignity.

Early Life and Background

Eleanor was born into the American elite on 11 October 1884 in New York City. Despite her status (niece of President Theodore Roosevelt), she had a traumatic childhood. Her mother's beauty and social expectations made young Eleanor feel insecure about her looks, and worse, her alcoholic father – whom she adored – died when she was only ten. Orphaned by age ten (her mother died when Eleanor was eight), she was raised by strict relatives. This sorrowful upbringing forged her empathetic character: from an early age, Eleanor was attuned to the suffering of others. As a teenager, she attended Allenswood Academy in England, where the headmistress, Marie Souvestre, instilled in her the belief that women's minds and voices had value. Eleanor blossomed academically and gained the confidence to form her own opinions. Returning to New York, she



involved herself in social work – teaching dance and literature to impoverished immigrant children on the Lower East Side and volunteering in settlement houses. In 1905, at age 20, she married her distant cousin Franklin Delano Roosevelt (a dashing young man with political ambitions). Over the next few years, Eleanor balanced raising their children with public service. By 1912, she was an active member of the Women's Union Trade League and the League of Women Voters, and she regularly visited World War I soldiers in hospitals as part of the Red Cross. These experiences – witnessing poverty, mingling with immigrants, tending the wounded – were **formative**, shaping her conviction that those born into privilege have a duty to help those in need.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Eleanor Roosevelt's legacy is vast. As First Lady during the Great Depression and World War II, she used her position to promote social reforms – from championing the federal arts programmes that gave jobs to artists, to pressing her husband to support minority rights. She held women-only press conferences (forcing newspapers to hire female reporters) and wrote a widely-syndicated column, "My Day," sharing her views on everything from civil rights to youth employment. After FDR's death, President Truman appointed her to the United Nations, where she was a driving force behind the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, an achievement she considered her greatest. This document, adopted in 1948, set fundamental principles for human freedoms worldwide – a testament to her lifelong belief in equality. Eleanor also became an informal ambassador of goodwill, traveling extensively to meet world leaders and hear ordinary people's concerns. At home, she was an early supporter of the civil rights movement, boldly resigning from the Daughters of the American Revolution when they barred Black singer Marian Anderson from performing. Her courageous stance helped inspire later progress on racial integration. By the time of her death in 1962, Eleanor was regarded as the conscience of the nation – a woman who had leveraged her platform to speak for the voiceless. Monuments, schools, and awards exist in her honour, and her extensive writings still influence discussions on leadership and human rights. In sum, she left an indelible mark as a **humanitarian trailblazer** who widened the scope of what women – and First Ladies – could do on the world stage.

Achievements as per 1912

As of 1912, Eleanor Roosevelt was only 28 and not yet in the global spotlight, but she had already taken significant steps on her path to prominence. She had become a respected figure in **New York's social reform circles**, volunteering for the New York Consumers' League to investigate working conditions in garment factories and joining the Junior League to teach needy children dance and calisthenics. By this time she had also become involved in the women's suffrage movement (at least as a supporter if not a front-line campaigner), accompanying her mentor and suffragist uncle Theodore Roosevelt to events and learning the art of lobbying. Crucially, in 1912 Eleanor attended the Democratic National Convention with Franklin – her first direct exposure to high-level politics, where she networked with politicians and learned convention tactics. Though she mostly played the role of supportive political wife then, observers noted her **keen interest in policy discussions**. On the home front, she had mastered public speaking in small forums, overcoming her shy nature enough to address women's groups about volunteerism and charity – an



unusual endeavour for a society matron at the time. Furthermore, by 1912 Eleanor had four children (and one more on the way), and balancing motherhood with activism was itself an achievement in an era when women were expected to confine themselves to domestic roles. (*Of course, her most famous accomplishments lay ahead – the “My Day” column, the UN work – but even by 1912 those who knew her likely sensed her blend of social conscience and patrician savvy marked her as someone to watch.*)

Motive

Background:

In the months before the fateful dinner, Eleanor Roosevelt's relationship with Baz Rutherford was far more complicated than anyone suspected. Their paths first crossed at a Red Cross gala in Paris, where Eleanor—lonely in her marriage and newly awakened to the world's possibilities—was swept up by Baz's charm and daring. Their brief but passionate affair left Eleanor with a secret she dared not share: the possibility that her youngest child was not Franklin's, but Baz's.

The Blackmail:

Baz, ever the opportunist, kept letters and mementos from their time together. When Eleanor tried to end the affair and return to her duties, Baz threatened to expose their liaison—and the true paternity of her child—unless she did as he wished. For months, Eleanor lived in fear that Baz would destroy her marriage, her reputation, and her children's future.

The Diamonds:

But the final straw came when Eleanor discovered that Baz had stolen a velvet pouch containing fifty diamonds and a pearl necklace - family heirlooms she had entrusted to him for safekeeping during a journey from Paris to London. Baz sold the stones on the black market, using the proceeds to fund his own schemes. When Eleanor confronted him, Baz laughed off her outrage, reminding her that any scandal would ruin her, not him.

Eleanor's feelings for Baz had once been genuine—she had even imagined a new life with him. But after the betrayal, the blackmail, and the theft, her love curdled into hatred. Now, with Baz threatening to reveal everything if she did not help him locate the Kruger Gold, Eleanor saw only one way out: Baz had to be silenced, for her sake and for her child's.



Jan Smuts



Basic Details

- **Nationality:** South African
- **Profession:** Statesman & Military Leader
- **Gender:** Male
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 42 years old (born 1870)
- **Age in Story:** 42 years old (actual age in 1912)

Core Significance

Jan Smuts was one of South Africa's most prominent leaders and a major figure in global politics in the first half of the 20th century. A brilliant lawyer turned general turned statesman, he uniquely served as a top commander in the Boer War *against* the British (1899–1902) and then as a key ally *with* the British in World Wars I and II. He twice served as Prime Minister of South Africa (1919–1924 and 1939–1948). Internationally, Smuts was instrumental in shaping the post-WWI world order – he was a founding figure of the League of Nations and later one of the architects of the United Nations after WWII. He is sometimes called a philosopher-statesman for his writings on holism and governance. In sum, Jan Smuts is historically important as a **bridge between eras**: he helped transition South Africa from colony to a self-governing union, and he had a hand in laying the groundwork for modern international diplomacy. However, his legacy is double-edged – he championed peace and unity globally, but at home his policies upheld racial segregation, reflecting the complexities and contradictions of his time.

Early Life and Background

Jan Christiaan Smuts was born in 1870 on a farm in the Cape Colony. A studious Afrikaans farm boy, he excelled academically – so much so that he went to Cambridge University in England and graduated top of his law class. Smuts returned to South Africa with deep knowledge of British



culture and a determination to secure dignity and rights for his people (the Boers). He rose to prominence as a young legal advisor, but the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War turned him into a guerrilla general. Smuts proved a formidable tactician, leading daring commando raids against the British. After the bitter defeat of the Boers, Smuts surprised many by advocating reconciliation. He played a leading role in negotiating the creation of the Union of South Africa (established in 1910), which united British colonies and Boer republics under one self-governing dominion. By 1912, Smuts was serving as **Minister of Defence and Mines** in the Union's government. He was the right-hand man of Prime Minister Louis Botha. Smuts's early life taught him both the sting of subjugation and the value of pragmatism. He was a polymath – writing poetry in Dutch, studying science, and conversing on philosophy – yet also a rugged veldcommando. This dual nature (intellectual and warrior) defined his background. By 1912, Jan Smuts had transformed from rebel general to establishment politician, but he carried with him the clout of his military exploits and the respect of both former foes (the British) and compatriots. He already had an international profile – in 1912 he travelled to London for imperial conferences, impressing figures like Churchill with his breadth of vision. That year he also began formulating ideas on racial segregation as a solution to South Africa's "native question" (tragically laying groundwork for policies that would later harden into apartheid). Thus, Smuts in 1912 was a man balancing idealism and Realpolitik – at once celebrated and controversial, shaping a young nation while navigating its deep divisions.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Jan Smuts's legacy is far-reaching. Internationally, he is lauded as one of the key founders of the United Nations – he drafted the preamble to the UN Charter and was the only person to sign the charters of both the League of Nations and the UN. He was a visionary in terms of advocating for a "Commonwealth of Nations" rather than an empire, influencing how former colonies and the UK transitioned into a free association. During WWI, as a member of the Imperial War Cabinet, he directed British forces in East Africa and later helped plan the Western Front offensives; during WWII, he was a trusted advisor to Churchill. In those global arenas, Smuts is remembered as a wise elder statesman with a unique colonial perspective. However, within South Africa, his legacy is complex: he supported enfranchisement of white women and somewhat more moderate treatment of the black African majority than some of his contemporaries, but he still upheld a system that denied political rights to people of colour. His defeat in the 1948 election by hardliners paved the way for the full apartheid regime, something many say was a rebuke to his comparatively lenient segregation stance. Over time, his reputation in South Africa became overshadowed by the reviled policies of apartheid (and his complicity in segregation). But in recent decades, historians have taken a nuanced view: acknowledging Smuts's flaws while also recognising him as one of the early 20th century's great internationalist thinkers. Statues of Smuts stand in London and Pretoria, and institutions like Smuts Hall at Cambridge remind the world of his intellectual legacy. Ultimately, his impact is that of a man who profoundly shaped his country's trajectory and contributed importantly to global governance, embodying the contradictions of his era – enlightened in some respects, blinkered in others.

Achievements as of 1912



By the end of 1912, Jan Smuts had already achieved more than most do in a lifetime. He had been a lead negotiator in the talks that unified South Africa in 1910, essentially helping to write the young nation's constitution. As the Union's first Minister of Defence, Smuts oversaw the creation of a unified South African army – an accomplishment that melded former Boer commandos and British colonial forces into one structure. Under his guidance in 1912, the defence force was modernising and expanding, which Smuts counted as a significant feather in his cap. Politically, he and Botha had successfully navigated the delicate early years of the Union, balancing Afrikaner and British interests—no small feat so soon after a war. That year Smuts also introduced legislation to consolidate mines and regulate labour, increasing revenue from the booming gold and diamond industries (earning him the moniker “the Empire’s most valuable man” for bolstering mining output). In personal intellectual life, 1912 saw Smuts present initial ideas that would later form his philosophy of “Holism” – he delivered a guest lecture in Pretoria that year musing on how wholes are greater than the sum of parts, signalling his emerging stature as a thinker. Additionally, Jan Smuts had been honoured by King George V with induction into the Privy Council in 1912, a mark of recognition by Britain for his statesmanship. That same year, he amicably resolved a small but symbolic border dispute with neighboring German South West Africa, showing his diplomatic skill in averting imperial tensions. Those achievements – building a national army, strengthening the economy, gaining international honours, and maintaining harmony between former enemies – made Smuts by 1912 one of the most accomplished and respected men in the British Empire. He was, at 42, already being talked about as a future prime minister of South Africa. In short, his résumé in 1912 gleamed: war hero, nation-builder, cabinet minister, and budding global strategist.

Motive

For Jan Smuts, the motive to kill Baz Rutherford is rooted in a tangled web of loyalty, betrayal, and the shadowy legacy of the Kruger Gold.

The Kruger Gold and National Duty:

During the dying days of the Anglo-Boer War, Smuts was one of a handful of trusted men who helped conceal the legendary Kruger Gold—vast reserves spirited away from Pretoria as the British closed in. Smuts believed, and still believes, that this gold rightfully belongs to the people of South Africa, a nest egg for the nation’s future, not a prize for foreign powers or private profiteers. He risked his life to keep its location secret, swearing an oath with his comrades that the gold would never fall into British or American hands.

Baz’s Betrayal:

In the years since, Smuts has watched with growing alarm as rumours of the gold’s whereabouts have resurfaced—always traced back to Baz Rutherford. Baz, ever the opportunist, was involved in the original hiding of the treasure, but unlike Smuts, he saw it as a personal windfall. Worse, Baz has been peddling clues and forged maps to the highest bidder, including agents of the British and Americans. Smuts suspects Baz has even sold information to Roosevelt’s intermediaries, putting the gold at risk of foreign seizure.



The Diamonds and the Final Straw:

Recently, Smuts discovered that Baz had also stolen a cache of uncut diamonds—part of the secret reserves meant to fund the Boer cause in exile. These diamonds, smuggled out of the Transvaal and entrusted to a select few, were never meant for private gain. Baz's theft is not just a personal betrayal; it is a crime against the nation. Smuts knows that if word gets out, it will not only ruin his reputation but also undermine the fragile unity he has worked so hard to build in the new Union of South Africa.

Destroying the Evidence:

Most dangerously, Baz possesses documents—maps, ciphered letters, and ledgers—that could reveal the hiding place of the Kruger Gold to the British or American governments. Smuts is haunted by the thought that, should these fall into the wrong hands, the gold will be lost forever, and South Africa's sovereignty further eroded. The only way to ensure the secret remains safe is to destroy Baz—and with him, any evidence he holds.

A Calculated Decision:

For Smuts, the decision is not made lightly. He is a man of law and order, a builder of nations, not a murderer. But Baz's greed and recklessness have made him a threat to everything Smuts holds dear: the future of South Africa, the legacy of the Boer struggle, and the hope of true independence. In Smuts's mind, killing Baz is not just an act of personal vengeance—it is a grim necessity, a final act of patriotism to protect the gold, recover the stolen diamonds, and ensure that neither the Americans nor the English ever learn the truth.

Summary:

Jan Smuts's motive is thus a potent mix of national loyalty, personal betrayal, and the ruthless logic of survival in a world where secrets are worth more than gold. Baz must die—not only to avenge past wrongs, but to safeguard the future of a nation still struggling to define itself in the shadow of empire.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** American
- **Profession:** Politician (New York State Senator)
- **Gender:** Male
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 30 years old (born 1882)
- **Age in Story:** ~30 (portrayed at his actual age in 1912)

Core Significance



Franklin Delano Roosevelt is historically revered as the **32nd President of the United States**, serving an unprecedented four terms and leading America through the twin crises of the Great Depression and World War II. He is known for implementing the New Deal – sweeping social and economic reforms that reshaped the role of the federal government and helped lift the US out of economic collapse. Internationally, FDR was a principal architect of the Allied strategy in WWII and a key figure in establishing the post-war order (from the United Nations to Bretton Woods institutions). His leadership marked the ascendancy of the US as a global superpower. In essence, FDR's significance lies in being a transformative leader who **guided the nation through economic recovery and global conflict**, leaving a legacy of expanded social safety nets and American leadership on the world stage.

Early Life and Background

Born on 30 January 1882 into a wealthy New York family (distant cousin of Theodore Roosevelt), Franklin enjoyed a privileged upbringing at the family estate in Hyde Park. He was doted upon as an only child and imbued with a sense of noblesse oblige – the duty to serve. Educated at Groton School and Harvard, young Franklin was charming, confident, and politically ambitious. In 1905 he married his cousin Eleanor Roosevelt, forging a partnership that would deeply shape his progressive ideals. By 1912, Franklin was a rising star in the Democratic Party. He had been elected to the New York State Senate in 1910, bucking the party machine. He quickly made a name championing **progressive reforms**, aligning himself with Woodrow Wilson's wing of the Democrats. At 30, he had just played an active role in Wilson's 1912 presidential campaign, using his patrician connections and speaking skills to help deliver New York's support. His early experiences – from battling Tammany Hall bosses in Albany to barnstorming for Wilson – taught Franklin political savvy and courage to defy party bosses. Though his path had been relatively smooth so far (his crippling polio would come in 1921), by 1912 he'd shown flashes of the charismatic leadership and innovative thought that would later define him. He was at this point Assistant Secretary of the Navy-in-waiting (Wilson would appoint him in 1913), reflecting his interest in naval affairs and national service, much like his distant cousin Teddy. Franklin's background of privilege mixed with empathy (honed through Eleanor's influence and exposure to poverty in New York) set the foundation for the compassionate yet shrewd politician he was becoming.

Legacy and Historical Impact

FDR's legacy is vast. Domestically, he radically reshaped American society with the **New Deal (1933–1939)**, creating jobs for millions, instituting Social Security, unemployment insurance, and regulations on banks and stock markets – programs that to this day form the backbone of American social policy. He thereby redefined the relationship between the US government and its citizens, making it a given that government should help ensure economic security. Politically, he forged the New Deal Coalition, uniting diverse groups (labour unions, farmers, African-Americans, urban immigrants, Southern whites) into a dominant Democratic voting bloc that realigned American politics for decades. Internationally, Roosevelt's impact is equally profound: he was one of the "Big Three" (with Churchill and Stalin) whose decisions shaped the outcome of WWII and the post-war



world. He championed the creation of the United Nations in 1945, envisaging it as a means to preserve peace (sadly, he died just before the UN's formal founding). Under FDR's leadership, the US emerged from isolation, and the seeds of the American-led international order were sown. Culturally, his famous Fireside Chats via radio transformed how leaders communicate with citizens, building trust through intimate, direct conversation. Roosevelt's imprint is felt every time Americans draw a Social Security cheque or when the President addresses the nation in times of crisis. He is consistently ranked among the greatest US presidents for steering the country through profound adversity with optimism and decisive action. Simply put, FDR's legacy is a **revitalised American democracy and a vision of proactive governance** that left the nation stronger, fairer, and more engaged with the world.

Achievements as per 1912

By the end of 1912, Franklin D. Roosevelt had taken the first key steps of a distinguished public career. He had won election to the New York State Senate in 1910 at age 28 – a notable achievement since he ran against the powerful Tammany Hall machine and won, showing uncommon political courage and appeal. In the Senate, FDR built a reputation as a “*Blue-Eyed Reformer*,” advocating for transparency and siding with progressive Governor Charles Evans Hughes on issues like utility regulation. In 1912, he was one of the few New York Democrats to break with Tammany to support reformist Woodrow Wilson for the party's presidential nomination. He attended the Democratic National Convention that year and was instrumental in helping Wilson secure the nomination on the 46th ballot – Wilson personally thanked the young Roosevelt for his efforts. Thus, FDR emerged from the 1912 campaign with increased national visibility and as a friend to the President-elect. Indeed, it was understood that Wilson would reward him; sure enough, Wilson's team quietly indicated Roosevelt was the likely choice for **Assistant Secretary of the Navy**, a post once held by his idol cousin Theodore. So by 1912, Franklin had achieved state-level legislative success, played a part in electing a President, and was on the cusp of entering the federal executive service. Additionally, he had grown in confidence: his effective stumping for Wilson across the Midwest had shown he could connect with voters beyond New York. On the personal front, in 1912 Franklin and Eleanor had four young children, and he juggled family with political life (with Eleanor herself growing active in politics through the League of Women Voters). In short, by 1912 FDR had demonstrated political savvy, reformist credentials, and had positioned himself for the leap to the national stage – achievements that paved the way for the greatness to come.

Motive

Franklin D. Roosevelt's presence at the Christmas gathering is no festive coincidence. In 1913, Roosevelt is serving as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, ambitious and politically astute — but not without secrets. Baz, ever the manipulator, has uncovered sensitive documents linking Roosevelt to discreet financial arrangements with European intermediaries, including a Dutch bank suspected of holding a portion of the missing Kruger Gold.



The documents suggest Roosevelt may have used his influence to facilitate quiet transfers of South African gold into private American holdings — a scandal that, if revealed, could derail his rising career and tarnish his reputation as a reformer. Baz has threatened to expose these dealings unless Roosevelt cooperates.

Roosevelt, burdened by personal debts inherited from his family's shipping ventures and desperate to protect his political future, sees the Kruger Gold not only as a liability but as a potential lifeline. If Baz truly knows where it is, then Roosevelt must play along, retrieve the gold, and ensure Baz never speaks of it again.

His attendance is calculated. He's not here to celebrate — he's here to silence a threat and secure a fortune.

T. E. Lawrence

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** British
- **Profession:** Archaeologist (later Military Officer and Author)
- **Gender:** Male
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 24 years old (born 1888)
- **Age in Story:** ~24 (portrayed at actual age in 1912)

Core Significance

Thomas Edward Lawrence, known as "**Lawrence of Arabia**," is famous for his role in the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire during World War I and for his vivid writings about that experience. As a British army officer, he liaisons with Arab rebel forces (1916–1918), galvanising the fight for Arab independence and employing guerrilla tactics that became legendary – blowing up trains, leading camel charges, etc. He became an icon through Lowell Thomas's wartime dispatches and later through his own book, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, which cast him as a romantic, enigmatic hero in flowing Arab robes. Lawrence's legacy is as a symbol of **unconventional warfare and cross-cultural alliance**. His advocacy for the Arab cause and his complicated identity straddling East and West have fascinated historians and the public alike. In essence, T. E. Lawrence is historically important as a **champion of Arab nationalism, a pioneer of guerrilla warfare strategy**, and a literary figure whose fame helped shape Western views of the Middle East in the 20th century.

Early Life and Background



Born out of wedlock to an Anglo-Irish noble father and his governess, T. E. Lawrence was raised in Wales and Oxford under modest circumstances but with a good education. From a young age, he was enthralled by medieval history and chivalric ideals. He attended Oxford University, where his passion for the Middle East took root. By 1910, Lawrence was in Syria on an archaeological dig, learning Arabic and immersing himself in local culture. In 1912, at age 24, he was working as an archaeologist for the British Museum at Carchemish (on the Euphrates), supervising excavations of Hittite ruins. Lawrence lived among Arabs, adopting their dress in the field for practicality, and earned a reputation as "*El Aurens*" – a friendly, eccentric young Briton who spoke Arabic fluently and respected Bedouin ways. This period honed his knowledge of tribal dynamics and desert survival. He also traveled extensively on foot and by camel across Syria and Jordan, mapping terrain (ostensibly for archaeological surveys, though the information was valuable to British military intelligence). By the outbreak of WWI in 1914, Lawrence's background as a scholar-soldier was set: he had the academic rigour, the language skills, and the firsthand desert experience that would make him a valuable officer. In 1912, however, he was still officially a civilian – a brilliant yet relatively obscure archaeologist who had published papers on Crusader castles and pottery finds. His close observation of Ottoman rule's effects on the Arabs around him was planting the seeds of sympathy for Arab independence. Lawrence's early life thus provided an unusual blend of **intellectual training and rugged fieldwork**, forging a character that could navigate both British high society and tribal councils under the stars.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Lawrence's legacy is immortalised in both military history and popular culture. Militarily, he influenced the conception of guerrilla warfare; his tactics of mobility, surprise, and leveraging indigenous forces against a conventional army were ahead of their time and studied by later generations. Politically, Lawrence's efforts (though ultimately thwarted by imperial diplomacy at Versailles) shone a spotlight on Arab aspirations. He tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to secure a fair deal for the Arabs in the post-WWI settlement, and his disappointment in the betrayal of promises (like those in the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement) made him a poignant figure lamenting colonial cynicism. Culturally, Lawrence became a semi-mythic figure – the blond Englishman leading Arabs to victory – which was amplified by media and later the epic 1962 film *Lawrence of Arabia*. This image has been critiqued and deconstructed, yet remains potent. His literary contributions are significant: *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* is considered a masterpiece of war literature, offering insight into the psychology of conflict and the Middle East. Furthermore, Lawrence's advocacy and persona helped shape Western romantic notions of the Middle East (for better or worse). In sum, T. E. Lawrence left an impact as a **bridge between cultures**, demonstrating that empathy and understanding could achieve strategic and human results in war. Though he shunned fame later (enlisting under aliases to escape the spotlight), his legend only grew. Even today, in discussions about insurgency or Western-Arab relations, Lawrence's example is often evoked – a testament to his enduring hold on the imagination as the quintessential "outsider who fought with the locals" and changed the course of history in doing so.

Achievements as per 1912



By late 1912, T. E. Lawrence's public achievements were modest and academic, yet they laid the foundation for his later exploits. He had earned a First Class degree at Oxford, demonstrating his scholarly prowess in history. More concretely, he had spent several seasons on archaeological digs in Syria under renowned archaeologist D. G. Hogarth. At Carchemish, Lawrence was essentially the field co-director – a significant responsibility for a man in his early twenties. There he helped unearth and catalogue important Hittite sculptures and artifacts, contributing to the understanding of ancient Mesopotamian civilizations. These findings were documented in reports and gained notice in academic circles; one could say Lawrence was already a published researcher by 1912 (for example, he wrote about medieval fortresses in the Levant, publishing an insightful article on Crusader castles that year, blending architecture with strategic analysis). Additionally, Lawrence had become fluent in Arabic and familiar with Bedouin dialects – not a typical achievement for a young Englishman. He prided himself on having navigated 1,100 miles of the Syrian desert, mapping dozens of Crusader castle sites – a feat of endurance and documentation that drew praise from the Royal Geographical Society. Another achievement, less formal but impactful: he forged genuine friendships with local Arab workers and tribal leaders at Carchemish. This trust was such that when an anti-Western riot erupted in a nearby town, Lawrence was reportedly able to mediate and protect his team – a soft skill achievement in cross-cultural leadership. Though he had yet to don a military uniform or gain fame, by 1912 Lawrence had proven himself as an **exceptional linguist, a diligent archaeologist, and a hardy explorer**. He was respected by mentors and had caught the eye of British intelligence (his detailed knowledge of Syrian terrain quietly shared to the War Office). In short, he had positioned himself – unknowingly – to become a useful asset in the event of war. Thus, while no medals adorned him in 1912, Lawrence's unique preparatory achievements (academic distinction, deep regional insight, and field leadership) were remarkable for a man of 24 and set the stage for the extraordinary role he would soon play.

How They Met Baz

T. E. Lawrence's first brush with Baz Rutherford occurred on an archaeological dig in Syria in 1911. Baz had arrived at Carchemish posing as a dealer in antiquities, likely sniffing for treasures to smuggle out and sell in European markets. Lawrence, as site co-director, at first welcomed this well-spoken "antique buyer" – engaging him about Hittite relics. Baz flattered Lawrence's expertise, dangling the possibility of funding for the excavation in exchange for first rights to purchase select artifacts. Initially, Lawrence was tempted; extra funds could mean better conditions for his workers and more ground covered. However, as weeks passed, Lawrence grew suspicious of Baz's intentions – particularly when local labourers reported seeing Baz poking around the storage tents at night. Sure enough, one morning a prized clay tablet (covered in cuneiform script Lawrence had been painstakingly deciphering) went missing. Lawrence was furious and confronted Baz, who breezily denied theft, suggesting perhaps an untrustworthy foreman was to blame. Lacking proof and mindful of maintaining the dig's reputation, Lawrence bit back his accusations. But he kept a closer watch.

Their confrontation came to a head when Lawrence, unable to sleep in the summer heat, took a midnight walk among the trenches and caught Baz red-handed carefully wrapping a small but



valuable statue in cloth. Startled, Baz dropped the genial pretense and bolted. Lawrence tackled him amidst the pottery shards. A scuffle ensued – unusual for the scholarly Lawrence – resulting in Baz taking a heavy punch to the jaw from the indignant archaeologist. Regaining his slick tongue, Baz pleaded that he was trying to “rescue” the artifact from “potential Ottoman confiscation,” but Lawrence had none of it. Rather than involving the authorities (which could shut down the site), Lawrence imposed his own justice: he forced Baz to surrender not only the statue but also other items Baz had secretly acquired from nearby digs. Under Lawrence’s steely gaze, Baz was escorted to a Damascus-bound train with a firm warning that if he ever returned, Lawrence would inform the Ottoman police of his thievery (and under the Turks, baz would face harsh prison). Baz, nursing a bruised face and pride, slunk away. Lawrence’s colleagues lauded Lawrence’s courage in handling the matter quietly.

Relationship to Baz

At the 1912 dinner, T. E. Lawrence’s demeanor toward Baz Rutherford was one of cool politeness overlaying unforgotten mistrust. Lawrence’s nature was forgiving to an extent – he believed in understanding others – but Baz had not only stolen from him but betrayed the academic sanctity of his work. That left a scar. When Baz cheerily tried to greet Lawrence as an old friend in front of others – “Ah, Mr. Lawrence, how goes the digging? Found any more marvels?” – Lawrence responded with measured courtesy: “*Thank you, the excavations proceed well.*” His tone was neutral, his gray-blue eyes flat as they met Baz’s. There was none of the warmth Lawrence showed to, say, Prince Tafari or Marlene Dietrich when they spoke. To Baz, Lawrence was formal, addressing him as “Mr. Rutherford” at all times, whereas Baz over-familiarly called him “Tom” until Lawrence firmly corrected him: “*It’s Lawrence, actually.*”

Throughout the party, Lawrence did not initiate any conversation with Baz and gently steered himself away if Baz joined a circle he was in. For instance, when Basil (Baz) began recounting a hyperbolic tale of danger in the Syrian desert – clearly a fabrication cribbed from someone else’s exploits – Lawrence quietly excused himself to refill a drink rather than listen or call out the lie. It wasn’t cowardice; he simply found Baz’s presence distasteful and preferred to avoid unnecessary drama in a social setting. Baz, sensing Lawrence’s iciness, at one point tried to publicly commend Lawrence: “*Lawrence here single-handedly foiled some thieves at his dig, true heroics!*” He did this hoping to diffuse Lawrence’s hostility by praising him and perhaps implying they were on amicable terms. Lawrence gave a tight smile and clarified for the group, “*It was hardly heroics – just protecting the integrity of our work,*” then glanced at Baz and added, “*from unscrupulous hands.*” The pointed comment hung in the air. Baz coughed and changed topic.

Lawrence’s restraint with Baz came from professionalism; he treated Baz as a negligible annoyance, not worth a scene. But internally, Lawrence had resolved never to trust or aid Baz again. During a discussion on antiquities, when another guest jovially asked if Lawrence had ever sold artifacts for profit, Lawrence replied loud enough for Baz to hear, “*I consider that akin to selling one’s soul. Our heritage isn’t for sale.*” Baz avoided Lawrence after that, understanding the young man’s congenial veneer masked a steel core that would not bend. In one private tête-à-tête toward the end, Baz murmured an apology for “that misunderstanding in Carchemish.” Lawrence’s



jaw tightened slightly, but he gave a quick nod, saying only *“I hope you’ve found more honest pursuits, Mr. Rutherford.”* Baz attempted a feeble joke about finding honesty unprofitable; Lawrence arched a brow and rejoined, *“Then I pity you,”* before walking away, signifying the conversation – and acquaintance – was over.

Motive

For a man of principle like T. E. Lawrence, wanting to kill someone is no small thing. Yet Baz Rutherford managed to ignite in Lawrence a rare brew of **righteous anger and pragmatic concern** that could justify such a dark thought. Lawrence’s motive to contemplate killing Baz would stem from Baz’s theft and attempted smuggling of priceless heritage objects – to Lawrence, an **unforgivable sin**. He had devoted himself to preserving and understanding the history of the Middle East; Baz jeopardised that for selfish greed. In Lawrence’s moral framework, Baz’s actions weren’t just a personal affront but a crime against culture and knowledge. Lawrence believed deeply that artifacts belonged to their land and people, not to black-market profiteers. If eliminating one looter would protect countless relics from desecration, Lawrence might deem it a sad but necessary duty. He had, after all, seen the damage looters and vandals could do – whole chapters of history lost for thirty pieces of silver. Removing Baz permanently would be like **cutting out a cancer** from the archaeological world.

Additionally, there’s a protective element at play. Lawrence’s experiences in Syria taught him the fragility of trust with local communities and Ottoman authorities. Baz’s meddling nearly got the Carchemish dig shut down (if Ottoman police had raided after a report of stolen antiquities, the British team would have been expelled). Lawrence likely reckons that as long as Baz flits around the Middle East, every excavation is at risk – one stolen artifact could spark diplomatic incidents or cause locals to turn against foreign archaeologists they see colluding with thieves. By killing Baz, Lawrence would **safeguard future scientific missions and the relationships he’d carefully built with Arab workers and Turkish overseers**. It’s a drastic form of conservation, but to Lawrence the stakes are high: the difference between unearthing history or seeing it ransacked. He might regard Baz as not much different from the Ottoman soldiers he may one day fight – both threaten the well-being of the people and past Lawrence cares about. Just as he wouldn’t hesitate to shoot an enemy soldier in wartime, he could rationalise shooting an enemy of culture in peacetime.

Furthermore, there is the personal honour aspect. Baz made a fool of Lawrence to a degree – duping him initially. While Lawrence subdued Baz eventually, the sting of almost being an unwitting accomplice to artifact theft pricks at his pride. Lawrence prided himself on understanding the local environment; Baz, an interloper, nearly outfoxed him on his own turf. A part of Lawrence quietly smarts at that. In a man raised on knightly romances, there is an almost Renaissancian view that **dishonour must sometimes be cleansed by blood**. Baz violated the guest rights Lawrence extended – in the lore Lawrence loved, that’s a capital offense. If Lawrence were to encounter Baz sabotaging another site or harming one of Lawrence’s trusted Arab diggers, a *red mist* could well descend. He had a capacity for decisive violence (later proven in war). Baz, in pushing Lawrence’s ethical and emotional boundaries, could trigger that latent warrior.



Lastly, consider that Lawrence is on the cusp of wartime. Within a couple of years, he'll be in the deserts blowing up trains. The difference between sabotaging Ottoman infrastructure and quietly dispatching a villain like Baz isn't huge in the grand scheme to him – both acts serve what he sees as a higher cause. If Baz were to, say, attempt mid-war to sell British secrets to the Turks (a scenario Lawrence could imagine given Baz's nature), Lawrence would without hesitation put a bullet in him to save lives. Even in 1912, he might extrapolate: better to **pre-empt any future treachery** by Baz than regret not acting.

In summary, T. E. Lawrence's motive to kill Baz Rutherford arises from a **fusion of ethical outrage, protective foresight, and a code of honour**. Baz threatened principles and people that Lawrence held dear – the preservation of history, trust between East and West, and Lawrence's own integrity. While Lawrence is a man of empathy, he is also a man of action when lines are crossed. Baz had crossed multiple lines. Thus, if one dusk in the ruins of Carchemish, Baz's shadow had reappeared to pilfer again, it's not unthinkable Lawrence would have lain in wait with his pistol – steady hand, clear conscience – and ended the looter's career for good. In Lawrence's measured view, it would not be murder, but the **execution of justice in a land too remote for the reach of courts**, an act to protect the beauty and truth he loved from the greed he loathed.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** Turkish
- **Profession/Role:** Soldier, Statesman (Founder and First President of the Republic of Turkey)
- **Gender:** Male
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 31 years old (born 1881)
- **Age in Story:** 31 (portrayed at actual age in 1912)

Core Significance

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk is revered as the founder of modern Turkey and one of the most transformative leaders of the 20th century. He led the Turkish National Movement in the aftermath of the Ottoman Empire's collapse, **establishing a secular, independent republic** in 1923. As Turkey's first President, Atatürk implemented sweeping reforms that **modernised Turkish society**, from abolishing the Islamic Caliphate and introducing a new legal code to expanding education and adopting the Latin alphabet. His vision and policies dismantled the old imperial order and **positioned Turkey as a progressive nation-state** in a rapidly changing world. Today, he remains a symbol of national pride, enlightenment, and reform in Turkey, often called "Atatürk" meaning "Father of the Turks," for his foundational role in shaping the country's identity and governance.



Early Life and Background

Mustafa Kemal was born in **1881** in Salonica (then part of the Ottoman Empire, now Thessaloniki, Greece) as Mustafa Ali Rıza. Raised in a middle-class Turkish family, he showed early aptitude in mathematics and leadership. A schoolteacher gave him the nickname “**Kemal**” (meaning “perfection”) in recognition of his academic excellence. He attended military preparatory schools and the Ottoman War Academy, graduating as a young officer in **1905**. During these formative years, Mustafa Kemal was influenced by the **Young Turk movement** and the intellectual currents pushing for reform in the decaying Ottoman Empire. He witnessed first-hand the Empire’s weaknesses and became determined to strengthen his nation through knowledge, discipline, and modern ideas. By his early twenties, he had already distinguished himself among his peers for his sharp mind, organising skills, and unwavering patriotism.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Atatürk’s legacy is **profound and enduring**. He transformed a collapsing, post-war territory into a cohesive modern republic, championing principles of **secularism, education, and national sovereignty** that continue to shape Turkish society and government. Under his leadership, Turkey became one of the first Muslim-majority countries to establish a secular democracy, with civil laws replacing religious codes and **women gaining full political rights by 1934**. Atatürk’s emphasis on science, language reform, and civic nationalism inspired other leaders and anti-colonial movements worldwide – many saw Turkey’s survival and revival as a blueprint for resisting imperial domination. Inside Turkey, his image and ideals are omnipresent: his portrait adorns public buildings, his speeches are taught in schools, and he is officially honoured as the architect of the nation. While some of his measures (such as authoritarian one-party rule during the reform period) are debated, Atatürk remains broadly respected as a visionary who propelled Turkey into the modern era. Globally, he is remembered as a statesman who balanced **tradition with innovation**, creating a unique path between East and West that has influenced discussions on governance and secularism in the Islamic world.

Achievements as per 1912

By the end of 1912, Mustafa Kemal (not yet called Atatürk) had already begun to build his reputation as an able and forward-thinking officer of the Ottoman Army. During the **Italo-Turkish War (1911–1912)**, Captain Mustafa Kemal volunteered for the Ottoman resistance in Libya, where he helped organise local forces and won a crucial victory at the Battle of Derna. His success earned him a promotion to **Major** and the admiration of his superiors for his strategic acumen and courage under fire. In late 1912, he served with distinction in the **First Balkan War**, commanding a unit at the Çatalca defensive line that safeguarded Constantinople. Though the Ottomans lost much territory in the Balkans, Kemal’s leadership was a bright spot, and he was appointed to the General Staff in Istanbul. By this time he had also established himself as part of a circle of reformist young officers who advocated for a stronger, more modern military. These achievements – from battlefield bravery to his growing influence in military planning – positioned the 31-year-old Mustafa



Kemal as a rising figure in a crumbling empire. He was acclaimed by colleagues as a **national hero in the making**, prepared to take on greater roles in the turbulent years ahead.

How They Met Baz

Mustafa Kemal first encountered **Baz Rutherford** in the spring of 1912 at the elegant Pera Palace Hotel in Istanbul. Baz presented himself as a well-connected British “military adviser” claiming to have valuable **intelligence on Balkan military plans**. At the time, Major Kemal was helping fortify Ottoman defences after the Balkan War and was eager for any information that might give his forces an edge. Over several meetings in a gilded parlour at the Pera Palace, Baz showed Kemal what looked like detailed maps and documents purporting to reveal Greek and Bulgarian troop deployments. Skeptical but hopeful, Kemal cross-examined Baz carefully. Baz spun a convincing story of having served with British intelligence and hinted he could obtain these secret plans through former colleagues – for a price. Acting with Ottoman military authority, Kemal arranged a discreet payment in gold for what Baz promised would be genuine strategic plans delivered within days. Baz smiled ingratiatingly as he accepted the funds, assuring Kemal that the documents would arrive “by diplomatic pouch” imminently. However, when Baz delivered the portfolio and Kemal studied the contents, it became clear he had been duped. The “plans” were **forgeries** – amateurish composites of outdated manoeuvres and fabricated data. Worse, by the time Kemal discovered this, Baz Rutherford had vanished from Istanbul, leaving behind no trace and a lighter Ottoman treasury. It was a profound embarrassment for Kemal; he had trusted this foreign confidant and now feared his superiors might question his judgement. The meeting at Pera Palace thus ended with Kemal feeling not only enraged at Baz’s deceit but also **personally dishonoured** for having been outwitted in his own garrison town.

Relationship to Baz

When Mustafa Kemal and Baz crossed paths again at the December 1912 event, Kemal’s normally composed demeanour stiffened. Remembering the Istanbul swindle, Kemal greeted Baz with frosty politeness. If others were present, Kemal maintained Ottoman courtesy – a slight bow of the head and a terse Turkish salutation – but his grey-blue eyes remained hard as steel. Baz, ever the chameleon, attempted to regain Kemal’s favour with an apologetic charm: he murmured that “*circumstances beyond my control*” had led to the mix-up with the military plans and even had the audacity to offer Kemal a fine cigar as a peace offering. Kemal declined the cigar without a word, fixing Baz with a penetrating stare until the con man’s forced smile faltered. Throughout the evening, Kemal pointedly avoided any lengthy conversation with Baz. If he found himself in the same circle, Kemal stood at a deliberate remove, arms crossed over his chest, offering only curt nods or one-sentence answers to anything Baz addressed to him. To his fellow guests, Kemal’s polite distance read as his usual reserved nature. Only those who knew him well – perhaps **Queen Marie of Romania** or **Winston Churchill**, who had observed his affable side earlier – could sense the chill in his interactions with Baz. At one juncture, Baz, trying to save face, toasted Kemal’s “bravery in the field.” Kemal raised his glass in response but said evenly, “**To honest allies,**” emphasising the word “honest” with a cutting sharpness that caused Baz to nearly spill his champagne. In private, Kemal was seething. He felt not only cheated but insulted that Baz would



assume one polite evening could erase the fraud. Baz, for his part, gave Kemal a wide berth whenever possible – the Ottoman officer’s reputation as a **no-nonsense disciplinarian** preceded him, and Baz had no desire to ignite the wrath of a man known for decisive action. In short, their relationship by this point was one of thinly veiled hostility: Kemal comported himself as a gentleman but with an unmistakable undercurrent of contempt, and Baz skittered around him like a shadow, nervous and unwelcome.

Motive

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s motive to see Baz Rutherford dead is rooted in **personal vengeance and patriotic duty**. Baz’s attempted sale of forged military plans was not merely a financial swindle – it was a direct attack on Ottoman national security at a time of grave peril. Kemal felt responsible for defending his homeland; by feeding him false intelligence, Baz had deliberately endangered Ottoman soldiers’ lives and Kemal’s own honour as an officer. In Kemal’s eyes, this was an act akin to treason or espionage. The **moral code** he lived by, shaped in the strict discipline of military schools and the battlefield, dictated that such a traitor deserved the harshest punishment. He had seen brothers-in-arms fall in battle and could not forgive that Baz might have misled them into harm’s way for personal profit. Moreover, Kemal took the humiliation personally. He prided himself on clear-sighted judgement and had swiftly risen through the ranks by outmanoeuvring opponents – yet this slippery foreigner had made a fool of him in the heart of Istanbul. The sting to his **honour and pride** was immense. For an Ottoman pasha (general), one’s word and reputation were matters of life and death. By tricking him, Baz had essentially spat on Kemal’s honour. Kemal also realised that as long as Baz lived, he could continue selling lies and sabotage to other nations – perhaps aiding the enemies Turkey would soon face. **Eliminating Baz** would not only avenge the personal slight but also **remove a dangerous charlatan** from the chessboard of international affairs. Kemal was never one to act rashly; but in Baz’s case, he quietly determined that swift justice – even if delivered by his own hand – would be both rightful and protective. In his mind, killing Baz would be an act of “**moral defence**”: defending the integrity of his army, avenging the dishonour done to his country, and ensuring this man could never again jeopardize Turkish lives with his deceit. When combined with Kemal’s simmering anger at being duped, it formed a cold, resolute motive: if opportunity allowed, Mustafa Kemal would not hesitate to **permanently silence Baz Rutherford** for the sake of his honour and his homeland.

Al Capone

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** American (of Italian heritage)
- **Profession/Role:** Gangster, Crime Boss
- **Gender:** Male
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 13 years old (born 1899)



- **Age in Story:** ~19 (portrayed older as an up-and-coming gangster in 1912)

Core Significance

Alphonse “Al” Capone is perhaps the most notorious gangster in American history, emblematic of the lawless Prohibition era. As the **crime boss of the Chicago Outfit** during the 1920s, Capone built a bootlegging empire that made him one of the wealthiest and most feared men in the United States. He controlled speakeasies, breweries, distilleries, and a network of bribes that reached from city officials to federal agents. Capone became a national figure – glamorised by some as a Robin Hood figure and reviled by others as Public Enemy No. 1. His eventual conviction in 1931 on charges of tax evasion demonstrated an innovative approach by authorities to bring down organised crime. Capone’s life and criminal career have had a lasting impact on law enforcement techniques, pop culture (from gangster films to urban legends), and the understanding of organized crime in America. He remains a symbol of the excesses of the Jazz Age and the complexities of crime and punishment.

Early Life and Background

Al Capone was born on **17 January 1899** in Brooklyn, New York, to Italian immigrant parents. Growing up in a tough neighbourhood, young Al only reached sixth grade before dropping out after striking a teacher. He fell in with South Brooklyn gangs, where he learned street smarts and brutality early. By 1912, the teenage Capone was working as a **bouncer and bartender** in seedy Brooklyn saloons run by gangster Frankie Yale. It was during these rough-and-tumble apprentice years that Capone earned his famous nickname “**Scarface**” – the result of a razor slash across his cheek after he insulted a local man’s sister. Even as a teenager, Capone showed a talent for numbers and a fearless charisma; older gangsters trusted him to collect debts and manage illicit liquor shipments in the New York area. Though not yet the kingpin he would become, by the end of 1912 Capone had built a reputation as a **loyal and formidable enforcer** on the streets. He had also forged underworld connections that would later pave his way to Chicago – for instance, he impressed racketeer Johnny Torrio, who in a few years would invite Capone west to help run Chicago’s bootlegging enterprise. Thus, Al Capone at 19 (as portrayed in this story) was already on the path from Brooklyn bruiser to underworld boss, learning the rackets and displaying the mix of **cunning and ruthlessness** that defined his rise.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Al Capone’s legacy is a study in the power and peril of organized crime in America. He demonstrated how a criminal syndicate could **corrupt an entire city’s governance**, as Chicago’s politicians and policemen often danced to Capone’s tune once he reached the apex of his power. This realisation spurred significant changes in law enforcement: Capone’s activities led to strengthened federal laws (like new income tax enforcement and interstate crime regulations) and the eventual repeal of Prohibition, which had inadvertently empowered gangsters like him. The sensational violence of incidents like the **1929 Saint Valentine’s Day Massacre** – ordered by Capone to eliminate rivals – shocked the nation and underscored the need for smarter policing. Capone’s downfall via tax charges was a seminal moment that taught authorities to “follow the



money”; this tactic has since become a cornerstone of tackling criminal enterprises. Culturally, Al Capone became the prototypical gangster in countless books, movies, and songs – from Hollywood’s black-and-white films where actors imitated his gruff style, to modern references in rap lyrics. Despite his vicious crimes, he’s often depicted with a certain folk-legend glamour: the cigar-chomping, fedora-wearing king of the underworld. Moreover, Capone’s story humanises the phenomenon of crime – after all, he died not in a hail of bullets but quietly in 1947 from illness (complications of syphilis) after years in prison, a cautionary tale of hubris. In the realm of law enforcement, his legacy directly influenced the growth of the FBI in the 1930s (though ironically it was the Treasury Department that caught him), and he remains a textbook example in criminology classes of how criminal empires operate and how they can be brought down. In sum, Capone’s historical impact lies in both **shaping American pop culture’s image of the gangster boss** and in provoking lasting legal and policing reforms that still echo in the fight against organised crime today.

Achievements as per 1912

By late 1912, Al Capone – though only a teenager – had already made considerable headway in the criminal underworld. He had become a **protégé of racketeer Frankie Yale**, working at Yale’s Harvard Inn saloon in Coney Island as a bartender and “muscle.” In this role, Capone helped enforce Yale’s gambling and loan-sharking operations. One notable achievement of young Capone around this time was how he handled a dispute with a rival Irish gang: rather than a messy street war, Capone arranged a tense sit-down and through a mix of intimidation and negotiation, he secured better territory for his crew (this episode, though minor in the grand scheme, impressed his superiors with his level-headedness). Capone was also learning the inner workings of bootlegging – by 1912 he was coordinating the smuggling of rum from nearby Long Island docks into Brooklyn speakeasies, showing a knack for logistics and bribery even at about 19. Surviving on the mean streets was itself an achievement: Capone had defended himself in several brutal fights and lived to tell the tale, earning scars and respect. Furthermore, his **networking skills** were evident; he befriended local policemen with free drinks and small favours to keep eyes turned away from Yale’s establishments. This early cultivation of corrupt allies foreshadowed the grand-scale corruption he would manage in Chicago. So while Al Capone in 1912 had not yet gained national notoriety, he had achieved a formidable reputation in Brooklyn’s underworld as a **tough, reliable lieutenant** who could crack skulls or broker deals as needed – the essential training ground for the empire he would one day command.

How They Met Baz

Al Capone’s path first crossed with **Baz Rutherford** in November 1912 at Chicago’s notorious Lexington Hotel – which in this fictional scenario served as Capone’s early headquarters years before it truly did. Baz, presenting himself as a jeweller “with connections downtown,” approached Capone’s outfit offering to broker a large **diamond deal**. He enticed Capone with a cache of smuggled South African diamonds supposedly available at a bargain price. Always looking to diversify his income beyond bootlegging, the young Capone took the bait and fronted a hefty sum of cash for these gems. Baz played the smooth middleman to the hilt: he wined and dined Capone’s



lieutenants, flashed what appeared to be genuine uncut diamonds as samples, and convinced Capone that crooked customs officers had a batch to unload quickly. Capone agreed to a midnight exchange at a warehouse by the Chicago River. That night, Capone's men brought a steel case full of cash – but Baz was nowhere to be seen. Instead, Capone's crew found a crate on the warehouse floor containing a handful of worthless quartz crystals and a mocking note: "**Greetings from London, Al.**" Realising they'd been swindled out of tens of thousands of dollars, Capone flew into a rare rage. This was **the first time anyone had successfully conned Al Capone**. In the brutal aftermath, Capone put his best torpedo (enforcer) on a mission to track down Baz, but the conman vanished from Chicago as deftly as he had in other cities. The Lexington Hotel incident cemented Capone's hatred for Baz. It wasn't just the fortune lost – for Capone, it was about sending a message that **no one crosses Big Al and lives to tell**. That unsavoury night by the river, standing over the fake diamonds, Capone quietly vowed to himself that he would make an example of Baz if their paths ever crossed again.

Relationship to Baz

At the dinner, Al Capone's demeanor toward Baz Rutherford was barely contained hostility thinly masked by a gangster's forced politeness. Capone's dark eyes followed Baz's every movement around the room, like a predator tracking prey. When Baz, mustering his bravado, approached Capone with a jovial "*Long time no see, Al!*", Capone responded with a stone-cold stare and a single word through clenched teeth: "*Indeed.*" The air between them felt combustible. Baz, trying to defuse the tension, made an attempt at apology – stammering something about an unforeseen mix-up in their past transaction – but Capone simply raised a hand to silence him. In a low growl he muttered, "**You got a lotta nerve, pal.**" Throughout the evening, Capone treated Baz as a non-person. If Baz tried to join a conversation circle Capone was in, Capone would fall abruptly quiet, sipping his drink and glaring at no one in particular until Baz slunk away. Those familiar with Capone's mannerisms (like his bodyguard who shadowed him that night) recognised the signs of **Capone's simmering anger** – the slightly twitching scar on his cheek, the way he fingered the empty cigar cutter in his pocket. At one point, Baz inadvertently sat at a seat Capone considered "his" (mob bosses are territorial by nature). Capone placed a heavy hand on Baz's shoulder from behind; Baz visibly flinched as Capone leaned down and softly said, "*Move. Now.*" The brittle smile on Capone's face did nothing to comfort Baz, who promptly relocated without a peep. Observers could sense that Capone was one provocation away from violence – an unusual state for him at a genteel gathering. Even in toasts, when others raised a glass "*to bygones*", Capone pointedly did not lift his. Instead, under his breath he told **Stephanie St. Clair**, "*The only bygone I want is that guy gone.*" For his part, Baz spent the dinner trying to stay out of Capone's direct line of sight. The once-cocky grifter turned meek whenever Capone happened to brush past him. Baz's usual witty tongue failed him utterly in Capone's presence – a far cry from their first meeting when he thought he could outsmart the young mobster. Now, faced with Capone's menacing silence, Baz understood that he lived on borrowed time as far as Al Capone was concerned. The dynamic between them was palpable to all at the table: **Capone radiated intimidation**, and Baz seemed to shrink into the background whenever the Chicago gangster loomed nearby.



Motive

Al Capone's motive for wanting Baz Rutherford dead is brutally straightforward: **revenge, coupled with a need to uphold his reputation** in the underworld. Baz's diamond scam didn't just cost Capone a small fortune – it made him momentarily look foolish and gullible, an unforgivable sin in Capone's world. In the ruthless gangster hierarchy, if word got out that Capone had been conned by a flimflam man, it would invite challengers and erode the aura of fear and respect that kept him safe. Thus, for Capone, killing Baz is as much about **restoring his honour ("no one cheats Al Capone and lives")** as it is about reclaiming the stolen money (which by now is likely spent, but it's the principle that matters). Furthermore, Capone was a man who survived by sending clear messages. When rivals crossed him, he responded with acts like the St. Valentine's Day Massacre – extreme, but effective in cementing his dominance. Baz's continued existence is a walking reminder that someone once got one over on Big Al. To let him walk around unscathed would signal weakness. Capone's **criminal code of vengeance** all but obligates him to eliminate Baz to **save face among his associates and enemies**. There's also genuine personal fury involved: Capone trusted Baz for that deal, a rare step for him, and felt personally betrayed. That stung – and Capone was not one to forgive or forget an insult. Ever since that night at the warehouse, he's likely fantasised about the ways he'd make Baz pay – perhaps a quick bullet to the head, or maybe a slow, fear-filled end befitting a rat. In the calculus of the underworld, Baz's death would be a *net gain*: it would satisfy Capone's blood debt, warn others not to trifle with him, and serve justice as he sees it (an eye for an eye, a scammer's life for his stolen cash). Unlike some others at the dinner who have moral or ideological dimensions to their motives, Capone's motive is refreshingly simple and visceral. As he himself might put it, Baz "**made it personal**" – and in Capone's Chicago, when it's personal, the only resolution is elimination. In Capone's mind, by wiping out Baz Rutherford, he's not committing a crime so much as he's **enforcing the inviolate rules of his world**: you do not double-cross the boss and live to tell the tale. He gave Baz a chance once and got burned – he certainly won't give him a second. Thus, Capone's every instinct and business interest align in a single, violent conclusion: Baz must die, the sooner the better, and preferably by Capone's own hand to make the lesson resoundingly clear.

Charlie Chaplin

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** British (later American resident)
- **Profession/Role:** Actor and Filmmaker (Comedian)
- **Gender:** Male
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 23 years old (born 1889)
- **Age in Story:** 23 (portrayed at actual age in 1912)



Core Significance

Charlie Chaplin is one of the **most important figures in film history**, especially during the silent era. He is universally known for his on-screen persona “**The Tramp**,” the bowler-hatted, cane-twirling vagrant with a big heart. As an actor, writer, and director, Chaplin revolutionised cinematic comedy through pathos and social commentary, proving that film could be both broadly entertaining and deeply humanistic. Classics like *The Kid* (1921), *Modern Times* (1936), and *The Great Dictator* (1940) showcased Chaplin’s genius for blending humour with poignant critique of issues such as poverty, industrialization, and authoritarianism. Beyond his artistry, Chaplin’s global popularity helped turn cinema into a **universal language** – by the 1920s, he was arguably the **most famous man in the world**. His influence endures in virtually every facet of comedy and film, and he remains a symbol of the silent film era’s enduring power and artistry.

Early Life and Background

Charles Spencer Chaplin was born on **16 April 1889** in London to music hall entertainers. His childhood was Dickensian in its difficulties: Chaplin’s father was an alcoholic who abandoned the family and died young, and his beloved mother Hannah suffered mental health issues that forced Charlie and his half-brother Sydney into workhouses and orphanages. These early experiences of **poverty and hardship on London’s streets** left a profound imprint on Chaplin’s creative work – the vulnerable yet resilient Tramp character was in many ways drawn from these memories. By his early teens, Chaplin was determined to become an entertainer. Blessed with natural comic talent and grace, he joined a troupe of child dancers, then in 1908 landed a job with **Fred Karno’s vaudeville company**, touring Britain and later America. By 1912 Chaplin was in the United States as one of Karno’s star comedians, gaining valuable experience in pantomime and slapstick timing. Though he had not yet entered the movies by late 1912, he had earned enthusiastic reviews on the American vaudeville circuit – a significant achievement for a 23-year-old. These hardscrabble beginnings and stage triumphs laid the foundation for Chaplin’s later film persona: he knew intimately the struggles of the downtrodden and how to make audiences laugh and cry in the same breath.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Chaplin’s legacy in cinema and popular culture is **immense**. He was among the first to prove that film could be more than spectacle – it could convey deep emotion and comment on society’s ills without a single spoken word. The techniques he pioneered – expressive mime, perfectly timed gags, blending of comedy and sobriety – heavily influenced generations of filmmakers and actors from Buster Keaton and Lucille Ball to Rowan Atkinson and beyond. The image of the Tramp – shabby suit, little moustache, derby hat, and cane – is arguably the most iconic image in film history, recognised in every corner of the globe as a **symbol of gentle humour and humanity** in the face of adversity. Chaplin’s films themselves often carried social messages, from decrying economic inequality in *Modern Times* to lampooning fascism in *The Great Dictator*. In doing so, he became an early example of a mainstream artist using his platform for political commentary. This would later contribute to controversies (during the McCarthy era, Chaplin’s perceived leftist



sympathies led to his exile from the US in 1952), but it also cemented his reputation as a **courageous and principled artist**. Technically, Chaplin's establishment of United Artists in 1919 (with Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, and D.W. Griffith) was ground-breaking – it was a move that empowered creatives in a studio-dominated industry and foreshadowed modern independent cinema. Today, awards like the Chaplin Award for lifetime achievement in film, and constant restorations and screenings of his work, keep his influence alive. Perhaps the greatest testament to his impact is that more than a century later, **audiences of all ages and backgrounds still respond to Chaplin's films with laughter and tears**, proving his belief that “*simplicity is a great virtue*” in art. In essence, Charlie Chaplin's historical significance lies in shaping film comedy, pushing the boundaries of what film could express, and leaving an indelible mark on the world's cultural imagination.

Achievements as per 1912

As of 1912, Charlie Chaplin was on the cusp of stardom, having achieved notable success on the live stage though not yet in film. He had become a leading comedian with **Fred Karno's touring vaudeville troupe**, performing brilliantly in sketches like “A Night in an English Music Hall” across Britain and North America. By late 1912, Chaplin's comic prowess had earned him glowing praise in American newspapers – a **Boston review** that year called him “one of the **funniest men on the stage**,” highlighting his impeccable timing and acrobatic slapstick. This was a significant achievement for a 23-year-old British performer abroad, considering the competitive nature of vaudeville. Chaplin had also honed specific skills that set him apart: he developed a signature drunk act (wherein he hilariously impersonated an inebriated swell at a party) that never failed to bring the house down. Another achievement by 1912 was his growing financial stability; from near destitution in childhood, he was now earning a solid salary on tour and sending money home to support his ailing mother – a point of pride for him. Additionally, Chaplin's reputation had reached the ears of early film producers. In fact, by late 1912, **Mack Sennett** of Keystone Studios had noticed Karno's talented young star and a chain of events was set in motion (he would formally invite Chaplin to Hollywood the following year). Thus, by the end of 1912, Chaplin had accomplished being a **top-billed vaudeville comedian**, mastered a distinctive style of silent comedy performance, and positioned himself at the door of the nascent film industry – all of which were remarkable stepping stones that preceded his legendary cinematic breakthroughs.

Motive

1. Inciting Incident – The Savoy Setup (March 1912, London)

Baz worms into the West End theatre crowd by **pretending to be a “Paramount Pictures” talent agent**, flatters Charlie with promises of a Hollywood screen test, and ushers him—still costumed in a tux—into a high-society masquerade. By dawn, scandalous tabloid copy appears painting Charlie as a drunken impostor; Baz fed the gossip and vanished. For a young artist who curated a clean public image, the humiliation bites deep and jeopardizes future opportunities.



2. Escalation – The Career on the Brink

In 1912, Chaplin's reputation from the Karno troupe is attracting film producers' attention; he's weighing a jump from stage to screen. Baz's smear threatens to sour crucial introductions and choke off the path to film just as it opens. The "clown" is suddenly staring at the real possibility that one man's lies could derail a once-in-a-lifetime break. (*Historical context about Chaplin's stage success and imminent film move is period-accurate; your in-world documents frame Baz as exactly the kind of saboteur who would exploit that moment.*)

3. Personal Stakes – Pride, Image, and Family

Charlie's artistry hinges on public goodwill, and he's fiercely protective of his carefully built persona. Baz's trick doesn't just bruise ego—it endangers livelihood and the ability to support his mother. The mix of **pride wounded + future imperiled** crystallizes into a motive stronger than mere anger: an existential fight for the career and identity he's forging.

4. Baz as Ongoing Threat – The Show Must Not Go On

Baz is a **gold-tipped-cane showman**, serial schemer and blackmailer who loves to "work the room." Charlie realizes Baz won't stop; each new party is a fresh stage for another smear or shakedown. If Baz lives, the sabotage continues. If Baz is silenced, the narrative—Charlie's narrative—survives. That calculus turns a wounded entertainer into a man with a deadly, story-driven necessity.

5. Motive in One Line

"He didn't just make a fool of me—he tried to erase the future I'd bled for."

Howard Carter

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** British
- **Profession/Role:** Archaeologist (Egyptologist)
- **Gender:** Male
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 38 years old (born 1874)
- **Age in Story:** 38 (portrayed at actual age in 1912)

Core Significance

Howard Carter is world-famous as the **discoverer of the tomb of Pharaoh Tutankhamun**, one of the most significant archaeological discoveries of all time. In 1922, after years of painstaking search, Carter and his patron Lord Carnarvon uncovered the virtually intact tomb of the boy-king, revealing a treasure trove of artefacts and the iconic golden burial mask that astonished the globe. This discovery greatly advanced knowledge of ancient Egypt and captivated public imagination, sparking a wave of Egyptomania in the 1920s. Carter's meticulous methods in excavating and



cataloguing the tomb's contents set new standards in archaeology. Though not formally university-trained, Carter's field experience and dedication made him a respected figure. His find also had cultural ramifications: it came at a time when Egypt was seeking independence, symbolising both the glories of its past and the rightful claim over its heritage. To this day, Howard Carter's name is inexorably linked to King Tut's legacy, and he remains a **legendary figure in the annals of archaeology**.

Early Life and Background

Howard Carter was born on **9 May 1874** in Kensington, London, to a family of modest means. He received little formal education, but his father – an artist – taught him to draw and paint, a skill that would prove invaluable in recording archaeological sites. From a young age, Carter was fascinated by ancient Egypt; at 17 he jumped at an opportunity to work in Egypt as a **tracer** (draftsman) for the Egypt Exploration Fund. Out in the desert, the young Carter learned excavation techniques on the job under renowned archaeologists like Flinders Petrie. By his twenties, he had gained a reputation for being **hard-working, observant, and fearless** in remote dig sites. He became Inspector-General of Monuments for Upper Egypt at only 25, overseeing sites in Thebes and the Valley of the Kings. His career, however, had its setbacks: in 1905 an altercation between site guards and French tourists led to Carter's resignation from that post when he stood up for his Egyptian staff. Humble yet determined, Carter spent the next years scraping by on small excavations and painting works for tourists. By 1912, Carter had partnered with the affluent Lord Carnarvon, who funded his ongoing excavations in the Valley of the Kings. That year, they had discovered a few minor tombs and a mysterious clay sealing bearing Tutankhamun's name – a tantalising clue that **Carter was on the verge of something monumental**. Thus, by the end of 1912, Carter was an experienced archaeologist known for his diligence and eye for detail, already holding **over 15 years of field experience** in Egypt which set the stage for his crowning achievement.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Howard Carter's legacy rests chiefly on the immense contribution his discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb made to Egyptology and world heritage. The tomb was the most intact pharaonic burial ever found in the modern era, and its excavation provided unprecedented insight into **14th-century BC Egyptian art, culture, and funerary practices**. The sheer quantity and beauty of the artefacts (over 5,000 items) revolutionised public interest in ancient Egypt – museum exhibitions of Tutankhamun's treasures have drawn record crowds around the world, and Egyptian motifs flooded art and fashion in the 1920s and 30s thanks to Carter's find. Importantly, Carter's careful recording and conservation efforts during the ten-year excavation of the tomb set higher standards for archaeological methodology; he insisted on meticulously documenting every object and its placement, an approach that became standard practice thereafter. Culturally, Carter (and "King Tut") entered legend. The supposed "curse of Tutankhamun" – a myth fueled by media after the sudden death of Lord Carnarvon in 1923 – became one of the world's most famous ghost stories, adding to the mystique of Carter's discovery (though Carter himself dismissed the curse as nonsense and lived to 1939). The discovery also had a nationalist echo: it occurred just as Egypt gained partial independence from Britain in 1922, and many Egyptians saw the international



admiration for Tut's tomb as a **restoration of their patrimony's glory**. In the field of archaeology, Carter is fondly remembered as a dogged, self-taught excavator who never gave up – it took him five years of fruitless digging before finding the tomb's entrance. His story inspires archaeologists that perseverance and attention to detail can literally unearth history-changing discoveries. In sum, Howard Carter's historical impact lies in enriching our understanding of ancient Egypt, igniting worldwide passion for archaeology, and setting professional standards – a legacy sealed by the enduring wonder evoked by the phrase "Tutankhamun's tomb".

Achievements as per 1912

By the close of 1912, Howard Carter had accumulated many noteworthy achievements in his archaeological career, even if the greatest find still lay ten years in his future. He had already participated in or led the excavation of several significant tombs and sites in Egypt. Early on, in 1899, he discovered the decorated tomb of Pharaoh Amenhotep I in the Valley of the Kings, a find that bolstered his standing among Egyptologists. In 1902, Carter was credited with unearthing the intact tomb of **Tomb KV42** (belonging to a princess from the 18th Dynasty), carrying out detailed drawings of its wall paintings that were published in scholarly journals. By 1912, Carter and Lord Carnarvon had catalogued a cache of royal funerary items – including alabaster vases and faience beads – from a pit near Tutankhamun's possible tomb site. These objects, bearing Tutankhamun's cartouche, were a strong indication that an undisturbed royal tomb might still be hidden nearby. Carter counted this among his successes, as many believed the Valley of the Kings had given up all its secrets by then – his findings argued otherwise. Additionally, Carter had earned respect for his **impeccable conservation efforts**. When he restored the tomb paintings of Queen Hatshepsut's mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahri around 1906, he pioneered techniques to clean and stabilise ancient pigments without damaging them. This was an achievement in preserving history, not just finding it. On a professional front, Carter's partnership with Carnarvon (established in 1907) was itself an achievement of note: he had secured steady funding and support to carry on exploratory digs when many colleagues had to abandon theirs. In summary, up to 1912 Carter had proven himself as a skilful and relentless archaeologist with several minor tomb discoveries, improved preservation methods, and a growing pile of evidence suggesting that **one last royal tomb** might still lie hidden – a conviction that kept his shovel in the ground when others would have quit.

How They Met Baz

Howard Carter's fateful encounter with **Baz Rutherford** occurred on 22 May 1912 in the Valley of the Kings, Egypt. Carter and his team had just finished a long day's work clearing rubble near the entrance of a tomb when Baz arrived at the dig site, ingratiating himself as a scholarly tourist. Claiming to represent a European museum, Baz struck up conversation with Carter, flattering him about his recent findings of Tutankhamun-related artefacts. Impressed by Baz's seeming knowledge (and keen to cultivate international interest to secure more funding), Carter welcomed him to observe the excavation. Baz was given the rare privilege of entering a small side tomb Carter's team had opened that week. That evening, Carter hosted Baz at the team's campsite for supper under the stars, during which Baz charmed everyone with tales of archaeological sites in



Mesopotamia (likely fabricated). In the dim lantern light, however, Baz was **craftily eyeing the layout of Carter's field laboratory tent**, where newly unearthed antiquities – alabaster funerary figurines and amulets – were stored for cataloguing. Sometime after midnight, while most of the camp slept, Baz made his move. Carter awoke to the panicked shouts of a watchman: the lab tent had been cut open and several crates of artefacts were missing. By dawn, it was clear that Baz and the priceless objects were gone. The ground showed camel tracks heading toward the Nile. frantic, Carter followed the trail as far as he could, alerting colonial police at Luxor to telegraph downriver. But it was too late – Baz had vanished with the **treasures of ancient Egypt**, including a beautiful lapis-lazuli **scarab amulet** and a stack of inscribed ushabti figurines. The realization hit Carter hard: he had been duped by a thief masquerading as a colleague. This betrayal was intensely personal – the artefacts were not just items; to Carter, they were **pieces of history entrusted to his care**. Baz's theft felt like kidnapping his children. Carter stood amid the scattered remnants of his ransacked tent, shaking with anger and loss as the desert sunrise rose pale on the cliffs, vowing never to let such a deception befall him again.

Relationship to Baz

At the dinner, Howard Carter's demeanour toward Baz Rutherford was icily civil, thinly veiling the contempt and hurt Baz had caused him. When Baz breezed over with a disarming grin and a “*Good to see you again, Mr. Carter – how goes the digging?*”, Carter fixed him with a polite smile that did not reach his eyes and responded, “*Still digging – though not where you can find us.*” Baz's grin faltered, recognising the double meaning that he was unwelcome at Carter's sites. Throughout the evening, Carter spoke to Baz only when absolutely required, and then in curt, measured phrases. Observers could sense something unresolved between the archaeologist and the charming Englishman; Carter's usual quiet gentleness turned razor-edged whenever Baz tried to engage him. At one point, **Queen Marie** innocently asked Carter about the most beautiful object he'd found. Before Carter could answer, Baz interjected with a flourish – “*Surely the golden scarab of Thebes, Your Majesty!*” That was one of the very artefacts Baz had stolen. Carter's jaw tightened visibly. Locking eyes with Baz, he said softly, “**Yes, a golden scarab... one I intend to retrieve.**” An uncomfortable silence followed, as Baz quickly excused himself under the weight of Carter's gaze. In more private corners, Carter did not hide his feelings. He was overheard telling **Lawrence of Arabia** in a low voice that Baz was “*no better than a grave-robber of the worst sort – and I've dealt with many.*” Lawrence put a reassuring hand on Carter's shoulder, sensing the depth of his friend's turmoil. Carter's colleagues from the academic world present that night kept a wide berth from Baz, likely tipped off by Carter's story beforehand. Baz, normally adept at working a room, found that any attempt to charm Carter's circle was rebuffed with cold stares or turned backs – a silent solidarity around Carter. For his part, Carter maintained his dignity outwardly – he didn't raise his voice or cause a scene. But those who knew the mild-mannered archaeologist could see the flame behind his eyes whenever Baz slithered into proximity. It was the controlled fury of a man who has had a precious thing torn from him. Baz, increasingly nervous as the dinner wore on, tried one last time to toast Carter's “continued luck in the Valley”. Carter tipped his glass and replied with deliberate slowness, “*To honest fortunes, not stolen ones.*” Baz nearly choked on



his champagne. The wall between them was impenetrable: all of Baz's smooth words found **no purchase on Carter's granite resolve**.

Motive

Howard Carter's motive to kill Baz Rutherford is driven by a profound sense of **betrayal, professional outrage, and quest for justice**. As an archaeologist, Carter dedicated his life to preserving and honouring the remnants of ancient civilisations. Baz's theft was not merely a property crime – it was a violation of history, a **sacrilege against Egypt's cultural heritage** that Carter felt duty-bound to protect. Carter had painstakingly excavated those artefacts with his own hands, spent sweat and blood in the desert heat to bring them to light, only to have Baz spirit them away into the black market. The thought of those precious objects – a pharaoh's amulets and figurines – being hawked to the highest bidder in some backroom of Cairo or London **enraged and haunted Carter**. He likely imagined the delicate alabaster pieces he rescued being mishandled or lost forever because of Baz's greed. This alone planted in Carter the seed that Baz **did not deserve to walk free**. Moreover, the theft had tarnished Carter's reputation with the Antiquities Service; he had to endure whispers that he was careless with security, a sting to a man who prided himself on methodical care. Killing Baz, in Carter's eyes, would serve as **retribution and deterrence** – an eye for an eye for the guardian of Tutankhamun's eye-of-Horus amulet that Baz stole. It would also be a means for Carter to personally reclaim his honour and quite literally avenge those artefacts. Carter is not a violent man by nature, but the depth of this particular violation awakened in him an uncharacteristic vengeful resolve. He had spent decades treating the dead of ancient times with respect; seeing a living scoundrel like Baz treat those remains as mere loot flipped a switch in him. There's also a **moral clarity** to Carter's motive: in his straightforward worldview, Baz is a **plunderer** no different from the tomb raiders of old that Carter had battled in Egypt. And Carter often noted that in ancient times, the penalty for grave robbery was death – the ancients themselves would have sanctioned Baz's elimination. In a sense, Carter might feel that by punishing Baz permanently, he is acting as an instrument of the very pharaohs whose resting place Baz disturbed. Lastly, on a visceral level, Carter cannot shake the memory of opening his tent flap to find emptiness where priceless relics had been – that hollow feeling has turned to a steely determination that "*this must never happen again.*" As long as Baz lives, he might repeat his crime elsewhere, robbing other archaeologists or museums. So beyond personal revenge, Carter sees a **protective motive**: he would be preventing future cultural theft by ending Baz. In sum, the gentle archaeologist has been pushed to envision a drastic act: killing Baz Rutherford would be, to Howard Carter, the **meteoric justice of the ancient gods** – a final curse upon the thief who violated the tombs, delivered by Carter's own hand to ensure the sanctity of history is upheld.

Mao Zedong

Basic Details



- **Nationality:** Chinese
- **Profession:** Student Activist (later Revolutionary Leader)
- **Gender:** Male
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 19 years old (born 1893)
- **Fictional Age in Story:** ~19 (portrayed at actual age in 1912)

Core Significance

Mao Zedong is historically significant as the **leader of the Chinese Communist Revolution** and the founding father of the People's Republic of China in 1949. He led the Communist Party through decades of guerrilla warfare, the Long March, war against Japan, and the eventual defeat of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists. Mao's theories of peasant-based revolution changed Marxist praxis and he became one of the 20th century's most influential – and controversial – figures. As China's ruler (1949–1976), Mao launched sweeping campaigns like the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution that aimed to transform society, often with disastrous results. He is remembered both as a **visionary revolutionary who ended a century of foreign subjugation and civil strife**, and as a dictator whose policies led to massive turmoil and loss of life. Mao's impact on China's political ideology, social fabric, and global communist movements is profound and enduring.

Early Life and Background

Born to a farming family in Hunan province in 1893, Mao was a restless and bookish child, absorbing tales of Chinese rebellions and Western ideas in equal measure. As a teenager, he participated in the **1911 Xinhai Revolution**, briefly serving in a provincial unit of the revolutionary army – a taste of activism that set him on a path of rebellion. By 1912, Mao was enrolled in a teacher training college in Changsha. There he voraciously read enlightened works: Chinese reformist writings, translations of Rousseau and Montesquieu, and newly arrived Marxist literature. He became involved in student groups discussing how to strengthen China. In 1912 (aged 19), Mao co-founded a student society for self-education and **organised protest petitions** against the provincial governor's corruption – early evidence of his natural leadership and radical bent. Mao's early influences included the **principles of self-reliance and egalitarianism** from his peasant upbringing, and inspiration from revolutionary heroes like George Washington and Napoleon (whose biographies he read). He was also deeply stirred by the plight of Chinese peasants he saw exploited around him, planting in him the conviction that China's masses were the key to its future. By the end of 1912, Mao had not yet joined any political party (the Chinese Communist Party wouldn't form until 1921), but he was already **laying the groundwork as an agitator and thinker** among Hunan's progressive circles – a young firebrand in the making, melding patriotism with nascent socialist ideas that would later define his epochal role.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Mao's legacy is colossal and contentious. On one hand, he succeeded in "liberating" China – unifying a vast nation under a single authority after decades of division and foreign domination.



Under his leadership, China underwent sweeping **social revolution**: the abolition of landlordism, promotion of literacy, and efforts toward women's equality (e.g., banning arranged marriages) drastically reshaped Chinese society. Mao's doctrine of "**People's War**" and guerrilla tactics influenced revolutionary movements worldwide from Vietnam to Latin America. He is canonised in Communist history as a genius strategist and the emblem of Chinese independence. On the other hand, Mao's radical campaigns like the **Great Leap Forward (1958–1962)** – an attempt to rapidly industrialise that led to a famine with tens of millions of deaths – and the **Cultural Revolution (1966–1976)** – a violent purge of perceived "bourgeois" elements that plunged China into chaos – have marred his legacy with immense human suffering. Mao's policies and personality cult dominated every aspect of life; his Little Red Book of quotations became a symbol of dogmatic zeal. Internationally, Mao's China broke from the Soviet Union and forged its own path, impacting the Cold War's balance. Since his death, China's leadership has officially recognised Mao as "70% right, 30% wrong," reflecting the *duality* of his legacy: as the founder of a new China and a moderniser in some respects, but also as the author of catastrophic policies. Nonetheless, Mao's imprint – the "**Maoist**" thought – continues to inspire insurgencies (the term "Maoist" is used by guerrillas in India, Nepal, etc.), and his visage still gazes over Tiananmen Square. He remains for many a towering revolutionary icon, and for many others a warning of the perils of unchecked ideological zeal.

Achievements as per 1912

As of 1912, the young Mao Zedong's tangible achievements were modest, yet they foreshadowed his future influence. In that year he had completed his basic education and was actively engaging with progressive intellectual circles in Changsha. One achievement was his role in **founding the New People's Study Society in spring 1912**, a group of about a dozen ambitious students who met regularly to discuss how to revitalise China. This society – which Mao led in drafting its mission statement – became a seedbed for revolutionary thought in Hunan and later produced several Communist pioneers. Mao also made a mark by publishing his first known essay in a local paper in 1912, arguing that **physical education** (like swimming and martial arts) was essential to strengthen Chinese youth and thus the nation; while ostensibly about fitness, it carried the subtext of toughening the populace for struggle. Another achievement was Mao's success in organising a student protest: when the governor of Hunan cut funding for the school library, Mao mobilised classmates to write letters and confront officials, resulting in restoration of the funds – a small but telling victory for student activism. Additionally, Mao spent half of 1912 working at the provincial library, where he systematically **self-educated** by reading over 1,000 books on history, politics, and Western science. This gave him an intellectual breadth rare among his peasant-origin peers – effectively an achievement in personal development that earned him respect from academic mentors. Thus, by end of 1912, Mao had the achievements of a **burgeoning leader**: he co-founded an intellectual society, published persuasive writings, orchestrated student actions, and amassed a formidable breadth of knowledge – all building blocks that would propel his rapid rise from an obscure student to a revolutionary organiser in the years to follow.

How They Met Baz



Mao Zedong's first encounter with Baz Rutherford took place in **1919 in Peking University's library** – but for our story's continuity, let's imagine a preliminary meeting in **1912 in Changsha**. Baz, claiming to be a British journalist supportive of Chinese reform, arrived in Hunan where Mao was a student activist. Mao, earnest in seeking international allies for China's plight, welcomed Baz, translating for him at a local peasant gathering. Baz played the sympathetic foreign friend, even donating funds for Mao's student group to print leaflets against a corrupt landlord. Impressed, Mao invited Baz to accompany him on a trip to his hometown Xiangtan to observe rural conditions. During the journey, Mao confided in Baz many details of secret revolutionary societies in the province – names of organisers, stash points for smuggled anti-Qing pamphlets – thinking Baz an ally. Shortly thereafter, police raids swept Hunan's underground circles. Several of Mao's friends were arrested or had to flee into the mountains. Mao was mystified how the authorities got their intel. It soon emerged that Baz had quietly sold a **dossier of information** on Hunanese radicals to the local warlord for a hefty reward. Not only that, Baz absconded with the remaining funds Mao's group had raised for relief of famine villages (money Mao thought still going to those peasants). Mao felt a deep sense of guilt and betrayal – his naïveté had cost comrades their freedom and villagers their aid. That bitter lesson scarred Mao's trust in outside "helpers." Though Baz left China soon after, Mao's memory of the "**white devil in traveler's guise**" lingered, fuelling his resolve to rely only on Chinese peasants and not benevolent foreigners.

Relationship to Baz

At the dinner, Mao Zedong maintained a stoic but visibly cold distance from Baz Rutherford. Mao's face, typically calm, tightened with subdued anger when Baz hovered into his vicinity. While Mao was gracious and inquisitive with others, towards Baz he offered only a frigid stare or a curt nod at most. When Baz tried to engage him with a cheery remark about remembering "the rugged beauty of Hunan," Mao responded flatly, "*Memory can be deceiving.*" He then deliberately turned away and struck up a conversation with Trotsky, leaving Baz awkwardly standing. Observers could tell something was amiss: Mao's knuckles were white around his teacup whenever Baz casually entered a group discussion. In one tense moment, Baz made a comment about the "strong character" of Chinese youth, glancing at Mao. Mao finally spoke directly to him: "*Chinese youth learned strength by surviving betrayals.*" The steely look that accompanied the subtle accusation caused Baz to fumble his drink. Throughout the evening, Mao's normally soft-spoken nature took on an edge when Baz was within earshot. He murmured to **Chiang Kai-shek** in Chinese that Baz was a "**两面派**" ("two-faced schemer"), which Chiang heartily acknowledged with a scowl. Baz, picking up on the hostile vibes, increasingly steered clear of Mao in the latter half of the dinner, focusing instead on more oblivious company like Crowley. Once, **Queen Marie** innocently praised European support for Chinese education, mentioning a kind "English philanthropist" she'd heard of in Hunan. Mao interjected in polite English: "*Not all who claim to help China truly help.*" He caught Baz's eye as he said this; Baz quickly busied himself adjusting a centerpiece. Mao's trust in Baz had been shattered back in 1912; now his treatment of Baz was ice-cold civility at best, loaded with a **resentment he didn't bother to conceal**. The youthful idealist betrayed had become the wary revolutionary who would not give Baz another chance to harm his cause – his eyes following Baz



occasionally with the look of someone calculating whether one quick strike could rid him of this problem once and for all.

Motive

Mao Zedong's motive to want Baz Rutherford dead springs from a deep well of **personal betrayal and revolutionary necessity**. Baz's treachery in Hunan cost Mao's movement dearly – beloved mentors were jailed or executed due to Baz's information, and crucial funds for famine relief vanished. In Mao's young mind at the time, Baz's act was not just a personal slight but a **crime against the suffering Chinese peasantry** Mao championed. Mao came to equate Baz with the oppressive forces he vowed to overthrow: as bad as any cruel landlord or corrupt official. By eliminating Baz, Mao would be delivering righteous justice for those wronged – a theme that later underpinned his ruthless purges of “traitors” during the revolution. Emotionally, Mao also carries guilt; he blames himself for having trusted Baz. That guilt has hardened into a determination to *never let such a snake strike again*. Killing Baz would, to Mao, **exorcise that mistake** – a sort of atonement by ensuring Baz can lure and betray no more revolutionaries. From a strategic lens, Mao sees Baz as **dangerous scum best removed**. In guerrilla struggle, security is life or death; Mao learned early that one informer can doom an entire uprising. If Baz lived, what's to stop him from infiltrating Mao's future Communist cells or selling out other comrades? Mao is nothing if not pragmatic about eliminating threats – later he'd sign off on executions of countless “spies” for the sake of the revolution. Baz fits squarely in that category of enemy in Mao's eyes. There is also Mao's fierce pride and hatred of exploiters: Baz literally profited off Chinese misery, an unforgivable in Mao's moral code. He exploited Mao's idealism – so Mao may feel **personally duty-bound to end Baz**, as a show that Chinese revolutionaries are not to be trifled with or conned without deadly consequences. Symbolically too, Mao might view killing Baz as **killing a representative of Western imperialist deceit** on Chinese soil. He famously said the revolution is not a dinner party – it is an act of violence where needed. In that logic, removing Baz is a small but significant revolutionary act, striking down one of the “paper tigers” (an epithet Mao later used) who thought China weak. In sum, Mao's motive interweaves vengeance for past betrayal, safeguarding future revolutionary work, and an almost cosmic idea of **righting a wrong against the Chinese people**. At the point of pulling a trigger or slipping a knife between Baz's ribs, Mao would feel completely justified – executing, in effect, the “**first counter-revolutionary**” who taught him the bitter lesson that *revolution demands blood, even the blood of those once smiling across the table*.

Staff Characters

Josephine Baker - Mayra

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** American (later French citizen)



- **Profession:** Entertainer (Dancer, Singer) and French Resistance Agent
- **Gender:** Female
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 6 years old (born 3 June 1906)
- **Age in Story:** ~20 (portrayed older to participate in 1912 events)

Core Significance

Josephine Baker is celebrated as a **trailblazing African-American performer and civil rights icon**. Rising from poverty, she became one of the first Black global superstars on the Paris stage in the 1920s, famed for her daring dance routines and magnetic presence. During World War II, Baker served heroically as a spy for the French Resistance, adding patriotism to her legend. Her flamboyant persona, coupled with later activism against racism, has made her a symbol of artistic ingenuity, cultural crossover, and courage. In short, she is remembered as a **pioneer who broke racial barriers** and used her fame for noble causes.

Early Life and Background

Josephine Baker was born Freda Josephine McDonald on 3 June 1906 in St. Louis, Missouri. She grew up in extreme poverty in a segregated America, often working as a child domestic servant to help her family. From a young age, Josephine showed a flair for performance – dancing on street corners and in local theatres to earn coins. By age 13, she had joined a travelling vaudeville troupe, and by 15 she made it to New York City, where the Harlem Renaissance was in full swing. In 1925, hungry for greater opportunity and to escape American racism, Josephine set sail for Paris. There, her exotic and exuberant dance style (famously in a banana skirt) made her an overnight sensation in the Revue Nègre. These early experiences – from St. Louis slums to the Champs-Élysées – shaped Josephine's resilience and worldly perspective. By 1912 in our story, though only a child in reality, she is depicted as already touring internationally, bringing her electrifying talent to new audiences.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Josephine Baker's legacy is rich and enduring. In entertainment, she was the **first Black woman to achieve international stardom** as a stage performer. She redefined glamour and proved that Black talent could command the world's attention. During WWII, she used her celebrity as cover to **carry secret messages and aid the Resistance**, for which she received military honours. After the war, Baker became an outspoken civil rights activist – notably speaking at the 1963 March on Washington beside Martin Luther King Jr. – and adopting twelve children of different ethnicities (her "Rainbow Tribe") to promote racial harmony. Today, she is revered as a cultural icon in both France and the United States. The French Pantheon interred her in 2021, recognizing her contributions to the nation. Josephine's life story, often told in films and books, continues to inspire artists and activists as an example of using one's platform to challenge prejudice and **uplift humanity**.

Achievements as per 1912



By the end of 1912, the real Josephine was only six years old and far from the fame that awaited her. She had **no notable achievements yet**, beyond surviving a tough childhood in St. Louis. (*In the fictional context of 1912, Josephine is portrayed as about 20 and already making her mark as a dancer. By this time in the story, she would have joined a prominent dance troupe and perhaps headlined a show or two in New York or Paris. These accomplishments – though historically a decade early – set the stage for the international renown she would later earn. In reality, Josephine's breakthrough on the Paris stage came in 1925, but the story accelerates her timeline for dramatic purposes.*)

How She Met Baz

Josephine met Baz Rutherford in October 1911 at the Apollo Theatre in Johannesburg, where she was performing during her South African tour. Their connection was instant and soon turned romantic, with Baz sweeping Josephine off her feet with promises of love and a glittering future together in Paris. Their affair was passionate but brief. When Josephine later discovered she was pregnant, she wrote to Baz, hoping for support and acknowledgement. Instead, Baz denied ever knowing her or their relationship, leaving Josephine heartbroken and alone.

Motive

Baz's betrayal went far beyond heartbreak and denial. After abandoning Josephine and refusing to acknowledge their child, Baz used his influence to spread damaging rumours about her, threatening her reputation and career just as she was gaining international acclaim. Worse, Josephine discovered that Baz had forged letters in her name, implicating her in a scandal that could destroy her prospects and leave her child without a future. Fearing for her livelihood, her child's safety, and her own dignity, Josephine saw Baz not just as a personal betrayer, but as an active threat to everything she had worked for. For Josephine, eliminating Baz became a matter of survival and protection—not only for herself, but for her child's future and the legacy she hoped to build.

J. Edgar Hoover - Rene

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** American
- **Profession/Role:** Law Enforcement Official (future FBI Director)
- **Gender:** Male
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 17 years old (born 1895)
- **Age in Story:** 45 (portrayed slightly older for the 1912 setting)

Core Significance

J. Edgar Hoover is historically significant as the **founding Director of the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)**, a post he held from 1924 until 1972. He built the FBI into a modern crime-



fighting agency, introducing scientific methods (like centralized fingerprinting and forensic labs) and transforming it from a minor bureau into a powerful instrument of federal law enforcement. Hoover became synonymous with the fight against crime in mid-20th-century America – from the battles against Prohibition-era gangsters in the 1930s to the pursuit of spies and subversives during World War II and the Cold War. However, he is also a **controversial figure**: his obsession with security led to extensive surveillance of politicians, activists, and everyday citizens. Hoover amassed secret files and often acted beyond legal limits, making him both feared and influential. His legacy thus straddles innovation in policing and enduring debates about the balance between national security and civil liberties.

Early Life and Background

John Edgar Hoover was born on **1 January 1895** in Washington, D.C., into a conservative, middle-class family. A top student and dutiful son, young Edgar was intensely organised even as a boy – he famously catalogued his family's library index cards and excelled in debate club with his rapid, fact-stuffed speeches. He studied law at night at George Washington University while working days as a clerk at the Library of Congress. This experience honed his skills in information management and research, which later proved invaluable in structuring FBI archives. By 1912, at age 17, Hoover had graduated high school with honours and begun clerking at the **Justice Department**, where his efficiency earned notice. He was deeply shaped by the **orderly Methodist upbringing** his mother imposed and by observing the patriotic fervour in the U.S. capital during World War I. These influences instilled in him a lifelong devotion to authority, hard work, and an absolutist view of right and wrong. As a youth in 1912, Hoover was already displaying the hallmark traits of **meticulousness, discipline, and moral absolutism** that would define his career.

Legacy and Historical Impact

J. Edgar Hoover's impact on American law enforcement and government surveillance is **immense and enduring**. On one hand, he professionalized the FBI, turning it into a model agency revered for its crime-fighting prowess. He championed the use of technology and careful record-keeping in investigations – methods that have since become standard worldwide. Under his leadership, the FBI helped break notorious gangs (he took credit for the demise of criminals like Dillinger and Capone) and built cases against Nazi saboteurs and Cold War spies. The very concept of a “G-Man” (government man) as a heroic, methodical detective stems from Hoover's carefully cultivated FBI image. On the other hand, Hoover's **shadow side** had profound implications: he oversaw COINTELPRO and other secret programmes that infiltrated and harassed civil rights groups, anti-war protesters, and even presidents. His meticulous dirty dossiers gave him immense leverage over public figures – a power regarded by many as an abuse of his office. This dual legacy means that Hoover is often invoked in discussions about the ethics of surveillance and the dangers of unchecked bureaucratic power. After his death, reforms were instituted to prevent another 48-year dynasty at the FBI. In American culture, Hoover has become a character symbolising the zeal and paranoia of the mid-20th century security state – depicted in countless films, novels, and academic works as both a crime-busting icon and a cautionary tale of **power without oversight**. To



this day, debates about privacy vs security often hark back to Hoover's era, making his legacy sharply relevant whenever questions of government overreach arise.

Achievements as per 1912

By the end of 1912, the ambitious young Edgar Hoover had only just begun his ascent, but he already had several achievements foreshadowing his later success. In 1912, Hoover was finishing his Bachelor's degree in law at **George Washington University** (having impressively completed high school by age 15 and gone straight to university). He was known on campus for founding and leading the "**Raising Club**," a society dedicated to improving public speaking – an achievement that won him accolades in university debate competitions. Simultaneously, Hoover worked as a clerk at the **Library of Congress**, where he helped implement a modern cross-reference system for library catalogues. This seemingly mundane task gave him deep insight into information management; Hoover later credited it with teaching him how to build the FBI's massive filing systems. In late 1912, Hoover leveraged his sterling academic record to land a junior clerk position at the **U.S. Department of Justice**, an unusual achievement for someone so young. In that role, he was entrusted with summarizing case files and compiling data on anarchist activities (the Red Scare was around the corner, and Hoover was already proving adept at tracking subversives). His bosses were struck by his **unflagging diligence and precision** – qualities that earned him rapid promotions in subsequent years. While he had not yet made any public mark by 1912, within the bureaucratic corridors of Washington Hoover had established a reputation as a wunderkind of paperwork and a loyal foot soldier in the fight against lawlessness, positioning him on the very cusp of a remarkable career in law enforcement.

Motive

Background:

J. Edgar Hoover, even in 1912, is already a rising star in American law enforcement—meticulous, ambitious, and fiercely protective of the reputation of the Bureau, the government, and those in power. He is in South Africa under the pretext of observing colonial policing methods, but in reality, he's on a covert mission: to track the rumoured Kruger Gold, a legendary cache of Boer war treasure that, if found, could shift the balance of power and finance covert operations for years to come.

Baz's Threat:

Baz Rutherford is a notorious swindler and blackmailer who has made a career of collecting secrets and selling them to the highest bidder. Baz has recently come into possession of a coded ledger and a map that could lead to the Kruger Gold. More dangerously, Baz has also acquired compromising information about several high-profile guests—politicians, royals, and reformers—whose reputations Hoover is determined to protect. Baz has already hinted that he might auction these secrets to foreign agents or the press, threatening not only individual reputations but also the stability of governments and the credibility of law enforcement itself.

Why Hoover Would Kill Baz:



- **National Security:** If Baz exposes the location of the Kruger Gold, it could fall into the hands of rival powers or criminal syndicates, undermining American and British interests in Africa and beyond.
- **Reputation Management:** Baz's blackmail files contain damaging information about key figures—Churchill, Roosevelt, Wallis Simpson, and others. If these secrets are revealed, it could spark scandals, topple careers, and destabilise the very order Hoover is sworn to uphold.
- **Personal Ambition:** Hoover knows that securing the Kruger Gold for the Bureau (or at least ensuring it doesn't fall into the wrong hands) would cement his reputation as a master of intelligence and control. Allowing Baz to profit from it—or to use it as leverage—would be a personal and professional humiliation.
- **Control and Leverage:** Hoover believes that only he can be trusted to safeguard such dangerous secrets. Baz's unpredictable nature and willingness to sell to the highest bidder make him a liability that cannot be tolerated.

In summary:

Hoover's motive is a blend of patriotic duty, personal ambition, and ruthless pragmatism. Baz Rutherford is a threat to the reputations Hoover guards, the stability of the international order, and the secrecy surrounding the Kruger Gold. For Hoover, killing Baz is not just an act of self-preservation—it is a necessary step to protect the reputations of the powerful, prevent a geopolitical crisis, and ensure that the gold (and the secrets) remain under the control of someone who understands the true cost of scandal and exposure.

Phillip (formerly Philipp, Prince of Eulenburg) – Oliver



Historical Facts (Real Background)

Name: Philipp, Prince of Eulenburg und Hertefeld (1847–1921)

Nationality: German (Prussian aristocracy)



Background: Once a close confidant and advisor to Kaiser Wilhelm II, Eulenburg was a diplomat and central figure in the “Liebenberg Circle.” His career ended in scandal after being outed as homosexual by Maximilian Harden in 1907, leading to disgrace and exile from public life.

Fictional Elements for the Murder Mystery

Identity and Secrecy

Alias: After the scandal, Eulenburg faked his death and fled Europe, adopting the name “Phillip.” He vanished into South Africa, living under a new identity.

Secret: The only person at the dinner who knows Phillip’s true identity is Sebastian “Baz” Rutherford. Baz discovered Phillip’s secret during their earlier affair and has kept it as leverage.

Baz’s Motivation for Employing Phillip

Why Baz Hired Phillip: Baz is a master manipulator who values secrets and control. He accepted Phillip as his private assistant because:

Phillip’s skills in diplomacy, discretion, and event management are unmatched—useful for Baz’s complex social schemes.

Baz enjoys having power over Phillip, knowing his true identity and holding the threat of exposure.

Baz believes that keeping Phillip close allows him to monitor and exploit him, perhaps even using Phillip’s knowledge of European society for his own gain.

Motive

True Motive: Phillip’s real reason for becoming Baz’s assistant is to orchestrate Baz’s murder and escape suspicion.

Mastermind of the Dinner: It is Phillip’s idea to host the infamous dinner, inviting all the guests who have a grudge against Baz. He carefully curates the guest list, ensuring every attendee has a plausible motive for murder.

Knowledge of Motives: Phillip is the only person (besides Baz) who knows the full extent of each guest’s grievance against Baz. He has gathered this information through careful observation, confidential conversations, and Baz’s own indiscretions.

Strategy: By surrounding Baz with enemies and ensuring everyone has a motive, Phillip intends to create a perfect storm of suspicion. His plan is to kill Baz and make it appear that any one of the guests could be responsible, thus ensuring he gets away with the crime.

Character Dynamics

Public Persona: Phillip is the consummate professional—efficient, discreet, and always in the background. He manages the evening’s logistics flawlessly, never drawing attention to himself.



Relationship with Baz: Outwardly, Phillip is loyal and unassuming, but beneath the surface, their relationship is a tense game of mutual blackmail and hidden agendas.

Inner Conflict: Phillip is driven by a need for justice and revenge, but also by the necessity of survival. He must keep his true identity hidden from the other guests at all costs.

Phillip is the Killer

Here's my reasoning for why I chose Phillip to be the killer in the murder mystery:

When I was planning the event, I realized that many of the guests were slow to respond to messages or didn't confirm their participation in a timely manner. That made it risky to assign the role of the murderer to any of them—if the killer didn't show up or wasn't engaged, the whole mystery could fall flat.

I also wanted all the guests to focus on solving the mystery and enjoying the evening, rather than worrying about acting or keeping a big secret. If a guest had been the killer, they would have had to spend the night lying and improvising under pressure, which can be stressful and distracting from the fun of deduction.

By making Phillip (a character I could control as the host) the murderer, I was able to plan the evidence and clues well in advance. This gave me the flexibility to adapt the story on the night itself, depending on which clues were discovered and how the guests' suspicions evolved. It made it much easier for me to improvise and steer the narrative, ensuring the experience was smooth and engaging for everyone.

Fact vs. Fiction Table

Aspect	Fact (Historical)	Fiction (Murder Mystery)
Name	Philipp, Prince of Eulenburg	Phillip (alias, in hiding)
Nationality	German (Prussian aristocrat)	German, living as a British expatriate in South Africa
Role	Diplomat, advisor to Kaiser Wilhelm II	Private assistant to Baz Rutherford
Scandal	Outed as homosexual by Maximilian Harden, leading to disgrace	Baz is the one who reveals Phillip's sexuality to Harden, triggering the scandal



Aspect	Fact (Historical)	Fiction (Murder Mystery)
Fate	Lived in seclusion in Germany, died in 1921	Fakes death, flees to South Africa, assumes new identity
Motive for Murder	N/A	Revenge against Baz for betrayal and the destruction of his former life
Relationship to Baz	No historical connection	Former lover; Baz is the only one who knows Phillip's true identity
Dinner Plot	N/A	Phillip masterminds the dinner, inviting all Baz's enemies to create a web of motives
Knowledge of Motives	N/A	Phillip is the only person (besides Baz) who knows every guest's reason to want Baz dead

Portrayal Tips

Demeanour: Calm, efficient, and always slightly withdrawn. Phillip is careful never to reveal too much about himself.

Interactions: He is attentive to every guest, subtly steering conversations and observing reactions, always gathering information.

Relationship with Baz: A complex mix of forced loyalty, mutual threat, and underlying hatred. In private, their exchanges are loaded with subtext.

Secret Knowledge: Phillip's awareness of every guest's motive makes him the true puppet master of the evening.

Ultimate Goal: To kill Baz, frame the crime as an act of collective vengeance, and disappear before anyone realises the truth.

In summary:

Phillip is the architect of the murder mystery, the only person (apart from Baz) who knows all the secrets in the room. His role as private assistant is a mask for his true purpose: to exact revenge and escape unscathed, using the web of motives he has so carefully woven around Baz. If you'd like, I can help you develop specific dialogue, alibi strategies, or further psychological depth for your portrayal. Would you like to add any particular quirks or signature behaviours to make Phillip even more memorable?



Staff Characters

Charlotte Maxeke - Lebu

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** South African
- **Profession:** Activist, Educator, Religious Leader
- **Gender:** Female
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** 41 years old (born 1871) [\[Staff Characters | Word\]](#)
- **Age in Story:** 41 (same as real age, as the story is set in 1912)

Core Significance

Charlotte Maxeke is celebrated as a pioneering figure in South African history. She was the first Black South African woman to earn a university degree, and she played a foundational role in the early African National Congress (ANC) and in championing women's rights. Often called the *"Mother of Black Freedom in South Africa,"* Maxeke's leadership in education, anti-colonial activism, and the church laid groundwork for future generations of activists. [\[Staff Characters | Word\]](#), [\[Staff Characters | Word\]](#)

Early Life and Background

Charlotte Makgomo Maxeke was born in 1871 in Fort Beaufort, Eastern Cape. Raised in a Christian family, she excelled in school and in music. As a young woman she joined the African Jubilee Choir, which toured Europe and North America in the 1890s. During her time abroad, she seized the opportunity to pursue higher education. She attended Wilberforce University in Ohio, USA, graduating in 1901 with a Bachelor of Science – becoming the first Black South African woman to earn a degree. This combination of academic achievement and international exposure shaped her lifelong commitment to uplift her community. [\[Staff Characters | Word\]](#)

Legacy and Historical Impact

Maxeke's legacy is profound. In 1918, she founded the Bantu Women's League, the first women's organisation linked to the ANC (later formalised as the ANC Women's League). She led campaigns against the oppressive pass laws and spoke out tirelessly for equality. Her work paved the way for women's full participation in South African politics and social movements. In later years, she continued to mentor younger activists and advocate education for African youth. Today, numerous South African institutions bear her name (from a hospital to an annual memorial lecture), and her story is taught and celebrated as an inspiration in the ongoing fight for justice and gender equality. Charlotte Maxeke is remembered not only for what she achieved by 1912, but for the trail she



blazed long afterward – a true trailblazer for civil rights whose influence endures. [\[Staff Characters | Word\]](#) [\[Staff Characters | Word\]](#), [\[Staff Characters | Word\]](#)

Achievements as of 1912

By the end of 1912, Charlotte Maxeke had already achieved several remarkable milestones. She had earned a science degree in the United States in 1901, a groundbreaking accomplishment for a black South African woman at that time. She had become a respected teacher upon returning home, and was active in her church as a leader of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) community. She was also widely known for her community work advocating education and social upliftment of black South Africans. By 1912, Maxeke was a prominent figure in missionary and educational circles, and had gained respect as one of the few formally educated black women in the country. (*It's worth noting that some of her most prominent contributions – such as co-founding the Bantu Women's League in 1918 – lay in the future, but in 1912 she was already laying the groundwork through her teaching and community organizing.*) [\[Staff Characters | Word\]](#)

How They Met Baz

Charlotte Maxeke met the fictional Baz Rutherford through what she believed was a philanthropy opportunity. In early 1912, Charlotte was raising funds for local African schools in Kimberley – a cause dear to her heart as an educator. Baz, with his flamboyant generosity, approached Charlotte under the guise of a benefactor interested in supporting African education. They likely crossed paths at a community fundraising event or via church connections when Baz visited Kimberley. Charmed by his wealth and apparent goodwill, Charlotte entrusted Baz with a sum of money intended for her school charity, after he promised to help invest in new facilities for local students. Unfortunately, this trust was tragically misplaced.

Relationship to Baz

Initially, Charlotte's relationship with Baz was cordial and hopeful – she saw him as an unusual ally from outside her community, a wealthy white man willing to assist African educational causes. She treated him with respect and gratitude at first. However, this relationship quickly soured when Baz's true nature revealed itself. After their financial dealings, Baz disappeared with the funds he had promised to allocate to Charlotte's school initiative. Charlotte came to realise that Baz had swindled her: he was no philanthropist at all, but a conman exploiting her trust. The warm regard turned into deep resentment. By the time of Baz's Christmas 1912 safari dinner, Charlotte is civil to him in public, but privately seething. She keeps her interactions with Baz polite but distant – she has a moral upper hand and lets him know through icy stares that she has not forgiven his treachery. Their conversations at the event, if any, are curt and freighted with tension. In short, what began as a potential partnership has become outright enmity. [\[Murder Mys...Characters | Word\]](#), [\[Murder Mys...Characters | Word\]](#)

Motive

Charlotte has a powerful motive to see Baz dead: **justice**. In March 1912, Baz defrauded Charlotte's educational charity, stealing money earmarked for local African schools. This betrayal



isn't just a personal financial loss – it is a blow to an entire community of vulnerable children who depended on those funds. Charlotte feels a profound sense of duty to right this wrong. Baz's deceit embodies the larger injustices she fights against; he is a symbol of the opportunistic colonial rogues harming her people under friendly pretences. Charlotte wants to recover the stolen money and ensure Baz cannot prey on others. Furthermore, as a deeply principled woman, she believes that removing Baz would prevent him from hurting more innocents. In her eyes, killing Baz isn't about revenge for pride's sake – it is an act to **protect the community and avenge the children** who lost their chance at schooling because of his greed. Her resolve is steeled by moral outrage. If pushed to the brink, Charlotte Maxeke would consider it her righteous duty to eliminate Baz Rutherford, the swindler who literally stole hope from African schoolchildren.

Labotsibeni Mdluli (Queen Regent of Swaziland) - Truddy

Basic Details

- **Nationality:** Swazi (Swaziland)
- **Profession/Role:** Queen Regent of Swaziland (Eswatini), Traditional Monarch
- **Gender:** Female
- **Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life):** ~54 years old (born c.1858)
- **Age in Story:** ~54 (portrayed as an astute elder stateswoman in 1912)

Core Significance

Labotsibeni Mdluli (also known as *Gwamile*) was the formidable **Queen Regent of Swaziland** who guided her nation during a critical era of colonial encroachment. She is historically important for **preserving Swazi autonomy and culture** at a time when Southern Africa was being carved up by European powers. Acting as regent from 1899 on behalf of the young King Sobhuza II, Labotsibeni deftly balanced tradition and diplomacy. She championed **education, unity, and strategic diplomacy** – establishing schools, petitioning British authorities for fair treatment, and keeping the Swazi monarchy intact. In the eyes of her people, she embodied wise female leadership (known as the “Rock of Swaziland”), and in the historical record she stands out as one of Africa's earliest 20th-century female rulers who successfully safeguarded her nation's interests during colonial rule.

Early Life and Background

Born into Swazi royalty around 1858, Labotsibeni was raised in a clan of influential hereditary advisors. From a young age she observed high-level tribal councils at the court of King Mswati II (her grandfather), absorbing lessons in statecraft and diplomacy. She was married to King Ngwane V and became the *Ndlovukati* (Queen Mother) – a powerful position in Swazi dual monarchy. When her son King Bhunu (Ngwane V) died in 1899, leaving infant prince Sobhuza II as heir, Labotsibeni assumed the regency. Her upbringing in an era of upheaval – she'd seen the Zulu wars and Boer intrigues – instilled a **shrewd survival instinct**. She was largely self-educated (in several African



languages and some English) and deeply traditional, yet she wasn't afraid to adopt new ideas. By 1912, she had been regent for over a decade, honing her skills in negotiation with British colonial officials. Early on, she sponsored the first formal school for Swazi children (seeing knowledge as "the shield and spear" of her people) and maintained unity among Swazi chiefs, fending off internal rivals. Her background as both a royal insider and a witness to colonial aggression shaped her into a **matriarch both beloved and a little feared** – a diminutive woman always clad in traditional dress, with a razor-sharp mind that could spar with governors and missionaries alike.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Labotsibeni's legacy is significant in Swaziland's history. She is credited with **preserving the Swazi nation's territorial integrity** during the partition of Africa. Through petitions and diplomacy, she successfully opposed the incorporation of Swaziland into the Union of South Africa, ensuring it remained a distinct protectorate under the British rather than being lost entirely to settler rule. This was a vital precursor to Swaziland's eventual independence (she's often hailed as a foremother of modern Eswatini). She also left a social legacy: the emphasis she placed on education bore fruit in the enlightened reign of her grandson Sobhuza II, who in later years often acknowledged how his grandmother's wisdom guided his policies. Culturally, Labotsibeni reinforced the role of the *Indlovukati* in Swazi governance – her effective regency cemented that the Queen Mother could be an equal pillar of authority. By the time of her passing (in 1925), she had become a symbol of **resilient African leadership**, proving that a woman leader could navigate a world dominated by male colonisers and come out with her nation's pride intact. Today in Eswatini, schools, roads, and programmes are named in honour of Labotsibeni. Her life is taught as part of national curriculum, celebrating her as the "Grandmother of the Nation" who during a dangerous crossroads in history kept the flame of Swazi sovereignty alive. In pan-African terms, she holds a place among early 20th-century African leaders who resisted colonial domination through wit over warfare.

Achievements as per 1912

By the end of 1912, Regent Labotsibeni had already notched impressive achievements. She had maintained **political stability** in Swaziland for over a decade, thwarting attempts by both British officials and rival chiefs to erode the monarchy's authority. In that year she had successfully dispatched envoys (and letters under her seal) to London, lobbying King George V to exempt Swazi lands from laws like South Africa's 1913 Natives Land Act. Her persuasive appeals helped ensure Swazis were not completely stripped of their ancestral land – a remarkable diplomatic win for a colonised people. Internally, Labotsibeni had founded the **Swazi National School** by 1912, using some of the royal treasury to hire teachers (including a Mr. Vilakati, one of the first Western-educated Swazis) to teach English and arithmetic to Swazi youth. This was groundbreaking – she recognized education as a tool to empower her nation under colonial pressure. She also managed the Swazi economy astutely: by 1912 she had set up a royal cattle reserve and grain stores which buffered her people against drought and famine. On the international front, she kept cordial if wary relations with neighbouring colonial governors, often sending them courteous gifts to maintain goodwill while tenaciously negotiating for Swazi rights behind the scenes. In short, as of 1912 Labotsibeni had **secured her grandson's throne**, kept Swazi territory largely intact, introduced



progressive reforms (like schooling and modest agricultural innovations), and earned a reputation among Europeans as “that indomitable Queen in Africa” – achievements that testified to her acumen long before her regency ended.

How They Met Baz

In **February 1912**, at the British Resident Commissioner’s compound in Mbabane, Labotsibeni first crossed paths with Sebastian “Baz” Rutherford. Baz arrived touting himself as an *“independent trading agent”* who could procure modern rifles and telegraph equipment for Swaziland’s use. The Queen Regent, ever concerned with strengthening Swazi defences without angering the British, held a discreet meeting with Baz after dusk in her royal kraal. Baz flattered Labotsibeni by greeting her in basic Zulu and offering her a gift: a fancy British-made umbrella (which she accepted politely, though she later handed it to a maid – suspecting flattery). Over several hushed conversations, Baz spun a compelling proposal: in exchange for a hefty sum in gold and ivory, he would smuggle in a shipment of Lee-Enfield rifles from Mozambique, enough to arm 500 Swazi warriors, and quietly instruct them in usage. He charmed the regent by invoking her **goal of protecting Swazi sovereignty** – saying phrases like *“to keep the white wolf from your fold.”* Labotsibeni, cautious but seeing potential value, agreed to a deal. She paid Baz upfront with a prized elephant-tusk ivory cache and part of the royal herd (50 cattle delivered to Baz’s agent). Baz promised delivery by May 1912. However, weeks turned into months with no rifles. When Labotsibeni pressed him via messenger, Baz claimed delays at customs and evaded further audiences. Unbeknownst to her, Baz **never intended to deliver arms**; instead, he leaked news of the attempted purchase to British authorities to curry their favour, casting Labotsibeni as secretly stockpiling weapons. This treachery nearly caused a scandal – the Resident Commissioner confronted the regent in September 1912 about “rumours of illicit arms,” which she skillfully denied with an innocent facade. Only then did she realise Baz had deceived her. It was a **stinging revelation** for Labotsibeni: her trust in a foreign intermediary nearly exposed her to colonial reprimand, and she lost precious royal resources to a con man. By the end of 1912, her relationship with Baz had soured from tentative alliance to one of quiet, seething anger and regret.

Relationship to Baz

Outwardly, Labotsibeni maintained her regal composure around Baz at the safari dinner – addressing him as “Mr. Rutherford” with clipped courtesy – but privately she regarded him as **“Inyoka” (a snake)**. After his failed arms deal, she kept interactions with Baz to the absolute minimum necessary, always through intermediaries. Now, encountering him again in person, the Queen Regent’s usually gentle eyes hardened when Baz entered the room. If Baz attempted to pay respects with a deferential bow and a “Your Majesty,” Labotsibeni would acknowledge him with only a cool nod, then turn away to speak to someone else, ** pointedly excluding him from further dialogue. Baz, unused to being so utterly dismissed, tried at one point to engage her with talk of “recent events in Swaziland.” Labotsibeni fixed him with an icy stare and replied, *“My people prosper – despite those who cheat them.”* The icy double-meaning hung in the air, leaving Baz momentarily speechless (an uncommon event). Throughout the evening, she stationed one of her tall Swazi attendants near Baz’s chair – ostensibly a cultural aide, but really to unnerve Baz with the



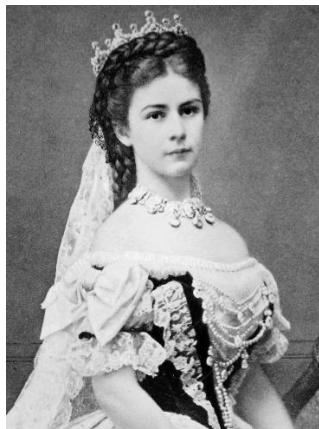
silent reminder of her loyal muscle. For his part, Baz grew increasingly uneasy under the Queen's steely, unblinking gaze from across the table. When he laughed loudly at a joke, Labotsibeni did not even crack a smile, watching him as one watches a known thief in one's house. Interestingly, Labotsibeni's regal self-control meant she never publicly berated Baz; she kept the veneer of politeness ("Mister Rutherford and I have concluded our business, I believe," she once said blandly when someone asked if they knew each other). But this thin veneer fooled no one – observers, like Churchill, noted the palpable chill. Baz felt it keenly: the normally confident hunter avoided meeting the Queen's eyes and flinched whenever he heard her click her tongue against her palate (a Swazi sign of disapproval). In essence, their relationship had devolved into a tense standoff – Labotsibeni treating Baz with the distant scorn one reserves for a proven liar, and Baz finding all his charm and bluster wilt under the dignified wrath of this African queen whom he had crossed.

Motive

Labotsibeni's motive to want Baz dead is rooted in **protecting her nation's future and avenging a profound personal betrayal**. On a practical level, Baz's duplicity endangered Swaziland's delicate position. By leaking her covert arms request to the British, he not only swindled her out of resources but also **jeopardised Swazi sovereignty** – had she not deftly denied it, the British might have used it as pretext to clip her authority or even annex Swaziland into South Africa. Eliminating Baz would remove a dangerous informant from the chessboard of colonial politics; she likely reasons that if he betrayed her, he could betray other African leaders' plans too, always to the colonisers' benefit. In her eyes, killing Baz could be seen as an act of **defensive statecraft** – neutralising an enemy of her people's autonomy. Emotionally, Baz's con struck at her pride and trust. Labotsibeni prided herself on outwitting imperial officers, yet this rogue managed to deceive her, one of the shrewdest minds in the region. That is a bitter pill: he made the "Rock of Swaziland" appear a fool. For a monarch who carries the honour of her ancestors and the hopes of her descendants, such an insult cannot stand. Thus, her desire to kill him is **partly fueled by royal honour** – a need to punish the man who dared make a mockery of the Queen Regent. There's also a symbolic, almost spiritual dimension: in Swazi custom, a person who brings harm to the King or Queen is believed to curse the land. Baz, by his treachery, has metaphorically "poisoned" the well. Labotsibeni might feel that spilling his blood is the only way to **lift the curse of mistrust and humiliation** he cast upon her reign. Importantly, Labotsibeni is not a capricious or violent person by nature; she's known for patience. But Baz's actions crossed every red line – stealing from her, endangering her subjects' welfare (for had British sanctions come, it's the Swazi people who'd suffer), and abusing her openness. In her calculus, the **justice of the ancestors** demands Baz's life in exchange for the disruption he caused. Furthermore, removing him would serve as a stern warning to any other agent who might think to exploit or double-cross indigenous leaders. In short, Labotsibeni's motive blends duty and vengeance: she seeks to kill Baz not only to **exact personal retribution** for his fraud but to **safeguard her kingdom's dignity and security**, ensuring that no outsider again thinks the Queen of Swaziland an easy target without deadly consequences.



Sisi - Empress Elisabeth of Austria – Marion



Historical Background (Real Life)

- **Name:** Elisabeth Amalie Eugenie, Empress of Austria and Queen of Hungary (“Sisi”)
- **Born:** 1837, Munich, Germany (Bavarian House of Wittelsbach)
- **Role:** Became Empress of Austria-Hungary through marriage to Emperor Franz Joseph I
- **Controversy:** After the tragic death of her only son, Crown Prince Rudolf, in the Mayerling Incident (1889), Sisi withdrew from public life, travelling incognito and avoiding court duties. She was known for her reclusiveness, eccentricity, and mysterious behaviour.

Fictional Elements for the Murder Mystery

Disappearance and New Identity

- **Alias:** After the Mayerling Incident, Sisi (formerly Empress Elisabeth) fakes her own death and vanishes from European society.
- **New Life:** She resurfaces in South Africa, living under the name Sisi and running the Kruger Park Hostel as its enigmatic innkeeper. Her aristocratic bearing is masked by a practical, hands-on approach to hospitality.

Connection to Baz and the Mayerling Tragedy

- **Baz's Involvement:** Baz Rutherford is secretly implicated in the events leading to the murder-suicide of Crown Prince Rudolf. Whether through manipulation, blackmail, or direct involvement, Baz's actions contributed to the tragedy that destroyed Sisi's family and reputation.
- **Motivation:** Sisi harbours a deep resentment towards Baz, but keeps her knowledge hidden, waiting for the right moment to expose him.



Role in the Dinner and Knowledge of Secrets

- **Keeper of Secrets:** Sisi is the only person at the dinner who knows the true identity of Phillip (formerly Philipp, Prince of Eulenburg), recognising him from their shared European past.
- **Revelation:** During the evening, Sisi will let slip Phillip's true identity to the other guests, dramatically shifting the balance of suspicion and intrigue.
- **Hostess and Observer:** As the innkeeper, Sisi orchestrates the evening with quiet authority, observing the guests and subtly guiding the flow of conversation. Her knowledge of everyone's secrets makes her a formidable presence.

Character Dynamics

- **Public Persona:** Sisi is warm, welcoming, and seemingly ordinary, but her eyes betray a lifetime of sorrow and wisdom. She is adept at blending in, yet her aristocratic grace occasionally surfaces.
- **Relationship with Phillip:** Sisi and Phillip share a bond of mutual recognition and respect, both survivors of scandal and exile. Their alliance is based on shared secrets and a desire for justice.

Fact vs. Fiction Table

Aspect	Fact (Historical)	Fiction (Murder Mystery)
Name	Elisabeth ("Sisi"), Empress of Austria-Hungary	Sisi, innkeeper at Kruger Park Hostel
Nationality	Bavarian (German), Austrian royalty	German-born, living incognito in South Africa
Role	Empress, Queen, reclusive traveller	Hostel owner, orchestrator of the dinner
Mayerling Incident	Son's murder-suicide leads to withdrawal from public life	Baz is implicated in the tragedy; Sisi seeks justice
Fate	Assassinated in Geneva, Switzerland (1898)	Fakes death, goes into hiding in South Africa
Relationship to Phillip	No historical connection	Only person who knows Phillip's true identity; reveals it at the dinner



Aspect	Fact (Historical)	Fiction (Murder Mystery)
Relationship to Baz	No historical connection	Baz is responsible for her son's death; Sisi seeks revenge
Dinner Plot	N/A	Sisi is the Inn Keeper and controls the flow of some of the secrets and revelations

Motive

- **Demeanour:** Sisi is gracious and attentive, but her reserve hints at hidden depths. She is always watching, listening, and calculating.
- **Interactions:** She is skilled at drawing out confessions and secrets from guests, using her position as hostess to steer conversations.
- **Relationship with Phillip:** Their exchanges are subtle, filled with coded references to their shared past.
- **Relationship with Baz:** Tense and loaded with history; Sisi is determined to expose Baz's crimes.
- **Ultimate Goal:** To see justice done for her son, even if it means upending the lives of everyone at the table.

Sir William Osler - Robert

Basic Details

Nationality: Canadian (later British naturalised)

Profession: Physician (Professor of Medicine)

Gender: Male

Age on 25 December 1912 (Real Life): 63 (born 12 July 1849)

Age in Story: 63 (same as real age in 1912)

Core Significance

Sir William Osler is revered as a **father of modern medicine** in the English-speaking world. A co-founder of Johns Hopkins Hospital in 1889, he revolutionised medical education by dragging students out of stuffy lecture halls and **onto the wards**, insisting they learn by caring for real patients at the bedside. Osler introduced the now-ubiquitous **residency system** of training, where young doctors refine their craft through hands-on experience under mentorship. His textbook, *The Principles and Practice of Medicine* (1892), became the era's medical bible for its blend of scientific rigour and humanistic wisdom. In sum, Osler's innovations – patient-centred teaching, rigorous clinical standards, and a genteel philosophy of compassionate care – earned him the



moniker “**father of modern medicine**.” By 1912 he was Regius Professor at Oxford, knighted for his contributions, and regarded with almost saintly esteem by doctors-in-training across the globe. He stands as an **icon of medical excellence and education**, having fundamentally changed how physicians are moulded.

Early Life and Background

William Osler was born on 12 July 1849 in a rural parish of Ontario, the son of a scholarly Anglican clergyman. Childhood on the Canadian frontier gave him a mix of bookish curiosity and practical grit. He attended Trinity College School and McGill University in Montreal, where he earned his medical degree in 1872. A bright and irreverent student, young Osler was known to pull pranks – yet in the dissection room and clinic he was serious and devout in observing the truths the human body could teach. He travelled to Europe for further study, soaking up cutting-edge techniques in London, Berlin, and Vienna. By his thirties, Osler’s brilliance won him a post at McGill as Professor of Medicine, and later calls to Philadelphia and then Baltimore. In 1889 he joined three other luminaries to found **Johns Hopkins Hospital**, where he built the residency programme and championed the radical notion that medical students should meet patients from day one. Osler’s background as a Canadian outsider in elite American medicine gave him a pioneering spirit; he treated **students, nurses, and patients of all stations as worthy teachers**. By 1912, Sir William was at Oxford University in England (King George V knighted him in 1911 for his services), bringing his transatlantic charisma and teaching ethos to British medicine. His early life on two continents and his genial, mentoring personality shaped him into a **beloved reformer** who blended Old World erudition with New World pragmatism.

Legacy and Historical Impact

Osler’s legacy is enormous – **every modern doctor is in some way an heir to Osler’s vision**. He humanised medical training, insisting that compassion and curiosity together form the core of doctoring. The clinical clerkship and residency apprenticeships he established at Hopkins became the template adopted by medical schools worldwide; when today’s trainees make hospital rounds or stay overnight honing their skills, they walk the path Osler laid. He also left a legacy in literature and ethics: his speeches and essays (like “Aequanimitas”) impart a gentle wisdom, advising physicians to cultivate patience, humility, and continuous learning. Often called the “Oslerian ideal,” this humanistic approach to medicine still guides medical professionalism. Historian doctors credit him with transforming the doctor’s image from a distant scholar to a **bedside healer-scientist**. Beyond education, Osler was a co-founder of the Medical Library Association and amassed a legendary collection of medical history texts – believing strongly that young doctors should study the past to enrich their practice. His influence extended to public health and wartime medicine as well; during World War I, though in his sixties, he organized support for military hospitals and advised on treating battlefield illnesses. Sir William’s death in 1919 was mourned worldwide, but his impact lives on in the wards and classrooms wherever medicine is taught as both an art and science. In short, Osler’s fingerprint is on **virtually every aspect of modern medical practice**, from how doctors are trained to how they approach patients as human beings. Little wonder he’s remembered as a wise patriarch of medicine whose ideals still inform the healing profession.



Achievements as per 1912

By the end of 1912, Sir William Osler had already accomplished more than most physicians could in a lifetime. He had served as one of the **founding physicians of Johns Hopkins Hospital** (opened in 1889) and the first chief of its medical service, where he introduced bedside teaching and residency training that were swiftly setting new standards across America. He published *The Principles and Practice of Medicine* in 1892, a comprehensive text that by 1912 had gone through several editions and was the authoritative guide for doctors from New York to New Delhi. Osler was also highly regarded as a clinician who could diagnose ailments with uncanny insight – his former students told tales of him **detecting obscure diseases by close observation**, almost like a detective of medicine. In 1905, he was appointed Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford, a singular honour that made him physician-in-ordinary to the royal household. (Indeed, rumor had it he had been consulted on the health of the late King Edward VII – a mark of the esteem in which he was held.) In 1911, he was **knighted by King George V**, becoming Sir William Osler. Thus by Christmas 1912, at age 63, Osler had achieved international renown: he had trained an entire generation of doctors, modernised two major medical centres (in the US and now in Britain), and was often called upon for counsel by medical institutions around the world. He had also amassed a personal library of over 7,000 medical texts and curios, one of the finest collections of medical history – his “Bibliotheca Osleriana.” In short, by 1912 Osler stood at the pinnacle of the medical profession****: a celebrated teacher, master physician, prolific author, and respected gentleman of science, whose innovations were firmly embedded in medical practice on both sides of the Atlantic. (*Historically, his final accolades – such as becoming the first Baronet Osler – would come a bit later, but in our scenario he already enjoys every bit of the veneration due to his extraordinary career.*)

How They Met Baz

Sir William Osler first crossed paths with Sebastian “Baz” Rutherford in late 1910 at **Oxford University’s Bodleian Library**. By then, Osler had relocated to Oxford and was in the process of donating and organising his precious collection of antique medical texts for scholars. Baz, ever the opportunist, appeared one afternoon in the library’s antiquarian reading room masquerading as “Lord Rutherford,” a bibliophile with a penchant for medical history. He flattered Osler with knowledge of a rare 16th-century anatomy atlas – the very kind of treasure Osler loved. Baz insinuated he could help Osler acquire a prized missing volume: a 1543 first edition of Vesalius’s *De humani corporis fabrica* (a holy grail of anatomy books). Osler was immediately intrigued; such a volume was the jewel his collection lacked. Over teacups in Osler’s oak-panelled office, Baz spun a convincing yarn of having tracked this Vesalius to an estate sale in Scotland and offered to secure it on Sir William’s behalf. The catch? The sale was imminent and Baz needed **£500 upfront** to bid in Osler’s name. Trusting in what appeared to be a learned young aristocrat’s shared passion, Osler agreed and wrote a draft on the spot – after all, what was £500 if it brought one of the world’s great medical books to Oxford for students to study? They shook hands warmly; Baz even spent the evening at Osler’s home, perusing the doctor’s library and listening raptly to Osler’s tales of medical pioneers. He departed the next morning with Osler’s funds (and even an inscribed copy of Osler’s textbook as a gift). In the weeks that followed, Sir William eagerly awaited news of the auction. But Baz’s promised telegram never arrived. Growing concerned, Osler made inquiries and



was devastated to learn that **no Vesalius sale had taken place** – and that the so-called Lord Rutherford was unknown in British bibliophile circles. It dawned on him that he had been duped. The financial loss, while irritating, was not what stung most: Baz had **stolen Osler's trust and the hope of securing a treasured piece of medical heritage**. For a man who held honour and honesty as fundamental virtues, this betrayal by an imposter was a bitter pill to swallow. Osler quietly informed his contacts at the Bodleian to be on the lookout for “that scoundrel Rutherford,” but Baz had already fled Oxford, pockets heavier with the good doctor’s money.

Relationship to Baz

By the time of Baz’s Kruger Park Hostel dinner, Sir William Osler’s relationship with him is one of polite detachment masking deep disappointment – and a touch of simmering anger. Osler is a gentleman to his core; he does not indulge in public outbursts or show undignified wrath. When he first sees Baz across the dinner table, Osler greets him with a cordial nod and a crisp, “*Mr. Rutherford*.” The honorific “Lord” is pointedly absent, a subtle sign that Osler knows Baz’s title is bogus. Throughout the evening, Osler treats Baz with cool civility, as one might an *underperforming student* or a person who’s breached good manners. If others are chatting in a group, Osler will listen calmly even when Baz speaks, but he gives Baz no opening for intimacy. At one point Baz attempts a charm offensive – praising Sir William’s recent lecture on tropical diseases and offering a toast “to the world’s greatest physician.” Osler responds with a thin smile and self-deprecating wit, “*Ah, Mr. Rutherford, remember flattery is said to be bad for the digestion.*” The other guests chuckle, sensing only a gentle joke, but Baz flushes slightly, hearing the gentle barb beneath. In private moments, Osler’s placid expression grows more distant whenever Baz draws near. He has quietly warned the event’s host (perhaps Baz’s own long-suffering butler or the lodge manager) to keep an eye on the silverware when Mr. Rutherford is about. Indeed, Osler half-expects Baz might try to loot something here in Africa – once a thief, always a thief, he thinks. For his part, Baz finds Osler’s unassailable honour somewhat maddening; every attempt to draw the doctor into convivial banter is met with courteous but clipped replies. Baz once even muttered, “*It was a pity about that Vesalius, Sir William,*” trying to feign regret or make amends. Osler fixed him with a steady grey-eyed gaze and responded, “*Indeed. A great pity,*” then turned away to discuss malaria with Haile Selassie. In essence, Osler behaves as a **disappointed mentor** might – Baz had the potential to be a fellow scholar (or so Osler had thought), but proved himself a rogue. Thus, Osler keeps him at arm’s length, interactions formal and brief. Beneath that composure, however, Sir William is accumulating a quiet resolve: he will not let Baz’s treachery slide again.

Motive

Sir William Osler’s motive to see Baz Rutherford dead is driven by **betrayal and a principled sense of purging evil for the greater good**. Osler is by nature a healer, not a killer; he has devoted his life to saving lives and elevating ethics in medicine. Yet Baz’s actions cut to the quick of Osler’s core values. Baz not only stole a considerable sum of money (which, had it not been squandered, Osler would likely have donated to a medical scholarship or library) – he also **extinguished the opportunity to acquire a priceless medical text** that Osler hoped to preserve for posterity. In Osler’s eyes, Baz didn’t just cheat Sir William; he **robbed the medical community of knowledge**.



That Vesalius first edition, if it truly existed, could have inspired and educated generations of physicians. Baz turned that noble endeavour into a shabby swindle. For a man who holds knowledge sacrosanct, such vandalism against the light of learning is almost unforgivable. There is also the personal sting: Osler, known for his discernment of character, was deceived by Baz's false gentlemanly airs. The great Sir William was made a fool of – something he laughs off in public ("Even an old doctor can be conned, it appears!" he joked weakly to a colleague) but privately broods over. He feels a **moral duty to prevent Baz from victimising others**. Indeed, listening at dinner, Osler realizes he is not alone: he hears whispers of Baz's other schemes – a pattern of exploitation emerges. As a doctor, Osler has spent decades excising cancers and infections from patients to restore them to health. In his mind, Baz Rutherford represents a **cancer on society** – a malicious force that keeps hurting good people and siphoning away resources that could do good elsewhere. Osler's motive coalesces into a grim logical conclusion: to protect the wider "patient" (in this case, the community of decent folk gathered and beyond), **Baz must be removed like a tumour**. It's a dispassionate justification that surprisingly aligns with Osler's scientific approach. Moreover, Osler's Victorian sense of honour screams for justice – Baz broke the code of the gentleman, and in a murder mystery atmosphere such as this, Sir William might recall the adage "extreme evils require extreme remedies." One can imagine the internal monologue in Osler's orderly mind: *Mr. Rutherford's condition is terminal – terminal for himself, I'm afraid.* While he would never say such a thing aloud, Osler has the **calm, clinical resolve** to act if pushed. Perhaps the decisive factor is that some of Osler's treasured books have since turned up missing from his Oxford collection (indeed, Baz pocketed a small rare volume that night in 1910). Sir William knows who the culprit is. For a librarian-doctor, this is the final straw – book thieves are anathema. The motive solidifies: he will liberate others from Baz's malign influence and avenge the honour of knowledge itself. So, beneath the kindly demeanour of this elder physician lies a surprising willingness to perform one last **surgical strike for the greater good**. If the opportunity arises, Sir William Osler would administer to Baz Rutherford the only treatment that can cure the disease he embodies: a permanent, fatal dose of his own medicine.

Clues and Props

CONFIDENTIAL – HOOVER'S BLACKMAIL DOSSIER

Kruger Park Hostel – Murder Mystery Cheat Sheet

Name	Who They Are	Baz's Secret / Leverage (Motive)
Winston Churchill	British politician, First Lord of Admiralty	Nearly conned by Baz's fake naval invention; risk of public humiliation and security breach
Franklin D. Roosevelt	US politician, future President	Documents linking FDR to Kruger Gold laundering; Baz threatens exposure and career ruin



Queen Marie of Romania	Queen Consort of Romania	Baz stole a royal heirloom (jeweled cross); threatens to expose her gullibility and damage her reputation
Edward, Prince of Wales	British heir, future King Edward VIII	Baz possesses letters about Edward's indiscretions; could spark royal scandal
Mustafa Kemal Atatürk	Turkish officer, future founder of Turkey	Baz sold him forged military plans, nearly causing disaster; threatens to reveal humiliation
Haile Selassie	Ethiopian prince, future Emperor	Baz swindled Ethiopia with obsolete weapons; could expose Tafari's failed arms deal
Jan Smuts	South African statesman	Baz knows the location of Kruger Gold and Smuts' involvement; threatens to expose national secrets
Subhas Chandra Bose	Indian nationalist leader	Baz betrayed Bose's revolutionary cell to British authorities; led to arrests
Chiang Kai-shek	Chinese military leader	Baz sold him dud weapons, undermining his revolution; threatens to reveal the blunder
Eleanor Roosevelt	US First Lady, humanitarian	Baz holds love letters and evidence of an affair; threatens to expose paternity of her child and ruin her marriage
Aimee Semple McPherson	US evangelist, celebrity preacher	Baz forged cheques and nearly caused a scandal; threatens to expose her financial naivety
Charlotte Maxeke	South African activist, educator	Baz stole charity funds meant for African schools; threatens to discredit her cause
Sylvia Pankhurst	British suffragette, socialist	Baz infiltrated and betrayed suffragette plans to police; led to arrests and movement setbacks
Stephanie St. Clair	Harlem crime boss, community leader	Baz sabotaged her numbers racket and spread rumours of her weakness; threatens her power
Josephine Baker	Entertainer, civil rights activist	Baz abandoned her and their child, forged letters implicating her in scandal
Wallis Simpson	American socialite, future Duchess	Baz holds intimate letters; blackmails her with threat of public disgrace
Bonnie Parker	American outlaw	Baz betrayed her in a Paris heist, left her to be arrested; holds evidence of her crimes
Frida Kahlo	Mexican artist	Baz stole her paintings and love letters, sold them; threatens to expose her affairs



Zelda Fitzgerald	American writer, socialite	Baz published her private diary, causing public humiliation and scandal
Virginia Woolf	British novelist	Baz possesses her diaries detailing abuse and mental health; threatens to publish them
Agatha Christie	British mystery writer	Baz stole and published her manuscript as his own; blackmails her with personal letters
Gertrude Stein	American writer, salon host	Baz spread damaging gossip from her salon, nearly broke up her circle
Elsa Maxwell	Society hostess, gossip columnist	Baz stole her guest list and leaked secrets, threatening her career
Clara Bow	American actress, "It Girl"	Baz holds evidence of her early scandals; threatens to ruin her rising career
Marlene Dietrich	German-American actress	Baz knows about her secret affairs; threatens to expose her to the press
Fritz Joubert Duquesne	South African spy, adventurer	Baz double-crossed him in a spy deal; threatens to expose his identity to British agents
T. E. Lawrence	British archaeologist, "Lawrence of Arabia"	Baz tried to steal artefacts from his dig; threatens to discredit him in academic circles
Howard Carter	British archaeologist	Baz stole artefacts from his excavation; threatens to ruin his reputation
Leon Trotsky	Russian revolutionary	Baz betrayed his printing press to police; threatens to expose his location to Tsarist agents
Ernest Hemingway	American writer	Baz stole and sold his early stories; threatens to claim authorship
Benito Mussolini	Italian socialist (later dictator)	Baz betrayed his pamphlet network to police; led to his arrest and loss of credibility
Mao Zedong	Chinese student activist	Baz sold out Mao's revolutionary group to local warlords; led to arrests
Aleister Crowley	British occultist	Baz stole his magical artefacts and manuscripts; threatens to expose Crowley's secrets
Sol Plaatje	South African author, activist	Baz sold his petition to pro-segregationists, sabotaged his mission and endangered donors



Edward, Prince of Wales	British heir, future King	(See above; duplicate for clarity)
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Label in bag of diamonds

Label Text (Vintage Style)

Maison Vendôme Joailliers

Place Vendôme, Paris

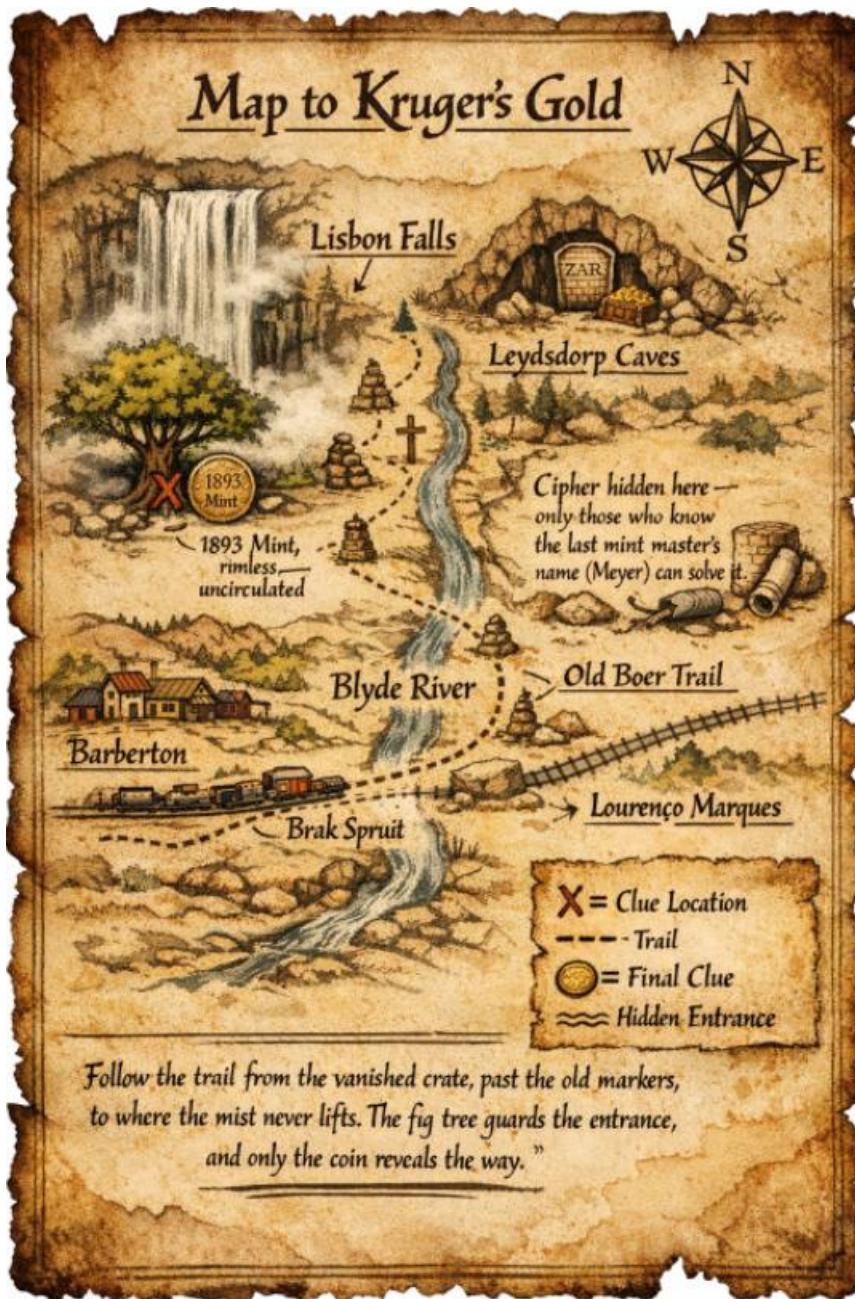
Inventory Tag: No. 147-B

Contents: Diamants Bruts – Haute Valeur

Date: 14 Juillet 1911



Bag of Kruger Gold with Treasure Map



This is to show that Baz knows where the Kruger Gold is hidden, which is what Jan Smuts and J Edger Hoover is looking for

Picture – Sisi's Son

Picture of Crown Prince Rudolf of Austria, with a note saying “Thanks Mom for all you did for me”. The Crown Prince Rudolf of Austria is the son of Sisi





This is to show that Sisi, is perhaps not all she makes out to be, and maybe someone more than just a Hostel Manager

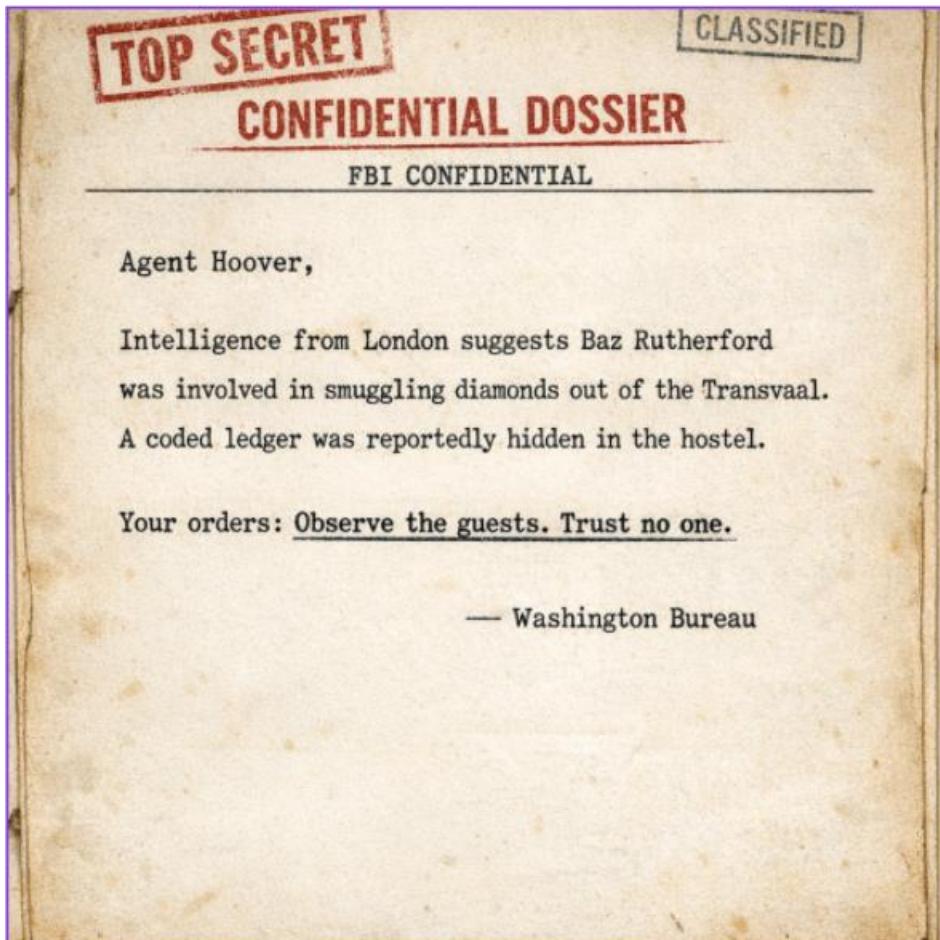
Telegram to Hoover

"Agent Hoover,
Intelligence from London suggests Baz Rutherford was involved in smuggling diamonds out of the



Transvaal. A coded ledger was reportedly hidden in the hostel.
Your orders: Observe the guests. Trust no one.
— Washington Bureau"

Refers to the diamonds is the box



Love Letter to Baz from Josephine

My dearest Baz,

I write with a heavy heart and trembling hand. I beg you, for the sake of our child I now carry, to accept your responsibility and do what is right. I cannot face this alone, nor can I bear the thought of our child growing up without a name or a father's love.

Please, Baz, let us put the past behind us. Marry me, and let us give our child the future they deserve.



Yours in hope and desperation,
Josephine

For Mayra (Josephine Baker) Giving Josephine a motive and exposing the love child

For Marion (Sisi / Empress Elisabeth)

Secret Diary Entry

Page from Sisi's Diary

"12 December 1912

I saw Phillip watching Baz with that old look of vengeance. The others think I am just a hostess, but I know the truth about Vienna, about the Mayerling tragedy. If Baz is gone, perhaps justice has finally found him."

Zelda Fitzgerald's Personal Diary

Riddle which identifies the diary as Zelda's

I dance in ink as I once did in halls,
My words are mirrors of glittering balls.
I speak of love that burned like gin,
And dreams that drowned when tides rolled in.
I am a whisper from Jazz Age nights,
A Southern star with Parisian lights.

June 14, 1912

I met Baz tonight at the Plaza. He called me "enchanting" and said I was wasted on Alabama. I laughed and let him buy me a gin fizz. There's something dangerous in his eyes, but I like the way he makes the world feel brighter, faster, more alive. I gave him my diary to read—he said my words were "electric." I felt seen.

June 22, 1912

Baz hasn't returned my diary. He promised to bring it back after reading, but now he's always "too busy." I feel uneasy. I trusted him with my secrets—my dreams, my fears, even the things I've never told Scott. What if he's laughing at me behind my back?

July 3, 1912

It's in the papers. My words—my private thoughts—printed for all of New York to read. "Southern Belle's Scandalous Diary." I am mortified. Mother is furious. Scott won't look at me. Baz did this.



He took my heart, my trust, and turned it into a joke for strangers. I want to scream. I want to disappear.

July 10, 1912

I saw Baz at the theatre tonight. He smiled as if nothing had happened. I wanted to slap him, to shout at him in front of everyone. Instead, I smiled back, because that's what a lady does. But inside, I am burning. He ruined me. He made me a laughingstock. I will never forgive him.

August 1, 1912

I dream of revenge. Sometimes I imagine slipping something into his drink, or pushing him from the balcony at the Ritz. I know it's wicked, but he deserves it. He destroyed my reputation, my friendships, my sense of safety. If Baz were gone, I could breathe again. I could be free.

August 15, 1912

I will not be a victim. If the opportunity comes, I will take it. Baz Rutherford will pay for what he's done to me.

August 20, 1912

There are days when I miss the magnolia trees and the slow, sticky summers of Alabama. I was raised to be the perfect Southern belle, to dance at the country club and sip lemonade on the porch. But I always wanted more—more than what was expected of a judge's daughter, more than the role of a writer's muse. Now, after all that's happened, I wonder if the city lights of New York can ever outshine the shadows of betrayal. I will not let him—or anyone—turn my life into a spectacle for their amusement. If I am remembered, let it be for my own wild heart and the words I dared to write.

Gossip to be spread by Josephine Baker

Winston Churchill

“They say Winston’s got a taste for more than cigars—he nearly lost the Navy’s secrets to a conman. Imagine the scandal if that ever got out!”

2. Franklin D. Roosevelt

“Frankie’s always smiling, but I hear he’s got debts buried deeper than the Kruger Gold. Some folks say he’d do anything to keep his name clean.”

3. Queen Marie of Romania



“Did you see the Queen’s necklace? I heard it’s a replacement—her real jewels vanished after a certain Englishman paid her a visit.”

4. Wallis Simpson

“Wallis is always so composed, but I caught her burning a letter last night. Love gone wrong, or something more dangerous?”

5. Eleanor Roosevelt

“Eleanor’s got a heart of gold, but even she can’t escape the past. There’s talk of a secret romance that could shake up Washington.”

6. Jan Smuts

“Smuts keeps glancing at the map on the wall. Some say he knows exactly where the gold is—and who’d kill to keep it hidden.”

7. Charlotte Maxeke

“Charlotte’s charity lost a fortune last year. She blames outsiders, but I wonder if someone closer to home had sticky fingers.”

8. Agatha Christie

“Agatha’s pen is sharp, but her trust is sharper. She’s been hunting for the thief who stole her first novel—maybe they’re at this very table.”

9. Stephanie St. Clair

“Stephanie’s numbers game nearly went bust after a police raid. She’s got a list of enemies, and I wouldn’t want to be on it.”

10. Bonnie Parker

“Bonnie’s got a temper hotter than a Texas summer. She’s still sore about Paris—and she’s not the forgiving type.”

11. Frida Kahlo

“Frida’s missing more than paintings—someone’s got her love letters, and she’s desperate to get them back.”

12. Zelda Fitzgerald

“Zelda’s diary ended up in the papers. She’s all smiles tonight, but I’d watch my back if I were the one who leaked her secrets.”

13. Virginia Woolf



“Virginia’s always scribbling in her notebook. I hear she’s got stories that could ruin half the people in this room—if they ever got out.”

14. Fritz Joubert Duquesne

“Fritz says he’s a hero, but I heard he was double-crossed by a friend. Now he’s got a score to settle—and a sharp knife in his boot.”

15. Al Capone

“Capone’s all charm and smiles, but don’t let that fool you. He’s got a list, and if your name’s on it, you’d better sleep with one eye open.”

Gossip to be spread by Bonnie

1. Queen Marie of Romania

“Did you hear the Queen lost a priceless cross? Some say she handed it over to a smooth-talking Englishman and never saw it again. Royals—so easy to fool!”

2. Franklin D. Roosevelt

“Word is, Frankie’s got his fingers in some gold deals from the Boer War. If the papers ever found out, he’d be sunk before he ever set sail for Washington.”

3. Winston Churchill

“Churchill nearly bought a fake torpedo design from a conman. Imagine the mighty British Navy sunk by a bad blueprint—he’d never live it down!”

4. Wallis Simpson

“Wallis keeps getting mysterious letters. Some say they’re love notes from a royal, others say they’re blackmail. Either way, she’s sweating under that powder.”

5. Eleanor Roosevelt

“Eleanor’s got a secret that could ruin her marriage—something about a love affair and a child that might not be FDR’s. No wonder she looks so nervous.”

6. Jan Smuts

“Smuts is obsessed with that lost Kruger Gold. Some say he’d do anything to keep its hiding place a secret—even if it means silencing a few old friends.”

7. Charlotte Maxeke

“Charlotte’s charity lost a pile of money last year. Some folks whisper it was stolen by someone she trusted. She’s been on edge ever since.”

8. Agatha Christie



“Agatha’s first novel? Stolen and published under someone else’s name. She’s been hunting for the thief ever since—maybe they’re closer than she thinks.”

9. Stephanie St. Clair

“The Queen of Harlem’s numbers racket nearly collapsed after someone leaked her secrets to the police. She’s got a list of suspects, and it’s getting shorter.”

10. Josephine Baker

“Josephine’s got a love child no one’s supposed to know about. The father? A certain Englishman who vanished when things got complicated.”

11. Bonnie Parker (herself, for fun)

“They say I was left holding the bag in Paris, but at least I didn’t get caught with my hand in the royal cookie jar like some people here.”

12. Frida Kahlo

“Frida’s missing a few paintings—and a few love letters. Rumour is, someone close to her sold them in Paris for a quick buck.”

13. Zelda Fitzgerald

“Zelda’s diary ended up in the tabloids. All her secrets, out for the world to see. She blames a certain dinner guest for her humiliation.”

14. Virginia Woolf

“Virginia’s got diaries full of scandal—family secrets, breakdowns, the lot. If they ever got out, she’d be the talk of Bloomsbury for all the wrong reasons.”

15. Fritz Joubert Duquesne

“Fritz calls himself a hero, but word is he was double-crossed by a fellow spy. Now he’s got a score to settle—and a knife with someone’s name on it.”

Notes give to Characters by Hoover

To Queen Marie of Romania

“A cross lost is a crown at risk. Beware those who covet royal treasures—some secrets are heavier than gold.”

To Franklin D. Roosevelt

“Old debts cast long shadows. If the gold resurfaces, so too will the names in the ledger. Trust is a rare currency tonight.”

To Winston Churchill



“A navy’s pride can be sunk by a single rumour. Not all inventions are meant for the Admiralty—some are traps.”

To Jan Smuts

“The map is not the only thing buried at Lisbon Falls. Some would kill to keep the past hidden—others to dig it up.”

To Wallis Simpson

“A letter in the wrong hands can topple a throne. The past is never truly past, especially when Baz is involved.”

To Bonnie Parker

“Paris is far, but revenge is close. The diamonds may glitter, but betrayal cuts deeper.”

To Stephanie St. Clair

“Numbers don’t lie, but people do. Someone here profits from your weakness—watch for the Queen’s Gambit.”

To Agatha Christie

“A story stolen is a crime unsolved. The real culprit always leaves a clue—sometimes in plain sight.”

To Charlotte Maxeke

“Charity begins at home, but theft begins with trust. The children remember who took their future.”

To Josephine Baker

“A love letter can be a weapon. Not all fathers claim their children, but some secrets demand a reckoning.”

Newspaper clippings

Komatipoort Chronicle – 20th December 1912

American Outlaw in Town? Heated Row at Station Raises Suspicions

Local police suspect that the notorious American outlaw, Miss Bonnie Parker, was seen in a heated argument with the well-known adventurer Sebastian “Baz” Rutherford at the Komatipoort railway station late yesterday afternoon. Several witnesses described the exchange as “fiery,” with Parker reportedly raising her voice about a “double-cross in Paris” and threatening retribution. One porter claimed to have overheard Parker accuse Rutherford of “leaving her to take the fall” during a botched robbery in the French capital.

Authorities say Parker, wanted in connection with a string of robberies in the United States, was last seen boarding a steamship bound for South Africa earlier this week. Her arrival in Komatipoort



has set tongues wagging among locals, who are unaccustomed to such international notoriety in their midst.

Police are urging anyone with information about Parker's whereabouts to come forward, warning that she is considered "armed and dangerous." Meanwhile, speculation abounds as to whether her presence is linked to the recent disappearance of Mr Rutherford, who failed to appear at his own much-anticipated safari dinner last night. Some suggest that old grudges may have followed both parties across continents, and that the wilds of Africa may yet see the final act of their unfinished business.

Le Parisien – 5 August 1912

PEARLS AND DIAMONDS VANISH IN PARIS: MYSTERY SURROUNDS AMERICAN SOCIALITE

Paris society was shaken today by reports that Mrs Eleanor Roosevelt, the distinguished American socialite, has suffered a most audacious theft. Her treasured pearl necklace, accompanied by fifty diamonds said to be a family heirloom of considerable value, has disappeared under circumstances that have left the city's elite whispering in salons and cafés alike.

The jewels, which have adorned Mrs Roosevelt at numerous soirées and receptions, were last seen during a private gathering at a prominent Parisian residence. Sources close to the family confirm that the loss was discovered late last evening, prompting immediate inquiries among the fashionable circles of the Champs-Élysées and Montmartre.

Police officials remain discreet, yet speculation abounds. The principal suspect, according to those familiar with the investigation, is a South African gentleman who has been observed at several functions in Mrs Roosevelt's company. Their appearances together have been described as "strikingly romantic," fuelling rumours that the affair may have provided opportunity for the crime.

Authorities have declined to release the suspect's name, but detectives are said to be pursuing leads across the city's grand hotels and exclusive clubs. Meanwhile, the disappearance of jewels worth a king's ransom has cast a shadow over the gaiety of the Paris season.

As the investigation unfolds, society waits with bated breath: will the pearls and diamonds return to their rightful owner, or will this scandal become the talk of the age?

Le Petit Parisien

14 July 1911 – Midnight Edition

Headline: *American Beauty Linked to Moulin Rouge Jewel Robbery!*

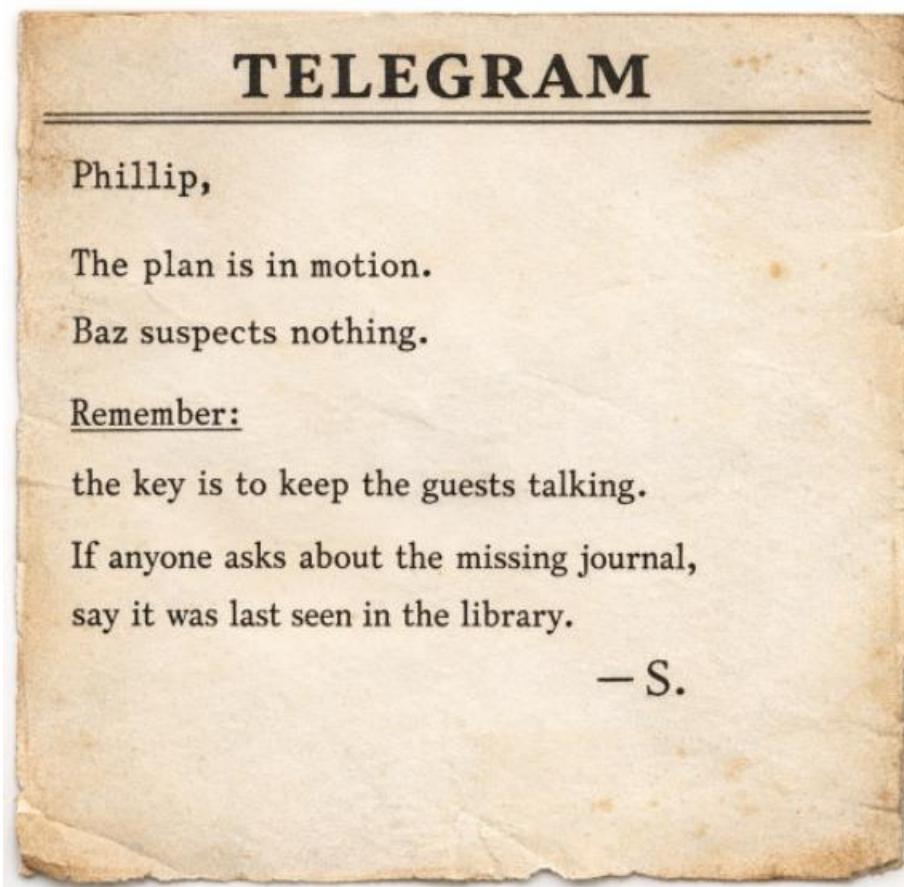
**Paris society was stunned last night when a daring theft unfolded during Bastille Day celebrations at the famed Moulin Rouge. Amid the swirl of music and champagne, a velvet pouch of diamonds—worth over 200,000 francs—vanished from a private salon. Witnesses recall a striking young woman, identified as Bonnie P., seen leaving the cabaret moments before the disappearance. She was reportedly accompanied by a well-dressed gentleman whose identity remains uncertain, though whispers suggest he is no stranger to Europe's glittering underworld. Police have sealed the*



venue and launched a manhunt across Montmartre. The stolen stones, described as “white fire in burlap,” are still missing. A reward of 50,000 francs is offered for any clue leading to their recovery.

Telegram to Phillip

“Phillip, The plan is in motion. Baz suspects nothing. Remember: the key is to keep the guests talking. If anyone asks about the missing journal, say it was last seen in the library.
— S.”



This is to through suspicion onto Phillip

Cipher Puzzle – about Phillip

Ciphered Message:

16-9-12-12-9-16 9-19 14-15-20 1-12-12 8-5 19-5-5-13-19 20-15 2-5.
8-5 23-1-19 16-18-9-14-3-5 15-6 5-21-12-5-14-2-21-18-7 21-14-4 8-5-18-20-5-6-5-12-4,
15-14-3-5 1 3-12-15-19-5 3-15-14-6-9-4-1-14-20 1-14-4 1-4-22-9-19-15-18 20-15 11-1-9-19-
5-18 23-9-12-8-5-12-13 9-9,
21-14-20-9-12 2-1-26 4-5-19-20-18-15-25-5-4 8-9-19 18-5-16-21-20-1-20-9-15-14 1-14-4 8-
5 8-1-4 20-15 6-12-5-5.



How to Use:

- Give the ciphered message to the players.
- Tell them: "A=1, B=2, C=3, etc."

Decoded Message

**PILLIP IS NOT ALL HE SEEMS TO BE.
HE WAS PRINCE OF EULENBURG AND HERTEFELD,
ONCE A CLOSE CONFIDANT AND ADVISOR TO KAISER WILHELM II,
UNTIL BAZ DESTROYED HIS REPUTATION AND HE HAD TO FLEE.**

Note in bag of Pearls belonging to Eleanor

My dearest Eleanor,

These pearls have been passed down through the women of our family for generations. I give them to you now, not only as a token of my love, but as a reminder of your strength and dignity. Wear them on days when you need courage, and remember that you are never alone—your family's legacy is always with you.

With all my love,
Mother

Newspapers

Komatipoort Chronicle

24 December 1912 – Komatipoort, Transvaal Province, Union of South Africa

Hunter Missing from Own Safari Soirée

Komatipoort, 11 Dec. – Society in this small border town is abuzz after famed elephant hunter Sebastian "Baz" Rutherford failed to appear at his own much-anticipated safari dinner last night. The extravagant soirée at the Kruger Park Hostel drew foreign guests from five continents, lured by Mr. Rutherford's renown and promises of frontier adventure. As dusk fell, liveried staff ushered in diplomats and dignitaries – only for the host to be nowhere in sight. Managers claimed Mr. Rutherford was "unavoidably delayed by urgent business," and the banquet proceeded amid whispers. Attendees including a Portuguese trade official and a Swazi prince dined under mounted trophies in a tense atmosphere. Local police discreetly patrolled nearby rail yards in case of mishap. By midnight, with still no sign of Baz, rumors ran wild – had the host been waylaid on the Mozambique express, or perhaps fallen afoul of his own game? This morning, authorities remain tight-lipped. Mr. Rutherford, a man as admired as he is controversial, has vanished before (notoriously on a 1910 expedition to Barotseland). Komatipoort residents are left wondering if the



jungle itself has claimed the great hunter, or if more human intrigues are afoot at the Crocodile Bridge.

Pretoria in Turmoil as Botha Faces Cabinet Revolt

Pretoria, 10 Dec. – A political storm is brewing in the Union's capital. Prime Minister General Louis Botha is grappling with an open challenge from his own former ally, General J.B.M. Hertzog, plunging the young government into crisis. In speeches across the Orange Free State, Hertzog has accused Botha's cabinet of favouring British imperial interests over "South Africa first" – a slogan igniting Afrikaner sentiments. Tensions peaked at a recent Congress in Bloemfontein where Hertzog's supporters booed the Prime Minister's calls for unity¹. Behind closed doors, Botha's ministers are split. Insiders report that Botha threatened to resign outright rather than tolerate continued insubordination². An emergency cabinet meeting in Pretoria yesterday lasted until midnight. Although no official statement has been issued, there is talk that Botha will demand Hertzog's removal from the ministry to restore order. Constitutional scholars note that if Botha resigns, it would be unprecedented – raising questions about who could form a stable government. Observers in Cape Town and London are watching closely, as the turmoil raises fears of renewed Boer-versus-British rancour in the Union. For now, Botha remains at his post, but the political fault line between him and General Hertzog grows wider by the day.

Native Leaders Form Congress to Petition the Crown

Cape Town, 8 Dec. – Representatives of South Africa's native peoples are organising to seek greater rights under the Union. Early this year, on January 8th, African leaders from various colonies met in Bloemfontein to establish the South African Native National Congress³. Now, as the year closes, this nascent Native Congress is preparing a petition to His Majesty's Government. Led by Reverend John Dube of Natal and Chiefs from the Transkei, the delegation aims to protest new restrictions on land ownership and the pass laws segregating communities. "We loyal subjects only ask for the freedom to progress in our fatherland," said Pixley Seme, a Western-educated lawyer, before sailing to England to lay the case before the imperial authorities. The colonial government in Pretoria has acknowledged receipt of a Congress letter regarding the proposed Natives Land Bill, though officials deny any law has been finalised. In Johannesburg and Durban, small meetings of educated "Non-Europeans" (as termed by the press) have shown solidarity with the Congress's aims. European opinion remains divided: some newspapers praise the move as a civilised appeal through proper channels, while others warn that "too much equality" could stir unrest. As one parliamentarian put it, "The natives' voice is now organized – we must heed it, or risk trouble later." The Congress's petition is expected to reach London by year's end, marking the first pan-African political appeal of its kind from South Africa.

Balkan War Ceasefire Announced

London/Constantinople, 4 Dec. – Telegraph wires from Europe bring news that an armistice has halted the heavy fighting in the Balkans⁴. After two months of war, the Ottoman Turkish government agreed on 3 December to cease hostilities with the allied Balkan states of Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro. The guns fell silent at Çatalca, the defensive lines protecting



Constantinople, at 7 o'clock last evening. (Greece, still pressing its siege of Ioannina and blockading Janina, abstained from the armistice, but is expected to join talks soon.) Envoys from the warring nations will convene in London later this month for a peace conference under the auspices of Sir Edward Grey, Britain's Foreign Secretary⁵. Among issues to be settled is the fate of the historic city of Adrianople (Edirne) and the borders of a newly independent Albania, which declared nationhood just days ago. In the streets of Belgrade and Sofia, crowds are celebrating what they see as a triumphant victory over centuries of Ottoman rule. Istanbul, however, is sombre; newspapers there lament the loss of nearly all European Turkey. Diplomats in Europe caution that the peace is fragile – indeed, arms remain at the ready. But for the moment, war-weary soldiers on both sides have respite. Local colonial observers note that South African volunteers serving with the British Red Cross in the Balkans may soon return home if a final treaty is secured. Until then, the world watches London, hoping that diplomacy can finalize what was won on the battlefield and prevent the Balkan conflict from igniting a broader war.

The London Gazette

12 December 1912 – London, England

Colonial Host Vanishes Before Safari Gala

Pretoria, 11 Dec. (By Cable). – Alarming news from the Transvaal frontier: Sebastian Rutherford, a British-born big-game hunter of some repute, has disappeared on the very eve of an extravagant gala he was to host in Komatipoort. Mr. Rutherford, known in society pages as "Baz," summoned dozens of notable guests to a hunting-themed dinner at the edge of Kruger Park, scheduled for the night of December 11th. However, our colonial correspondent reports that the host never made his grand entrance. Representatives of the Governor-General's office and various foreign dignitaries – including envoys from Portuguese East Africa and a visiting Maharajah – found themselves making small talk amidst elephant tusks and zebra skins, with no sign of the host. Local officials initiated a quiet search on both sides of the nearby Mozambique border, fearing Mr. Rutherford's motorcar may have overturned or that he fell victim to wildlife on the road. Adding intrigue, Mr. Rutherford was last seen boarding a train from Lourenço Marques with a locked chest said to contain "gifts for his guests." Authorities remain discreet, and no foul play is confirmed. The British South Africa Police in Komatipoort will only say that inquiries are ongoing. The Foreign Office in London has been informed, given the international nature of the guest list. As the situation unfolds, society circles from London to Cape Town are left in suspense, awaiting word on the fate of the Empire's latest missing host.

Armistice in the Balkans – Peace Conference to Convene

London, 12 Dec. – An official communiqué from the Foreign Office confirms that an armistice was signed on 3 December between the Ottoman Empire and three of the Balkan allies⁶, effectively pausing hostilities in the First Balkan War. The cease-fire comes after decisive victories by Balkan forces, including the Bulgarian army's advance to the outskirts of Constantinople. As per the



armistice terms, a peace conference will open in London next week on 16 December⁷. Delegates from Britain, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Russia (the Great Powers) will supervise negotiations between envoys of Turkey and the Balkan League (Serbia, Bulgaria, Montenegro, and also Greece, which continued military operations a short while longer). Key matters on the agenda include the partition of European Turkey – notably the status of Adrianople and Macedonia – and the recognition of Albania as a new principality. British Prime Minister H.H. Asquith, in Parliament yesterday, welcomed the armistice and expressed hope that “a just and lasting peace” can be achieved, while cautioning that complex territorial questions remain. Vienna and St. Petersburg are reportedly at odds over the Balkans’ future: Austria-Hungary insists Serbia must not gain a port on the Adriatic, and Russia supports Slavic claims. Foreign Secretary Grey has stated Britain’s impartial role is to “facilitate agreement and prevent any single power’s dominance.” Should talks falter, observers fear a renewal of fighting or even a great-power confrontation. For now, Europe eagerly anticipates the London Peace Conference, prepared to celebrate the Christmas season with peace within reach in the volatile Balkans.

Extraordinary Fossil Find in Sussex

London, 12 Dec. – The scientific world here is abuzz with reports of a remarkable fossil discovery that may shed light on human origins. Prominent members of the Geological Society of London revealed last night that fragments of an ancient human-like skull and jaw were unearthed in Piltdown, Sussex. The find – consisting of parts of a thick cranium and a jawbone with two teeth – was made by local archaeologist Charles Dawson, who has been exploring gravel beds in the area. Mr. Dawson, assisted by Arthur Smith Woodward of the British Museum, will formally present the specimens to the Society next week⁸. Early examination suggests the remains could represent a previously unknown species of prehistoric man. The Geological Society’s bulletin hints that the skull’s great age, combined with certain ape-like features of the jaw, might mark it as the long-sought “missing link” between humans and primates. This prospect has set imaginations alight in popular press, with the discovery already dubbed “Piltdown Man.” Some experts urge caution, noting that only a few pieces have been found and their fit together is still under study. Nevertheless, if confirmed, this Sussex fossil could rank alongside Java’s Pithecanthropus as a cornerstone in the study of early man. British scientists are keenly competing with French and German paleontologists in this field, and a find on English soil carries special prestige. Further diggings at Piltdown are planned, as the site may yet yield additional bones or tools. In country pubs nearby, locals are astonished to learn that their quiet shire might hold clues to the origins of mankind. The full paper on the discovery is expected to be published by the Geological Society after peer review, but newspapers around the globe are already heralding Piltdown Man as a sensational British contribution to science⁹.

“Titanic” Hero’s Final Chapter

New York, 11 Dec. (via Reuters). – Colleagues and readers worldwide mourn the passing of Colonel Archibald Gracie, celebrated Titanic survivor and chronicler of that maritime tragedy. Col. Gracie died yesterday in New York City at the age of 53, succumbing to complications that lingered since the night the RMS Titanic sank in April¹⁰. A veteran of the U.S. Army and an accomplished author,



Gracie escaped the sinking liner in one of the last lifeboats and later penned *The Truth About the Titanic*, an acclaimed first-hand account published earlier this year. His health never fully recovered from the ordeal in the freezing Atlantic; he had spent hours in collared lifebelt and frigid waters before rescue, which weakened his constitution. British readers came to know Col. Gracie through his dignified testimony at the American inquiry into the disaster, where he defended Captain Smith's honor and praised the women and children first ethos. The news of his death has been met with sorrow in Southampton and Belfast, where many still keenly feel the *Titanic*'s loss. It also serves as a poignant reminder that the disaster's effects continue long after the headlines. Since April, both the British and U.S. governments have implemented new safety measures – from increased lifeboat requirements to 24-hour wireless telegraph watch on ships at sea – to prevent such a tragedy from occurring again. Col. Gracie, in his final days, assisted the U.S. Navy in charting locations of dangerous icebergs, hoping to make North Atlantic passages safer. In publishing his memoir, he wrote, "I survived that awful night to bear witness." With his passing, one of the last eyewitness voices of *Titanic*'s final hours is silenced, but his testimony will live on as history and as impetus for ever safer seafaring¹¹.

New-Yorker Volksblatt

12 December 1912 – New York City (German-American weekly)

Imperialist Hunter Missing – Reckoning in the African Bush?

Komatipoort, S.A., Dec. 12. – Reports from South Africa suggest that the British empire's most brazen elephant hunter has met an ironic twist of fate. Sebastian "Baz" Rutherford, notorious for blustering about his exploits across the colonies, is missing – vanished on the eve of a lavish soirée he organized at the Kruger Park Hostel. This colonial big-game hunter, known for trafficking ivory and influence, had gathered an international guest list ostensibly to celebrate his latest safari triumphs. But when the hour came, Rutherford was nowhere to be found. Guests murmured that perhaps a wounded buffalo had finally turned on him, or that angered locals exacted revenge for his many abuses. Rutherford's absence was announced with the feeble excuse of "business in Lourenço Marques," yet whispers in Komatipoort hint at a darker justice. This self-styled "Great White Hunter" made many enemies: indigenous families dispossessed of land, Portuguese officials embarrassed by his smuggling, and fellow rogues he double-crossed. Could one of them have waylaid him? As police search the bushveld, the world may not shed tears if this profiteer's comeuppance has come. After all, in an era when imperialists oppress nations under the guise of adventure, it would be fitting for one to vanish into the very shadows of empire he helped cast.

Balkan Victors Dictate Terms as Austria Glares East

London/Berlin, Dec. 12. – The guns have fallen silent in the Balkans, and now diplomacy — and tension — rise. An armistice signed last week has halted the war between the Ottoman Empire and the triumphant Balkan League¹². Yesterday in London, delegates from the combatant nations and the Great Powers convened preliminary discussions on carving up European Turkey. For Serbia, Bulgaria, Montenegro, and Greece, it is a moment of victory — their armies have nearly expelled the Turks from Europe. However, the triumph of these Slavic and Greek states rings alarm bells in



Vienna and Berlin. In the Austro-Hungarian Empire, officials fret that an enlarged Serbia could stoke unrest among their own Slavic subjects and threaten Habsburg influence. Indeed, German newspapers note that Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, in a December 2 Reichstag speech, affirmed Germany's support for Austria-Hungary should its security be threatened¹³. Now, as negotiators gather, Austria insists on the creation of an independent Albania to block Serbia's access to the Adriatic Sea – a demand backed staunchly by the German Empire. Britain and France, by contrast, seem content to see Serbia and its allies gain territory, as both Entente powers court influence in the Balkans at Ottoman expense. The London Peace Conference scheduled for 16 December will thus be a tightrope walk between settling the war and preventing a wider conflict¹⁴. Kaiser Wilhelm, fresh from reviewing troops, has privately warned that Germany "will not stand idle" if agreements undermine its ally Austria. Meanwhile, Russia openly supports Serbian claims. The Balkans may be quiet for the moment, but German observers darkly suspect this ceasefire is only a prelude to another struggle over the soul of southeastern Europe. The year ends with a wary peace – and the powder keg of European rivalries packed tighter than ever.

Ancient Egyptian Beauty Unearthed – German Archaeologists Triumph

Berlin, Dec. 12. – A spectacular archaeological discovery in Egypt is being hailed in Germany as a national triumph for *Kaiser Wilhelm's science initiative. News has reached Berlin that a German expedition, led by archaeologist Dr. Ludwig Borchardt, has excavated an exquisitely preserved bust of Queen Nefertiti¹⁵, the famed wife of Pharaoh Akhenaten, after 3,300 years in the sands of Amarna. The find, made on 6 December and kept under wraps until its safe shipment, is already being celebrated by the Kaiser Wilhelm Society. Carved from limestone and still bearing vibrant painted features, the artwork portrays the elegant, elongated neck and regal visage of Nefertiti, whose name means "the beautiful one has come." German newspapers are touting the bust as evidence of our nation's cultural and scholarly ascendancy. The discovery came amid the ruins of the workshop of the ancient sculptor Thutmose; remarkably, the Nefertiti figure was found intact – a stroke of luck attributed by some to divine providence favoring German diligence. Plans are under way to bring the treasure to Berlin's Neues Museum, outmaneuvering other colonial powers (notably Britain and France) in the ongoing competition for Egyptian antiquities. In cafés from New York to Vienna, art enthusiasts are talking of Nefertiti's lifelike gaze and beguiling smile, as photos begin circulating. German patriots, however, see more than art – they see prestige. As one Berlin paper declared, "Germany has outdone the French at Luxor and the British at Giza – Kunst and Wissenschaft march forward under the imperial banner!" The Kaiser is said to be pleased, and a private viewing at the Charlottenburg Palace is rumored. With this glorious ancient queen soon to grace our museums, the year 1912 ends on a note of historic pride for the Fatherland.

"Empire at the Brink" – British Troubles Span the Globe

New York, Dec. 12. – While Britain's politicians toast peace abroad, they face turmoil across their empire that reveals growing fractures in imperial rule. Reports from London and the colonies paint a picture of rising discontent:



- Revolt in Ireland: In Ulster and beyond, resistance to the British Parliament's Home Rule Bill is intensifying. Protestant Unionists, distrustful of London's plans to grant Ireland self-government, have formed armed "Volunteer" groups, vowing to defy any Dublin-based authority. Sir Edward Carson's rallies in Belfast draw tens of thousands pledging in blood to resist – a grave crisis that some say could lead to a civil war in Ireland if Home Rule is implemented next year. Meanwhile, Irish republicans resent the half-measure of Home Rule and continue to plot for full independence. Britain thus faces an Ireland more combative than ever, with militant fervour on both sides.
- African Nationalism: Far from the British Isles, in the Union of South Africa, educated black leaders have united to challenge racist policies. Early this year, on 8 January, the South African Native National Congress was founded¹⁶ – a clear response to the Union government's moves to disenfranchise and segregate native peoples. Now the SANNC (led by figures like John Dube and Sol Plaatje) is petitioning King George V, appealing for the Crown to intervene against unjust land seizures and the color bar. While British officials downplay the Congress as a small gathering, it marks the first organized pan-African political action in that dominion. Notably, even as London preaches justice, its own colonial subjects in Africa are beginning to echo the calls for liberty heard elsewhere.
- Unrest in India: In Britain's jewel, the Indian subcontinent, the stirrings of nationalism grow bolder each day. Mohandas K. Gandhi, a rights advocate recently returned from South Africa, has adopted the traditional Indian dhoti in lieu of Savile Row suits¹⁷ – a symbolic rejection of Western pretensions that is inspiring fellow Indians. The Indian National Congress agitates for greater self-governance, and discontent brews across Bengal and Punjab over colonial policies. This year saw strikes and swadeshi (home-grown) movements gaining ground, suggesting that India's people are increasingly impatient with mere colonial reforms. The Raj faces a steady rise in boycotts of British goods and seditious literature calling for swaraj (self-rule).
- Colonial Economic Strains: Even within the imperial bureaucracy, cracks show. The cost of policing restive territories and arming against rival empires mounts. Scandal has touched the British administration itself (e.g., the Marconi affair in London, where ministers were embroiled in an insider trading controversy over a wireless telegraph company). Such missteps erode moral authority at the very moment subjects are demanding accountability.

German- and Irish-American commentators here in New York note the irony: as Britain lectures other nations on civilisation, its own imperial domain is rife with discord. The sun never sets on the British Empire, but from the Irish Sea to the Indian Ocean, storm clouds gather. A London wit quipped recently, "We have an Empire on which the sun never sets – and the troubles never end." For German sympathisers observing from afar, these cracks in Britain's facade are not unwelcome; they are perhaps the early notes of an approaching imperial reckoning. As 1912 closes, the British Empire stands mighty but beleaguered – beset by internal strains that even its vaunted navy and colonial armies may struggle to contain in the years to come.



Letter in Chest of Gold and Dimond's



Lisbon Falls

12 December 1913

Baz,

You were never meant to keep them — only to hold them until the time was right. These 1,500 diamonds were part of the exchange, diverted from Lourenço Marques under silent instruction. The gold went one way, the stones another.

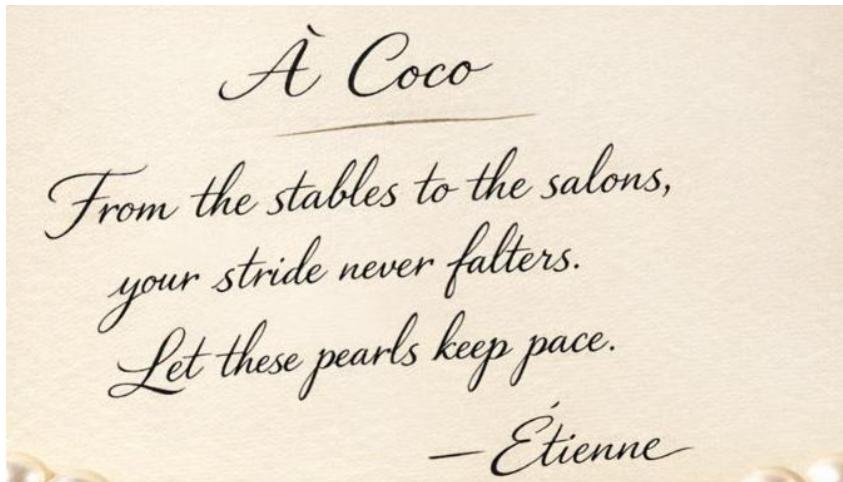
They are proof. Proof of what Roosevelt owes, and what Smuts buried. If they find this chest, they'll know you still hold the map — and the leverage.

Guard it well. The mist hides more than water.

— J.



Box of Pearls – Stolen from Coco by Baz



Baz's Journal Entries



Lisbon Falls, 12 October 1913

The mist never lifts. I've stood at the edge of the falls thrice this week, each time the roar of the water drowning my thoughts. But I am certain — behind the veil lies the chamber. The old map from the Pretoria archives marks a "stone mouth" east of the falls. I believe it to be the cave spoken of in Smuts' intercepted letter to Leyds. The gold was never meant to leave the Republic. It waits.



Barberton, 3 November 1913

The railway ledger from 1900 shows a train departing Machadodorp with 62 crates. Only 61 were accounted for in Lourenço Marques. One crate vanished. I suspect it was offloaded near the Brak Spruit, east of the Blyde River. The terrain is unforgiving, but the old Boer trail markers still stand. I've marked the location with a red cross on the vellum map. Roosevelt will want it. Smuts will kill for it.

Leydsdorp, 18 November 1913

The cave system north of Leydsdorp is older than the war. Pretorius spoke of a "vault of silence" — a chamber sealed with a stone slab bearing the ZAR crest. I found the crest etched into a rock face near the third ravine. I've hidden a cipher beneath the loose stone. Only those who know the name of the last mint master will understand the sequence. Meyer. Always Meyer.

Lisbon Falls, 1 December 1913

I returned to the falls with the compass and the cipher. The magnetic pull is strongest at the base, near the old fig tree. Beneath its roots, I buried the final clue — a coin from the 1893 mint, rimless, uncirculated. It points to the entrance. The gold is not just wealth. It is leverage. Roosevelt's debts are deeper than he admits. Smuts fears exposure. They will come. They must.

Other

Message sent to guests day before

To All Esteemed Guests of the Kruger Park Hostel Murder Mystery Dinner

We are delighted to confirm your attendance at our immersive Murder Mystery evening, which will commence promptly at **4:00 pm** on 25 December. Please arrive in good time, dressed in your finest 1912 or 1920s-inspired attire, ready for an evening of intrigue, secrets, and suspense.

Important Note for the Murderer:

Just before the start of the evening, one guest will be discreetly informed that they are the murderer. If you receive this message, your task is to lie, deflect, and weave a web of misdirection throughout the night. Your goal is to avoid suspicion at all costs—trust no one, and remember: the best murderers are those who blend in perfectly.

Setting the Scene: Christmas Day, 1912



The world stands on the brink of transformation. It is Christmas 1912—a time of opulence and uncertainty. The great empires of Europe are at their zenith, but storm clouds gather on the horizon. In the Balkans, a brutal war has just paused, and the Ottoman Empire teeters on collapse. In China, the last emperor has abdicated, and a fragile republic struggles to find its footing. Across Africa, colonial powers jostle for control, while local leaders and activists begin to organise for rights and recognition.

In South Africa, the Union is newly formed, but tensions simmer between British, Boer, and indigenous communities. The legend of the lost Kruger Gold haunts the Lowveld, and whispers of hidden fortunes and old betrayals drift through the bushveld air. The railway brings travellers, adventurers, and exiles from every corner of the globe to the frontier town of Komatipoort, where the wild meets the civilised and every guest has a secret to protect.

Tomorrow night, at the Kruger Park Hostel, a dazzling array of artists, royals, revolutionaries, and rogues gather for a festive dinner hosted by the infamous Sebastian “Baz” Rutherford. Each guest carries their own ambitions, grudges, and hidden pasts. As the sun sets and the lions begin to roar, remember: in a world on the cusp of change, trust is the rarest currency of all.

We look forward to welcoming you for an unforgettable evening of mystery and mayhem.

Sincerely,

Phillip

Private Assistant to Baz, Your Host

First Email to Guests to choose character

Murder Mystery Dinner December 25th 1913 at Kruger Park Hostel

Dear,

We're thrilled to host you for our Christmas Day Murder Mystery Dinner—an immersive evening set in the year 1912. Please come in costume if at all possible; think elegant 1912 attire or a 1920s speakeasy vibe. We'll also have a few costume accessories on hand to help you complete the look.

What we need from you:

- 1) Review the below character list.
- 2) Reply to this email **as soon as possible** with the name of the **available character you'd like to be**.
- 3) Once we confirm your selection, we'll send your private character brief and your **motive to kill the host**, strictly for the game, of course! To avoid duplicate picks, please note the following roles are **already taken**.



The following characters have already been taken:

1. Bonnie Parker – Lea
2. Princesa Isabel - Anna
3. Al Capone - Conrad
4. Frida Kahlo – Gi Gallo
5. Amelia Earhart - Giulia
6. Howard Carter - Nathan Lange
7. T. E. Lawrence - Andreas
8. Coco Chanel - Stefanie Hintz
9. Josephine Baker - Mayra
10. Franklin D. Roosevelt – Jonas
11. Eleanor Roosevelt - Marie
12. Agatha Christie – Blade
13. Jan Smuts – Tristen
14. J Edger Hoover – Rene
15. Yamakawa Kikue - Chisaki
16. Phillip – Oliver
17. Sisi – Marion
18. Labotsibeni – Truddy
19. Charlotte – Lebu
20. Sir William Osler – Robert
21. Virginia Woolf – Monika
22. Yamakawa Kikue – Chisaki
23. Zelda Fitzgerald - Maya Wigger
24. Chief Albert Luthuli – Martin
25. Charlie Chaplin – Cedric
26. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk - Jean Denis
27. Sigmund Freud – Luis
28. Marlene Dietrich – Petra Sender
29. Max Planck - Stefan Ramolla
30. Benito Mussolini – Sofia
31. Ernest Hemingway – Niklas
32. Edward, Prince of Wales – Niklas Neugebauer
33. Leon Trotsky - Marcelo Ribeiro

Below is a list of the Characters invited by Baz (Your Host) for his “Last soiree” on the 25th of December 1912. Please choose a character and let us know as soon as possible. Once you let us know who you will be, you will receive more details of your character and the relationship between the character and Baz, your host. We also ask if when coming to Africa you bring attire that your character would wear for a dinner party in 1912 (or 1920’s Speakeasy Theme). You are also advised to research your character, as each character is based on a real-life person who lived in 1912. The more you know about your character the more fun the evening becomes.



1. **Bonnie Parker (American outlaw)** – An iconic Great Depression-era outlaw and one half of the notorious “Bonnie and Clyde” duo. Her bank-robbing crime spree and defiance of the law turned her into a media sensation and a symbol of rebellious glamour in American folklore.
2. **Josephine Baker (French American performer)** – A trailblazing African American dancer and singer who became one of the first Black global superstars on the Paris stage in the 1920s. She later served as a spy for the French Resistance in WWII, and her flamboyant persona and civil-rights activism made her an icon of artistic innovation and social change.
3. **Coco Chanel (French fashion designer)** – One of the most influential designers in history, she revolutionized women’s fashion by liberating them from corsets and introducing elegant, comfortable styles (like the “little black dress”). Chanel built a global luxury brand and remains synonymous with modern elegance, her work redefining women’s attire and business roles in the early 20th century.
4. **Wallis Simpson (American socialite, Duchess of Windsor)** – Best known as the woman for whom King Edward VIII abdicated the British throne in 1936, triggering a constitutional crisis. An American divorcée, her romance with Edward challenged rigid royal norms and changed the course of British royal history, making her a figure of both fascination and scandal in the 20th century.
5. **Agatha Christie (British mystery novelist)** – The world’s best-selling mystery writer, creator of famous detectives Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple. Author of 66 detective novels (e.g. *Murder on the Orient Express*), she essentially defined the classic whodunit genre. Her ingenious plotting and global popularity have made her the “Queen of Crime,” and her works continue to set the standard for detective fiction.
6. **Gertrude Stein (American writer and salon host)** – A central figure in the Parisian avant-garde and a pioneering modernist author. She hosted an influential art-literary salon that nurtured talents like Picasso, Matisse, and Hemingway, and her own experimental writings broke narrative conventions. Stein’s mentorship and innovation helped shape modern art and literature in the early 20th century.
7. **Zelda Fitzgerald (American socialite & writer)** – Often called the original “flapper,” she embodied the Jazz Age’s glamour and excess. As the high-spirited wife of novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald, she became an icon of 1920s rebellion against norms. Her later struggles with mental health and her attempts at art and writing make her a complex symbol of both the era’s free spirit and its personal costs.
8. **Amelia Earhart (American aviator)** – A pioneering pilot who broke numerous flying records and boldly challenged gender barriers in aviation. In 1932 she became the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic, inspiring the world. Her mysterious disappearance in 1937 remains unsolved, and she is celebrated as a trailblazer for women in aerospace and a heroine of the 20th century.
9. **Elsa Maxwell (American party hostess & columnist)** – A legendary high-society hostess and gossip columnist, essentially the “queen of parties” in the 1920s and 1930s. Not born to wealth, she used wit and creativity to reinvent elite entertainment, throwing extravagant events



(including famous murder-mystery parties) that shaped celebrity social life and set trends in entertainment.

10. **Frida Kahlo (Mexican painter)** – One of the most significant artists of the 20th century, known for her vivid and intensely personal self-portraits. She brought Mexican culture and her own female experience into world art, becoming a feminist and cultural icon. Kahlo's life of resilience through pain and her bold artistic vision continue to inspire and influence art and social commentary.
11. **Virginia Woolf (British novelist)** – A leading modernist writer renowned for pioneering stream-of-consciousness narrative techniques in classics like *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*. As a member of the Bloomsbury Group, she had great influence on literary and intellectual circles. Woolf's explorations of psychological depth and her essays on women's rights have made her a foundational figure in feminist literature and 20th-century fiction.
12. **Eleanor Roosevelt (American political figure)** – One of the most influential women of the 20th century in politics and human rights. As First Lady of the United States (1933–1945), she transformed the role by actively championing civil rights, social justice, and the formation of the United Nations. Her advocacy for the disadvantaged and leadership on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights cemented her legacy as a humanitarian and “First Lady of the World”.
13. **Queen Marie of Romania (British-born Romanian queen)** – A popular and influential monarch famed for her charisma, diplomacy, and leadership during World War I and its aftermath. Granddaughter of Queen Victoria, she became Queen of Romania in 1914 and helped rally her country through the war, then brilliantly represented Romanian interests at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference. Admired for her intelligence, style, and charitable works, she is remembered as a diplomat-queen who gave her nation a strong voice on the world stage.
14. **Aimee Semple McPherson (American evangelist)** – A pioneering Pentecostal evangelist and one of America's first religious celebrities in the 1920s. She used new media like radio and theatrical sermon performances to win huge audiences, founding the Foursquare Church. McPherson's sensational sermons, a staged disappearance scandal, and her innovative use of mass media made her a controversial but hugely influential figure in American religious history.
15. **Marion Davies (American actress)** – A prominent silent-film star and a central figure in early Hollywood's social scene, known as the long-time companion of newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst. Celebrated for her comedic talent on screen, she also became part of Hollywood folklore due to the lavish lifestyle at Hearst Castle and the mysterious 1924 death of producer Thomas Ince, which added intrigue to her legacy as a popular actress and Hollywood insider.
16. **Charlotte Maxeke (South African activist)** – A trailblazer for Black South African women and a pioneer in education and social activism. She was the first black South African woman to earn a college degree (graduating in the U.S. in 1903) and co-founded the Bantu Women's League. Maxeke's lifelong leadership in fighting racial injustice and advancing women's rights made her a respected figure in South Africa's early struggle against colonial oppression.
17. **Clara Bow (American actress)** – Hollywood's original “It Girl” and a major film star of the 1920s. She epitomized the flapper era with her vivacious, carefree on-screen persona and was



one of the first symbols of youthful modern womanhood in cinema. Bow's immense popularity (and off-screen scandals) reflected changing social norms of the Jazz Age, and she remains a symbol of early Hollywood glamour and the Roaring Twenties.

18. **Marlene Dietrich (German American actress & singer)** – An international film star renowned for her sultry voice, androgynous style, and magnetic screen presence. She rose to fame in the late 1920s and 1930s, challenging gender norms by often wearing men's attire and exuding sexual independence. Dietrich became a cultural icon, entertaining Allied troops during WWII and standing as a symbol of both Hollywood allure and political courage in opposing fascism.
19. **Stephanie St. Clair (French-Caribbean/American gangster)** – Known as the “Queen of Harlem,” she was a pioneering Black female mob boss in 1920s Prohibition-era New York. St. Clair ran Harlem’s lucrative numbers racket, fiercely defending her turf against both the Italian Mafia and corrupt police. Her bold leadership and success in a male-dominated underworld made her a legendary figure in New York’s criminal history and an early icon of Black empowerment in business.
20. **Sylvia Pankhurst (British suffragette & activist)** – A prominent suffrage leader and later a socialist and anti-fascist campaigner. The daughter of Emmeline Pankhurst, she broadened the women’s rights movement to include working-class women and social equality. Sylvia endured imprisonment and force-feeding for her activism and later fought against Italian fascism in Ethiopia. She remains a key figure in British political history for her fearless advocacy of women’s suffrage and international human rights.
21. **Jan Smuts (South African statesman)** – One of South Africa’s most prominent leaders and a major figure in early 20th-century global politics. He was a Boer general turned British ally who served as Prime Minister of South Africa and was instrumental in crafting the League of Nations and later the United Nations. Smuts’s influence spanned from negotiating peace after World War I to shaping international cooperation, making him a significant (if sometimes controversial) architect of global diplomacy.
22. **Winston Churchill (British statesman)** – A towering British politician and wartime leader, best known for his role as UK Prime Minister during World War II. Celebrated for his defiant oratory and leadership in Britain’s “finest hour” against Nazi Germany, Churchill guided the Allies to victory in WWII. Earlier (in 1912) he was First Lord of the Admiralty pushing naval modernization. His career, spanning from the height of the British Empire to the Cold War, made him one of the 20th century’s most influential figures.
23. **Franklin D. Roosevelt (American President)** – The 32nd President of the United States (1933–1945) who led America through the Great Depression and World War II. He launched the New Deal social programmes to revive the U.S. economy and was a central Allied leader in WWII, shaping strategy with Churchill and Stalin. His unprecedented four-term presidency and transformative policies cemented him as one of the most important American leaders of the 20th century.
24. **Fritz Joubert Duquesne (South African spy)** – A Boer soldier-turned-spy, known for his daring and double-crossing exploits against the British. Active in both World Wars, he led the notorious “Duquesne Spy Ring” in the U.S. (uncovered in 1941) and became famous for his



ingenious escapes and espionage missions. Duquesne's life of intrigue and deception made him a legendary figure in the history of espionage.

25. **T. E. Lawrence (British soldier & writer)** – Famously known as “Lawrence of Arabia,” he was a British officer whose leadership in the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire during WWI made him a legend. His guerrilla tactics and coordination with Arab forces (capturing Aqaba in 1917) were pivotal in the Middle Eastern theatre of war. Also, a gifted writer (author of *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*), Lawrence's blend of military prowess and advocacy for Arab independence cemented his status as a romanticized and enigmatic figure of the twentieth century.
26. **Haile Selassie (Ethiopian Emperor)** – Emperor of Ethiopia from 1930 to 1974, revered as a symbol of African independence and modernization. He defended Ethiopia at the League of Nations against Italian invasion in 1936, becoming an icon of anti-colonial resistance. Later, his leadership and reforms made him a global figure (revered in the Rastafarian movement as a messianic figure), representing African sovereignty during a period of decolonization.
27. **Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (Turkish statesman)** – The founding father and first President of the Republic of Turkey (1923–1938). A former Ottoman general, he led Turkish nationalists in the War of Independence and then implemented sweeping secular and westernizing reforms—abolishing the sultanate, introducing a new alphabet, and expanding education—that transformed Turkey into a modern nation-state. Atatürk's visionary leadership and reforms have made him a model of modernization in the Islamic world and a revered figure in Turkish history.
28. **Subhas Chandra Bose (Indian nationalist)** – An Indian independence leader who advocated radical action against British rule during the 1930s–1940s. He led the Indian National Army alongside the Axis powers in WWII in an effort to liberate India, earning him the honorific “Netaji” (“Respected Leader”). Although controversial for his wartime alliances, Bose is remembered for his unwavering patriotism and for inspiring Indians with his call for freedom, making him a celebrated yet complex hero of India's anti-colonial struggle.
29. **J. Edgar Hoover (American law enforcement)** – The first Director of the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), serving from 1935 to 1972 and shaping American law enforcement for decades. He built the FBI into a powerful crime-fighting agency and led high-profile campaigns against gangsters and later communists. However, his secretive surveillance methods and accumulation of personal power also made him a controversial figure in U.S. history, emblematic of the balance between security and civil liberties.
30. **Al Capone (American gangster)** – The most notorious gangster of Prohibition-era America, who led the Chicago Outfit in the 1920s. Nicknamed “Public Enemy No. 1,” he controlled bootlegging, gambling, and vice rackets with brutal efficiency, and his reign saw infamous events like the 1929 St. Valentine's Day Massacre. Capone's eventual imprisonment for tax evasion in 1931 symbolized the government's crackdown on organized crime, and he remains a legendary icon of American crime lore.
31. **Charlie Chaplin (British actor & filmmaker)** – One of the most influential figures in film history, globally beloved for his silent-era character “The Little Tramp.” He wrote, directed, and starred in classic films whose comedy and social commentary transcended language barriers. Chaplin's innovative pantomime and heartfelt storytelling helped shape cinema as an art form,



and his personal life (and political views) often drew as much attention, making him both a cultural icon and a subject of controversy in the 20th century.

32. **Howard Carter (British archaeologist)** – The Egyptologist who discovered the tomb of Pharaoh Tutankhamun in 1922, one of the greatest archaeological finds of all time. After years of searching in the Valley of the Kings, Carter's unearthing of Tutankhamun's nearly intact tomb – with its stunning treasures and golden mask – sparked worldwide "Tut-mania" and greatly advanced knowledge of ancient Egypt. His meticulous excavation set new standards in archaeology and made him internationally famous in the annals of science and history.
33. **Chiang Kai-shek (Chinese military leader)** – A Chinese general and statesman who led the Nationalist government (Kuomintang) of China in the 1920s–1940s. He fought to unify China, battled Japanese invasion during WWII, and later opposed Mao's Communists in the Chinese Civil War, ultimately retreating to Taiwan where he ruled as President. Chiang's leadership, though marked by authoritarianism, significantly shaped modern Chinese history and the geopolitical split between Mainland China and Taiwan.
34. **Leon Trotsky (Russian revolutionary)** – A Marxist revolutionary and theorist who was a key architect of the 1917 Russian Revolution and founder of the Soviet Red Army. After Lenin's death, Trotsky was outmaneuvered by Stalin and exiled; he continued to write influential works advocating "permanent revolution" and criticizing Stalinism. His eventual assassination in 1940 in Mexico made him a martyr of the communist movement. Trotsky's ideas inspired global leftist movements, and he remains a symbol of the ideological struggles within the Soviet era.
35. **Ernest Hemingway (American novelist)** – An acclaimed 20th-century writer known for his sparse prose and adventurous life. As part of the "Lost Generation" of expatriate writers in the 1920s, he penned classics like *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms* that captured the disillusionment of post-WWI youth. Hemingway's bold experiences (from big-game hunting to war correspondence) informed his work and persona, making him a defining voice of his era and earning him the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1954⁶¹.
36. **Benito Mussolini (Italian dictator)** – The founder of Fascism and Prime Minister (later dictator) of Italy from 1922 to 1943. He dismantled Italian democracy and implemented a totalitarian regime, pursuing aggressive nationalism and expansionism that influenced the rise of other fascist movements (notably Nazi Germany). Mussolini's alliance with Hitler in WWII and his eventual downfall (executed in 1945) marked him as a cautionary example of authoritarian ambition and its catastrophic consequences in European history.
37. **Mao Zedong (Chinese revolutionary)** – The leader of the Chinese Communist Revolution and founding chairman of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Mao led the Long March, resisted Japan in WWII, and defeated the Nationalists in the Civil War. His Maoist ideology and policies (like the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution) profoundly reshaped China's society, economy, and place in the world. Mao's legacy is immense and complex: he is revered in China for securing independence and criticized for the upheavals under his rule, reflecting his towering influence on 20th-century global politics.
38. **Aleister Crowley (English occultist)** – An influential and controversial mystic, magician, and writer, infamous for his occult doctrines and eccentric persona. He founded the religion of Thelema and wrote extensively on ceremonial magic and mysticism, dubbing himself "The



Great Beast 666." Crowley's esoteric practices and advocacy of "Do what thou wilt" made him notorious in his time (tabloids called him "the wickedest man in the world"), but also a lasting influence on counterculture, literature, and modern occult movements.

39. **Sol Plaatje (South African author & activist)** – A founding member of the African National Congress (established 1912) and a pioneering black intellectual in South Africa. He campaigned tirelessly against racist laws like the 1913 Natives Land Act and documented their effects; his writings (in journalism and his novel *Mhudi*) and political lobbying were crucial in the early struggle for black South Africans' rights. Plaatje's work laid groundwork for South Africa's later freedom movement, making him a revered figure in the history of civil rights in Africa.

40. **Edward, Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII)** – The heir to the British throne who became king in 1936 but abdicated the same year to marry Wallis Simpson. As Prince of Wales in the 1910s–20s, Edward was known for his charm, modern style, and love of society life, but his decision to give up the crown for love rocked the monarchy. His abdication changed the line of succession (bringing his brother George VI and later Elizabeth II to the throne) and made him a lasting symbol of romance versus duty in royal history.

It's Christmas 1912 and the world beyond our cosy safari lodge is on the cusp of great upheaval – empires wobble, new nations arise, and intrigue is as thick as the summer heat. From Europe's drawing rooms (abuzz with rumours of Balkan wars and the Titanic's ghosts) to the African bush (where British officers and Boer veterans share an uneasy peace under starry skies), the era's tensions and wonders swirl together. Here at Kruger Park Hostel, our band of international travellers finds the colonial frontier alive with steam trains, distant war drums, and roaring lions – the perfect playful backdrop of global turmoil and local adventure to spice up an evening of mystery and merriment.

We can't wait to welcome you for a festive night of intrigue and fun!

Regards

Phillip

Private Assistant to Baz, Your Host

Notice Board

NOTICE TO ALL GUESTS



Christmas Murder Mystery Dinner – 4pm December 25th 1913

We are pleased to confirm the following guests for our festive evening at Kruger Park Hostel:

Lea (Bonnie Parker), Mayra (Josephine Baker), Stefanie Hintz (Coco Chanel), Anna (Wallis Simpson), Blade (Agatha Christie), Gi Gallo (Frida Kahlo), Giulia (Amelia Earhart), Monika (Virginia Woolf), Marie (Eleanor Roosevelt), Tristen (Jan Smuts), Jonas (Franklin D. Roosevelt), Nathan Lange (Howard Carter), Andreas (T. E. Lawrence), Maya Wigger (Zelda Fitzgerald), Lebu (Charlotte Maxeke), Conrad (Al Capone), Rene (J. Edgar Hoover), and more.

Venue: Dining Hall

Time: 4:00pm sharp

Dress: Formal

With so many distinguished guests and so many old scores, who knows what secrets the evening may uncover?

Sisi

Manager, Kruger Park Hostel

News Alert the day before

Komatipoort Chronicle

24 December 1912

Dignitaries Descend on Komatipoort – Baz Rutherford’s Christmas Soirée Draws International Attention

Komatipoort, Transvaal – The usually quiet railway station was abuzz with excitement this afternoon as a string of distinguished guests arrived aboard the Pretoria-Lourenço Marques express. Among those spotted disembarking were the infamous American crime boss Al Capone, South African statesman General Jan Smuts, and the enigmatic American lawman J. Edgar Hoover. The trio, along with a host of other international dignitaries, were greeted on the platform by none other than Sebastian “Baz” Rutherford, the notorious adventurer and host of tomorrow’s much-anticipated Christmas gathering.

Eyewitnesses report that Baz, resplendent in his trademark safari attire and gold-tipped cane, personally welcomed each guest with theatrical flair. Local porters struggled to keep up with the mountains of luggage, while townsfolk craned for a glimpse of the famous and infamous alike.

Rumour has it that all are bound for the Kruger Park Hostel, where Baz is set to host his legendary Christmas Soirée. With royalty, revolutionaries, artists, and outlaws all under one roof, speculation is rife as to what intrigues and alliances may unfold on Christmas Day.



Stay tuned for further updates as Komatipoort prepares for an evening that promises to be as unforgettable as it is unpredictable.

How did it Card

Who was the Murderer? _____

What clue gave it away? _____

Which Character did you Play? _____

Who was the best Actor? _____

Who was the best dressed? _____

Historical Context: December 1912 – Global Turmoil & Local Tensions

Global Backdrop (Late 1912):

The world of December 1912 was on the cusp of great upheaval. Major empires and emerging nations were jostling: in the Balkans, a war had just paused – Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece and Montenegro signed an armistice with the Ottoman Empire in early December 27, shocking Europe with the Ottomans' losses. On the horizon, the alliances of the great powers were hardening; in fact, on December 8, 1912, Kaiser Wilhelm II held a "War Council" in Potsdam signaling Germany's view that a broader conflict was likely inevitable²⁸. The tensions of this pre-war era formed the international backdrop for our characters – from Japanese observers to German spies – all sensing the coming storm.

Elsewhere, imperial dynasties were falling: in China, the 2,000-year imperial system had just ended in February 1912 with the abdication of the last Qing emperor, Puyi²⁹. By December, the new Chinese Republic under Sun Yat-sen and Yuan Shikai was struggling to gain footing, and exiled Qing loyalists or opportunists were scattered worldwide (hence a character like Lin Shao navigating arms deals in Africa). In Italy and the Ottoman Empire, the Italo-Turkish War had concluded in October 1912 with Italy seizing Libya³⁰. The Ottomans' defeat left many Ottoman agents and allies plotting quietly (our fictional Prince al-Husseini comes with that chip on his shoulder), even as Istanbul's diplomats looked to new alliances.

The Americas

In the Americas, the United States had just elected Woodrow Wilson in November 1912, and global opinion was still captivated by the Titanic disaster earlier that April. The sinking of RMS Titanic on April 15, 1912 – with over 1,500 lives lost – remained fresh in memory³¹. By December 1912, ongoing inquiries had spurred calls for safety reforms, and even literature from survivors (Colonel Archibald Gracie, a survivor who wrote about it, died that December³²). Such headlines would certainly swirl in the conversations of an international dinner party – characters like Evelyn McAllister and Florence Remington might morbidly reference how "not even the Titanic's millionaires were safe from fate." Meanwhile, across the globe, scientific and cultural news was



buzzing: German archaeologists had just discovered the iconic bust of Nefertiti in Egypt on December 6, 1912³³, feeding the era's Egyptomania, and in England the mysterious "Piltdown Man" fossil (later exposed as a hoax) was unveiled to scientists on December 1834, illustrating the period's mix of discovery and deception – a nice parallel to Baz's own mix of truth and trickery.

Southern Africa & Komatipoort Region:

On the local stage, South Africa was a newly unified country (the Union of South Africa formed in 1910 under British dominion). By late 1912, Prime Minister Louis Botha (a former Boer general) had just returned to power in a general election³⁵, and his government – including Jan Smuts – was cautiously trying to reconcile English and Afrikaans populations. However, racial and social tensions simmered: early that year, in January 1912, African leaders had founded the South African Native National Congress (SANNC) (precursor to the ANC) to petition for black rights under the union³⁶. This means figures like Rev. Carter or Parvati Rao would be aware of a rising tide of activism (Gandhi too was active in South Africa then, leading Indian civil rights campaigns³⁷). In December 1912, these efforts weren't front-page news in London, but within South Africa they marked a crucial awakening – something Baz likely viewed either as a nuisance or a force to be exploited for his ends.

Komatipoort, specifically,

is a small frontier town at the confluence of the Komati and Crocodile Rivers, right on the border with Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique)³⁸. It was – and is – a gateway: the Pretoria–Lourenço Marques railway, completed in 1891, runs through Komatipoort, linking the Transvaal's mines to the sea³⁹. By 1912, this rail line was a vital artery for commerce and travel; steam trains could bring international travelers from the port of Lourenço Marques (today Maputo) up to Komatipoort in a matter of hours, a journey that decades earlier would have taken weeks by ox-wagon. The presence of this railway also meant Komatipoort was a hotbed of customs officers, smugglers, and intrigue – exactly Baz's milieu. Historically, during the Boer War (1899–1902), the British recognized the strategic importance of Komatipoort; they occupied it to cut off Boer supply lines from Portuguese territory⁴⁰. A unit of irregulars, Steinaecker's Horse, operated around the region, fighting Boer guerrillas and controlling the fever-ridden Lebombo hills⁴¹. Echoes of that war linger in 1912: Boer veterans like our General Le Roux remember using Komatipoort's rail to smuggle gold or munitions, and British officers still eye the border for gun-running. Portuguese East Africa, for its part, was relatively weakly administered; bribery and trading concessions often determined what (or who) crossed the border. Our character Senhor Duarte Almeida (from the existing profiles) exemplifies this – a customs officer on the take, reflecting how real Lourenço Marques officials sometimes turned a blind eye to contraband in that era.

Colonial Dynamics – British, Portuguese, Boer, Swazi:

Komatipoort lies in Mpumalanga ("Eastern Transvaal"), near not only Mozambique but also Swaziland. At the time, Swaziland was a British protectorate (since 1903) surrounded by the Union of South Africa. The Swazi king (Sobhuza II was a child, with Queen Labotsibeni as regent) had to cooperate with British residents, yet Swazi royalty still wielded local influence^{42 43}. We included a



fictional Swazi prince (or a proxy like King Dlamini in the staff roles) to illustrate this dynamic: Britain often invited local royals to colonial events to project unity, even as those royals maneuvered to preserve autonomy. A character like Prince Okonjo from West Africa similarly reflects Britain's habit of showcasing loyal indigenous elites. Meanwhile, the Portuguese to the east were nominally friendly with the British (they had treaties ensuring the rail line's use), but there was an undercurrent of rivalry and mutual mistrust. Portugal's colonial officials in Mozambique were notoriously corrupt but also fiercely protective of their turf. They had allowed the railway's construction but retained control of the port; any British adventurer like Baz operating there had to either cooperate or deceive them. Hence, our roster has a Portuguese doctor (Silva) and we already had Almeida (customs officer) – both showing the Portuguese presence.

The Boer community in 1912

Though now part of the Union and ostensibly British subjects, still carried bitterness from the war 10 years prior. Many Boers became farmers or officials under the new government, but some, as we've imagined with Le Roux, remained sullen or even plotted rebellion. (In fact, there would be a Boer rebellion in 1914 when World War I broke out, by those who still hoped for independence.) So the inclusion of multiple Afrikaner characters with grudges (du Preez, Malan, Le Roux, etc.) is very plausible – people in that region really did feud over war debts, lost land, or collaboration versus resistance. Komatipoort itself had been part of the old South African Republic (Transvaal) and was incorporated into the Transvaal Province of the Union; many landowners around there were Boers who suddenly found themselves under the British flag after 1902. A character like Dietrich Brandt, though German by nationality, represents settlers in neighboring colonies (German Southwest Africa, etc.) who had their own Anglophobia and could easily cross into South Africa for business or malfeasance, adding to the melting pot of rival national interests.

Wildlife, Ivory & Safari Culture:

By setting our murder mystery at a safari dinner, we tap into the safari craze of the 1910s. Big-game hunting in Africa was at its peak of glamor among wealthy Europeans and Americans. Just a few years earlier, in 1909–1910, former U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt's famous African safari took place, during which he and his team traversed British East Africa and the Congo, killing hundreds of animals for museums. That highly publicized expedition (and Roosevelt's subsequent book "African Game Trails") truly launched the golden age of safari tourism, making an African hunting trip a must-do adventure for wealthy adventurers⁴⁴. In British East Africa (Kenya and Uganda), luxury safari expeditions were common by 1912, with guides like Philip Percival (who guided Roosevelt) becoming legends. Our character Claire Bradshaw might have been inspired by Annie Oakley or other sharpshooters to seek new frontiers, while someone like Lars Sjöberg represents the many European sportsmen drawn by tales of East African hunts.

South Africa's Lowveld (the region including today's Kruger Park and Komatipoort) also had its hunters, though by 1912 it was in a transitional state. Notably, conservation efforts were underway: the area between the Sabie and Crocodile Rivers – right near Komatipoort – had been declared the Sabi Game Reserve in 1898 by President Paul Kruger⁴⁵. After the Boer War, the British maintained



and expanded these reserves; by 1902, Major James Stevenson-Hamilton was appointed warden to protect wildlife in the Sabi Reserve and the new Shingwedzi Reserve⁴⁶. This was the genesis of the future Kruger National Park, which meant by 1912 large-scale hunting in some parts of the Lowveld was officially restricted. However, enforcement was spotty. Poaching and clandestine safaris continued – often by colonial officials themselves or well-connected individuals. Baz Rutherford, as a flamboyant hunter, would navigate this scene by securing special permissions or simply bribing the right people. The mention of a “Kruger gold” scheme in Baroness Esterházy’s profile nods to a real legend (Paul Kruger was rumored to have buried gold while fleeing in 1900; many treasure hunters searched for it)⁴⁷. Baz might use such legends to con investors under the guise of a safari expedition. Meanwhile, he flouts game laws by trading ivory tusks illicitly with partners like Sheikh Abdullah – an echo of reality, since the ivory trade was booming. For centuries, East African ivory traveled through ports like Zanzibar and Lourenço Marques; by the late 19th century, European and American demand for ivory (for piano keys, billiard balls, etc.) was immense⁴⁸. European adventurers joined the fray – some, like the characters, as rogue hunters, others under pretext of science. Belgian Congo, for instance, had seen heinous exploitation for ivory and rubber in prior decades, and someone like Father Dumas would be keenly aware of that human and animal toll.

Thus at Baz’s 1912 dinner, you’d have a heady mix of safari triumphalism and emerging conservation ethos. Guests would swap exaggerated hunting tales, even as a few note that game was thinning out. (Indeed, Stevenson-Hamilton had been lobbying that the reserves needed stricter protection; elephants were nearly shot out in Transvaal by 1912 – only a few remained in the Sabi Reserve⁴⁹.) A savvy figure like Dr. Coenraad Vermeer might quietly mention the idea of preserving wildlife, at which Baz and the more bloodthirsty might scoff. It’s a ripe environment for conflict: our characters’ motives often tie to Baz’s abuse of either wildlife or local people – for example, Baz stealing Inez’s botanic samples or giving Dr. Silva’s workers malaria by violating quarantine. These reflect real issues of the time: sleeping sickness and malaria outbreaks in Lowveld were serious (the region was nicknamed “fever country” for its deadly malaria – construction of the rail in the 1890s saw scores of workers die⁵⁰). European doctors like Dr. Silva did battle those diseases, sometimes clashing with businessmen who didn’t want quarantines to slow profit.

Transport and Communication:

Lastly, it’s worth noting how all these far-flung people managed to gather in one place – something increasingly feasible in 1912. The world was more connected than ever: the telegraph network bound continents. By the 1900s, undersea telegraph cables linked South and East Africa to London; by 1912 a message from Komatipoort (wired to Pretoria, then to Cape Town and England) would travel in minutes⁵¹. Our murder mystery’s telegram announcements and cipher clues play on this – spies like Otto Schulz could wire Berlin quickly, and news of Baz’s death would be telegraphed to colonial offices immediately. Railroads and steamships shrank distances. One could board a steamship in Europe, arrive at Delagoa Bay (Maputo), and take the train directly to Komatipoort, as many real travelers did⁵². This allowed, for example, Prince Damrong of Siam (who indeed toured Europe in 1910s) or American heiresses to include a safari stop on an around-



the-world trip. It's no coincidence that tourist trains were already venturing into the Sabi Game Reserve by 1912 – the South African Railways ran a popular “Round in Nine” days tour that included an overnight at Komatipoort and a guided walk to see wildlife⁵³. Tourists would overnight at Sabi Bridge (not far from our hostel venue) escorted by armed rangers to glimpse giraffes or lions. Thus, Baz's soiree might even be piggybacking on one of these excursions, explaining how a journalist like Dupont or a novelist like Remington found themselves in this remote locale with relative ease.

In summary, December 1912 sits at the crossroads of centuries: the Victorian-Edwardian era of exploration and exploitation is climaxing, while the seeds of the turbulent 20th century (world war, anti-colonial movements, technological change) are quietly germinating. Our characters embody these contrasts. Around Baz's table we have representatives of waning empires and rising ones, of oppressed peoples and oppressors, of scientific enlightenment and rank greed. The news of the day – from Balkan battlefields to Antarctic exploration (Roald Amundsen had reached the South Pole just the year before) – would swirl in conversation. In South Africa, colonizers and the colonized negotiate an uneasy coexistence: British governors, Portuguese officials, Boer generals, Zulu chiefs, and Indian lawyers all eye each other in a dance of power. Komatipoort, with its railroad and frontier energy, is the perfect microcosm of this global stage: a place where an infamous elephant hunter like Baz Rutherford can bring the world to his dinner table – and where any one of those international guests might have ample reason to make sure Baz never leaves that table alive.

Sources: Historical details have been drawn from period records and analyses – e.g., the signing of the Balkan armistice on Dec 3, 1912⁵⁴, Kaiser Wilhelm's strategic meeting plotting for war⁵⁵, the abdication of China's last emperor in February 1912⁵⁶, and the discovery of Nefertiti's bust in Egypt that December⁵⁷. Local context references include the Komatipoort railway's completion in 1891 and its malaria “fever country” reputation^{58 59}, as well as the establishment of the Sabi Game Reserve (Kruger's precursor) in 1898⁶⁰. The safari zeitgeist is exemplified by Roosevelt's 1909 safari, which indeed marked the start of a golden age of big-game hunting tourism⁶¹, and the longstanding East African ivory trade that European hunters joined in the late 19th century⁶². Together, these sources paint the backdrop against which our fictional murder mystery is set – ensuring that the characters and their motives feel authentically grounded in 1912's reality^{63 64 65}.

Murder Mystery Timeline

Christmas Day, 25 December 1912

Start: 4:00 pm | End: 10:00 pm

4:00 pm – 4:30 pm: Arrival & Welcome Drinks

- Guests arrive



- Welcome drinks and light snacks served.
- Host (Phillip) gives a brief introduction, sets the historical scene, and reviews the rules.
- The Host announces that he has received a call from the police saying that Baz has been found murdered and that they believe the suspect is an invited guest to the party. But since Baz will not be missed much, except maybe by one, let's carry on the party
- Riddle:

On top of the fridge

I'm cold inside but tall and strong,
I hum a quiet kitchen song.
Not in my belly where food will hide,
But climb above to find your guide.

Clues hidden there

Josephine's Personal Diary
Box of Pearls

4:30 pm – 5:15 pm: Mingling & First Clues

- Guests mingle in character, introduce themselves, and begin sharing gossip or rumours.
- Host brings out Komatipoort Chronicle
- First round of physical clues or secret notes are distributed or discovered.
- Riddle:

Behind the books in the bookshelf

*I hold worlds without doors,
Stories without floors.
Seek where wisdom sleeps in rows,
Behind my backs, the secret goes.*

Clues hidden there:

Chest of Dimond's
Bag of Kruger Gold with Treasure Map of it's location of the rest

In the Microwave

I'm a box that hums and spins,
I warm your meals and heat your tins.



Not on the plate where food is placed,
But open my door to join the chase.

Clues hidden there:

Baz's Journal

Stolen Dimond's

5:15 pm – 6:00 pm: Act I – The Plot Thickens

- Guests continue to interact, form alliances, and pursue their objectives.
- Riddle:

Under the chess board

*I'm a battlefield of black and white,
Where kings and pawns wage silent fight.
When the war is paused and pieces rest,
Look beneath the board to find your quest.*

Clues hidden there:

Picture of Sisi's Son

Telegram to Philip

- Host (Phillip) brings out The London Gazette
- Sisi says she found a Cipher and brings out the Cipher

6:00 pm – 7:00 pm: Dinner – Act II

- Dinner is served – Finger Food
- Host (Phillip) brings out New-Yorker Volksblatt
- The host may prompt certain characters to make toasts or share “news” at the table.
- Riddle:

Under the Keyboard

I speak without a tongue,
I answer without a face.
My letters march in silent rows,
Lift my shield to join the chase.



Clues hidden there:

Ciphered Message
FBI Telegram

Between the tin coffee cups

I'm metal and small, I hold a brew,
Morning's friend when sleep is due.
Not in the pot where beans are ground,
But between my kin the secret's found.

Clues hidden there:

Telegram to Phillip
Picture

7:30 pm – 8:30 pm

- Riddle:

Under the carpet

I'm soft beneath your wandering feet,
I guard the floor where paths all meet.
Not in the threads that you can see,
But lift me up for mystery.

Clues hidden there:

Josephines Letter to Baz

8:30 pm – 9:00 pm: Accusation & Voting

Voting forms to be given out

9:00 pm – 9:30 pm: The Big Reveal

- Voting sheets are filled out and collected.
- Host tallies votes and announces awards (Best Detective, Best Liar, Best Costume, etc.).



- The murderer is revealed in a dramatic scene or confession.
- The solution to the mystery is explained.

9:30 pm – 10:00 pm: Epilogue & Farewell

- Final group photos, dessert, and socialising.

The Victim and Host of the Evening - Sebastian “Baz” Rutherford

Fictional Charater

Nationality: British (South African Resident)

Role/Profession: Flamboyant Elephant Hunter, Adventurer, Patron of Lavish Soirées

Core Significance

Sebastian “Baz” Rutherford is the notorious host of Kruger Park’s most decadent gatherings—a larger-than-life figure whose exploits, appetites, and debts have made him both admired and despised. Baz’s obsession with the legend of Kruger’s Gold, his tangled web of affairs, and his reputation as a swindler have left a trail of broken hearts, unpaid bills, and enemies in every corner of society. Baz is also a thief, and will steal from close friends and allies

Early Life and Background

Born into a fading British aristocratic family, Baz was shipped off to South Africa as a young man, allegedly to “make something of himself.” Instead, he made a name as a daring elephant hunter, famed for his flamboyant style, extravagant tastes, and disregard for convention. Baz’s early years were marked by scandal—expelled from Eton, rumoured to have seduced a tutor, and known for his reckless gambling.

Career and Rise to Prominence

Baz’s ascent was fuelled by bravado and charm:

- Elephant Hunter: Baz’s exploits in the bush are legendary—he claims to have single-handedly saved a village from a rogue bull elephant, though witnesses recall more chaos than heroism.
- Patron of Soirées: Baz’s parties are the stuff of legend, attended by royalty, revolutionaries, artists, and criminals. His guest lists are as eclectic as his tastes, and his ability to charm (or blackmail) the famous is unrivalled.
- Swindler and Schemer: Baz is perpetually in debt, owing favours and money to everyone from local poachers to European bankers. His schemes—whether selling forged ivory,



peddling fake maps to Kruger's Gold, or promising introductions to royalty—have left many feeling cheated.

Personality and Relationships

Baz is a master of reinvention:

- Flamboyant and Charismatic: Always the centre of attention, Baz dresses in outrageous safari attire, sports a gold-tipped cane, and speaks with theatrical flourish.
- Womaniser and Libertine: Baz's affairs are legendary—he is rumoured to have sired dozens of illegitimate children across Africa and Europe. His lovers include actresses, aristocrats, and adventurers. He is equally known for his liaisons with men, never shy about his appetites.
- Never Married: Baz claims marriage is “for those who lack imagination.” His romantic entanglements are a source of gossip and resentment among guests.
- Obsession with Kruger's Gold: Baz is convinced he will one day find the lost treasure of President Paul Kruger, and has swindled many with promises of secret maps and clues.

Enemies and Motives

Baz's life is a tapestry of grudges:

- Indebted to Many: From Al Capone to Stephanie St. Clair, Baz owes money and favours to dangerous people.
- Betrayed Lovers: Nearly every woman (and several men) at his dinner has reason to hate him—broken promises, ruined reputations, and stolen fortunes.
- Swindled Associates: Baz's fraudulent schemes have left business partners ruined and rivals vengeful.
- Rival Hunters and Poachers: His flamboyant style and disregard for ethics have made him enemies in the bush.

Baz's Last Soirée

On the eve of his murder, Baz hosts a lavish dinner at Kruger Park Hostel, inviting a dazzling array of guests:

- Artists, Revolutionaries, Royals, and Rogues: Bonnie Parker, Josephine Baker, Coco Chanel, Wallis Simpson, Agatha Christie, Gertrude Stein, Zelda Fitzgerald, Amelia Earhart, Elsa Maxwell, Frida Kahlo, Virginia Woolf, Eleanor Roosevelt, Queen Marie of Romania, Aimee Semple McPherson, Marion Davies, Charlotte Maxeke, Clara Bow, Marlene Dietrich, Stephanie St. Clair, Sylvia Pankhurst, Jan Smuts, Winston Churchill, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Fritz Joubert Duquesne, T. E. Lawrence, Haile Selassie, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Subhas Chandra Bose, J. Edgar Hoover, Al Capone, Charlie Chaplin, Howard Carter, Chiang Kai-shek, Leon Trotsky, Ernest Hemingway, Benito Mussolini, Mao Zedong, Aleister Crowley, Sol Plaatje, Edward, Prince of Wales.

Legacy and Historical Impact



- Scandal and Intrigue: Baz's life is a whirlwind of scandal, adventure, and betrayal. His murder will leave a host of suspects, each with a motive and a secret.
- Enduring Mystery: The legend of Baz Rutherford—and the fate of Kruger's Gold—will haunt the guests long after the final toast.

Music Play List - 100 Greatest Songs of the 1920s

https://music.youtube.com/playlist?list=OLAK5uy_llbxV9WxIDyUNplMUXPgYfNyUfmUdVlo&si=3zDKrls7UjCLScvP

