

Dragon in the Poplars

A LARP by Meg Hilko
(Written for Gaelcon 2008)

1943: Los Alamos Ranch School, Jemez Mountains, New Mexico

Code name: Manhattan Project

Across the world in Europe the theatre of atrocities of WWII is being played out. But here in Los Alamos, the serene surrounding forests and the peaceful skies could belie that reality. If of course, one overlooked the miles of perimeter fencing, and the military men who walked it.

The war has been raging for years now, the US of A finally urged into action by the infamous Pearl Harbor bombings. While the deployment of military assets had been swift in response, a quieter, more subtle reaction also kicked into gear. Scientists, the best in their fields, were quietly gathered up, bundled out of their university lives, and thrown into a world of classified experimentation. Nondisclosure agreements were par for the course, forbidding even their wives to know their projects, and from family members knowing where they were moving to. Some were lucky enough to be co-opted into the already running project at the University of Chicago. The rest were sent to Los Alamos.

Referred to most often as "The Hill" by the residents, Los Alamos is as secure as it can be. 40 miles from any other point of civilization, residents were only allowed off the Hill infrequently, in small numbers and under heavy guard. They are forbidden to say where they are from, or answer any question about their work or home lives to anyone who is not cleared for and equivalent classified security clearance. All mail correspondence is opened and anything deemed dangerous was censored by the military. Some liken it to prison.

Having been a boys ranch before the military commandeered it, the town is solely a laboratory with surrounding houses now. The Lab has been ticking along for 2 years, although there doesn't seem to have been much in the way of breakthroughs. Oppenheimer, the scientist in charge, has been getting more and more tense. The military is getting more and more edgy. The residents have been stoically attempting to ignore them both.

TA-46 has always benefited from not being attached to the central laboratory. Down in a quiet, shady canyon, TA-46 looks peaceful and unobtrusive. The atmosphere inside, is anything but.

The problem is really the rivalry between Peter Warner and Truman Richards, the team leaders of the two groups working at TA-46. Peter is a theoretical physicist. Thomas is as well. Before being drafted here the two had clashed in heavy debates in the academic world, both having been leading experts in their fields. The publishing circuit has always had to contend with their dueling papers, and not a few allegations have been thrown between the two of copying research and debating who came up with an idea first. Both men's careers could be defined by their clashes. Someone higher up had obviously thought their rivalry would help get their work done quicker when they put the two together in TA-46. Unfortunately, the higher ups were wrong.

The two groups should be working together. Their projects involve the same experiments and it makes sense that that two would work side by side so that duplicating experiments doesn't need to happen. If only Peter and Truman's egos could allow for easy life in the workplace, it might have been a great idea. For the past few months, tensions have been building. Most of the time the two teams are ducking for cover and just praying not to be noticed with both Peter and Thomas are in the room. But the tension is going to snap soon. And everyone's worried about what will happen if it does.

Rules of the Game:

Standard LARP rules are going to apply here. Those rules being:

No running.
No violence. (Please be respectful of your fellow players)
Put all other games away.
Turn off all mobile phones.

This is a serious LARP, while funny things do happen, please don't take the piss.

If your GM tells you to do something or not to do something, you do what the GM says.

In addition we're going to have a safety word. If you've had enough and you want out the safe word for today is "**ASPARAGUS**".

If you need any clarification on these rules please discuss them with your GM before the LARP starts.

Security Clearances:

Everyone has a nametag. At the end of that there is a number that corresponds to their Security Clearance. Those with higher numbers have a much greater understanding about what's going on. Those below your security clearance are not allowed to know what you know. You will have been told what security clearance you have and what the levels below it are allowed to know.

General Knowledge About the Others

The number in [] indicates their security clearance level. Levels 1 to 5 (5 being highest).

Team Warner

Patrick Warner[4]: Team Lead. Brilliant Scientist and knows it. Went to Harvard with Truman Richards.

Isaac Rosenthal[3]: Jewish. Very smart. Likes to be right.

Josiah Parks[3]: Devoutly Christian. Likes to debate. Very intellectual.

John Sullivan[3]: High Strung. Jumpy. Keeps to himself.

Winston Ramsey[2]: The team's technician and scribe. Younger than most. Very upbeat.

Team Richards

Truman Richards[4]: Team Lead. Brilliant scientist and knows it. Went to Harvard with Patrick Warner.

Lee Marks[3]: Very smart. Usually upbeat. Married to Kay Marks.

Timothy Fairbanks[3]: Loudly outspoken. Very patriotic.

Istvan Laszofli[4]: Hungarian. Convinced things are being done wrong.

Stephen Moore[2]: The team's technician and scribe. Older gentleman. Very traditional.

The Others

Kay Marks[2]: Married to Lee Marks. Nurse. In charge of watching out for the health of the teams.

Peter Bergen[2]: Dependable. Steady handed technician who performs most experiments for the teams.

Ben Sellers[2]: Flighty but smart. Technician dedicated to taking readings of the experiments.

Private Tony Gonzales[2]: Security Guard for this room. Hispanic. Army man fresh out of boot camp.

Grace Austin[1]: Upbeat. Society girl. Serves teas and coffees and takes orders for lunch.

BEN SELLERS: All readings are at normal.

[Mini-Play]

LEE MARKS: Everything ok in there? Kay?

KAY MARKS: Radiation levels as expected, as Ben said, everything looks normal.

PETER BERGEN: Getting ready to begin tickling folks.

WINSTON RAMSEY: Steady as she goes, Peter. Then we can all go home and have some fun.

TRUMAN RICHARDS: Good work, Peter.

PATRICK WARNER: You know being on the good side of the technicians doesn't make you right.

ISTVAN LASZLOFI: I'm telling you, the critical mass coefficient in this problem is wrong. You're doing it all wrong!

TIMOTHY FAIRBANKS: None of your funny maths now, Istvan, our American boys checked them all out just fine.

ISAAC ROSENTHAL: I've been going over the numbers and Istvan may have a point.

JOHN SULLIVAN: Is anyone else hearing that wind? That's a terrible storm out there.

STEPHEN MOORE: Could you send through those last readings again please, Ben.

GRACE AUSTIN: Who would like some tea?

TONY GONZALES: You know the rules ma'am. No carts allowed in here.

BEN SELLERS: Readings increasing as expected.

GRACE AUSTIN: I'll just leave the cart out here and come in and take orders then.

TONY GONZALES: Yes, ma'am.

JOHN SULLIVAN: Oh god that storm's going to kill us all!

LEE MARKS: It's ok John. The storm won't affect us in here.

[lights flicker- GM Explanation]

BEN SELLERS: Massive Spike in output!!

TRUMAN/PATRICK: What was that??

JOSIAH PARKS: Dear Lord in Heaven, protect us...

PETER BERGEN: Oh god. My hand slipped.

[Mini-Play]

Istvan Laszofli

In an ideal world, you would still be in Hungary. You would have continued to help the brilliant scientist Leo Szilard with his nuclear fission projects, your family would be safe and sound and fed and you wouldn't have to put up with the crass Americans who now make your life hell.

Unfortunately for you, Szilard found out about the Nazi work to copy his findings. And not only copy- but produce the chain reaction that would create a nuclear explosion. Knowing you could not afford to move your family as well, you were convinced that your knowledge would be too valuable if the Nazi's invaded Hungary and you were captured. So with Szilard, you fled to first to Britain, and then on to America.

Since then, the brilliant Enrico Fermi requested your help with the critical mass calculations. You were shipped still further from your family to a remote place called Los Alamos. You told the Americans about your family before being shipped out west. Some General made dismissive motions in your direction, and some lowly aide said that everything would be done to get your family out of Hungary. But you really don't believe they even listened to you. The worry for your family is sometimes overwhelming; Your wife Annika, little Maria and Petur.

Unfortunately, despite being one of the voices to raise the importance of this task to their attention, the Americans seem to treat you like a second class citizen. All the other Hungarians you knew were either left back East or have been assigned to different experimental groups.

While your English is still broken, you know you understand the science behind the experiments you are doing far better than any of the pompous, loud Americans assigned to this team. One day they will need you. Until then, you will continue to make the calculations and watch as they get ever closer and closer to the critical mass needed for a nuclear chain reaction. And perhaps, if the calculations get close enough, you can smuggle out whatever research you might need to get your family out of German occupation safely.

Your biggest worry is that you won't live long enough to do so. These crazy scientists are going about the whole thing wrong. You keep saying it, but they won't believe you. You just hope that by repeating yourself that you can get the message across before they kill someone.

Security Clearance- Istvan

Team Richards

Security Clearance Level 1

These people are merely facilitating the laboratory. They are not supposed to have any information regarding the experiments being conducted.

Security Clearance Level 2

The experiments going on are beyond these people's understanding. They know that they are pushing two radioactive materials at each other and recording readings of the radiation from that. They don't understand much beyond that.

Security Clearance Level 3

The experiment is to see how much explosive force is given off by various sizes of radioactive material when a chain reaction is brought into being.

Security Clearance Level 4

The experiment is to see how much a yield an explosion would create from various sizes of radioactive material when used in a device.

Security Clearance Level 5 (Istvan only)

The experiment is to create a chain reaction that will set off a nuclear explosion. Theoretically this can be used as a weapon to finish the war. As part of Szilard's original team to bring this to the attention of the Americans, you know exactly what's going on. You actually have Level 5 clearance. (You just aren't supposed to let Richards or Warner know that you actually know more of what's going on than they do, hence why you are classified officially as Level 4)

What you know about radiation:

B Class Knowledge

Radiation is something you have a clinical knowledge of. Radiation is given off of various particles in varying types and quantities. A cell that has been exposed to enough radiation may begin to deteriorate.

How it affects the human body? You don't really know although it got bad press in the early 1930's from a radioactive medication that has since been taken off the market. In experiments you're read about, it appears to be useful in some medical treatments despite the clear improper usage of the so called 'cure all' medicines. However from your clinical research, you would assume that high doses would be bad. Clearly more research into what radiation does is needed to understand it fully but at this time in history; radiation is considered a good thing.

Lee Marks

Sometimes it's hard to believe you got so lucky. A brilliant mind. A scientific career that is peppered in papers and recognitions and even tenure. And a beautiful, smart, caring wife to share your perfect life with!

You never thought you'd be lucky enough to grab a gal like Kay. But when you did find her, you knew what a gem she was instantly and grabbed on with both hands! She's so supportive, so thoughtful, so honest and so downright sexy!

When you got the notice that you had been chosen for the Manhattan Project, you of course went straight to Kay. She, as always, enthusiastically supported you, insisting on quitting her own nursing job to accompany you out to Los Alamos. You knew she was bored in town and arranged to get her a job assisting the team you're part of. This way you can be near her almost all day long!

And she's done you proud. She knows more than you thought she did about radiation has made herself invaluable on the team. It's been many a night when the two of you have enjoyed long talks on the progress of the project and the experiments wrapped up in your post coital bliss. You know you shouldn't, but she's so helpful when you talk to her that you've occasionally spilled some top secret material that she technically doesn't have the clearance to have. But it's not like she would ever tell anyone!

Kay is your everything. This job, your career, it all pales in comparison with her. And it's a good thing she's here too. Your team is a fractured thing. Truman and Patrick are always fighting and this whole experiment could have been sorted out months ago if their egos could just step out of the room long enough to get the work done. The whole veil of secrecy isn't helping either. Kay's been a bit distant lately, but you're hoping it's just because of the bullshit at work.

Outside of your little group, you've no right to talk to anyone else about what gets done or how it could be done better. You know the pressure is coming from the military Higher Ups and you just hope the answer gets found before your team is thrown off the project. The whole thing has been stressing you out immensely.

Security Clearance- Lee

Team Richards

Security Clearance Level 1

These people are merely facilitating the laboratory. They are not supposed to have any information regarding the experiments being conducted.

Security Clearance Level 2

The experiments going on are beyond these people's understanding. They know that they are pushing two radioactive materials at each other and recording readings of the radiation from that. They don't understand much beyond that.

Security Clearance Level 3

The experiment is to see how much explosive force is given off by various sizes of radioactive material when a chain reaction is brought into being.

What you know about radiation:

C Class Knowledge

Radiation is something you have a base knowledge of. Radiation is given off by certain things in nature. It's been theorized it might have a helpful affect on some medical ailments, although it got bad press in the early 1930's from a radioactive medication that has since been taken off the market. Clearly more research into what radiation does is needed to understand it fully but at this time in history; radiation is considered a good thing.

Truman Richards

You are, to be blunt, a certified Genius. You flew through your education. Began your professorship at a young age, and have even managed to co-write several scientific papers alongside the pre-eminent scientists of the day; Einstein, Oppenheimer. Your work in the field of nuclear fission was going to topple the scientific community with its brilliance.

Unfortunately, shortly after your paper was sent to the publisher you found out that your experiments had been copied and flawed, incorrect findings were being published by one Patrick Warner. Warner was well known to you. You two shared many classes, studied under many of the same brilliant minds. But Warner is flawed. You've known it since you were in school together at Harvard. Sure he can do the computations, he can set up experiments, but he interprets things wrong!

When you were approached to join the Manhattan Project, you were offered your own team. You jumped at the chance, seeing your work was finally being accepted and the praise for your intellect finally was being recognized by the scientific community at large.

They failed to mention that your team would be working closely with another team on the same project.

Or that the second team would be led by one Mr Warner.

The man is insufferable. He's constantly telling you that you're wrong, constantly contradicting your orders, constantly undermining your position with the members of your team! You might be able to forgive his completely off the wall conclusions as part lunacy if it wasn't for what appears to be a deliberate attempt to sabotage your work on this project.

You'd like to get this job done, and done right. You'd settle for being able to complete the experiments and then go to Oppenheimer with your findings. If only Warner wouldn't interfere with YOUR team things might get progressed a bit faster.

Security Clearance Level 4- Truman

Team Richards

Security Clearance Level 1

These people are merely facilitating the laboratory. They are not supposed to have any information regarding the experiments being conducted.

Security Clearance Level 2

The experiments going on are beyond these people's understanding. They know that they are pushing two radioactive materials at each other and recording readings of the radiation from that. They don't understand much beyond that.

Security Clearance Level 3

The experiment is to see how much explosive force is given off by various sizes of radioactive material when a chain reaction is brought into being.

Security Clearance Level 4

The experiment is to see how much a yield an explosion would create from various sizes of radioactive material when used in a device.

What you know about radiation:

B Class Knowledge

Radiation is something you have a clinical knowledge of. Radiation is given off of various particles in varying types and quantities. A cell that has been exposed to enough radiation may begin to deteriorate.

How it affects the human body? You don't really know although it got bad press in the early 1930's from a radioactive medication that has since been taken off the market. In experiments you're read about, it appears to be useful in some medical treatments despite the clear improper usage of the so called 'cure all' medicines. However from your clinical research, you would assume that high doses would be bad. Clearly more research into what radiation does is needed to understand it fully but at this time in history; radiation is considered a good thing.

Kay Marks

Sometimes it's easy to think that you've been living in a dream world. You grew up like all good girls in New Hampshire, learning how to care for the home, being taught how to cook, clean, sew and many other worthwhile pursuits for young women. But you always had a keener mind than your sisters and the other ladies you knew. So it was unsurprising to your family when you chose to go on into academia.

It was in the fall of 1934 when you met Lee. He was a handsome collegiate, and when he retrieved your scarf from the water fountain, soaking himself in the process, you simply couldn't help but love his lopsided grin and quiet charm. It was a quiet courtship, his natural shyness precluding him from overstepping the bounds of politeness, but you two grew to care for each other deeply. You were married in a beautiful ceremony in 1938. He has been your world for the past 9 years. Lee is a fantastic scientist, brilliant in your eyes.

You studied to become a nurse, although his interest physics meant that you eventually abandoned your studies to take basic science courses to understand what Lee would often talk about so animatedly. You've often helped him with his experiments and were even hired on as an assistant at Boston College where Lee had earned a professorship. You've helped him with his projects, graded papers, and been immersed in the college lifestyle for many years now.

Eventually you found a position part time at a local hospital as a nurse, allowing you to do both. Two years ago, Lee announced he'd gotten a new job, one of great importance, for the good of the country. You were eager to do your part for the country, having followed the dreadful course of the War in the papers. You hadn't expected to be so far away from the rest of your friends and family, but Los Alamos has become a new home of sorts.

When you arrived and your experience (specifically your nursing training and time as an assistant) became known, you were quickly hired as well, and it has been your pleasure to help Lee and the team he is in as they are working on their secret projects. Primarily you monitor the health of everyone involved in a basic manner, but you also help by taking readings down and wherever else needed.

While it's never happened yet, Lee has always made it clear that children would be welcome in the home and you've dearly wished you could give him the pleasure of being a father. Finally, it's happened. It's been two months since you had your period, and you went to the doctor last week who confirmed you're almost three months along in your pregnancy. You were delighted with the news, but you haven't had the chance to discuss it with Lee.

Lee has been so stressed lately that you know your news would lighten him up. But you've both been so busy that there hasn't been any real time to yourselves in which you could confess this delightful news to him. He hasn't guessed yet, which you've been surprised by- you've practically been floating on air since you found out and beaming all the while. You've even been toying with names already- Martin, Claudia, and Thomas being your favourites thus far.

Security Clearance- Kay

Security Clearance Level 1

These people are merely facilitating the laboratory. They are not supposed to have any information regarding the experiments being conducted.

Security Clearance Level 2

The experiments going on are beyond these people's understanding. They know that they are pushing two radioactive materials at each other and recording readings of the radiation from that. They don't understand much beyond that.

Security Clearance Level 3

The experiment is to see how much explosive force is given off by various sizes of radioactive material when a chain reaction is brought into being. (No, you're not supposed to know Level 3, but Lee's told you in confidence and it's not like you'd pass it on to anyone else anyway.)

What you know about radiation:

A Class Knowledge

You have a very good understanding of radiation for the times. Due to the nature of the work you assisted with during your time as a nurse, you helped in experimental usages of radiation as a form of treatment for acute medical problems. Cells that are affected by radiation may begin to degenerate, and in some cases, completely die off.

Long term usage of enough radioactive materials has, in your experience, been a detriment to most patients. You've heard the term 'radiation poisoning' bandied about and you have to agree with the assessment. It takes decades before this poisoning can be noticed tho so in general it can be useful in some short term treatments.

The symptoms of the poisoning have been:

Early stages: Nausea, fatigue, and flu-like symptoms.

Middle stages: Vomiting, Hair loss, Uncontrollable Bleeding.

Later stages: Organ failure, Coma, sterility, and a loss of mental capacity.

You've never seen this take less than 10 years to develop, which is why you agreed to be involved in this experiment. You've never heard of any source that could create higher than safe levels.

Patrick Warner

You are, to be blunt, a certified Genius. You flew through your education. Began your professorship at a young age, and have even managed to co-write several scientific papers alongside the pre-eminent scientists of the day; Einstein, Oppenheimer. Your work in the field of nuclear fission was going to topple the scientific community with its brilliance.

Unfortunately, shortly after your paper was sent to the publisher you found out that your experiments had been copied and flawed, incorrect findings were being published by one Truman Richards. Richards was well known to you. You two shared many classes, studied under many of the same brilliant minds. But Richards is flawed. You've known it since you were in school together at Harvard. Sure he can do the computations, he can set up experiments, but he interprets things wrong!

When you were approached to join the Manhattan Project, you were offered your own team. You jumped at the chance, seeing your work was finally being accepted and the praise for your intellect finally was being recognized by the scientific community at large.

They failed to mention that your team would be working closely with another team on the same project.

Or that the second team would be led by one Mr Richards.

The man is insufferable. He's constantly telling you that you're wrong, constantly contradicting your orders, constantly undermining your position with the members of your team! You might be able to forgive his completely off the wall conclusions as part lunacy if it wasn't for what appears to be a deliberate attempt to sabotage your work on this project.

You'd like to get this job done, and done right. You'd settle for being able to complete the experiments and then go to Oppenheimer with your findings. If only Richards wouldn't interfere with YOUR team things might get progressed a bit faster.

Security Clearance Level 4- Patrick Warner

Team Warner

Security Clearance Level 1

These people are merely facilitating the laboratory. They are not supposed to have any information regarding the experiments being conducted.

Security Clearance Level 2

The experiment going on is beyond your understanding. You know that you are pushing two radioactive materials at each other and recording readings of the radiation from that. You don't understand much beyond that.

Security Clearance Level 3

The experiment is to see how fast a chain reaction can happen. You are looking to figure out how quickly this chain reaction can be replicated.

Security Clearance Level 4

The experiment is to see how fast a chain reaction specifically can be replicated for a unknown device. You need to quantify how much material for the smallest chain reaction and how much faster a larger portion would create.

What you know about radiation:

B Class Knowledge

Radiation is something you have a clinical knowledge of. Radiation is given off of various particles in varying types and quantities. A cell that has been exposed to enough radiation may begin to deteriorate.

How it affects the human body? You don't really know although it got bad press in the early 1930's from a radioactive medication that has since been taken off the market. In experiments you're read about, it appears to be useful in some medical treatments despite the clear improper usage of the so called 'cure all' medicines. However from your clinical research, you would assume that high doses would be bad. Clearly more research into what radiation does is needed to understand it fully but at this time in history; radiation is considered a good thing.

Private Tony Gonzales

When you signed up for the army, the last thing you expected to be doing was babysitting eggheads. You wanted in on the action. You wanted to be one of the heroes of the War. When Pearl Harbour was bombed, even though you weren't sure you'd heard of Hawaii before, you were outraged. You went into your local army recruiters and asked to sign up.

Boot camp was great, and you loved the camaraderie of the squad. When graduation rolled around, you all anxiously awaited your assignments, praying for somewhere in Europe. You couldn't believe your luck when you realized you'd pulled a top secret assignment. Every other member of the squad congratulated you and waved you goodbye with envy in their eyes. Little did they know the boredom you were to endure once you reached the classified destination- a half assed town full of scientists and their wives, egos and red tape.

The army guys stationed here are great, all wishing to be elsewhere, but you're not close to any of them like you were with your squad. From what you can gather, most of the rest of the guys are the same- all pulled singly from various squads about the country too. It's like they want you to be lonely here.

The job itself has mostly been standing around, checking ID tags. The occasional spot of guard duty on the perimeter fence has been a welcome distraction from the endless boredom of watching scientists argue over things you don't understand.

The annoying thing is, technically you're over any of this yahoos. If it came down to the security of this base of the project, you have a carte blanche to do as you please. Sometimes it's nice to think of who you'd shoot first if it came down to it. Probably the team leads first. Then maybe Grace, who can't seem to stop breaking regulations every time she passes by.

Boredom & Loneliness. This is what you've been reduced to. It's no life for a soldier.

Security Clearance- Tony

Team Richards

Security Clearance Level 1

These people are merely facilitating the laboratory. They are not supposed to have any information regarding the experiments being conducted.

Security Clearance Level 2 (Tony only)

The experiment going on is beyond your understanding. But you have been told by the army that these experiments are vital to the war effort in creating a new weapon to stop the Nazis and that this information is not normally given to those of this security clearance level but as a member of the armed forces you were allowed to know this.

What you know about radiation:

D Class Knowledge

Radiation is not something you're very familiar with. There was some public news about people accidentally dying from some medication related to radiation but sure, anyone who misuses a medication can die right?

Grace Austin

Los Alamos is so not your place in the world. You are a beautiful society lady. You belonged to all the best clubs. You dressed in all the best fashion. And ate up all the stares of the men and women around you. You went to college, as all good ladies do, to find a husband. Which you did. He was a successful scientist, ideal as he brought credit to your name and yet was gone in his labs most of the time leaving you to enjoy your day as you liked.

Then this war happened. You were perfectly happy to help organise war drives to support our soldiers and to attend all the rallies and fundraising events. When your husband told you he'd been selected for a top secret mission, you were pleased as punch- until you found out where it was.

You had begged to stay in Boston with all its high society life, but David would have none of it stating that he couldn't bear it if something were to happen to you and he wasn't around. Sweet, but not at all what you had wanted to hear. It wasn't like he'd ever really 'been around' before! Now you're stuck in this back end, no life town. The other wives here are mostly common women, some even from working class families! You couldn't fit in with them, despite your attempts. So you volunteered to help out the laboratory. Pushing carts and serving tea is certainly not glamorous, but your friends back home never have to know. And it fills the tedium of this place.

And it did get you Peter. Peter Bergen is just... yum. He's a nice man, single, and very attentive. Your husband is so busy he'll never notice the nights you spend in Peter's house. Peter is finally making this trip away from home worthwhile. He's just so good in bed!

At first it was just the thrill of the illicit sex and something to keep you entertained while living in this place. But now... You're actually worried you might be developing feelings for him! Its fairly unprecedented, seeing as you normally operate on a 'What can he give me?' basis for your affairs. But Peter... He's just so sweet. You've found yourself swinging by the room he works in a little more often than others, and trying to have lunch with him in the cafeteria, although he's often with that kid, Winston.

One of these days you might tell him how you feel. The fact that he might want someone else gives you pause though. You're not sure how you'd take rejection. But then again, who knows, maybe he could help you get rid of the other half so the two of you could give things a go?

Security Clearance Level 1

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What you know about radiation:

D Class Knowledge

Radiation is not something you're very familiar with. There was some public news about people accidentally dying from some medication related to radiation but sure, anyone who misuses a medication can die right?

Winston Ramsey

You never expected your life to be like this. From the time you were small you knew there was something different about you. You were smart, but not as athletic as your brothers. Instinctively, you shied away from sports and the intimacy of the dressing rooms. It was harder to pretend not to notice the bulging biceps or taught abs of the other boys when they were only semi-naked.

So you hid your true self from the world. The world of science was a welcome distraction from the confusion of your mind. When your professor at Yale said he had a position he felt you should take, you jumped at it. And so you came to Los Alamos. You weren't stellar, but steady in your studies and the fact that he felt you'd be useful in the scientific community gave you a sense of pride in yourself for the first time in a long time.

It was here in Los Alamos, one innocuous day in the main cafeteria, that you met Peter. You became friends, neither one of you were top of your class scientists, given lower security clearances that excluded you from much of the talk between the others whose intellects quite frankly scare you. But Peter was different, in more ways than one. When your hands touched, as you passed over a napkin, that look you'd only ever seen between a man and a woman passed between you. He asked you over the next night and you nervously said yes.

But Peter was a gentleman, and lovely, and so accepting. He's helped you explore a world you never knew existed, a side of you that you thought you'd have to hide away for all times. But Peter has accepted you, and while you two still keep what you are from the rest of the world (beyond friendship that is).

He is your lover. You have selfishly found yourself hoping this project never gets finished in order to be near him, keep him to yourself for that little bit longer. He has become your world and the thought that the end of the project might mean the end for you two has been eating away at you.

Your work and your days are filled with mindless typing and scribbling notes for the scientists. Stephen, the other team's counterpart to you, is an old man. He hangs around a lot, but you're really wishing he wouldn't. He just doesn't get that you don't want to have to do both his job and yours. He's a bit of an old dote, but you really wish he would find someone else to befriend.

Team Warner

Security Clearance Level 1

These people are merely facilitating the laboratory. They are not supposed to have any information regarding the experiments being conducted.

Security Clearance Level 2

The experiment going on is beyond your understanding. You know that you are pushing two radioactive materials at each other and recording readings of the radiation from that. You don't understand much beyond that.

What you know about radiation:

D Class Knowledge

Radiation is not something you're very familiar with. There was some public news about people accidentally dying from some medication related to radiation but sure, anyone who misuses a medication can die right?

Peter Bergen

Dependable. Everyone has always used that word about you. You don't mind anymore, but growing up it used to weigh heavily on you. It did land you this job. You are the one member of these two teams who everyone counts on. It's a powerful feeling sometimes. You may not know what's going on fully, but every day you come to work, go into your little room and prove to them all that you're who they need.

It's give you the confidence you lacked for so long. The confidence to, for example, go out and find a lover... or two...

It's not like you meant for it to happen. First you found Winston. He was a sweet boy, and you led him into the world of homosexuality as gently as you could. After all, it was a first for you as well, although Winston seems to think you've huge amount of experience in it.

Then Grace came along and bowled you over. She was so sophisticated, sexy and knew what she wanted! It was great! While you love your role as a teacher with Winston, being the one that Grace takes advantage of is so delicious you can't resist her siren call.

Eventually, you know the project will end. You're hoping to avoid the messy three-way issue until that time when you can make your escape. Unfortunately, Grace has taken it upon herself to drop by 'the office' more often. You've been glad you're rarely in the outer room, so your work contact with her has been limited.

But you dread the idea of either finding out. Especially Winston. The poor boy would be crushed. Grace you reckon would try to squish you like a bug if she found out you were 'cheating' on her.

You just hope all these experiments get some results sooner rather than later!!

Security Clearance Level 1

These people are merely facilitating the laboratory. They are not supposed to have any information regarding the experiments being conducted.

Security Clearance Level 2

The experiment going on is beyond your understanding. You know that you are pushing two radioactive materials at each other and recording readings of the radiation from that. You don't understand much beyond that.

What you know about radiation:

C Class Knowledge

Radiation is something you have a base knowledge of. Radiation is given off by certain things in nature. It's been theorized it might have a helpful affect on some medical ailments, although it got bad press in the early 1930's from a radioactive medication that has since been taken off the market. Clearly more research into what radiation does is needed to understand it fully but at this time in history; radiation is considered a good thing.

John Sullivan

High Strung: Nervy: Jumpy. Those are the nicer words people have used to describe you.
Paranoid: Crazy: Coward...

It's not that you don't want to help the world end this terrible war. It's that you are fundamentally not the type of person who should be given responsibility or a high stress job.
And this is very definitely a high stress job!

You know that things could go horribly wrong and there's a deadline and the bosses up high aren't happy. It nearly makes you sick to your stomach just thinking about it.

The fact that your boss Patrick and his counterpart Truman keep fighting like schoolyard boys isn't helping. You're pretty certain that they've given you an ulcer.

And this whole experiment just kind of freaks you out. You don't have the clearance level to access everything that's going on, but you're pretty sure this is just not safe. Istvan, the crazy Hungarian from the other team, seems to think everything's being done wrong, and he's smart enough he's probably right.

Isaac keeps telling you to be calm, but you're pretty certain he's started rechecking old calculations to figure out what's going on. He's much better at maths than you are so you hope he can alleviate the growing sense of dread and foreboding that's been growing inside you.

And all day today there's been a storm building outside. It's now whipping the branches of the pine trees and you keep flinching every time you hear it. It just makes you wish you were somewhere safe.

And this building in the canyon is certainly not what you'd consider safe.

You just hope you can get home and safely locked inside before the panic sets in.

Security Clearance Level 3- John

Team Warner

Security Clearance Level 1

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Security Clearance Level 2

The experiment going on is beyond your understanding. You know that you are pushing two radioactive materials at each other and recording readings of the radiation from that. You don't understand much beyond that.

Security Clearance Level 3

The experiment is to see how fast a chain reaction can happen. You are looking to figure out how quickly this chain reaction can be replicated.

What you know about radiation:

C Class Knowledge

Radiation is something you have a base knowledge of. Radiation is given off by certain things in nature. It's been theorized it might have a helpful affect on some medical ailments, although it got bad press in the early 1930's from a radioactive medication that has since been taken off the market. Clearly more research into what radiation does is needed to understand it fully but at this time in history; radiation is considered a good thing.

Isaac Rosenthal

You've always been good with maths. Some less educated people claim it's because you are Jewish. Truthfully, you've just always been good at maths, despite your father's complete and utter lack of ability to deal with numbers. Your New York home often found scenes of you as a child going over the books of your father's jewellery business and totting up the figures for him. Numbers have always been a comfort for you. When your father would beat your mother, you could escape to your numbers and their complexities would help you keep out the noises from downstairs.

So it wasn't surprising that you went into a heavily mathematics laden field when you went to college. You just seem to grasp numbers and their meanings a bit faster than the average person. And it was this innate understanding of numbers that brought you to Los Alamos. The War was a distant thing to you until some Army officers accompanied by Enrico Fermi knocked on your door. Apparently there had been multiple attempts to get you involved but you'd mislaid or hadn't bothered reading the letters sent. He sat you down and explained the importance of the Manhattan Project and you said of course you would do whatever you could to help.

Now that you're here, you find yourself working for an insufferable man, and his counterpart. The two of them are at loggerheads, not even researching the same thing but forced to share the same space and it's driving the entire team up the wall. You've retreated, once again, to your mathematics. And you're starting to worry.

It started as a way to calm John down, who seems to constantly be worried about everything. He'd paid attention to the Hungarian from the other team Istvan, who's been carrying on that things aren't right with the experiments. Placating John, you said you'd recheck the equations you've had so far. And it looks like crazy old Istvan might be right.

There is something that's not quite right with the numbers you've been using. You're supposedly looking for how quick these reactions can take place. Which is odd in that this information is already here. Someone has been fiddling with the numbers to make them seem like they don't correspond. But they do. It's all very clear if you look at the base recordings. Which poses a problem. Because someone is working against the team...

You doubt Winston is capable of figuring it out. John's the one who brought it up to you in the first place. Josiah... well he doesn't approve of you because of your religion, but you can't imagine he'd do something like this and Patrick? He's so busy being angry at Truman you can hardly imagine that either one of them would be capable of such deception. But who else would have access to your team's files?

Security Clearance Level 3 - Isaac

Team Warner

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Security Clearance Level 2

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Security Clearance Level 3

The experiment is to see how fast a chain reaction can happen. You are looking to figure out how quickly this chain reaction can be replicated.

What you know about radiation:

C Class Knowledge

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Josiah Parks

The Lord is your shepherd. You shall not want...

Or so you tell yourself. Lately, your faith has been tested however.

You've always been a devout Christian. You grew up in a fervent Baptist family, and you found comfort in the Bible from the time you could read. You truly believe.

But you've also found science to be fascinating. When college rolled around, you chose to go down the scientific route instead of joining a seminary, but you continued to read the Bible daily and engage in philosophical debates. Most people don't seem to understand that science and a belief in God are not mutually exclusive. If an apple falls to the ground, a scientist will tell you it's not because God wishes it to fall but because gravity works. But you know that while God may not be able to watch every apple fall from a tree, he does clearly wish for gravity to work, and therefore even the simple fall from the tree is part of his plan. Otherwise it wouldn't fall.

You find yourself very interested in such debates, even more so as you start to learn even more about the atom. Los Alamos was just another scientific opportunity that you took as it came along. The work is fine, aside from the constant bickering of Warner and Richards. You are surrounded by smart intelligent people who are usually up for a good debate. It's been lovely.

It's also been the place that has tested your faith the most. 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife'. You never understood how this was a hard thing until you met Grace. Grace Austin, married to some scientist here in LA, is quite frankly the most beautiful woman you have ever met. She sparks your interest on so much more than a mere physical level.

You're hopelessly head over heels over her. She's just so perfect! Gritting your teeth and bearing it has been all you can do so far.

But deep down, you know you'd be better for her than her husband. But how to prove that to her?

Security Clearance Level 3 - Josiah

Team Warner

Security Clearance Level 1

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Security Clearance Level 2

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Security Clearance Level 3

The experiment is to see how fast a chain reaction can happen. You are looking to figure out how quickly this chain reaction can be replicated.

What you know about radiation:

C Class Knowledge

Radiation is something you have a base knowledge of. Radiation is given off by certain things in nature. It's been theorized it might have a helpful affect on some medical ailments, although it got bad press in the early 1930's from a radioactive medication that has since been taken off the market. Clearly more research into what radiation does is needed to understand it fully but at this time in history; radiation is considered a good thing.

Timothy Fairbanks

You're certainly not what most people would think of as a scientist. You were raised down in Alabama, with a big family, and a healthy outdoor lifestyle. You know how to handle yourself out in the wilds, how to hunt, how to survive in the most impractical of circumstances. You were raised as a survivalist.

But you knew deep down this wasn't a life you could continue. While you agreed with the virulently patriotic and prejudicial leanings of your family you were too intellectual to be happy becoming yet another hunter or sheriff. You still have your Alabama West Militia membership, but you haven't put on the KKK hat at the back of your closet in years.

You found yourself a bit of a pariah in the scientific world. So many people who are in this community are real liberal crazies. They're ok with foreigners, like that crazy Hungarian Istvan and they've let a Mexican into the army to guard you guys! That guy Tony (who CLAIMS he's an American) isn't worth his weight and you know you could keep this place safer than he does. He seems to be bored all the time and he hardly even checks that all is in order. Then there's that Jew on the other team too. And that John guy is clearly unstable. Who the hell would let a guy like that near anything important?

You're happy to be vocal about what you see as the degradation of good American values. God knows any one of them could be a potential security hazard. It's just not acceptable and you feel it's your duty to make certain the higher ups know this. Unfortunately neither your team lead Truman, or the other team lead Patrick can seem to get their heads out of their own egos long enough to listen.

The truth is though that you speak up to make certain none of the fingers get pointed at you. For all your butch militia, survivalist outlook on life, you're scared of being the freak yourself. You've started having feelings.. for a man. And above and beyond the Blacks and the foreigners and the Jews, the worst thing out there is a homosexual.

You won't act on it, No matter how much you want Lee or how closely the two of you are working. He's even married. But sometimes it's so hard to think of anything else besides him standing right next to you.

You just want this all to be over. Then you can head back to some back wood area and lose yourself in the wild and forget all of this happened. You can go back to being the strong, manly man you are instead of having these feelings like an insecure woman. You just don't want anyone to find out.

Ever.

Security Clearance Level 2- Timothy

Team Richards

Security Clearance Level 1

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Security Clearance Level 2

The experiments going on is beyond these people's understanding. They know that they are pushing two radioactive materials at each other and recording readings of the radiation from that. They don't understand much beyond that.

Security Clearance Level 3

The experiment is to see how much explosive force is given off by various sizes of radioactive material when a chain reaction is brought into being.

What you know about radiation:

C Class Knowledge

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Stephen Moore

When you were in your prime, you were a brilliant scientist. Unfortunately, your prime was some 30-40 years ago. There are those who feel you are too old to be involved in a project like this- high stress, high pressure, huge importance. But the higher ups know the quality of work you can bring to the project.

You neglected to mention the tremor in your hands to them though. When the project started, it was a minor shake, the occasional twitch. You've managed to keep it from the base doctors up until now, but you doubt you'll be able to much longer. It's gotten much, much worse and far more regular.

It's started affecting your work, and you know it. Sometimes you have to stop your transcribing to bring it back under control and when you get back to the work, it is impossible to know where you left off. It's incredibly frustrating, because you know your mind is up to the task, it's just your body that is failing.

And there's the embarrassment factor. You were a celebrated scientist, published no less than 35 papers in the various journals and taught at several of the more prestigious universities. To become a man who can barely keep up with writing down numbers... It's humiliating.

So you've come up with a way to keep your good name intact. You're not proud of it, but you couldn't allow yourself to be seen to fade away in obscurity because of this. Your name will be attached to this completed project, and you can retire with your good name after it's all done.

Winston's a nice boy, but easily distracted. The two of you are the transcribers for the two teams working here, and you primarily write the same things down. So you've been swapping logs.

It's shameful, and probably not in the best interest of the project, but it's basically the same thing anyway right? You fill in what missing pieces you can as best you can; sometimes making things up if you have to, and then hang around until Winston is yet again not looking in your direction and make the switch.

Really, you shouldn't have taken this position. If Nora, your wife of 38 years, hadn't died you probably would have stayed where you were when the call came. But living without her was just too hard. You needed to be busy. You needed to not see the empty other side of the bed or the piano where she used to play for you in the evenings.

Moving to Los Alamos was a bit of a godsend for you in that regard. It's kept you from becoming the drunken morose widower that you know you'd be otherwise. You've been too busy for it to happen here, and the work keeps you distracted. You'd hate to see the Project wrap up too quickly. You're not sure you're ready to properly grieve and that's about all that will be left to you once things wrap up here.

Which is one reason you feel less guilty about the book swapping. If the other team can't complete their task, then you can put off the horrible reality of facing a normal life without Nora. You just don't know quite yet whether that's possible for you.

Security Clearance Level 2- Stephen

Team Richards

Security Clearance Level 1

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Security Clearance Level 2

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What you know about radiation:

C Class Knowledge

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Ben Sellers

You're a lab technician. You don't get the glory, you don't get the fame, you just get work and more work while scientists get published and awards all based on YOUR work. Under paid, overlooked.

It was like this before you came to Los Alamos. You worked at the University of Chicago, and none of the eggheads there every appreciated you anymore than they do here. When the technicians who'd been working beside you were told that one of you would be sent to an undisclosed location, everyone else took two big steps back and left you hanging out to dry.

Perhaps if you hadn't been so overlooked you might not have accepted your uncle's proposition. Clearly someone in charge of security didn't do their job on your background check, or else didn't notice the relevance of your mother's immigrant family from Russia. The Petrolov's had fled to America after the fall of the Czars, and while you grew up in the US, you were weaned on borscht and tales of Russia.

Apparently, Uncle Nicky has been making inroads for a return to the motherland. He approached you while you were working at UofC and impressed upon you the importance of your position. Your family's honour lies in the balance, and even if the Americans win this War, you still have a duty to help protect Russia. He wanted you to spy for him, bring him copies of the experiments you worked on so that he could use it to buy your family a life back in Russia. You accepted.

Subsequently, you have been smuggling copies of notes out of the laboratory as much as you can. It was easy back in UofC, but Los Alamos has complicated things, although the quality of the information that you will bring them has gone up immeasurably. None of this would be so top secret if it wasn't important.

You know you can't possibly get the notes to your uncle through the post, but you are hoping these experiments will end soon so you and your stash can get out of here before the army catches on and searches your house.

Yet another reason for your desire to get things wrapped up sooner rather than later, you never realized it before, but you think you might actually be claustrophobic. Working in the small room all day, you find yourself more and more unnerved by the whole thing and fighting to stop yourself from hyperventilating. It's just too hot, too tight, and there's barely enough room for you, Peter and Kay to move in.

With Truman and Patrick fighting constantly, it looks like this is going to continue for a while. At least it means more help for Uncle Nicky.

In the meantime, you plog away, watching the readings and catching the occasional glance of Kay's fine behind all the while.

Security Clearance Level 2- Ben

Security Clearance Level 1

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