

*Victoria Benderschi*

# THE BOX LABELLED

## 119

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The room was filled with the mingled scent of iodine and chloride. As he rested his eyes upon the white, impeccable table before him, he could see his reflexion in the chemistry flasks arranged neatly on it. The mesmerizing display of colour gave a certain warmth to the room. It reminded him of his childhood. He was always quite fond of chemistry, and from a young age, liked to sneak in his dad's laboratory to examine and be amazed by the beauty of chemical reactions. But as he looked at the person reflected in the flasks, he did not see the spark in the eyes of a happy child. No. That spark disappeared a long time ago.

"You do realize the gravity of your actions, Mr. Redwood. You attempted to steal the only sample of Teleportium that humanity possesses, the most dangerous of all chemical elements."

Edward Redwood looked at the grave, rather old-looking man before him. It was a familiar face, he saw it not once in papers and on television. He was after all the president of the International Organization of Chemistry. But as Edward replied to the accusations of this so very important figure, not a single muscle on his face traded a sign of intimidation or fear.

"I do not deny attempting to take the Teleportium. However, my intentions were entirely different from what your Excellency might think."

"And what may those intentions be?" cried the President perplexed, his gray mustache agitatedly moving under his big plump nose.

For a moment, the room was overcome by silence as Edward recollected his thoughts. This was his chance to escape 20 years of imprisonment. His freedom depended on what he would say now. With the corner of his eye, he could see a little flicker of light. It was coming from a table on his left, all made of glass. The peculiar looking table was divided into 119 little glass boxes, each of the same size, arranged in such a way, that together they formed a big periodic table. On each of the boxes was written the sign of one chemical element, and inside, it contained a sample of the element corresponding to the sign. In the box with the number 119, which stood at the corner of the table, right near Edward's hand, a blue light flickered. He glanced at it for a second. To think that this table could preserve in it everything ever known to humanity, that these 119 elements, in

different combinations, created matter itself and therefore our whole world, was quite incredible.

“For your excellency to better understand the reason behind my actions, I have to start from the very beginning of this elements’ origins.” said Edward in a confident voice. “As you well know, Teleportium was discovered very recently, in 2069 to be exact. Now, in the two years of its existence, this element, found in the remains of an asteroid, changed absolutely every perception of physics and chemistry to humans. The fact that by only touching this shiny blue rock, one can be teleported to any place and time of his choice is absolutely out of this world! But it is imaginable how dangerous this could be in the hands of the wrong person. And that is why, its existence is concealed from the majority of the population.” he continued calmly.

“Oh for God’s sake, Redwood! You are just wasting my time here. I am very aware of what Teleportium means but that doesn’t get me closer to understanding why you tried to steal it!” burst out the President exasperated.

“My dear Sir, I beg you to be patient for just a bit longer for I am almost finished.”

At that very moment, the silence was broken by a roaring sound. The window burst into pieces and glass was scattered all over the floor. It all happened so quickly, the President didn’t even have time to acknowledge it. In a second, a woman with bright red hair was standing in the middle of the room, a gun hanging on her shoulder.

“Long time no see, Mr. President!” she giggled. Her smirk betrayed the freckled, innocent-looking face.

Edward reached for the box labelled 119. Blood was rushing through his veins. He opened the box under the Presidents horrified face and took the woman's hand. But before he could touch the Teleportium and disappear, he felt a dreadful pain in his shoulder.

Edward and his red-haired partner hid under the white table from the shower of bullets coming upon them.

“Dammit, Edward! You've been shot! Where's the box?”

“Dropped it... must be somewhere on the floor...”he groaned through the pain.

Over the noise and light, she could spot the blue rock a few feet from them, only it fell from the box and trying to get it would mean instantly teleporting from the room. She looked at Edward. He was white as chalk, barely keeping his eyes open.

“Can you walk?” she asked, concern spreading all over her face.

“Go without me, I’ll distract them. You won't be able to take it if they don't stop shooting.” Edward whispered.

“Are you mad? I'm not going without...”

In that second, with his last strength, Edward jumped from behind the table and into the shower of bullets. Tears blurring her vision, she ran to the blue light. The president saw a

dash of bright red before the room fell silent. The woman and the Teleportium were gone, and in a way, so was Edward.

