

Delores Lepton Sample

GIANOTTI

Have I got news for you.

GILLIES

More black holes?

LEPTON

Black holes?

GIANOTTI

No, worse. Magnets. The cryogenic system crashed overnight. Only seven of eight are back to full energy.

GILLIES

What happened?

MINETTI

Someone left the parts outside too long.

GILLIES

You've got to be...(Pauses.) You are?

MINETTI

Mario Minetti, from the Theory Unit in the Physics Department.

GILLIES

I didn't know we had a Theory Unit.

MINETTI

We study what-if scenarios. (Gestures to Gianotti). The project leads use them to assess risks, mostly.

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GILLES

What's your assessment?

MINETTI

No change. 10-4.

LEPTON

Black holes?

MINETTI

(Pauses, as if trying to make out Lepton). I'm sorry.

GIANOTTI

This is Delores Lepton. She's a reporter.

(Lepton extends her hand to Minetti).

Nice to meet you.

(Minetti guardedly shakes her hand.)

MINETTI

You know you're named after...

LEPTON

I know, my father. Isn't it strange?

GIANOTTI

Her twin brothers are Muon and Tau. But they don't talk much.

(Minetti is the only one to get the joke.)

LEPTON

No, my brother's name is Edward, and he's my half-brother.

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GILLES

Stepson Lepton.

GIANOTTI

There's no change to the risk profile.

MINETTI

(Speaking to Delores) Sorry, 10^{-4} means a 4 in 10 chance of failure in one of the 10,000 high-current joints between the magnets. It's incredibly small.

LEPTON

What do the magnets do?

MINETTI

They control the direction of the beams of high energy particles around the 27-kilometer accelerator.

LEPTON

That's quite the walk.

GIANOTTI

Walking just under the speed of light.

LEPTON

That's a fast walk.

GILLES

Do we delay firing the beam until the last magnet is replaced?

GIANOTTI

That's the other bit of news. It's already been fired.

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LEPTON

What happens if one of your magnets fails?

MINETTI

The short answer is nothing. The beam isn't aligned and no particles collide. (Pause.) Probably.

LEPTON

That's good. (Pause). Black holes 'n all.

GILLES

Probably.

MINETTI

Well, we don't fully understand what could happen when we create the conditions of the early Universe. What rules may or may not apply. We're well within the range for supersymmetry even if everything goes as planned.

LEPTON

Is that...a good thing or a bad thing?

GIANOTTI

It means you could meet your twin.

LEPTON

I don't have a...

MINETTI

She's making another joke about...

GILLES

The end of the world.

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MINETTI

Not quite. Achieving supersymmetry would give us visibility into the maths that dictate how matter operates. It might show us dark matter. (Pauses.) Your twin, as Dr. Gianotti says.

(Gillies checks his watch.)

GILLES

The media must be chewing at the bit for more info. We need to get in front of them before the beam does.

GIANOTTI

Right. I can skip the science pubs and join you in the briefing room. Minetti can add color commentary.

MINETTI

Sure.

GILLIES

I don't think that would be helpful. (Looks at Minetti) But thank you.

LEPTON

Are we in danger?

GILLIES

No, statistically speaking.

MINETTI

The risks are acceptable.

LEPTON

Is that a fact or a choice?