**5) Winckelkopf and Arthur**

**Arthur:** Ah, we meet at last, Winckelkopf.

**Winckelkopf:** Indeed Lord Arthur. **(Referring to Podgers)** I do not like that man. There is something very Russian about him. But forgive me. I understand that it was on your request that I was invited tonight. I am curious as to the reason.

**Arthur:** Yes. I apologise for my covertness. You were recommended by our mutual friend, Count Rouvaloff.

**Winckelkopf:** Indeed. He has told me that you are a man of great character. I must admit to coming here with some curiosity. I am not sure how a man of my… skills can be of service to you.

**Arthur:** Please sit down and I will explain.

(Pause as Lord Arthur considers how to make his forthcoming unusual request. After a moment he goes over to the drinks table, pours himself a drink, and drinks it in one go. He then remembers that Winckelkopf is still waiting for him to start the conversation.)

**Arthur:** My apologies. May I offer you a drink?

**Winckelkopf:** No thank you, I do not drink. Some years ago I made an important discovery… that alcohol, taken in sufficient quantities, produces all the effects of intoxication. Pray continue.

(Lord Arthur pours himself a drink, and paces for a moment, then sits on the chaise longue.)

**Arthur:** I am assured by Count Rouvaloff that you are the very epitome of discretion, and would be able to supply me with… an exploding clock.

**Winckelkopf:** An exploding clock?

**Arthur:** Yes. Well, you see I’ve recently found poison to be extremely unreliable, and decided I need to turn to some… method… that was more terminal. After some thought, I arrived at the conclusion that dynamite, or some other form of explosive, was obviously the proper thing to try.

**Winckelkopf:** The ways of the British aristocracy are strange indeed. I will never understand them.

**Arthur:** You should study the Peerage… It is the best thing in fiction the English have ever done.

**Winckelkopf:** I must give your request some thought.

**Arthur: (Alarmed, and rising from his chair)** Does this mean that you cannot help me? I trust that if this is the fact, I can depend on your discretion the matters we have so far discussed.

**Winckelkopf:** Relax, my dear Lord Arthur, Relax. I am merely trying to assure myself that you are, what do you British say, ‘The genuine article’. Please. Re-seat yourself.

(Lord Arthur sits. Pause.)

**Winckelkopf:** Explosive clocks are not very good things for foreign exportation, as, even if they succeed in passing the Custom House, the train service is so irregular, that they usually go off before they have reached their proper destination. If, however, you want one for home use, I can supply you with an excellent article, and guarantee that you will be satisfied with the result. May I ask for whom it is intended? If it is for the police, or for anyone connected with Scotland Yard, I am afraid I cannot do anything for you. The English detectives are really our best friends, and I have always found that by relying on their stupidity, we can do exactly what we like. I could not spare even one of them.

**Arthur:** I assure you, that it has nothing to do with the police at all. In fact, the clock is intended for the Dean of Chichester.

**Winckelkopf:** Dear me! I had no idea that you felt so strongly about religion, Lord Arthur. Few young men do nowadays.

**Arthur:** I am afraid you overrate me, Winckelkopf. The fact is, I really know nothing about theology.

**Winckelkopf:** It is a purely private matter then?

**Arthur:** Purely private.

**Winckelkopf:** I see. **(Pause.)** Do you have a specific clock in mind, or would you wish me to provide one?