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What the Revolution Requires

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Raymond was determined to shake up the publishing world. His vision demanded a revolutionary approach to mathematical fiction. He would turn the whole genre on its head.

For decades, far too many decades, works of mathematical fiction simply presumed that their storylines would play out in the traditional and accepted manner, and the conclusions would be demonstrable and unquestioned. That type of story—rather smugly and arrogantly—believed that, for example, the square of the hypotenuse of a right triangle would, in the end, be just exactly and inevitably the same as the sum of the squares of the other two sides. No matter how disreputable those other two sides might be; and regardless of their psychological quirks and limitations.

“Nonsense,” he said out loud. “Idealistic twaddle.”

The emotional basis of what he intended to call the “destructively-tested” story obviously would *not* believe that the square of the hypotenuse would match the sum of the squares of those other two sides; not without considerable effort. Not unless some very determined individual made it his or her business to see that the hypotenuse measured up to those expectations.

That much he knew. Mathematical stories needed to be grittier, needed to suffer more friction from reality.

Raymond had several plotlines laid out, all their steps organized and ready. He intended to expose his protagonist to the irrational, and even the heavily imaginary.

What he didn't have was his protagonist's name. The name would be crucial; the name would resonate in certain ways, and not in others. The choice had paralyzed him.

There were two possibilities. Fletcher or Beaumont. Beaumont suggested the ideal, in its meaning of Beautiful Mountain. But Fletcher suggested the Fletcher's Paradox of Zeno, with all the mystery it implied. While quite different, each was temptingly rich.

Both names had eight letters, and 8 resembled the symbol for the infinite. Surely that was the most appropriate numerology for his protagonist's name. Eight letters it must be.

Beaumont? Fletcher?

Resolved to make the right choice, Raymond put the decision off. The answer would come to him.

Then, and only then, would the revolution begin.