

Silent Sky Character Descriptions

Henrietta Leavitt (LEH-vit), (F) Raised in Wisconsin, the daughter of a minister, and hired as a Harvard College Observatory “computer,” Henrietta is a non-traditional early 1900s woman. She aspires to work as an astronomer. She is passionate about her work and feels compelled to find answers to her questions about the universe. Brilliant, meticulous, excited. Wears a period hearing aid.

Margaret Leavitt: (F), Henrietta’s sister, homebody, sweet, creative, plays piano. Henrietta’s younger sister and a gifted musician. She stays at home and is a traditional early 1900s woman. She marries and has a child. She is concerned about Henrietta’s ambition, as it goes against the traditional norms for women at the time; however, she is supportive of her sister and celebrates her accomplishments.

Peter Shaw: (M), 30s, the head astronomer’s apprentice and supervisor of the women at the observatory. In contrast to Henrietta, he is not passionate about astronomy, although he enjoys the work. He wanted to be an actor. He falls in love with Henrietta.

Annie Cannon: (F), 40s, Henrietta’s co-worker, she has made important scientific discoveries of her own and is a suffragette. A leader of the group of women, terse and sure of herself, a firebrand.

Williamina Fleming: (F), 50s, Scottish, smart as a whip and fun. A former housekeeper for Dr. Pickering, head of the Harvard College Observatory, was hired because Dr. Pickering felt she would do better than the men he had working for him. She is smart and quick-witted.