

ANTARKTIKOS

by,
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“Victory awaits him who has everything in order -- luck, people call it. Defeat is certain for him who has neglected to take the necessary precautions in time; this is called bad luck.”

--from The South Pole, by Roald Amundsen.

7/17/17 DRAFT

Time: The Present

Settings:

The Amundsen-Scott research station, Antarctica
Scott's Tent, Antarctica
A hospital room, Salem, Oregon
Mt. Bachelor, Oregon

Characters:

Susan: A writer in her late 40s

Hilary: a 21 year old college student, Susan's daughter

Alex: a 22 years old EMT

Robert Falcon Scott: The Antarctic explorer, 40s

SETTINGS/SCENE changes: The first time we shift from the Antarctic world to the Oregon world should have the feel as if "the camera lens has expanded" showing something that was always there but can now be seen. Once both worlds are present on stage there should be a fluidity between worlds so that the Oregon locations (hospital, mountain) and the Antarctic locations (research station, tent, outside) are overlapping worlds that both exist in the same time and place inside and outside each other.

RUNNING TIME: The play is approximately 90 minutes and should be performed without an intermission.

This play is dedicated to Brenda Engler and Alan Stolowitz who grace us in our dreams.

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Kilroy's Honorable Mention List 2015

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Developed at Artists Repertory Theater (OR), Key City Public Theater (WA), The New Harmony Project (IN), White Pines Productions (PA), JAW Festival at Portland Center Stage, High Desert New Play Workshop (NM), and Seattle Repertory Theater (WA). The play was a finalist PlayPenn and Premiere Stages. Thanks to Mead Hunter, Paul Walsh, and Anita Montgomery for dramaturgical support.

*Antarctic sound track. Whale sounds. Wind.
Weddell seals. Russian hymn singers.
Glaciers calving. Susan appears in her room
at the Amundsen-Scott research station,
Antarctica. She makes some notes, flips on
her computer and begins her talk.*

SUSAN

I am preparing this introduction in order, well in order to introduce myself to you. Since we are to be neighbors, base mates, for the next several months, I thought I would introduce myself.
Well that sounds idiotic.

She takes out a pen and crosses out.

I am so pleased to have gotten this fellowship-
It has long been a dream of mine-
I have come to find out-
God fucking damn it

She picks up her clicker to flip through slides

70 million years ago Antarctica was part of the super continent Gondwana.

Slide of Gondwana

25 million years ago this continent broke apart forming Antarctica.

Slide of Antarctica

The Greeks, in their ever pursuit of a logical world named this fictitious Southern land. Antarktikos, or opposite of the north. This is a place for dreamers, where reality is like a dream and the dream becomes the reality.

Slide of Antarctic ice

SUSAN (CONT'D)

The flip side.

That was my proposal. Or part of it. In coming here. I had a resume of course. I told them I would not be writing a book about penguins. Maybe they liked the honesty. Perhaps they went through 1000 proposals from writers with writers block who've recently been liberated from a complicated divorce, about penguins. I told them that I would not be undertaking some great physical adventure. I don't want to sky dive out of a plane like those poor bastards in '97, not being able to differentiate the sky from the ground because there was everywhere, only white. I do not want to re-do the Scott expedition this time making it work.

I did write that I can imagine him sitting there in his tent, writing letters, while his companions drift off to death, sitting upright in his sleeping bag arm outstretched waiting to be saved.

Slide of Scott's tent.

What were those last moments? What do you do when you realize the ground is careening towards you, your parachute is closed and you are going to hit? 10. 9. 8. 7. 6. 5. 4. 3. 2. 1. And then nothing. I wrote that I came here to find out.

She shakes her head, shaking off a headache.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

The funny thing about being down here is the altitude and the lack of humidity. Upon first arrival, like now, people like me often have headaches. Altitude sickness and dehydration.

She drinks water.

My daughter always says I should drink more water. Headache aside I feel fine. Except for my leg which hurts and I think got banged in the cargo plane on the way down here.

Scott died on March 29th 1912, incidentally 18 KM away from a giant food cache called one ton depot that would have guaranteed his survival if he could only have reached it.

March 29th is my daughter's birthday.

Scott had a small child. And a young wife. He wrote to them from the tent, good natured in his boy scout adventurer heroic way. I don't think he knew his son. Maybe he saw him once before he ventured off to the Pole.

Things are different now. I can call from the south pole to my daughter which I have been trying to do for the last 27 hours. Every time the plane stopped. Even from New Zealand. I've been leaving messages.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Hilary.

Hilary's skinny.

She would prefer that I say thin. When she was born she was no light weight. 9 lbs 2 oz. 98th percentile. Which made her the biggest baby in the neo natal intensive care.

She drinks water. She breathes

Steady. The South Pole is at 9,306 feet. Pretty high.

We thought she might die. She couldn't breathe. I can't remember all the details now, but I remember walking around the supermarket after she was born and there I was, no longer pregnant nothing inside, but no baby in my arms. And my husband. Ex. Hilary's father. Jason. He was in architecture school. And we were young and in love. And this was our baby. And she could die. We sat at her bedside. We couldn't touch her. We weren't allowed. She had feeding tubes and breathing machines so we just sat there and held hands and sang. We sang her lullabies, Beatles songs, the state song of Louisiana.

She hums a few bars of the one of the two official state songs which is "You are my sunshine..."

SUSAN (CONT'D)

And then it happened. And she was fine. Like she was sick and could die and eight days later she was fine and we took her home in her little car seat. So tiny sitting in there. She looked just like a torso, her little legs were so tiny in that thing. A torso with legs.

Slide of newborn baby in a car seat.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

And we laughed, Jason and I did, our perfect little torso with legs.

She drinks water. Touches her head.

I can't remember what happened now or how we fought and why. Just before I came down here. I was leaving and we argued. Or she was leaving and we argued. Or we argued. We argued about turkey bacon and egg whites. Because she's so skinny. So we slammed some doors and said some words and she left to go back to school. She said this thing. She said, "you know Susan, you never make any sense. You're a writer but you haven't published anything in ten years. And you know you leave everything unfinished. All your projects, all your ideas, your marriage. Even the groceries you buy make no sense. Who has only ketchup and olives in the fridge?" It wasn't true by the way. I had bought vegetables. And there were the eggs and bacon. And how could you explain that you don't feel much like eating after a divorce. Even three years after a divorce you might not feel much like eating. Or projects might be hard to finish because something has been interrupted and everyone else has moved forward. How do you explain that you bought the eggs and bacon because she liked it as a little girl and since she was coming for the weekend you wanted to make her breakfast. How can you explain what it's like when she won't pick up the phone and you're at the bottom of the fucking Earth, in the unknown land to the South trying to write your first book in ten years and you're so scared because inside maybe there's nothing, and you're just empty. Is that how Scott felt sitting there in his tent, dying, writing letters which may never be found, trying to connect one last time with his wife, his infant son? Back then it was called the heroic age. Racing off to uncover, discover, find out about new worlds. A misguided heroism, but still. What would this age be called?

Slide of Antarctica. Susan looks up. Alex is there. He's been there a while. A deer caught in headlights. She squints at him. He stares at her. She squints.

ALEX

I-I-knocked-

They stare.

SUSAN

Did you-How long have you been-Who-

ALEX

I-

Silence.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I didn't want to interrupt. I came to...but then you were...so I thought maybe I could...but then it kind of went on for a while-

She stares

ALEX (CONT'D)

Uh- I need to uh-I need to check your...vitals.

Susan stares

ALEX (CONT'D)

I-I'm the EMT. Here. On the base. I'm also the greenhouse tech. I'm supposed to-I'm supposed to check everyone. When they first get here. To make sure everyone's-

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

I'm supposed to do the intake eval.
One guy came down here with a simple herpes blister and next thing you knew he was
having his tonsils out.
Open please.

Susan looks at him. He demonstrates.

Aaaaaagh.

She stares. He tries again.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Aaaaaagh.

She opens her mouth.

SUSAN

Aaaaagh?

He look inside her mouth with his pupil gauge light.

ALEX

Good. Eyes.

*Alex checks her eyes. There is a beeping. She twists her
face away.*

ALEX (CONT'D)

Pain?

SUSAN

What's that noise?

ALEX

What?

SUSAN

The beeping.

ALEX

Oh. Luggage. It's the luggage being unloaded.

He puts away his light

SUSAN

And?

ALEX

And?

SUSAN

Am I OK?

ALEX

Well, how do you feel?

SUSAN

Why do doctors always ask that? It's like a test.
I don't know how I feel, how does it look like I feel? I mean when you look in my eyes?

Beat.

My head hurts.
Damn altitude.
Where is everyone?

ALEX

It's 3 AM.

SUSAN

Oh.

ALEX

I can't sleep. That's why they assigned me to do the intake evals. I'm always awake no matter what time the planes come in.

SUSAN

The insomnia. I read about it. Your body's attempt to deal with 24 hours of darkness. Or light. I read about it all. The vitamin deficiency, the skin lesions, the sleep disruption. The altitude sickness upon arrival.

ALEX

The dreams.

SUSAN

The dreams?

ALEX

Your mind, in an effort to regulate itself with the strange surroundings, creates extremely life-like dreams. So you're not always sure what is the dream and what is reality. There is a counselor for you to talk to down here if you feel depressed. He's also one of the neutrino researchers.

Susan sighs. Sits.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Tired?

SUSAN

No.

ALEX

Hope you don't get the insomnia thing.

SUSAN

I think-I think I'm hungry. That's so weird. I'm never really hungry. Or maybe my stomach hurts. Sometimes you can't really tell if you're hungry or if your stomach hurts.

Alex checks her eyes with his light. She turns away.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Hey. I thought we were done with that.

ALEX

I'm supposed to keep checking.
You probably are hungry. Lots of people are hungry when they first get here.

He finishes her eyes.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Come on.

SUSAN

Where to?

ALEX

The greenhouse. You've got to see it. You won't believe what we can grow down here on the ice.

SUSAN

This is very strange. I feel like in a second I'm going to be offered a cookie and start growing or shrinking.

She gets up to walk. She limps.

Ow. My leg hurts. It's the leg cramps. I read about this.

ALEX

Rub it.

*She rubs her leg. They wait. She tries to stand. Still a
cramp.*

Stretch.

She stretches her leg.

SUSAN

The strange thing is that I don't remember so much about coming here. I remember the flight from New Zealand. Everything was bumpy. And ever since I left I've been so worried about Hilary. And now I can't contact her. She's very young.

Looks at Alex

Well, you're very young too.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

I guess I was young once. Somehow you and Hilary look younger than I ever was, but I guess you're not.

She rubs and tries to stand.
This isn't going away.

She tries to stand and then sits down.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
I can't make any of my muscles work.

ALEX
I'll carry you. It's good practice for me.

SUSAN
You're not going to carry me.

ALEX
But we're trained for-

She shakes her head no.

SUSAN
I don't think so.

Beat.

ALEX
Fine.

He starts to exit

SUSAN
Wait-

*He exits. Susan looks around the room. Sits on the floor,
rubs her leg.*

SUSAN (CONT'D)
Day 1. Sometime after 3 AM. I guess that's actually DC time. There are 15 different time zones in the Antarctic. Each country preserves its time. At the US bases they are on DC time. At the Australian base 20KM away they are on Australian time. Must make it hard to organize lunch meetings. I felt the air on my face when we got out of the plane.
-47 degrees c. Without protective gear you would be dead within 12 minutes.

*Alex re-enters with a sledge for hauling Antarctic
supplies. He has the runners covered with sliding plastic
wheels.*

ALEX
Get in. I'll pull you.

Susan looks at the sled

ALEX (CONT'D)

Very similar to the one Scott used. Ours has indoor/outdoor capacity though. The sides are always loaded for a three day expedition. Something Scott probably wished he had. Come on, didn't you come here for the adventure.

SUSAN

Oh what the hell.

*She climbs into the sled; he gives her a sleeping bag.
She points to her books and notebooks. Her purse.*

Give me those, would you?

He hands her items. She takes them.

ALEX

Off we go.

He pulls, she sits there.

Ho-ho?

SUSAN

What?

*Alex hands her a ho-ho cake. She looks at it critically.
He pulls her over the stage.*

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Is this thing food?

ALEX

Is it food? It might be the best food that exists that also has a shelf life of 60 years.

She sniffs it. She takes a bite. Alex pulls her.

SUSAN

Not bad.

ALEX

See.

He pulls.

SUSAN

Is it snowing outside? When I arrived they said it would snow.

ALEX

Blizzard. They're expecting a blizzard.

Alex pulls.

Of course blizzards down here now are nothing like they were in the past. I mean the blizzards are the same, it's just now we have buildings and electricity. Still there is something to the fact that you can walk outside and just be lost. Disappear somewhere in the ice. Poof.

Pause. He pulls her.

SUSAN

Dear Hilary...

Dear Hilary, I am sorry about our fight. Of course you're old enough to decide what you want to eat. I just want you to be happy. Of course I realize that eating breakfast might not guarantee happiness.

Alex stops pulling.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Are we there?

ALEX

No, just taking a rest. How are you feeling?

SUSAN

Funny. I feel funny.

Susan rubs her head. Alex comes around to her and pulls out his light.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

I didn't mean we had to do this again.

He tilts her head back. He looks in to her eyes.

What do you see in there anyway? Can you see into my head?

ALEX

I'm watching the response time of your pupils.

SUSAN

Oh. That's less exciting than I imagined.

He takes the light away.

May I?

She takes the light. She turns it towards him. He closes his eyes. She lifts up his eyelids.

I see. Your pupils react right away.

She plays with it a little, lifting up his eye lids, pretending to try to trick the pupils.

Smart little buggers.

She hands the light back to him. He touches her neck, checking her pulse. He looks at his watch.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Why are you here anyway?

ALEX

Here?

SUSAN

Yeah. I mean in this place. Lots of places to live that aren't -47 degrees Celsius.

ALEX

It's gravity I guess.

SUSAN

Gravity.

He continues to monitor her pulse.

ALEX

Sometimes you get shaken around so much you just fall to the bottom. This is it. The bottom of the earth. All the people who've been shaken out of their roots eventually fall down here.

He finishes with her pulse.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Tomato?

SUSAN

Tomato?

He pulls out two small but very red tomatoes from his pocket.

ALEX

From the greenhouse.

SUSAN

This is some world you've got here.

ALEX

It's easier sometimes. This world I mean. Fewer, well, fewer possibilities. Fewer entanglements. Everything is temporary here. People come and go. Moment to moment. I just wish I could sleep.

But even that, you kind of get used to it. People think you can't function without sleep, but you do, you kind of function in a muted kind of way. Just like Antarctica--a little muted. Nothing is really very clear. You kind of exist in the semi-dark recirculated air. One day, it will happen. I'll do it. Eat dinner, read the paper, go to bed, warm and safe and sleep. And wake up the next day with sunlight streaming through the window. But until then, I'm here. And it's alright.

Susan holds up her tomato to toast.

SUSAN

Neither here nor there.

ALEX

Neither here nor there.

They toast.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Ready to try walking?

Susan stands, limps, twists her head, squeezes her eyes shut.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Head worse?

Susan nods.

We're going to have to move soon.

SUSAN

I thought we were going to the greenhouse?

ALEX

Change of plan. We're going outside. The air will be the best thing for you. We'll need Polar suits. I'll be right back. We'll bring the sled just in case you need it.

He goes to get Polar suits. Susan returns to her Antarctic presentation.

SUSAN

In 1977 Air New Zealand offered tourist flights from Auckland to Antarctica circling Mt. Erebus.

Slide of Mt. Erebus

SUSAN (CONT'D)

The last of these scheduled flights, Flight TE 901, with 237 passengers and 20 crew, crashed into the side of Mt. Erebus killing everyone. The crash site was painstakingly cleared but because ice is a permeable surface, bits of wreckage and debris appear new each summer as the surface ice thaws.

They were flying in white out conditions just like the skydivers. Again, they couldn't tell the sky from the ground. And they believed they were in the right place until the collision warning started to go off. They must have had only about 90 seconds between when they all realized what was going on and when they crashed. What did they do in those moments? Did they pray? Did they sing? Did they say their good-byes? Did they put down their cigarettes and martini glasses? Did they curse the fact that they didn't stay put nicely at home going no farther than their legs could carry them?

Alex re-enters with two giant Polar suits. He helps Susan put hers on and he puts his on.

ALEX

When we go outside it will feel unbelievably cold. Although the sun is up, it is snowing heavily with heavy gusts of wind. There will be ice buckles to go over. Everything will be white.

He hands her ski goggles. She puts them on.

ALEX (CONT'D)

We will proceed due South for 2000 ft to the barbershop pole which marks the location of the south pole. We will secure polar ice and we will put it on your head. Can you hear me?

SUSAN

Yes.

*Alex pulls the sled with the sleeping bag and supplies.
Susan limps. He supports her.*

ALEX

Here we go.

And they are outside and it is snowing. Wind.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Look, there it is.

He points.

SUSAN

The point they all came looking for.

*Beat. Susan touches her head, winces. Alex bends down
and picks up the polar ice and puts it on her head.
There's a beeping.*

Do you hear that?

ALEX

Yes. It's the machines.

SUSAN

The machines?

They approach a tent. Scott's tent.

Is this...?

ALEX

Scott's tent. A model of Scott's tent. Left here as a tribute to him.

Beeping is heard.

SUSAN

I need to rest.

ALEX

No no. Don't rest here. Come with me.

SUSAN

But I need to rest here. My head hurts. And the tent is warm.

Beeping

ALEX

Susan-

She bends to enter Scott's tent.

SUSAN

What machines?

She shakes her head. Beeping, bright lights. She sits on the snow outside the tent.

ALEX

Susan can you hear me?

Siren.

SUSAN

What is that?

Alex pulls out the light for her eyes.

Stop that.

ALEX

Susan-

SUSAN

I'm just resting.

ALEX

Susan, listen to me.
There was an accident.
You were in an accident.

SUSAN

I'm at the Pole, at Scott's tent.

ALEX

Susan. You were biking. It was raining. A truck didn't see you. I'm an EMT. My name is Alex. Can you hear me?

SUSAN

I'm not in the Antarctic?

ALEX

You were in an accident. We've just arrived at the hospital.

SUSAN

I just want to rest for a little in the tent.

ALEX

Come with me.

Susan looks at the tent. She starts to open the flap. She looks backwards at Alex.

SUSAN

Hilary.

ALEX

There was an accident. You were in an accident.

Susan grabs Alex.

SUSAN

Go to Hilary.

Stay with her until I get back. Tell her I am on my way.

He stares. Siren is screaming, beeping, lights. Susan is holding on to him.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Go to her.
Please.

Siren.

ALEX

I will.

SUSAN

Promise.

ALEX

I promise.

And then she lets go. Susan crawls in the tent. Light emanates from within.

Scene 2. The stage now has the tent from scene one and the hospital room. Alex sits in the chair, head tipped back, eyes closed, ear buds in. Hilary enters sees Alex and exits. She re-enters, this time coughing. Alex doesn't move. She stands in front of him and coughs again. He opens his eyes, sees Hilary towering over him, and takes out his ear buds.

HILARY

I'm sorry.

I think there's been some kind of a mistake.

He stares

HILARY (CONT'D)

This is room 561 west. This is my mother's room.

ALEX

I-

She holds out a paper to him.

HILARY

See. 561.
It's a private room.

ALEX

Yeah, well-I-uh...see...

HILARY

If you ask at the nurse's desk they can probably help you find the room you're looking for.
It's right out the door, down the hall, to the left. Can't miss it.

ALEX

I-uh-I...

HILARY

Look, I'm tired and it's late. Do you think you could just utter a complete sentence?

ALEX

Yeah.

HILARY

Now?

ALEX

Umm-hi. I'm Alex.

He holds out his hand. Hilary stares. He stares.

HILARY

I'm going to get a nurse.

ALEX

Wait-
I was on call.
I brought her in.
I was the EMT on call.

HILARY

So you work here-

ALEX

Well-
EMTs are contract employees through ambulance companies.
It doesn't matter.

Hilary stares.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I was in the back of the ambulance with her. We hit traffic. I was in with her for almost two hours.

Pause

ALEX (CONT'D)

She made me promise-well she was worried- It was hard to understand her.

HILARY

What happened to her?

ALEX

There was a bicycle accident.

HILARY

Yes. I know that. I mean what's wrong with her?

ALEX

I don't-we don't. They're running tests. I just brought her in.

HILARY

So you don't know anything either. Of course.

Pause.

ALEX

She made me promise to- to make sure to-

He looks at Hilary.

To stay with her.

HILARY

To stay with her?

ALEX

To not leave her.

HILARY

I see. Well my mother's a very emotional person. And it was, I'm sure, an emotional time. And I imagine this must happen a lot. In an ambulance I mean.

ALEX

Well she was...she asked...So I promised.

HILARY

Right. I see.
Well I'm here now.

ALEX

Right.

Alex pauses.

It's just-

HILARY

I'll tell her you stayed till I got here.

ALEX

It's just I-well I promised.

Hilary stares.

HILARY

My mother's in the hospital. I'm really tired. I want to be here alone. In this room. Not with a complete stranger who looks like he hasn't showered in a month. I drove four hours to get here so get out of my mother's room.

Beat.

ALEX

I can pull out the sofa-bed for you if you like.
And look

Holds out his ear buds

I'll just wear my earphones. I won't bother you at all.

Hilary looks at him and starts to exit. He calls after her.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Wait-I'm sure we can work out something that's mutually-

She exits.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Fine, You go. But you'll never be able to say I've broken a promise.
Yeah. You go ahead. A promise is a promise and a friend is a friend and a friend stays true to a promise till the end. That was Horton Hear's A Who. So there. Blah, blah blah. God, if your mother had told me a little more about you I never would have agreed to this. You don't need any help.

She re-enters. She gives him a look.

HILARY

No one's there. Not like anyone in this place would need to speak with a nurse or something.

She stands there. Alex sits in the chair. She looks around and then kicks the side of the bed. Alex watches as she hops around.

Shit. Fuck.

ALEX

Do you want me to help you with the bed or not?

HILARY
No.

ALEX
Fine.
There are some blankets in the closet.

HILARY
I don't care.

ALEX
Look- I know this must be-

HILARY
Headphones. You said headphones.

Alex looks at her.

ALEX
Fine.

He puts in his ear buds. Hilary grabs a blanket from the couch and sits down on it. She pulls the blanket over herself.

Sleep well.

She looks at him. Glares.

HILARY
I'll kick you if you snore.

ALEX
Really? That's all?
I thought you'd cut out my tongue.

HILARY
I'm sleeping now.
Asshole.

Hilary rolls over. Alex plays with his i-pod. He looks around the room and settles in for a sleepless night.

Scene 3. The tent is now strewn with Susan's belongings. Susan is in her sleeping bag sitting up. She is clearing away a space to boil water on her stove for tea.

SUSAN
Tea. I'm in the Antarctic drinking tea.

She checks under the side of the tent.
There's a blizzard. I don't remember much about how I got here and my head still hurts. There are two competing theories that I am exploring.

(MORE)

SUSAN (CONT'D)

One is that I am in the Antarctic on a research trip for artists funded through the national science foundation. The other is that I think I'm in the Antarctic on a research trip for artists funded through the national science foundation. My head hurts either because I have altitude sickness or because I've been in an accident. I met someone named Alex. He either works at the American South Pole research station as an EMT or-

She makes tea

This is beginning to get complicated.

She pours loose tea into a cannister. Suddenly a moan is heard from the back side of the tent. A sleeping bag shifts. Susan gets ready to throw boiling water at the figure.

SCOTT

Mmmm. Tea. Smells like tea. Make me some tea.

Scott sits up. He looks like a cross between a boy scout and a member of the British Antarctic Expedition from 1912. He is either real or not. Or maybe he is real and Susan is not. Or both. Or neither. He looks at Susan.

Who the hell are you?

He looks at her again.

Are you a woman? There are no women at the Antarctic. And what are you wearing?
This is a dream.

He picks up the tent corner and sticks his hand out.

But it's cold out there.

He looks at his hand.

And wet. I don't feel cold and wet in my dreams.

Looks at the tea brewing.

And that's tea. I can smell it.

He looks around.

Where are the others?

He touches his face.

I feel better than I have in some time.

He checks his feet.

And the feet are fine. Maybe the other one is a dream. The one where I am in the tent with the others and my feet are frozen and we have no food. Maybe I dreamed the Norsekies got to the Pole first. Maybe I dreamed Evans fell into a crevasse and went crazy?

He looks at Susan.

Well better not examine these things too closely I say.

(MORE)

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Just work with what you've been given. So- Now then. It's a blizzard and I am here in the Antarctic trying to make it to the next depot.

To Susan

Are we trying to make it to the next depot?

SUSAN

Who are you?

SCOTT

Oh Sorry. Excuse me.

He offers his hand

Robert Falcon Scott. Leader of the 1912 British Antarctic Expedition. Very nice to meet you.

SUSAN

Ok. Ok.

SCOTT

Like I said, better just to work with it and see what happens.

SUSAN

But I can't really be here.

Looks at her

SCOTT

But somehow you are.

SUSAN

Right.

Scott looks around.

SCOTT

I'll be honest. I see you've got lots of food there.

He points.

It's been a long time since I've had lots of food. Or really any food. So whether or not this is real I want the pleasure of eating in a hallucination, or dream, or whatever this is. What have you got there?

Susan picks up a package of freeze dried food.

SUSAN

Beef Stroganoff.

SCOTT

What? In that little package?

Susan reads package.

SUSAN
Add boiling water. Let sit.

SCOTT
In the bag?

SUSAN
Watch.

Susan takes the tea water and pours it into the bag. Scott is on edge, sure this will fail. Susan seals the ziplock part of the bag.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
Now we wait.

They wait. They look at each other.

SCOTT
Before I woke up here, I was in the tent. Our tent. We were in a tough spot. Or are. I mean maybe this is a dream and I am still there. Or maybe this is real and that's a dream. Or maybe I'm dead. Am I dead?

SUSAN
I'm probably not the right person to answer these questions.

SCOTT
Right.
Could be the morphine. I didn't think I took it, but maybe I did. Either way we're dying. There. In the tent. Or were. We're in bad shape. No more fuel. No more food. A blizzard. I don't know why I would dream, or hallucinate being in some tent in the future. With an American woman. I guess we don't really know the contents of our own minds. Still, all things being told, I'm glad you're here. I didn't want to be alone.

SUSAN
I-Well. Thank you.

SCOTT
You may be the last dream I ever have. And that thing, in the bag there, might be my last meal.

SUSAN
I've been in an accident.

SCOTT
You look fine.

SUSAN
Yeah, but so do you.

SCOTT
Point taken.

SUSAN

And then I don't know much more. I might be dead.

SCOTT

I guess you never know, do you?

SUSAN

And I have another admission. I've read all about you. And your book.

SCOTT

Book-

SUSAN

So it could be that I'm imagining you. That you exist in my mind.

He kicks her

Owww.

SCOTT

Now then.

She rubs her leg

You didn't invent that, did you?

Tell me though. Tell me more. About my book. Does it detail the journey home-to England?

Susan stares

Does it? Do I write about my journey home?

Pause

SUSAN

No.

SCOTT

I thought not. One can always hope though, right?

She checks the food

It ends there in the tent then? My journal ends there.

SUSAN

Yes.

She pours the food.

SCOTT

Nasty business isn't it? Failing. Failing and dying.

Susan offers him a bowl of the food. They eat.

I believe everyone else has died in my tent. Things got quiet. No one said anything. I couldn't hear their breathing. I was writing. Writing letters. Saying goodbye, leaving records. I must have closed my eyes for a minute and-

Gestures around. They eat.

This is quite good. And made only from powder. The future holds astonishing advancements.

He looks under the tent.

Still a blizzard out there.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

We should have gone on to one-ton depot.

Points outside

The weather.

SUSAN

Later on they did weather data studies. To see if it could explain...your situation.

SCOTT

And?

SUSAN

Your weather was no worse than others. An average year.

SCOTT

I see.

Well one can't be perfect, now can one?

He pouts

I think I'll go back to writing.

He pulls out papers

I've got letters to write on behalf of the men. And then there are my thoughts to set down about the expedition.

SUSAN

I'm writing too.

SCOTT

What are you writing?

SUSAN

I'm writing about the Antarctic.

SCOTT

Right. And?

SUSAN

I'm writing about being neither here nor there.

SCOTT

Fascinating.

SUSAN

Was that sarcasm?

SCOTT

In Britain we call it wit.

She's silent.

Oh come on. I was just joking. I'm sure it's very good.
Just a little unspecific no?

SUSAN

Well starting is always the hardest part. Especially when it's been a long time since you've started.

SCOTT

Start at the beginning. That's what I did. Kind of logical isn't it.

SUSAN

Yes because you did yours in journal entries.

SCOTT

So?

SUSAN

Hardly literature.

SCOTT

Well, maybe not but I have a book out, don't I?

Pause

People don't think it's literature? I mean I thought some of the ideas, the sentences, well yes, maybe about travel but...

SUSAN

No they do. They do think it's literature. I was just-

Pause

SCOTT

I'm sorry if my thoughts are so prosaic. It's true. I'm a navy man, not an Oxford scholar. But in my view one just starts at the beginning. The beginning of the expedition. Your expedition. Day 1, hour 1. Go!

Susan stares.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

OK. Let's try it another way.
You know, this is strange. I'm not used to talking to women and yet it's fairly easy to talk to you. Are you sure you're really a woman?

SUSAN

Yes. Quite sure. Thank you.

SCOTT

Right.
Alright then. Onwards.

He thinks.

Do you remember the day you decided to come here?

SUSAN

Yes.

SCOTT

And?

He gestures to the notebook.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Start with that. Start writing with that.

He hands her her notebook and takes his.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

And don't forget the details of travel and the food rations. I personally enjoy reading those.

They prop themselves up in their sleeping bags. He writes. She starts writing. She stops.

SUSAN

I'm scared.

SCOTT

Fear is what drives us into the unknown. That is the cloth from which heroes are cut.

She looks at him. He sighs.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

I am too my dear. I am too.

*Scene 4. Alex and Hilary. Morning. Early.
Alex is covered with a blanket not sleeping.
His headphones are on and he is pretending
to sleep while Hilary whispers loudly on the
phone, pacing.*

HILARY

Fine. Fine. No. I'm not. I understand. I'm fine. I slept fine. The room is

She glances over at Alex

Yes. Of course. A private room. You know me. I can sleep anywhere. Whispering?
No.

She glances over at Alex who hasn't moved.

HILARY (CONT'D)

They said they were keeping her downstairs for more tests.
Like she's sleeping. No. There's nowhere to run around here. No trails or anything.

She looks out the window
And they might bring her up. And anyway I forgot my sneakers.

She stretches her legs, doing runners stretches.

You will? Thanks. Maybe a pair of shorts too? I love you too.
What? No, no, now's fine. What about it? Did the caterers raise the fee? Oh. Well how many more? What?

Pause
Of course I'll think about it. Yes. I love you too. Bye.

She hangs up her cell phone, paces. Alex rolls over, looks at her and pretends to be asleep. She doesn't notice. He opens his eyes to watch her. She throws the phone in her bag and kicks the bed.

Owww.

Alex watches her. She does some more leg stretches. He watches her. She leans over, stretches her back. Alex watches. She stands up. He's just about to sit up. She turns and he immediately closes his eyes. She looks at him. She moves closer. He stays still. She studies his face. He pretends to sleep. She looks out the window. Paces. Waits. Stretches. She looks over at Alex sleeping in the chair and then kicks it. He doesn't move. She kicks it again. He pretends to wake up, opens his eyes, takes out his head phones and yawns.

ALEX
Oh. Hey.

He stretches.

HILARY
Sorry. Did I wake you. I caught my foot on the chair.

ALEX
No worries.

Pause. He points to the sofa.
Did you sleep-

HILARY
I can sleep anywhere.

ALEX
Oh.

HILARY
Listen, I'm sorry if I seemed difficult last night.

ALEX
No, it's fine-

HILARY
I just like to have my privacy.

ALEX
Right-of course-

HILARY
So now that it's day time and the nurse's are here do you think you could just leave?
Please.
Look, I have a fiancé. His name is Dean. He's in law school. He's coming tonight and there won't be room for three. So thanks for everything but now you can go.

Pause. They look at each other.

ALEX
Djeet?

HILARY
Djeet?

ALEX
Did you eat? Breakfast?

Hilary shakes her head. Alex pulls two granola bars and little boxes of OJ out of his backpack. He hands her one of each.

HILARY
I hate breakfast.

ALEX
Suit yourself.

Alex begins to eat and drink. Hilary stares.

HILARY
You're a really loud chewer.

He eats. She stares. She points to the granola bars.

HILARY (CONT'D)
You always carry these around with you?

ALEX
I like to be prepared.

She looks at him.

ALEX (CONT'D)
You should eat. You'll feel better.

HILARY

I'm fine.

ALEX

What'd he say? The doctor.

HILARY

I'm not going to talk to you about every little thing the doctor says.

ALEX

Fine.

*He eats. He opens a granola bar and passes it to her.
He pretends it is an animal of some sort. He uses a high
pitched voice for the next bit.*

Don't eat me. I'm innocent. No, Help, don't eat me. I'm an innocent little granola bar.
Help!

He makes the JAWS music.

Aaggghhh. Help.

He puts the granola bar in her hands. She stares at him.

HILARY

You are seriously weird.

ALEX

Yeah.

She takes a bite of the granola bar.

HILARY

Non responsive state. They did a CAT scan. MRI. She's just not waking up. And they don't know why.

They eat.

I'm not sure what I'm supposed to do now.

ALEX

You're supposed to call her people.

HILARY

Her people?

ALEX

Your people.

HILARY

We don't...We don't have people. My father's in South Africa. Building shopping malls. I called his secretary. She said he was temporarily out of contact. She said she'd get word to him. I texted. I think he's temporarily out of contact.

She drinks juice.

You know, you don't have to stay here. I'll tell her how you tried to keep the promise but I wouldn't let you. OK? Go. You're absolved from all promises you've made.

ALEX

We went through this last night.

She stares

ALEX (CONT'D)

When your guy comes, I'll

Holds up earphones

Earphones. You won't even know I'm here. Be like you have the room to yourselves. Anyway, I'm on a duty in a few hours. You'll get to be alone then.

HILARY

Don't you want to go home? Get cleaned up?

He touches his face, checking for cleanliness.

ALEX

No, I'm fine. Got my toothbrush here.

He pulls it out of his backpack.

HILARY

Of course.

Pause

I'm supposed to be in class now.

ALEX

Should I-I could stay here if you need to go. Or I could drive you if-

HILARY

I go to school four hours away.

ALEX

Oh.

HILARY

And I don't want to be there.

ALEX

You should call. Your advisor or someone. You know so your teachers know and all that.

HILARY

Yeah.

She doesn't move.

ALEX

I can call for you.

HILARY

You don't have to help me you know. I'm a grown up. I've been a grown up for a long time.

ALEX

I know.

HILARY

I've done lots of things on my own. I like it that way.

Alex nods.

That's what Dean likes about me. Tough as nails. Self sufficient.

ALEX

That's something to admire.

HILARY

Driven. That's what Dean says.

Alex sighs.

What?

ALEX

I'm not. My sister says I'm wishy washy. She's like you. She's got it all together. Nice house, good job, nice family, nice husband. Car with tinted windows. She just-it all works for her. It just makes sense. She makes sense. I live with her.

Hilary stares. Beat.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Would you mind...

He gestures towards the bathroom.

I kind of thought I could shower here. I don't always sleep so well and I find a shower helps.

Hilary looks at him.

HILARY

One shower. Today. Only.

ALEX

Right. Got it.

Do you want me to-after this-we could go down stairs--I mean I could talk to the doctor with you.

HILARY

I'm fine.

ALEX

It's just-you know-I know all the medical terminology. All the words. I'll know what to ask. And who knows when you'll get to see him again.

Hilary stares.

HILARY

You'll grill him? You'll find out everything I want to know? I'll tell you what I want to know and you won't let him leave till he answers everything?

ALEX

I-

HILARY

That's the deal.

Alex looks at her.

ALEX

And then I can stay?

HILARY

No. Dean's coming.

ALEX

And then I can stay till Dean comes?

HILARY

You'll make the doctor talk to me?

ALEX

I'll find out everything you want to know.

HILARY

Fine. But-

Don't get too comfortable in there.

He takes a small towel and his toothbrush out of his back pack and then hands her another granola bar.

ALEX

Just eat it, OK.

She takes it. He takes his towel and heads off to the shower.

HILARY

And don't get the floor wet.

He salutes. She eats the granola bar. He exits.

Scene 5. Scott is lying down. Susan is awake, speaking.

SUSAN

Miles Mosley, base commander at Halley Bay station, Antarctica, lost his life while photographing a low flying aircraft on February 2nd, 1980.

(MORE)

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Very few aircraft could at that time fly into Halley Station and the occasion was marked with much excitement by the base scientist and staff. Miles and other members of the base climbed up on a piece of machinery to get a better view. As the aircraft descended it suddenly dropped its landing gear. By the time Miles Mosley realized what was happening, it was too late to move. He was struck and killed instantly.

Scott sits up in sleeping bag.

SCOTT

He saw it coming and bam it was over.

SUSAN

Yes.

SCOTT

Rather go that way really. All this brooding. Waiting. Thinking. Reflecting.

Sighs.

I don't really understand why I can go to sleep here and then wake up here. I don't really understand where here is. And if it is morphine it should have worn off by now. Unless I keep taking it of course. But would I be doing that?

Looks under tent.

The blizzard is still going. At least one thing is constant. So onwards we go. Alive. Still. What's for breakfast. Any more of that powdered wonder food?

Susan looks through freeze dried packets.

SUSAN

Eggs florentine.

SCOTT

Well that's certainly quite tasty.

She starts the water boiling.

And how did you sleep then?

SUSAN

Excellent. Very comfortable. Odd isn't it?

SCOTT

Me too. Better than forever. Then again in your tent I am not freezing or starving. If I am in your tent.

He fiddles with food package

SCOTT (CONT'D)

So just to clarify, I mean about yesterday, about the journal, just to be clear--I don't make it back, right?

SUSAN

Yes.

SCOTT

Right. That's what I thought. So it is good that I'm writing all these letters.

SUSAN

They'll publish them.

SCOTT

Oh.

SUSAN

No don't worry, Kathleen, your wife-

SCOTT

I know who Kathleen is.

SUSAN

Right. She's your editor. She edits everything. Cleans everything up. You get called a hero.

SCOTT

Really?

SUSAN

Oh yes. And poor Amundsen, the man who actually won the race-

SCOTT

We weren't racing. I was on a scientific mission.

SUSAN

You were racing.

SCOTT

I was on a scientific mission.

SUSAN

Please. Why would anyone go to the actual Pole on a scientific mission? It's a totally arbitrary spot 800 KM interior on the continent. You don't go there unless you want to go there. And you wanted to go there to be the first one there.

Scott opens his mouth, then closes it, then opens it again.

SCOTT

Well.

SUSAN

Amundsen got picked on for eating his dogs and living and you became a hero for dying.

SCOTT

Ha! Fancy that. A hero.

SUSAN

He was a broken man.

SCOTT
Amundsen's Norwegian. They don't break.

SUSAN
I'm telling you, he had it worse.

SCOTT
And no one thought it was my fault? The failure and all that?

SUSAN
You mean the death. Four men dead?

SCOTT
Yes.

SUSAN
Like I said, you were a hero.

He nods.

SCOTT
I'll admit to some stupid things. Some very stupid things. Not using the dogs for one. And taking the damn ponies. Lord, what was I thinking. The men, they die as heroes too?

SUSAN
Yes.

SCOTT
Not so bad then.

SUSAN
That's not what Mrs. Oates thought.

SCOTT
Yes.

SUSAN
And all the other families. They would have rather had them alive.

SCOTT
Well it was an adventure. We all knew that.

Susan looks at him
What? What do you want me to say?

SUSAN
The truth.

SCOTT
What truth. Who wants to hear the truth?

SUSAN
I do. I want to hear the truth.

SCOTT

Why? Why do you care?

SUSAN

Because when, if I'm dying, if I'm dying now-and I'm never gonna see her again, my baby-I want to know what other people felt. I don't want to put on a good face. I don't want to leave but if I have to I want the comfort and company of those who knowingly faced it before me. Because it's awful. Because I'm here now but maybe not for long. Because she's too young to be without me. And I don't want to put on some stupid brave face, because it's you who came before me who leaves the records so don't pretend it's all OK. These deaths were stupid--all of them, stupid.

Scott stares. Beat.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

That's the letter you should write.

SCOTT

But if that is the case then I killed them. Killed those men. I can't be both a brave Antarctic explorer willing to take risks and face death and a foolish leader sentimental and scared in the face of tragedy.

SUSAN

You know what? This tent is feeling rather small.

SCOTT

What?

SUSAN

I'm thinking I'd rather be alone.

SCOTT

There's a blizzard out there.

SUSAN

Just go back to your tent.

SCOTT

And how shall I do that?

She turns away from him.

Oh come on. Can't we maintain a civil discourse? Now you're reminding me of Kathleen. You don't have to pout about it-

SUSAN

And you're reminding me of Jason. You don't have to be so cavalier. You could try to recognize a human emotion.

SCOTT

Well it is feeling quite small in here.

Susan turns away from him and blows her nose. Scott eventually starts to pat her back half heartedly.

There there.

SUSAN

I don't want to die.

SCOTT

I know. I know. I really do know.

She sniffles. He strokes her hair.

Scene 6. Hilary is in hospital room. She is talking to Susan, who sleeps in the tent with Scott but is also in the hospital bed.

HILARY

I came as soon as I could. I called Dad of course. The doctors say I should talk to you even if it seems like you can't hear me, so I'll try to say things you'd want to know. I got an A on my sociology exam. A in French. Dean's doing great. Law school keeps him busy and he just started his internship at a really big firm. Which is why he's not here. I know you don't like Dean. Even though you always say you do. He's well...he is what he is. But he loves me. We're finalizing the wedding plans. It was going to be small, just our friends. But now, his Dad wants to invite a lot of people, business contacts, law contacts for Dean...and now with Dean in law school he kind of likes the idea. They're paying for it.

She looks at mom

I don't want to upset you with that. I just wanted to tell you. Do you want to know what the doctor said? I know you like the truth and despise lies and sugar coating. They don't know. They think it is some kind of brain injury from the accident but they don't know. I hate that road in the rain. I know it's because of me that you went for that ride. Because you were angry. I don't know why I didn't just want to eat the regular eggs and bacon. I know I'm thin. I know you were just trying to be nice. I shouldn't have slammed the door and yelled. I wish I could go back and change it. Because then you wouldn't have been angry and left in a hurry and biked down Smith road in the rain. I would have stayed and you would have showed me what you were working on.

She looks around

This room is drab. Hospital like. You wouldn't like it. These days are critical they say. They just don't know why. Or what will happen.

Pause

I guess none of us does ever know that anyway, right? Isn't that what you're always trying to tell me? Not to plan so much? That you don't know what's going to happen? Well I guess you're right. Dean's like me. He likes to plan. We have a wedding plan, a career plan, a family plan. It's all agreed. Dean's agreeable. We haven't planned the honeymoon yet, but we're thinking France. They say if you think positively all the time about the future, the future will be positive. I'm not sure I believe it, but I'll try. I'll imagine the wedding and I'll imagine you there. Probably you'd wear purple and silver. My colors are blue and yellow but I know you'll ignore that so I'll imagine you in purple and silver. And I'll sit you next to me. I would. I know maybe usually I wouldn't.

(MORE)

HILARY (CONT'D)

I'd probably make you sit next to Dad at a table with Dean's parents but in this case, now I would sit you next to me. If you make it through this I'll sit you next to me. Please make it through this so I can sit you next to me.

Pause

So I guess this is all I really have to report. I wish I had more to say.

Pause

Remember when you went on your book tour and I stayed with Dad? I would go into your closet and smell your clothes. I used to try to sleep with this purple cotton skirt you had and Dad would discover it every couple of days and hang it back up. Dad was really proud of you. He posted all the newspaper articles you sent him. We tracked your route on this map with little flags, like Eisenhower conquering Europe.

Hilary goes to her own suitcase and takes out one of her own skirts and lays it over the bed where her mom is. She tucks her in. Hilary moves into a chair by the window. She waits. Lights dim, time passes, everyone in twilight. Everyone sleeps. Antarctic sound track plays...whale songs, Russian religious hymns, bubbles. Hilary in the chair, Susan and Scott in the tent. Alex enters into this world. He takes off his shoes. He tiptoes in. He sees Hilary. He looks at her. He takes a blanket from the cot and covers her. She wakes up.

ALEX

Sorry--I.

HILARY

Dean?

ALEX

No, it's-

HILARY

Oh.

ALEX

I brought you a sandwich.

HILARY

Not hungry.

ALEX

Ho-ho?

HILARY

What?

He pulls one out of his bag, shows her, and throws it to her. She opens it.

HILARY (CONT'D)

Usually I'm on a raw food diet.

She examines the ho-ho. She tries it.
She was up here for a while.

ALEX
I know. I ran into the doctor.

HILARY
What'd he say?

ALEX
You mean after he finished trying to hide from me?

She smiles.
They don't know anything more.

She nods.

HILARY
Dean's coming tonight.

ALEX
It's pretty late.

HILARY
He had to work late.

ALEX
Ok. Well I'll just wait till he gets here.

HILARY
Aren't you tired?

ALEX
Nah.

She looks at him.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Yes. Really really tired.

HILARY
You can sleep. I'll wake you up when he gets here.

ALEX
I can't.

HILARY
No I'm fine. Really.

ALEX
No it's-

HILARY
Just go to sleep if you're tired. God.

ALEX

I can't sleep. I haven't slept in months. Years. I can't sleep.

HILARY

Ever?

ALEX

I don't know. I doze. I kind of go into this gray kind of zone.

HILARY

But you don't sleep?

ALEX

No.

But you can sleep and I'll wake you up when he comes. I don't mind.

HILARY

No. I'm not tired. And anyway I just ate 1000 pounds of sugar in that ho-ho thing.

Pause

ALEX

Oh hey. I bought you something.

He takes a book out of his bag. He hands it to her. She reads the title.

HILARY

"Scott's Last Expedition in Two Volumes. Vol. I being the journals of Captain R.F. Scott, R.N., C.V.O., Vol. II being the reports of the journeys and the scientific work undertaken by Dr. E. A. Wilson and the surviving members of the expedition."

ALEX

I only had enough money for Volume I. I thought that was the more important one anyway. You know your mom was talking all about him and the Antarctic and stuff.

HILARY

She was?

ALEX

Yeah. In the ambulance. I think she thought she was there or something. She never mentioned it?

HILARY

No. We...Sometimes we don't always communicate that well.

ALEX

Oh.

HILARY

And we get easily annoyed at each other. And she was always getting interested in things which never panned out.

Beat.

So she probably was waiting to tell me about it until she had something to say.

Beat.

What else?

ALEX

Well--I don't know. She mainly talked about him, and something about ponies and dogs and skis and greenhouses. Altitude. Antarctica. A New Zealand plane crash. It was hard to understand. I was just trying to keep her alive.

She opens the book.

HILARY

"Fourteen years ago Robert Falcon Scott was a rising naval officer, able, accomplished, popular, highly thought of by his superiors, and devoted to his noble profession. There are few events in history to be compared, for grandeur and pathos, with the last closing scene in that silent wilderness of snow. The great leader, with the bodies of his dearest friends beside him, wrote and wrote until the pencil dropped from his dying grasp."

Well that's cheery.

ALEX

Sorry...I-

HILARY

No it's fine. I want to know what she said. I want to know what she was interested in, Thank you.

She puts the book down.

HILARY (CONT'D)

I found some things in the gift shop.

ALEX

OK.

HILARY

I thought well--I thought they would brighten up the room. Maybe you can help me. She really hates drab rooms. I thought tomorrow when they bring her back up she'd like it.

She takes out some items. Glow in the dark stars and a strand of decorative patio lights. She hands him some large glow in the dark stars and stands on a chair and starts to stick hers to the wall. He does the same. They glow. Then she puts up the patio lights. He helps her string them. They plug them in. The room is cozier. Less hospital like. Alex looks around.

ALEX

Nice.

HILARY

She'll like this better I'm sure.

Pause.

ALEX

Shall I read?

HILARY

Now?

ALEX

I don't know. I mean I can't sleep. I've got more ho-hos.

HILARY

It'll be death by sugar.

ALEX

I eat them all the time and I'm fine.

HILARY

You haven't slept in years.

ALEX

Well I'll put them in the middle here.

He places them on the table.

HILARY

What time is it now?

ALEX

11:55.

HILARY

Oh.

ALEX

Hey, I was thinking that I'll go down with you tomorrow morning and we'll terrorize the doctor again. Remember his face when I kept asking questions.

Hilary giggles.

HILARY

He almost started panting when you asked him to show you the MRI and then to interpret it.

ALEX

Oh you just wait till tomorrow. Think of all the tests she had today. We'll make him explain them in detail AND translate anything that's in Latin. He'll be trapped for hours.

She smiles. She takes a ho-ho.

See. Told you you'd like 'em.

HILARY

Tomorrow I'm making you drink wheat grass.

ALEX

Sounds delightful. What's after that? Grazing the lawn in front of the hospital?

HILARY

Stop that.

ALEX

What?

HILARY

Joking.

ALEX

Why?

HILARY

Fine don't. You are funny. Kind of.

ALEX

Funny like you're laughing at me, or funny like I make you laugh?

HILARY

Oh now you want compliments.

Beat.

Fine. Funny like you make me laugh.

ALEX

Ha! I knew it.

They eat their ho-hos.

HILARY

So, aren't you gonna start?

ALEX

What?

HILARY

Reading.

Alex opens the book.

ALEX

"Chapter One. Through Stormy Seas"

Alex looks up

HILARY

Go on.

ALEX

“The first three weeks of November have gone with such a rush that I have neglected my diary and can only patch it up from memory.

Alex looks up. Hilary has her eyes closed, head tipped back, listening.

ALEX (CONT'D)

The tanks are filled with compressed forage for the ponies, except one, which contains 12 tons of fresh water, enough, we hope, to take us to the ice.”

and we fade into the Antarctic sound track. The stars glow and the garden lights gleam.

Scene 7. Scott and Susan in tent. Susan wakes up, checks under tent. Sighs. Blizzard is still on. Scott wakes.

SUSAN

No change.

SCOTT

And you say this is normal weather.

SUSAN

Not normal, but falls within the norm. Average.

SCOTT

Right. What time is it? What meal should we be eating?

SUSAN

I don't know. I guess it doesn't really matter does it? I mean what we eat.

SCOTT

Well that feels liberating.

Pause

SUSAN

It smells like her.

Scott sniffs

SCOTT

Who?

SUSAN

Hilary. My daughter.

Scott sniffs again.

SCOTT

I don't smell anything.

SUSAN

They did this test-these psychologists. They tested newborn brain reactions to different smells and the newborns were always able to recognize the smell of their mothers. They monitored their brains and their little brains lit up when they smelled their moms. And then they gave mothers different newborn clothes to smell and they could pick out the smell of their newborn.

SCOTT

Fancy that. What about Father's?

SUSAN

Not part of the study.

Pause

I'm tired of staying here.

SCOTT

You mentioned that yesterday. Or earlier today. Who knows.

SUSAN

I'm ready to go.

SCOTT

Good luck. We were trying to get out of our tent for four days.

SUSAN

Why didn't you just leave. Die trying?

SCOTT

We wanted to stay together.

SUSAN

Why couldn't you all go?

SCOTT

Oh so now you think you'd be fit to lead an Antarctic expedition? Everyone's an explorer aren't they? Everyone's got a better idea of how it should work.

SUSAN

I didn't mean-

SCOTT

Sometimes as a leader you need to make the best choice from a selection of terrible choices. There is no good choice.

He looks at her.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

We couldn't all go because we didn't all have the same physical strength left. What does it even matter now anyway.

SUSAN

One for all and all for one. That's selfless.

SCOTT

Yes well.

SUSAN

You should write about that decision in your journal.

SCOTT

I did.

SUSAN

But drop the hero veneer.

SCOTT

Are we back to that again?

SUSAN

You could still do it.

SCOTT

Oh my god. Are we talking about this again? And what would even be the point? You said Kathleen edits the whole thing anyway.

SUSAN

I told you why.

Pause

It's dishonest to pretend you felt like a hero in the face of death.

Susan sniffs

It does smell like her.

SCOTT

That's a sign of insanity you know.

SUSAN

What?

SCOTT

Olfactory hallucinations.

SUSAN

That's the least of our problems at the moment.

Scott pulls out some tea. He starts to fix it.

SCOTT

How did he die anyway.

SUSAN

Who?

SCOTT

You know. Him. Amundsen. The winner of the great race to the south pole.

SUSAN

He died in a plane crash. In the arctic. They think he spent his last 12 hours rowing a n inflatable boat towards land, the coast of which he couldn't see. They never found the bodies. Shreds of the boat washed up on the shore. Found by some fishermen. And by the way, that was his greatest glory. That South Pole conquest. Everything else paled in comparison.

SCOTT

You think he read my book?

SUSAN

Of course he read your book.

SCOTT

And he may have thought of me in my tent in my last hours, at that time, during his last hours. That's what you're trying to say, right?

SUSAN

I'm going to set out tomorrow. Whether or not this blizzard clears.

SCOTT

You won't make it far in this kind of weather.

SUSAN

I don't know how far I need to make it. I'm not sure what I'll find. There might be a base out there, filled with Americans and a greenhouse nearby. And maybe I can get there and come back the way I came. Or maybe out there is all there is. Maybe it is just ice and snow and cold.

You could come with me. Die in your tracks on the way to one-ton depot?

SCOTT

I can't leave them.

SUSAN

They're already dead.

SCOTT

Yes. And according to you I die there too, leaving heroic letters.

SUSAN

But you are also here now with me. Maybe-maybe if we go together we could make it.

SCOTT

You want me to go with you?

SUSAN

I'm not saying that. I'm just saying it might be better to die trying. This time. This very weird time. If I can arrive home from it I'll never forget it. I don't need to go to the Antarctic to write. I just want to go home. I know what I'd write about. I'd write about this. About how the greatest expedition is the one that you make across your living room, not across the ice and snow. Maybe I'd even call it *Conversations With Scott*. Or *Meditations on Death*.

SCOTT
Conversations With Scott is catchier.

A beat

Susan- SCOTT (CONT'D)

Beat

SCOTT (CONT'D)
What happens to them? To her? To my son? Are they provided for?

SUSAN
Yes.

SCOTT
And Kathleen?

SUSAN
She remarries. A politician.

SCOTT
I didn't want to leave them.

SUSAN
I know.

SCOTT
Nasty business.

SUSAN
I know.
But I guess it wouldn't be an adventure then now would it?

He smiles.

SCOTT
Well thank you. I have worried about them and I am relieved to know that they are all right.

Now then, let's get you packed.

Scene 8: Hospital room. Day time. Hilary reading to Susan. Susan sitting next to Scott.

HILARY
"Wednesday, January 17.--Camp 69. T. -22 deg. at start. Night -21 deg.. The Pole. Yes, but under very different circumstances from those expected. We have had a horrible day--add to our disappointment a head wind 4 to 5, with a temperature -22 deg., and companions labouring on with cold feet and hands.

Scott reads to Susan

SCOTT

Great God! This is an awful place and terrible enough for us to have laboured to it without the reward of priority. Now for the run home and a desperate struggle. I wonder if we can do it.”

Scene 9. Night. Hilary has her mother's books on the Antarctic and her mother's journals all around her. An Antarctica poster is hanging on the wall. The room has changed with small things from her mother's apartment. It looks cozier, homier.

Hilary is looking through her mother's papers and highlighting. Alex enters with bags of take-out food.

HILARY

Did you know Scott was in blizzard conditions for eleven straight days? The whole thing is morbidly depressing but amazingly fascinating at the same time. That man was so pig-headed and blind to dangers. He was living in his own private hero fantasy. But then on the other hand you kind of get it. He just wants to do something important. Make people proud. Find something new. And the snow, the cold-just trying to survive even though he knows his decisions were badly made and that he is not a great leader. Having to go on knowing you messed up.

She looks at another paper.

HILARY (CONT'D)

Amundsen ate his sled dogs.

ALEX

Oh yeah. She kept talking about Amundsen and his dogs. And a blizzard.

HILARY

She was applying for a grant to be an artist-in-residence down there. I found it on her desk. I read to her today from Scott's journals. They say it's good for her to hear voices she knows.

Alex looks around.

ALEX

Looks good here. Much homier.
How was it?

HILARY

What?

ALEX

The apartment.
If you had waited I would have gone-

HILARY

I wanted to get her things. She hates hospitals. I wanted to make it better. The doctors said it would be good if she had some of her own things.

Alex looks at her.

It was hard OK. It was hard. All her clothes are sitting there waiting for her to come home from a bike ride. The stupid eggs in the fridge. All the food she bought for the weekend. A cake she had made. For me. I couldn't...I left it there. I thought maybe she'll just wake up and we'll go home and eat the cake.

She looks at him

You look terrible.

He laughs

ALEX

Nice to know how you really feel.

HILARY

Sorry. I didn't mean....I just meant you look tired.

ALEX

I am. I'm tired. I'm really tired.

Pause

I picked up Chinese food. You hungry?

HILARY

Kind of.

ALEX

Kind of?

HILARY

Yes. I'm hungry.

ALEX

Good.

He unpacks the food.

HILARY

Dean called. He said he can't come tonight. And probably not tomorrow. He's got some big exams coming up.

ALEX

You know it's hard, not everyone's so good at-

He gestures around

HILARY

Yeah.

ALEX

Well, I look forward to meeting him.
I mean anyone who's that important to you must be really amazing because...well...you're so...nice.

He looks around

ALEX (CONT'D)

That came out wrong.

He hands her a plate and chopsticks.

HILARY

It all feels so different now. I just can't imagine a wedding at the Continental Hotel. I mean now. With everything going on.

ALEX

It's just super intense right now. It'll be fine and you'll feel exactly how you did before.

HILARY

What if I don't?

ALEX

You will.

HILARY

I don't know.

ALEX

Trust me. You'll be back to your regular life in no time, feeling exactly as you felt before.

HILARY

I played the Beach Boys for her today. She used to love them. My Dad and I thought they were such a silly band but we went along with it. When I was 12 she threw me a Beach Boys birthday party. I didn't want to do it but she smiled and said, "trust me, everyone will love it." She set up the whole garage like a beach, had hula hoops and coconut drinks and beach boys albums. And all the kids came. I remember because I had invited boys and that was why we couldn't just have a sleep over like I usually had. All I knew was I wanted a party with boys but I didn't know what you did at a party with boys. She invited all the parents to stay. We all thought they wouldn't but they did. They danced and hula hooped and drank the rum punch she made for them and laughed. I remember watching her dance with my Dad. She had a bikini on and some kind of Hawaiian print skirt. They laughed and danced. When it was over all my girl friends said it was the best party they'd ever gone to with boys. And everyone saw their parents have fun. She was good with things like that. Here.

Hilary stands up and fiddles with her i-pod.

This is her favorite.

Beat. Beach Boys "Hawaii" starts.

HILARY (CONT'D)

Tomorrow when she's back up here I'm gonna have a beach boys marathon. We'll play it all.

Music. She starts to shake her head to the music. She looks at him.

She's a good dancer.

Hilary stands up and dances. Beat.

You want to dance?
HILARY (CONT'D)

Uh-I-uh.
ALEX

Come on.
It'll wake you up.
HILARY

I'm not a good dancer.
ALEX

You don't have to be.
Come on.
Just trust me.
HILARY

Beat. Alex stands up to dance.

Move your hips. There.
Twist a little.
There, steady, steady, good.
Don't look down.

And they dance.

Scene 10. The tent. No blizzard.

SUSAN
It stopped. The snow stopped.

SCOTT
Really?

He checks under the tent.
This was the weather we had been waiting for. Maybe if we'd gotten it we'd have made it. You've got to get out-you've got to go now.

SUSAN
Just like that?

SCOTT
Yes.

SUSAN
What about you?

SCOTT
I go back to my tent. You go on.

SUSAN
I think you should come.

SCOTT
Susan, you've got to get going if you want to make it to wherever you're going. My men are waiting for me.

Susan looks at him.

SUSAN
Please.

SCOTT
Susan, I don't know if this is real or not. Or where I am. What the dream is and who's the dreamer.

He looks at her.

SUSAN
I want to make it back. I need your help.

SCOTT
I can't just leave them.

SUSAN
This morning when I woke up, I looked outside. I thought I would know it, the way to go. But I don't. I don't know how to go back.

SCOTT
If I go with you it would be only to help you, you know. I am not choosing to leave my men in their tent. I'm going in order to help you.

She nods.
What will the historians say?

SUSAN
That you were human.

He sighs.

SCOTT
Alright then. Suit up.

They finish putting on their Polar suits. They stand outside. Bright blue sky, sun. They ski. Scott pulls the sled.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

It is good to be moving again. Look you can see all the way to the bottom of the glacier. This is the finest Antarctic weather. The day I had been waiting for. The finest day at the bottom of the world. We'll go the way I know. Towards one ton depot. And maybe as we go your sense of things will get clearer.

They ski.

SUSAN

I couldn't sleep last night.

SCOTT

Really? I love that tent you have. And all the food. I sleep quite well here. Better than ever.

SUSAN

I know. I watched you.

SCOTT

What? You watched me sleep?

SUSAN

I used to do it with my husband too. Ex. He always slept well. Sleeps. You look very peaceful when you sleep.

SCOTT

Thanks?

SUSAN

While I was lying there not sleeping I was thinking if I get out of this I'll be so much easier, as a person I mean. So much more grateful. Just to be alive. All the silly things, the fights. How stupid in the face of death. If I could bargain, trade, promise, go back..but you can't can you? There is no going backwards. Just forwards. And I guess bargaining won't even work.

SCOTT

When I was sitting there in the cold tent, the men smelling of death, I thought about each time things could have been different. I was foolhardy. I just wanted to have something to leave, a legacy, a reason I was here. A reason I existed. Just something to leave. Even that seems silly now.

They ski

SUSAN

We're fast.

SCOTT

Like we're flying.

SUSAN

Moving is good.

SCOTT

Means we are alive. You know if I were to live, which I know I don't, but if I did, I would have been glad to have met you. To be honest I never had such an opportunity to talk with a woman before. I had never really thought about how they think. So thank you.

SUSAN

Oddly touching.
It was nice to get to know you too.

SCOTT

But I think if I had lived I would have understood Kathleen better. Because of you. And maybe we would have had the chance to get old together, knowing each other's thoughts. And the boy. My son. I would have gotten to know him. To be someone's father. Probably harder than traversing the Antarctic, being someone's father I mean.

They ski.

Scene 11. The couch is pulled out. Hilary and Alex are in bed. Hilary is sleeping, Alex is sitting up in bed, not sleeping. The room is littered with food containers, bottle of rum, articles of clothing. A beach boys party has been had. Alex looks at Hilary and tries to wake her. She rolls over. He waits and tries again. She continues to sleep. Finally he gets out of bed, assembles his clothes, assembles his bag and looks at Hilary. He takes a granola bar out of his bag and leaves it on the chair. He looks at her again. She rolls over towards him and opens her eyes.

HILARY

Hi.

ALEX

Hi.

HILARY

Aren't you tired? It's still early.

ALEX

I...I can't sleep.

HILARY

But you slept. I woke up in the night and I saw you. You were sleeping.

ALEX

I know. I just can't...sleep now. I thought I'd...

Hilary giggles

HILARY

Who would've thought we could learn dance steps from the internet. And who knew you could rhumba to the beach boys.

ALEX

Yeah.

HILARY

And you did great. Never danced before, ha!

ALEX

Yeah.

HILARY

What's wrong?

ALEX

Nothing.

HILARY

OK. Well should we get breakfast?

ALEX

I'm not really hungry.

HILARY

I had this crazy dream about her and Scott and the Antarctic and the blinding snow. I want to be where they are.

ALEX

In the Antarctic?

HILARY

In the snow. Let's go up to the mountains. They have her in observation till three. If we go now we'll be back in plenty of time.

ALEX

I don't know.

HILARY

Come on, it would be perfect. There's still snow up there. It would be like we're on the expedition. Skiing blindly into the unknown. Please.

ALEX

I'm thinking you know, I'm thinking that we've spent a lot of time together in the past three days and I'm thinking I should stop by home.

HILARY

Oh.

ALEX

Maybe we can just each do our own thing.

HILARY

But I thought-

ALEX

I'm just taking one day off OK? Just a day off.

HILARY

What's that supposed to mean? Like I'm some kind of task? Some kind of burden?

Alex looks at her.

HILARY (CONT'D)

What?

ALEX

Your mother made me-asked me-to promise to be...to stay with you. Because she didn't want you to have to deal with this

He gestures around

ALEX (CONT'D)

alone.

HILARY

My mother?

ALEX

In the ambulance-she had a moment-a moment where she understood everything and I told her what happened, the accident and all that, and she understood and she said,"go to Hilary".

HILARY

I thought she asked you not to leave her.

ALEX

No. She asked me not to leave you.

Hilary stares

She made me promise.

HILARY

Of course.

And that's what all this was. That's all it was.

And you just want a day off. Stupid me.

Beat

ALEX

Hilary-

HILARY

It was stupid. I'm sorry I didn't understand earlier. My mother was wrong. I don't need anyone.

I- ALEX

Just go, OK. Just leave. HILARY

Hilary. ALEX

Please. Please go. HILARY

I- ALEX

Fine. I'll go. HILARY

She starts to leave

Wait- ALEX

She's gathering up her stuff. She goes to exit.

Hilary! ALEX (CONT'D)

She exits. He talks to the door she left from.

Hilary. *He stares after her.*

*Scene 12. Scott and Susan. They are skiing.
Susan is pulling the sled.*

SCOTT
For a woman you're in great shape. I'm tuckered out.

SUSAN
We don't say things like that nowadays.

SCOTT
Right. Well I'm winded.

SUSAN
I trained. I was training. I did bike racing.

SCOTT
That's some world you have.

SUSAN

Maybe have, maybe had.

SCOTT

You have the luck of the weather. You can see for miles in this. You'll find what you're looking for.

SUSAN

But there's nothing out here. I don't even know which way to go.

SCOTT

Susan.

SUSAN

Yes.

SCOTT

I have to go back.

SUSAN

What?

SCOTT

Remember before you asked why we didn't march on, die in our tracks?

SUSAN

You said you couldn't all make it.

SCOTT

It was I who couldn't make it. They could have. I was the one. My foot was badly off, the worst of everyone. I couldn't go on. I...I...They stayed with me.

SUSAN

You didn't want to be alone.

He stops skiing.

SCOTT

I didn't want to be alone.

SUSAN

You didn't want to die alone.

SCOTT

Yes.

SUSAN

Is it in the journal?

SCOTT

How can I put in my journal that I convinced the men to wait out the blizzard because I was scared to die alone? I wrote that I picked the better strategy, the strategy that would preserve the spirit of the expedition. That waiting was better. And maybe it was. Maybe it was better. There's no proving they would have made it anyway.

SUSAN

But that's not why you chose it.

SCOTT

No. I argued, I insisted that waiting out the storm was the right thing. And I reminded them that they were obliged to follow my orders. That they had signed a contract and anything short of following my orders would be tantamount to a mutiny which would be permanently attached to their names and service records. But then the storm didn't break. And we were stuck there. And the longer we waited, the more we ate through our rations. The lower our rations became the more impossible it was that anyone could set out for the depot with enough food to make it. And then for some reason they got weaker. It was like their will to live decreased by waiting in the tent. I should have let them go. I should have wished them well as they ran off to life, but I just-

SUSAN

I know.

SCOTT

So I have to go back. You see I can't leave them. After all this I can not leave them.

SUSAN

And you have some letters to write.

Who knows. Maybe Kathleen will let something come through. And if not she'll at least have read it.

You are going to write what you just told me, right?

Scott looks at her.

SCOTT

It might really have been a better choice to wait out the blizzard-hindsight is 20/20.

She gives him a look

Alright, alright.

SUSAN

So this is good-bye?

SCOTT

You understand?

Susan nods

SCOTT (CONT'D)

In that moment, in that last moment, I'll think of you.

SUSAN

Wait-

SCOTT

What.

SUSAN

Come here.

He comes close. She gives him a kiss.

SCOTT

All that time in the tent and now I find out you felt that way?

SUSAN

I don't. Feel that way. I just think there ought to be a little sweetness before death.

SCOTT

Funny what you learn just before you die. When it's no real use to you anymore anyway.
God speed Susan.

And he skis off.

SUSAN

Cold, sunny, alone. I was alone when I arrived here and now I am alone again. The sky is beginning to get white. Maybe a blizzard.

We shift to the side of the stage with Hilary. She appears in light, suited up in ski clothes skiing fast and hard downhill.

HILARY

Asshole. What an asshole. Bend knees, up, down. Jump.

She jumps and lands.

I don't know what I was thinking. Asshole.

We see Alex. He is driving.

ALEX

Asshole. I'm an asshole. I get home to my sister's house. I tell her what happened. She gives me that look of hers. And then I know. I'm blowing it. So I jump in the car. She lends me her car. But now the weather is turning. Sky white, ground white. She might be driving back already and then I'll miss her. I'm such an asshole.

HILARY

There's no reason I should like him. He's not my type. He's disorganized and confused. Dean is my type. Knees, up, jump. I just got distracted with everything that's been going on, Bend knees. Sky is white. Snow is coming. Asshole.

ALEX

Shit. There it is. That mountain is big. How am I gonna find her on that mountain? Why would anyone want to ski down that? Why would anyone want to ski? Great. It's starting to snow. I don't even have my hat.

SUSAN

Snow is starting to get heavy. Might need to set up tent soon. Would rather keep going. Feel her strongly now. Head hurts though. Just like before. Head, leg, altitude. Colder now. All is white. Ski, ski forward.

Scott is back in his tent with his men.

HILARY

Jump, high, height, knees, bend, land.

ALEX

They're closing the lifts. Weather coming in. I don't see her. Of course. I don't have gloves either. Everyone looks the same in those puffy outfits. Snow falling. Waiting.

SUSAN

Hilary? Hilary? I'm trying to come to you. I'm trying.

She touches her head, breathes, skis

HILARY

Jump, shit. Skis together. Jump-Keep body straight. Flying up-up-up. Body position off. Legs separating. Falling. Going to land badly. Waiting for impact.

SUSAN

Forward. Forward. Forward.

Hilary stands center stage, center snow storm.

HILARY

Mountain is gone. Snow and sky. Must be lying face down in snow.

She looks at her feet.

But I am on my feet. And it is flat. Where is the mountain? Hard to see anything. Stormy. See something red. Red? Ski patrol. Ski towards it. Ski towards the red.

She skis towards the red.

SUSAN

I see something. Something is there.

ALEX

The lifts are closed. The ski patrol is going up.

HILARY

Something red.

SUSAN

Someone's there.

I feel you. Are you here? I can feel you. Am I dreaming you? Hilary.

HILARY

Mom?

I'm here.

I'm here.

I've been trying to find you. And now you're here. Where are we?

SUSAN

Here. Nowhere. Together.

Antarctica.

HILARY

I'll eat the eggs and bacon. Please come back. I'll eat all the food if you come back. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

SUSAN

It's OK.

HILARY

Mom-

SUSAN

Come here. Let me smell you. You smell like you.

HILARY

Come with me. I came that way.

She points.

I'll help you. I'll pull you.

SUSAN

I can't.
My leg. My head.

HILARY

Don't do this. Try. Would you please try?
Come with me.

SUSAN

Listen to me.
We are here. Now.

HILARY

And this is it.

Susan nods.

SUSAN

For some time now I've wondered about the last moments before death-and here I am. It's funny you don't know it until it's upon you. But I'm grateful to see you here. To tell you. To tell you I love you and that you will have a beautiful life Hilary. A beautiful life.

HILARY

Wait-

SUSAN

I'm here.

HILARY

Not yet.

SUSAN

I'm here. I'm here.

HILARY

What if I need you?

SUSAN

You'll have to remember me.

HILARY

What if I can't?

Susan thinks for a moment. She brings her hands together and touches Hilary's chest.

SUSAN

I'm in here.

She moves her hands to Hilary's forehead

And I'm in here.

And when you need me, you'll dream about me. I'll come to you in your dreams.
You'll see me in your dreams.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Now go back. Go back to where you belong. I'll watch you go until you disappear.

They face each other.

Now go.

Hilary turns and skis off. Susan watches.

Goodbye my love.

The scene transforms. Susan is gone. Hilary is on the ground, Alex is bending over her. He has out his pupil gauge from the beginning of the play.

ALEX

Hilary. Hilary. Hilary.

She opens her eyes.

You fell. The ski patrol found you. Can you say something?

HILARY

You asshole.

He smiles.

ALEX

That's the Hilary I know.

She tries to move.

ALEX (CONT'D)

No no. Wait. Take it slow.

She sits up.

HILARY

I'm OK.

He stares.

ALEX

The ski patrol-I guess you jumped. Fell wrong.

HILARY

But I'm OK.

Alex looks at her.

ALEX

I'm sorry. I was a...jerk. I didn't mean what I said. You know when you get scared in that way--heart beating. Palms sweating?

Hilary looks at him. For a long time.

HILARY

I do.

Alex helps her sit.

HILARY (CONT'D)

I saw her. She said goodbye.
She's gone.

ALEX

You saw her?
Hilary-

HILARY

No no. It's OK. She said goodbye. We found each other. We said goodbye.

She stands. Alex helps her.

ALEX

Can you walk?

Hilary limps a bit but is fine.

HILARY

Yes.

Let's go back. We'll need to-
we'll need to call her people.

They hobble forward. He helps her. She stops.

(CONT'D)

HILARY

It's funny. In the end there really isn't that much to say is there? I guess it's because actually you're just living it all along, aren't you?

*Alex takes Hilary's hand. Russian Orthodox singers.
Sounds of whales. Weddell Seals. Bubbles. Slide of the
Aurora Australis, the southern lights, illuminating the
sky.*

End of play.