

ROCK BOTTOM

Written by

Scott van Beever

scott.vanbeever@gmail.com
323-627-7220

INT. C-130 CARGO PLANE - MORNING

CLOSE ON: DR. JACK ROBERTS, (early 30s, African American) wearing a large red winter jacket with the hood over his head, is startled awake by the PILOT's voice letting the passengers know they are about to land. He digs an engagement ring out of his pocket and looks at it. Sighs.

The plane hits some turbulence and he drops it. Sitting across the plane, DAVID (40s, gay and fabulous) also in a large red jacket, gets up from his seat and picks it up and sits next to Jack.

DAVID
Simple but elegant.

David hands the ring back to Jack.

JACK
Thanks.

DAVID
So does she work at McMurdo? I'm assuming it's "she?"

JACK
Last I checked.

DAVID
Thought so. No gay man would propose in a jacket that hideous. I'm David.

JACK
(trying out the way it sounds)
Jack. Doctor Roberts. Doctor Jack Roberts.

DAVID
Which one is it, dear?

JACK
Sorry. I just finished my residency at UCLA. Still trying out which one sounds best.

DAVID
I like Jack.

JACK
Hmmm. I dunno. Anyway, she came down a few weeks ago.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

So I decided I should come down and work the summer too and surprise her.

DAVID

She doesn't know you're coming?

JACK

Nope! But I'm spontaneous as fuck.
(small beat)

I'm not sure why I said that. I'm really not. But she is. I mean, she's crazy. Gets me to do all kinds of things I would never do. Like way out of my comfort zone.

DAVID

Like anal plugs or something?

JACK

No. I mean like sky diving.

DAVID

Sorry. Yep. I'm with you.

He digs his phone out and shows David a selfie of he and JEN rock climbing; Jen smiling and Jack scared shitless.

JACK

That's Jen.

DAVID

What's going on there with you?

JACK

Oh, I'm afraid of heights. I told her a million times, but she wanted to go, so...

DAVID

She's cute.

REVEAL: Crates of supplies labeled "U.S. Antarctic Program (USAP)" fill the center of the plane while dozens of passengers in USAP issued red winter jackets try to sleep and stay warm in their seats.

JACK

So what's it like down here?

DAVID

Hmm, well they say the first time people come to Antarctica, they come for the adventure.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

Second time is for the money. After that, they come because they don't fit in any where else.

Jack puts the ring back in his pocket and looks out the plane's window.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I hope you brought what you need with you. Amazon doesn't ship down here, honey.

JACK

It might as well be the fucking moon.

He puts his earbuds in and starts an upbeat hiphop song on his phone. We HEAR it as we...

CUT TO:

The wheels of the airplane landing on the ice.

EXT. MCMURDO STATION AIRSTRIP - MORNING

The song continues as Jack, carrying a large duffel bag over his shoulder, grimaces as he walks toward the station's entrance with a herd of other crew. He tries to keep his face warm by sinking into his jacket. The sprawling station looks like a dirty mining town. A sign reads: **Welcome to McMurdo Station, Antarctica.**

He stops when he sees a lone penguin standing still in the middle of the road. Some of the new crew swoon with delight and "aww" annoyingly. Cameras come out and start snapping. Jack smiles just before a large truck barrels past, flattening the poor bird.

Jack stares stunned as someone WEEPING is heard behind him. The song ends abruptly.

MAIN TITLE: **ROCK BOTTOM**

EXT. MCMURDO STATION AIRSTRIP - MOMENTS LATER

Jack stands over the dead penguin. A hand touches his shoulder. STELLA (30s), a Depeche Mode T-shirt visible through her open jacket, looks comfortingly at him.

STELLA

Morgan Freeman never mentioned this, am I right?

JACK

Huh?

STELLA

Accidents like that are happening more and more unfortunately. Some crew here just don't give a shit anymore.

JACK

Isn't that illegal or something?

STELLA

Yeah. But the station manager is more focused on exploiting Antarctica for its possible oil and natural gas than its wildlife. What a bitch.

JACK

Jesus.

STELLA

I'm Stella.

JACK

Jack. Dr. Roberts.

They shake hands and start heading toward the station.

STELLA

You look young for a doctor.

JACK

Thanks! It's the botox. I brought some if you want a treatment.

STELLA

(feigning concern)
You think I need it?

JACK

You look okay to me. And what do you do?

STELLA

I'm one of the beakers around here.

JACK

Beaker?

STELLA

I know. This place and nicknames.
It's what they call scientists. I'm
a biologist.

JACK

Cool. How long have you worked
here?

STELLA

This is my fourth year. I just love
it. No internet. No cell phones.
Just you and the other weirdos.

Jack looks around at the busy station. It's clearly seen
better days. Many parts of the vast station are jury-rigged
to keep functioning. A WASTE DISPOSAL WORKER, reading a book,
sits on a couch covered in snow.

JACK

Yep. It's just like paradise.

INT. MCMURDO STATION - ENTRANCE HALL

They enter the cramped space mid conversation where they join
a large group standing around waiting for their dorm room
assignments. A banner reads: **WELCOME SUMMER EMPLOYEES!**

Jack, relieved to be inside, swipes through his photos on his
phone.

JACK

Let me see if there's a
better...ah, here.

INSERT: Another selfie of Jen; a drink in her hand, she blows
a kiss to the camera with Jack barely visible in the frame.

STELLA

She seems...nice.

She attempts an encouraging smile. Jack raises his eyebrow.

STELLA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. Don't listen to me. I'm
an idiot when it comes to that sort
of stuff. That's great. Really.

JACK

Why do I get the feeling you don't
believe that?

STELLA

Look, love is hard enough back home. Down here, things are a little more...fluid. Sex? Yes. Definitely yes. This place is like a warehouse for the unattached.

A pale, zombie-like JANITOR stands in front of them, blocking their path.

JACK

Uh, excuse us.

A long beat.

JANITOR

Huh?

JACK

(hinting to move)
Could you...

In a trance, the janitor slowly shuffles out of the way.

JANITOR

(to himself)
So many people.

JACK

What's up with that guy?

STELLA

He's a winter-over. It can really scramble your brain staying down here all winter long with only a few hundred people and no sunshine. Some people are fine. Others...

The janitor slides along the wall, avoiding a noisy group of newbies.

JACK

I see.

An obviously overwhelmed HR Rep., NANCY, tries to manage the crowd.

NANCY

People! Please line up in a--

She trips over someone's duffle bag. The crew doesn't move to help.

NANCY (CONT'D)
 Mother Fucker! Orderly fashion.

STELLA
 Ugh. I'll do this later. I have to
 check on my crabs.

Jack hesitates to speak.

STELLA (CONT'D)
 Biologist remember?

JACK
 Right. I didn't-

STELLA
 Nice to meet you Jack.

JACK
 You too, Stella. Stop by for a
 checkup anytime.

Stella furrows her brow.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Not for like a pap smear or
 whatever. I mean...

STELLA
 (chuckles)
 Good luck!

Jack grabs a registration card with a sigh and gets in line.

INT. MCMURDO STATION - ENTRANCE HALL - LATER

Jack slaps his card on the makeshift reception desk.

NANCY
 Welcome to McMurdo.

JACK
 Thanks. Listen, could you tell me
 what room my girlfriend is in?
 She's down here already and it
 would be great if we could bunk
 together.

He leans in.

JACK (CONT'D)
 It's a surprise.

NANCY
I'm sorry, sir-

JACK
Doctor.

NANCY
Excuse me?

JACK
I'm a doctor. Jack Roberts.

He sticks his hand out. She shakes her head.

NANCY
Sorry, doctor. I can't give out
that information.

JACK
Come on. There's gotta be a way.
Please?

Nancy looks cautiously around before staring into Jack's eyes.

NANCY
Well, I could use a private exam.
(whispers)
In my panties.

Jack recoils.

NANCY (CONT'D)
(still whispering)
Do you know what I'm saying?

Jack yanks his room assignment.

JACK
Yep. I'll try and find her on my
own. Thanks.

NANCY
Come now. What's her name?

Jack hesitates.

JACK
Jen Thompson.

Nancy begins typing.

NANCY
Hmm. No Jen Thompson.

JACK
Thompson. With a P.

Nancy types some more.

NANCY
Nope. With and without the P.

JACK
What?

NANCY
(winking)
I'll see you around, doctor.

EXT. HALLWAY - DAY

The hallway is busy with crew moving in and out. Jack stands in front of his room and turns the key.

INT. JACK'S DORM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is decorated in a Hawaiian theme, with tiki decorations everywhere. He sits on the bed and pulls out his phone. No bars. No wifi. Shit.

The door opens and NED (50s), grizzled and wearing a Hawaiian shirt and already a scotch into the day, enters the room.

NED
Oh, hey roomie! I hope you don't mind the decorations. Feel free to add your own though. But nothing too urban if you don't mind, ok?

JACK
Urban?

Ned walks over to shake Jack's hand.

NED
I'm Ned.

JACK
Jack. Listen, I don't plan on staying, no offense. I'll be rooming with my girlfriend as soon as I can find her.

NED
Oh, that's a shame.

JACK
Hey, do you know where we can make
phone calls?

NED
There's a comms building down the
road.

JACK
Thanks.

NED
See you around, Doc.

Ned opens the door to the bathroom but doesn't fully close it behind him. Jack glances at a picture of Ned and a woman on a beach. The door begins to swing back open, revealing Ned taking a dump and staring blankly at him.

NED (CONT'D)
Hey, could you throw me a magazine?

INT. COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - AFTERNOON

Jack nervously taps the desk with his finger while he holds a phone to his ear. It's ringing. Finally someone picks up.

JEN (V.O.)
Hello?

JACK
Jen? Where are you?

JEN (V.O.)
Jack?

JACK
I'm in McMurdo. Where are you?

JEN (V.O.)
What? You're where?

JACK
Antarctica! I came to surprise you.
You said you were working here for
the summer. Please tell me this is
a joke!

JEN (V.O.)
(sighs)
Oh my God, Jack...

JACK

What?

JEN (V.O.)

I...I just felt like we needed a break. To be honest, you're no fun. I thought you'd be more like those doctors on TV; driving fancy cars, living in Malibu, do a little blow...

JACK

I'm just starting out! Give me time!

JEN (V.O.)

I want someone who likes to go out and have fun. Get loose. But with you, everything is planned out. There's no edge.

JACK

Edge? I can work on edge.

JEN

No, Jack. You can't.

Jack, about to throw the phone out the window, puts it back to his ear.

JACK

So you never left?

He hears laughter and people splashing in a pool. A ceiling panel falls to the floor next to him.

JACK (CONT'D)

Hello?

JEN (V.O.)

(to her friends)

Hold on, guys. I'll be right there.

(back to Jack)

I gotta go. I'm in Palm Springs with some friends.

JACK

I think I'm going to be sick.

She hangs up. He rushes to a trash can and vomits.

END ACT 1

ACT 2INT. HR OFFICE - LATER

Jack grabs Nancy's arm.

JACK

Please-

He reads her name-tag.

JACK (CONT'D)

Nancy. I need to get out of here.

NANCY

Doctor?

(slightly turned on)

Such strong hands.

JACK

I can't stay here. There's been a mistake. My girlfriend lied to me. I need get back to LA.

NANCY

That bitch. Well, normally contracts are iron-clad here.

JACK

Shit!

NANCY

But...I could see about pulling some strings.

She eyeball screws him up and down.

NANCY (CONT'D)

I like pulling strings. For friends.

She leans in close to his ear.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Are you my friend?

Jack pulls back slightly and forces a pleading smile.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE OF HR OFFICE - LATER

Nancy is heard orgasming behind the closed door. A moment later, a clearly catatonic Jack opens the door and takes off his latex gloves and drops them on the floor. The open door reveals Nancy on her desk getting her pants back on.

NANCY
I'll see what I can do!

INT. THE POLE HOLE - NIGHT

The dimly lit bar is busy as an OVERWEIGHT MAN is SINGING karaoke on the small stage in the corner. Jack, already drunk, spots Stella as she enters the bar.

STELLA
Oh hey!

JACK
Hey.

STELLA
Where's your fiancé?

JACK
Palm Springs.

She sits next to him at the bar.

STELLA
Wait, what?

JACK
She broke up with me. She wasn't even here. I'm such an idiot.

STELLA
Oh my God. I'm so sorry.

David, from the flight in the beginning, is bartending.

DAVID
What'll it be, darling?

STELLA
Single malt, one cube. Thanks. How many has he had?

DAVID
Not enough if you ask me.

Jack spins the ring on the bar.

JACK

Like a moth to a dumpster fire. Mom always told me to look out for the crazy girls, but did I listen? Noooo. And all along she was plotting to leave me and do jello shots with her friends.

STELLA

I'm so sorry, Jack.

He takes a large sip. Stella's drink arrives. She picks it up.

JACK

I feel like hitting someone. And I hate violence.

Stella leans away from him.

JACK (CONT'D)

Oh, not you. Sorry.

STELLA

No, you should be mad. I'd be pissed too. Should we pick a fight with someone?

Jack looks around the bar and spots Nancy, drink in hand, who winks back at him. Jack shudders.

JACK

I need to get out of here.

EXT. MCMURDO STATION - CONTINUOUS

Jack and Stella walk along the main street. It's night but it looks like it's early morning.

JACK

Jesus, when does the sun go down?

STELLA

It doesn't this time of year.

JACK

Fuck, there is nothing good about living down here.

STELLA

No offense, but you don't know what you're talking about.

JACK
Whatever. I'll be outta here soon
enough. I'm making sure of that.

They stop at the edge of a hill overlooking the docks below.
She inhales deeply and screams at the top of her lungs. Jack
is pee-in-his-pants scared.

JACK (CONT'D)
Jesus! What the fuck?

STELLA
Try it.

JACK
What?

STELLA
Come on. Scream out your pain.

JACK
Is this some hippy therapy?

STELLA
Whatever you want to call it, but
it helps.

JACK
I don't know.

STELLA
Trust me.

Jack looks at her then out into the vast white nothingness
and lets out a painful yell. He looks relieved and less hurt
as he finishes. He turns to Stella and smiles.

JACK
Huh. That felt good.

STELLA
Right?

He pulls out the ring. He clutches it and moves to throw it.
But he can't. Slowly, he puts it back into his pocket.

With rage, he kicks the bumper of a nearby truck on a jack.

STELLA (CONT'D)
Yeah! That's it! Get it out.

Jack kicks the truck again.

STELLA (CONT'D)

Yes! Again!

He does, only this time knocking it off the jack and sending it rolling down toward the docks. Jack's eyes widen as the truck crashes into some wooden crates and propane tanks, which explodes into a ball of fire.

STELLA (CONT'D)

I didn't say kick it that hard!

JACK

Fuuuuck.

STELLA

We gotta get out of here.

Before he can move, Jack faints.

INT. STATION HOLDING CELL - EARLY MORNING

CLOSE ON: Jack lies passed out on a bench. Water is splashed onto his face, jolting him to sit up. He notices his hand is handcuffed to a rail.

JACK

What the hell?

Standing with an empty pitcher is the station manager, MAY (50s), approachable despite her no bullshit demeanor. She hands the pitcher to her assistant, MARGARET (20s), a portly woman with a child-like vibe. May drags a chair close to Jack.

MAY

Dr. Roberts, right? My name is May Wilson. I'm the station manager.

Jack shifts uncomfortably in his seat.

MAY (CONT'D)

I've been doing this a long time, Dr. Roberts. Seen some weird shit down here; people growing pot in their dorm rooms, bloody fights over pieces of fruit. Once a guy thought he was going to get beamed up to an alien spaceship.

(beat)

But you. Man, first day on the job and you somehow blow up the station's re-supply of booze.

JACK
Oh, is that what that was?

Margaret steps on Jack's shoe.

JACK (CONT'D)
Ow! Jesus!

MARGARET
Do not interrupt the commander when she is speaking.

Jack nods his head. She removes her large boot from his.

MAY
Thank you, Margaret. So you can imagine my predicament. As the station manager, my job is to oversee every aspect of this facility. And right now I can see that my already under-stocked bar has lost its only shipment of alcohol.

JACK
To be fair, I was really hammered. You see my girl--

Margaret again steps on his shoe.

JACK (CONT'D)
Ow! Sorry!

MAY
You think this is a joke?

JACK
No ma'am.

MAY
No. No it's not.

Margaret snarls at him as she steps back.

MAY (CONT'D)
I'm looking to get promoted this year, doctor. And what you did has made that incredibly more difficult for me. And if I'm fucked, then you're fucked.

May gets up and pulls a key out of her pocket. She kneels face to face with Jack and touches the key along his face.

MAY (CONT'D)

Losing the one thing that keeps our crew going is kind of a big deal. Your ass should be sent home.

JACK

Really?

MAY

But you're our only doctor, so there's that.

JACK

Fuck.

MAY

I'll talk it over with Nancy about replacing you.

JACK

Nancy. Yeah. I, uh, discussed it...with her.

MAY

Not sure what there's to be done about the alcohol. Damn! In the meantime, you so much as fart and I'll make sure they never find your body. Do we understand each other?

JACK

Yes ma'am.

With frustration, May unlocks the handcuffs.

INT. MCMURDO STATION - HALLWAY - EARLY MORNING

Jack makes his way to his room. Everyone he passes by is giving him a dirty look. He overhears some of them curse him. He quickens his pace as anxiety begins to take root.

INT. JACK'S DORM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jack enters the room, closing the door with a sigh. Just as he sets his jacket down, a hand grabs his shirt and slams him against the wall.

NED

Tell me you didn't.

JACK

Didn't what?

NED
Blow up our booze!

JACK
I did. Man, word travels fast here.

NED
Then you're a dead man!

JACK
What happened to your Aloha spirit?

Ned tightens his grip.

JACK (CONT'D)
Now hold on, Ned. I'm going to make this right.

NED
Oh yeah? How you going to do that?

JACK
I...I'll find more. There's gotta be some somewhere.

NED
You better pray that there is. I can't make it out here without a drink. Not sure anyone can.

JACK
You have my word, Ned.

NED
Good. Good.

Ned loosens his grip. Jack notices the room looks different.

NED (CONT'D)
Oh, I took the liberty of moving the furniture around for better feng shui. You like?

Jack sees his bed has been moved right next to Ned's. He does not like, but musters a smile anyway.

INT. MEDBAY - LATE MORNING

Jack opens the door to his office, discovering it's no where near as clean as it should be. He sits at a desk and sighs. A body lying under a sheet in the exam room sits up.

JACK

Oh my God!

The sheet falls, revealing HUEY (20s), too eager for his own good, in nurse scrubs.

HUEY

Oh sorry! I didn't mean to scare you. I had to sleep here last night. Roommate problems.

JACK

You too, huh?

HUEY

I'm Huey Rubenstein. Are you Dr. Roberts?

JACK

Unfortunately.

HUEY

Nice to meet you. I'm your nurse. So where did you go to med--

JACK

I'm going to stop you there. I don't plan on being here that long, Huey. There's been a huge mistake and I just have to figure out a way to get out of here. First I need to find a shit-ton of alcohol.

HUEY

Are you an alcoholic?

JACK

Not yet.

A WOMAN knocks at the door.

WOMAN

Hi, they said to come here.

JACK

Not now.

The camera tilts down as the woman points to her leg where a good-sized piece of wood from a pallet is sticking out.

JACK (CONT'D)

Oh good. It begins.

Huey grabs a clipboard from the desk.

HUEY
 OK, miss. Let's get you checked
 out. Now, would this be a workplace
 injury?

Jack, rolling his eyes, grabs the clipboard from Huey.

JACK
 (annoyed)
 This way.

INT. JACK'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Sunlight streaks Jack's face. He opens his eyes and looks at his bed-side clock. 11:05pm.

JACK
 What the hell? Why?

He rolls over to see Ned's face snoring away. Jack stuffs his pillow on top of his head. No use. He picks up his cell phone and tries to text Jen, but quickly sees there's no service.

Ned let's a fart rip, turning his ass to Jack. Defeated, Jack crashes his pillow on to his face.

INT. AUDITORIUM - MORNING

May is at the podium addressing dozens of personnel who sit in rows; some excited, others annoyed with having to be there. May looks sharp, like a hawk looking for prey.

MAY
 It's so great to see the many
 returning faces and new ones
 joining the McMurdo family this
 season.

The camera pans past eager looking NEWBIES until it reaches a sleep deprived Jack, who is writing Jen a postcard.

It reads: **"Dearest Jen, please don't do this. I am figuring out how to get home so we can work this all out.**

He looks up for a moment. Then back down to finish with: **"I love you."**

MAY (O.C.) (CONT'D)
 Without you, this research station
 and the important work we do here
 wouldn't be possible.
 (MORE)

MAY (O.C.) (CONT'D)

In the face of major shifts in the funding of climate science, everything we do is crucial to making the planet a better place for everyone.

Everyone applauds. A MALE NEWBIE leans closer to Jack.

MALE NEWBIE

I hear the parties here are crazy.

Jack, engrossed in his letter, looks up annoyed.

JACK

Far out.

He goes back to his letter.

MAY

But let me just say that we've seen better days. The station isn't what she used to be and many will find it challenging with our limited resources.

May eyeballs Jack. A large number of the crew also turn to look at Jack with scorn. Jack, feeling the burn, looks up and attempts a smile. He quickly looks back down.

MAY (CONT'D)

But I know we picked the best and scrappiest.

Someone laughs out loud. Margaret, like an alert German Shepherd, steps up to the mic.

MARGARET

Who was that? Stand up if you think you're so funny.

MAY

It's alright, Margaret.

(to the audience)

This is a good moment to bring much needed light to a pervasive problem here at McMurdo. Respect for the system. Let me be clear: while you live and work here, you are under my command. You will obey the laws we set up here to keep everyone safe.

(MORE)

MAY (CONT'D)

That means no parties in your dorm rooms, put waste in the appropriate containers, and contraband, especially drugs, will not be tolerated.

MALE NEWBIE

Apparently she doesn't know about the black market here.

The newbie shows Jack two joints from his pocket.

JACK

Look man, I don't care...Wait. There's a black market here? Like for anything?

MALE NEWBIE

For sure, dude.

MAY

Anyone caught breaking station rules will have their pay docked and their bonuses revoked.

JACK

And, um. Is there a certain person one would talk to? You know, if they needed something?

MALE NEWBIE

Word is the short cook in the galley is the guy to talk to.
(a beat)
Hey aren't you the guy who blew up-

JACK

Nope.

INT. GALLEY - NOON

More dirty looks. A grey-ish food plops onto Jack's tray. He looks up at the COOK who seems too happy to be serving this slop.

JACK

What is this?

COOK

Today's special is meatloaf.

JACK

Is it organic?

COOK

Man...

The JANITOR from earlier shuffles past with an apple up to his nose.

JANITOR

Oh, that's good. You are a good apple. I'm going to nibble on you all day.

Jack shakes his head.

COOK

You may want to lower your expectations while you're here. When the freshies run out, it's frozen meat and canned food as far as the eye can see.

JACK

Great.

(beat)

Hey, I hear you might be able to help me out with something.

The cook quickly looks around, then leans in.

COOK

Shhh. You trying to get me busted or something?

JACK

Oh, shit. Sorry.

COOK

What do you need?

JACK

Do you know where I could get alcohol?

COOK

The Pole Hole?

JACK

No, I mean like a lot. Crates?

COOK

Shit. No one has ever asked me that.

(beat)

But...I have this connection at the Russian base, Vostok.

(MORE)

COOK (CONT'D)

I think they have a supply stash pretty close to here, though I don't know where exactly. I'm guessing it has booze in it.

An OLDER WASTEY behind Jack is getting annoyed.

OLDER WASTEY

Hey, can you hurry up? Some of us are hungry?

JACK

Sorry. Thank you.

Jack takes his tray and looks for a place to sit. He sees Stella sitting alone and walks toward her.

JACK (CONT'D)

Hey stranger.

STELLA

Oh. Hey.

JACK

Cold today.

STELLA

Jack, I'm so sorry about last night. I got scared and-

JACKL

You don't need to apologize. I would've run to.

He sits next to her.

STELLA

And now everybody hates you.

He gives a defeated look.

STELLA (CONT'D)

But I don't hate you.

JACK

Thanks. Med school doesn't teach you what to do when all your patients want to kill you.

(beat)

Listen, do you know the surrounding area well?

STELLA

Of course. Why?

JACK

There's a Russian supply hut I may need to "borrow" from before someone tries to kill me. Russians like to drink so maybe they have extra they can spare.

STELLA

Are you serious?

Jack looks desperate. Stella thinks for a second.

STELLA (CONT'D)

I've had to do some traveling with the station's helicopter and I remember the pilot pointing out a supply hut a few miles east of here. That's probably the one.

Jack lights up.

JACK

Only one way to find out.

INT. GARAGE - LATER

Large trucks and forklifts move about. Ned is working on the engine of a truck as Jack and Stella approach.

NED

Did you blow up something else now?

JACK

Funny. Ned, meet Stella. We have an idea.

CLOSE ON: a map being unrolled on a table. Stella points to the supply hut.

NED

The Ruskies, huh? And you're going to take it from them?

JACK

Yes, but I need your help.

NED

I don't know, doc. Why should I help you?

JACK

Although it's completely unethical, I could write you a script for-

NED
Viagra?

JACK
I was going to say stronger pain
meds, but sure. Viagra. Why not?

Ned shuts the hood of the truck.

NED
And not the knock offs. Those give
me headaches. OK. We can take one
of these snow-mobiles. You'll need
your heavy weather gear. We'll
attach a sled to bring back
whatever we find.

JACK
Wow. Thanks, man. I owe you.

NED
I have a drinking problem, doc. I
don't want it solved just yet.

EXT. GARAGE - AFTERNOON

Jack holds on to Ned as he drives the snowmobile out of the
garage. A long sled drags behind.

EXT. THE ICE - LATER

Jack shivers behind Ned.

JACK
I can't feel my hands!

NED
Pussy.

EXT. RUSSIAN SUPPLY HUT

The snowmobile pulls up to the hut. Ned and Jack get off and
look around for signs of life.

JACK
Looks like no one's home.

They approach the door to the hut and notice a padlock.

JACK (CONT'D)
Shit!

NED

Now what?

CLOSE ON: the padlock is smashed open with a sledgehammer. Jack holds the sledgehammer, smiling.

JACK

Universal key.

INT. RUSSIAN SUPPLY HUT - CONTINUOUS

The door slowly creaks open. Jack pulls at a light, illuminating the room. Crates and shelves are stacked with various liquor bottles.

JACK

Jackpot.

NED

There must be enough here to last years.

Ned opens a bottle of whiskey and takes a sip. They sit down on some boxes. Ned passes the bottle to Jack.

JACK

No thanks. I'm more of a gin guy.

NED

Of course you are. Don't be such a wimp. Here.

Jack takes a sip and reacts with a sour face.

NED (CONT'D)

Keeps you warm though, right?

JACK

You think they'll miss any of it?

NED

Nah. They probably don't even know how much they got.

A beat. Jack chuckles to himself.

NED (CONT'D)

What's so funny?

JACK

This whole thing. I mean, I spent years studying to be a doctor while my friends were out traveling the world and having fun. I somehow manage to meet this awesome girl-

NED

Jen?

JACK

Yeah. Jen. And I thought all the pieces were fitting into place. Now, she's left me and I'm stuck at the bottom of the planet.

Jack takes another sip.

NED

Me too.

JACK

What do you mean?

NED

My wife used to be a volcanologist here, studying Mount Erebus.

JACK

Wait, you're married?

NED

Was married. She fell in.

Ned shakes his head and takes a sip.

JACK

What?

NED

Yep. Fell right in about seven years ago. I promised myself I would never leave her, so I keep coming back and live in the same room that we share now.

(beat)

I'm stuck here too, man.

JACK

Holy shit. I'm so sorry.

NED

Thanks. This is home now. And these people are family.

(MORE)

NED (CONT'D)

It's better here anyway. The real world is just fucked up.

JACK

So the Viagra?

NED

I'm not dead yet, doc.

JACK

Gotcha.

Ned stands up.

NED

Come on. Let's load this hooch up.

Jack takes another sip.

EXT. RUSSIAN SUPPLY HUT - LATER

Jack and Ned pull a large tarp over the crates they managed to fit on the sled. They pull a rope tight around the tarp. Jack looks at the white horizon and takes a breath. He then sees something approaching in the distance.

JACK

What is that?

NED

What?

JACK

Something heading this way.

Ned pulls out his binoculars and sees a truck with a Russian flag painted on it driving toward them.

NED

Time to move.

They jump onto the snowmobile and take off with the sled in tow.

INT. THE POLE HOLE - NIGHT

It's open mic night. An OLD LADY with an acoustic guitar is SINGING on stage. David shoves bottles of whiskey, vodka, and gin onto the shelves of the bar.

Jack scrolls through some photos of Jen on his phone. Stella arrives and sits next to him.

STELLA
I can't believe you did it!

JACK
O Ye of little faith.

STELLA
So what now?

JACK
I have to get out of my contract somehow. Hopefully Nancy can find a replacement. And quickly.

Stella looks like she was hoping for another answer.

STELLA
Of course. No, this place isn't for everybody.

JACK
Stella, I really appreciate you helping me. You're pretty rad.

STELLA
Rad? People still use that word?

Jack holds up a glass.

JACK
To new friends?

STELLA
To new friends.

They clink their glasses and drink.

STELLA (CONT'D)
What are you going to do about your girlfriend? Sorry, ex-girlfriend.

JACK
Well, I plan on burning all her stuff. Maybe write a novel about how wrong I was.

STELLA
Aw, you still love her, don't you?

JACK
It's awful.

David approaches from behind the bar, a tad inebriated.

DAVID

Whew! I am drunk! This Russian stuff is strong. You gotta tell me where that stash is.

JACK

I'm not going back there.

DAVID

Miss Stella. Looks like that gentleman over there would like to buy you a drink.

David points to a hopeful BEARDED MAN (50s) who waves back.

STELLA

Uh, no thanks.
(yelling to the man)
No thank you! I'm good.

The man frowns and goes back to his drink.

JACK

Not your type?

STELLA

That guy's been trying to buy me a drink for 3 years now. Guess I still got it.

JACK

Can't say I blame him.

Stella blushes just as a hand rests on her shoulder. TERRY, a glacial scientist (40s) with an Australian accent, approaches and leans in to plant a long kiss on her. Jack is briefly confused.

STELLA

There you are. Busy day?

Terry sits down next to Stella.

TERRY

Yeah, the damn thermo-scanners keep sending bad data. They should just replace them already.

(to Jack)

Hi, I'm Terry.

JACK

Uh, hi. I'm Dr. Roberts.

TERRY
How do you two know each other?

STELLA
This is the guy I told you about.

TERRY
Woah! The one who blew up the
loading dock? Oh man-

JACK
Well, it wasn't the whole loading-

STELLA
Yes, him.

TERRY
Ha! That's quite the start to your
stint on the ice, isn't it mate? Oh
hey. Sorry to hear about your
girlfriend. Real dick move.

JACK
Thanks.

David hands Jack a phone.

DAVID
Hey doc, it's the station manager.
She wants a word.

Jack takes the phone.

JACK
Hello? Alright. Keep Maggie in her
cage, OK?

He hands the phone back to David. Jack and Stella share a
quick smile before he leaves.

INT. STATION MANAGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

May is reviewing some paperwork as Jack enters.

MAY
You blow anything else up on the
way here?

JACK
Why does everybody keep asking me
that?

MAY

Please sit.

Jack sits across from her at her desk. Nancy enters.

NANCY

Dr. Roberts! Hello again!

JACK

Oh good. The gang's all here. Any luck on finding my replacement?

Nancy sits in the chair next to Jack.

MAY

Settle down, Sally. I called you in here because I wanted you to know that Nancy here with HR is working hard to remedy this situation.

JACK

What does that mean?

NANCY

You know, it is not easy finding such a...talented doctor as yourself who is willing to work in our tiny little bubble.

JACK

How much longer am I going to have to stay here?

MAY

Dr. Roberts. I'm going to need your assurance that you will provide this station with sound medical leadership no matter what comes our way as we continue finding a solution. Can I get that from you?

Jack stares blankly at May. Nancy gives him a smile and wink.

EXT. MCMURDO STATION - ENTRANCE HALL

Jack sits down on the steps to the station in disbelief. A penguin slowly walks by and pauses to look at him.

JACK

What are you looking at?

END OF EPISODE