

**SIDE # 1 – SCOTT/AMUNDSEN**

**AMUNDSEN:** A brave man. His body will never be found.

**SCOTT:** What have I done? I slaughter them one by one.

**AMUNDSEN:** No time for pity, least of all for yourself.

**SCOTT:** It's over, isn't it. All but the last bit.

**AMUNDSEN:** While there are players left on the field? Come, Scott-don't you want to play?

**SCOTT:** I'm very tired ...

**AMUNDSEN:** Play the game.

**SCOTT:** No.

**AMUNDSEN:** Play the game!

**SCOTT:** I don't give a damn any more! Leave me alone.

**AMUNDSEN:** You wish you didn't, but you never had any choice. You are who you are.

**SCOTT:** (Bitterly.) It was my own choice that brought us here. My own choice that rejected the dogs. That kept us from turning back when we could.

**AMUNDSEN:** But not that cut the hand. Not that killed Oates.

**SCOTT:** (Fiercely.) You won't deny me the choice that's still left me! (He shakes the bottle of pills.) My own choice even now.

**AMUNDSEN:** You have only forty miles to safety.

**SCOTT:** I can do the arithmetic as well as you. It's bitter but simple. Paraffin for four days, food for six. The last depot and the relief party are eight days away at this pace. We're just too weak, too slow.

**AMUNDSEN:** What is food, next to the spirit? A man dies when he stops wanting.

**SCOTT:** We all know it. We've known it since Evans, I think. Only no one will say it. We walk in silence because any sound we made would be a shout of despair. We turn our faces against the darkness, we grope for the pulse of our hearts, and feel an idiotic pride that they're still throbbing. In the night we huddle together for warmth, but touching, we're still alone. Still alone.

**AMUNDSEN:** (Gently.) At last, I think you begin to understand the game.

**SCOTT:** (Quietly.) Help me. Help me?

**AMUNDSEN:** There's no help I can give you.

**SCOTT:** They weigh so heavily. All the other lives.

**AMUNDSEN:** You have strength enough.

**SCOTT:** And this ... ? (He holds out the bottle of pills in his hand.)

**AMUNDSEN:** That's for men who have no choice. Not the Pole, but here.

**SIDE # 1 – SCOTT/AMUNDSEN**

**SCOTT:** What?

**AMUNDSEN:** The single moment you were born to live. One place, the pattern revealed. Not the Pole, but here.

**SCOTT:** Yes . . .

**AMUNDSEN:** You feared life had passed you by, that you couldn't keep pace with younger men. And yet, you see- it's the younger men who are falling by the wayside, and you who are still strong. You thought it was a kind of death at the Pole-yet I tell you, you were never so alive as now, and the moment you were born for is here. (Pause.) Live it well.

**SIDE # 2 SCOTT/AMUNDSEN**

**SCOTT:** He had no right to keep it to himself. It doesn't make any sense!

**AMUNDSEN:** Why should it? This cold-so hard on a sick man. He never heals.

**SCOTT:** First frostbite, then gangrene.

**AMUNDSEN:** Snow blindness.

**SCOTT:** Exhaustion ...

**AMUNDSEN:** Madness. (Pause.) Really, it's an extraordinary place. It wants so much for you to be dead.

**SCOTT:** I struck him! I can't believe I struck him.

**AMUNDSEN:** He behaved like a fool.

**SCOTT:** But I had no right! A sick man, and a petty officer at that...

**AMUNDSEN:** Which bothers you more- that you struck him or that he's going to die? Toughen your heart, English. You know what has to be done.

**SCOTT:** Yes. I must leave him behind.

**AMUNDSEN:** Of course.

**SCOTT:** Not-when he's still walking, not tomorrow or the next day, but soon ...

**AMUNDSEN:** Easier for him than for you. Maybe he won't wake at all.

**SCOTT:** The others slipping away before dawn ...

**AMUNDSEN:** He's rolled warm in his sleeping-bag. He doesn't hear or see. He feels nothing.

**SCOTT:** He wakes at noon. The silent tent. The empty miles around.

**AMUNDSEN:** But the others saved.

**SCOTT:** One lost, but the others saved. And peace for him ...

**AMUNDSEN.** It must be done.

**SCOTT:** Yes. It must ...

**AMUNDSEN:** And I want to do it.

**SCOTT:** And I want to ..

**AMUNDSEN:** For myself. For my own sake.

**SCOTT:** Yes. (Self-disgustedly.) For my own sake.

**AMUNDSEN:** Well. Where's it written that a general should stop a bullet for a private? That's against all rules of strategy. He's finally only a common sort of oaf- too clumsy even to avoid spearing himself.

**SCOTT:** (Lost in himself) What?

**SIDE # 2 SCOTT/AMUNDSEN**

**AMUNDSEN:** One sick man is sacrificed for the good of the many. Don't worry, there's no danger of any stain on your reputation. You might even seem a greater hero than ever.

**SCOTT:** You disgust me.

**AMUNDSEN:** For speaking common sense! You're thinking a miracle will come along.

**SCOTT:** It's still only his hand! He just needn't haul any more.

**AMUNDSEN:** And when he can no longer walk? What then?

**SCOTT:** Then we'll put him on the sled and drag him.

**AMUNDSEN:** For God's sake, English! (He picks up a large crate.) The sled weighs one thousand pounds already. (He heaves the crate on to the sled.) Now! The weight of a big man! If not for your ridiculous pride you might have dogs drag it, instead of cripples! And when he slows you down so much you can't reach your supplies-will you drag him even then?

**SCOTT:** If we must.

**AMUNDSEN:** He is one. You are four.

**SCOTT:** That makes no difference.

**AMUNDSEN:** The difference between living and dying!

**SCOTT:** Should I just shoot him then, like one of your dogs? Damn it, perhaps we could eat him as well-just to be absolutely logical! It's my fault he's here. Can't you see I'm responsible for his life?

**AMUNDSEN:** (Furiously.) For many lives! There's one way to live here, one only! Everything is a tool- a boot, a sled, a dog-and a hand, an arm, even a man! If it breaks down you throw it away and you march on! It's brutal, yes! And it's ugly. But anything else is sentiment and it will kill you!

**SIDE # 3 SCOTT/KATHLEEN**

**SCOTT:** You quite dislike me, don't you?

**KATHLEEN:** No, but I don't understand you. (Pause.) To me it's all nonsense. The South Pole! But I'd hoped from reading about you in the papers that at least you might turn out to be some sort of wild romantic, a visionary, a modern Columbus in furs and wind burns. But that's not at all the man I met last night.

**SCOTT:** And what was he?

**KATHLEEN:** Oh, medium height, strongly built. Not especially handsome, but terribly well-dressed, and with the most penetrating eyes. Dark blue-almost purple. A man whose outsides are all rocklike naval dignity, quite simple to sculpt. But whose insides are altogether different. Inside is- a fearful yearning. And- I think a kind of terror.

**SCOTT:** Of what?

**KATHLEEN:** Failure. (Pause.) Perhaps the yearning is for failure too. (Pause.) I was promised a smashing celebrity, and I got a haunted man.

**SCOTT:** It sounds as though you were terribly disappointed.

**KATHLEEN:** I can't decide.

**SCOTT:** Perhaps you're merely jealous, then.

**KATHLEEN:** Jealous? Of your kind of celebrity? Don't be idiotic.

**SCOTT:** Of my freedom. Because I don't fit so comfortably into little rooms as you do. Because a piece of clay that size isn't large enough to hold my dreams. Perhaps that's why you feel so compelled to challenge me, Miss Bruce.

**KATHLEEN:** And perhaps you're merely mad! Yes, I think you might have to be, to want to go to such a boring place.

**SCOTT:** A place where one might be killed at any instant could be called a great many things. Boring is not one of them.

**KATHLEEN.** Silly is. And melodramatic. And self- publicizing.

**SCOTT:** You needn't flatter me any further. I'll go.

(Kathleen stops Scott with her voice before he can get far.)

**KATHLEEN:** A place where you might be killed at any instant is not a place worth going to at all! That's merely vulgar. I should think it would make more sense to go to a place where one might suddenly, at any moment, become alive! A daring expedition, deep into the darkest depths of a concert hall, or theatre! The dizzying ascent to the top floor of an art gallery- never before seen! Now that would be really dangerous! One might have to open one's eyes and see, and think, and feel and come out a different person altogether on the other side. But I suppose exploits like those don't often capture the headlines.

**SCOTT:** I've seldom met anyone who had such an elevated opinion of me.

**SIDE # 3 SCOTT/KATHLEEN**

**KATHLEEN:** Not of you.

**SCOTT:** Of my motives, then.

**KATHLEEN:** Do you know what would frighten me, I think, if I were you? Just a little bit.

**SCOTT:** (To Kathleen.) What?

**KATHLEEN:** The way they make a sacred national hero of you in the schools now. They hold you up as an example to the children.

**SCOTT:** Oh, yes, I've heard about that. It's now their assigned pleasure to be bored by my exploits. But that's hardly frightening-unless you mean the danger of putting them to sleep.

**KATHLEEN:** No, I mean the danger of foolish ideas seeping into immature minds. The idea that daring is more to be respected than their own precious safety. That duty and honor should be held above an independent spirit, and that patriotism is more important than anything, more even than thinking for themselves. We shall have a whole generation of adventurers, Captain Scott, nurtured by you.

**SCOTT:** Patriotism is not a joke, Miss Bruce. Honor and daring and sacred duty are not empty words. I despise to see them mocked by those who would scarcely be safe and warm in their homes, were it not for men who believed in them, and believed enough to offer their lives. Those words are our glory, they made the British Empire what it is today.

**KATHLEEN:** Then perhaps one day they will topple it, as well. You may go to the Pole, Captain Scott, but what of your young worshippers left at home? What adventures will remain for them? How shall we ever satisfy so many?

**SCOTT:** Let us make a pact, Miss Bruce-shall we? I shall leave off talking of sculpture, about which I've admitted I know nothing-and you will leave off this idle speculation about the nature of patriotism, of which you seem to know even less.

**KATHLEEN:** Oh dear! You don't frighten me, Captain Scott. Though you seem to be a most contrary man, and as different from me as chalk from cheese. In the event, I've made up my mind anyway, so our differences scarcely matter. I knew last night when I chose you.

**SCOTT:** ( after a pause.) Chose me, Miss Bruce?

**KATHLEEN:** You are the man who will give me a son. (Pause.) With the benefit of wedlock, or without, as you wish.

**SIDE #4 WILSON/SCOTT/ BOWERS**

**SCOTT:** What are his chances?

**WILSON:** If I keep him pumped full of morphine? He may be able to hobble another week. Only because he's as strong as a bull. Another man would've collapsed days ago. After that? I don't know- perhaps if he were on the sledge- if we had the strength to pull it ...

**SCOTT:** But what are his chances?

**WILSON:** He hasn't any. Not a hope.

**SCOTT:** Even if we carry him?

**WILSON:** This kind of decay is irreversible. If we tried to carry him the effort, weak as we are, could kill us all. It's a horrible thing to say, but we were lucky with Evans. With Titus- he's already slowed us down so badly, well- if he doesn't die within the next few days we're going to be in a very desperate position, Robert.

**SCOTT:** Does he know it?

**WILSON:** In his heart, perhaps. But you know Titus-he'll march until he drops.

**BOWERS:** (After a pause; quietly.) Wilson-how much opium in your kit?

**WILSON:** (Looking in the kit.) In tablets, a hundred and twenty of opium, and one vial of morphine. Enough to last him perhaps ten days.

**BOWERS:** I wasn't thinking of Titus at the moment. (They look at Bowers.) That's thirty tablets each, and the morphine. That's enough for a lethal dose, if you took it all at once, isn't it?

**WILSON:** I'm not even going to listen to this.

**BOWERS:** All I'm suggesting is that each of us has the right to end it if he sees fit, and if it comes to that. Quiet, peaceful, and with dignity. I just don't want to lose my mind! That would be the worst, to go without knowing why, or even who you are. To die like an animal. I say we divide up those drugs now.

**WILSON:** No.

**BOWERS:** Why not?

**WILSON:** Because it hasn't come to that yet, and I won't give you the means.

**BOWERS:** As a doctor?

**WILSON:** As your friend.

**BOWERS:** Damn it, Wilson, we're entitled! Did you see Evans's face?

**WILSON:** (Angrily.) If you have the means to end it at any moment, then there's little reason not to! You can simply take the easy way out. Well, that's not going to pull us through, none of us! It's only going to sap our will, and we might as well be dead now. I absolutely refuse.

**SCOTT:** I-I agree with Birdie. (Wilson stares at him in disbelief. ) Each man has the right to do as he sees fit- I won't deny that to anyone. Divide the drugs.

**SIDE #4 WILSON/SCOTT/ BOWERS**

**WILSON:** Do you think I like to see a man dying under my eyes when I can't lift a finger to save him? But I've got to think of the ones that might be saved, and not the one who's certainly lost. And you want me to help you murder yourselves!

**SCOTT:** I'm sick of playing God, Wilson! I won't have it anymore, not even from you.

**WILSON:** Is that an order?

**SCOTT:** I'm afraid you make me insist.

**WILSON:** Then I'm afraid, too. And I want it clearly recorded in the journal that it was over my objections, and that I strongly warned against it. .

**SCOTT:** Agreed.



SIDE # 5 SCOTT/EVANS

**SCOTT:** Your hand is frostbitten. You know that, don't you? Very badly frostbitten.

**EVANS:** Well, yes sir. I reckon I did catch a bit of it, didn't I?

**SCOTT:** Not a bit, a very great deal. If we were back at base camp this hand would be amputated.

**EVANS:** Well, they might be able to do *something* for me at base. Stitches and that. I mean, there's always hope, isn't there, Sir?

**SCOTT:** You knew it wouldn't have a chance of healing in this cold. You knew that! And yet you selfishly said nothing. Do you realize what this means to the rest of us?

**EVANS:** I thought- if I took care of it- it might ...

**SCOTT:** (Furiously.) Damn it, Evans, stop pretending! Your hand is dead, do you understand that? Dead! It's going to swell up and turn black and rot off your arm!

**EVANS:** (Defiantly.) Yes, sir. I knew that right off.

**SCOTT:** Then why in hell did you keep your mouth shut, you stupid bloody fool?

**EVANS:** (Quietly.) I was afraid you'd send me back. (Scott is unable to face him.) I knew you would. One look and you'd've packed me off with the support party, straight back to Base Camp, and I couldn't hardly say I'd blame you. But I didn't want to be sent back, I couldn't be sent back- for nothing, for a-a little cut-well that wouldn't have been fair, would it? (Pause.) I wanted to go to the Pole. Well, it means a lot to the old ones back in Rhossily that I'd been chosen - and I thought- it'd be worth a hand for that, to go to the Pole, to be one of the first. And so I took my choice, and peace with it. You, you're a wonderful great man, there's babies named after you. That's all I wanted, same as the rest, and I was willing to take my chance right along- I knew I'd never get another my whole life long if I mucked this up. But I never meant to slow you, Captain. God's truth and strike me dead if I did. Please you have to believe that. (Pause.) Only, what's to become of me now?

**SCOTT:** You're going to be all right, Evan. We're all going to pull for you from now on, and that will take the strain off. You can't haul, but you can still march. You've got to keep your strength up, though. I want you to eat now, and rest.

**EVANS:** Yes sir. And-you won't send me back?

**SCOTT:** I don't very well see how I can.

**EVANS:** Oh thank God, sir- thank you! You don't know what this means to me, sir.

**SIDE # 6 BOWERS/OATES**

**BOWERS:** Hey. How about here, eh? Lovely spot for a picnic? Running water, plenty of shade, bit of a view. I say, hope we shan't be bothered with ants.

**OATES:** That's even funnier than it was last week, Birdie. And past all comparing to a month ago.

**BOWERS:** Only trying to look on the bright side.

**OATES:** You're nothing but sweetness and light the whole day long. It's so depressing.

**BOWERS:** Guilty of good humour! Never again will I commit so much as a grin.

(Oates spits. Pause.)

**BOWERS:** Can't hear the crackle.

**OATES:** (Gravely.) Not quite ready yet. Let's give it a few minutes.

**BOWERS:** I've always wanted to see spit freeze before it hit the ground. It's been my life's ambition.

**OATES:** Right. You can't get that in England.

**BOWERS:** I'm awfully keen on it. (He spits again and listens critical[y.] I think I got one that time! (Oates shakes his head and moves away.) You know, Titus, I've been thinking. (Oates snickers.) No, no, don't laugh, I can do and have done. And what I've been wondering is- what's the nicest thing you'll remember about Antarctica?

**OATES:** Leaving it.

**BOWERS:** Well, that's fair enough, lad, that's well spoke. Not much room for discussion there. (Pause.) Aren't you going to ask me what I'll remember?

**OATES:** No, but I've a feeling you're going to tell me.

**BOWERS:** I like the way a day here takes a whole blessed year to go by.

**OATES:** How do you make that out?

**BOWERS:** Simple! Logic! It's daylight here for six months, right? A six-month day.

**OATES:** Right.

**BOWERS:** And it's night-time here for six months-a six-month night.

**OATES:** Yes?

**BOWERS:** Ergo, one day here equals a whole year at home.

**OATES:** Bra-vo!

**BOWERS:** Scoff all you want, my lad, but this theory of mine explains many puzzling and wondrous things- for instance why the sunrise takes a week here. I don't know whether you noticed, but we had a very lovely dawn last Monday morning through Saturday afternoon. It also explains how we won't seem to grow older as long as we're here- why, blinking takes an hour and a half, and a man may piss for a month! The puzzler is-will it freeze him to the ground?

**SIDE # 6 BOWERS/OATES**

**OATES:** We'll be shipping you home in a padded suit, Birdie.

**BOWERS:** (Sniffing.) Good. I'll be warmer that way.

**SIDE # 7 OATES/BOWERS/WILSON**

**OATES:** Evans has bought it. He's done us all, more than likely.

**BOWERS:** We'll all pull for him. Taff will make it.

**OATES:** And go short rations? Pull on short rations?

**BOWERS:** If we must.

**OATES:** Evans knows his duty, same as the rest. If he was any sort of man, he'd do what has to be done.

**BOWERS:** And what's that?

**OATES:** (After a pause.) It's not my place to say.

**BOWERS:** Over a cut hand?

**OATES:** (Angrily.) Now it's his hand. Next it's his feet, then his legs, then his lights. He'll go to sleep by bits.

**BOWERS:** Not Taffy!

**OATES:** Any one of us! There's no point getting sentimental about it, Birdie. It's precious late in the game for that, and the wrong latitude.

**WILSON:** (Evenly.) He's not done yet, not by a mile.

**OATES:** 'Course he's not! He could hang on for weeks!- Eating food the whole time, using fuel the whole time, and slowing us down to a bloody crawl. And then what?

**BOWERS:** You're a cold-hearted bastard, OATES: You'd tell your mate to do away with himself over a scratch and a portion of biscuit?

**OATES:** I tell no man anything. But if I were in his place, I'd know what to do.

**WILSON:** You're not in his place! You can't know what you'd do.

**OATES:** I'm a soldier, aren't I? And all a soldier needs to know is his duty. We're not one life, we're five. Would you like to kill your mates or kill yourself?

**BOWERS:** I'd rather live, thank you.

**OATES:** If it was one or the other?

**WILSON:** I don't know what I'd do.

**OATES:** Birdie?

**BOWERS:** (Angrily.) I never thought of it.

**OATES:** Think of it now. The time may come you'll look at the man walking beside you and hate his guts for not deciding. If it does come, then you've got my opinion already.

**BOWERS:** You're welcome to it!