

INT. ANDROMEDA STATION -- ANTARCTICA

ALARMS! BEEPING! The Chaos of everything going wrong at the exact same moment! Amid the cacophony, a FRANTIC TAPPING OF KEYS!

DR. LLEWELLYN  
(frantic and distracted)  
Mayday! Mayday! Mayday! This is  
Antarctic research station Andromeda!  
Mayday! Mayday! Does anyone copy?

MORE TYPING and a DOPPLER EFFECT as the frequency changes.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
(trying to calm down and speak  
clearly)  
This is an emergency transmission from  
research station Andromeda! All  
stations, all stations, all stations --  
Mayday, Mayday, Mayday! Electrical  
systems are malfunctioning and climate  
control is failing. I've lost all  
local and satellite contact and  
require immediate assistance! Mayday,  
mayday, mayday, this is antarctic  
research station Andromeda...

MALE VOICE  
(over the radio, with a heavy  
Russian accent)  
*Privet?* I -- I mean, Hello? Hello? Are  
you receiving me? This is Tchaikovsky  
Station, transmitting in blind. All  
vessels, all vessels, this is  
Tchaikovsky Station...

Llewellyn SCRAMBLES AT THE CONSOLE.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
(daring to hope)  
Yes! Yes! Tchaikovsky Station?  
Confirm! You're receiving me? Over!

MALE VOICE  
(relieved)  
Confirmed, Andromeda! This is Science  
Officer Utkin, receiving you loud and  
clear, over!

DR. LLEWELLYN

(more impatient than relieved)

Finally! Tchaikovsky, you might just have saved my life. I need evac out of here soon as possible -- power systems are failing and there's one hell of a storm kicking up. I'm at grid reference 0-10 by 0-17, Can you assist, over.

There's a long, STATIC-FILLED silence

DR. LLEWELLYN

(beginning to get nervous)

Um, Tchaikovsky? Please confirm you're receiving, over.

PVT. UTKIN

(uncertain)

Receiving you Andromeda. Please repeat coordinates, over.

DR. LLEWELLYN

(SIGHS with annoyance)

0-10 by 0-17, Antarctic international grid reference 11b. It should be on your charts, it's a fairly large station...

PVT. UTKIN

(worried)

Eh, Pardon me, Miss...

DR. LLEWELLYN

(irritated)

Llewellyn -- DOCTOR Llewellyn.

PVT. UTKIN

(amused)

Oh, *Doktor*, *khmm*?

DR. LLEWELLYN

(fast losing patience -- she's had to deal with this shit her whole life)

Yes, Doctor. There a problem, Private?

PVT. UTKIN

(suddenly on the backfoot)

No, no problem miss, no problem -- well, small problem.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (through gritted teeth)  
 And what might that be, Mr. You-tkin?

PVT. UTKIN  
 (irritated)  
 Utkin.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (holding her cool, but just barely)  
 Right, Utkin. Now -- problem?

PVT. UTKIN  
 (off-balance once again)  
 Right, problem. Well, maybe not  
 problem, more -- minor  
 misunderstanding.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (we can't hear it, but she's  
 counting to 100)  
 And what exactly am I not  
 understanding?

PVT. UTKIN  
 (mostly to himself)  
 Misunderstanding may be wrong word.  
*Da, net navernoye...* miscalculation,  
 perhaps?  
 (long beat as he thinks)  
 Maybe minor miracle, actually.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (about two seconds from exploding)  
 Private Utkin, the temperature in this  
 station has dropped 15 degrees  
 centigrade in the last hour, I have no  
 contact with my support staff, and  
 even my sat-phone isn't getting a  
 signal. I've been transmitting for the  
 better part of a day with no response,  
 and I would appreciate it, I would  
*really* appreciate it, if you could  
 please tell me what this "minor  
 miracle" of yours is, and whether or  
 not it's relevant to your ship sending  
 rescue craft before I freeze to death!

There's a long silence. ALARMS continue to sound in the  
 background. Finally...

PVT. UTKIN  
 (cautiously)  
 Miss Llewellyn, who do you think  
 you're speaking to? Over.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (so done with this she doesn't  
 even bother to correct him)  
 I don't know -- some kind of research  
 ship off the coast? Military vessel,  
 maybe?

PVT. UTKIN  
 (long silence)  
 Andromeda Station, you did say  
*Antarctic* grid reference, correct?  
 Over.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (exasperated)  
 Of course I did!

PVT. UTKIN  
 (awed)  
*Okhuyet'*. Andromeda Station, this is  
 Tchaikovsky Research Base at *Arctic*  
*Circle* grid reference 0-1 by 0-0.  
 (long pause)  
 I'm at North Pole, Miss Llewellyn.

A long moment -- then, the radio falls out of Llewellyn's  
 hand and CLATTERS on the console.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (scrambling)  
 Dammit!  
 (picks up the radio, CLICKS it on)  
 Tchaikovsky station, say again, you're  
 transmitting from the *north pole*?

PVT. UTKIN  
 (lost)  
 Da, Miss Llewellyn -- we are, so to  
 say... "in same boat." All our  
 instrumentation failed at same time as  
 yours, and no contact from Moscow  
 station since 0800. Rest of my team  
 left base to find help -- have not  
 returned.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (disbelieving)  
 How -- how are we talking right now?

PVT. UTKIN  
 (confused)  
 Um... With our mouths?

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (heading right back into  
 frustration)  
 No I mean -- our radios. How are you  
 getting my signal?

PVT. UTKIN  
 (suddenly excited, then falling  
 flat)  
 Oh! *Da!* I do not know. Over.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (growling like she hasn't had  
 coffee in three days)  
 Well that's helpful.

PVT. UTKIN  
 What was your team researching?

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (suddenly guarded)  
 Excuse me?

PVT. UTKIN  
 What was your team studying down  
 there? Over.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (with bruised pride)  
 Who says I needed a team?

PVT. UTKIN  
 (worried and more than a little  
 condescending)  
*Der'mo*, don't tell me *you're* all alone  
 in that research station?

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (shutting this line of thought  
 right down)  
 I like being alone. Nice and quiet.

PVT. UTKIN

(unsure and careful in his wording)  
I -- guess that's true. So, um -- what  
were you researching?

DR. LLEWELLYN

(we can hear her smirk)  
What do you think I was researching?

PVT. UTKIN

Probably same thing we were --  
worsening fluctuations in  
magnetosphere, and possible effects  
on... *tipa*, everything -- electronics,  
telecommunication, navigation...

DR. LLEWELLYN

(jumps in -- she's got an idea)  
Utkin! Utkin, come in! Do you have a  
compass handy?

PVT. UTKIN

(sarcastic)  
*Da*, compass is always handy thing to  
have.

DR. LLEWELLYN

(rapidly losing her patience)  
No, I mean -- do you have a compass  
easily accessible?

PVT. UTKIN

Oh! *Da*, it's right here, over.

DR. LLEWELLYN

(exultant -- finally getting  
somewhere)  
Okay, okay, good. Now, tell me where  
it's pointing.

Llewellyn sets the radio down and RUMMAGES through the  
drawers.

PVT. UTKIN

Everywhere but where it should be, as  
usual. Miss Llewellyn, what is point  
of...

Something CLATTERS onto Llewellyn's console desk.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (excited by potential discovery)  
 Where is it pointed now?

PVT. UTKIN  
 Now?

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (impatient)  
 Yes, now! Right now!

PVT. UTKIN  
 (confused, but goes along)  
 South-Southwest, approximately 210  
 degrees -- *der'mo, net*, now at...

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (confident, certain)  
 North-northeast, 30 degrees. Right?  
 Opposite of mine. And in about five  
 seconds...

PVT. UTKIN  
 (finally getting it)  
*Da! Da!* Turning again to 210. An  
 oscillating magnetic field...

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (more than a little smug)  
 ...with our positions as the center-  
 point.

PVT. UTKIN  
 (stunned)  
*Ya ne veryu etomu...*

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 That about sums it up.

PVT. UTKIN  
 (stunned)  
 You speak *russkiy*?

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 Nope. But I don't understand a lick of  
 what's happening out there, either.

PVT. UTKIN  
 (relieved)  
 Oh, Good. I have been -- what is  
 expression -- "swearing like sailor."

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (completely flat)  
 That I did notice.

PVT. UTKIN  
 (annoyed growl)  
*Khmm.*  
 (beat)  
 Are -- are your alarms still on?

Neither of them noticed, but the alarms did SHUT OFF a few minutes into their talk.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (surprised)  
 Huh. Guess not.

PVT. UTKIN  
 Mine have shut off too. *Strannyy.*

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (offering the olive branch)  
 Theories?

PVT. UTKIN  
 (musing, mostly to himself)  
 Well -- theoretically, a constantly shifting magnetic field could generate a low-level electric current -- create static buildup and overload v *elektronika, vse zhe...*

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 You're back to Russian again, doctor.

PVT. UTKIN  
 (waking up)  
*Chto?*

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (not mean, but not quite friendly)  
 Speaking Russian again.

PVT. UTKIN  
 Net, before that. What did you call me?

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 Oh! Doctor.  
 (awkward pause)  
 You are a doctor -- aren't you?

PVT. UTKIN

(sheepish)

Well, no. I am -- how to say -- more like intern. Finishing PHD soon, yes, but need more lab hours for graduation. Tchaikovsky's like -- summer job. Over.

DR. LLEWELLYN

(stunned)

They... sent a grad student? To the arctic?

PVT. UTKIN

(covering with humor)

Da, is fun. Get out of classroom, meet new people, work on suntan. Good program.

DR. LLEWELLYN

(trying to wrap her head around it)

But -- it's dangerous out here. There, I mean.

PVT. UTKIN

(amused by the silly American)

No more than going home for summer. Can be warmer here than in Siberia, you know.

(beat)

But you're already doctor, *net*? Why you leave cushy office job for freezing cold Antarctic base?

DR. LLEWELLYN

(defensively and reflexively lying)

I -- came to research the effect of magnetic flux on the local wildlife. No one else would take the post. Besides, I never *really* liked offices that much -- too many people, too little space...

She cuts off. Through the radio, she can hear Utkin YAWNING.

DR. LLEWELLYN

(annoyed)

I'm sorry Private Utkin, am I boring you?

PVT. UTKIN  
 (snorting awake)  
*Net, net Doktor, just so quiet now  
 that alarms gone, feeling so sleepy.  
 May take nap to conserve energy. Will  
 get cold soon.*

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (aghast)  
*Utkin, you can't go to sleep! Isn't  
 your life support out?*

PVT. UTKIN  
*Chto?*

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (straddling the language gap)  
*Your -- the climate control. The  
 heating! Didn't the flux knock it out?*

PVT. UTKIN  
*Oh! Da, but problem fixed -- I think.*

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (stunned)  
*How?*

PVT. UTKIN  
 (clearly in his element now)  
*Well, Static buildup shorted system,  
 but managed to insulate and hotwire to  
 manual. No temperature control, but  
 can turn off and on. Very easy  
 modification.*

A long beat, as Llewellyn tries to work out where they sit  
 with one another.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (willing to trust him -- barely)  
*Can you.. walk me through it?*

STATIC CRACKLES as the transmission cuts out, WINING, RISING,  
 AND FALLING as time passes until we cut in on...

INT. ANDROMEDA STATION -- LATER

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (friendlier than before)  
*Andromeda to Tchaikovsky, Andromeda to  
 Tchaikovsky, are you receiving, over?*

A moment of STATIC, then...

PVT. UTKIN  
(lighthearted)  
Andromeda, this is Tchaikovsky --  
"you're five by five." Proceed, over.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
(more casual than before)  
Hey Utkin, what's your status up  
there?

PVT. UTKIN  
(unsure why she's asking)  
Um... largely unchanged, Llewellyn.  
Temperature holding *mostly* steady  
since last week. No radio or radar  
contact. No major changes in weather  
either, so, little chance at small  
talking. Only thing... *kak skazat'*...  
only thing -- dropping? Is...

DR. LLEWELLYN  
(a little too cheerful)  
Fuel levels, right? Generators  
starting to run low?

PVT. UTKIN  
(a little surprised at her tone)  
*Da*. At about -- third of petroleum  
reserves now. Should last about two  
more weeks.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
(trying to be funny)  
So we've got a few more miles before  
the light on the gauge turns on? Heard  
that one before.

PVT. UTKIN  
(totally lost)  
Light? What light? What are you  
talking about Llewellyn?

DR. LLEWELLYN  
(still trying to strike up a  
rapport)  
Just, um... pointing out the obvious.

PVT. UTKIN  
 (losing patience)  
 Obvious?

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (on to business)  
 Well, your team hasn't come back, so either they got lost out there, or the magnetic storm knocked out GPS and they can't find their way back. Neither of us can get in touch with anyone back home, and for all we know, we've got the only working telecommunications system on the planet.

PVT. UTKIN  
 (one last try)  
 Please find point you're trying to make -- much to do up there.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (now *she's* losing patience)  
 I'm getting there, Utkin. So, we're totally isolated in the middle of this event -- in the eye of the storm, right?

PVT. UTKIN  
 (impatience is becoming a feedback loop)  
*Pravil'nyy.*

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (knows he's trying to shut her down with Russian)  
 I'm going to assume that means yes. So, what does that tell you?

PVT. UTKIN  
 (too sharp to be friendly)  
*Ya ne znayu, Doktor.*

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (now neither of them are really listening to one another)  
 It tells me that we're on our own. That if we want to get out of this, we need to work together. That we need to figure out what's happening, and how to counteract it.

PVT. UTKIN

(*that catches his attention*)

*Chto?* I mean, what? Miss Llewellyn, we are *v odinochestve* -- alone, *da*, alone out here. I have not much equipment, and most of it is for resource survey. How can we...

DR. LLEWELLYN

(sees an opening and latches on)

Because I'm not *Miss* Llewellyn, Private Utkin, I'm *Doctor* Llewellyn. *Doctor*. The youngest woman -- the youngest person -- to ever earn a PHD from Stanford University. I've been studying this phenomena for years -- I know what I'm looking for. And if you work with me on this...

PVT. UTKIN

(cutting her off)

And just how young are you?

DR. LLEWELLYN

(taken aback)

Excuse me?

PVT. UTKIN

(slightly defensive, but still questioning)

Well, you do sound rather young to be running an arctic research station all by your lonely.

DR. LLEWELLYN

(through gritted teeth)

*Lonesome.*

PVT. UTKIN

*Chto?*

DR. LLEWELLYN

(explodes)

Christ on a skidoo, would it kill you to try and speak English, Comrade Kelvin!

PVT. UTKIN

(taken aback, but quickly getting angry)

*Aga, shchas tovarishch Doktor.* Would

you die, too, if you tried to speak a little *Russkiy*?

DR. LLEWELLYN  
(short temper's have run out)  
I. Don't. Speak. Russian.

PVT. UTKIN  
(gloating)  
Then you should be glad I speak *angliyskiy* at all, *tovarishch*.  
"Comrade Kelvin." Pah! Would be cruel joke if one person you could talk to was one person you couldn't understand.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
(muttering)  
That *would* be funny, wouldn't it?

PVT. UTKIN  
(sarcastic)  
Sorry, didn't quite get that *Doktor*. I think I might be losing signal, over.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
(temper flares again)  
I said it *would* be something, wouldn't it, if the only person I could talk to in the entire world *sounded like a goddamn Bond villain!*

A long, hurtful silence.

PVT. UTKIN  
(a little too quickly -- he's hurt and trying to hide it)  
Sorry, didn't get that, must be storm, losing signal, try again later, over and out!

DR. LLEWELLYN  
(suddenly regretful)  
No wait, Utkin, I...!

CLICK. Too late. STATIC is the only answer.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
(realizing it was a mistake but still mad as hell)  
Dammit.

STATIC CRACKLES, RISING AND FALLING with the passage of time until...

INT. TCHAIKOVSKY STATION -- EVEN LATER

ALARMS! SIRENS! SOMETHING'S ON FIRE! (probably several things) Utkin emerges from the noise, COUGHING LOUDLY as he FUMBLES at the radio console.

PVT. UTKIN  
 (between hacks)  
 Andromeda Station, Andromeda Station,  
 Andromeda Station! Can you read me?  
 (beat)  
 Llewellyn, I know you're there!

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (SIGHS LOUDLY)  
*Da. Privet, tovarishch Kelvin.*

PVT. UTKIN  
 (annoyed -- this really isn't the  
 time)  
 Oh, ha ha *Doktor*. Been studying your  
*Russkiy*, have you?

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (clearly loving this)  
*Nemnogo, Utkin. Nemnogo.*

PVT. UTKIN  
 (through LOUD COUGHS)  
 Well, If you are quite done being  
 pleased by yourself, may I bring to  
 your attention the fact that my  
 LABORATORY IS ON FIRE!?

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (snaps out of it)  
 What? Utkin! Jesus, are you okay!?

PVT. UTKIN  
 (HACKING UP HALF A LUNG)  
 Yes, yes, I am -- unharmed, excepting  
 minor smoke inhalation. Fire  
 suppression system should start...

There's a WHOOSH through the pipes above, then SPRINKLERS start, putting out the fire.

PVT. UTKIN  
 (clearing his throat)  
 Ah. *Luchshe*.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (clearly worried)  
 What happened?

PVT. UTKIN  
 (sheepish and halting)  
 Oh. Er... *tipa*, I was attempting to test my theory -- you know, about static buildup and discharge caused by crazy magnetosphere spin, and, um...

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (you can hear the facepalm)  
 Please tell me you didn't try to install a lightning rod on the station?

PVT. UTKIN  
 (defensive)  
 Not so much lightning rod, more of -- collection coil. My own design. Very clever, large solenoid made of copper wiring attached to station batteries to see if phenomena could be used once the generators...

DR. LLEWELLYN  
*Goddammit* Utkin! Your climate controls are already fried! What, were you trying to blow out the rest of your systems, or just kill yourself...

Suddenly, Utkin's stomach give a SQUELCHING GROAN. Utkin GROANS as well.

PVT. UTKIN  
 (pitiably)  
 Please do not say "Fried," *Doktor*, my stomach feels empty enough without reminder of real food.  
 (to himself)  
 God, could really go for some *shashlyk* right now.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (genuinely concerned)  
 Don't -- don't you have food up there?

PVT. UTKIN  
 (halting and guilty)  
*Da. Net. Navernoye. I...*

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (trying to pry a straight answer  
 out of him)  
 Utkin? What's going on?

PVT. UTKIN  
 (giving up on the lie)  
*I... khmm. Well, when I rewired the  
 climate controls, I forgot they were  
 connected to the refrigeration unit,  
 so was pumping heat into cold box for  
 week before I noticed smell. Plenty of  
 canned meat left, but...*

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (explodes in exasperation)  
 For the love of sweet baby Russian  
 Jesus and all the Siberian shepherds,  
*what were you thinking!* How could you  
 forget to check that? What were you  
 even doing?

PVT. UTKIN  
 (the answer comes like pulling  
 teeth)  
 I was... working on the collector coil  
 design. Wasn't eating much. Not  
 sleeping much, either, come to think  
 of.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (she's taken aback)  
 You weren't...  
 (beat)  
 Why would you do that?

PVT. UTKIN  
 (halting, but the answer comes)  
 Because... because I was trying to --  
 to prove I could do something right.  
 Prove I was not *idiot*. Impress you.

There's a long silence, and in it, a quiet understanding  
 grows.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (embarrassed)  
 Did... did you think I -- that I  
 thought you were a...

PVT. UTKIN  
 (doesn't want to talk about it)  
 Net. But... but you are youngest  
 Doktor in Stanford history, and I am  
 student from Siberian backwater who  
 barely speaks enough *angliyskiy* for  
 you to understand. I -- I *am idiot*.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (after a long pause)  
 Utkin...

What she says is lost in STATIC and the passage of time.  
 Longer than the others, before...

INT. ANDROMEDA STATION -- LATER

A DRILL RUNS a few moments, then shuts off. A second later, a  
 WELDING TORCH starts up and SPARKS AGAINST METAL.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (muffled behind welding mask)  
 You have a family back home?

PVT. UTKIN  
 (over radio)  
*Chto?*

Llewellyn's MASK FLIPS UP.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (genuinely curious)  
 Do you have a family? Back in Russia?

PVT. UTKIN  
 Da, of course I do. Everyone has  
 family.  
 (beat)  
 Well, except evil Soviet cloning  
 experiments, but I don't think I've  
 met any of those.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 That's not what I... I mean, are you  
 married? Do you have a wife? Husband?  
 Kids...?

PVT. UTKIN

(good natured sarcasm)

Oh yes, many kids. Lots of white picket fences and Jones's I have to keep up with. Very time consuming.

DR. LLEWELLYN

(LAUGHS)

Yeah, that sounds about right.

PVT. UTKIN

(reciprocating curiosity)

*I ty?* Is there a mister *doktor* Llewellyn? Or a *missus doktor*, maybe?

Llewellyn can't help but LAUGH ALOUD.

PVT. UTKIN

(immediately retreating)

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to imply anything...

DR. LLEWELLYN

(through peals of laughter)

No, no, it's not that. It's just we're...

(imitating Utkin)

"how do you say -- in same boat."

(LAUGHS)

No time for that sort of thing.

PVT. UTKIN

(concerned)

Really? No time for -- anyone?

DR. LLEWELLYN

(pulling herself together)

Nope. No time for anyone but myself, or so I've been told by several potential *mister* and *missus Doktor* Llewellyn's. What can I say?

(TAPS the device she's building)

Work is everything.

PVT. UTKIN

(trying to convince himself)

Da. The work.

Llewellyn stands and BRUSHES HERSELF OFF.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (misses his loaded tone)  
 Okay, coil's attached. That should be  
 it, right?

PVT. UTKIN  
 (shaking out of his stupor)  
*Pochti*. Just need to connect to  
 secondary comms circuit -- you have  
 fire extinguisher ready?

A WHOOSH OF FIRE RETARDANT is heard.

PVT. UTKIN  
 (satisfied)  
*Khorosho*. Now, connect to terminals,  
 negative to positive, positive to...

ELECTRICITY SPARKS, and Llewellyn SHOUTS.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (more annoyed than hurt)  
 Ah, son of a *borscht*!

PVT. UTKIN  
 (worried)  
*Doktor* Llewellyn, are you alright?

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (sucking her burnt finger)  
 Well, this things live, Utkin, I'll  
 tell you that for free.

PVT. UTKIN  
 (concern only growing)  
 Are you hurt? *Durachit'*, I should've  
 told you to wear insulating gloves...

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (LAUGHING to release the tension)  
 I'm fine, Utkin. Just a little zap.  
 And besides...  
 (Doctor Frankenstein impression)  
 "*It's... Alive!*"

PVT. UTKIN  
 (now totally lost)  
*Chto?*

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (forcing herself back into a  
 businesslike tone)  
 The device is working. The console  
 should be able to transmit directly  
 into the anomaly.

PVT. UTKIN  
 (finding his sense of humor again)  
 Don't you mean, *the huricano dynamo*?

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (annoyed muttering)  
 God, I called it that one time. And  
 that was after you convinced me to  
 look in the commander's locker for  
 drinks.

PVT. UTKIN  
 (jokingly defensive)  
 What can I say? Vodka is great comfort  
 in times of affliction. Most happy  
 memories from childhood warmed by it.  
 (beat)  
 Most bad ones, too.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (gentle ribbing)  
 Well if I didn't know any better, I  
 might think you were trying to get me  
 drunk. You know, if you weren't on the  
 other side of the planet from me.

An awkward silence as they realize what they said was too  
 close to how they're feeling.

PVT. UTKIN  
 (stiff, halting)  
 Um... you should -- try transmitting  
 with the relay. I haven't had any  
 response on my end, but your's should  
 be more powerful. Over.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (just as uncomfortable)  
 Yeah. Over. I'll -- I'll give that a  
 try. Over and out.

CLICK. The radio switches over to the secondary circuit and  
 the STATIC CHANGES TONE. A long moment of silence, and  
 then...

DR. LLEWELLYN  
Dammit, not again.

MALE VOICE  
(garbled through radio)  
*...Tchaikovsky, Tchaikovsky, ty menya  
slyshish'? Tchaikovsky, Tchaikovsky,  
Tchaikovsky...*

DR. LLEWELLYN  
(stunned)  
Holy shit, it works?

MALE VOICE  
(garbled, but getting clearer)  
*Privet? Ryadovoy Utkin, eto ty?  
Reagirotat'...*

DR. LLEWELLYN  
(jumps on the radio)  
Hello? Hello? Can you hear me? This  
is... um... I'm sorry, did you just  
say Utkin?

MALE VOICE  
*Utikin, da! Kto ty?*

DR. LLEWELLYN  
(long moment of indecision,  
then...)  
Sorry, wrong number!

MALE VOICE  
(confused and losing signal)  
*Chto? Kto eto...?*

A loud CLICK as she shuts off the radio. STATIC AS TIME  
PASSES BY, leading us to...

EXT. ANDROMEDA STATION - MUCH LATER

The WIND HOWLS -- the very sound of it is cold. Llewellyn  
SHIVERS under several layers of jackets.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
(into radio)  
Brrr! Utikin? You there?

PVT. UTKIN  
*Da, doktor. Chort, and I though  
winters back home were cold.*

DR. LLEWELLYN  
(through shivers)  
Yeah? Try Minnesota in January. You haven't seen cold 'til your eyelashes start f--freezing.

PVT. UTKIN  
I don't know about eyelash... what about frozen beards?

DR. LLEWELLYN  
(a little surprised, but mostly cold)  
Y-you have a b-b-beard?

PVT. UTKIN  
(slips into easy, familiar sarcasm)  
Oh yes, big bushy Rasputin beard. Keep pet monkey in it.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
(would be laughing out loud if she wasn't freezing)  
Hardy har h-har. Nice one C-Comrade Kelvin.

PVT. UTKIN  
(curious)  
What *do* you think I look like?

DR. LLEWELLYN  
(suddenly concerned)  
W-what?

PVT. UTKIN  
Well, I was just thinking -- I mean, you hear strange voice on radio when all alone...

DR. LLEWELLYN  
(trying to stop this train of thought)  
A f-friendly voice...

PVT. UTKIN  
...and when I sound the way I do -- I mean, Cold War was not so very long ago...

DR. LLEWELLYN

(trying to keep her voice steady)  
 Utkin, I don't th-think your some m-  
 monster, if that's what you're g-  
 getting at.

PVT. UTKIN

Just -- pointing out obvious flaw in  
 our relationship.  
 (correcting too quickly)  
 Our *Professional* relationship, I mean  
 of course!

DR. LLEWELLYN

(trying to change subject quickly  
 with her brain half-frozen)  
 N-no! I'm the one m-missing the  
 obvious! Brrr! We c-came out here to  
 observe the auroras under f-flux...

PVT. UTKIN

(joking again)  
 Now *Doktor*, if you were trying to get  
 me outside to look at the stars with  
 you, there are easier ways.

DR. LLEWELLYN

(so shocked she forgets it's  
 freezing)  
 What? No! That's not what this is!  
 I...

PVT. UTKIN

(LAUGHING as he shivers)  
*Uspokoysya, Doktor*. Bad joke.  
 (beat as he watches the lights)  
*Khmm*. Aurora is strong at my end.  
 Moving much faster than usual --  
 probably due to accelerated magnetic  
 activity in ionosphere, or could be  
 unpredicted solar flare...

DR. LLEWELLYN

What... color is it?

PVT. UTKIN

(surprised by her tone)  
*Chto?*

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (her mind seems far away)  
 It's blue here -- turning to p-purple  
 just before it reaches the stars.  
 Yours?

PVT. UTKIN  
 (trying to figure out where she's  
 going with this)  
 G -- green. *Neimovernyy*, such a green.  
 I've only ever seen them so vibrant  
 once before.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (a little surprised)  
 You -- you've seen them before?

PVT. UTKIN  
*Da, Doktor.*

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 Before you came here?

PVT. UTKIN  
 (musing as he remembers)  
*Da*, when I was a boy. I grew up in  
 Dikson. You know of Dikson?

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 N-no.

PVT. UTKIN  
 (amused as he muses)  
 No surprise. No one knows Dikson.  
 Small town, northern Siberia. Heh, too  
 small to even be called "town." Too  
 far, they say, too cold for people.  
 Only *idiots* live there. But it is  
 beautiful. Right on the shore of the  
 Kara. The ragged edge of the Arctic.  
 (pauses to bring the image to mind)  
 I used to watch the lights over the  
 black water when I was a boy. Folk  
 thought I was strange. Well, they  
 always thought that -- silly little  
 boy with his head in books. They told  
 me I'd catch my death out there, ankle  
 deep in snow, in the cold and the  
 dark. But the lights -- the lights  
 always made me feel so calm. Pah. I  
 could never sleep very well. I was

always thinking, always wondering --  
my brain never stopped. Except for  
after those times I watched the lights  
dance in the dark above and the dark  
below -- then I could rest. Then I  
could dream.

There's a long silence, with only the sound of the WIND.  
Finally, Llewellyn SIGHS.

DR. LLEWELLYN

(speaking from another time,  
another place)

We didn't get auroras very often. Not  
in Greenbush. Only a couple of times  
when I was a kid, and I barely  
remember them. But I loved the night  
sky. It was always... so big. So dark  
and empty, except -- it wasn't. So  
many stars, with so many planets, you  
just had to wonder.

(pause as she remembers)

I was alone, most of the time. Even  
when I was w-with other people, I was  
still lonely. Most of the time I still  
am -- at least back home. But... I  
mean, looking up at the sky and trying  
to c-count the stars, I just... I just  
knew I couldn't be the only one like  
me out there. I knew there had to be  
someone, s-somewhere, looking up at  
the the sky and feeling the s-same  
things I was.

Another long, heavy pause. WIND. Then...

PVT. UTKIN

(hesitant, but hopeful)

*Doktor*, I think I...

Over the radio, a SPIKE OF STATIC and a SINKING TONE OF  
FAILING ELECTRICITY are heard.

DR. LLEWELLYN

Utkin? Utkin! Do you read me, over?  
Tchaikovsky station, are you  
receiving?

Long, STATIC filled silence.

DR. LLEWELLYN

(from deep within her soul)

*Dammit!* Utkin, answer me! Please!  
Please! Don't leave me now! Not now,  
not after everything! Please, don't --  
don't let me be alone out here.

STATIC is her only answer. Her utter isolation -- physically and emotionally -- fall on her all at once, and she begins to cry into the microphone.

DR. LLEWELLYN

(through tears)

Utkin. Utkin, please. Please answer me. I need to hear you. I need you to make another stupid joke, so I can laugh at it even if it isn't funny. You can even speak *ruskiyy* if you like! I'll try to speak it too! I know I won't be any good, but...

(long beat)

Please. I need to tell you you're not an idiot. You're stone-cold brilliant. And I need to tell you I'm not any kind of genius. Well, I mean, I am, but I didn't want to be. I just wanted to have a normal life. I wanted to feel butterflies in my stomach when I saw the person I liked. I wanted to go to prom and feel embarrassed when I finally got up the courage to dance with them. I wanted to get engaged on a pier somewhere with the sun was setting behind us. But I was too obsessed, or maybe too scared, or -- maybe both.

(long, regretful beat)

I need to tell you what I did -- what I *didn't* do. I heard the rescue team, Utkin. The one coming to get you. On the relay, the first time I switched it on. And I got so scared at the idea they'd come and take you away that I didn't tell them where you were. I didn't tell you they were looking for you. I didn't try to get you help. And I should have, because -- because I wanted to keep talking to you, to have you to myself, but... but I love you more than that now.

(with more conviction)

*I love you, Utkin.*

A long, STATIC filled pause.

PVT. UTKIN  
(over radio, sheepish)  
*Doktor?*

There's a long, awkward pause.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
(more than a little embarrassed)  
Oh, goddammit.

PVT. UTKIN  
(trying to skirt the issue)  
Sorry to lose you there. Static  
buildup must've shorted radio -- easy  
fix.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
(mortified)  
How... how much of that did you hear?

PVT. UTKIN  
(just as embarrassed)  
Um... most -- of it? Pretty much  
everything?  
(beat)  
You really wanted to get engaged on  
pier at sunset? *Khmm*. Very specific.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
(voice a knife's edge)  
If you ever tell a living soul...

PVT. UTKIN  
(you can hear him put up his hands)  
*Uspokoysya, Doktor!* No one will ever  
know you are -- what is phrase? --  
"old romantic?"

DR. LLEWELLYN  
(sinking back into embarrassment)  
And the other part? The, um...

PVT. UTKIN  
(unreadable)  
The lying?

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (sheepish)  
 Yeah. That.

PVT. UTKIN  
 (sheepish)  
 I -- *da*, yes, I heard that. I -- well.  
 You know old American expression?  
 "Glass houses should not throw rocks?"

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (automatically corrects him)  
 No, it's "those who live in glass  
 houses shouldn't..." -- Wait, what?

PVT. UTKIN  
 (resigned -- he's painted himself  
 into this hill and will die on it)  
 You know how I said communication  
 relay didn't work on my end? That it  
 didn't have enough power to reach  
 anyone?

(beat)  
 That was -- that was lie. As soon as I  
 turned it on, I caught radio  
 transmission from rescue team in  
 Antarctic. They had your position, but  
 GPS is kaput all over planet. They  
 were trying to contact you, to get you  
 to launch flares. I could've -- I  
 should've told you weeks ago, I know,  
 but...

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (unreadable)  
 But you didn't want to be alone  
 either.

PVT. UTKIN  
 (finally admitting the truth, to  
 her and himself)  
*Da*. It's like you say, *Doktor*.  
 Everywhere I go, I am alone. Except  
 for here. Except with you, here on the  
 radio.

A long silence between them, as they consider what the  
 other's said.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (relieved)  
 We're both kind of messed up, aren't we?

PVT. UTKIN  
 (chuckling)  
*Da, Doktor. Da.* But same kind of messed up, I suppose.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (grateful)  
 In a way.

PVT. UTKIN  
 (hopeful, but still not sure)  
 So what do you say? Our rescue teams must be close by now. One call, one flare, and they take us both home.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 Do they, though? I mean, is that -- is that really home? For you?

A long, loaded pause. Then Utkin CHUCKLES.

PVT. UTKIN  
 (contented)  
*Net. Net,* not really.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (relief floods over her)  
 What do you say then? One more night under the stars? I think I still have some vodka left.

PVT. UTKIN  
 (smiling in his soul)  
 And I'm pretty sure I can survive one more canned meat supper, too.  
 (beat)  
*Da, Doktor.* I would like that very much.

DR. LLEWELLYN  
 (happy, knowing this won't last but trying to hold time still)  
 One more night, then. One more night.

The WIND rises over the snow. In it, we can hear a sound like the AURORAS SINGING overhead. STATIC RISES SLOWLY, until...

CLICK. The transmission cuts out at last.