

# Chapter V

Chapter V begins with Gore, struggling in the sick bay aboard the *Erebus*, nursing frostnip while also grappling with the psychological and emotional toll of a recent shooting incident. The cold has ravaged his body, and the chilling effects are made worse by the sense of urgency surrounding the aftermath. Stanley, the ship's doctor, is visibly shaken as he works to tend to Gore's injuries, clearly disturbed by the situation. His movements are hurried and frantic, reflecting his anxiety about the severity of the injury. Meanwhile, Lieutenant Le Vesconte, a man with combat experience from the Opium War, questions Gore with a steely focus, seeking to understand the details of the shooting incident. Le Vesconte's inquiry reveals the critical importance of the situation—whether Gore is certain that he shot a man dead. Despite the seriousness of the matter, Goodsir, the assistant surgeon, remains remarkably composed, offering calm reassurance to Gore. His composed demeanor stands in sharp contrast to the palpable tension around them, reinforcing the bond of trust and friendship between him and Gore, despite their differing ranks.

Gore's mind races as he reflects on the event. At first, he believed he had shot a seal, a situation that would have been understandable given the circumstances, but now, as the gravity of the situation sinks in, he comes to the disturbing realization that he shot a man dead. This realization devastates him, and he instructs Le Vesconte to send men to the body with tobacco and steel knives, hoping that offering these items might serve as a token of peace and prevent further violence with the Esquimaux. Le Vesconte, however, expresses caution, warning against arming the locals, concerned that the situation could escalate if they do not approach the matter carefully. Gore, however, persists in his decision, convinced that the gesture is necessary. At the same time, he faces his own physical struggles. His feet have swollen from the frostbite, but he ignores the advice to rest, determined to push on regardless of the pain. His

resilience in the face of both physical discomfort and moral complexity highlights the inner conflict he is enduring. Gore's determination to act on his conscience despite his suffering emphasizes the difficult choices that must be made in these dire circumstances.

The weight of Gore's actions weighs heavily on him as he prepares to put his boots back on. His mind is consumed with the memory of the shooting, and he expresses deep regret, though it feels hollow and powerless, as he knows the deed cannot be undone. It is during this moment of inner turmoil that Goodsir offers him a quiet gesture of support by squeezing his arm. This small, almost unnoticed act of kindness cuts through the tension and provides Gore with a brief moment of comfort, yet it also prompts deeper reflection within him. Does he seek solace, or is he simply too burdened to accept it? As Gore continues to wrestle with his feelings of guilt and the weight of his actions, the broader emotional strain of the situation becomes apparent. The chapter then moves towards its conclusion, with the atmosphere aboard the ship becoming charged with a growing sense of urgency. The watch reports that a party of Esquimaux has been spotted approaching, signaling the potential for confrontation or negotiation. This news brings the tension to a boiling point, emphasizing the precarious nature of their situation. The imminent arrival of the Esquimaux raises the stakes, leaving the crew on edge and the protagonist facing the uncertain outcome of their interactions with the locals. The chapter concludes with the sense that, even though personal guilt and emotional struggles continue to haunt Gore, larger, more dangerous events are on the horizon, leaving the reader eager to find out what comes next in this volatile environment.