

The Walton Base Incident

Scene 1

*Walton Base, the Arctic. The not-too-distant future.*

*DOCTOR MONROE RAIN and DOCTOR QUINN CARSETTE are sat together. Monroe is making notes on two different maps of the Arctic region. Quinn is looking through a large file containing various graphs and equations. They are both absorbed in their own work- This is the preset. After the audience have entered. The two doctors sit in silence for a moment. Then:*

QUINN  
Have you read this?

MONROE  
No.

QUINN  
You should.

MONROE  
When I have time.

QUINN  
It's very good.

MONROE  
I've heard.

QUINN  
Very relevant, to, you know, what we do here.

MONROE  
I'm sure.

QUINN  
You'll read it.

MONROE  
Yes.

QUINN  
You should read it.

MONROE  
I know. Sorry. I know.

*Beat*

QUINN  
Anything?

MONROE  
Nothing new.

QUINN  
Never anything new.

MONROE  
Well, sometimes. That Inuit village.

QUINN  
That was new, I suppose.

MONROE  
Another one for the list.

QUINN  
There's a list?

MONROE  
Yes. For human rights... things, I think.

QUINN  
Oh, sorry. No, I thought you meant a, a, list of new/ things

MONROE  
No, no, sorry.

QUINN  
Sorry.

MONROE  
Yes.

*Beat*

MONROE  
No, they- somebody keeps a list of all the Inuit locations which have melted.

QUINN  
Right.

MONROEs  
All the native locations. I mean, all the locations with, historical, or, er, spiritual importance.

QUINN  
Right.

MONROE  
They keep a list of them. Obviously, up here it's the most direct, but all the... yes.

QUINN  
Right.

MONROE  
All the locations around the world. Because, obviously, the flooding-

QUINN  
Right, the flooding.

MONROE  
It's not just here. The ice melts, destroying one village here, and the water from that melted ice floods another village somewhere in the global south. So they keep a record of all of them. All the villages. So there's a list.

QUINN  
Why?

MONROE

Well. I don't know. So we know what we've lost, I guess.

QUINN

And reparations, I suppose.

MONROE

Sorry?

QUINN

In case one of the indigenous groups sue. So we know what was lost, for reparations.

MONROE

Right. Yes, probably. Yes.

QUINN

When's the next supply plane coming?

MONROE

Only a couple of weeks. It'll bring the new team as well, for the summer. New folks!

QUINN

Exciting. God, I hope they're nice.

MONROE

They'll all have had to go through an evaluation first, I'm sure they'll all be perfectly lovely. It'll be good to have enough people to really pick things up again, though.

QUINN

I don't know. Certain benefits to being part of a skeleton crew.

MONROE

Like what?

QUINN

You've got more freedom. And more space.

MONROE

I don't know. I like it when it's crowded. After all, it's not like we're lacking for space out there, is it? An agoraphobic's nightmare.

QUINN

You can say that again.

MONROE

An agoraphobic's nightmare.

QUINN

Very funny.

*But it is, a bit. She can't help but smile.*

MONROE

"I coulda been a comedian."

QUINN

What?

MONROE

"I coulda been a comedian."

QUINN  
What?

MONROE  
Like Marlon Brando? You know, Marlon Brando in *On The Waterfront*? "I could have been a contender." Like that, but only instead of contender I/ said comedian.

QUINN  
Said comedian, oh my god you absolute nerd.

MONROE  
I have doctorate in climatology of course I'm a nerd.

*The lights flicker.*

QUINN  
What was that?

MONROE  
I don't know. Generator?

QUINN  
Could be. Do you want me to go out and check?

MONROE  
Might be worth it. No- Could just be a bit of random fluctuation. If it happens again then you can go out.

QUINN  
Okay. Okay,

MONROE  
Couple more weeks and then we'll be surrounded by people, don't worry.

QUINN  
I know. I know.

*Beat*

QUINN  
Franklin Base said they saw him.

MONROE  
Not this again.

QUINN  
I just think it's interesting.

MONROE  
You shouldn't... You scare yourself.

QUINN  
I'm fine.

MONROE  
Maybe. Maybe right now you're fine,

QUINN  
What does that mean?

MONROE  
With your condition-

QUINN  
*My condition? What condition is that?*

*Beat*

MONROE  
You know what I meant. I didn't mean-

QUINN  
Go ahead. Say it.

MONROE  
I'm meant to be looking after you.

QUINN  
Because?

MONROE  
Because you're fragile-

QUINN  
Because I barely scraped through my psych evaluation, is that it?

MONROE  
That's not a fair-

QUINN  
I'm not your bloody lab rat! I have a PhD! I can be treated like an adult, you know, I can.

*Beat*

MONROE  
I'm sorry.

QUINN  
Sure you are.

MONROE  
I just don't want you to get hurt, that's all. That's all any of us want.

QUINN  
I know. I know. But you have to treat me like a person, not a bomb waiting to go off.

*Beat*

MONROE  
I'm sorry. I know.

*Beat*

QUINN  
What was I saying?

*Beat*

MONROE

You were talking about the two figures. Franklin Base.

QUINN

Right. Franklin Base. Franklin Base said they'd seen two figures pass by in the distance within about three hours of each other.

MONROE

Let me guess, one was about the size of a normal man and he was on a dogsled, and the other...

QUINN

The other. The other was an enormous figure, at least eight feet tall, walking through the snow in rags.

*Beat*

QUINN

Franklin Base are proper scientists. Not tourists, not indigenous people, not hunters. Proper. Scientists. How do you explain that?

MONROE

Did they get any pictures of these two people?

QUINN

It was all blurred, they were too far away and moving too fast.

MONROE

What a surprise.

QUINN

Don't you at least think it's compelling?

MONROE

No, I think it's a weird arctic urban legend you've become obsessed with because you'd rather imagine there was some strange monster out in the ice than the truth.

QUINN

And what is the truth?

MONROE

That we are utterly, totally, alone. Even the people on the ISS have a more substantial connection to civilisation than we do. The truth is that the world doesn't need monsters to be terrifying, Quinn. The world's plenty terrifying as it is. The cold out there would freeze you to death in an instant if you didn't wear these absurd protective clothes. The wind would draw blood. The ice could swallow you whole. You don't need a monster to kill you, Quinn. The snow does that all by itself.

*The lights flicker again.*

MONROE

Something must have broken in the generator. Maybe a wire came loose.

QUINN

It's not that windy, surely?

MONROE

Well, you'd think not, and yet...

QUINN

What do we do?

MONROE  
I'll have to go out and fix the generator.

QUINN  
Out?

MONROE  
Outside.

QUINN  
Right.

MONROE  
I won't be long.

QUINN  
No.

MONROE  
I won't.

QUINN  
No.

MONROE  
So you'll be okay.

QUINN  
I've got a PhD. I think I can be left alone for five minutes while the grown-up fixes the fuse box.

MONROE  
It's a lot more complicated than a fuse box.

QUINN  
I really don't care.

MONROE  
I know.

QUINN  
And I'm assuming there's nothing I can say to persuade you to let me be the one to go out?

*Beat*

QUINN  
Right. Fine. Right.

MONROE  
Where's the communicator?

*Quinn passes a communicator to Monroe and starts to set up a microphone. Monroe is getting into their protective clothes.*

MONROE  
Thanks.

QUINN  
No problem. Call in if you need any help.

MONROE

I can handle a temperamental generator on my own, Quinn.

QUINN  
Sure.

MONROE  
I'm just going outside. I may be gone for sometime time.

QUINN  
What?

MONROE  
Nothing. Don't worry about it.  
Okay.

QUINN  
Okay.

*MONROE goes to the metal "airlock" door, and unlocks it. They step through, and close it behind themselves. Quinn stays stock still and watches. They stay there as we hear the sounds of a second door being opened, a rush of wind, and then the door being closed. Quinn waits a second longer, then switches the microphone on. When Monroe talks their voice comes through the speakers.*

QUINN  
Monroe, how are you doing?

MONROE  
I only just came outside, Quinn.

QUINN  
I know. Sorry. I just wanted to check.

*Beat*

MONROE  
I'm just getting to the generator now.

QUINN  
Okay, call in if you want any support.

*Beat*

MONROE  
Quinn can you check the wind speed for me?

QUINN  
Sure, why?

MONROE  
Just checking.

QUINN  
It doesn't look like the wind speed is anything above average.

MONROE  
Okay. Weird. Did Russel Base say anything about any polar bears seen in the area in their report?

QUINN  
No, there shouldn't be any here, not at this time of year. Why? What's wrong?



MONROE

Just looking at the generator and it hasn't just been broken, it's been torn bits. I don't know if the wind could do that unless it hit a pretty high speed.

QUINN

Maybe some machinery got blown into it?

MONROE

That's possible. I'll have a look out here see if I can see anything and then I'll come back in and get a set of spare wires. I thought I'd just have to re-connect a couple of them, but this whole lot need replacing.

QUINN

Roger that Monroe.

MONROE

Quinn.

QUINN

Yes?

MONROE

What direction- Nothing.

QUINN

Sorry?

MONROE

What size shoe do you wear?

QUINN

I'm a five.

MONROE

Okay.

QUINN

Monroe, I don't see the relevance.

MONROE

When were you last out here?

QUINN

Yesterday.

MONROE

Did you- Quinn, did you see any footprints while you were out here yesterday?

*Beat*

QUINN

Footprints?

MONROE

Yes, Quinn, footprints-

*Beat*

QUINN

What is it Monroe?

MONROE

Why have you come outside?

QUINN

What?

MONROE

I told you to stay inside, why'd you come out?

QUINN

Monroe. I'm talking to you via the base's microphone, aren't I? How could I be using the microphone if I was out there? Even if I'd taken another communicator you'd be able to see me using it, wouldn't you? You'd see it in my hand. I'm not out there, Monroe

MONROE

But- There's someone out here with me. There's someone- If it's not you-

*Static*

QUINN

Monroe? Monroe? Monroe?