

The Evening Was Cold

The evening was cold. Yuri sat at the rickety wooden table in his dimly lit cabin, the sun's rays muffled by the blizzard. The snow was a void that encompassed everything; it swallowed the light and buried all it touched. Getting lost in the snow would spell certain death in the minus fifty-degree weather. Luckily, Yuri was safe, eating his stew. Yuri's life was one of tranquility. He could hear nothing but the howling winds of Siberia while he was in his cozy vintage cabin.

"What happened?" Yuri thought. It had become pitch black in the cabin, the light bulb above the table had gone out. "No worries," thought Yuri "The generator isn't too far from here, I'll just take the snowmobile." He opened the wooden door and a blast of cold air rushed in. He quickly closed the door. He felt the cold air burning his nose and the sleet caressing his body. He heard only his thoughts and the howl of wilderness. "I'll have to be quick," thought Yuri "Or else I'll surely succumb to the freezing temperatures." He mounted the old snowmobile and a feeling of growing anxiety filled his body.

There was not much to see as he sped across the barren terrain. The headlight on his snowmobile only illuminated a few feet in front of him. If he had hit a rock that knocked him off the vehicle or strayed from his path, he would have become lost in the harsh and unforgiving plains. But this did not worry him. He had done this countless times before, it was a straight line from his house to the generator. Something truly unfortunate would have to happen for Yuri to get lost.

Then suddenly, the gentle hum of the engine had stopped and the light that gave him vision had ceased to exist. Hope was not lost for there was still light, he would need to hurry before the sun fully went down. "Damn it!" said Yuri in frustration. He knew he should have checked the fuel, he knew he had this anxiety for a reason. It had been a long time since he checked the fuel. "But it's no use moaning about it now," he thought "everything in retrospect is obvious."

He turned around and grabbed his decrepit skiing gear and his torch. Yuri fumbled around, trying to put his gear on, knocking off things from the snowmobile. "It won't matter, the snow will cover it all by nightfall," said Yuri begrudgingly. He hopped off the snowmobile and started the long trek. He did not know how far he had made it but predicted that he was three-quarters of the way there. This gave him hope as he slid through the dense snow. Although he was inconvenienced, things were still looking good.

After a while, his arms began to feel the burn of the strenuous exercise. The repetitive motion and the fact that the sun was going down took a major toll on his morale. The little

light that was left slowly slipped away. He was alone in the faint moonlight. It was just light enough so that he could see where he was going. If he didn't get to the generator soon, he would be in total darkness. The world around him would look like an endless abyss. The temperature was also dropping. The chill set into his bones like a wolf setting its teeth into its prey. But he was so close. He could see the faint outline of the generator about one hundred meters away. His hope had been restored.

He got to the power generator. It was surrounded by a tall industrial fence topped with barbed wire. The gate had a chain around it which had long since broken. The government did not care to fix it. He pushed the gate open, its eerie creak pierced his eardrums. He messed around with some wires and pulled a lever, and the bloated chugging of machinery started up again. He smelt the burning of wires and felt the residual heat from the generator. It gave him comfort, feeling something else other than cold.

But he had to move on. There was such a journey ahead of him. He wondered if he would make it home or succumb to the weather as many others have before. He began skiing, faster and faster, gliding across the deep snow, desperate to get back home. He could see the silhouette of mountains to his left, the mountains where he once skied as a child. Would this be his last time seeing this silhouette? "No," he thought, "I will make it. I must prevail!"

While looking at the silhouette, he neglected to watch where he was going, and snap, one of his skis broke. He had hit a rock. This was bound to happen and he knew it. He knew his shoddy equipment would break one day. But why now, why this day of all days?! He reluctantly removed his feet from the skis and trudged on. "I shouldn't have gone out to fix the generator," thought Yuri. "Everyone knows that going out in this weather is a death wish,". It got colder and he began to wonder if this was his last night on earth.

He could see the luminescent light of his wooden cabin glowing through his blurred vision, but he didn't know if he had the strength to continue. He was shivering, his body nearly frozen solid. He wondered what would've happened if he had checked his fuel or if he hadn't hit that rock. He wanted to be safe in his warm cabin, but the void beckoned him. It called him closer, tempting him with something warmer and an even greater sense of peace. He tried to go on, but he closed his eyes and the snow falling from the sky gently touched his face. As he let go and fell, the snow consumed him and the desolate plains of Mother Russia bade him goodnight.

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Year 8