

Antarctica

By

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CHARACTERS:

A note on the characters: These are two people who speak and process very quickly usually without any hesitation. Their pace is rapid.

William: Late 20's to mid 30's. A scruffy, wide eyed, fast talking lover with no filter. He has no self awareness.

Janet: Late 20's to mid 30's. A calculated, serious, job obsessed environmental scientist. She's like a doctor with horrible bedside manner.

NOTE ON THE SINGING:

William isn't necessarily good at singing but he's so overwhelmed with passion that he has no choice but to sing. He doesn't care that he's bad. He probably hasn't even thought if he's good or bad.

Lights up on a research lab of Antarctica. Janet is writing down data. A loud pounding on the door. She is startled. Janet takes a second and carefully walks over to open the door. Before she gets there William falls face first into the room followed by a small avalanche of snow.

JANET

Ahhhhh!!!

WILLIAM

Oh no I'm ok

JANET

What!? How did you get here?

WILLIAM

Oh I just walked here

JANET

From where??

WILLIAM

I.... uh.... the research center up the road.... it was... um-

JANET

What road?

WILLIAM

The one just down the road... it-

JANET

There's no road-

WILLIAM

Well not literally a road

JANET

Figuratively?

WILLIAM

Yes-

JANET

What does that-

WILLIAM

Well a path I guess. Snow Paths.

JANET

Are you ok? Do you need water

WILLIAM

No I'm fine.

JANET

Are you injured?

WILLIAM

Yes.

JANET

Oh God, let me take your pulse. What hurts?

WILLIAM

My aorta.

JANET

What!?

WILLIAM

I've been shot in the heart.

JANET

What!? oh my God let me get you some help

WILLIAM

No that's not-

JANET

Someone help! I going to put pressure on your wound-

WILLIAM

No I mean it's-

JANET

Point to where you've been shot-

WILLIAM

No I mean I've been figuratively shot-

JANET

What does that even mean-

WILLIAM

How do I say this, I've been pierced by an ice pick of love

JANET

Someone help!!! Let me call Terrence! Shit where's my phone-

WILLIAM

That came out wrong- I've been shot by an arrow sharper than Shakespeare's wit

JANET

Help! This man is dying!!

WILLIAM

Janet.

Long silence

JANET

How do you know my name?

WILLIAM

Janet.

JANET

How do you know who I am!?

WILLIAM

Janet.

JANET

Stop saying that!

WILLIAM

It's William.

JANET

I don't know any Williams'

WILLIAM

Yes you do.

JANET

No I fucking don't.

WILLIAM

From high school.

JANET

Help!

WILLIAM

It's William Myrick!

Long pause

JANET

Will Myrick.

WILLIAM

Yes.

JANET

Your beard.

WILLIAM

I know sorry. I haven't seen a razor in 4 years.

JANET

Sorry?

WILLIAM

I wanted to see you clean shaven.

JANET

Why? Would that-

WILLIAM

Dang it. I should have brought a razor. Or a knife or something.

JANET

What!?

WILLIAM

Oh boy this isn't how I imagined this to go.

JANET

Imagined?

WILLIAM

Oh no. You're confused.

JANET

Yes!!!

WILLIAM

Ah damn it. I thought you were expecting this.

JANET

How would I have expected some man I haven't seen in 10 years, to show up, in my lab, in winter, in ANTARCTICA!?

WILLIAM

This was way more charming in my head.

JANET

What are you trying to do?

WILLIAM

Silence

Considers: "how do I put this?"

Trying to marry you?

Looks at all the science equipment and starts fiddling with it.

Shit! This stuff is Amazing!

JANET

Takes it in.

OK I didn't hear that.

Regroups. Breaths in.

If you're not actually injured, I'm going to get Terrence to escort you off the premises.

WILLIAM

Look at all this science! Do you even know what all this stuff does?

JANET

Don't touch anything.

WILLIAM

So many gadgets. What are you even measuring? Is that a thermometer in an ice block?

JANET

It's a cutting edge hypersaline trace fossil experiment.

WILLIAM

I'm no scientist but the temperature of ice doesn't really sound too cutting edge to me.

JANET

Stop talking.

WILLIAM

To be honest it seems like you just accidentally brought too many gadgets and you were just like "what do we do with this?" "I don't know, stick it in that ice or something."

JANET

Terrence!

WILLIAM

Wait, Do you not remember me?

JANET

No.

WILLIAM

Yes you do.

JANET

Nope. Terrence!!!

WILLIAM

Terrence is dead!

JANET

What?

Pause

Oh my God. You killed him.

Pause

WILLIAM

Well no he's not dead, I don't think. He might be- I haven't- I honestly don't know who that is. Just listen to me-

JANET

Terre-

WILLIAM

No don't call Terrence. I'm not going to hurt you. I just wanted to.....

Silence as William tries to think of what to say

JANET

To what? Please finish that sentence.

WILLIAM

I'm trying but all I can think of are lyrics from the Phantom of the Opera.

JANET

Are you on recreational drugs?

WILLIAM

I'm high on love.

JANET

Love isn't a narcotic. That isn't possible.-

WILLIAM

Immediately explodes into song
"Anywhere you go let me go too!"

An awkward second

JANET

Wait. You're in love with me.

WILLIAM

Again
"Janet! That's all I ask of you"

JANET

Takes another breath. Tries to stay calm.
William, I'm sorry. But this is not- This isn't how-not at all- I have a schedule to stick to and this isn't how I expected my day to go. At all. Ever. This literally feels like a weird dream.

WILLIAM

I'm the man of your dreams.

JANET

No. That's not-

WILLIAM

Technically I'm the man of your dreams.

JANET

This is a nightmare.

WILLIAM

A nightmare is still a dream.

JANET

Ok.

WILLIAM

I'm the man of your dreams.

JANET

Fine.

WILLIAM

Great.

JANET

William this is a very, very, very odd thing to do.

WILLIAM

In what way?

JANET

I'm actually worried about- Are you- Do you have something wrong with you?

WILLIAM

Like what?

JANET

A disorder?

WILLIAM

I don't think so. Probably not.

A moment

So you don't really remember me?

JANET

William, I'm sorry but I had literally forgotten you existed until 3 minutes ago.

WILLIAM

Yes. I thought you might say that.

JANET

I don't know what you expected-

WILLIAM

Our connection was too strong for you to bear. You had to forget it in order to carry on.

JANET

Why would you think that?

WILLIAM

Remember that time you looked at me and said: "Can I borrow your pen?" and the look you gave me, it was transcendent. You smiled and your eyes. God! Your eyes I swear they sparkled. Literally sparkled And you gave me a look. I know you remember this. You said "thank you.. I like your shoes by the way" You said that! I thought "why would she say that? They're just normal dress shoes." And then at that very moment our thoughts spoke. You said "I love you William." ...Well, you didn't say that but you thought it and I heard it in my head.

JANET

Look William. I vaguely remember speaking to you maybe once. You were in my math class? I think?

WILLIAM

Yes. Algebra II

JANET

Ok. I have no recollection of that.

William finally realizes that she doesn't love him. A long pause.

WILLIAM

Oh no.

JANET

Yeah, so.

WILLIAM

Fuck.

JANET

Yeah.

WILLIAM

How did that happen? You realize, that moment in high school has ruined my life.

JANET

I'm sorry.

They stare at each other. He realizes that he's stuck in Antarctica and this did not go the way he expected.

WILLIAM

Well now what the fuck am I supposed to do!?

Silence

JANET

Just let me take a second to- Just let me process all this.

WILLIAM

Fine. I mean it's not like I'm going anywhere.

As Janet thinks William sings to himself introspectively these lyrics really speak to him at this moment.

"Once upon a time I was falling in love and now I'm only falling apart I don't know what to do a total eclips-"

JANET

So you traveled all that way just to woo me?

WILLIAM

hm? yeah. Took me 4 years to get here.

JANET

I'm sorry?

WILLIAM

Fuck. I never thought that this might not work out.

JANET

Traveling to Antarctica in an effort to win me over despite the fact that we've only had one conversation?

WILLIAM

yes.

JANET

That's not how love works.

WILLIAM

Says who?

JANET

Science.

WILLIAM

Fuck Science.

JANET

Take it back.

WILLIAM

It's all just a bunch of boring numbers and paperwork!

JANET

Take it back or I'll press the emergency button and Terrence will be here in less than a minute.-

WILLIAM

There are all these steps that you have to follow and everyone gets mad if you do the experiments but don't write anything down after you finish it. It doesn't make any sense-

JANET

It's the only thing that makes any sense! Everything else is fake and can get confused. Science is the only thing that is real.

WILLIAM

Love is real.

JANET

No it isn't!

WILLIAM

Then why am I here?

JANET

Because you're delusional!

WILLIAM

No! I love you! And that's something that I know. I don't know a lot about other things but I know that love is real and I love you.

JANET

Oh please.

WILLIAM

Why can't you love me? Because you have a husband?

JANET

No. Wait, yes. Yes that's exactly why!-

WILLIAM

Sings again

(MORE)

WILLIAM (cont'd)

Let me be your freedom let me be your light!

JANET

That doesn't make any sense.

WILLIAM

You don't make any sense.

JANET

You traveled for 4 years in an attempt to uplift me off my feet and live happily ever after! You clearly haven't thought this through.

WILLIAM

Shakespeare didn't think it through.

JANET

What do you even know about Shakespeare?

WILLIAM

I read all the sonnets!

JANET

Those are tiny. Have you read any of the histories? The tragedies?

WILLIAM

Those were too long! I couldn't follow them! Too many people and all the death was sad! So I stuck with the comedies and sonnets.

JANET

Those writings have been fossilized and are no longer relevant.

WILLIAM

The imagery and metaphors are more relevant now than ever! That's why he's so incredible!

JANET

Takes another breath and regroups
How did you even get here?

WILLIAM

Took me 4 years. I walked/ran/biked/train hopped through North and South America. I did it illegally.

JANET

Illegally-

WILLIAM

I didn't have a passport.

JANET

Four years?

WILLIAM

It wasn't too bad. I sort of had to hop a couple borders. But I mean North America is connected to South America and South America is actually pretty close to Antarctica. So there wasn't too much swimming-

JANET

Swimming! That isn't possible. You would have died.

WILLIAM

Well I didn't. I actually swam straight from the bottom of Chili to Antarctica without stopping.

JANET

The World record for the longest time spent swimming in water that temperature is approximately 18 minutes.

WILLIAM

Impressed by himself

Hm! I guess I beat the record then. It really wasn't that bad. -Anyway, I guess I was so wrapped up in this moment during my traveling I didn't ever have anyone talk me out of it-

JANET

You really love me?-

WILLIAM

I mean most people didn't speak English along the way so it was hard for me to sort of tell them my plans-

JANET

This is just hitting me.-

WILLIAM

Not that they would have stopped me I mean-

JANET

4 years-

WILLIAM

I would have done this no matter what it's just that-

JANET

Will-

WILLIAM

I was so driven- What?

JANET

You love me?

WILLIAM

Oh yeah. Head over heels. Anyway, I actually saw a lot of cool stuff along the way. Stuff I wouldn't have seen otherwise.-

JANET

When did you know?

WILLIAM

A lot of- What? Immediately. I told you.

JANET

Wow.

WILLIAM

A lot of cool scenery that I didn't know existed. Northern Argentina is beautiful by the way. No one ever talks about it but it's absolutely gorgeous. So many cliffs! I never thought I would ever actually encounter a cliff. They're always in adventure movies but I never thought I would be in a situation where I would just be walking along, minding my own business and then BAM! Cliff. So that was interesting but yeah overall the journey was pretty exciting because I was thinking about winning you over in this big romantic gesture the whole time.

JANET

Oh dear God.

WILLIAM

Yeah so this moment is pretty disappointing considering all the time and blood and sweat I've put into this.

JANET

I could imagine.

WILLIAM

Yeah.

They share a moment

JANET

That's just not how it works.

WILLIAM

How does it work?

JANET

Well... it... it's not that. You stay with someone who you are excited to be-

quickly stops herself and continues.

Someone who can protect you and who you are physically attracted to in order to procreate.

Pause

WILLIAM

That sounds awful.

JANET

It's based on survival not a fairy tale. It's not the way the poems tell you.

WILLIAM

Really? Because that's exactly how it felt.

JANET

Well the feeling clearly wasn't accurate was it?

WILLIAM

No. I guess not.

JANET

I'm sorry William.

WILLIAM

I guess my hypothesis was incorrect.

JANET

Yes.

Another moment. They stare at each other.

WILLIAM

Well I guess I'll just go back then.

JANET

I don't believe that you have any other options.

WILLIAM

Ok so to recap, we decided that I love you, which is great- the best feeling in the world, but you? Don't?

JANET

Love you.

WILLIAM
Love me?

JANET
Correct.

WILLIAM
You love me?

JANET
I don't love you.

WILLIAM
Oh right.

Another moment
Well I should get going.

JANET
yeah.

WILLIAM
You're not really married are you?

JANET
No.

JANET
but you're just too scared of what we could be to want
to love-

JANET
No.

WILLIAM
Me?-

JANET
No.

A moment.

WILLIAM
Well.

JANET
Yep.

*She doesn't know how to act or what to do. They
stare at each other. A moment.*
Do you want me to kiss you or something? I mean 4
years is a lot to get nothing. I could kiss you if you
want.

WILLIAM

They look at each other.

Janet leans in. William leans in and is about to kiss her. Stops. Realizes.

No I don't want that.

JANET

Just offering.

WILLIAM

I don't want that at all.

JANET

What did you want to happen?

WILLIAM

Well, I guess I originally wanted to kiss you but now I don't want that. I really don't want that.

JANET

Ok

Sticks out her hand for a handshake.

He slowly shakes her hand.

WILLIAM

Ok well I need to get back actually.... I have a... thing.... that I... an appointment that I forgot about so

JANET

Goodbye Will.

WILLIAM

Bye.

JANET

I am sorry

WILLIAM

I think I'm actually going to just keep walking forward and see where I go. Maybe I'll get to Australia. It's funny, before I thoughtlessly pursued you to the edge of the earth I had never even left my town before.

Sincerely

Thank you for ruining my life.

A moment.

William walks out the door into the snow and starts his journey across the other side of the world. Janet Stands there unsure what to do.

Blackout.

End of play.