

## Cold Callers

By Anthony Anderson

There was only one house on Erebus drive. The North residence sat at the top of a long snowy driveway. Two huge black iron gates stood guard nearly twelve feet tall at the entrance. The spectacularly ornate metal framework promised visitors a gothic mansion house. Like all promises, it was quickly broken as the house itself was a single story, 1970s post modern affair complete with prefabricated fake fountain.

A withered hand touched the iron gateway and one side screeched open with the sound of brittle fingernails scraping down a dusty chalk board. An old woman in a ragged black and white dress stumbled across the snow toward the house.

Lewis North eased another narrow log into the wood burner and closed the grate with the poker. He stood entranced by the heat and peered out of his picture windows across the frozen wasteland of the moor. Shrouds of heavy snow clouds hung over the tor awaiting their moment to envelop. He put a pair of binoculars to his eyes and in the failing light of dusk tried to focus on an odd shape in the distance. Mid-way up the rocky hill stood a black horse. “What are you doing out in the cold fella?” The beast watched from his perch high-up on the rise. His dark brooding eyes stared back as if witnessing some unforeseen danger lurking just behind.

The doorbell gave one prolonged scream causing Lewis to drop his binoculars to the hardwood floor. “Damn!” he said as he saw one lens broken. He picked up the instrument and rested it on the black leather couch. Through the frosted glass side window of the front door he could see the dark outline of a visitor. The elderly woman stood at the porch, her skin as white as the snow behind her. “Hello?”

“Where am I?” the old woman asked.

“You’re on Dartmoor dear. Are you lost? How did you get here?”  
He looked around for signs of transport.

Her wrinkled face had a far-off look. “My son, he said would collect me from the hospital.”

Lewis scratched his head. “Would you like me to phone someone for you?” She gave a slight nod, barely aware of his words and Lewis backed away to grab his telephone handset. Before he could complete the gesture the infirm woman came through the open door and made toward the fire. She warmed herself by the glowing hearth. “So, who do I phone?”

Her outstretched hands shivered by the flames. “So cold...” she uttered. Turning her head towards Lewis she seemed lost in thought for a moment and he wondered if she was going to answer. Then a croaky sound came from the back of her throat. “Tavistock... 1826.”

Lewis dialled the numbers, inserting the code from memory. “Who should I ask for?”

“Stanley... My son.”

The tone sounded and then a voice of a man answered.

“Stanley?”

“*Yep, who is it?*”

“I’m Lewis North over near Sheepstor. Look, I’ve got your mother here; she says you were supposed to pick her up from the hospital, Derriford I suppose. She’s really confused and seems to have been wandering about in the snow up here. Can you come and get her?”

*“You’ve got the wrong number, it’s not my mother. My mum died two years ago.”*

“Look hold on for a moment will you,” said Lewis irritated. He turned back to the fire. “Did you give me the right num...” but the old woman was gone. Putting down the receiver he ran into the kitchen, checked the bathroom, bedrooms and office but she wasn’t anywhere in sight. For the next half hour he checked and rechecked every closet, wardrobe and crawlspace in the house searching for her but she was nowhere inside.

The hypnotic swirl of snowflakes caught in the headlights drew Bennett in as he drove. Outside was a black curtain with nothing but rolling dots. The blackness gave little to focus the eyes on, punctuated only by the regular random huge dips in the road that left the stomach in limbo. Coles kept a close eye on his driving, his face pressed almost to the windscreen watching for any sudden changes on the pitch black road he stared into.

“Can we put the heat up?” Coles asked.

Clearly irritated by her presence he clicked the dial only one notch. When he spoke, he timed his words to inject between beats of the wiper blades. “This isn’t permanent is it? You I mean.”

“No, I don’t think so. It’s just a bit of on-beat experience.”

“No offence, but this is a small area to cover and it doesn’t need two of us. Plus a new WPC fresh out of college... We don’t get many ‘domestics’ on the moor.”

“I suppose they thought...”

He didn’t give her time to finish. “I mean, shouldn’t you be walking the streets or something?”

“I’m sorry?”

“Getting some experience, actually on the street. You aren’t going to get any out here with me. You should be covering Union Street on a Thursday night or walking around Stonehouse. A nice-looking constable like you would make a good undercover prostitute.” Coles never replied. They passed a snowplough then Bennett pulled them off the main road onto a bumpy dirt track. “This leads to Erebus drive.” He parked them outside the black gates and Coles took a long look at the beautifully shaped iron framework. “Not scared are you?”

She shook her head. “They seem out of place that’s all.”

Bennett crunched ahead over the virgin snow toward the house where Lewis was waiting at the door.

“Thanks for coming out,” he called.

“Officer Bennett,” he announced, then pointing at his partner, “WPC Coles. You called the dispatcher about an intruder?”

Lewis related the details, now certain the old woman had somehow slipped out of the house while he was on the phone. Bennett made Coles write it all down then ordered her out into the snow to search for the missing woman. She walked around the house with only the light from the picture windows, her feet sinking further into the snow with each step.

“This is just the latest unexpected visitor I’ve had recently,” said Lewis to Bennett back inside the house. “Is there an asylum just opened somewhere near or something?”

“Not that I know of sir.”

“I’ve had an aggressive biker call at the door, an old bloke who just walked around in the fields for an hour, wouldn’t answer me when I called him. I only live here because I like peace and quiet but it’s getting ridiculous.”

Coles came back. One leg of her uniform was soaking wet. “I stepped in your pool by accident, didn’t see it; there was snow on the cover.”

Bennett laughed at her. “Find anything?”

“Nothing, not even footprints in the snow, and this happened tonight you say?”

“Yes, of course,” said Lewis.

“There weren’t any footprints by the gates either.”

Bennett picked up on this point. “Yes I noticed that too, there would have been some footsteps, it hasn’t snowed enough since then to erase them entirely.”

Lewis shook his head. He knew it was a waste of time calling them out.

“On the subject of your gates, are they new?” asked Coles.

“Yes, how can you tell? Some idiot delivery driver reversed into the last ones so I had those made. Local man. Cost me £4,000 though but nice work.”

“I thought I knew you!” said Bennett. “You won the lottery didn’t you?”

Lewis folded his arms. “Ten years ago.”

“Yes, yes. I remember you; we’ve spoken before, a few times in fact.”

Lewis became visibly uncomfortable. “I really don’t remember,”

“I have a good memory for this kind of thing. You frequent Stonehouse don’t you? That’s where we’ve met before.”

Coles paid particular interest to Bennett’s recollection. The interaction and body language between the two men suddenly became intense. Lewis was shifting from side to side like a mouse on the moors while Bennett became darker, hovering like a hawk preparing to swoop.

“Well,” said Lewis. “That doesn’t really have anything to do with this now does it.”

“Are you quite sure sir?” I mean this woman isn’t...”

Lewis knew where he was going. “Oh do me a favour! She’s an old lady, seventy if she’s a day!”

“Just making sure mister North. Just in case this woman is another one of your female relatives; another sister perhaps or maybe your cousin this time. An aunty or grandmother perhaps? I have met an awful lot of the women of your family now haven’t I.”

“No, she is not, and frankly there isn’t a law against driving late at night thank goodness; as I’m sure I must have stated before.”

“There is a law against kerb-crawling though, especially in the docks area of Stonehouse.”

“Yes alright, alright,” said Lewis. “I think we’re done here now. Sorry for wasting your time. I was concerned about an old lady wandering in the snow on the moors but obviously you’re not

interested, goodnight.” He shepherded them out the door with his arm and closed it with a firm push.

“What if there is an elderly woman lost out here?” said Coles as they walked back to the car.

“I’ll do a bit of checking back at the station; make a few phone calls just in case. There’s no point in you getting under my feet anymore tonight. Maybe you should earn your keep filing or something when we get back, or make a nice cup of tea, that’d be good.”

Lewis went to bed early. He took with him a copy of *Black Beauty* from the top shelf. It wasn’t long before the rhythmic motion of his waterbed sent him to sleep. He dreamed of the horse on the moor. It stood alone beyond the back wall to his property amongst the barbwire bracken. It was dressed in black harness, blinkers and feather plume. Behind it stood a carriage, the type they once used to bring coffins to the graveyard. There was a stillness in the cool morning air, a gentle mist rolled over the frost covered scrub. The brisk breeze carried a cemetery smell. It was the kind of smell one can never place until standing amongst the gravestones. It was the smell of decomposing bodies beneath the surface; the gently rising gases permeating the soil. He tried not to inhale, the odour becoming stronger, more recognisable. In his sleep he rolled over trying to escape the growing putridity in his nostrils. As he thrashed in his bed, he felt the dampness of the soil around him as if he himself was lying in the grave. The bed sheets took on a rotting texture. The cold damp feeling began to seep through his pyjamas. In his unconscious state he shifted to avoid the wet. Trying to get comfortable, he rolled onto a squishy mass next to him. His face stuck to the cold, moist thing beside him. Nostrils flaring at the stench of whatever it was, he awoke in the darkness with a sudden jolt of alarm. He pulled away, his face and arm peeling off the sticky, cold blob lying next to him. Decaying material came away from it in his hand as he pushed away,

the texture disintegrated between his fingers. There was the taste of something awful in his mouth; whatever stuck to his lips was foul. He leapt from the bed and clawed at the light switch on the wall. Beside where he had lain was the rotting body of an old man, his decaying clothes and putrefying carcass lying on the waterbed. His long sharp fingernails had pierced the surface, his dead weight slowly sinking into it, forcing water up, soaking the sheets in a pool.

“No! No!” he cried slapping his own face, then pinching himself but the vision remained. He backed away from the bedroom, out the door and slammed it shut. Diving into the bathroom he got under the shower hose and turned it on full, washing away the gunge he was covered in. He took off his pyjamas; they were covered in green filth from the corpse. Lewis shook his head, then again. “Wake up! Wake up!” he shouted at the man in the mirror.

It was one hour, twenty minutes after he woke, showered and had a strong cup of coffee before Lewis felt brave enough to venture back into his bedroom. As he expected, the corpse was not there. Nor was there any sign of it ever having been so. Still, he couldn’t quite shake the feeling he had seen something very real and sat close to the telephone for the rest of the night.

The sun finally rose and rolled across the barren, frozen landscape. Naked tree branches wept icicles onto the frosty tundra. He watched lonely flames dance to the pop of the fireplace until it was late enough to make the call.

“Hello?” came the tired voice.

“Hi Angie, it’s Lewis North. Are you busy tonight?”

“Hi Lewis, it’s early.”

“Sorry, didn’t sleep so well. Can I book you for the whole night, through to morning?”

“No, I’m really sorry. It’s tempting though, I could really use the money but I’m not working at the moment.”

“Not working, but why?”

“The murder, didn’t you hear?”

“No, I don’t know anything about it.”

“You must have done, it was all over the news. One of the girls down here, they found her body last month. I knew her too so until they get the guy I don’t feel safe.”

“I never listen to the news Angie. Look you know me, you’ve been here before. You’ll be safe with me. You know I’m okay.”

“Lewis, I just can’t take the risk, I’ve got a kid, you know how it is.”

A silence fell across the line. “Ange, I really need some company. I had a weird experience.” He laid it all out for her, the visitors, the old woman, the dead man in his bed.

Angie tried to understand her customer’s needs; in her career she had heard everything and nothing ever shocked her. “I don’t know about ghosts Lew, it sounds kinda creepy though. Hey look I know a girl; she might be able to help you. She does escorting and she is a medium too. If you like I’ll tell her about you and give her your details. I’m sure she’d stay the night with you if you paid her of course.”

Lewis gave a reluctant sigh, he hated getting to know new girls, there was so much that needed to be worked out and there was the issue of trust. “Will she be able to do all the same things?”

“Yes of course, she’s a lovely girl, a little weird maybe, but harmless. I think she’s working right now. She’s braver than me, but I’ll have to check. Give me a couple of hours okay?”

It was less than three hours later when a dull thud came at the door. Lewis took his eyes from the moor; he had been transfixed by the tumbling flakes against the conifers in his garden. He glanced at the front door. A black shape stood on the other side of the frosted glass. A feeling of dread came over him once more.

There was a woman standing with her back to him on the porch. She looked towards the gates and the blanket of snow covering the drive. She was watching a taxi driving back along the main road. “Can I help you?” She turned and he saw an attractive woman in her late twenties. There was a wild gypsy look about her. Her hair was loose, frizzy and windswept; fire-red, plaited in places with mauve ribbons tied-in to keep those thin strands in place. Her skirt was short, with thick nylon tights and boots laced up to her knees. He noticed a small pentagram necklace nestling between her breasts. She seemed reluctant to speak first. “You must be Angie’s friend?” he said; “from Stonehouse?”

“Is it that obvious?” she said, checking her attire for signs of sluttiness.

“I don’t get many guests,” he laughed as he invited her in. Her presence lightened him, he preferred young and attractive company.

“Krista Bell,” she said. “Do you have any whiskey?”

The request caught him off guard, he was about to offer tea but willingly filled her a glass of his most potent scotch from the bar. He explained the events of the previous few days in great detail, perhaps even embellishing slightly. She peered across the moor with her wide brown eyes as she listened, occasionally putting the glass to her lips.

“I wonder what made these ghosts come to you now, why not before,” she said. “Something is drawing them here at this time; they are obviously lost for some reason. Do you have any idea?” Lewis shrugged. “It could be planetary alignment,” she continued. “Neptune is in its own sign Pisces at the moment. It’s a very mystical planet. The boundary between the dead and living is very narrow now.”

Lewis listened to her whiskey voice, studying her moist alcohol soaked lips. As she toyed with her red hair, Lewis became lost in her appearance; it made him forget the traumatic night he’d had. “You must be cold in that skirt. Let me stoke the flames.” He felt slight embarrassment at his thinly-veiled innuendo, but he seldom wasted time anymore; especially with girls that were on the clock.

She stroked her nylon leggings. “I’m not actually, see, they’re very warm. Do you have any silver?”

Lewis was puzzled by the request. Was she asking for cash?

“I need something made of polished silver, it must be reflective.”

He went into the kitchen and came back with an old knife from the drawer. “It’s probably the only real silver in the house. I’m not into trinkets.”

Krista held the blade to her eye and looked into its shiny surface. “Yes, this’ll do. This is a way to see the dead before they want to be seen. You can catch them by surprise like this, before they’re aware of you. They call it Scrying.” She walked around the house with the blade to her face, looking at the reflection of the room behind her. Lewis followed her through the hall and into the bedroom, enjoying her movements, then back toward the kitchen.

The phone rang and Lewis reached for it. “Hello? Oh it’s you Officer Bennett.”

*“I’m just calling to check if you’ve had any more visits?”* said the voice on the phone.

Lewis hesitated for a moment, taking a prolonged look at Krista’s body from behind as she leaned over the sofa checking all angles of reflection in the blade.

“Er, no. Don’t worry about it. No need to check any more, just forget I called you.”

Krista waved to Lewis as if spotting him across the high street and he took the phone away from his ear trying to comprehend what she wanted. “Tell Officer Bennett I said ‘hi’,” she said. “We know each other.”

Lewis put his ear back to the phone. “Sorry, hello?”

*“I said there are no old ladies reported missing so we’re going to close this matter. You won’t hear from us anymore on this.”*

“Ah, yeah okay then Bennett, good. Oh, ‘hi’ from Krista by the way.”

*“What!?”* said his startled voice.

“Krista... Krista Bell, from Stonehouse. You know, attractive, slim, red hair, into all the witchy stuff.” He spoke with an implied nudge of the elbow; a man-to-man, locker-room thing. “Krista, you know who I’m talking about!” Somehow he knew Bennett got the point. It was Lewis’s way of getting him back, even if he was wrong, the previous night’s repeated digs still festered. The phone was dead. “Hello?”

Krista burst into life. “I’ve seen them!” She dragged him to the picture windows. “We’ve got to go outside, quick before the light fades.”

A chill wind whispered across the moor. Foot-sized rocks littered the landscape half-buried in the frozen peat. Lewis checked behind, the house was still visible in the mist. Krista marched ahead of him, the vibrant colour of her blazing hair dulled into the haze. “You’re not planning to go all the way up the tor are you?”

“Just a bit further, I saw a circle over here earlier from your living room.”

“Yes, it’s only a small one. There are better ones if you’re into that sort of thing. Sousson’s common is a nice one. I could take you there in the car, it’d be warmer.” She began to vanish ahead of him, the fog growing thicker. “We’re not really dressed for this you know. I didn’t think we were coming so far. Back of the house you said. We have to be careful of the light. It’ll get dark soon.”

“Just over here!” she yelled back but he could no longer see her.

He followed the sound now, but all sound had lost its resonance, the fog absorbing all noise around. There was nothing, the moor was dead. He could no longer hear himself breathe. No bird calls either, they didn’t venture out this far from the trees or cover. He had often wondered about that. Even in summer he only occasionally saw high flying birds. There was something about the moor, they sensed some kind of danger. As he stepped around the craggy trip-stones he saw his first menhir appearing from the fog then the first few stones of the arc of the circle. Krista was standing in the centre of the ancient stone megalith. She had her arms out wide, her head back and eyes closed as if absorbing some hidden magical power. Lewis smiled, she was slightly crazy, he thought but in a mesmerising way.

“Can you feel it?” she said.

Lewis paused for a moment so as not to appear false. “Yes, it’s wonderful. Such energy!”

“Yes, yes! No wonder the spirits are coming here. They’re drawn to this place from your house.”

“It’s a good job I know the way back. One could get lost in this fog. It’s easily done and the light is fading. Aren’t you cold? I’m freezing.”

“Here, try it now,” she said, offering him the knife. “Take a look.”

He took the knife from her hand with some hesitation. She had an odd expression on her face, a wide-eyed enthusiasm or wonder. Standing in the centre of the circle next to her, he brought the blade up to his eyes and looked into the silver. Into focus came the arced stones behind him. Their lichen-encrusted shapes stood out against the foggy background. The grave-like stones lay silent and unchanging in the silver. “What am I looking for?”

“Look further into the fog.”

He did so, straining his eyes through the sliver of polished metal. He shifted his position, looking into the cloud behind. Then he thought he saw something; a grey shape in the vapour. It stood taller than the stones of the circle. “What... What is that? Is that a menhir?” Then it moved further into the fog disappearing from view. He took the blade from his eyes and turned around, looking directly but all he could see was white beyond the stones.

“There’s lots of them,” she said.

A shiver ran down his body. “Lots of what?” He could feel the blood drain from his face as he spoke.

“The dead of course, they’re out there in the fog all around us.”

He checked over his shoulder in case something stood there. “This is stupid. There’s nothing in the fog,” he said, offering the knife back to her.

Krista came to him and gave him a hug. “Don’t be frightened. Try again.”

“I’m not frightened. It would take a lot more than fog and stone circles...”

“Try again!” she insisted and pressed the knife back into his palm. She kissed his cheek and Lewis slowly returned the blade to his eyes.

He peered through the shiny surface again. Slowly he began to see shapes in the swirl. Grey shapes, moving about left and right, shifting their positions again and again as if wandering, lost in the mist. Lewis’s breathing became heavy. “What...?” he started to utter but he wasn’t sure if what he was seeing was real. Was it just the shapes of menhirs in the background fog or people walking around? He watched silently at first, one hand on the blade then both as he scanned around the circle, looking for more of the shapes. The more he looked, the more he saw.

“Incredible isn’t it,” said Krista. “There are so many this time.”

Lewis was afraid, but somehow with his expert beside him the fear gave way to exhilaration. He continued to witness as the shapes moved through the fog around them. “You’ve seen this kind of thing before?”

“Recently yes, but not like this.”

“What do they want?”

“They’re lost spirits, displaced from their final resting place for some reason. It has something to do with your house. Perhaps you’ve invited them to your home somehow. Have you had a séance?”

“No, nothing like that, I’d remember inviting ghosts into my home. That doesn’t sound a good idea. How did you know they would be here?”

“Just a feeling. Can’t you feel that shiver up your spine right now? That crawling up your back?”

His exhaling breath gently whispered, “yes.” There was finality to his word as if he had always known, perhaps since he was a small boy afraid of the dark that the tingling spine had a meaning.

“It means they’re standing right next to you,” said Krista.

Back in the warmth of Lewis’s home they sat by the fire and drank. The alcohol had calmed his nerves enough for him to load up with more firewood then he insisted they speak of other things. For now at least he wanted to let the dead lie. Krista checked-out Lewis’s uncluttered living room. “Why aren’t you married? Why do you need escorts?”

Lewis looked reluctant to explain. It made him feel as cold and distant as the snow on the tor. “When I won the lottery, I had a lot of interest from women. They could smell a lonely man with money. I’d be easy work for them, quickie marriage, quickie divorce; they’d get to keep half my wealth. I realised the only honest companionship was with working girls; they told me the price up front and I paid it. At least they were genuine. After that it was just me slipping into habit.” Before Krista could ask another question, Lewis silenced her with a kiss. She was a magnet and he could no longer resist her pull.

Her mouth welcomed his with a professional passion but soon became more. They slipped down onto the sheepskin by the hearth. Fire licked across the body of logs within the mantel, caressing them in its amber lips. “This has been the most interesting day of my life,” he said as he lay beside her. She returned his smile as he watched her glistening body by the firelight. He ran his fingers through her beautiful red hair. Lewis couldn’t hold back a feeling that was growing inside him. It felt like water rising in a dam, reaching the critical point where something had to give. Maybe it was what happens after a scare, the same human reaction teenage boys rely upon when scaring girls with fairground rides. They know the fear will make them cling to them, seek out the protection of a warm body next to them. Perhaps he was just getting old and finally needed to break-out of his past confines and embrace the new, the unknown. The sensation started somewhere in his chest, like his heart would burst, like a bubble rising in his throat. He wondered for a moment if it was the beginning of a heart attack but decided he just felt happy. He was certain this girl was what he needed, whatever the price he had to pay, not just for the night, he wanted more this time. Not sure where the words came from or what exactly he meant, he just said it. “Would you like to stay?”

She nodded. “How long for?”

“As long as you like,” he said with a welcoming smile.

“That’s quite an invite you know.”

“I mean it, you’re amazing. I want you to stay.”

She showed her happy face and nodded. “I accept.”

He leaned in to kiss her again but the phone rang this time and they both laughed. Standing naked by the picture windows he picked up the receiver.

*“Is that Lewis?”* came a female voice on the other end.

“Yes, who’s that?” he said looking out across the blackness of the night.

*“This is Carol, Angie’s friend. She asked me to call you. I’m the medium. She said you have a spirit in your house.”*

Lewis transferred the phone to his other ear. “I think there’s been a mix-up. Angie already sent someone. Krista.... Krista Bell, she’s here with me now.” There was a silence over the phone.

*“What is this?... Is this your idea of a joke? Well it’s sick! You fucking weirdo!”* She said and slammed the line dead.

Lewis turned back to Krista. She was kneeling naked on the rug. “I don’t...” he tried to say, puzzled. “Krista? Angie sent you right?”

Krista’s face contorted, her eyes grew distant as she focussed on someone standing behind him. “Lewis, look out!” She cried, and he turned, too late to see Officer Bennett standing right behind him, fist raised. He punched Lewis in the face and he went down.

“Nobody,” said Bennett, picking up the silver knife from the table. “Nobody, blackmails me!”

“What the hell are you talking about?” cried Lewis, holding his face. He tried to distance himself but Bennett lunged forward and stabbed him between the shoulder blades.

Bennett stood over Lewis grinning then noticed something from the corner of his eye; the shape of a woman. He turned and saw her standing in the doorway where he just came in. “Coles... You stupid bitch! I told you to stay at the station. Why’d you go and follow me? This puts me in a very awkward situation now.” Without a word, she raised her hand and fired a taser into him. The tiny harpoon-like

electrodes pierced his neck and chest. With a jolt of electricity he fell to his knees then over onto the coffee table, twitching and jerking. The fifty-thousand volts rendered him unconscious and Coles quickly handcuffed him.

“So you’re actually a detective and not a WPC?” asked the police officer as he studied Coles’s warrant card.

She watched the paramedics load Lewis into the ambulance. “Bennett’s been a person of interest in the murder of the prostitute Krista Bell in Stonehouse. We had no evidence against him but he had the opportunity and was the one that found the body. I was asked to work with him undercover for a few weeks. He gave me a weird feeling from day one. Something not right about him,” she explained.

They walked down the driveway together as Bennett was placed in the back of a patrol car by the gates. Coles looked up at the ironwork. “As a side issue, you should check out these gates. I recognised them when I first arrived but couldn’t say anything; didn’t want to blow my cover. They’re stolen property. They were taken from Wydownford cemetery. There’s a sheet and a picture on them back at the station.” Her gaze seemed lost in the ornate framework for a moment. “Strangely, they’re from the same cemetery where they buried Krista. I’m sure it’s a coincidence.”

A small team of contractors gathered at the base of the gates to the lonely property. A man on a cherry-picker levered one gate from its hinges then eased it into the hands of his colleagues. They lifted it onto the back of their truck. Lewis and Krista stood watching them on the porch, whiskey in hand. “Does this mean you have to go?” asked Lewis.

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She sparked a flirtatious look from under her fiery hair. “No, you invited me to stay, remember?” She moistened her lips on the glass but her lipstick left no mark.

He was happy they would get to spend time together now. “So what do you want to do first?”

“Let’s walk on the moor,” she said and taking his hand, led him in the direction of the stones away from the only house on Erebus drive.