

THE ANALOG SOLUTION

Written by

Richard F. Russell

Wordmstr007@gmail.com
910-285-3321
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FADE IN:

EXT. SIBERIA - VILLAGE - DAY

Winter in Siberia, as cold as a whore's heart. Darkness rules even in the day as wind whips snow across a barely outlined road. Half a dozen roofless, stone houses mark what was once a village.

Down the road come two snowmobiles, their riders bundled beyond recognition. They stop among the houses. One rider gives a thumbs up to the other, and they both shut down and park in the relative shelter of a house.

One rider gets off his vehicle and pulls a lantern from his baggage. He turns on the lantern which casts a bright red light.

He places the lantern in the road and hurries back to where the other rider has managed to light a cigarette. Both men share the cigarette as they wait.

EXT. SIBERIA - VILLAGE - LATER

Half a dozen cigarette butts dot the snow next to the snowmobile. The Drivers rouse themselves as a sno-cat stops by the red lantern in the road.

The Drivers start their snowmobiles and pull ahead of the sno-cat, leading it through the abandoned village.

EXT. SIBERIA - VILLAGE - CEMETERY - LATER

The sno-cat's headlights wash over a cleared area of frozen ground. A Driver steps forward and pulls the cord on a large, circular saw. He lowers the spinning blade into the unyielding tundra.

EXT. SIBERIA - VILLAGE - CEMETERY - LATER

The ground has been cut away exposing two small bodies wrapped in leather, children. One driver produces a body bag. Both Drivers load a frozen body into the bag.

EXT. RUSSIAN WHARF - DAY

PAUL, 40, glasses and long hair give him an activist air. Parka and mittens attest to the cold.

Behind him a small ship lies tied to the pier. The peace symbols painted on the side mark it as a protester of the seas.

The Cyrillic letters on the wharf indicate this is a Russian port.

Paul steps forward as a dirty, dented pickup comes to a stop. The DRIVER climbs out and drops the tailgate to expose two wooden, coffin-like boxes. The Driver says something in Russian, and Paul nods his head.

As Paul pulls out a wallet and counts out bills, four MEN come down the gangplank. Two Men grab each box and carry them up the gangplank.

INT. SHIP - BRIDGE - DAY

At the wheel, CLARE, 40, thin and wan, a woman who doesn't use makeup. Hair pulled back, dressed in turtleneck and jeans, she steers the ship toward open ocean. Paul enters and hands her a cup of coffee.

CLARE

Did you get what you wanted?

PAUL

Won't know till I examine the bodies.

CLARE

We'll be in international waters in two hours.

PAUL

And I'll begin the tests.

CLARE

Will this do it?

PAUL

Chernobyl's total effects will never be fully known, but we might unravel a mystery or two.

INT. SHIPS SURGERY - DAY

Wearing rubber gloves and a mask, Paul approaches two body bags lying on a stainless steel table.

He takes a deep breath and unzips the first bag, exposing a leather-wrapped body packed in dry ice. He carefully pulls out the hunks of dry ice and drops them in a sink.

INT. SHIP'S SURGERY - LATER

Two small bodies, dressed in peasant clothes lie on the table—a boy and a girl. Paul touches their heads gently.

INT. SHIP'S GALLEY - NIGHT

Clare sips coffee and eats cookies. Paul enters, pours a cup of coffee and joins Clare at the table.

CLARE

Any luck?

PAUL

They're still thawing.

CLARE

If you find what you are looking for, then what?

PAUL

We change the world, Clare, we change the world.

CLARE

And that is a good thing?

PAUL

The best thing.

He grabs a cookie and munches. She stands and pasts his arm. He winces.

CLARE

Something?

PAUL

Bruise. Using a toilet at sea is an acquired skill.

She laughs and moves away.

INT. SHIP'S SURGERY - DAY

Paul prepares a slide and places it under a microscope. He examines the slide through the scope and shakes his head.

INT. SHIP'S BRIDGE - DAY

Clare has the helm. Paul, with coffee cup, joins her.

CLARE

Progress?

PAUL

I hope you don't mind, but I enlisted a couple of your crew. They're helping with some dissection.

CLARE

As long as they're off duty and you pay them.

PAUL

Oh, they're being paid. That was the first thing that was settled. How long before we reach port?

CLARE

Seattle in ten days. Why?

PAUL

Can you slow down a bit? I may need a couple more days.

CLARE

Two additional days and no more.

PAUL

Terrific. If this succeeds, you're going down in history.

With that, Paul leaves.

INT. SHIP'S SURGERY - DAY

Paul and two MEN, all in masks and gloves, handle severed arms and legs.

EXT. SHIP'S DECK - NIGHT

Clare and Paul, in parkas, look at the stars.

PAUL

They're wasted, you know.

CLARE

What?

PAUL

The stars, they're wasted on people with their TVs and pads and phones and games, the digital people. This is an analog world, Clare, and the digital people are ruining it. Soon, the world will be nothing but concrete and glass hives where the digital people can waste their puny lives in digital cocoons.

CLARE

That will leave more space for those who hate hives.

PAUL

They'll take all the space.

CLARE

Have you found radiation effects?

PAUL

Sadly, no, not yet. But I have a couple more days.

CLARE

Only two. Some of the crew came down with the flu.

PAUL

Keep them away from me.

CLARE

Don't worry. They're confined.

PAUL

I gotta get back. Not much time left.

She watches him disappear inside before she looks at the stars.

EXT. SHIP'S DECK - DAY

Paul and a Man lift a coffin box over the side and drop it into the sea. Paul watches it sink into the depths.

INT. SHIP'S BRIDGE - DAY

Clare is at the helm, and she looks wan, sickly. Paul enters with two cups of coffee. He hands one to Clare.

PAUL
That's the last of everything. You
feeling OK?

CLARE
Fever, aches, flu. I'm sorry you
didn't find a link to Chernobyl.

PAUL
We did some good science, Clare,
valuable science.

CLARE
We dock tomorrow. Everything has
been scrubbed?

PAUL
No evidence, no evidence.

EXT. SHIP'S DECK - DAY

The ship has docked, tied tight. On deck, Clare watches two
EMTs carry a laden gurney down the gangplank. The Man on the
gurney doesn't move.

PAUL (O.S.)
Serious?

She turns to Paul who wears a jacket and has duffle bag over
one shoulder.

CLARE
Fever, aches, cough, some sort of
rash. He hasn't been able to eat.

PAUL
And the others?

CLARE
Same, to varying extents. They're
ashore and resting.

PAUL
You?

CLARE
Captains are not immune.

He sets down his duffle and removes his jacket. There's a
bandage on his upper left arm.

PAUL
(folding jacket)
Clare, you've been very supportive.
I like you.

He puts the jacket in his duffle before he pulls the bandage off his arm, revealing a small scabbed over wound.

CLARE
From the head?

PAUL
You might say that.

He pulls an envelope from the duffle and offers it.

PAUL
For you, but I have to ask that you
don't open it till tomorrow.

CLARE
Why?

PAUL
To tell the truth, I'm a little
embarrassed. You might not like
it.

CLARE
And if I do?

Paul leans in and pecks her cheek.

PAUL
I'll call you in exactly one month.
You can tell me then.

He shoulders the duffle with a smile. She watches him leave the ship and walk away through the busy port.

INT. SHIP'S GALLEY - NIGHT

Clare shivers and holds onto the laptop on the table. She grabs the glass of wine next to her and takes a gulp. She turns toward the half-empty bottle and the envelope Paul left.

She grabs the bottle and pours. Stopping, she puts down the bottle and grabs the envelope.

She taps the envelope on the table before she shrugs and opens it. She pulls out a folded card. The front is blank, and she frowns. She opens the card and picks up her wine.

CLARE
(reading)
Romeo and Juliet, Act three, Scene
1, Line 94.

She grabs her laptop and types the cite into a search engine.
A moment before the line pops onto the screen.

CLARE
A plague on both your houses.

She highlights plague on the screen and hits return.

She grabs the wine to sip and stops. The glass slips from
her hand and shatters on the deck. On the screen.

SMALLPOX

FADE OUT.