

Fiction Contest Entry 2

“It was Scott's 43rd birthday which called for a celebration. The Cape Evans hut was festooned with sledge flags and the table was spread with enticing food and drink. Ted Wilson leaned over to Scott and whispered in his ear...”

“I say Con, I just noticed out the window another of those damn tourist boats coming in. It's lowering zodiacs under floodlights and a crowd of bright red anoraks are jostling about at the rail. The Ross Island Patrol must have lost their broadband connection for this tub to have sneaked in. What do you think old chap?”

Scott sighed, rose to his feet and tapped a wine glass with the bowl of his pipe. The hubbub quickly faded.

“Hey, Atch!” he called. “Have you been checking the windows? Ted's just seen a damn great diesel ship hove into view. What're you doing about it?”

“It's OK Sir,” came the reply. “Silas just texted me. Ponko's in place with his ratchet machine. Had to be dragged out of his sleeping bag. Y'know, he had it insideout again! And HashTagBirdie has fired up the engines on the helicopters we confiscated from last summer's Russian icebreaker. Titus has a team of ponies right up at the water's edge, no one will get through that!”

“Taking off now!” came the crackly voice of Bowers over the Android Skype that poked out of Deb's top pocket. “Bandits one-five we're on our way.”

“What name does this interloper carry, Birdie?” called Scott.
“The *Akademik LitsoBukskiy*, Sir.”

Scott whispered to Ted, “Who'd have imagined that all that global warming would have brought hoards of tourists here in the winter?”

“Unbelievable! And now there's a strange tweet on my iPhone,” replied Ted. “From a blog I've never heard of. We should check this out before we do anything rash with those helicopters.”

“Birdie!” called Scott, into Deb's Android.

“Sir?”

“Drop a crate of those audition leaflets for *McMurdo's Got Talent* on their decks. That'll scare them off pronto.”

“Uncle! Uncle!” interrupted Demetry. “That ship has a strange name, I don't recognise. In English, *Professor Facebook*. I never heard of it!”

“Professor Facebook?” enquired Scott of Ted, “Should we know him do you think?”

“Well,” replied Uncle, “I can’t make out what’s happening. This strange blog, it’s called Antarctic Cir...”

“HashTagBirdie to Con!” Burst the voice from Deb’s Android.

“Go ahead Bowers.” replied Scott.

“Leaflets dropped. The tourists don’t look like they’re scared off. But now we’re losing control. We flew around the ship’s bow to signal them to turn. There’s a strange black and white flag painted across the side next to the hammer and sickle, and now our navigation is going haywire.”

“What country is the flag from, Birdie?” called out Uncle Bill, still fumbling with his tweets.

“No country I know of,” came the reply, “but something’s taken control of the GPS. The screen says ‘*QR code for South Pole-sium*’. What the hell is that? And where?”

At that moment Uncle Bill announced an RSS feed was coming through on his wifi.

“Quick Ted, what’s it say?”

“I Don’t know what this means at all, Con. Here’s the text of it: ‘Greetings from Antarctic Circle on board Professor Facebook stop We have come to a stop stop SouthPole-sium is pleased to be held at Cape Evans for the birthday party stop Carrying huge banquets and unlimited drinks on board stop Trust you have stacks of books a great time to be had by all stop Permission requested to berth stop’”

“Birdie! Ponko!” yelled Scott. “Call off the choppers, and the ratchet machine!!”