

Chapter V

In Chapter V, we find Gore in the sick bay aboard the *Erebus*, dealing with frostnip while attending to a tense situation following a shooting incident. Stanley, the ship's doctor, displays evident panic as he tends to Gore's injuries, amid concerns about the aftermath of a recent encounter. Lieutenant Le Vesconte, who has combat experience from the Opium War, questions Gore about the event, specifically whether he is certain he shot a man dead. Despite the serious nature of the matter, Goodsir, the assistant surgeon, reassures Gore with his calm demeanor, further solidifying their friendship despite the ranks separating them.

Gore expresses remorse, initially thinking he had shot a seal, but the gravity of the situation becomes apparent when he confirms that he shot a man dead. He instructs Le Vesconte to send men to the body with tobacco and steel knives, hoping to offer some form of peace and avoid additional conflict with the local Esquimaux. Le Vesconte, however, voices caution about arming the locals. Gore persists in his plans, but in the midst of this, he wrestles with physical discomfort from his injuries, acknowledging that his feet are swelling and that he will walk on them regardless of any advice.

As Gore prepares to put his boots back on, he recalls the moment he shot the man, expressing hollow regret. Goodsir, who seems to sense Gore's distress, squeezes his arm, prompting Gore to reflect on whether he seeks comfort. The chapter concludes with the mounting tension aboard the ship as the watch crows about the sighting of a party of Esquimaux approaching, setting the stage for potential conflict or negotiation, underscoring the precarious situation they are in while navigating this treacherous environment.