

Chapter VI

In this chapter, the leaders of a group, comprising an elderly man and two younger hunters, request to board the ship *Erebus*. Due to the lack of an interpreter on Franklin's expedition, Captain Crozier of *Terror* steps in, despite not sharing a dialect with the Esquimaux. A party of ten natives is welcomed aboard, but their behaviors diverge from typical native actions. Instead of showing curiosity, they remain stoic, gathering on the quarterdeck and listening blankly while Crozier awkwardly extends apologies. Gifts of needles, tobacco, mirrors, and buttons are offered, though intriguingly, there are no knives present.

Crozier, after an unsuccessful attempt to communicate and connect with the natives, returns to the crew—identified as "Gore." He informs Gore that the widow of a native man wishes to speak with him. The widow is described as a petite woman, characterized by black hair, brown skin, and eyes that give her a deeply veiled expression. Her beauty and haunting demeanor leave Gore transfixed, as he perceives the weight of her sorrow marked by the remnants of tears on her cheeks.

At this moment, Gore's instinctual responses conflict—he considers the appropriate gesture of deference, deciding whether to kneel before her or extend his hand to replace what was lost. His thoughts reveal his internal struggle relating to his own unanchored existence, filled with violence and displacement. The encounter evokes deep feelings in him—a convergence of past traumas and a yearning for connection amid ongoing desolation.

Despite his hesitation, he apologizes in English, struggling for the right words. The widow watches him intently, and even after their encounter ends, he senses her gaze clinging to him, permeating his very being. This chapter encapsulates a moment rife with emotional tension, exploring themes of loss, connection, and the burdens of both personal and cultural histories.