

Viva La Winter
A novel by Jason Shannon
Chapter 1

We leave Toronto in the early morning hours, and touch down in Yellowknife just under eight hours later, changing planes in Calgary. Viktorya spends the flight reviewing her notes, while Bryant and I order off the drink menu.

We deplane directly onto the tarmac. Fields of sandy yellow and evergreen trees are in the distance. It's mild, but there's a noticeable chill. I stride off the plane in sweat pants and loosely-tied running shoes, half in the bag from the miniature Smirnoffs they were feeding me. Bryant, too, is casually dressed, and immediately shivers like someone walked over his grave. He's also feeling the buzz from one too many vodka and ginger ales, and spits out, "Oh, God!"

It's September twenty-second in the Northwest Territories.

"It's beautiful weather," I proclaim to Bryant.

We head into a terminal the size of a living room. The baggage conveyor stand, all of about fifteen feet long and circling around a taxidermied polar bear, is just inside the door. On the other side of the tiny room is the exit door, cabs waiting outside.

Greeting us just inside, next to a rustic airport shop with a mounted moose head, are two people. The first my old friend from high school, Mia Voren. She's casually dressed, in a thick fall jacket and a toque, a large coffee in her hand. Beside her stands Leanne Turnbull, assistant and lackey to the main producer, in a formal pantsuit, a light, professional jacket, and wire-framed glasses.

Viktorya snakes in around me hurries up to Leanne Turnbull. Shouldering her bag, she awkwardly reaches out to shake the woman's hand.

"Ms. Skaiffe," says Turnbull rigidly. She looks like someone pissed in her morning cereal.

Viktorya has her hair up, her glasses on, no makeup, and the jacket she tried to put on inside the plane is all twisted and uneven because of the shoulder strap of her bag. No one looks good getting off a plane.

Viktorya says, "I have the new notes on the continuity overview ready."

Turnbull nods curtly.

"And this is Bryant," says Mia, ebullient, introducing Turnbull to my friend.

"A pleasure, Mr. Biel," Turnbull replies formally, but without warmth.

The bags start funnelling into the terminal. Ms. Turnbull is talking as we await our luggage. "Mr. Shanahan, we have a house leased for you in Old Town. Here's my number, if there's anything you need, please contact me directly."

She hands me a card. I stuff it into my sweat pants' pocket.

"Bryant, you're going to be staying with me," says Mia. "You're only in a couple scenes, and they didn't want to fork out the cash for another hotel room. I won't even be there ninety percent of the

time, so make the place your own.”

I pick up my checked luggage bag.

Turnbull says, “Ms. Skaiffe, I understand you won’t be needing a hotel room?”

She did not need to say that out loud. I’m starting to think Leanne Turnbull resents the fact that their assistant script supervisor is sharing a bed with the creative consultant.

Viktorya casts a wan smile, trying not to look my way. “Yes, thanks,” she says curtly.

Turnbull is motioning to the exit. “We have a car out front.”

Mia turns to face us. She looks at me in particular, develops a great big smile. She claps her hands and beams at me.

“Let’s make a movie!”

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This is Jason Shannon. As I write this, it’s been about 24 hours since I’ve returned from a trip to Yellowknife, where I was researching this novel, and I think I can finally announce it here. Jay Shanahan is in the Northwest Territories having his novel, *Rayne’s Prophecy*, turned into a movie, when the storm of the century hits and a communist revolution breaks out. Look for *Viva La Winter*, coming soon.

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