

Clark muttered a question I couldn't hear.

Grimby nodded. "Did I ever forgive Adam? Oh, yeah. The night he joined a search party and landed on the Chena River where I was down in a whiteout, stuck in the cockpit, feet almost frozen."

Clark's adam's apple twitched each time he spoke.

"Naw, I didn't crash--just ran outa gas lookin' for a break," replied Grimby. "Ole Adam's pushin' 70 now, never lost a load, the best mountain flyspeck from Talkeetna to Selawik. Which is why I'll hire him to supply my new chain o' video rental shops. Funny, everything on TV used to lag behind the Lower 48. With cable and VCRs, an Inuit beaches his umiak, mushes home to watch tonight's news and a sitcom, then he wants the latest sci-fi flick."

Between the icescapes and Grimby's narratives, I wouldn't have traded seats with any nabob on a champagne tourist flight. I blessed my friend for suggesting this. Someone in the movie business could make a fortune on this man's life and the cinematography possibilities. Wish I had time to hear more.

Clark didn't look out the window until Grimby said, pointing, "There's your survey camp on the slope. Lotta new snow. Good to see that Marsten matting. Not that we couldn't put down anyways but it's not as dodgy. Aw, hey, don't be embarrassed. One guy used two whoopie bags and his cap before we landed."

Safely deposited on the tundra, Clark bid me a shivering, polite goodbye as I climbed into his seat. He didn't offer his hand which didn't offend me.

"Yeah, nice meetin' you too," Grimby told him. "Probably see you next week. Already know your team likes anchovy pizza. Extra cheese?"