

"THE THING"
by
Robert Skotte

Based on

"Who Goes There?"
by
John W. Campbell Jr.

&

"The Thing"
by
Bill Lancaster

FADE IN:

BLACK

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
-- something in the ice --

Static interrupts.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
-- peat, we found --
 (static)
-- need help --
 (more static)
-- all dead --

The words die out in a cacophony of harsh atmospheric snow.

EXT. MOUNTAIN RANGE - DAY

Snow covered glaciers stretch as far as the eye can see.
Strong winds hurl snow across the barren surface.

The whining winds drown out as the sound of an approaching
helicopter reverberates against the jagged mountain sides.

A red and blue striped SIKORSKY S-92, with the words "US
PETROLEUM" painted on its side, chops its way over a mountain
top and descends the precipice.

INT. SIKORSKY

MCCREADY (30s), casual and unshaven but with intelligent
eyes, suppresses a yawn and adjusts the collective.

He applies a bit more throttle, making the nose of the
aircraft dip.

Next to him sits VANE (40s). Sporting a healthy golf-tan, his
impeccable groomed appearance goes hand in hand with his
overachiever attitude.

Vane's rigid body stiffens with each small movement of the
helicopter.

VANE
This is...safe, right?

MCCREADY
Yeah. Well, more or less.

Vane swallows. McCready notices and chuckles to himself.

VANE
How long you've been flying?

MCCREADY
A while.

VANE
Military?

McCready doesn't reply. Vane notices.

The white landscape zings past the cockpit. A large camp structure takes shape in the horizon.

VANE
That's were we're going?

MCCREADY
That's right. McMurdo Station.

VANE
Do you know what's going on?

MCCREADY
Hey, I'm just the pilot, man.

VANE
It's just -- they called me in on pretty short notice. Is that normal around here?

MCCREADY
Nothing's normal around here.

McCready notices Vane's clean and manicured nails.

MCCREADY
What's a guy like you doing down here anyway? You piss off someone?

VANE
Excuse me?

MCCREADY
You just look more like an office type of guy, you know?

VANE
Looks can be deceiving, mister McCready.

McCready gives Vane a questioning look.

VANE

Let's just say I have it on good authority that, if I get the job done here, then they might put me in charge of a field in Texas. Maybe even Alaska.

MCCREADY

Ah, so it's a career move?

VANE

Basically.

MCCREADY

Figures.

EXT. MOUNTAIN RANGE

The helicopter banks left and rounds a protruding glacier. It climbs for altitude and thunders over an incline which reveals --

EXT. MCMURDO STATION

-- a massive array of houses lined by makeshift roads. Mountains to one side and an ice encrusted inlet to the other enclose this frozen community.

SUPER: "MCMURDO STATION, RESEARCH CENTER, ANTARCTICA"

A burly icebreaker toots its horn as the helicopter swoops by.

The big Sikorsky hovers over a large and partly snow covered red "H". The rotorblades whirl loose snow up at two waiting men.

KINNER (40s), weathered, wipes snow off his salt and pepper beard and pulls up the hood of his parka.

HARVEY (50s), too out of shape for the Lee Marvin look he's gunning for, stomps his feet and hugs himself in order to keep warm.

With accurate precision, McCready sets the helicopter down. The engine switches off and the rotorblades slow as Vane and McCready exit the craft.

Kinner sticks out a gloved hand as Vane approaches. They shake hands.

KINNER
Kinner here, sir.

VANE
Good to meet you. I'm Vane.

KINNER
You're...vain?

VANE
No no, V-A-N-E. Vane.

KINNER
Oh-kay. How was the flight?

Vane looks over his shoulder at McCready.

VANE
Interesting.

HARVEY
Don't mind McCready, sir, I think
his parents dropped him on his head
as a kid. I'm Harvey. Welcome to
Antarctica.

Vane grabs Harvey's hand.

VANE
Thanks.

Behind them McCready unload suitcases and various supplies
from the helicopter.

Covertly, he snatches a bottle of whiskey from a crate and
sticks it inside his parka.

KINNER
Come with me, sir, we've got some
folks waiting for you
(to Harvey)
Go give McCready a hand.

Kinner and Vane disappear into a shaggy building, passing a
beat up sign that reads: "US PETROLEUM".

INT. OFFICE

NORRIS (40s), sporting a creamy combover and a shirt that's
too tight for him, sits behind a cheap desk in an otherwise
spartan room

Chewing on a pencil, he looks up from a pile of files as Kinner leads Vane inside.

KINNER
Norris, this a Vane.

NORRIS
Vain?

VANE
No, it's --

KINNER
Mister Vane was sent down by headquarters.

NORRIS
Oh...

He quickly shuffles his combover into place.

NORRIS
Welcome, welcome. Have a seat.

The door squeaks open behind them and CLARK (40s), pale and bespectacled, enters.

CLARK
Sorry I'm late.

NORRIS
No, you're right on time, Clark. We were just about to begin.

Everybody finds a seat.

VANE
So what's going on?

NORRIS
As you know, we've got a crew operating out near the Ross Ice Shelf --

KINNER
That's about two hundred and sixty clicks west of here.

NORRIS
Right, conducting --

CLARK
Geological surveys.

VANE
Is that what we're calling it now?

NORRIS
Depends on who's asking.

Vane nods understandingly. Norris motions to speak but fails, his nervous eyes shift from Clark to Kinner.

VANE
What?

KINNER
We haven't heard from them in nine days. Their last transmission was, um...

CLARK
Weird.

VANE
Weird?

Clark hands him a sheet of paper from his folder. Vane eyes it intensely.

CLARK
Looks like they found something in the ice.

Vane leans forward in his chair.

VANE
Oil?

NORRIS
We don't know.

VANE
But it could be.

NORRIS
It could be anything.

VANE
Have they been out of radio contact before?

KINNER
Sure, but not for this long. Could just be a malfunctioned antenna, I mean the weather --

VANE
How long have they been up there?

CLARK
Too long.

Norris shoots him a reprimanding look, turns back to Vane.

NORRIS
Close to five months.

VANE
Five? I thought the standard tour
of duty out there was four.

NORRIS
True, and we would've gone up there
much sooner but the weather's just
been beating the crap out of us.

CLARK
Global warming.

NORRIS
(to Clark)
Don't start.
(to Vane)
You were lucky even getting here.

Vane leans back, chews his lip.

VANE
(taps the sheet of paper)
"All dead"? You're thinking maybe --

KINNER
It's a prank. I wouldn't put past
Garry.

NORRIS
Look, let's not jump to
conclusions. Like Kinner said, it's
probably just the antenna acting
up. Maybe they found a dead penguin
in the ice, who knows? My guess is
you'll find seven drunk guys up
there just waiting to be relieved.

Vane doesn't look convinced.

NORRIS
Anyway, we've only have a tiny
window of opportunity here.

CLARK

Another storm front's moving in.
It'll hit us in less than twelve
hours.

NORRIS

It's your site now, mister Vane.

Vane clears his throat.

VANE

And my team is ready?

NORRIS

Standing by.

Clark gets up.

CLARK

We really should get going.

Norris gets up and extends a hand to Vane. Vane grabs it and rises to his feet.

NORRIS

Get up there and relieve them.

EXT. MOUNTAIN RANGE

The Sikorsky roars its way across the white landscape as grey clouds thicken the sky.

INT. SIKORSKY

McCready by the controls, Vane riding shotgun. In the spacious cabin behind them sit Clark, Kinner, Harvey and three roughnecks.

DUTTON (40s), his demeanor about as loud as his body is muscular, sits next to

CHINO (40s), a stocky Inuit about as laid back as they come, who's flanked by

SAM (20s), pierced eyebrow and lower lip - and probably other places best left unexplored.

Sam dons a big pair of headphones over a knitted cap with the word "KORN" embroidered on it. He rocks back and forth in his seat.

DUTTON
How da hell can he listen to that
metal shit?

CHINO
Kids. They ain't got no taste.

SAM
What?!

CHINO
Nothing.

DUTTON
If my pop had caught me digging
that shit back in da day, he
would've just shot me, man. And my
dog too just for da hell of it.

SAM
What?!

CHINO
Nothing!

Dutton tears off Sam's headphones.

DUTTON
Gimme' that.

SAM
Hey!

Dutton scowls at him and puts on the headphone. His
expression changes completely.

He slowly peels them off again and hands them back to Sam,
delicately - like a pair of dirty socks.

DUTTON
What is that?

Sam looks down.

SAM
Peter --
(clears his throat)
-- Cetera.

DUTTON
What da fuck, Sam?

SAM

I don't know what the hell's wrong
me. I'm supposed to hate music like
that but I don't.

(shrugs)

Go figure.

DUTTON

That is so gay.

SAM

(perplexed)

I know.

Chino cracks a wide grin.

EXT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST

The rays of a setting sun reveals a cluster of prefab
structures, some interconnected by rectangular passageways -
some not.

An aesthetic eyesore - but functional.

The helicopter performs a sweeping circle of the complex.

INT. SIKORSKY

Everyone sits crammed by the helicopter's windows, eyes
peeled at the ground.

The complex appears intact, no outside damage -- and no
welcoming party.

VANE

Alright, set it down.

EXT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST

The eight of them leave the helicopter behind and trot
through the squeaking snow.

VANE

Hello?

Kinner scouts ahead at the dark and unrevealing windows. He
funnels his hands in front of his mouth.

KINNER

Garry?

Sam tugs his sleeve and points to the open door at the complex' entrance. Kinner waves the others over.

KINNER

Usually not a good sign.

They move closer with cautious steps, the dark unknown behind the door beckoning them in.

They stop a few paces from the door, the fading sun not revealing much more than a dark corridor.

DUTTON

Fuck this, I'm freezing.

The big man barges forward and enters the complex. Soon the rest follow.

INT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST

Dutton leads them down a long and cluttered corridor, the sound of the howling wind still audible.

DUTTON

Yo! Anyone home?

CLARK

Blair?

Clark flips a light switch. Nothing happens.

They continue along the murky corridor until its bland colored walls fade into a four-way intersection.

VANE

We split up.

REC ROOM

Dutton, Sam and Chino step inside a wide and square room.

No one's home.

A pool table dons the center of the room. A comfortable looking couch takes up most of one corner, surrounding a TV.

Empty beer cans rest on a low coffee table among scattered playing cards and an issues of Playboy Magazine.

Sam picks up the magazine, leafs through it. Dutton snatches it from his hand and pockets it with a scowl.

Chino grabs the remote from the table and tries the TV. Nothing. He drops the remote.

CHINO

Where the hell is everybody?

GALLEY

Smoke gusts his face as McCready peeks inside. Something sizzles somewhere in the room.

Harvey coughs into his hand as the two of them grope their way along tile walls.

They bump into an industrial sized stove

The charred remains of nearly a dozen pork chops simmer on a cast iron pan, the scorched lard popping smoke plumes.

McCready covers his mouth and turns off the gas valve to the stove. Harvey struggles with a grease stained window but nudges it open on his second try.

The smoke lifts.

McCready stares down at the wooden board on the kitchen table and the lone half-chopped onion that occupies it.

HARVEY

Look's like something interrupted dinner.

LAB

Hard rime cover the monitors placed in the left side of the room. The right side consist of shelves packed with translucent jars. Their content frozen solid.

Kinner inspects a stereo microscope. He runs a finger across the microscope's station and wipes a thick nearly black liquid off the glass.

He holds his fingers up for Vane to see.

VANE

(squints)

Son of a bitch, is that --

KINNER

Oil.

Vane clenches his fists.

VANE

Yes!

Clark rummages through cupboards when - out of the corner of his eye - he catches a shadow dart past the door opening.

He spins around.

CLARK

Hey.

VANE

What is it?

Clark dares a peek into the corridor.

CLARK

We're not alone.

GENERATOR ROOM

The thick darkness parts as a door splits open and dim light flows into the room. Three silhouettes appear in the doorway.

FSSSSH!

A bright flare sparks to life, bathing everything in red light.

Dutton holds it at arms length and descends the metal stairs down to the floor. Sam follows while Chino holds the door open above.

A weathered generator stands silent in a corner, flanked by cans of kerosene. A thick cable runs from the generator to a large breaker box that oozes a myriad of different colored wires.

Sam squats by the generator and inspects it with his hands as well as his eyes.

SAM

Looks alright.

DUTTON

Then get it running.

CORRIDOR

Kinner moves down the passage step by step, Clark and Vane behind him.

KINNER
You sure you saw someone?

Clark nods.

Kinner reaches a corner and stops abruptly. He squints in the dim light, something on the opposite wall catches his attention.

A handprint -- a bloody handprint smeared across the wall. Clark and Vane peer over his shoulder. Clark swallows.

CLARK
(whispers)
Maybe we should --

Kinner shuts him up with a quick hand gesture. He slips around the corner, tiptoes further down the dark hallway.

Clark and Vane observes from their vantage point by the corner.

Kinner jerks around as he hears a faint rustling from a door up ahead. He takes a step closer to the door.

CLANG!

Something metallic hits the floor in the dark. Kinner's breathing quickens.

WHAM!

A flailing shape bursts through the opening and blows Kinner backwards. He barely moans as the back of his head slams against the wall.

Vane and Clark back away from the corner as the fanning shape stomps toward them. They turn and sprint screaming down the corridor, leaving their courage lying on the floor.

GALLEY

McCready peels open the large refrigerator. His eyes light up at the sight of a six-pack nested on a shelf.

He grabs one.

HARVEY
Get me one too.

MCCREADY
They're frozen, Harvey.

HARVEY

And?

McCready reaches for a second can as panicking voices interrupt him.

CLARK (O.S.)

Help!

VANE (O.S.)

Somebody?!

McCready and Harvey bolt for the door.

CORRIDOR

Vane and Clark's feet slam against the floor, their hooded parkas swinging wildly around them.

Behind them a hissing figure gains distance on them.

They round a corner -- the figure hot on their heels.

AN ARM

clotheslines the figure across the chest, sending it tumbling across the floor.

McCready jumps on top of the flailing creature just as the power surges back on.

The ceiling lights flicker on one by one.

McCready grabs a handful of hair, jerks the figure around and stares into

A MAN'S FROSTBITTEN FACE

CLARK

Blair?

BLAIR (50s), looking worse for wear, shields his blood strained eyes from the bright artificial light.

His chapped lips move rapidly but no sound escapes.

McCready, his expression almost remorseful, releases his grip on the old man.

Blair's throat clicks as he struggles to speak. McCready leans closer.

BLAIR
(faint)
You...shouldn't...have come.

Clark kneels next to Blair.

CLARK
Blair?

The disturbed man's eyes linger on Clark.

BLAIR
Clark? Is that you?

CLARK
(smiles)
It's me, Blair.

VANE
Ask him what happened.

Annoyed at the intrusion, Clark shoots Vane a angry glance. He grabs Blair's calloused hand and gives a soothing squeeze.

CLARK
Are you hurt?

VANE
Ask him about Garry.

MCCREADY
Give it a rest.

Blair's eyelids droop, his breathing slow.

CLARK
Blair?

Blair snaps out of it.

CLARK
What happened here? Where are the others?

A puzzled look invades Blair's face. He zones out, as if replaying events.

Exertion great effort Blair reaches up a grabs a hold of Clark's parka.

BLAIR
The chameleon...

He coughs violently and gasps for air. Depleting his last remaining strength, he pulls himself close to Clark.

BLAIR

The chameleon strikes in the dark.

Blair sags back to the floor, passed out.

EXT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST - NIGHT

The pitch black hands of a moonless night wrap themselves tightly around the station.

The outside mounted lights struggle against the darkness as howling winds bounce snow off the structure.

Warm light seeps from the windows of one particular building.

INT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST (DINING ROOM)

Kinner, Vane and Dutton sit around a long table while Harvey pours them soup.

VANE

Any luck with radio?

KINNER

Yeah, I got it running. Don't know if it's working though, I'm only getting static.

DUTTON

That'll be da weather fucking with you.

McCready stands by a window, looking out at the violent blizzard while smoking a cigarette.

Harvey passes around a bread basket just as Clark enters the room.

HARVEY

How's he doing?

Clark finds a chair.

CLARK

He's sleeping now, I gave him a sedative. I don't know...

He shakes his head.

KINNER
That bad, huh?

CLARK
Yeah.

Vane scoops up a spoonful of soup and slurps it down, a bite of bread chasing it.

VANE
Did he tell you anything? Anything useful?

CLARK
Like where they found the oil?

Dutton chuckles.

DUTTON
He's got ya' number, Vane.

Far from amused, Vane lays a penetrating stare on Clark and keeps it there until the bespectacled man flinches.

CLARK
No. I did find his journal though, there might be something in it.

VANE
That can wait. What about the ice samples in the lab?

CLARK
They're thawing right now.

Chino and Sam barge inside, dragging in snow by the boots.

DUTTON
Anything?

Chino tears off his parka and sits.

CHINO
We checked the other shacks --
(shakes his head)
-- no one's home.

KINNER
Hell, they can't just all, like, disappear.

HARVEY
Maybe they're out there somewhere?

He points to a window.

DUTTON

Then they're corpses. It's pushing
sixty below outside.

VANE

We can't do anything more tonight.
Tomorrow we'll take up a search
party.

(looks over his shoulder)

Right, McCready?

McCready, caught in his own train of thought, continues to
stare out of the window.

VANE

McCready?

MCCREADY

What?

VANE

Tomorrow we'll take the chopper up
and search for the others.

MCCREADY

Depends on the weather.

VANE

No, we're going up, McCready.

McCready shrugs, returns to the window.

MCCREADY

Whatever.

EXT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST

McCready, a hefty rucksack on his back, struggles through the
thick snow made worse by the violently onslaught of a
blizzard.

He nears a remote and battered shack and climbs the few steps
to the door.

INT. SHACK

McCready pries the squeaking door open and squeezes inside.
He studies the surroundings.

The unkept room reeks of neglect. Dirty laundry everywhere, a fair amount of empty liquor bottles lay scattered about.

MCCREADY
My kind of place.

McCready picks up one of the bottles. A few drops of bronze colored booze swim around at the bottom. He shrugs and down the remnants.

McCready tosses the bottle on a bunk and grabs a seat by a table.

He shoves the dirty laundry off the table with his leg and pulls out a bottle of whiskey from his rucksack.

INT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST (LAB)

Clark leafs through Blair's journal. A specific page catches his attention. He lets a finger run along the feverishly scribbled letters.

Words like "ICE", "LIFE FORM", "ABSORBED" and "CHAMELEON" make Clark's brow twist.

The door swings open, Clark jerks around in his chair.

Vane enters.

VANE
Anything?

Clark quickly puts the journal down and turns to a magnified image on a monitor.

CLARK
Um, there's oil all right. A lot by the look of it.

Vane's lips widen in a triumphant smile. He nods toward the journal.

VANE
Does it say where they found it?

CLARK
Yeah, it does mention something about the Wilkes Land Crater.

VANE
What's that?

CLARK

A...crater.

Vane gives him the "duh" look.

VANE

Where's it located, Clark?

CLARK

About a mile and a half east of here.

VANE

All right then, we'll head out there tomorrow.

CLARK

To look for the others, right?

Vane sighs.

VANE

What is your problem, Clark?

CLARK

My problem?

VANE

Yeah, your problem.

CLARK

Maybe I'm not comfortable with your set of priorities.

VANE

Oh, really? But you are aware of who you're working for, right?

Clark looks away.

VANE

Don't you forget who, or should I say what, pays the generous grant of yours.

Vane shakes his head in disappointment.

VANE

You know, I can deal with the treehuggers and those Earth First idiots, but what I can't deal with is hypocrites.

He sends Clark a loathing glare and leaves.

Clark rolls his eyes and returns to the journal.

He doesn't notice the rack of filled test tubes off to the side. Condensation drips off them.

CLARK

(reads to himself)

"It needs to be alone and in close proximity with a life form to be absorbed".

(squints at the page)

"The chameleon strikes in the dark".

Clark leans back in the chair and stretches his back. He checks his watch.

CLARK

Damn.

The lights pop off, all screens go black.

SAM (O.S.)

I'm on it.

Clark gets up and leaves the lab, shutting the door behind him

Silence.

In the faint light from the moon, the test tubes vibrate slightly.

The liquid inside bubbles.

More violent now, it reaches a boiling splutter until the test tubes splinter.

Liquid drips onto the table, then to the floor -- and fans out, searching.

It moves across the floor, reaches the closed door and glides underneath.

REC ROOM

A portable petrol lamp provides the only light in the room. Seated in the couch, with his feet on the table, Chino flips through a magazine while sipping a beer.

GALLEY

In the working light of a few candles, Harvey dries off a glass and places it in a cupboard. He stretches his back before grabbing another wet glass from the counter.

DUTTON'S CUBLICE

A flashlight shoots its cone of light up onto the ceiling, revealing Dutton as his arms strain up and down, heavy weights in each hand.

CORRIDOR

Cast in darkness a figure moves through the passage. He doesn't notice the liquid pooled on the floor -- not even as he steps in it.

INT. MCCREADY'S SHACK - DAY

BAM BAM BAM

McCready's eyes pop open. He jerks his feet over the side of his bunk and falls disoriented to the floor among empty liquor bottles.

Someone pounds his door again.

Using whatever is around for support, McCready staggers to his feet and pries the door open.

He squints as sunlight bathes his face. A blurry figure takes shape in front of him.

KINNER

Mac?

MCCREADY

Kinner?

KINNER

Jesus Christ, Mac.

MCCREADY

What time is it?

KINNER

It's take-off time.

McCready rubs sleep from his eyes and checks his watch.

MCCREADY

Shit.

He spins around and nearly trips, grabs his parka and stumbles out of the door.

EXT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST

Vane and Clark boards the Sikorsky where Dutton, Sam and Chino are already seated.

Kinner holds the door open for McCready as he climbs into the cockpit.

KINNER

You've gotta be back in less than three hours, you hear? Another front's moving on in.

MCCREADY

Got it.

INT. SIKORSKY

McCready stalls as he sees Vane sitting in the cockpit next to the pilot's seat.

MCCREADY

Sure you wouldn't be more comfortable in the back?

VANE

Very sure.

EXT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST

Kinner gives McCready a thumbs up and he and Harvey watches as the helicopter takes to the sky and disappears over a ridge.

EXT. WILKES LAND CRATER

A huge open ice landscape surrounded by blueish glaciers and crevasses.

Dutton stands by large tripod bolted to the ice. Chino and Sam stare at the hefty drill on the ground.

VANE

Is that our equipment?

Dutton looks around at the barren surface.

DUTTON
Yeah, da shit's ours.

VANE
So the others drilled here? I mean,
this could be it, right?

CLARK
We won't know until we get a
sample.

Clark jerks a small portable generator to life and a laptop in front of him flickers on. Sam runs a cable from the laptop to the drill.

Vane looks around at the fairly even scenery.

VANE
So where's this crater supposed to
be anyway?

CLARK
You're standing on it.
(points down)
Beneath the ice. A meteor slammed
down here about two hundred and
fifty million years ago.

VANE
(unimpressed)
Wow.

Vane stomps his feet to keep warm.

CHINO
I wouldn't do that if I were you.
You never know what's underneath.

Vane stops and looks down.

Sam tightens a final bolt and turns to Dutton.

SAM
Alright, hit it.

Dutton throws a switch and the machinery roars to life. Chips of ice shoot in all directions as the drill pierces the ground.

VANE
How long?

DUTTON
'Bout half an hour.

Vane folds his gloved hands in front of his mouth and breaths into them.

DUTTON
You know, it's warmer in da
chopper.

Vane looks at the helicopter. He sees McCready sitting in the cockpit, arms folded, eyes closed.

VANE
Just tell me when you've got
something.

Vane wanders off, exploring the landscape. He takes in the enormous glaciers stretching high into the sky.

He approaches a gigantic crevice when --

CRACK!

-- a rift shoots across the ice underneath his feet. Vane freezes completely, only his eyes dart back and forth.

Everyone look up from their work.

DUTTON
Don't move.

He flips off the drill and grabs a rope. Everyone sprint toward Vane but screech to a halt at a safe distance.

CRUNCH!

A new crack ripples the ice around Vane. His breathing quickens.

VANE
Throw the fucking rope!

Dutton slings the rope just as the ground breaks away under Vane. He reaches out for the rope but gravity takes over and hurls him downward.

INT. CAVE

Vane tumbles down a sloped wall of ice, hitting outcroppings and ice stalactites on his way deeper into the darkness.

He screams as a huge ice boulder stops his fall the hard way.

SAM (O.S.)

You okay?

The words echo against the walls. Vane groans and rolls over on his back.

CHINO (O.S.)

Vane?

Vane tries to sit up but cries out and grabs his right knee.

VANE

My knee.

DUTTON (O.S.)

Just hang on, we're coming down.
Mac!

EXT. WILKES LAND CRATER

Dutton secures ropes in the ice with a bolt gun. Chino tosses him a flashlight.

DUTTON

Go wake up Mac.

Dutton throws himself backward into the hole, repelling style. Sam and Clark follow suit.

INT. CAVE

The light from the flashlights reflects against the icy walls. Dutton lands on an uneven surface and unhooks himself from the rope.

Clark and Sam touch down next to him with heavy thumps.

DUTTON

Yo, Vane? Where you at?

VANE (O.S.)

Over here.

The cones from the flashlights dance across the walls and locate Vane's bruised face.

Clark kneels next to Vane and inspects him. Vane sucks air through his teeth.

VANE

It's my knee.

Clark feels it. Vane grimaces in pain.

CLARK
Kneecap's alright, might have torn
a ligament. Can you stand?

Clark and Sam help Vane to his feet. Vane puts weight on his
right leg, groans.

VANE
Hurts like hell.

CLARK
Alright, let's get you out of here.

DUTTON (O.S.)
Fellas?

They turn around.

Dutton's light rests on a MASSIVE METALLIC CRAFT buried in
the ice wall.

DUTTON
Somebody please tell me what the
fuck that is.

Vane gasps at the sight, Sam nearly drops him.

SAM
Holy shit.

EXT. WILKES LAND CRATER

Chino feels the rope tighten in his hands. He waves McCready
over.

DUTTON (O.S.)
Pull.

The two men pull the rope with gritted teeth. Inch by inch,
foot by foot until Vane appears. They pull him onto the ice,
catches their breath.

VANE
Dutton wants the drill.

CHINO
Dutton wants the what?

INT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST (REC ROOM)

On the pool table lie chunks of chrome metallic debris. Everyone gathers around the table. Harvey bends down for a closer look.

HARVEY
You found this where?

CHINO
Out by the crater.

Kinner weighs a piece of debris in his hand.

KINNER
What the hell is it?

Everybody looks to Clark. He looks around, sighs.

CLARK
I can only guess.

DUTTON
Aw, come on, Man. It's a fucking spaceship.

CLARK
We don't know that for certain.

HARVEY
Maybe it's some satellite that fell out of orbit.

KINNER
Yeah, it happens.

CLARK
No, this was buried under thousands of years of ice, if not millions.

DUTTON
See?

Chino rubs a necklace talisman between his fingers and backs away from the table.

CHINO
I don't like this, man. The spirits don't like it. We should have left it there.

DUTTON
What? We just found E.T.'s ride. We're gonna be famous, man.

SAM
Screw the fame, I want the fortune.

VANE
Whoa, let's not get ahead of
ourselves here. First things first.
(turns to Clark)
Clark, the ice samples? Anything?

CLARK
I'm on it.

McCready puffs on a cigarette in the corner of the room.

MCCREADY
Shouldn't we call somebody about
this?

SAM
Yeah, let's get Anne Heche on the
radio.

DUTTON
If we call somebody, they're gonna
come in and snatch the shit up from
under our nose. Ain't gonna happen,
bro'.

MCCREADY
Last time I checked, you weren't in
charge here, Dut.

McCready looks at Vane.

VANE
No, let's find out what we're
dealing with here before we jump
the gun.

KINNER
You won't get through to anyone in
this weather anyway.

SAM
Damn straight.

VANE
Clark, get started on the samples.
(to Harvey)
Get this stuff squared away.

The group breaks up. McCready lights a smoke and heads for
the

GALLEY

McCready walks to a bread box on the counter and snags a bread roll, tears a piece off and throws it in his mouth.

He pops open the fridge and grabs a can of beer.

A shadow falls upon him.

Startled, he jerks around. But breathes a sigh of relief at the sight of Harvey.

MCCREADY

Dammit, don't sneak up on me like that.

HARVEY

Looking for something.

MCCREADY

Found it too.

HARVEY

You know, this isn't your personal stash, McCready.

MCCREADY

Whatever.

McCready steps around him but Harvey blocks his way.

MCCREADY

Can I help you?

Harvey stares long and hard at McCready.

Glass shatters somewhere (O.S.).

MCCREADY

What the hell?

CORRIDOR

The two of them bolt down the hallway, the sound of an argument in progress echoes toward them.

BLAIR (O.S.)

Who did it?

KINNER (O.S.)

Did what, Blair?

They round a corner and rush into the --

LAB

-- and see everyone gathered around Blair.

Blair, red-faced, yields a fire axe in his tightly knitted fists. Beads of sweat visible above his darting eyes.

MCCREADY

Blair, what the --

BLAIR

Was it you?

MCCREADY

Was it me what?

Blair nods at the rack with the shattered test tubes.

BLAIR

Who broke them? They were supposed to be frozen. Who the hell's been in here?

DUTTON

You're pissed off over some fucking glass?

Clark holds up his hands in a comforting way.

CLARK

Blair, please, put the axe down.

Vane limps forward.

BLAIR

(raises the axe)
Stay away from me.

VANE

Easy, old timer. I'm sure whatever it is you think has happened --

Blair swings the axe at Vane --

HARVEY

Whoa!

-- who scuttles to safety.

SAM

What the fuck, man?

CLARK

Stay away from me!

MCCREADY

Put the damn axe down before you hurt someone.

BLAIR

You don't know what you're dealing with.

DUTTON

Clark, what da fuck's he talking about?

BLAIR

Tell them.

CLARK

I don't know.

BLAIR

The chameleon!

Chino and Sam exchange glances, nod to each other. Both of them slowly move off to the sides.

KINNER

What did you find, Blair?

BLAIR

There was something...alive in the ice. It...it took over --

Chino throws himself at Blair. With surprising speed, Blair swings the axe but Chino ducks and the axe buries itself harmlessly in the wall.

Sam lurches forward, throws a punch at Blair but the older man rolls with it, sending Sam hurdling against the wall -- against the pointy back end of the axe.

Sam groans as the fire axe impales his sternum.

VANE

Jesus!

DUTTON

Sam!

Chino and Dutton rush to Sam's aid, while McCready and Kinner overpower Blair and wrestle him to the ground.

Clark kneels next to Sam, who coughs wide eyed.

DUTTON
It's gonna be okay, you hear me,
boy?

CHINO
Sam, hang in there.

Clark rips Sam's shirt apart, exposing the wound. He reaches out for a first aid kit just as the wound collapses on itself.

CLARK
What the --

Like sand running through an hour glass, the tissue implodes into the body.

Without warning, tentacles explode from the wound swinging wildly around the room.

DUTTON
Shit.

BLAIR
Get away from him.

Everyone recoils from the flailing mass of tissue, but Sam's still human hand grabs a hold of Clark's sweater.

CLARK
Get him off me!

Chino rips Clark out of Sam's grip just as the arm spasms and grows pointy humps and horns.

Sam's body convulses and tears itself inside out. Fangs grow out of nowhere while the tentacles expand into mouths.

Chino lifts the axe, ready to strike.

BLAIR
No! It'll just divide. We need to
burn it.

Kinner backs out of the door and takes off.

McCready searches for a usable weapon as the grotesquely swollen shape -- The Thing -- burps out intestines.

Clark tears open a cabinet, grabs a vial and douses the creature with acid.

The Thing lets out a high pitched squeal as the acid dissolves its tissue. It rolls over and grows claw-like hoofs

It drags itself across the floor.

BLAIR
Get away from it!

Finding what he's looking for, McCready rips a CO2 fire extinguisher off the wall and shoots a frozen salvo at The Thing.

It reels and thrashes about, smashing everything around it. The creature leaps toward the window. The glass shatters as it disappears out into the storm.

EXT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST

McCready blows the door open and rush out into the snow, trailing everybody.

He squints in the onslaught of snow and points up ahead.

A slimy and bloody drag mark leads from the broken window and around the complex.

The seven of them sprint through the snow and round the corner. They slam on the breaks.

In front of them lies The Thing. It shivers, trembles, claws at the ice.

Winded, Kinner returns with a canister of kerosene and splashes it over The Thing. He tosses a flare to McCready.

KINNER
Do it, Mac.

McCready stares down at The Thing as a portion of it morphs itself to a barely recognizable image of Sam's face.

DUTTON
Kill that motherfucker!

McCready slams the end of the flare, igniting it. He tosses the flare at The Thing which goes up in flames.

It squeals and growls but eventually subsides.

INT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST (REC ROOM)

Armed with axe and fire extinguisher, Chino and Kinner guard the closed doors.

McCready shoves Blair into a chair.

MCCREADY

Talk.

BLAIR

I already told --

MCCREADY

Talk!

DUTTON

What da fuck was that thing?

HARVEY

What happened to Sam?

BLAIR

-- we found something in the ice.
An organism. It was alive.

DUTTON

(to Clark)

I though you said the ice was a
million years old.

CLARK

It is.

KINNER

What the hell did it do to Sam?

BLAIR

This creature assimilates the host
on a molecular level. It imitates
the body's cellular structure,
breaks it down, replicates it.

MCCREADY

In English.

BLAIR

It infects you, takes you over.
Completely.

HARVEY

Like some kind of virus?

BLAIR

Yeah, more or less.

VANE

Is that what happened to the
others?

BLAIR
The others? I killed the others.

That landed. Everybody stare at Blair.

VANE
Did you just say --

BLAIR
I had no choice.

He sags back in the chair.

BLAIR
It all just happened so damned
fast. I'm talking hours, not days.

Blair runs a hand through his hair.

BLAIR
It got to Garry first, then
Bennings...
(looks up)
They tried to kill me.

He buries his face in his hands and sulks.

VANE
Where did you find it, Blair.

BLAIR
Out by the crater.

Vane looks from Dutton to McCready to Chino.

VANE
Yeah?

Blair looks up.

BLAIR
What?

INT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST (LAB)

Kinner and Chino hammer pieces of plywood over the shattered windows.

Vane sits next to Blair who inspects the debris from the spacecraft on a screen.

VANE
So?

BLAIR

I don't know what to make of this.
The metal...I've never seen such a
composition before. It doesn't
correspond with anything on the
periodic table.

(shakes his head)

Definitely not man made.

Dutton and McCready huff and puff as they carry a bulging
piece of tarp into the lab.

MCCREADY

Where you want it?

Clark points to an elongated stainless steel table. The two
men grit their teeth and slams it onto the table.

DUTTON

Heavy fucker.

Clark peels the tarp open and stares at the charred remains
of The Thing.

He winces at the fuming flesh.

KINNER

Clark, what are you --

Clark SLAPS on a pair of surgical gloves.

KINNER

Oh.

Clark drives a scalpel through the scorched flesh and opens
up a long incision.

The others moan in disgust.

Clark pries the skin apart, revealing a soggy mass of blood
and guts.

KINNER

Jesus Christ, Clark.

Clark sticks a hand inside and scoops out long threads of
goey viscera.

Vane covers his mouth while regurgitation.

CLARK

My God.

He slices open a membrane and discovers a slimy human hand attached to several tendrils.

EXT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST - NIGHT

Everyone stands in the snow, gathered around the remains that was once Sam.

Kinner empties a can of kerosene over the pulp and brings out a flare.

Chino tosses Sam's "KORN" embroidered cap on top of the pile.

CLARK

You sure his family don't want to keep that?

CHINO

You're looking at his family.

Chino kisses his charm and nods to Kinner. Kinner mumbles something inaudible, crosses himself and throws the flare.

A huge fireball shoots into the air as the kerosene ignites. The flames lick the sky and cast anamorphic shadows across the even terrain.

INT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST (REC ROOM)

The crew sit scattered around the room. Some sipping alcohol, others deep in their own thoughts.

McCready rolls two pool balls around in one hand, his trusted cancer stick in the other.

Blair eyes them covertly one by one while Clark scribbles on a notepad.

Rolling his axe around in his hands, Chino looks up.

CHINO

I don't understand how it got to Sam? What would he be doing in the lab?

KINNER

Yeah, I've been thinking that myself.

BLAIR

He didn't. It went after him.
That's why I kept it frozen. But
now it's out.

Dutton empties his beer and crushes the can in his palm.

DUTTON

Let me get this straight. You're
saying that ice got its ass up and
fucking walked out of the lab?
(looks around at the
others)
You buying this bullshit?

KINNER

After what we just saw I'm not
ruling out anything.

MCCREADY

If what you're saying is true,
Blair, doesn't that mean that
anyone of us could've been...?

He looks around at the others.

BLAIR

That's right.

A moment of silence ensues. Dutton chuckles, gets up and
heads for the galley. His walk a little unsteady.

DUTTON

I ain't infected by a damn thing.

MCCREADY

How would you know? Sam sure as
hell didn't look like he knew.

Dutton pauses and looks at McCready.

DUTTON

Don't you tell me what the fuck Sam
knew or didn't. In fact don't even
be speaking his fucking name. Who
the fuck do you --
(the penny drops)
You accusing me of something,
McCready?

Dutton puffs his chest and approaches McCready.

CHINO

Yeah, what the hell are you saying,
Mac?

McCready stands and faces Dutton. The two men stare each other down, the tension as thick as they come.

CLARK

He's right. If it got to Sam it
could have gotten to anyone of us.

CHINO

Then how the hell do we know who's
who?

DUTTON

I say we start with McCready here.
Cut his hand off, see if he grows a
new one.

HARVEY

Why don't we just fly out of here?
Or the snow mobiles? We can use
them.

KINNER

Not in this weather.

HARVEY

Then let's at least get a hold of
somebody at McMurdo.

KINNER

Knock yourself out.

Dutton sends a disgusted grunt in McCready's direction and heads back to his seat.

Harvey sighs, looks around.

HARVEY

Anybody want something to eat?

VANE

How can you think of food after
what we've just been through?

KINNER

Hell, I could go for some chow.

DUTTON

Yeah, that's a great idea. What if
Harvey's one of them things, huh?

(MORE)

DUTTON (CONT'D)
He'll piss in da stew and fuck us
all up.

HARVEY
Got to hell, Dutton.

Dutton chuckles again, this time with a vicious twist.

DUTTON
And Clark here --

Clark looks up.

DUTTON
-- he spent the better part of
yesterday in that lab...with those
fucking ice samples sitting right
fucking next to him. How d'you like
that?

CLARK
(appalled)
Nothing happened. I guarantee you
that --

DUTTON
And let's forget good ol' mass
murdering Blair over there.

Furious, Blair jets to his feet.

DUTTON
What? You're gonna tell me you
off'ed all six of them things? You?

Blair starts at Dutton, his fists clenched at his side.
Dutton gets up, both of them ready to rumble.

BLAIR
You don't know what you're talking
about! You weren't there!

Kinner and Chino quickly throw themselves between the two and
force them apart.

DUTTON
Fuck you, old man!

He shoves Chino away.

DUTTON
Get da fuck off me.

CHINO

Cool it.

Kinner and Chino manage to navigate the two infuriated men back to their seats. Vane gets up and takes center stage.

VANE

Gentlemen, it would appear that we've arrived at the proverbial impasse.

DUTTON

The what?

BLAIR

It means a deadlock, you --

DUTTON

(holds up a fist)
You want a piece of this?

CLARK

Blair, please.

VANE

But before you all let your paranoia get the best of you, how 'bout we all just lock our doors and try to get some sleep?

Vane looks around.

VANE

Hmm?

McCready drops the pool balls onto the pool table and grabs his parka.

MCCREADY

I'll be in my shack.

DUTTON

You want me to come over and tug you in?

Blair gets up and heads down the --

CORRIDOR

Clark hurries after him.

CLARK

Blair?

Not stopping, Blair looks over his shoulder.

BLAIR
What is it?

CLARK
McCready was right back there.
Anyone of us could have been
affected last night.

BLAIR
Yeah.

CLARK
How did you...? I mean, when Garry
and the other got infected, how did
you know?

BLAIR
I just knew.

Clark stops.

CLARK
Blair, hold up.

Blair does.

CLARK
You just knew?

BLAIR
Try spending five months together
with the same group of people and
you would know what I'm talking
about.

CLARK
You didn't come up with some kind
of test?

BLAIR
There wasn't time.

Clark runs a hand through his hair.

BLAIR
You need to get some sleep.

CLARK
Later. If just one of us is
infected and he makes back to
McMurdo, back to civilization --

BLAIR
Then Earth is gone.

Blair turns and continues down the corridor.

CLARK
Jesus. We can't let that happen.

BLAIR
Everyone here needs to be
quarantined.

CLARK
A quarantine won't help, we need to
find --

BLAIR
Starting now, Clark.

Clark stares at Blair.

CLARK
If you're worried about me...?

Blair shoves open the door to his cubicle.

BLAIR
Get some sleep, Clark.

He closes the door behind him.

INT. MCCREADY'S SHACK

Two whiskey bottles stand two-thirds full on a table. A piece
of cloth stuffed down each of them.

McCready fills a third bottle with kerosene and adds a
generous amount of sugar.

INT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST (CORRIDOR)

Clark walk down the hallway, his thoughts preoccupied.
Stopping at a door he peeks inside the --

RADIO ROOM

A small square room holds a large array of receivers and
speakers.

Clark lays his sight on the setup.

Contemplates

INT. MCCREADY'S SHACK

Sitting in darkness by a window that overlooks the main complex, McCready gulps down a mouthful of whiskey and winces.

He switches from the bottle to a lit cigarette and takes a deep drag.

He turns a piece of torn cloth over in his hand. A military insignia that reads: "160th SOAR".

Something catches his attention. A blurry figure moves through the blizzard toward the helicopter.

McCready leans closer to the window as the figure disappears behind the Sikorsky.

McCready quickly puts on his parka, sticks two Molotov cocktails in his pockets and grabs the door handle.

He opens the door slightly ajar -- and the blizzard blows it wide open, nearly tearing off its hinges.

EXT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST

With his parka pulled close, McCready trots through the snow. He sinks into it to his knees but struggles free.

The fuzzy outline of the Sikorsky grow before him as the figure hastes its way back to the main camp.

MCCREADY

Hey!

His words drown out in the storm, as if stolen from his mouth.

The blurry person pushes on with a relentless pace and quickly reaches the entrance to the main complex.

McCready stops and catches his breath. He turns toward the helicopter and moves closer.

I/E. SIKORSKY

McCready pulls himself into the cockpit. His shivering fingers dance across several switches, one of them marked "CABIN HEAT".

McCready throws another switch and looks up surprised as nothing happens.

He throws it again -- same result.

McCready pushes the door open and slides onto the snow. He inspects the fuselage and spots an open hatch. Torn wires dangle from the opening.

A flare ignites near the entrance to the camp.

INT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST (CORRIDOR)

With the axe in one hand and the other draped around Dutton's shoulder, Chino leads his drunk friend down the hallway.

DUTTON
C'mon, man, just one more.

CHINO
Nah, let's get you into bed.

DUTTON
Aw, who can sleep anyway?

He rips himself loose of Chino's hold.

DUTTON
It's not like you can trust anybody around here!

CHINO
Keep your voice down, people are trying to sleep.

DUTTON
Fuck 'em. Fuck the lot of 'em.
(performs a three-sixty)
Y'all hear me motherfuckers?!

EXT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST

McCready ducks down behind the helicopter, his eyes peeled at the entrance.

Even though the weather obscures the stranger's face, it's almost like he's staring straight at McCready.

INT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST (CORRIDOR)

Chino once again drags Dutton by the shoulder, the big man's demeanor more mellow now, almost melancholy.

DUTTON
Sam was a good kid, Chino.

Chino nods and swallows the lump in his throat.

CHINO
The best.

They approach a corner. Around it, the lights flicker on and off.

DUTTON
You think he's --

Chino holds up a hand, silencing Dutton.

He tilts his head slightly, straining his ears.

Further up ahead, the sound of something dripping to the floor alerts him.

DUTTON
What?

EXT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST

McCready scoots down low in the snow as the figure takes a step toward the helicopter. And another step.

His right hand fumbles with one of the Molotov cocktails in his pocket.

INT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST (CORRIDOR)

Dutton looks on as Chino moves ahead on stealthy feet. The dripping sound grows closer.

He grips the axe a little tighter as the flickering light reveals a small pool of blood on the floor.

DUTTON
What is it?

Chino looks up at several bloody intestines hanging from the maze of piping above.

A mass of amoeboid flesh squirms around the pipe and retracts the intestines. Chino recoils to the wall. He raises the axe.

A section of the creature rips open.

CHINO

It's he --

A long tentacle shoots down, catches a hold of Chino's face and sucks him back up.

His skull bludgeons against the pipes.

DUTTON

Chino!

His head buried inside the creature, Chino let's out a muffled scream as his arms and feet flail about.

Dutton tries to grab a hold of his friend's legs but to no avail.

Without warning, a thorn covered tentacle rips through the back of Chino's pants.

The tip of the tentacle morphs into a sickening imitation of a Venus flytrap, its teeth slam shut mere inches from Dutton's face.

Dutton throws himself to the floor. His hands find Chino's axe. He picks it up and whacks a blow at The Thing.

The blade punctures a pipe. Super heated steam spews from the opening and douses The Thing and Dutton.

Dutton screams as steam jets across his arm.

The Thing releases its clutch on Chino and slithers along the pipes. The Inuit drops to the floor. Blood and slime cover his massacred skull.

Dutton gasps and pushes himself away from his former friend.

EXT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST

Halfway between the complex and the helicopter, the dark figure stops.

McCready brings his Zippo lighter close the Molotov cocktail and pops off the lid.

He nearly drops the lighter as a BLARING siren sounds off.

The figure drops the flare in the snow and rushes back to the complex.

INT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST (CORRIDOR)

Kinner sprints down the corridor, the earsplitting noise of the siren much louder here.

A wall of steam rolls toward him as he turns left.

Dutton emerges from the steam, his skin red and sweaty, his eyes darting.

KINNER
Where's the fire?

Dutton grabs him by the collar and pulls him close.

DUTTON
It got Chino.

Alarmed, Kinner backs away and frantically looks around.

KINNER
Where is it?

DUTTON
There's two of them fuckers now.

Dutton points the axe at the broad air duct overhead. A mangled grill cover dangles by a lone screw at the opening.

DUTTON
One went in there.

KINNER
Jesus, it's got access to every room through there.

DUTTON
And Chino...

Dutton looks down.

KINNER
Sorry, Dut, we've gotta find him
and --

WHAM!

Vane stumbles straight in to them on his bad leg. He drops his flashlight and backtracks on all four.

Dutton lowers the axe.

DUTTON
Goddammit, Vane.

Vane breathes a deep sigh of relief at the sight of the two men and wobbles to his feet.

VANE
What's going on?

Dutton reaches up, grabs a valve and shuts off the steam.

KINNER
It got to Chino.

VANE
What?

Dutton lets his eyes follow the air duct. It shoots across the ceiling, splitting into different directions.

Kinner finds a breaker box on the wall and turns off the alarm.

CLARK (O.S.)
Guys?

Vane swings his flashlight around as a red-faced Clark rounds the corner.

VANE
Where's Blair?

BLAIR (O.S.)
Right here.

Blair emerges from around a corner. Harvey follows him, dancing on one leg trying to put his pants on.

A brute noise distracts them. Dutton presses forward along the corridor toward the sound.

Clark stare at the others as they hurry after Dutton.

CLARK
What's going on? Hey, wait up.

ENTRANCE

McCready closes the door behind him and drowns the sound of the outside blizzard. He pulls his hood back and wipes snow off his frostbitten cheeks.

Blowing breaths into his trembling hands, he sneaks along the wall.

STORAGE ROOM

Dutton kicks the door open and peeks inside. Kinner moves in next to him and rips a CO2 extinguishers of the wall, arming himself.

The dimly lit storage room is cluttered with boxes, supplies and spare parts.

KINNER

Throw some light over here.

Vane limbs inside and shines his flashlight around, while Clark stands guard at the door.

Harvey checks the ceiling for surprises but sees nothing out of the ordinary.

Kinner pokes a crate aside and jumps back like a boxer jabbing his opponent.

Dutton uses his foot and slides a cardboard box off to the side. He bends down and inspects a corner.

VANE

Anything?

DUTTON

Yeah, a whole lotta dust.

Blair slowly leans around a corner. Nothing.

CLARK

Will someone please tell me what's going on?

Kinner jerks a cabinet open and fire a short spurt of CO2 inside. Again, nothing.

KINNER

Just keep your damn eyes open for that thing.

CORRIDOR

McCready sneaks closer to a door opening. He pushes the door open and peeks inside. His shoulders sag.

STORAGE ROOM

Kinner sticks the extinguisher's nozzle into a cramped corner and shoots off a burst.

Nothing.

DUTTON

Gimme' that.

Kinner tosses the CO2 cannister to Dutton. Dutton approaches a stack of crates.

VANE

Guys, I've been thinking. If we could somehow trap that thing and freeze it --

CLARK

What?!

Dutton and Kinner pause their search and turn to face Vane.

DUTTON

Hey, that's my friend you're talking about.

VANE

And I'm very sorry about that, mister Dutton, but you're all missing the big picture here.

KINNER

Big picture?

VANE

Do you have any idea how big a scoop this would be for the company. I mean, the PR value alone would be out of this world so to speak.

CLARK

Plus it'll keep Greenpeace looking the other way while you suck the continent dry of oil.

VANE

(shrugs)

An unintended benefit.

He looks at Dutton and Kinner.

VANE

I'm sure the company will green-light a bonus for that.

Dutton licks his lips, contemplates this. He makes eye contact with Kinner.

Vane turns to the rest of the group.

VANE

For anyone who helps of course.

KINNER

Yeah? How big a bonus?

VANE

The substantial kind, mister Kinner.

Clark slams a hand against the door frame.

CLARK

This is insane. You can't let that thing live, it'll infect anyone it comes into contact with.

Clark's eyes widen with horror.

CLARK

Unless...

VANE

Unless what?

CLARK

Unless you're also infected.

DUTTON

Nah, he's too greedy to be anything but human.

(nods)

I'm with you, Vane.

VANE

Thank you, mister Dutton. Anyone else?

KINNER

Sure.

Dutton sticks the nozzle behind a pile of crates.

DUTTON

But if Mac's one of them things,
Vane, I'm totally killing his ass.

He fires the extinguisher.

SCREECH!

A slimy multi-legged shape erupts from behind the crates and flies across the room.

Vane stumbles backward and drops the flashlight, sending the beam of light flailing all over the room.

Dutton reacts instinctively and fires the extinguisher, fogging up the storage.

Someone screams somewhere in the room. The fog lifts and a skinless moth with lobster-like claws hisses at Vane.

Dutton fires his CO2 canister again, dousing the creature. It yelps and retreats behind a crate.

Dutton grabs the a hold of the axe.

VANE

Wait. What about the money?

DUTTON

Fuck the money.

Dutton and Kinner tip over the boxes, sending supplies sliding across the floor.

A YOUNG BOY, nude with Neanderthall characteristics, cowers behind a box. His hairy body doesn't go hand-in-hand with his prepubescent features.

The boy lifts his head. Chino's face stare at them. Tears run from eyes down his dirty cheeks.

DUTTON

What the fuck...?

Dutton pauses, unsure what to do. The axe trembles in his hand.

CLARK

It's not him.

The boy gets to his bare feet and, with pleading eyes, extends a hand.

KINNER

Do it!

The boy's back ripples like a folded fan and tears open. Huge crab-like legs grow from the wound.

Dutton stares up wide eyed at the ten feet tall monstrosity. He clutches his pathetically small axe close.

MCCREADY (O.S.)

Get down!

McCready shoves Clark away from the door and hurls a lit Molotov cocktail at the monster.

The bottle shatters and the kerosene ignites in a huge fireball.

The boy wails as flames engulf his body. His flesh sizzles, cracks and pops. The body flails about, igniting the surroundings

The young boy's features melt away, replaced by a hideous deformed monster.

Slowly the creature slumps against the wall and twitches a final time before it dies.

Kinner rush over with fire extinguisher and puts out the flames.

Clark covers his nose and mouth as he stares down at the charred remains of The Thing.

McCready looks around and counts the remaining men.

MCCREADY

Chino?

Clark nods.

MCCREADY

He was one of them?

Dutton charges at McCready and slams him against the wall.

DUTTON

He wasn't one of them! It got to him, you hear?

McCready pushes Dutton away.

DUTTON
Where the fuck were you anyway,
McCready?

The others take up position behind Dutton, all eagerly anticipating McCready's answer.

MCCREADY
I was outside.

VANE
Outside?

KINNER
It's sixty below outside.

Harvey looks at the others.

HARVEY
You think he's one of those things?

CLARK
No, not McCready. He couldn't be.

DUTTON
Why the hell not?

CLARK
Cause he was in his shack when this
thing first broke out.

VANE
You don't know that.

KINNER
What the hell were you doing
outside, Mac?

MCCREADY
The chopper, someone got to it.

DUTTON
What da hell ya mean "got to it"?

MCCREADY
They crippled it, got it?. The
radio too.

RADIO ROOM

They all stare at the shattered remains of the radio set-up.
Bits and pieces lie scattered across the floor.

Kinner squats and salvages some of the pieces in his hand.

KINNER

It's gone. I can't fix this.

Blair slams a hand against the table.

BLAIR

Dammit.

HARVEY

Who would do this?

VANE

Someone who doesn't want us to
radio for help.

CLARK

Or someone who don't want us to
expose this thing to the outside
world.

McCready shoots Clark a quick glance, noticing his wet boots.

HARVEY

And they did the same to the
chopper? Jesus Christ.

MCCREADY

I was in my shack and I saw --
(looks at Clark)
-- someone.

DUTTON

Nice story. Very fucking
convenient.

KINNER

I'd say.

MCCREADY

Look, whoever --

DUTTON

I ain't buying your shit.

CLARK

Why are you so hellbent on accusing
him?

DUTTON

Why are you so hellbent on
defending his ass?

MCCREADY

Look!

McCready's outburst silences Dutton.

MCCREADY

Someone here, right here in this room ain't what he appears to be. Might even be one or two of us.

DUTTON

Yeah, you would know, wouldn't you?

MCCREADY

I know I'm human, Dutton. And I know that if all of you were infected then you would just thing out on me right know. But since you're not, I'm guessing at least some of you are still human.

Vane swallows.

VANE

But how can we know who's who?

McCready turns to Blair and Clark.

MCCREADY

Is there some kind of test you guys can do to see who's human or not?

Clark scratches the stubble on his chin, shrugs.

CLARK

I guess I could come up with something.

REC ROOM

Clark sits on the couch with his notepad resting in lap.

Engulfed in his own thoughts, he doesn't take notice as McCready enters the room behind him.

McCready walks up to the coffee table and slides down into a chair opposite Clark.

He places a bottle of whiskey on the table and observes Clark while he scribbles on his pad.

MCCREADY

Thanks.

Clark looks up with a puzzled expression.

MCCREADY

For sticking up for me, I mean.
Probably not the smartest thing to
all things considered but thanks
anyway.

Clark smiles and returns to his notepad. McCready checks the surroundings, making sure they are alone.

MCCREADY

You did it, right?

CLARK

(without looking up)
Did what?

MCCREADY

Come on. The chopper? The radio?

CLARK

(still not looking up)
I don't know what you're talking
about, McCready.

MCCREADY

Right, sure you don't. I'm just
hoping you did it for the right
reason and not because you're one
of those...you know.

CLARK

Me too.

He looks up, snickers.

CLARK

Just kidding.

MCCREADY

(re: the notepad)
You're getting anywhere?

CLARK

You know, this would be a whole lot
easier if I was allowed to kill or
at least maim the test person.

MCCREADY

I'll bet.

Clark puts the notepad on the coffee table.

CLARK
That was pretty handy back there,
the firebomb.

MCCREADY
Just some old school tactics.

CLARK
Old school?

McCready lights a cigarette.

CLARK
I've read all the personnel files
and yours doesn't mention anything
about military training. Either you
lied or you had a really weird
childhood.

MCCREADY
How 'bout a little bit of both?

He reaches into his pocket, picks out the military emblem and
flicks it to Clark.

CLARK
160th SOAR? Is that code for
something?

MCCREADY
Special Operations Aviation
Regiment.

Clark's jaw drops.

CLARK
You...were in the Special Forces?

MCCREADY
Gee Clark, thanks.

CLARK
That's not what I...when was this?

MCCREADY
Got out a couple of years ago.

CLARK
What happened?

MCCREADY
The war happened.

Clark nods.

MCCREADY

One morning we're hitting this camp up north, close to the Pakistani border.

McCready puffs the cigarette.

MCCREADY

Everything goes as planned. We come in low, hit 'em hard and fast. Job done.

CLARK

But...?

MCCREADY

But the geniuses at Army Intel gave us the wrong coordinates.

He clears his nose.

MCCREADY

And instead of taking out an Al-Qaida training camp, we wiped out an entire Afghan family. And their goat. Three generations gone just like that. One of the victims was a young boy, couldn't have been more than five years old. Half his head was missing when they brought him out.

McCready takes a long drag on the cigarette, fills his lungs to the brim.

MCCREADY

Shit like that sticks with you.

CLARK

Yeah, I would imagine.

McCready grabs the whiskey bottle off the table.

CLARK

Is that why you keep to yourself most of the time? Because you're afraid to trust anyone again. Afraid what will happen if you do?

MCCREADY

Um, no, that's why I drink, Clark.

CLARK

Oh.

MCCREADY

Anyway, I quit the Army after that
in an...AWOL kind of way.

McCready brings the bottle to his lips but changes his mind
and stoves it.

MCCREADY

What about you? I mean, you seem
like a pretty intelligent fella,
shouldn't you be working on a cure
for cancer or something?

CLARK

Would you believe me if I told you
I came for the adventure?

MCCREADY

Not for a second.
(smiles)
You're not the type, Clark.

Clark chuckles.

CLARK

I thought I was, at least as a kid.
I used to watch those old adventure
movies from the fifties, the black
and white ones. Remember those?

MCCREADY

Sure.

CLARK

Thought I was gonna see the world
back then.
(sighs)
Well, dad didn't agree. Still
doesn't. I just had to get as far
away from him as possible. Get a
chance to do what I want to do for
a change, you know?

MCCREADY

So you picked the coldest place on
Earth?

Clark laughs.

CLARK

Beggars can't be choosers.

DUTTON (O.S.)

Aw, ain't that sweet.

The two of them turn to see Dutton stand in the doorway.

DUTTON

Get yo ass in here, Blair's come up
with a test.

DINING ROOM

Everyone sit gathered around Blair who stands by a table. On the table rest seven petri dishes, each with a name on it.

Next to them stands a brown bottle marked with the hazard symbol for "CORROSIVE".

VANE

So how does this work, Blair?

BLAIR

First, I need a blood sample from
each of you.

DUTTON

What the hell for?

BLAIR

When Sam...came apart, it was as if
each of his cells acted as an
isolated organism. All of them
trying to survive.

(holds up the bottle)

If I'm right about this, that means
a drop of sulfuric acid will cause
an immediate effect upon contact
with contaminated blood.

KINNER

That's a mighty big "if", Blair.

CLARK

(nods)

No, he's right. Good thinking,
Blair.

Kinner grunts.

KINNER

Why didn't you come up that, Clark?

Blair slices a scalpel across his thumb. They all wince.

DUTTON

Damn, Blair.

The blood drips from his thumb down into a petri dish. Blair squeezes a few more drops of blood from the wound and turns to the others.

BLAIR

Your turn.

He hands a petri dish and a sealed scalpel to each of the men. Vane unwraps his scalpel, gives it a not so confident look.

VANE

You're sure about this, Blair?

The men look at each other, some sceptical, some challenging.

McCready slices his thumb -- Dutton follows suite immediately. Soon blood fills all the dishes.

Blair sets the filled dishes on the table. He sticks a pipette into the brown bottle and picks up Clark's dish.

Clark takes a deep breath and nods.

Blair squeezes the pipette and drips acid into the blood sample.

The acid create rings in the blood -- and nothing else.

Clark breathes a sigh of relief.

VANE

(shakes his head)

This proves nothing. For all we know you two are in cahoot.

Blair quickly picks up Vane's sample and applies the acid. Vane gasps for air.

Same result as before.

BLAIR

You were saying?

Vane swallows.

BLAIR

I thought so.

He picks up another dish.

BLAIR

Dutton now.

Clark and Vane back away from the other. The big man smiles.

DUTTON
Ain't gonna be no surprises here.

Nothing.

DUTTON
Told 'ya.

BLAIR
McCready.

Dutton picks up the axe and positions himself behind McCready. He bends close to McCready's ear.

DUTTON
I wish I could say this ain't
nuthin' personal, Mac.

He lifts the axe.

DUTTON
But I just can't.

He nods to Blair.

DUTTON
Do it.

A drop of acid makes its way into the blood. Nothing.

Dutton squints at McCready, almost disappointed. McCready glares up at him. Dutton clicks his tongue and lowers the axe.

McCready extends a hand. Dutton looks at it -- and grabs it. He pulls McCready to his feet.

DUTTON
I guess you're okay.

Blair picks up the dish marked "KINNER". Kinner takes a deep breath.

KINNER
Let's do this.

Blair squeezes the pipette and drips acid into the sample. No reaction.

Blair picks up his own dish.

BLAIR

Now I'll show you what I already
knew.

The acid touches the blood.

SQUEAL!

The blood shoots out of the dish and splashes to the floor. The others tumble backwards, tripping over the chairs and each other.

Clark looks up just as Blair's head explodes.

Blair's body bends violently backwards, the spine snaps with a sickening CRUNCH. Now a quadruped, Blair's body spasms as a grotesquely swollen head rips through its sternum.

Thin bony legs shoots from it's side lifting The Thing in to the air.

The men scuttle away from the monster, Vane blows the door open and hobbles down a corridor. Harvey finds another door and does the same.

The Thing roars and sweeps a leg across the floor. Chairs flies through the air. One catches McCready across the face and slams him against the wall.

Dutton pushes Kinner out of the way and grabs McCready's cocktail.

Groggy, McCready zings his lighter across the floor to Dutton.

The Thing slams against the ceiling. Plaster and sparks from broken lamps shower the men.

Dutton ignites the cocktail and hurls it at the monstrosity. The bottle ricochets off its skin and shatters against a wall.

A massive fireball shoots up, blowing pieces of glass in all directions.

Clark goes down screaming as shrapnel tears through his arm.

The Thing scuttles across the floor as the fire spreads from the wall to the ceiling.

Kinner doubles for the door but a hook catches him in back and drags him screaming across the floor. McCready reaches out for him but misses his hand.

The Thing lifts Kinner into the air and pulls him close. It's head splits into a giant mouth. Kinner's screams die abruptly as The Thing takes a bit of his face, exposing the cranium.

Clark covers his mouth as The Thing hurls Kinner's body against the wall with such force that it rips right through.

The sudden rush of wind from the outside fuels the fire, spreading it across the room violently.

The Thing pounds its back against the ceiling again, shaking the foundation.

Dutton wobbles across the floor, grabs a hold of McCready and Clark and drags them toward the opening in the wall.

The Thing blows a part of the roof off and slithers its way through the hole.

MCCREADY

Wait.

The three of them stop. They look up as a thumping sound moves away from them.

CLARK

Where's it going?

McCready heads for a door.

MCCREADY

Get your gear on.

CORRIDOR

Vane limps down the corridor. He stops and looks back. The floor reflects the flickering light in an odd way.

Vane squints. The floor moves.

Blood glides along the floor in a searching pattern.

VANE

Kee-rist.

The blood shoots across the floor. It ascends the wall and races towards Vane.

Vane backs up, his eyes filled with panic. He stumbles backward and sees the blood arc onto the ceiling.

Crawling on all four, Vane regains his footing and staggers down the corridor.

He bounces off a wall upon turning a corner. Spotting a door up a head, he throws himself inside and kicks it shut.

EXT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST (WEST AREA)

McCready, Dutton and Clark race along the camp. Clark keeps a watchful eye directed at the flaming roof.

CLARK
Where the hell is it?

Something roars on the other side of the complex.

MCCREADY
Does that answer your question?

CLARK
We have to kill it.

DUTTON
What'd you think we're doing?

CLARK
Running away from it?

INT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST (CUBICLE)

Eight feet by eight feet, the small berth sports a bunk, a locker and a cheap wood imitated desk.

Vane shoves the desk in front off the door and backs away from it. He searches the locker and finds a flashlight.

The flashlight switches on and the light trains on the door.

Vane holds his breath. Nothing happens. No sound. No movement.

Then a trickle of blood seeps under the door.

EXT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST (WEST AREA)

Dutton veers off to the left and heads toward a small shed. He kicks the door in and barges inside.

INT. SHED

Dutton rips cardboard boxes off shelves and searches through them.

McCready grabs a can of kerosene, throws it to Clark and stuffs his pockets with flares.

Dutton tosses a box out of the way and snatches up another.

CLARK

What are you looking for?

Dutton spots a small box marked "TITADYN 30 AG" and with smaller letters "INDUSTRIAL EXPLOSIVE".

DUTTON

The good stuff.

INT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST (CUBICLE)

Vane tears the linen off the bunk and stomps it against the crack under the door.

Without warning, the entire complex shakes. The glass in the small window behind Vane shatters and showers him with shrap pieces.

Vane stumbles against the locker and drops the flashlight.

EXT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST (WEST AREA)

Clark shields his face from the oncoming snow while hurrying to keep up with Dutton and McCready.

Another otherworldly roar rips through the blizzard.

They look up and see a quick glimpse of a huge hideous shape covered behind the complex.

Clark's eyes go wide with terror at the sight of the obscenity that quickly disappears behind the structure.

Their legs wobble as the ground trembles.

DUTTON

Whoa! What the fuck's gong on?

They throw themselves against the complex' wall.

MCCREADY

We need to flank this bastard, hit it from both sides.

Dutton nods and throws McCready a few sticks of Titadyn. He hands another to Clark who just looks at it.

DUTTON
Come on, take it.

Clark swallows and looks at McCready. McCready reads Clark's terrified expression.

MCCREADY
Okay, you stay here. We'll be back
for you.

DUTTON
If anything funky heads your way
you know what to do, right?

He pulls the blasting cap off the end of the Titadyn stick and slides it into Clark's placid hand.

DUTTON
Light it, throw it and cover your
damn ears.

McCready readies to move on but stops.

MCCREADY
Keep an eye out for Harvey. Both of
you.

CLARK
What do you mean?

MCCREADY
Who didn't get tested?

Dutton and Clark exchange glances. An silent "oh" passes between them.

INT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST (CUBICLE)

Vane regains his footing and snatches the flashlight off the light. It flickers on, goes out, flickers back on.

He aims the light at the door. The blood climbs the inside of the door and spreads out onto the door frame.

Vane holds his breath. The flashlight shakes in his hands. He backs up against the shattered window, bumps against the pane.

Moving with as much stealth as possible he squeezes himself backward through the opening.

Glass shards slice through his pants. Vane grimaces in pain but keeps his mouth shut.

EXT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST (EAST AREA)

Vane falls backward through the air and lands hard on the icy surface.

He groans and grabs his injured knee. Vane rolls over when out of nowhere

A HAND

reaches out for him.

Vane looks up and sees Harvey staring down at him. Harvey offers him his hand again.

HARVEY

Come on.

Vane grabs it -- skin against skin. Harvey pulls him to his feet.

VANE

Thanks.

Vane's body jerks and a surprised yelp escapes his mouth. He looks down at the hands.

Harvey's fingers bites into Vane's skin, fusing themselves into the hand.

Vane looks in horror at his hand. Spikes shoot out through the skin near the wrist, a few more further up through his arm.

VANE

No!

EXT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST (NORTH AREA)

Dutton snaps around at the sound of Vane's scream. He pulls the blasting cap of his stick of explosive and sprints toward the sound.

EXT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST (SOUTH AREA)

McCready pops on a flare and moves around a building. He drops to his knees as the ground shakes.

An unearthly roar ensues somewhere close.

EXT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST (WEST AREA)

Clark paces back and forth while flames spread across the building behind him. He scouts for the others.

CLARK

Come on.

The ground ripples in front of him, like something moving underneath.

Something breaks the surface. Clark jolts at the sight of Kinner's grotesquely mangled face.

CLARK

Kinner? Wh--what...?

SWOOSH!

The snow rips apart and Kinner's body bursts from the snow. The bloody pulp lands in front of Clark who shrieks in utter dread.

It zings towards him on spider legs. A long coarse tongue shoots from its stringy mouth and sweeps across the snow.

Clark jumps as it passes under him and sprints away.

EXT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST (SOUTH AREA)

McCready rolls around in the snow and scouts the area. Something big disappears into the snow a bit away from him.

McCready crawls across the snow and nears a large jagged hole in the ice. He peeks over the edge and stares down into a deep black crevasse.

He drops his flare into the abyss. Its light reveals jagged walls before disappearing into the blackness.

EXT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST (EAST AREA)

Dutton holds up a sizzling flare and moves cautiously closer to a broken window on the side of a building.

He sees frozen blood on the glass shards and bloody torn clothes in the snow. Dutton squats and inspects it.

VANE (O.S.)

Where are the others?

Dutton spins around, nearly falls but keeps himself on his feet.

Vane holds up his unscathed hands in a reassuring gesture.

VANE

Easy, easy.

Dutton sighs and gets to his feet.

DUTTON

Where the hell were you, man?

VANE

Hiding of course.

DUTTON

Did you see Harvey?

VANE

Harvey? No.

(looks around)

Where are the others?

EXT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST (WEST AREA)

Clark slides through the snow and ducks around a corner. His glowing hands fumbles with the stick of explosive while also struggling to light a flare.

A furious HISSING snaps his head around. Clark looks around the corner. The Thing scurries through the snow toward him

Almost whimpering, Clark manages to light the flare. He jumps to his feet and runs across an open space, heading for the crippled Sikorsky.

The Things spots him and quickens its pace.

Halfway to the helicopter, Clark slips and plows through the snow. The stick of Titadyn flies from his hand and buries itself in the snow a few yards from him.

Seeing The Thing approaching, he grits his teeth and struggles his way out of the snow. He snatches up the stick and jams it against the flare.

Nothing happens.

CLARK

Come on!

Cursing himself, he turns the Titadyn stick around and holds it against the flare.

The fuse ignites.

A prehistoric shape of mouth and legs gallops at him. Clark throws the stick at it and barrels away.

He looks over his shoulder and --

KA-BLAM!

The Titadyn explodes with a deafening bright white flash. The concussion picks up Clark off his feet and shoves him flailing through the air.

EXT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST (SOUTH AREA)

McCready recoils from the hole as the sounds of the explosion hits him. He looks westward.

MCCREADY

Clark.

EXT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST (EAST AREA)

Dutton and Vane jerk their eyes into the air as burning pieces of the complex fly through the night sky.

VANE

What the Christ was that?

DUTTON

(winks)

The good stuff.

EXT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST (WEST AREA)

Lying dead in the snow, Clark's eyes stare straight up in the sky.

A sudden silent cough sends snow shooting from his mouth. Clark gasps for air and sits up. He stiffens his back and grimaces in pain.

Clark screeches back when McCready suddenly drops down next to him.

McCready looks down at him and grins.

MCCREADY
(m.o.s.)
Are you alright?

Clark squints, shakes his head.

CLARK
What?

Again McCready's lips move -- again without sound.

CLARK
I--I can't hear you.

McCready pulls Clark to his feet and pats his back.

MCCREADY
It'll pass.

CLARK
It just did.

He looks around and sees a massive charred crater about two hundred feet away.

CLARK
Kinner. Did I get it?

MCCREADY
If that blast didn't kill it then
we're in deep shit, cos' I don't
got a nuke on me.

Clark manages a chuckle.

The sound of crunching snow interrupts them. They turn in time to see Dutton and Vane running toward them.

Dutton observes the crater in the snow.

DUTTON
Pretty impressive, Clark. Did you
remember to cover your ears?

Clark tilts his head.

DUTTON
Thought not.

McCready looks at Vane.

MCCREADY
You made it out?

Barely. VANE

Harvey? MCCREADY

No. DUTTON

Dammit. MCCREADY

What? VANE

He thinks Harvey might be one of them. CLARK

Based on... VANE

Later. I need to show you guys something. MCCREADY

EXT. US PETROLEUM OUTPOST (SOUTH AREA)

The four of them run through the snow and come to a stop near the black hole in the ice.

Shee-it. DUTTON

It went down there? CLARK

Yeah. MCCREADY

Where the hell's it going? DUTTON

Any place but here. It's been outed now, can't hide among us anymore. MCCREADY

I know where it's going. CLARK

It needs to go asleep in the ice and hope someone finds it. MCCREADY

CLARK
That's right and I know --

DUTTON
That's a lame fucking plan, Mac.

MCCREADY
Wanna hear an even lamer one?

McCready peeks down into the hole and looks up at Dutton, smiles.

DUTTON
Whoa.

CLARK
What?

DUTTON
You've gotta be fucking kidding.

CLARK
Dammit, what?

VANE
I think McCready wants to go after it.

CLARK
No, we don't have to --

VANE
That's insane, McCready.

MCCREADY
Really? I thought you would have been thrilled with the idea.

VANE
Excuse me?

MCCREADY
Since it gives the two of you a chance to gang up on us.

Clark and Dutton give McCready a perplexed look.

VANE
What the hell are you talking about?

MCCREADY

At least Blair was smart about it. He knew Clark would come up with a test eventually so he held his own. His rules, his order. Exposing himself so that Harvey could get away.

VANE

I passed the test, remember?

CLARK

That's right, Mac.

MCCREADY

No. Vane passed the test. You didn't.

VANE

What?

DUTTON

Did one just fly over the cuckoo's nest? What the hell is wrong with you, Mac?

MCCREADY

I think the right question here is: Why is nothing wrong with --
(points at Vane)
-- him?

DUTTON

You lost me there, man.

MCCREADY

Last time I saw Vane he could hardly walk but you...

Dutton and Clark shift their attention to Vane.

MCCREADY

...you're a regular Usain Bolt.

Dutton steps away from Vane.

DUTTON

Shit. He's right.

CLARK

Who?

Dutton yanks Clark away from Vane. The gap in the ice separating the three men and what was once Vane.

They stare each other down, like gunslingers at high noon.

Vane licks his lips.

VANE

You're not as stupid as I thought,
McCready.

MCCREADY

Coming from you I'm not sure that's
a compliment.

Dutton brings out a stick of Titadyn.

DUTTON

Come on, let's light his ass up.

He pops on a flare. Clark holds him back and turns to Vane.

CLARK

Just out of curiosity, what's it
like? I mean, how do you...feel?

Vane smiles.

VANE

Peachy.

Vane throws himself across the gap and - in midair - spreads a pair of giant insect wings.

Its human shape blows apart and reveals a locust form with antennas and fangs.

McCready shoulders Clark out of the way but Dutton doesn't react fast enough. The grossly swollen insect lands on his chest and drives him into the snow.

A long stinger shoots from the creature's sternum and stabs Dutton in the groin repeatedly.

The big man bellows in petrified pain but fights back for his life.

McCready plunges a flare into one of the creature's many eyes. It whirls around which gives Dutton enough time to rip one of its paper-thin wings off.

The Thing cries out and Dutton kicks it hard. It topples backwards toward the gap in the ice. Dutton kicks it again.

This time The Thing grabs Dutton's foot and drags him with it over the edge.

Dutton gloved hands claw at the ice as his legs disappear down in the hole. Tearing the fabric he manages to stop the fall.

McCready throws himself to the rescue.

DUTTON

No! Don't touch me! It got me, I
can feel it inside.

Dutton's face twitches and he screams in pain.

MCCREADY

What do you want me to do?

Dutton's eyes search for the stick of Titadyn in the snow.

DUTTON

Light it. Light it!

McCready grabs the stick and ignites the fuse. Dutton closes his eyes and chokes back a yell. He lifts a shivering hand.

DUTTON

Gimme' that. While I still can.

McCready sticks it into his hand. Dutton clutches it tight and looks up.

DUTTON

See you on the other side.

And with that he lets go.

McCready and Clark stares at the gaping hole, hearing a faint scream that ends abruptly.

CLARK

Now what?

WOOOOF!

A deep muffled explosions shakes the ground and sends ice and a fire up through the opening.

The blast sends McCready and Clark on their backs. A monstrous roar echoes up through the hole and the ground shakes.

Lying on his back, McCready stares on in horror as a chunk of ice breaks off and tumbles down the hole.

Another -- much larger chunk -- tears loose and follows it smaller sibling down into the abyss.

A tear ripples the ice.

MCCREADY
Not good. Not good!

He springs to his feet and drags Clark away from the growing hole.

CLARK
What's happening.

MCCREADY
The whole place's caving in.

A ten feet wide section of ice a snow crumbles and opens up a long gaping scar in the ground.

Another unearthly roar tears through ice, moving the same direction as the spreading scar.

MCCREADY
It's moving.

CLARK
That's what I've been trying to tell you, I know where it's going.

MCCREADY
Where?

CLARK
Home, McCready.

CRACK!

A massive ice fragment -- supporting the two men -- breaks free and keels over toward the abyss.

Clark wobbles on sluggish feet and reaches out for McCready for support.

Their gloved hands meet and together they struggle uphill while the gap separating them from safety opens precariously wider.

Chips and chunks shoot off the sides as Clark throws himself to across the gap. He rolls around just in time to see McCready making an attempt on his own.

A sudden shift in direction sends McCready off course. He stumbles sideways and reels nearer the edge.

Clark glides on his stomach to the edge and throws out a hand. McCready stretches his arm as much as humanly possible and their fingers lock.

Just then the plate of ice rips of barrels to the bottom of the cavernous gorge.

McCready dangles in midair, Clark's hand the only thing postponing his imminent death.

Clark grits his teeth and wraps his other hand around McCready's wrist and pulls.

McCready's boots scrape against the icy side. He kicks himself further closer to rescue while Clark pulls his arm.

The ice under Clark cracks in a weblike fashion.

Both men freeze.

MCCREADY
Get out of here, Clark.

CLARK
I'm not letting go.

MCCREADY
Dammit, go!

Something roars beneath McCready. He looks down and catches a quick glimpse of huge anamorphic shape moving through the abyss.

CLARK
Come on!

Clark digs deep and pulls with all of his strength. McCready finds footing in the ice and kicks himself over the edge.

They race to their feet and barrel away from the rapidly expanding crevasse.

Sprinting through the snow, they look back as part of the burning camp tips over the edge collapses into the blackness.

They add more pace. McCready takes point and leads them toward a wide building.

MCCREADY
Please tell me you didn't mess with
the snowmobiles.

CLARK
Missed those.

INT. MOTORPOOL

McCready blows the door open. The wide room sports a mess of spare parts, tools and -- at center stage -- two hefty HÄGGLUNDS snowcats with US Petroleum logos.

Clark climbs up on one of them, steps on its track and flings the door open to its spacious compartment.

MCCREADY
No, it's too slow.

He looks off to the side and spots four red ARCTIC CAT snowmobiles. McCready straddles one of them and revs the engine to life.

Loud BANGS and RUMBLE sound off from the outside, emphasizing the urgency of the situation.

MCCREADY
Get the door.

Clark bolts to the wide retractable door and slams down a button on the controls.

Nothing happens.

He tries it again -- same result.

MCCREADY
Forget it. Hop on.

Clark swings himself onto the snowmobile behind McCready as he jerks the throttle.

EXT. MOTORPOOL

The snowmobile splinters through the garage door and hits the blizzard head on. The snowmobile's tracks shoot snow high into the night sky as McCready accelerates.

MCCREADY
Where to?

CLARK
(points)
There.

McCready throws the Arctic Cat around in a dizzying turn and punches the gas.

Clark looks back over his shoulder at the camp.

The structure crumbles, comes apart and, with a whining tear, tumbles into the rift.

Clark clings on to McCready as the snowmobile fades into the howling night.

EXT. WILKES LAND CRATER

McCready parks the Arctic Cat a bit away from hole that Vane fell into a day earlier.

Clark shivers, ice covers most of his frostbitten face.

CLARK
I'm frozen solid.

MCCREADY
Walk it off.

McCready steps closer to the hole and peers down. The ropes still hang secured in the ice. He kneels and checks them.

MCCREADY
You set?

Clark nods in an unconvincing manner.

MCCREADY
Look, if you're not up to --

CLARK
Let's do just this, McCready.

McCready pulls out his two remaining sticks of Titadyn from his parka and hands one to Clark.

MCCREADY
You've got your flares?

Clark shows him two.

MCCREADY
All right.

McCready grabs a rope.

MCCREADY
If for some reason we get separated
down there and you see me
again...don't trust me, you hear?

Clark swallows.

CLARK

Okay.

McCready slides down and out of sight. Clark finds another rope and disappears into the --

INT. CAVE

McCready pops a flare as Clark shimmies down next to him. An eerie silence roams the cave -- not even the wind seems audible down here.

They proceed along the uneven base. Clark spots a freshly cleared narrow crevasse.

CLARK

(whispering)

We didn't get here first.

MCCREADY

Easy.

McCready lifts the flare and throws light on an obscured drag-mark leading down a small slope.

They follow the declination and come to a stop at the MASSIVE CRAFT still mostly buried in the ice wall.

McCready bends down to the drill left on the ground from earlier and spots an opening into the craft.

MCCREADY

Was that thing there the last time
we --

CLARK

No.

The flare fizzles out and bathes everything in darkness.

A creepy noise trickles through the darkness. Something moves, scrapes, bends.

CLARK (O.S.)

(hoarse whisper)

Mac...?

BOOM!

Something big and hard hits the ground close by and shatters. Again. And again.

Clark's breathing quickens in the dark.

FFFSSSHHH!

A bright flare flashes to life. Clark holds it up and jerks his head around, searching.

No McCready.

Just a huge pile of broken ice boulders blocking his way back.

CLARK
McCready?

Nothing.

The blood drains from Clark's face, his eyes reveal a state of panic.

That creepy noise again.

Clark backs up, bumps against the wall. He closes his eyes, takes a couple of deep breaths, recomposes himself.

He eyes the open hatch leading into the craft. It's small, only about five feet tall.

Clark squats by the opening, shines his flare inside.

INT. CRAFT

The light reveals a featureless chrome shaft. Clark bites his lower lip -- and crawls inside.

CONDUIT

Holding the flare stretched out in front of him, he squeezes forward. The reflective surface bounces the light around in an odd pattern.

It's almost as if the surface moves.

Clark blinks, shakes his head. He puts a hand on the wall for support.

He slants over and nearly falls as the wall adjusts itself, expanding.

Clark straightens, stands up. The entire conduit expands to fit him.

He proceeds further in.

CHAMBER

Taking a weary step inside, Clark peeks around in the oval shaped room.

Again, it's the same kind of surface as in the conduit, except this one glows. Artificial light, but off-putting, casting strangely shaped shadows.

As if on cue, Clark's flare withers out.

He pulls out another but stops as he spots something in a nearby alcove.

ALCOVE

A mummified corpse sits cropped against the wall, as if frozen in time.

Its features human but prehistoric. It holds a wooden spear with a pointy flint head in its hand.

Clark leans closer and sees a second mummified corpse, a child. A sharpened sabre-tooth still lodged in its tiny prehistoric hand.

Clark pulls back and sees his own bend reflection in the wall's surface. And -- right behind his -- Blair's.

He jerks around and stumbles back into the --

CHAMBER

-- where Blair, nude, waits.

Clark circles around, keeping a healthy distance to his former friend.

His hand slides to his pocket, grabbing a Titadyn stick.

BLAIR

Don't.

CLARK

You know I have to, Blair. I have to stop you.

Blair shakes his head.

CLARK

Are you even in there anymore?

The old man smiles.

BLAIR
He's here.

CLARK
Who are you?

BLAIR
Who do you want me to be?

CLARK
What do you want?!

BLAIR
To live.

Clark gently pulls the stick from his pocket.

BLAIR
I said don't.

He takes a step closer. Clark sees the reflection of Blair's back in the wall behind him. Something grows out of him.

Clark retreats toward the conduit, except it isn't there anymore.

Blair clicks his tongue.

Clark does a quick scan of the room, finds no exits. Defeated, he pops his final flare to life.

BLAIR
It doesn't have to be like this.
It's over for you either way.

CLARK
I won't let you destroy the world.
You're not getting out of here,
Blair.

BLAIR
Out?

Blair send him a devilish smile and nods toward the corpses in the alcove.

BLAIR
I'm already out.

Clark's face sags, the look of defeat painted across his face.

BLAIR

I can make this very painful for
you.

Slimy tentacles curl around his neck and shoulders. His legs
rip apart into a pair of threes.

Defeat turns to desperation. Desperation to anger. Clark
lifts his head in a last act of human defiance.

CLARK

Go fuck yourself.

He smashes the flare and Titadyn stick together. The fuse
ignites immediatly.

Blair lurches forward. A claw tears insulation from Clark's
park, the stick flies through the air.

Clark stumbles into the wall. It gives way and opens up a
conduit around him.

CONDUIT

Sensing hope, Clark scuttles on all four through the rocking
passage. The Thing shrieks in behind him and plows through.

Clawing his way forward with a will to live, Clark reaches a
pitch black opening and --

INT. CAVE

-- the craft regurgitates him onto the icy floor. The opening
closes behind him like it never even was there.

He stumbles forward in the darkness. Something shrieks behind
him. He turns and --

BRRRRRRRRMMMMM!

The craft illuminates from within as the Titadyn explodes in
a deep muffled roar.

Chips of ice blast through the air. The craft trembles
violently, tearing the ice to pieces. Flames rips the craft
apart and shoots into the air.

Ice rains down all around Clark as he climbs over boulders
toward the faint outline of the hole above.

The Thing swoops through the air and nearly tackles Clark. He reaches the rope when suddenly the ground shudders and knocks him off his feet.

The grotesquely deformed thing towers above him, ready to strike.

A piece of the ground canons into the air and smashes against the ceiling.

A trembling roar increases in volume, nearing a deafening crescendo.

And then oil blows through the ground. Thousands of gallons of thick black liquid gold fills the cave in a matter of seconds.

The virtual tsunami of oil swoops by and thrashes The Thing hard against the wall. It picks up Clark but not before he manages to grab the rope.

As oil and gas fills the cave beneath him, Clark climbs the rope. The opening above him inching nearer.

And then the flames ignite the oil.

The sudden expansion of heated air shoves Clark out through the opening.

EXT. WILKES LAND CRATER

Clark scuttles across the snow to safety. Behind him, a tower of burning oil shoots up through the hole.

The monolithic gust of liquid fire shoots high into the night sky, sweeping its light around the jagged surroundings.

Clark slides down to a sitting position and lets the fountain of flames warm his chapped cheeks.

Exhausted, he leans his head against the boulder and closes his eyes.

A shadow moves across his tired features. Clark looks up and nearly smiles at the sight of McCready.

McCready slumps down next to him. He groans and massages his injured shoulder.

Clark chuckles.

MCCREADY

What?

CLARK
The irony.

MCCREADY
What are you talking about, Clark?

CLARK
Never thought I'd be saved by oil.

MCCREADY
Go figure, huh?

He looks up at the towering inferno.

MCCREADY
Someone's gonna see this. They'll
come for us.

CLARK
Yeah...

The two of them stare at each other for an odd moment, a
space of mistrust building between them.

MCCREADY
So...

CLARK
So.

MCCREADY
You made it out.

Clark nods.

CLARK
As did you.

MCCREADY
Yeah, the whole thing came down on
me. I came around, you weren't --

CLARK
Stop. Just stop, man. I'm cold, I'm
beat --

MCCREADY
Clark...

CLARK
-- I just wanna sit here a while
and not worry about the guy sitting
next to me.

MCCREADY

Fair enough.

Clark runs a gloved hand across his face. He stops, stares at the glove -- then at McCready.

Clark slides the glove off. The warm hand steams in the cold night. McCready looks up.

MCCREADY

Clark?

Clark sticks out his hand. McCready sends it a doubtful glare.

MCCREADY

Remember what I told you, before we went in?

Clark nods, extends his arm a bit further.

CLARK

I've had enough mistrust today,
enough to last me a lifetime.

MCCREADY

Okay.

McCready pulls off his own glove and reaches out for Clark's hand.

Stops.

Looks at Clark.

Clark sends him a smile - the warm kind.

McCready grabs his hand.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END