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Alphabetical

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#)
[I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#)
[R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)

Genre

[Action](#) [Adventure](#) [Animation](#)
[Comedy](#) [Crime](#) [Drama](#)
[Family](#) [Fantasy](#) [Film-Noir](#)
[Horror](#) [Musical](#) [Mystery](#)
[Romance](#) [Sci-Fi](#) [Short](#)
[Thriller](#) [War](#) [Western](#)

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[Seinfeld](#)
[South Park](#)
[Stargate SG-1](#)
[Lost](#)
[The 4400](#)

International

[French scripts](#)

Latest Comments

[ALL SCRIPTS](#)

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"THE THING"

Screenplay by

Bill Lancaster

Based on the story

"WHO GOES THERE"

by

John W. Campbell. Jr.

SECOND DRAFT

March 4, 1981

CAST

MACREADY

35. Helicopter pilot. Likes chess. Hates the cold. The pay is good.

GARRY

46. The station manager. Stiff. Ex-army officer. Wears a handgun.

CHILDS

33. Six-four. Two-fifty. Black. A mechanic. Can be jolly. But don't mess.

BLAIR

50. Sensitive. Intelligent. Unassuming. An assistant biologist.

DR. COPPER

45. Professional. A decent man. A good doctor.

PALMER

27. Second string chopper pilot. Crack mechanic. Long hair. Slight sixties acid damage.

NAULS

22. The cook. Bright. Black. Irreverent. But kindhearted. Roller skates.

NORRIS

44. Stocky. Rugged looking. A geophysicist. An incipient heart condition.

BENNINGS

38. A meteorologist. Dutiful. An old pro.

CLARK

24. The dog handler. Likes it here. Good at his job.

SANCHEZ

21. The radio operator. Hates it here. Lousy at his job.

In the winter of 1982 these men were commissioned by the United States National Science Foundation to gather data concerning the physical and natural sciences on the continent of Antarctica.

THE MAIN COMPOUND OF U.S. OUTPOST #31

The interior is a cramped and never ending maze of hallways, passageways and doors which connect the many rooms and compartments within the compound. Sturdy, but prefabricated materials have been used in its construction.

There is a laboratory. An infirmary. A kitchen and mess hall. A communications room and sleeping quarters. Other cubicles are for storage and supplies.

The most spacious area of the building, and the main center of activity, is the Rec Room. Of the many entrance ways to this room can be seen the small work chambers with their sophisticated computers and other scientific equipment.

The below quarter houses the generator and still other compartments for storage.

A long underground tunnel connects the main compound to the dog kennel.

FADE IN:

A STARRY BLACKNESS

From out of the billions, the smallest of specks drives slowly forward. It closes; getting larger; its features becoming more identifiable: a vessel. Flip-flopping; out of control. Its stern roaring with flame. It passes; its blue fire surging into the screen.

"THE THING"

A thundering...

FADE TO:

BLIND AND FERAL WHITENESS

...Glacial desert... gusts of snow... superimpose:

ANTARCTICA 1982 WINTER

A SOUND

Loud and strident. A helicopter streaks across frame. It travels precariously close to the ground; its chassis battered and swayed by the wind.

INT. COPTER

Red dials beam on the faces of two men. One carries a rifle and searches the horizon with binoculars. The other pilots. Their unkempt faces, their blazing eyes notate a wildness. They bark at each other in some Scandinavian tongue. Two men arguing like mad and desperate children.

The man with the binoculars sights something.

EXT. HORIZON - BINOCULARS' POV - A DOG

It turns and snarls at the craft some fifteen hundred yards to its rear. Then whirls and gallops off. A gun blast kicks up snow at its heels.

INT. COPTER

Another blast of rifle fire as the man takes issue with his prey. The pilot slams a fist into his gunman friend and implores for better aim. The craft swoops lower and the engine is put into full throttle.

EXT. HILL -- THE DOG

running feverishly up and over a hill of ice. A weather-beaten, wooden sign sticks up on the other side:

U.S. NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION -- OUTPOST #31

A rifle blast kicks up more snow.

EXT. COMPOUND OF U.S. OUTPOST #31

A large, almost snow-covered building. Not far from that a tall, meteorological balloon tower.

A scattering of several small shacks at varying distances from the main compound. The smaller hovels are connected by wooden planked walkways and steadying ropes. Multicolored pennants stick out of the snow marking pathways and directions to outdoor experiments.

A tractor and two helicopters sit idle, covered with mounds of continuously mounting snow.

TWO MEN, NORRIS AND BENNINGS

standing some thirty yards from the main building are in the process of letting up a large red balloon. Childs, a hefty black man, is twenty yards away tinkering with a snowmobile. Their beards are caked with ice. It is winter and it is harsh.

The faint sound of the copter turns their attention.

THE COPTER

flying ever lower now. The man with the gun leans dangerously outside and fires away at the dog as it nears the outpost.

THE MEN

outside the compound look to one another, incredulous.

THE COPTER

much too low now, and chastised by the wind, attempts a high-speed landing, directly on the heels of the sprinting dog. It bounces violently on the hard-packed surface.

Once. Twice. Passing the dog.

A third bounce sends it skidding. It flips; its blades snapping off like toothpicks. It lands belly-up, soundless except for the whine of its engine.

The man with the gun rolls out before the explosion.

INT. MAIN COMPOUND

The half a dozen men, playing cards, monitoring equipment, listening to music -- spring to their feet, startled.

EXT. COMPOUND

The dog reaches Norris and Bennings, as they awkwardly wade through the snow, toward the downed copter.

THE SURVIVOR

of the crash, his eyes crazed with determination, struggles to his feet. Heedless of his companion, he double-times his way to the men and the dog. He reloads his gun and bellows in his Scandinavian tongue.

Norris and Bennings have no idea what he is saying.

The survivor waves his arms as if shooting them off, screaming as he does so; his face now caked with blood.

The two men are bewildered. The dog jumps up, licking and pawing them, imploring for safety.

Blam!! The visitor fires. The men jump back in disbelief.

NORRIS

What the fu...

Blam! Blam! The crazed visitor screams and fires as he stalks after them. His countenance ablaze, mad. Ice and snow kick up about the terrified Americans. A bullet smacks into the dog's hip, sending it skidding and howling in pain.

Childs, the black man by the snowmobile, takes cover, diving behind his machine.

Bennings is hit. Norris pulls, drags him back toward the compound. The dog crawls along beside them.

The intruder is relentless in his assail. He runs, screaming, firing, screaming, reloading and firing.

INT. COMPOUND

Total confusion. Some watch helplessly through the small, fogged-up and translucent windows. Others try to mobilize grabbing for their heavy jackets.

CLOSE ON A .357 MAGNUM

as it efficiently breaks through a windowpane and into the cold. A steady hand grips it firmly.

THE SCANDINAVIAN

getting closer. Kablam! Suddenly, his head jerks back. He falls to his knees and then face down into the snow.

NORRIS AND BENNINGS

stare blankly, but relievedly at the fallen man. The dog whimpers in pain.

CHILDS

pokes his head out from under the snowmobile.

INT. MAIN COMPOUND - REC ROOM

The rumbling of voices fades. The men adjust their eyes to station manager Garry, as he extracts his gun from the broken window, relieves it of its spent shell and puts it away.

CUT TO:

EXT. BURNING COPTER

Several men spray snow on the burning wreckage. There is no hope for the pilot.

CUT TO:

INT. COMPOUND

CLOSE ON THE PALLID FACE OF THE SCANDINAVIAN INTRUDER

A neat round hole is set in the middle of his forehead.

Station manager Garry holds up something akin to an ID.

GARRY

Norwegian... Jans Bolen.

Fuchs, a young and sensitive-looking biologist, stands closest to the large area map of Antarctica. Several men sit and stand around viewing the body that lies on two brought-together card-tables.

FUCHS

Gotta be from the Norwegian camp.

GARRY

How far's that?

FUCHS

'Bout eighty kilos southwest.

GARRY

(surprised)

That far?

Garry directs his attention to Childs, the large black man who had been working on the snowmobile. Next to him sits Norris, the rugged-looking, fortyish, geophysicist, who was one of the men being shot at.

GARRY

You catch anything he was saying?

CHILDS

Am I starting to look Norwegian to you, Bwana?

Garry motions inquiringly to Norris.

NORRIS

Yeah. I caught that he wanted the better part of my ass to come apart.

INT. INFIRMARY

Dr. Cooper, mid-forties, works on the outstretched leg of Bennings, the meteorologist. Clark, the dog handler, is mending the hip of the wounded dog off in the corner.

Bennings lets out with an ouch.

DR. COPPER

Don't "ouch" me. Two stitches. It just grazed you.

He helps a shaken Bennings up off the table.

BENNINGS

What in the hell were they doing...?
Flying that low... shooting at a
dog... at us...

DR. COPPER

Stir crazy. Cabin fever... Who knows.

The dog yelps and whimpers as Clark tries to calm him.

CLARK

I'll be here a while. Shell's pretty deep.

INT. RADIO ROOM

Blair, senior biologist, fifty, balding, leans against the entrance door.

He looks on as the young, bored-looking radio operator, Sanchez, attends to his equipment. Bursts of static.

SANCHEZ

It's no go.

BLAIR

Well, get to somebody. Anybody. We've got to report this mess.

SANCHEZ

Look, I haven't been able to reach shit in two weeks. Doubt if anybody's talked to anybody on the whole continent.

INT. HALLWAY

Nauls, the cook, glides along on his roller skates down one of the many narrow hallways that connect the various compartments of the main compound. He is black, a little mischievous, about twenty-two.

He comes to a flashy skidding stop at one of the entrances to the rec room area, where the men are gathered with the dead Norwegian.

NAULS

Maybe we at war with Norway.

Palmer, a spacy, twenty-seven year old, novice pilot and mechanic, grins as he lights a joint. He directs a remark to station manager Garry.

PALMER

Was wondering when "El Capitan" was going to get a chance to use his pop gun.

Garry rebukes him with a stern look and then turns to Fuchs.

GARRY

How long have they been stationed there?

Fuchs leafing through a pile of papers.

FUCHS

Says here about eight weeks.

Dr. Copper enters the room. Bennings limping after him slightly.

GARRY

(shaking his head)
That's not enough time for guys to go bonkers.

NAULS

Bullshit, Bwana, sweetheart. Five minutes is enough to put a man over down here.

PALMER

Damn straight.

NAULS

I mean Palmer been the way he is
since the first day.

Palmer smiles and flips the cook the bird.

GARRY

How many in their party?

FUCHS

(referring)
Started with six. There'd be four
others left.

DR. COPPER

How do you know?

The men's attention turn to Copper.

DR. COPPER

...Guys as crazy as that could have
done a lot of damage to their own
before they got to us.

GARRY

Nothing we can do about that.

DR. COPPER

Yes, there is. I'd like to go up.

GARRY

In this weather?

DR. COPPER

(turns to)
Bennings?

BENNINGS

Winds are going to let up a tad,
next couple of hours.

GARRY

A tad?

BENNINGS

Can't condone it myself. But it is a
short haul. Hour there, hour back.

Garry still does not much like the idea. Palmer takes another
hit off his joint.

PALMER

Shit, Doc, I'll give you the lift
if...

GARRY

Forget it, Palmer. Doc, you're a
pain in the ass.

GARRY

(turns)
Norris, go get MacReady.

Slight laughter from some of the men.

NORRIS

(grins)
MacReady ain't going nowhere. Bunkered
in till spring.

GARRY

Just go get him.

NORRIS

(stands)

Anyway, he's probably ripped.

EXT. U.S. OUTPOST #31

Norris, bundled in his sixty-five pounds of clothing, exits the main compound. He walks the prefab wooden planks up the precipice; his destination is someone a hundred yards up the slope -- to a shack. He grabs onto the steadying ropes and pulls himself against the wind and blowing sleet.

INT. MACREADY'S SHACK - CLOSE ON ICE CUBES

being dumped into a glass, followed by the pouring of whiskey. An electronic Voice is heard.

VOICE

Bishop to knight four.

MacReady takes a sip of his drink; makes his way over to his electronic chess game. A large Mexican sombrero hangs on his back. He is tall; about thirty-five. His shack is sparse but unkempt. A few centerfolds on the wall are interspersed by an occasional poster of some Mediterranean or South American paradise.

The chess game is of larger than normal size. The pieces move automatically with the press of a button. He sits down and chuckles over his opponent's bad move.

MACREADY

Poor little son of a bitch. You're starting to lose it, aren't you?

He confidently taps out his move. His companion's response is immediate.

VOICE

Pawn takes queen at knight four.

MacReady's grin slowly fades as he examines the board. There is a pounding at his door. MacReady broods for a bit, heedless of his visitor and makes his next move.

VOICE

Rook to knight six. Check.

More impatient pounding. MacReady glares at his opponent for a beat. He bends forward, opens up a flap containing the chess game's circuitry and pours in his drink. There ensues a snapping, popping sound as smoke and sparks rise from the machine; followed by a flush of chess gibberish.

MacReady gets up from his seat, mumbling on his way to the door.

MACREADY

...Cheating bastard...

He opens the door. Norris steps in followed by a flurry of snow and wind.

NORRIS

You jerking off or just pissed?

MACREADY

We got any more of those electronic

chess things down in supply?

NORRIS

Get your gear on.

MACREADY

What for?

EXT. OUTPOST

One of the grounded choppers is being readied for take-off. Childs holds a huge industrial torch to the engine, warming it up.

INT. MAIN COMPOUND - CORRIDOR

Garry, Bennings, Dr. Copper, Palmer and MacReady wind their way through the slender corridors on their way to the chopper. Dr. Copper carries a satchel of medicine supplies. MacReady, going over his flight chart, looks mad as hell. Dialogue overlaps.

MACREADY

...Craziness... This
is goddamn insane...

GARRY

...Quit the griping
MacReady. Sooner you're
there -- sooner you're
back.

MACREADY

It's against regulations to go up
this time of year!

DR. COPPER

Screw regulations! Four guys could
be crawling around on their bellies
out there!

MACREADY

So, I don't want to end up crawling
around with them when we go down.

GARRY

Look, if you're going to keep
bitching, MacReady -- Palmer's offered
to take him up...

MACREADY

What are you talking?! He's had two
months training in those choppers!

PALMER

(defiant)

Four!

MACREADY

(to Bennings)

What is it out there, anyway? Forty-
five knots?

BENNINGS

Sixteen.

MACREADY

(disgusted)

And the horse you rode in on. Sixteen
for how long?! You can't predict
this time of year...

INT./ EXT. CHOPPER

Dr. Copper sits next to MacReady, who is at the controls.

MacReady tightens the string of his sombrero around his neck and starts up its choking engine.

MacReady fights violently with the controls as he struggles to get the craft into the air. It finally rights itself and moves up and off into the grey-white sky.

INT. MAIN COMPOUND

A couple of the men mingle in the area. Clark, the dog handler, looks out the window.

CLARK

Mac's really taking it up, huh?

The dog, a large bandage on his hip, wades through the room. Under tables. Past men's legs. It hobbles slightly. No one takes notice.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CHOPPER

moves over a ridge of ice. Columns of smoke can be seen rising ominously from a quarter mile off.

INT. CHOPPER – POINT OF VIEW

As they near, the smoke looms thicker. A black, tar-like gush; billowing up into the grey sky from the whiteness below.

EXT. NORWEGIAN CAMP

Smoke climbs upward in the f.g. MacReady sets his craft down. Pull back to reveal the camp itself: resembling the aftermath of a western fort, sacked and ravaged by Indians.

Small fires and debris are strewn everywhere. The prefab Administration Building exposes gaping holes. Smoke rises from the almost entirely snow-buried Quonset huts. Embers swirl in every direction.

INT. CHOPPER

The two men look at each other in silence. They get out.

CLOSE ON A LARGE, MAKESHIFT FUNERAL PYRE

smoldering to a close. A hastily conceived crematorium. Wood, books, furniture, tires, anything that will burn has been mixed together with the charred remains of several dogs and the body of a man.

Curious mounds of a melted and blackened goo are heaped within the mess.

A small can of gasoline lies nearby. A large oil drum not far off.

MACREADY AND COPPER

their faces ashen as they take in this grotesque sight.

MacReady turns to view the Norwegian compound. He then exchanges a look with Copper. MacReady heads back toward the chopper.

THE CHOPPER

MacReady unhinges the shotgun that is latched to the panel behind the seats.

EXT. THE MAIN BUILDING - THE DOOR

MacReady and Dr. Copper stand hesitantly amidst the wisps of snow and embers. MacReady tries the door. It is unlocked. He slowly pushes it open with his gun. A creaking. A long pitch-black corridor. Copper shines a flashlight.

DR. COPPER

Anybody there?!

No answer. Just wind. They exchange a look and enter.

INT. NARROW CORRIDOR

The two men move slowly. It is dank and cold. Their breath, bleating like exhaust. A soft, steady wind howls overhead. The flashlight is not much help.

Further down, they hear a faint hissing sound. As they get closer it more resembles static. The flashlight finds a door at the end of the corridor. The sputtering static comes from within.

The face of the door has been shredded. An ax sticks out from its middle. MacReady wrenches out the ax. There is blood on it. The men acknowledge this for a beat.

MacReady tries the knob. It opens slightly. Something is blocking it from the other side.

MACREADY

Anybody in there?!

Nothing.

DR. COPPER

We're Americans!

Nothing.

MACREADY

Come to help you!!

MacReady pushes against the door.

MACREADY

Give me a hand.

They push, shove, grunt. The door gives a bit. Finally more. It widens enough for MacReady to see that a large computer-like machine is blocking their path. MacReady wedges in and shines the flashlight.

It is the communications room. Holes in its roof have allowed in the freezing cold. The flashlight exposes the back of the radio chair. One more nudge allows them into the room.

A beat as they catch their breath. MacReady spots a Coleman lantern. He lights it with a match. Holds it up. The brighter light exposes the top of a man's head sitting in the radio chair.

MACREADY

Hey, Sweden...! You okay?

The chair rocks slightly with the gentle breeze. They inch closer. A yard from the chair, MacReady stops the Doctor. He pokes his gun at the chair's back.

MACREADY

Sweden?!

Dr. Copper spots something. From the man's wrist on the armrest, he follows a long, yarn-thick, red line, ending in a pool of frozen blood on the floor.

The two men step around the chair. The Norwegian stares up in blanched death. A gaping black hole for a mouth.

His throat and wrists slit. An old-fashioned straight razor in his lap.

MacReady turns off the hissing radio, and marches to the other door. It is locked and barricaded.

DR. COPPER

(more to himself)

My God, what in hell happened here?

MACREADY

Come on, Copper.

The two men free a machine-like obstacle from the other exit. MacReady opens a lock and pushes the door open.

More blackness. Stronger wind. Copper holds the lantern high as they make their way down a row of wooden steps and into a cavernous, underground causeway.

MACREADY

Hey, Sweden!!!

DR. COPPER

(irritated)

They're not Swedish, goddamn it,
they're Norwegian, MacRe --

Whap!! Something slaps into the Doctor's face from the darkness. The lantern crashes to the ground. The Doctor stumbles, falls. MacReady grabs the flashlight and whirls in different directions. A panting beat. Silence.

Dr. Copper holds up what hit him. A thick centerfold, buffeted by the wind. MacReady takes it.

MACREADY

Norwegian of the Month, Doc. Harmless.

MacReady pockets it for further viewing.

INT. THE NARROWEST OF CORRIDORS

The supporting beams have long since buckled and cracked from the constantly moving ice underneath. The evidence of fire has further weakened the foundations. The wood creaks overhead. Bits of ice and silt trickle down.

The two men walk hunched, cautious. MacReady gingerly tries to make his way around a broken and smoldering beam. He brushes it gently sending a shower of debris from the yawning roof.

The two men wait until it subsides and then moves on.

Further down. MacReady's knee bumps into something along the wall, causing him to stumble slightly. He shines his light on it.

An arm is sticking out of a steel door about three feet off the ground. The door has been slammed shut. The arm pinned,

its fist still gripping a small welding torch.

The flame long since gone out.

MACREADY

(wincing)

Holy shit...

He tries the door. Unlocked. It opens. The arm drops to the ground. It has been severed by the force of the slam.

Its owner is nowhere to be seen.

MacReady, sickened, coughs. Dr. Copper mumbles.

DR. COPPER

Christ...

They step over the arm and into another slim passageway.

Moving along they come to rest in front of a door with Norwegian lettering on it.

MacReady pushes it open with his foot. Dozens of papers fly about, flailed by the holes in the Quonset hut-style roof. The place is a wreck. They enter. MacReady surveying the small room with his flashlight.

DR. COPPER

...Laboratory.

Broken beakers, test tubes, a microscope are illuminated.

MacReady notices a video camera.

MACREADY

Portable video unit.

Copper makes his way over to the main work table. He shuffles through papers, glancing at the writing.

MACREADY

Anything?

DR. COPPER

All in Norwegian.

Dr. Copper bends down and begins gathering the papers, strewn about the room.

MACREADY

What are you doing?

DR. COPPER

Could be important work. Might as well bring it back.

MACREADY

It's getting late. Hurry it. I'm going to check the last few rooms.

He exits. Amongst the rubble, Dr. Copper finds a pocket tape recorder and several cassettes. He selects a tape and is about to pop it in when he senses something to his rear. He turns. Looks. A beat. Nothing.

INT. HALLWAY

MacReady shoves himself into another room.

INT. ROOM

Debris and wood flush down on him. The receding ceiling had been blocking the door from above. He brushes his coat and shines the light upwards.

The ceiling is a shambles. He then shines the light deeper into the room.

INT. NORWEGIAN LAB

Dr. Copper is playing the small tape recorder. A casual Norwegian voice drones on as if making notes. He fast forwards. The same casual drone.

MACREADY (O.S.)

Copper, come here!!

INT. ROOM

Dr. Copper enters, squeezing in, through the door. The wood cracks overhead. More debris comes falling down.

MACREADY

Careful. It's about to go.

Copper dusts himself. MacReady stands before a huge block of ice. Fifteen feet long. Six feet wide. Four feet tall.

It has partially melted, but its thawing process has been stopped by the now freezing temperatures within the outpost.

Its one curious feature: the middle has been thawed and scooped out. Giving it the appearance of a large bathtub. The two men study it uncomprehendingly.

MacReady's gaze turns to a large metal cabinet at his left. He moves for a closer look. Several photographs are pasted to its door. Small snapshots of the Norwegians at work and play.

He tries to open it. Stuck. The partially caved-in ceiling is slightly blocking the top of the door. He tries again, careful not to dislodge the wood and plaster above. Bits of dust float down.

DR. COPPER

Watch it.

His grip is too strong. It gives suddenly, unexpectedly. The large metal door flies open.

Large chunks splash from the ceiling. They come thumping to the floor, behind and in front of the open cabinet door. MacReady coughs and waves away the dust. He peers inside. Nothing much. Some empty shelves. Some small scientific gear.

His flashlight then locates a large photograph taped to the inside of the cabinet door.

It is a picture of five Norwegians, arm in arm, all smiles, toasting each other. They are on either side of the frozen block of ice, pridefully displaying it for the camera. The block looks much thicker. Its interior opaque.

MacReady looks to the block of ice and then back to the photograph. He untapes it, pockets it and shuts the door.

An armless corpse swings into his face from behind the closing door. Dislodged from the ceiling, the body and MacReady go crashing to the floor.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S. OUTPOST - RECREATION ROOM

The loud beat of Warren Zevon's song, "The Werewolves of London," can be heard throughout the compound. The room is empty. Close on a video pong game, its ball of light lazily traveling back and forth. The dog, its tail wagging, its bandage on, walks by.

INT. KITCHEN

Zevon's record is blasting from Nauls' stereo. He skates from the big walk-in freezer and plunks down a large side of beef on the wood-cutting table to thaw. He skates from pot to pan keeping time with his sounds.

He smells. Tastes. Adds a little something here, a touch there. He clearly enjoys his work.

Station Manager Garry stops past the open door.

GARRY

Turn that crap down, Nauls. You can hear it all over the camp!

NAULS

Oui, Bwana. Can do.

He skates over and turns it down, but not much.

INT. COMMUNICATIONS ROOM

Garry enters and sees that Sanchez has nodded off in front of his receiver. His headgear is still on. Garry walks over and turns up the volume, the static jolting Sanchez awake.

SANCHEZ

Hey, man...!

GARRY

You reach anybody yet?

SANCHEZ

We're a thousand miles from anybody else, man. It's going to get a hell of a lot worse before it gets better.

GARRY

Well, stick to it.

INT. COMPOUND CORRIDOR

An empty hallway. Larger than most. Doors to several sleeping quarters on either side. The dog slowly walks through.

One of the doors is open up ahead of his left. The dog stops in front of it and looks in. Someone is inside.

Inside the small cubicle, a slight portion of a man's back can be seen as he sits bent over a chair; his large shadow displayed on the wall.

Back in the corridor. The dog looks up the hall once and casually to the other end. No one. He enters the room. The sound of a man's voice, too indistinct to tell whose, mumbles:

MAN'S VOICE

Hello boy.

A beat.

The sound of a glass breaking. A muffled scuffling. The door is slammed shut from the inside. And then silence.

CUT TO:

EXT. COMPOUND

Fuchs, the young biologist, is finishing up his daily jog around the compound. He stops at the end of a long Quonset hut almost completely buried in the snow. The hut is fifty yards long and connects to the main compound. He enters a tunnel from a latch door up top.

INT. TUNNEL

He jogs down the steps, passing the underground dog kennel and trots toward the compound through the long narrow tunnel. He passes and waves to Clark, who rolls along a wheelbarrow of dog food.

CLARK

opens the door to the small kennel and serves up the dinner. The dogs, about seven of them, yelp and bark eagerly.

INT. UNDERGROUND PASSAGEWAY

near the fuel supply bladders. Older and more rickety than the quarters above.

Childs waltzes through, humming, a big smile on his face.

He stops at a door with six locks on it. Different kinds.

Combination locks, key locks, etc. He opens each one separately.

INT. STORAGE ROOM

Inside are several marijuana plants. Sun lamps beam down on them. Childs inspects them with a wide grin.

CHILDS

How my brothers and sister doing today? Doin' fine.

He moves over to a tape deck, selects a cassette, grins back at the plants and turns it on.

CHILDS

What say to some nice Al Green for my babies, huh?

He waters them carefully, as Al Green sings softly. He hears a panting and turns around to see the dog. His bandage is gone.

CHILDS

What you...? You get the hell on out of here.

The dog is shooed off. Childs turns back grumbling.

CHILDS

...Comin' in here... goin' to urinate on my babies.

INT. MAIN COMPOUND - HALLWAY

Blair passing through, holding a chart and carrying a rack of test tubes, notices a large bandage on the floor. He picks it up, inquiringly. It is mangled and shredded.

INT. GENERATOR ROOM

Palmer works on the generator. He hears the sound of approaching propeller blades from outside. And then the sound of his tool box crashing to the floor. He turns to see what caused the ruckus.

The dog, who has entered the shed, has jumped on the work table and upended the tool box on its eagerness to look out of the above window. Palmer curses under his breath and calls out.

PALMER

Clark! Will you kennel this goddamn dog?

(bangs wrench against pipe)

Hey, Clark?!

THE DOG

It paws at the window and watches as the chopper, carrying MacReady and Dr. Copper, fights against the newly arrived heavy winds and lands safely.

INT. STATION MANAGER GARRY'S QUARTERS

Garry, MacReady, Dr. Copper, Norris, Bennings, Blair and his assistant, Fuchs, are present. The small Norwegian video unit has been set up and its contents are being viewed on a TV screen. Grainy, home movie-ish, no sound.

The proceedings are grim.

Shots of the Norwegian's at work. Others of them playing soccer on ice. Generally the footage is a prosaic record of their day-to-day life.

Norris shuffles the bundle of notes Dr. Copper brought back with him.

NORRIS

...Seems they were spending a lot of time at a place four miles northeast of their camp.

GARRY

What were they involved in?

MacReady, working on the video machine, answers.

MACREADY

Little ice core drilling... some seismology... glaciology... same old shit we do.

The present footage is a shot of them all naked and probably drunk, holding a sign across their waists as they stand outdoors in super-freezing weather.

BENNINGS

How much more of this crap is there?

DR. COPPER

About nine more hours.

BENNINGS

We can't learn anything from this.

DR. COPPER

Probably right.

MacReady turns on the light and shuts off the video machine.

He then slides the portable tape deck across the table to Dr. Copper. They exchange a look.

DR. COPPER

MacReady and I were listening to some of these cassettes on the way back.

(somberly)

Like you gentlemen to hear it.

A Norwegian voice drones on calmly, making verbal notes.

Norris shrugs.

BENNINGS

What do you want from us?

MACREADY

(flat)

Just listen.

Dr. Copper fast forwards. The calm voice continues. And then a loud blast, followed by pounding. The sounds of confusion. Voices. Loud. Frenetic. Men's feet running up and down wooden floorboards. A gurgling. A hissing.

Screams. And then a screeching. More blasts mixed with the din of wild, carnage-wrought cries. And then more screeching. A screeching unlike anything these men have ever heard.

The men look from one another in silence as they listen.

Dr. Copper turns it off.

DR. COPPER

Goes on like that quite awhile.

(beat)

What do you gentlemen make of it?

GARRY

Could be anything... Men in isolation... some beef that snowballed... got out of hand...

NORRIS

Maybe the whole camp got bent... Something they ate. What about food poisoning, Doc?

Dr. Copper taps the tape deck pensively.

DR. COPPER

Maybe.

He glances at MacReady, and then back to the others.

DR. COPPER

There's something else we want you to see.

INT. INFIRMARY

Dr. Copper and MacReady begin dumping the heavy contents of a large plastic trash bag onto the slab.

DR. COPPER

We found this.

Displayed on the slab is what appears to be the corpse of a man. Badly charred. What is left of the trousers and shoes of the bottom torso are ripped and split, as if his legs and feet had burst from the inside. His upper body is an almost

undecipherable gnarled mass of protoplasmic mush.

The head is strangely disfigured and looks larger than normal. It is situated not on its shoulders but near the abdomen. Tendon-like appendages are wrapped around the carcass and sticking up and out in odd postures. One is wrapped around the body's left leg.

The shirt has been ripped and lies shredded in the tar-like mess.

The men grimace.

DR. COPPER

I know he's pretty badly burned...
but could fire have done this?

Blair, sickened but fascinated, pokes at the tendon-like things and the tarry goo.

DR. COPPER

Blair, I'd like you and Fuchs to
help me with autopsies on this one
and the one Garry shot this morning.

INT. REC ROOM - LATER - CLOSE ON A TABLE HOCKEY GAME

Foosball. Nauls and Clark are going at it hot and heavy.

Sanchez sits off in a corner thumbing through an old issue of Photoplay.

Bennings, Norris and Garry are engaged in a card game. Bennings is about to play a card when he feels something under the table. He looks. It is the dog.

BENNINGS

Clark, will you put this mutt with
the others where he belong?!

INT. LAB

larger than most of the other rooms and well-equipped.

Dr. Copper is performing an autopsy on the Norwegian intruder, killed early that morning.

Blair sits over his microscope, while Fuchs prepares slides. The other body is draped with a sheet, waiting its turn. Dr. Copper pulls off his gloves.

DR. COPPER

Nothing wrong with this one.
Physiologically, anyway.
(to Blair)
Find anything toxic?

BLAIR

No drugs... alcohol. Nothing.

INT. TUNNEL

Clark leads the dog through the long, cold tunnel toward the kennel. A new dressing has been placed on its hip.

He unlatches the door to the kennel and leads him in.

INT. KENNEL

About twenty feet long, five feet wide. Poorly lit.

Cramped with dogs. Some of them sleeping. Others pacing around

and curious, greet their new companion, sniffing, panting and rubbing up against him. Clark pats the dog and several others, then leaves, latching the door behind him.

INT. SLEEPING CUBICLE

Childs lies in his cot watching a small television. The show is a tape of an American TV game show. He has seen this one too many times, extracts the cassette and injects another game show.

Palmer is stretched out in the other cot, reading a comic book and smoking a joint. Childs beckons for it and takes a hit.

INT. PUB

A small area, just off the rec room. Set up like a bar.

MacReady is alone looking over the rest of the videotapes from the Norwegian outpost. Mundane to esoteric chores of Antarctic camp life. He looks bored.

INT. LAB

Blair, hovering over the microscope, lays in a slide, focuses and motions for Dr. Copper to take a look.

Copper is confused as he examines. He shrugs.

DR. COPPER

I don't understand.

Fuchs takes the opportunity to look. Blair moves over to the disfigured corpse and indicates one of the fibrous, tendon-like appendages.

BLAIR

It's tissue from one of these sinewy rods.

Fuchs is befuddled as he examines.

FUCHS

What in the world kind of cell structure is this?

BLAIR

That's the point.

DR. COPPER

(tired)

I don't get you, Blair.

BLAIR

I'm not sure it is any kind of cell structure. Biologically speaking.

DR. COPPER

(sighing)

This really isn't my field, Blair.
Let's wrap for the day.

Dr. Copper undoes his lab coat and lays it over a chair as he exits. Blair stares down ominously at the mutilated body.

EXT. COMPOUND - NIGHT

A steady stream of sleet pounds the compound and small surrounding shacks.

INT. REC ROOM

Vacant. The wall clock reads four-thirty.

INT. HALLWAY

Sleeping cubicles on either side. The sound of snoring.

INT. PUB

Bleary-eyed, MacReady is in the process of blowing up some strange inflatable object. As he puffs away, he still keeps an eye on the Norwegian video tapes. His balloon begins to take shape. It blossoms into a life-size replica of a full-breasted woman. Something on the tape catches his eye. He rewinds, then starts it forward again.

The screen shows the Norwegians on the surface of what appears to be an enormous, flat glacier. They are spread out on the ice around a large odd oval shape; their arms outstretched.

It fades to black and then a Norwegian comes on mugging childishly in front of the camera, apparently quite pleased with something.

The tape fades to black again and the picture reappears.

This time they have marked off the large oval area with flag sticks.

Closer shots show three of the men digging a deep hole into the ice. There is a small patch of something dark and metallic at the bottom.

MacReady leans forward, intrigued.

The men are now sinking something deep into the ice at various points around the markings. MacReady squints and mumbles to himself.

MACREADY

Decanite...? Thermite charges...?

The tape jump cuts again showing a long shot of the markings. No Norwegian in sight. An explosion kicks up the ice. A beat as the ice sprays to the ground. Then the camera appears to shake as the ground beneath it quivers.

Another immense explosion follows. An earthquake-like force throws the camera to the ground.

MACREADY

What in...

The tape continues, distorted, unviewable. A distinct crack in the lens. MacReady lets go of his companion and quickly rewinds. The deflating mannequin is sent sputtering around the room.

INT. KENNEL - NIGHT

Most of the dogs are sleeping or lounging. The new dog watches them calmly, silently.

He takes several steps towards a group of about five dogs and sits upright. Completely still. He stares at them. A beat. The dogs are aware of something. They begin to seem a bit confused, uncomfortable.

The new dog continues to stare. Sitting rigidly, unnaturally still. His eyes dead, lusterless black spheres.

Bewildered, a few dogs start to pace. As if sensing something:

a portent. A danger. But so odd. They begin a soft, purring growl.

The new dog remains a statue. The growling builds. More dogs begin to pace. Nervously. Faster, encircling.

Emitting hisses, snarls. The lack of response driving them into a frenzy.

Barks. Growls. More frenetic pacing. The din escalating. Three dogs start to close in on the stranger.

They attack.

THE SHADOW OF THE NEW DOG

against the kennel wall. The shadow suddenly lurches upward, seeming larger.

The kennel roars.

INT. PUB

MacReady is still going over bits of the same footage, fascinated. He hears the far-off clamor of the dogs.

INT. NAULS' QUARTERS

He, too, bothered by the noise, tosses and turns in his sleep.

INT. CLARK'S QUARTERS

Clark snores. MacReady has entered.

MACREADY

Clark.

No response. MacReady nudges him. Clark rolls away, annoyed.

MacReady pinches his snoring nose, cutting off the air.

Clark sits up, groggy.

MACREADY

Dogtown's going nuts. Take care of it.

INT. TUNNEL

Clark, sleepy, irritated, makes his way down the freezing corridor. The wind souging loudly overhead.

CLARK

reaches the kennel door. The savage outpouring of noise from within baffles and angers him. He unlatches the door.

CLARK

What's got into...

Smack! Just as he opens the door, two dogs, as if jettisoned from a cannon, knock him off his feet. Growls, barks, snarls. And a screeching from within.

INT. KITCHEN

MacReady is fetching himself a beer. The sound of the far-off screeching. He freezes. A beat. He turns and sprints.

HIS BEER CAN

as it smashes the glass of the fire alarm. He pulls the lever.

INT. TUNNEL

The alarm is blaring throughout the camp. MacReady, Garry, Norris run through the narrow tunnel led by Clark.

MacReady carries a shotgun. Garry, half-dressed, has his .44. Clark, a fire ax.

CLARK

I don't know what the hell's in there,
but it's weird and pissed off,
whatever it is.

INT. HALLWAY

Chaos. Men, half-naked, bounce from their cubicle.

Pulling on their pants, digging into shoes.

INT. CHILDS' CUBICLE

Childs is grappling with his belt buckle.

CHILDS

Mac wants the what?!

BENNINGS

(at the doorway)
That's what he said. Now! Move!

Bennings is off.

INT. TUNNEL

as the men approach the locked kennel door. The two dogs, thrown into Clark, back ferociously and scratch at the door trying to get back in. One is badly bloodied.

The fight inside rages on. MacReady and Clark brace themselves by the narrow door. Norris and Garry hold back the two hysterical dogs. Clark undoes the latch and he and MacReady enter the kennel.

The light has been broken and it is pitch black. MacReady snaps on his flashlight. Norris and Garry can't contain their animals and the dogs burst into the room. They smash into MacReady and send him sprawling. Total confusion: the dogs; the men; the screeching; the blackness.

CLARK

Mac, where are you?

MacReady gropes for his flashlight and rights himself. He finds Clark. Then shines it around the cramped room trying to get his bearings.

The light finds a mass of dogs in a wild melee in the corner.

Barking mixed with hissing, a gurgling, a screeching.

Dogs being hurled about and then charging back into the fray with a vengeance.

The flashlight illuminates parts of some "thing." A dog.

But not quite. Impossible to tell. It struggles powerfully. Garry pokes his head into the blackness.

GARRY

What's going on, damn it?

MacReady aims his shotgun at the entire pack.

MACREADY

I'm going to shoot.

CLARK

No! Wait!!

Clark wades into the pack, grabs at dogs' hides and throws them back. He then wields his ax into the fray, chopping and hacking away at the gurgling, hissing silhouette.

From out of nowhere, a large, bristly, arachnid-like leg springs up and wraps around Clark's ax. It sends Clark smashing violently into the wall.

OUTSIDE

More men running, nearing the kennel. Several squeezing in with Garry, trying to get a look.

INSIDE

MacReady fires several rounds. A dog is flung at him, knocking him and his flashlight once more to the ground.

Garry squeezes in and begins blasting away in the direction of the hissing and screeching. A dog is hit. MacReady crawls for his flashlight.

MACREADY

Clark? Where are you? Clark!

Blam. Blam. Garry continues firing at the silhouette.

INT. TUNNEL

Childs, huffing and puffing, lugs the huge industrial torch toward the crowded kennel doorway.

CHILDS

What's happening?

MACREADY (O.S.)

Childs, you got the torch? You get your ass in here!!

INT. KENNEL

Childs scrunches in, disoriented by the blackness, and bumps into Garry, knocking him off balance.

CHILDS

Where are you?

MacReady signals with his flashlight and then points it at the gathering of snarling dogs.

MACREADY

Torch it over there!

CHILDS

The dogs?

MACREADY

Screw the dogs!! Torch it!!

Childs lets loose with a burst of blue flame. A mewing, a screeching.

Part of the kennel starts to burn.

GARRY

(panic)

We're on fire!

MACREADY

Don't let up, Childs!

GARRY

(to outside)

Extinguishers.

Childs moves closer, continuing his assault on the hissing, gurgling presence.

Men charge into the room and begin spraying dogs and burning walls. Dogs and men choke and cough amidst the smoke and **CO2**.

The screeching lessens. The hissing and gurgling fade. Childs turns off his torch.

CUT TO:

INT. REC ROOM – NEXT MORNING

Those of the men that have gathered exhibit a pale and quiet uneasiness.

Blair, in silent awe, stands over the badly burned corpses of two interlocking dogs, that lie before him on a table.

They are connected as if they were one animal. Though, the one wearing the remnants of Clark's bandage is much larger and appears less dog-like. Its entire torso is cracked and peeled, as if its innards were trying to burst out.

Odd appendages, recoiled and withered by the flame, are wrapped grotesquely about both bodies.

Clark, his eyes set in glassy stare, sits in shock. Nauls comforts him. Childs stands nearby smoking a joint and staring at the floor.

Blair, transfixed, continues hovering over the united cadavers. Weighing. Thinking. A very worried look on his face.

The dead bodies of two other dogs from the kennel are not far off.

INT. INFIRMARY

Fuchs is attending to the shredded bodies of three other badly wounded dogs.

INT. REC ROOM

Nauls pats Clark on the shoulder and grins, trying to pick up his spirits.

NAULS

It's okay now, man. It's dead. It's over.

(beat)

You see.

Clark turns to him with a childlike smile.

CLARK

I know. Mr. Childs killed it. I saw.

NAULS

Right, man. Right.

INT. SMALL WORKROOM

Norris is going through some maps. MacReady is bent over his shoulder. Norris finds the one he's looking for.

NORRIS

Here. This is where they were spending most of their time.

Bennings pokes his head in the room.

BENNINGS

Pretty nasty out, Mac. Thirty-five knots.

MACREADY

Screw it, I'm going up anyway.

INT. MAIN COMPOUND - MORNING

Station Manager Garry has joined Blair by the stuck-together bodies. Blair motions to the bandage.

BLAIR

Was that dog, the Norwegian dog?

GARRY

I just can't comprehend any of this.
It was just a dog.

CHILDS

(evenly)
"tweren't no dog, Bwana.

BLAIR

That tape MacReady showed us this morning...

GARRY

Couldn't make much of it myself.

BLAIR

I've asked him to try and locate the site. Okay with you?

GARRY

Sure. You think there's a connection?

BLAIR

Maybe.

EXT. CHOPPER

high above the Antarctic expanse.

INT. CHOPPER

MacReady pilots. Young Palmer and Norris are with him.

It is clear but the winds are troublesome. The ride is a shaky one. Norris refers to their map. He points.

NORRIS

One of their sites would be directly over here.

They aim for a large mountainous wall. As they go up and over... they see:

FLAT, GLACIAL EXPANSE

On the surface, an enormous blackened oval shape.

INT. U.S. OUTPOST #31 - LAB

All the bodies of the dogs have been brought in. Fuchs stands by as Blair studies through his microscope.

INSERT - A MICROSCOPIC SAMPLING

of two cells. They appear to be much different from each other. They are joined at the ends but are completing the process of breaking off from each other.

ON BLAIR

A disturbed look on his face. He checks his watch, as if timing the procedure.

EXT. GLACIER - TRACKING WITH MACREADY, NORRIS AND PALMER

as they walk along the ice. They come to a stop at the edge of a sharp drop.

Pull back to reveal -- the massive black hole about fifteen feet beneath the ice. Charred, gnarled and mangled metal are all that is left of what was once an enormous sphere.

MacReady's and Norris' eyes meet each other in silence.

Palmer is in awe.

PALMER

Wow...

MacReady finds a burst thermite canister. He and Norris climb down.

They move along amongst the wreck. Almost everything but the skeletal superstructure has disintegrated into a fine ashy powder.

Norris digs for ice samples at the perimeter of the wreckage, while MacReady browses through the center.

Palmer continues to marvel, as he walks around the oval, atop the ice.

MacReady returns and kneels down next to Norris as the latter examines a piece of metal.

NORRIS

Magnesium of some type... or some kind of strange alloy.

(looks out at debris
in disgust)

And those poor dumb bastards had to go and blow the hell out of it.

MACREADY

So what do you make of it?

NORRIS

You know damn well what we both make of it.

MACREADY

No chance it could have been some new kind of test craft?

Norris shakes his head no.

NORRIS

Seismic activity has been pushing
this are up from way down for a long
time...

(holds up ice sample)

...This ice it was buried in...
It's over a hundred thousand years
old.

Palmer calls out, waving them over.

EXT. GLACIER

The two men join Palmer about fifty yards from the oval.

A large rectangular chunk has been cut out of the ice. It is
fifteen feet long, six feet wide and eight feet deep.

MacReady kneels down to observe. A beat.

A gust of wind picks up the snow at their feet.

CUT TO:

INT. REC ROOM - NIGHT

Fascinated, a few of the men are reviewing the Norwegian
video tapes of the finding of the mysterious craft.

MacReady sits quietly by his chess set contemplating a large
glass of Scotch. Clark, less interested than the others, is
flipping through the Norwegian nudie magazine.

Blair, looking worried, sits off in a corner, pondering the
photo of the block of ice and fingering a piece of crumbled-
up metal brought back from the site.

Childs, viewing the tapes, can't quite believe it all.

CHILDS

Okay now, Mac, run this by me again.
Thousands of years ago this rocket
ship crashes, right...? And the...

MacReady is not listening.

CHILDS

MacReady!

MACREADY

Look, I'm just guessing...

CHILDS

Well, go on.

INT. KITCHEN

Nauls, about to prepare dinner, scowls as he rummages through
his many cabinets.

NAULS

Where's that big ol' steel pot of
mine?! Damn!

He turns to examine the cabinets above the large stove. He
spots something in the nearby kitchen trash can.

Disgusted, he pulls out a torn and shredded pair of long
johns.

INT. REC ROOM

MacReady theorizes.

MACREADY

...So it crashes, and this guy,
whoever he is, gets thrown out, or
walks out, and ends up freezing.

CHILDS

I just can't believe this voodoo
bullshit. You believe this voodoo
bullshit, Blair?

Blair says nothing, lost in thought.

Palmer, stoned, a joint dangling from his mouth, is searching
for information through stacks of old issues of The National
Enquirer and The Star.

PALMER

(rambling)

Happens all the time, man. They're
falling out of the skies like flies.
Government knows all about it...
Chariots of the Gods, man... They
practically own South America. I
mean they taught the Incas everything
they knew...

CHILDS

Cool it, Palmer!!

Palmer shakes a magazine at him adamantly.

PALMER

Read von Daniken! Have you read von
Daniken? Get your facts straight!

Clark marvels at a particular photo.

CLARK

Jesus, why would those guys ever
want to leave Norway...?

Nauls skates into the room. He shakes the crumpled-up pair
of long johns in his fist.

NAULS

Which one you mothers been tossing
his dirty underwear in the kitchen
trash?!

He flings it across the room. It lands on MacReady's chess
set.

NAULS

I want my kitchen clean. Germ free!

Nauls spins on his skates and storms off. MacReady fetches
the strangely shredded underwear and rolls it up, while Childs
paces.

CHILDS

So, MacReady, come on now. These
Norwegian dudes come by... find him
and dig him up...

MacReady tosses the ball of cloth across the room into a
trash bin.

MACREADY

Yeah, they dig him up and cart him
back. He gets thawed out, wakes up

and scares the shit out of them. And they get into one hell of a brawl...

CHILDS

Now how's this motherfucker wake up after thousands of years in the ice, huh?

MACREADY

(annoyed)

I don't know how. Because he's different than we are. Because he's a space guy. What do you want from me, anyway. Go ask Blair.

CHILDS

You buy any of this, Blair?

A beat as Blair stares straight ahead, transfixed. He speaks softly, to no one particular.

BLAIR

It was here... got to that dog... It was here in this camp...

The men take in his grave countenance.

GARRY

So...? So what? It's over with.

Blair turns to them. A pause. The men search his face.

BENNINGS

(edgy)

Well, isn't it?

INT. LAB - CLOSE ON A SHEET

as Blair rips it off exposing the tangled mess of interlocking dogs.

Pull back. All the men have gathered. Some of the men settle into chairs, others stand.

BLAIR

Whatever that Norwegian dog was... It... It was capable of changing its form...

(indicates their dog)

...when it attacked our dog... it somehow was able to digest... or... absorb it... and in the process shaped its own cells to imitate our dog's cells exactly...

(holds up gooey dog leg)

...This for instance isn't dog at all -- it's imitation... We got to it before it had time to finish or...

NAULS

Finish what?

BLAIR

...I think the whole process would have taken an hour... maybe more. And then I suppose both would have changed back to dog form.

PALMER

Well, that Thing in the ice sure weren't no dog.

BLAIR

(impatient)

Of course not... But whatever it was revived, it... Well, The Thing was probably disoriented... and realized it couldn't survive for long in our atmosphere... But being the incredibly adaptable creature it was... it tried to become something that could... Before the Norwegians killed it... it somehow got to this dog.

CLARK

What do you mean "got" to the dog?

BLAIR

It was a life form that was able to imitate and reproduce, whatever it ate or absorbed, cell for cell.

Silence.

BLAIR

The concept is staggering. I know... I... I don't fully understand it myself.

CHILDS

(skeptically, points)

You're saying... that big muther in the ice, became the dog.

BLAIR

(nodding)

I think we're talking about an organism... that could imitate other life forms... perfectly... It could have gone on and on... It could have become one dog... It could have become as many dogs as it wanted to -- and without losing any of its original mass...

NORRIS

You been into Childs' weed, Blair?

Blair slams his fist on the slab.

BLAIR

Look, I know it's hard to believe...

GARRY

(breaking in)

So what's our problem?

BLAIR

Well... there's still some cell activity... it's not entirely dead yet.

Several of the men nearest the carcasses jump back knocking over a chair.

CUT TO:

EXT. COMPOUND - NIGHT - CLOSE ON THE DOG CARCASSES

lying on the snow. Splash. They are being soaked with gasoline.

FUCHS (O.S.)

(in violent
protestation)
You can't do this! You can't burn
these remains...

Pull back. Fuchs is beside himself. Childs has the large
torch. MacReady empties another can on the bodies. Dr. Copper
stands nearby.

MACREADY

And the horse you rode in on, Fuchs.
(to Childs)
Light it up.

Childs lights the tip. Fuchs makes a determined move for the
torch.

FUCHS

Well, I'm not going to let this
happen...

Childs struggles with him for a beat and then flings him to
the ground. Dr. Copper grabs him preventing him from getting
back up.

Childs splays the remains with a jet of flame. Fuchs shakes
his head in frustration and disgust.

FUCHS

I just can't believe it... We're
going to go down as the biggest bunch
of assholes in history...

MACREADY

Fuck history. At least we're going
to live to be an old bunch of
assholes.

CUT TO:

INT. KENNEL - NIGHT

The night feeding. Clark dishes out the food. Blair is taking
blood samples from the remaining three dogs.

BLAIR

(perplexed, bothered)
Clark, did you notice anything strange
about that dog? Just anything at
all? Any little thing?

CLARK

No. Just that he recovered real
quick... That night when I found him
in the rec room, he had already
scraped off his bandage. Before I
put him with the others, I redressed
his wound and noticed it had healed
up real good...

A beat as Blair stares at Clark.

BLAIR

That night?

CLARK

(pets dog vigorously)
Yeah.

BLAIR

What was he doing in the rec room?

CLARK

Well, after I worked on him -- thought I'd let him rest. Left the room for a bit. When I came back, he was gone.

BLAIR

Well, where was he? Where did he go?

CLARK

Don't know. Looked for him for a bit... couldn't find him.

BLAIR

(a long beat)

You're saying he wasn't put into the kennel until the night?

Clark seems uneasy under Blair's intense gaze.

CLARK

Well... yeah.

Blair stands, his eyes still glued to Clark.

BLAIR

How long were you with the dog? Alone, I mean?

CLARK

Ah... He was hurt bad. Bullet nicked an artery... I don't know... An hour... hour and a half...

Blair's eyes glaze as if in revelation.

CLARK

What the hell you looking at me like that for?

BLAIR

Nothing. Nothing at all.

He backs out of the kennel.

INT. HALLWAY - COMPOUND

Irritated, distressed, station manager Garry moves briskly down the hall. Blair, worried and pale, tries to keep up with him.

BLAIR

...It could have gotten to somebody...

GARRY

Anybody sick?

BLAIR

No, I... I don't mean infection... or disease...

Garry stops at the entrance to the communications room.

GARRY

Any luck yet?

Sanchez shrugs.

SANCHEZ

Couple seconds of an Argentine disco station.

GARRY

Well, stick with it. I want you at it round the clock. We got to get help in here...

BLAIR

(alarm)

No... No, you can't let anyone in here... That dog was all over this camp...

Bennings interrupts, entering the hallway, referring to his meteorological chart.

BENNINGS

(to Garry)

Travel-wise, tomorrow may be okay. But after that some pretty nasty northeasterly shit's coming in.

FUCHS

...Goddamn fools...

The men outside come stomping through the hallway.

BLAIR

(pleading)

Listen to me, Garry. Please...

GARRY

(to MacReady)

If the weather clears enough before we reach anybody -- I'm sending you and Doc up to MacMurdo...

BLAIR

No! You can't let people leave...

MACREADY

I ain't going anywhere in anything over forty knots, Garry...

GARRY

(snapping)

The hell you won't, MacReady!

BLAIR

Don't you understand?! That Thing didn't want to become a dog...

GARRY

(fed up)

Damn you, Blair! You've already got everybody half-hysterical around here.

BLAIR

You can't let anybody leave!

GARRY

I've got six dead Norwegians on my hands, a burned up flying saucer, and we've just destroyed the scientific find of the century. Now fuck off!

Close on Blair, ashen-faced, falling silent. As if in a daze, he watches the men as they continue to converse. Suspicious, frightened.

CUT TO:

EXT. COMPOUND – NIGHT

Pitch black except for the barest of lighting which outlines the building. Wind. The swirl of ice.

INT. MACREADY'S CABIN – NIGHT

Far away from the others, MacReady sits in his little hovel putting the final screw into his mended chess set.

On the other side of the set, his busty, inflatable companion has been propped up in a chair. His sombrero hangs down her back, keeping her in place. Hawaiian music plays from his tape deck.

MACREADY

All set.

He puts down his screwdriver, holds up his glass and offers a toast with a big grin.

MACREADY

To us.

He clinks the drink he has made for her that rests on her side of the board. He sips. He turns on the machine and makes his first move.

MACREADY

Now go easy on me, Esperanza. I'm just a beginner.

The set answers for Esperanza.

CHES VOICE

Rook takes bishop at Queen four --
Rook take pawn at Queen two -- Rook
takes Queen at Queen one -- Checkmate.

MACREADY

Aw shit.

He flips open the circuitry panel in disgust. He tosses his screwdriver on the board and grabs his drink, downing it.

MACREADY

Sorry, hon.

He reaches inside his ice bucket. Empty.

MACREADY

Never any damn ice around here...

EXT. MACREADY'S CABIN – NIGHT

MacReady exits. He swacks at a nearby bank of ice with a small ice pick.

MACREADY

Now in Mexico... Tahiti... They got ice... They got ice coming out of their ears.

The sound of a clanking. He turns his attention. Metal against metal. Strange. MacReady listens. It appears to be coming from far off below, near the camp.

MACREADY

as he makes his way down with the aid of the steadying ropes. The clanking louder now. He senses the direction.

MACREADY

at the bottom near the main compound. The sound has stopped. He looks around in the near blackness. A beat.

THE CHOPPERS

sitting idle in the dark. MacReady approaches. The door to one of the cockpits is slightly ajar. He opens it cautiously.

INT. CHOPPER

MacReady slips in. He turns on a flashlight. The controls have been mangled. Beaten with something heavy. Bang!! MacReady, startled, turns. Like the sound of a gun. Coming from the main compound.

INT. COMPOUND - MAIN ENTRANCE

Confusion. Shouts. MacReady enters. He grabs Palmer as he and Bennings rush by.

MACREADY

What's...

PALMER

Blair. He's gone berserk.

BENNINGS

He's in the radio room. Got a gun.
Beat on Sanchez something fierce.

HALLWAY - RADIO ROOM ENTRANCE

The men are on either side of the open radio room doorway.

Garry peeks his head in. A gunshot blast forces him back.

RADIO ROOM

Sanchez lies on the floor, groaning. Blair holds the gun on the door. He wields a fire ax with the other hand and smashes down on the radio.

BLAIR

Anybody interferes, I'll kill!
Nobody's getting in or out of this
camp...

HALLWAY

MacReady has joined the others.

MACREADY

He smashed one of the choppers up
good. Childs, go check the other one
and the tractor.

Childs is off.

RADIO ROOM

Blair crunches the ax down once again, while keeping an eye on the door.

BLAIR

...You think I'm crazy? Fine! Most
of you don't know what's going on --
but I'm damn well sure some of you
do!

(crunch)

BACK TO HALLWAY

NORRIS

The back window. A couple of us could maybe surprise him.

MACREADY

Too damn dangerous.

BACK TO RADIO ROOM

BLAIR

...You think this Thing wants to become an animal? Dogs can't make it 1000 miles to the sea. No skua gulls to imitate this time of year... No penguins this far inland... Don't you understand?! It wanted to become us!

He brings the ax down hard on the radio.

BACK TO HALLWAY

Childs runs up, out of breath.

CHILDS

He got both choppers and the tractor... I don't know how bad yet.

Garry readies his large .357 Magnum.

MACREADY

No, wait a minute.
(to Norris)
The fuse box.

Norris double-times down the hall.

MacReady turns the corner and into the rec room. He grabs one of the thick card tables.

MacReady returns with the table to the hallway.

BLAIR

...Can't you see...? If one cell of this Thing got out it could imitate every living thing on Earth. Nothing could stop it! Nothing!

MACREADY

(humoring)
Look Blair, maybe you're right about this. But we've got to be rational. We've got to talk this over. I'm unarmed and I'm coming in.

BLAIR

No, you're not! I don't trust any of you!

NORRIS

reaches the fuse box. He opens it.

HALLWAY

MacReady readies the table like a shield.

MACREADY

If you're right we've all got to

stick together.

The lights go out. MacReady charges into the black room.

Blair fires. MacReady barrels into him, knocking him to the ground. He pummels him with a right hand and manages to control the gun.

The others dive in and pile on.

CUT TO:

EXT. COMPOUND

Heavily-clothed, MacReady, Fuchs and Dr. Copper help a dazed Blair to a toolshed some seventy-five yards from the main compound.

INT. TOOLSHED

More spacious than MacReady's. Very livable. Two windows. Blair has been placed on the cot. Dr. Copper injects him with a sedative.

BLAIR

Why am I here?

DR. COPPER

It's for your own protection, Blair.

MACREADY

And mainly ours.

EXT. SHACK

Fuchs and MacReady nail boards over the windows.

MACREADY

Leave a bit of an opening so he can see out.

Blair's droopy-eyed, heavily drugged features loom up at MacReady through the window.

MACREADY

How you doin', old boy?

BLAIR

(softly)

I don't know who to trust.

MACREADY

(humoring)

Know what you mean, Blair. Trust is a tough thing to come by these days. Just trust in the Lord.

BLAIR

(beat)

Watch Clark.

MACREADY

What?

BLAIR

Watch him close. Ask him why he didn't kennel the dog.

Blair's face disappears from the window.

CUT TO:

EXT. COMPOUND - DAY

Harsh and grey. Getting very dark as winter takes a stronger hold. Bennings is dumping the trash in a large hole in the snow which acts as the trash dump.

Bennings finishes and drags the empty bins past Palmer and Childs, who are fixing the wounded choppers.

INT. RADIO ROOM

The radio looks a mess. Norris and Sanchez, a bandage wrapped around his head, examines the damage. He is in pain and still looks a little groggy.

SANCHEZ

I'll see what I can do. But they didn't teach me much about fixing these things.

Norris smiles and pats him comfortingly.

NORRIS

They didn't teach you much about working them either.

INT. MESS HALL - MORNING

CLOSE ON A BUFFET OF EGGS, BACON, TOAST, ETC.

Pull back. The men help themselves. It is a cramped, elongated room.

Dr. Copper approaches Nauls and hands him a capsule.

DR. COPPER

Put this in Blair's juice before you take him his tray.

Clark comes running into the room, pallid, out of breath. The men turn to look.

CLARK

The dogs...

CUT TO:

INT. THE KENNEL

Empty. Clark and Garry examine the latch of the kennel door.

GARRY

Doesn't look broken.

CLARK

No. Door was wide open. I know I latched it.

EXT. COMPOUND ABOVE THE UNDERGROUND KENNEL

CLOSE ON THE DOGS' TRACKS in the snow. They lead from the kennel's open stairwell and out onto the ice. All the men have gathered.

CLARK

All three of them took off.

MacReady is writing down what appears to be a list on a pad.

DR. COPPER

How long do you suppose they've been gone?

CLARK

I haven't seen them since their last feeding. Could be as much as twenty-four hours.

MACREADY

They couldn't have gotten that far in this weather.

Garry and several others turn to MacReady quizzically.

GARRY

You're not thinking of going after them, are you?

MACREADY

I am going after them.

NORRIS

What in the hell for? Even if Blair's right -- they'll just die out there. No food. They're over a thousand miles from anything.

PALMER

Chopper aren't going to be ready for days.

MacReady hands his list to Bennings.

MACREADY

Get these things out of supply and meet me over by the snowmobiles.

GARRY

You're not going to catch them in one of those with the start they got.

MACREADY

Palmer, how long would it take you to strap those big four-cylinder carburetors on?

PALMER

(grins)
Oh, I got you. Not too long.

MACREADY

Then get a move on. Childs, come with me.

He puts his arm around Childs and pulls him along. The others watch them walk off, a little bewildered.

GARRY

(shouting after them)
Besides, what are you going to do when you catch up to them?

Bennings is reading MacReady's list.

BENNINGS

Holy shit.
(hands list to Garry)
Whatever he's going to do, he ain't fucking around.

EXT. OUTDOOR WORK AREA - CLOSE ON THE BARREL

of the large torch. A fierce stream of flame bursts from its

nozzle.

Pull back. The stream has shot out some fifteen feet.

Childs has been modifying it.

CHILDS

I can get maybe another five or six feet out of it.

MACREADY

That's good enough.

CLOSE ON PALMER

as he works on the snowmobiles. Into frame rolls a wheelbarrow on sleds. A box marked DYNAMITE is its most prominent article. Pull back. Bennings reads off the list of supplies.

BENNINGS

All right... Box of dynamite... box of thermite... three shotguns... box of flares... two flare guns... thirty cans gasoline... and a case of alcohol.

MACREADY

Let's load 'em.

EXT. ANTARCTICA - ICESCAPE

The two vehicles rip across the hard, flat ice, bolstered by the added horsepower. They follow the still visible dog tracks in the snow.

CUT TO:

THE SUN

sliding across the horizon, signaling midday. The snowmobiles whoosh past. Bennings drives the one loaded with supplies. MacReady and Childs double up on the other.

CUT TO:

MACREADY

steadying his binoculars, while Childs drives, spots something up ahead. The vehicles slow down and come to a halt. Something lies just ahead of them in the whiteness, in the middle of the dog tracks.

THE MEN

kneel down by the "something." It is the half-eaten remains of a dog. Its hind legs and lower stomach picked clean. Its ripped hide, flapping in the wind. Its top half missing.

CHILDS

What is it?

MacReady follows the line of continuing dog tracks.

MACREADY

Maybe dinner.

BENNINGS

Dogs don't eat each other.

MACREADY

(beat)

I know.

CHILDS

Where's the other half?

MACREADY

Probably the next meal.

MacReady moves to the snowmobile and grabs a two-gallon can of gasoline. He turns to Bennings.

MACREADY

Where these tracks headed?

BENNINGS

Nowhere... Just straight to the ocean.

A beat as MacReady takes this in. He pours the gas over the remains and sets it aflame.

MACREADY

Let's move.

Childs and Bennings are not that anxious to continue.

CHILDS

They could be hours ahead of us,
Mac.

BENNINGS

Gonna get dark soon, too. Supposed
to be fifty below tonight.

MacReady gets on and revs up the engine.

MACREADY

Turn back if you want.

Childs and Bennings return shrugs.

CUT TO:

THE SUN

making its last pass, rolling off the horizon. Only a slight orange hue left.

CUT TO:

THE SNOWMOBILES

move slower, positioned on either side of the tracks. The tracks abruptly change direction. The men come to a stop.

It is much colder now. Their beards, a mask of white powder.

MacReady surveys the new direction. They are headed toward a far-off ridge of bluffs. Large, windswept mounds of ice.

CUT TO:

THE SNOWMOBILES

as they move through a valley of newly-formed dunes and tall ice cliffs. The last of the sun obscured, the headlamps are turned on and pointed at the tracks.

The men look behind, in front, and from side to side, as they proceed cautiously through the maze. Up ahead MacReady spots:

A DOG

It sits, its back to them, unconcerned, heedless of their arrival. It is munching on the other half of the dog carcass.

The men stop their machines some twenty yards from it. They are hemmed in at the valley's narrowest point.

Childs, carrying the torch, and MacReady, armed with a thermite bomb, wade awkwardly but carefully toward the animal in their snowshoes. Bennings stands back by the snowmobiles.

Childs and MacReady spread out some dozen feet from the dog. It continues to pay them no mind, content to chew its food.

CHILDS

Where's the other one?

Bennings surveys the tops of the snow bluffs that encircle them with his flashlight.

MACREADY

(to dog)

Where's your buddy, boy? Huh?

No response. MacReady searches the near vicinity with his light. All three are growing uneasy.

MACREADY

Let that thing fly, Childs. Don't let up until he's ash.

Childs turns on the gas and lights the tip.

Bennings is still watching the bluffs. Something from beneath the snow reaches up and grabs his feet. He is ripped back down through the hard snow in one incredibly powerful motion. He screams, his head the only thing sticking out of the ice.

Childs and MacReady turn, confused, unable to see anything but Bennings' screaming head. They rush toward him.

MacReady stumbles.

The sound of a snapping, a crackling to MacReady's rear.

He freezes; turns back to the dog. Its back is still to him; its coat of hair sticking up like that of a porcupine. It snarls; its face turns slowly toward him.

Its skin splitting; its mouth ripping open wildly.

MACREADY

Childs!!

Childs stops, confused as to who to help first. He notices the dog hunched and ready to spring. He steps back toward MacReady. The dog/Thing leaps for MacReady; an incredible jump of some twenty feet.

Childs lets loose a blast, hitting the dog in midair; the force of the spray knocking it back and tumbling to the ice in flames.

MacReady throws his thermite canister. It discharges and engulfs the screeching animal in fire.

BENNINGS

howling in pain. The ice underneath him thrashes violently. Childs and MacReady stand by helplessly, unable to see what has him or what action to take. Childs moves closer to help.

MACREADY

(pulls him back)
Stay back!!

Bennings' head disappears with a sudden jerk through the ice. The ice continues to rumble like boiling water, moving in different directions. Part of Bennings' body pops up in a different area and is just as quickly pulled back down.

MacReady and Childs watch on in frustration and anger.

CHILDS

What we going to do?!

MACREADY

How the fuck do I know?!

Bennings' head and shoulders then surface near one of the snowmobiles. Something has him. Unclear as to what. The jowls of a dog. But huge. Bennings' heavy clothing begins to rip, tear, as if his skin underneath was bulging out. The jowls seem to be absorbing his head.

MacReady runs for the snowmobile.

MACREADY

Torch them!!

CHILDS

But...

MACREADY

He's gone already! Do it!

Childs blasts away. The ice begins to melt as Bennings and whatever has him catch fire. A screeching.

MacReady grabs cans of gas from the snowmobiles. Suddenly a steel-like, arachnid-shaped arm shoots out in pain and with incredible force pierces the fiberglass chassis of the snowmobile. MacReady is knocked back. He recovers and dumps cans of gasoline on the writhing mess.

He dives and rolls away from the lunging appendage.

He and Childs watch on as Bennings and The Thing roar in flame. Behind them, the other dog/Thing continues to burn. The screeching, mewing and gurgling wails on, all about them.

They look to each other in disbelief, their faces illuminated by the flickering flames. The strident sounds beginning to subside.

THE SUN

Its slim, orange arc sets, signaling the start of the Vernal Equinox. And the beginning of six months of darkness.

CUT TO:

INT. COMPOUND - REC ROOM

The men are interrogating Clark. He is frazzled and defensive.

CLARK

...I'm telling you I don't remember
leaving the kennel unlatched...

Childs is holding the industrial torch directly in his face.

CHILDS

Bullshit! You left it open so they
could get out!

EXT. TRASH DUMP

MacReady, waist-deep in trash and snow, searches for something.

INT. REC ROOM

The interrogation continues.

CLARK

...Would I even have told you they were gone if I had anything to hide?

GARRY

But why didn't you kennel that dog right away?

CLARK

I told you I couldn't find...
(pushes torch away)
...get that out of my face.

Childs grabs him by the collar and rips him off his chair.

CHILDS

Don't you be telling me...

Naulls steps between them.

NAULS

(to Childs)
Lighten your load, sucker. You ain't the judge and executioner around here!

CHILDS

Who you trying to protect, mutherfucker? I'm telling you this S.O.B. could be one of them.

Garry breaks it up, pulling them apart. MacReady enters from the outside. A bundle is tucked under his arm.

GARRY

Hold on, damn it. We're getting nowhere... If this bit of Blair's about absorbing and imitating is true... then that dog could have gotten to anybody.

DR. COPPER

And if it got to Clark... Clark could have gotten to anybody.

MacReady moves over to the table.

DR. COPPER

Theoretically any of us could be whatever the hell this thing is.

Norris shakes his head, rubbing his chest in slight discomfort.

NORRIS

It's just too damn wild -- I can't believe it.

MacReady pushes his sombrero back over his head.

MACREADY

Well, you can believe it now.

He drops the bundle he had been holding on the table between the men. It is the shredded pair of long johns.

MACREADY

Nauls found this yesterday. It's ripped just like the clothing on the Norwegian we brought back. The same thing was happening to Bennings' clothes when it got to him. Seems these Things don't imitate clothes. Just flesh and bone.

The men look from one another. Silence. MacReady picks it up and examines the label.

MACREADY

Size large.
(grins)
What do you wear, Clark?

Clark stews.

CLARK

So what?

NORRIS

I wear a size large, too.

MACREADY

So do I. So do most of us.

The uneasiness in the room grows.

MACREADY

Doubt if it got to more than one or two of us. But it got to someone.
(beat)
Somebody in this room ain't what he appears to be.

A pause as all eyes travel from man to man.

SANCHEZ

(scared)
Well, what we going to do?

Norris turns to Dr. Copper and Fuchs.

NORRIS

Can there be... some kind of test?
To find out who's what?

DR. COPPER

A serum test possibly.

FUCHS

Right. Why not?

GARRY

What's that?

DR. COPPER

It's a simple blood typing test. This Thing's blood chemistry is different than ours. Basically we mix someone's blood with uncontaminated human blood. If we don't get the proper serum reaction -- then that person isn't human.

CHILDS

Whose uncontaminated blood we going to use?

DR. COPPER

We've got blood plasma in storage.

GARRY

How long will it take you to prepare this?

DR. COPPER

A couple of hours.

GARRY

Well, get to it.

Garry unhinges a key from his belt and hands it to Dr. Copper. Dr. Copper and Fuchs head for the infirmary.

PALMER

How's that Thing get to the dogs? I though we stopped it in time.

MACREADY

Copper thinks they swallowed pieces of it during the fight.

PALMER

And that was enough?

DR. COPPER (O.S.)

Garry. The rest of you! Come here!

INT. INFIRMARY

The men rush in. Fuchs and Copper stand by the open plasma storage refrigerator. The inside is a mess of dried blood. The bladders have been ripped open. Copper is ghastly pale.

DR. COPPER

Somebody got to the blood... sabotaged it.

NAULS

Oh, my God.

A horrified silence.

MACREADY

Was it broken into?

FUCHS

No. Somebody opened it. Closed it. And then locked it.

Sanchez twitches, terrified.

MACREADY

Well, who's got access to it?

DR. COPPER

I guess I'm the only one.

GARRY

And I've got the only key.

Several pairs of eyes turn to Garry.

MACREADY

Would that test have worked?

DR. COPPER

I think so.

NORRIS

Somebody else sure as hell thought so.

MACREADY

Who else could have used that key?

GARRY

Ah... no one... I give it to Copper when he needs it...

MACREADY

Could anyone have gotten it from you?

DR. COPPER

I don't see how... when I'm finished I return it right away.

NORRIS

When was the last time you used it?

DR. COPPER

(uneasy)

A day or so ago... I guess.

Garry senses the nervous and inquiring eyes on him.

GARRY

I suppose... well, it's possible someone might have lifted it from me. But...

CHILDS

That key ring of yours is always hooked to your belt. Now how could somebody get to it without you knowing?

GARRY

(upset, flustered)

Look, I haven't been near that... that refrigerator.

Silence as the men continue to stare. Sanchez is perspiring.

GARRY

Copper's the only one who has any business with it.

The eyes shift from Garry to Copper.

DR. COPPER

Now... wait a second, Garry, you've been in here on several occasions...

FUCHS

And the Doc thought of the test.

CHILDS

(anger)

So what?! Is that supposed to leave him in the clear?! Bullshit!

Sanchez bolts out the door. Stunned for a beat, the others chase after him.

GARRY

Hey, Sanchez!

SANCHEZ

in terror, runs at top speed through the narrow corridors.
Opening and shutting doors. The others are in pursuit.
They shout for him to stop.

CUT TO:

SANCHEZ

as he reaches a small armory. A glass case set into the wall.
A half dozen rarely used guns are inside. He tries the handle.
Locked.

He hears the clamor of feet and voices as the others are
nearing. He breaks the glass and grabs a shotgun. Then a box
of shells. He frantically tries to load, but is too nervous.

The others arrive at the end of the hallway. Garry pulls his
handgun and points.

GARRY

Put that down!

SANCHEZ

(trembling)

No.

GARRY

I'll put this right through your
head.

No one doubts Garry's sincerity.

SANCHEZ

You guys going to let him give orders?
I mean he could be one of those
Things.

The other regard Garry tensely. No one oblivious to the fact,
that Sanchez just might be right.

MACREADY

(calm)

Put it away, Sanchez. Just put it
away.

Still trembling, he tosses the shells back into the broken
case, leans the gun against the wall and begins to sob.

Nauls skates over to comfort him.

The men watch as Garry lowers his gun. He turns to them.

GARRY

I don't know about Copper. But I
didn't go near that plasma...
(beat)
But I guess you'll all rest easier
if someone else is in charge.

He hands his gun to Norris.

GARRY

Can't see anyone objecting to you,
Norris.

NORRIS

Sorry, gentlemen...
(rubs chest)

...Don't think I'd be up to it.
Haven't been feeling well lately.

Childs goes for the gun.

CHILDS

I'll take it...

MacReady beats him to it.

MACREADY

Maybe it should be someone a bit
more even-tempered, Childs.

Childs glares.

MACREADY

(to others)

...Any objections?

Roving eyes pass about the hallway. Nobody is sure who to
trust. MacReady seems as good as any.

INT. REC ROOM

The men have gathered to discuss plans. Furtive and
untrustworthy glances are passed around the room.

MACREADY

...From what we know this Thing likes
to go one on one. So we stick together
as much as possible. In two's and
three's.

Childs points to Garry, Dr. Copper and Clark.

CHILDS

What do we do about those three?

MACREADY

We got morphine, don't we.

Fuchs nods.

MACREADY

Well, we keep them loaded. Stash
them here in the rec room and watch
'em twenty-four hours.

PALMER

(ears perk up)

Morphine? You know I was pretty close
to that dog, too.

Palmer is ignored.

NORRIS

We should sleep in shifts.

MACREADY

Right. Half of us awake at all times.

SANCHEZ

How we going to try and find out
who's... you know, who's who?

MACREADY

(to Fuchs)

Can you think of any other tests?

FUCHS

I'll try. I could sure use Copper's

help though.

CHILDS

You can eighty-six that thought right now, man.

Dr. Copper eyes his accuser solemnly.

MACREADY

Also... When this Thing turns... it turns slowly at first. I think we can handle it in that state. But if it ever got to full power... from what I saw of that Norwegian camp... well, I just don't know... It would probably take it an hour or more to get like that. So no matter what anybody's doing, we all return to this room every twenty minutes. Anybody gone longer than that... anybody trying to leave... we kill 'em.

CUT TO:

EXT. COMPOUND - DARKNESS

It is the dead of winter. Six months of darkness ahead. Palmer fights the cold as he works dismantling the engine of the helicopter.

He frowns, searching for something.

PALMER

(mumbles)

Where's that magneto? Can't find a darn thing around here any more.

INT. REC ROOM

Copper, Clark and Garry sit moodily together on a couch.

Norris awkwardly prepares to give them their injections.

He is new at this. Childs stands guard with his torch.

Dr. Copper offers to help.

DR. COPPER

I'll do it. You're going to break the needle in my arm.

CHILDS

No, Doc. He's doing a real fine job.

EXT. COMPOUND

MacReady and Sanchez are foraging through the trash dump.

MACREADY

Look for shoes, too. And burned cloth.

INT. RADIO ROOM

Norris has begun dismantling the radio. He rubs at his chest as he disengages the headset.

INT. HALLWAY

Following Nauls as he skates through the labyrinth.

Checking waste bins. Pausing to look behind shelves and any

obscure hiding place.

MacReady passes him coming the other way.

NAULS

That thing's too smart to be hiding
any more of its clothes, MacReady.

MACREADY

Just keep looking.

INT. LAB

Fuchs is poring over a book. Several others lie open on his desk.

MacReady pokes his head in the lab.

MACREADY

How's it going?

FUCHS

Nothing yet. But, MacReady, I've
been thinking... If our dogs changed
by swallowing parts of that other
one... We better see to it that
everyone prepares their own food and
we eat out of cans.

MACREADY

Gotcha.

EXT. COMPOUND

A siren goes off, signaling the end of a twenty-minute period.
Sanchez pulls himself out of the trash dump.

Palmer carries a large part of a helicopter engine toward
the compound.

INT. COMPOUND

The hallway near the supply storage cubicle. MacReady holds
the door open as Palmer makes his way to him lugging the
heavy helicopter part.

Childs passes by from the other direction.

PALMER

Childs, where's that magneto from
Chopper One?

CHILDS

Ain't it there?

He passes by.

PALMER

No it ain't there. Would I be asking
if it were there?

MACREADY

Move it, Palmer.

INT. SUPPLY STORAGE ROOM

Palmer sets down the heavy part. Norris follows him inside
with a bundle of radio gear. They move back out into the
hallway. MacReady locks the door behind them.

HALLWAY

The three move down the hall toward their appointed rendezvous at the rec room.

MACREADY

(to Palmer)

Start taking apart those snowmobiles next, huh?

INT. KITCHEN

Cramped. Several of the men are preparing their food.

Opening cans. Heating them in pots.

EXT. COMPOUND

Nauls wearily approaches Blair's tool shed with a tray of food. He hears a pounding from within.

NAULS

I got your goodies, superdude.

He peeks in through the opening in the boarded-up window.

Blair is nailing himself in from the inside. He looks pretty crazed.

NAULS

What you doin'?

BLAIR

Nobody's getting in here. You can tell them all that!

NAULS

Well, who the hell you think wants to get in there with you?

Nauls slides the tray in the slot. It is immediately shoved back out and topples onto the ice. Some of the food has splashed on Nauls' heavy coat.

NAULS

Now why'd you go and...

BLAIR

And I don't want any more food with sedatives in it. I know what you're up to. Don't think I don't. And if anyone tries to get in here -- I've got rope. I'll hang myself before it gets to me.

NAULS

You promise?

Nauls picks up the tray, heads back mumbling.

NAULS

Crazy white scientist motherfucker...

EXT. COMPOUND

Palmer works on the snowmobile. Sanchez resumes searching through the trash.

INT. BALLOON TOWER

MacReady slashes into the huge uninflated weather balloons, rendering them useless. Tanks of helium and hydrogen are stacked nearby.

INT. KITCHEN

Nauls does the dishes. His cassette plays in the b.g.

INT. REC ROOM

Childs continues guarding the three men.

CLARK

Gotta go to the can, Childs.

Childs follows him to the other end of the room.

CHILDS

Be quick.

Clark walks to the head. Childs moves back to the middle of the room. As the guard he is much more vulnerable in this position. Being split between his prisoners.

The lights begin to flicker. The soft purr of the generator begins to fade.

CHILDS

Oh, no.

The lights go out. Nauls calls from the kitchen.

NAULS (O.S.)

Childs! That a fuse?

CHILDS

No. The generator. You got the auxiliary box just off the kitchen. Get to it.

(fumbling around)

Where's the damn flashlight?

(calling out)

You fellas okay over there?

Dr. Copper giggles in the dark.

CHILDS

Cut that out, Copper.

(beat)

Nauls? What's taking you?!

NAULS (O.S.)

I'm working it! Nothing's happening!

CHILDS

That's impossible, man! Okay, Clark, out of the john where I can see you!

NAULS (O.S.)

It's shorted out or something!

CHILDS

(shouting)

Clark, you come on out here!!

Childs lights the tip of his torch, allowing him a strong candlelight. Garry is no longer in the room.

CHILDS

Where's... Where's Garry?

Dr. Copper looks numbly at the empty seat next to him. Childs finds the portable siren and blares it.

EXT. COMPOUND

MacReady, Palmer and Sanchez heed the call and head for the compound.

INT. REC ROOM

Childs jerks his head around in different directions.

CHILDS

Where are you, Garry? Don't you move an inch, Copper.

(shouts)

Nauls, bring me a goddamn flashlight!

INT. KITCHEN

Pitch black.

NAULS

Somebody's taken it. I can't find it!

CHILDS (O.S.)

Clark, you want me to come in after you?!

INT. HALLWAY

MacReady, Sanchez and Palmer come in from the outside.

They bump into each other trying to get their bearings from the lack of light. Palmer, the only one who seems to have one, turns on his flashlight.

MACREADY

(shouting)

What's happened?!

NORRIS (O.S.)

MacReady, that you?

MACREADY

Yeah!

NORRIS (O.S.)

It's the generator I think! No power.

MACREADY

(to Palmer)

Well, let's get down there.

CHILDS (O.S.)

MacReady!

MACREADY

What?

CHILDS (O.S.)

Garry's missing!

MACREADY

(to self)

Oh, shit!

(shouts)

Well, hang on!

CHILDS (O.S.)

Gee, thanks!

INT. GENERATOR ROOM

Palmer and MacReady stumbling down the stairs. MacReady turns around, looks.

MACREADY

Where's Sanchez?

Both look around. Sanchez is gone. Palmer's light finds the motionless generator. He examines it.

PALMER

The fuel pump... it's gone...
(frantic)

You've got to get up to supply, Mca.
If we don't get this thing started
soon, it'll freeze on us and we'll
never get it going.

MacReady dashes upstairs into the darkness.

INT. HALLWAY

The lab door is opened. Fuchs holding a small candle walks out. As he passes, the shoulder of a man springs into frame.

INT. GENERATOR ROOM

Palmer is feverishly working underneath the generator on his back.

INT. REC ROOM

The temperature continues to drop rapidly. Childs swats himself to keep warm, while still keeping an eye on Dr. Copper and the rest of the room.

INT. HALLWAY

MacReady rushes out of the supply room, with a fuel pump, bumps into somebody.

MACREADY

Who... Who is that?

The silhouette moves on down the hallway.

MACREADY

Sanchez...? Hey, who...

PALMER (O.S.)

Mac, where the hell is that pump!!

CUT TO:

INT. GENERATOR ROOM

MacReady holds the flashlight for Palmer. Their breath, puffs of white smoke.

PALMER

Somebody definitely messed with it.

MACREADY

We going to make it?

PALMER

Hope so. Another ten, fifteen minutes.
What I don't get is...

The sound of a screeching. From somewhere in the compound. The two men's faces, locked in fear.

CUT TO:

INT. REC ROOM

The generator has been repaired; the lights within the compound are back on.

Grim and tense. Everyone is present but Fuchs. Eyes flit from man to man. Palmer, Nauls and Sanchez are spread out about the room, keeping as much distance as possible from the rest.

Norris and Childs are tying the Doctor, Clark and Garry to the couch. MacReady prepares several makeshift blowtorches as he kneels on the ground.

SANCHEZ

Where were the flashlights?

MACREADY

Screw the flashlights. Where the hell were you?

PALMER

Tons of stuff's been missing around here. Magnetos, cables, wire...

NAULS

Kitchen things, too...

MACREADY

Anybody see Fuchs... or hear him...? Huh?

No answer as the men's faces roam the room. Childs glares at Garry as he begins to tie him in.

CHILDS

Where'd you go?

Garry's groggy features stare blankly.

CHILDS

I said where? Where'd you go?!

GARRY

Was dark... find a light...

CHILDS

You lying bastard...

Garry struggles to his feet, affronted.

GARRY

(slurring)

I rather don't like your tone...

He grabs Childs by the collar.

CHILDS

You sit back down...

Childs whales on him with a right hand. Both go tumbling over the couch. MacReady and Norris dive in breaking it up.

NORRIS

Enough...

MacReady, furious, pulls Childs away.

Norris breathing heavily from the activity, massages his chest. The strong, stormy winds overhead batter the roofing. MacReady glances up. He and Childs release each other.

MACREADY

That storm's going to start ripping
any minute -- so we don't have much
time.

He thrusts one of the blowtorches hard into Childs' stomach.

MACREADY

We've got to find Fuchs. When we
find him -- we kill him.

SANCHEZ

Why?

MACREADY

If he's one of those Things, we've
got to get to him before he changes...
Nauls, you and Childs and I'll check
the outside shacks...

He tosses torches to Sanchez and Palmer.

MACREADY

Sanchez, you and Palmer search the
inside...

PALMER

I ain't going with Sanchez.

Sanchez snaps his head toward Palmer. Palmer looks at the
others.

PALMER

I ain't going with him. I'll go with
Childs...

SANCHEZ

Well, screw you, man!

PALMER

I ain't going with you!

CHILDS

Well, who says I want you going with
me?!

MACREADY

Cut the bullshit... Okay, Sanchez,
you come with us. Norris... you stay
here...

(refers to tied-up
men)

Any of them move -- you fry 'em. And
if you hear anything, anything at
all you let loose the siren. We all
meet back here in twenty minutes
regardless.

(a beat)

And everybody watch whoever you're
with. Real close.

The men survey each other.

MACREADY

Let's move.

CUT TO:

EXT. COMPOUND - NIGHT

MacReady and Nauls, wearing their snowshoes and using flares
for light, pull themselves along the steady rope that
leads to Blair's shed. They are careful to keep an eye on

each other as they move along.

Sanchez heads off in the direction of another shack.

CUT TO:

INT. COMPOUND - HALLWAY

One of the many doors creak open. Childs and Palmer stealthily move into the next corridor. Palmer falls a few steps behind.

PALMER

What'd we ever do to these Things
anyway...

Childs freezes and snaps his head around facing Palmer. A beat.

PALMER

What?

CHILDS

Don't walk behind me.

Another beat.

PALMER

Right.

He moves to the other side of the wall, parallel with Childs. They continue on, skimming along the sides of the corridor in plain view of one another.

CUT TO:

EXT. COMPOUND

Nauls and MacReady arrive at Blair's shack. They peer in through the spaces between the boards.

A weak light burns as Blair is seated eating out of a can. A hangman's noose dangles from the ceiling nearby.

MACREADY

Hey, Blair!!

Blair jumps in fear, spilling his can.

MACREADY

Has Fuchs been out here?

Blair approaches the boarded-up window. He looks haggard and afraid.

BLAIR

I've changed my mind... I'd... I'd
like to come back inside... I don't
want to stay out here any more...
Funny things... I hear funny things
out here.

MACREADY

Have you come across Fuchs?

BLAIR

Fuchs...? No, it's not Fuchs... You
must let me back in... I won't harm
anyone... I promise...

MACREADY

We'll see...

He and Nauls trudges off. Blair shouts after them.

BLAIR

I promise! I'm much better now! I'll
be good!! I'm all better!! Don't
leave me here!!

INT. REC ROOM

Norris continues his watch on the sedated trio. He anxiously tries to keep an eye on the various entrances behind and in front of him. He rubs his chest in pain.

DR. COPPER

I'm getting worried about you. You
ought to have a checkup.

NORRIS

Let's just not get worried about
anything just now.

DR. COPPER

(yawning)
After all this mess then.

NORRIS

(nodding)
After all this mess.

EXT. COMPOUND – THE SLOPE TO MACREADY'S SHACK

The winds are thick and vicious now. MacReady and Nauls pull themselves along the rope fighting their way up the slope. A violent gust sends MacReady's body horizontal, but still hanging onto the rope. The wind slaps him back down. His flare and torch tumble back toward Nauls.

Nauls saves the torch from rolling down the hill.

MacReady, lying vulnerable, watches Nauls pull his way toward him. He tenses. Nauls reaches him. A beat. He hands back his torch. Relieved, MacReady pulls himself upright.

INT. COMPOUND – KITCHEN – CLOSE ON THICK POWER CABLES

that line the wall. They have been torn apart. Childs and Palmer examine.

PALMER

Auxiliary light cables...? Been cut.

CHILDS

Cut, bullshit. Been pulled apart.

EXT. MACREADY'S SHACK

as they reach the top. The remaining flare their only light. Very dark. They stand on either side of the door. MacReady shoves it open. Pitch black inside. MacReady flips the light switch. Doesn't work.

INT. SHACK

They enter. Hunched. Torches ready. The place is a mess. The winds as strong as on the outside.

The single flare illuminating the ceiling. Almost all of the corrugated, steel roofing is gone. As if ripped off.

NAULS

(shouting to be heard)
Where's the roof?!

MacReady stares up incredulous, as they advance through the room.

NAULS

This storm do that?

MACREADY

(shouting)

Couldn't be possible. Must have weighted a ton and a half...

Nauls kicks over a chair. A naked, fleshy object bounds high into the air. Nauls thrusts out his torch, catching the breasts of the inflatable woman. She pops and is sucked out through the hole in the roof.

Nauls tries to catch his breath.

NAULS

Goddamn white women.

INT. COMPOUND

Underground, rickety corridor. Palmer stands by as Childs undoes the many locks to the room that houses his plants.

One by one. Palmer twists his head in every which direction. Nervous.

Childs pulls open the heavy door. A flush of snow and wind push them back. They wedge their bodies at the entrance to the lightless room.

CHILDS

My babies.

They enter. The light from the hall exposes the completely smashed-in window high above the plants. The plants look frozen.

PALMER

Somebody broke in.

CHILDS

Now who'd go and do...

Saddened, angry, Childs goes to check the damage to his plants. Palmer, his face set in horror, yanks him back.

PALMER

Childs!!

CHILDS

Let go of me...

PALMER

Don't get near 'em. The plants! They're alive. Those things can imitate anything...

CHILDS

What's it going to do, being a plant?

Palmer readies his small torch.

PALMER

We got to burn 'em.

CHILDS

Now hold on, you dumb...

Palmer sprays them with flame. Childs pushes him to the ground, and tries to swat out the fire.

CHILDS

You stupid, sonofa...

Palmer, his mouth agape with terror, screams and points to the closing door to their rear. Childs whirls.

FUCHS

One arm outstretched, swings into view. An ax, embedded deep into his chest, pins his frozen body to the inside of the door.

INT. REC ROOM

Norris startled by the scream, turns on the siren.

CUT TO:

INT. PLANT ROOM

Sanchez has joined Childs and Palmer. The body of Fuchs is still pinned to the door. Sanchez tries to wrench the ax loose. It is too deeply embedded and won't budge.

SANCHEZ

Whoever put this through him...

Sanchez observes Childs' hulking frame and adds pointedly:

SANCHEZ

...is one bad-ass and strong muther.

CHILDS

No one's that strong, boy!

INT. PASSAGEWAY

Tracking with the three men. Opening and closing doors, as they make their way back to the rec room. They keep their distance from each other, watching each other while they walk.

PALMER

Why didn't it imitate Fuchs? Isn't that its number -- to get more recruits.

CHILDS

Wasn't enough time. Generator was out, what...? Thirty minutes. Takes the bastards an hour, maybe two to absorb somebody.

SANCHEZ

Why Fuchs?

CHILDS

He was working on a test. Fuchs must have been onto something. These bastards got scared and got rid of him.

(suddenly realizing)

...Hey... Where's...

CUT TO:

INT. COMPOUND - CLOSE ON PALMER'S FACE

shouting down a passageway.

PALMER

MacReady!!

CLOSE ON CHILDS

bellowing.

CHILDS

Nauls!! MacReady!!

EXT. COMPOUND

A strong driftwind streams snow across the ground obscuring everything but the very top of the buildings.

The siren screams.

INT. REC ROOM

Rigid, immobile faces. Listening to the storm overhead.

CHILDS

How long they been out now?

NORRIS

Forty... Forty-five minutes.

Silence, as the uneasy eyes measure one another.

CHILDS

We better start closing off the outside hatchways.

VARIOUS ANGLES OF THE COMPOUND

Childs, Sanchez and Palmer -- closing off and bolting the entrances to the camp.

NORRIS (O.S.)

All of you! Come here!

INT. COMPOUND MAIN HALLWAY - POINT OF VIEW - THE MEN

Through the fogged-up windows, a figure can be seen approaching the main compound. It pulls and drags its way along the guide rope, fighting the gale force winds.

CUT TO:

THE MEN

weapons in hand, huddle at the main doorway. They unbolt it. Sleet and hail send Nauls rolling in from the outside. The men force the door back and lock it.

The weary Nauls kneels on the floor and gasps for air.

The others surround him.

PALMER

Where's MacReady?

Nauls weighs each of them ominously, while digging down underneath his heavy jacket.

NAULS

Cut him loose of the line up by his shack.

CHILDS

Cut him loose?

NAULS

When we were up poking around his place... I found this...

He pulls out a thick bundle of heavy clothing. It is mutilated and partially burned. He holds out the jacket to show the inside collar.

Close on name tag -- it reads: R.J. MACREADY The men, as they examine in a hush.

NAULS

...It was stashed in his old coal furnace... wind must have dislodged it... I don't think he saw me find it.

The men continue to examine in various states of disbelief.

NAULS

...Made sure I got ahead of him on the towline on the way back... cut him loose.

SANCHEZ

(incredulous)
MacReady...?

NAULS

He's one of them.

SANCHEZ

(scared)
When do you think it got to him?

PALMER

Could have been anytime. Anywhere.

CHILDS

(to Nauls, suspicious)
If it did get to him.

NAULS

Look, man...

PALMER

When the lights went out...

NORRIS

Would have been a perfect time...

PALMER

Right. Garry was missing...
(pointedly)
...And Sanchez...

SANCHEZ

(goes for him)
Fuck you, Palmer.

Childs and Norris separate them.

NORRIS

This is just what it wants... to pit us against each other.

A pounding at the door sends the men jerking backward.

Nauls scampers to his feet. They tense.

MACREADY (O.S.)

Open up!

No answer as the men surround the door, their weapons ready.
Fear.

MACREADY (O.S.)

...Hey, somebody! Open up, it's me,
MacReady...

(still nothing)

...Come on, damn it... The towline
snapped. Been crawling around like a
seal out here...

NAULS

(harsh whisper)

Bullshit! He's got to know damn well
I cut it!

The men keep their voices low.

PALMER

Let's open it.

CHILDS

Hell no.

More pounding.

SANCHEZ

(shaking)

You think he's changed into one of
those Things?

NORRIS

He hasn't had enough time.

CHILDS

...Nothing human could have made it
back here in this weather without a
guideline...

MACREADY (O.S.)

...Where is everybody?! I'm half
frostbit!

PALMER

Let's open it. Now...

CHILDS

(edgy, hostile)

Why you so damn anxious to let him
in here...

PALMER

(slightly trembling)

He's so close. Maybe our best chance
to blow him away.

CHILDS

No. Just let him freeze out there.

SANCHEZ

(voice cracking)

What if we're wrong about him?

CHILDS

Then we're wrong.

The muffled breaking of a window down the hall. The men turn.

PALMER

The supply window!

SANCHEZ

(terror)

What we going to...

NORRIS

All right... all right... we've got
no choice now...

INT. SUPPLY ROOM

Pitch black. MacReady's voice is heard cursing as he appears to be stumbling around, looking for a light switch. He responds to the muffled voices at the door.

MACREADY

What's going on out there?

HALLWAY

Palmer stands by as Childs tries the knob. Locked.

CHILDS

Damn it, he's got the keys.

Childs rips a nearby fire ax off the wall and begins hacking away at the door.

INT. SUPPLY ROOM

MACREADY

What are you doing?

CHILDS (O.S.)

You're a dead man, MacReady -- or a
dead whatever the hell you are!

MacReady begins to rummage through the supplies in the darkness.

CHILDS (O.S.)

We found your clothes -- the ones
you tried to burn.

MACREADY

What clothes?

CHILDS (O.S.)

You been made, MacReady.

Childs chops away. MacReady desperately continues rummaging through the supplies.

MACREADY

Someone's trying to mark me, you
bastard... trying to frame me.

HALLWAY

Childs cautions to Palmer as he prepares for one last blow.

CHILDS

Move in slow now.

Crunch. The door gives. The men move in. Their blow torches ready. They freeze.

MacReady stands before them holding a lighted flare. His hair and clothing are covered with snow; his cheeks and nose blackened by frostbite. Tucked under his arm is an entire box of dynamite. He holds the flare dangerously close to the open box.

MACREADY

Anyone messes with me -- the whole camp goes.

He appears to mean it. They don't seem anxious to test him.

MACREADY

Put those torches on the floor and back off.

They do. He follows them out into the hall.

HALLWAY

The men step backwards carefully.

MACREADY

...back way off.

They heed, retreating further down the hall. MacReady glances behind him.

MACREADY

...Where's the rest...

Nauls and Norris, who have silently crept in through the supply window, come flying through the hacked-up door and barrel into MacReady. Both going straight for the flare.

MacReady spins Nauls off and rips into Norris, sending him crashing violently into the wall. Nauls tackles MacReady's legs, pulling him to the floor.

The others rush him. MacReady, still in control of the dynamite and flare, bellow:

MACREADY

So help me I mean it!!

They skid to a halt. Nauls crawls away, quickly.

NAULS

It's cool, man. We ain't near you, man... Stay cool...

PALMER

Yeah, man, really. Just relax.

MACREADY

Anybody touches me... we go.

Norris, lying on the floor, coughs as if gasping for breath. He quivers for a moment and then is still. Nauls crawls over to him and shakes him. A beat.

NAULS

I don't think he's breathing.

Nauls listens to Norris' chest. MacReady stands.

MACREADY

Go untie the Doc. Get him in here. Bring the others, too...

(grins menacingly)

From now on no one gets out of my sight.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY

Norris' body is plopped on the examination table. Copper stumbles and is steadied by some of the men. MacReady continues to keep his distance.

Copper places an oxygen mask over Norris' face. He then rips open his shirt.

MACREADY

So you sweethearts had yourselves a little trial. I just may have to kill you on general principle, Nauls.

Copper begins swathing Norris' chest with a gelatin substance.

MACREADY

...Ever occur to the jury that anybody could have gotten to some of my clothes and stuck them up...

CHILDS

We ain't buying that.

DR. COPPER

Damn it, quit the bickering and give me a hand. Wheel that fibrillator over here.

Sanchez pushes over the portable fibrillator. Copper climbs up on the table and straddles Norris' chest.

Unnoticed, Clark paws the contents of the instrument tray behind his back.

DR. COPPER

Palmer, turn on that oxygen and hold the mask over his face... Childs, grab his shoulders.

They do so. Copper holds electrical prongs over Norris' chest.

CHILDS

(to MacReady,
threatening)
You're going to have to sleep sometime.

DR. COPPER

Quiet down...
(to Sanchez)
...turn that thing on.

Sanchez depresses the "on" button.

DR. COPPER

Now hold him.

MACREADY

I'm a real light sleeper, Childs...

DR. COPPER

Enough, MacReady!

Dr. Copper presses the prongs onto Norris' chest and shoots a bolt of current. Norris' body heaves upward. A slight crackling sound and an odd chirp through the oxygen mask.

DR. COPPER

Again... More current this time, Sanchez...

Buzzz. Several more jolts from the prongs. Clark's hand has found a scalpel. He gently lifts it out, bringing it to his

side.

MACREADY

And if anyone tries to wake me...

DR. COPPER

Damn you, MacReady!

Norris' body begins bounding up. More crackling and popping. His chest begins to break up and spread. The mask pops off -- a hideous mewling escaping from Norris' distorted mouth.

The men jump back, incredulous. Dr. Copper scrambles off his chest and flops to the floor.

SANCHEZ

God... what...?

They watch on in stunned horror as The Thing that was Norris begins to change, to spread awkwardly on the slab.

Its clothes tearing. A shoe splits in half and falls to the floor, exposing the beginnings of a talon.

MacReady charges toward it, shooping the men off.

MACREADY

Get out of the way!!

He unloads with a stream of flame. The body writhes in pain, belching and hissing. The slab catches fire. It struggles, lunges for the floor, straightens up, and moves a few feet.

A black and yellow substance rips through its trousers and squirts to the floor. Norris' body collapses on the fibrillating machine in flames. Extinguishers are ripped from the walls and put to work.

MacReady watches the smoking particles of ooze in fascination, as they twitch and mew on the floor.

Within seconds the fire is out. The men stand around in awe as they look upon The Thing that was once Norris.

MacReady continues to observe the small particles. Their tiny squeals abating into silence.

INT. REC ROOM

MacReady, still carrying the industrial torch, has maneuvered all the men into the room. He holds Garry's .44. He has untaped the explosives from his chest and laid them on the nearby table next to two more boxes of dynamite.

CLARK

What you got in mind, MacReady?

MACREADY

A little test.

PALMER

What kind of test?

MACREADY

I'm sure a lot of you already know.

He tosses a ream of steel cable and some rope to Palmer.

MACREADY

Palmer, you and Copper tie everyone down. Real tight.

CHILDS

What for?

MACREADY

For your health.

GARRY

(to others)

Let's rush him. He's not going to blow us all up.

MACREADY

Damn if I won't.

CHILDS

(a beat)

You ain't tying me up.

MACREADY

Then I'll have to kill you.

CHILDS

Then kill me.

MacReady points the .44 at Childs' head.

MACREADY

I mean it.

MacReady cocks his gun. Childs holds his ground.

CHILDS

I guess you do.

A beat. Clark springs for MacReady. Scalpel raised.

MacReady spins and fires three shots, point-blank, the forces of the charges sending Clark flying backwards. The others, themselves about to pounce, stop -- as MacReady whirls the torch and gun back toward them.

CUT TO:

THE MEN

being tied securely to couches and chairs.

MACREADY

Tie up Clark, too.

PALMER

(bemused)

He's dead.

MACREADY

Norris looked pretty dead, himself.
Bullets don't kill these Things.

MacReady turns on a Bunsen burner while he cuts the rubber covering off an electrical cord, exposing the copper wire.

All the while, he keeps his eye on the men.

CHILDS

(muttering)

We should have jumped his ass.

MACREADY

Now Copper, you tie Palmer up.

Copper starts to tie Palmer to the small couch next to Childs and Garry.

MACREADY

We're going to draw a little bit of everybody's blood.

NAULS

What are you going to do? Drink it?

MACREADY

Watching Norris in there... gave me the idea that maybe every part of you bastards is a whole. Every piece of you is self-sufficient, an animal unto itself. When a man bleeds it's just tissue. But blood from one of you Things won't obey. It's a newly formed individual with a built-in desire to protect its own life. When attacked, your blood will try and survive -- and crawl away from a hot needle say.

CUT TO:

SANCHEZ

grimacing as Dr. Copper pinches a scalpel to his thumb and collects a small portion of his blood in a dish.

All the men have been tied up. Palmer, Childs and Garry on the small couch. The others, including the lifeless corpse of Clark, in chairs.

Copper returns the plate to the table and sets it down in line with the other plates of blood that he has collected.

The names of each man have been scribbled onto the plates.

MacReady slides the Doctor a fresh plate.

MACREADY

Now you.

Copper cuts his thumb, his blood dribbles onto the plate.

He stands nervously for a beat.

MACREADY

Slide it back here.

Copper pushes it toward MacReady.

MACREADY

Now step way back.

Copper steps backward, moisture beginning to collect on his brow. MacReady begins to heat the copper wire over the Bunsen burner.

The men watch intently. The wire begins to glow. MacReady points the torch directly at the Doctor. Both of them perspiring. MacReady lifts the glowing wire from the flame. The Doctor is dead still. MacReady slowly touches the wire to the Doctor's plate. A soft hiss.

MacReady heats it again and tries once more. The same soft hiss. MacReady and the Doctor both let out a sigh.

MACREADY

I guess you're okay.

DR. COPPER

(shaken, facetious)
Thank you.

MACREADY
I didn't think you'd use that
fibrillator on Norris if you were
one of them.

He hands Copper the torch.

MACREADY
Watch them.

He cuts himself with the scalpel and begins collecting his
own blood.

MACREADY
Now I'll show you what I already
know.

He heats the wire and puts it to his plate. The same harmless
hissing. All eyes continue to watch as he tries again. The
same result. Childs mumbles.

CHILDS
Load of bullshit.

MACREADY
We'll see. Let's try Clark.

He heats the wire and lays it in Clark's dish. The hissing.

CHILDS
So Clark was human, huh?

MacReady nods.

CHILDS
So that make you a murderer.

MacReady glances over the group.

MACREADY
Palmer now.

He sets Palmer's plate in front of him and heats the wire.

GARRY
Pure nonsense. This won't prove a
damn thing.

MACREADY
Thought you'd feel that way, Garry.
You were the only one who could have
gotten to that blood plasma...
(placing the wire in
Palmer's dish)
...we'll do you last...

Screech!!! The blood howls, trying to crawl off the plate.

Palmer bolts forward with incredible force, racing for
MacReady; his face splitting; his mouth roaring -- dragging
the couch, Childs and Garry with him. He smashes into MacReady
knocking him over the table.

MACREADY
Copper!!

It's all happened too fast. Copper tries to get off a burst
of flame. The ever-changing Palmer breaks his bonds and leaps
on the Doctor.

The others sit helpless, struggling at their bindings.

MacReady dives on Palmer's back and the three go rolling to the floor. Screeching. Crackling. MacReady pounds viciously at Palmer's head. A powerful, shirt-splitting arm sends him skidding across the floor.

Copper momentarily has control of the torch. Just as he positions it, Palmer's mouth splits from his chin to his forehead and engulfs the entirety of the Doctor's head.

The big torch slaps against the wall. Palmer bounds to his feet, wrapping his arms around the dangling, struggling body of Dr. Copper.

The men are screaming hysterically. MacReady tries to fire up the bruised torch. Busted. Won't work.

Frustrated, he charges up behind Palmer and begins hammering the thick steel instrument over his head.

The shirt of Palmer's back erupts in MacReady's face.

Splitting and ripping wildly, exposing the beginnings of yet another orifice. A blackened, iron-strong tongue lunges outward. Stunned, MacReady manages to elude it, diving for the top of the table by the boxes of dynamite.

MacReady lights the fuse of a thick roll and bounds from the table. Palmer awkwardly spins in circles, swinging the Doctor's body like a propeller blade, struggling to keep on balance, as he advances on MacReady. The second orifice, spitting and snarling as it continues to take form.

MacReady waits until Palmer's back spins around, facing him. Only two yards away, MacReady flings his lit roll into the ever-evolving second mouth and leaps onto the couch covering Childs and Garry with his body.

A muffled boom, as the swallowed explosive ignites from deep within Palmer and sends his flesh splattering all over the room. MacReady rolls away from Childs and Garry as fast as he can.

CUT TO:

MACREADY

perspiring profusely, his hand trembling slightly, prepares to continue the test. He heats the wire.

The men are pouring sweat, white-knuckled.

One of the smaller torches is pointed at Nauls. He closes his eyes. MacReady places the heated wire into his plate. Hiss. MacReady exhales. Nauls opens his eyes.

MacReady unties Nauls with one hand, while the torch stays glued to the others.

MacReady heats the wire once again. Both he and Nauls have torches aimed at Sanchez. Sanchez is near tears.

The wire is dipped into the plate... Hisssss.

Sanchez breaks down and sobs.

CHILDS

sits stoicly, while he watches the preparations for his turn.

CHILDS

Let's do it, Bwana.

Nauls and Sanchez take aim five yards away. Fierce, determined. The wire comes off the flame into the plate... the harmless hissing.

The muscles in Childs' face melt into a sigh.

CHILDS

Muthafu...

ALL EYES

snap towards station manager Garry. Childs, suddenly realizing who he is sitting next to, squirms.

CHILDS

Get me... get me the hell away from...
cut me loose, damn it!

Nauls rips away his bindings. The other two stand guard.

Childs scrambles off the couch and onto the floor.

GARRY

stares grimly ahead. Childs soaks his clothing with a can of gasoline. He is then surrounded. The room tenses, adrenalin pumps, breathing halts.

The burner. The torches. The wire. The plate. Garry's face.

Hisssss.

MacReady tries again. Hiss. The men breathe. Their torches are lowered. Nauls throws his on the floor.

Sanchez and Childs flop down in chairs. MacReady wipes his face.

A long silence. Sanchez weeps quietly with relief.

GARRY

I know you gentlemen have been through
a lot. But when you find the time...
I'd rather not spend the rest of the
winter tied to this couch.

A beat. Childs starts to giggle. The strain on MacReady's jaw begins to lessen. Garry sits catatonic. Nauls scowls at Childs' uncontrollable laughter.

The infectious rasping causes MacReady a slight smile as he looks up, taking comfort in the sound of the raging Antarctic wind vibrating the roof. Nauls, untying Garry, grumbles, at Childs.

NAULS

Shut the damn hell up.

Childs wipes his eyes and grins over toward MacReady. His smile fades, MacReady is now stone-faced. Childs' grin goes stale, in sudden realization.

MACREADY

(almost a whisper)
Blair...

EXT. COMPOUND - NIGHT

The wind rumbles. The storm is at its peak. MacReady, Childs

and Nauls, guided by their flares, pull themselves along the steadying rope, headed, for Blair's shack.

BLAIR'S SHACK

The door is wide open. They pause by the entrance, trying to balance against the wind. They enter.

INT. BLAIR'S SHACK

Empty. A few of the floorboards are loosened. They pull them up. They stare down into a large hole beneath the planking. Something is down there. They pull up more boards.

The hole is some fifteen feet deep. Its dimensions are the same as the shack. Its space is almost completely taken up by some strange metallic object.

Crudely fashioned, a patchwork job, but streamlined.

Sheets of corrugated steel are visible; but cut apart and welded into the desired shapes. The object appears to be unfinished.

NAULS

What is it?

MACREADY

Everything that's been missing.

CHILDS

Spaceship of some kind.

MACREADY

Smart S.O.B. He put it together piece by piece.

NAULS

Where was he trying to go?

MACREADY

Anyplace but here.

MacReady pulls out a dozen tightly wrapped sticks of dynamite.

MACREADY

But he ain't going to make it.

Far off, amidst the howling gale -- the screeching. The men jump. MacReady lights the fuse, as they make it to the exit. He tosses it in.

EXT. COMPOUND ALONG THE ROPE

The explosion echoes behind them. The men pull along. Their heads jerk in circles, searching into the blackness.

Some twenty yards to their rear something swooshes down, severing the line. The wind sends the men tumbling along the ice. Childs loosens the line and is blown away, rolling out of sight.

MacReady and Nauls have lost their torches. They pull feverishly along the ground trying to make it to the compound.

The screeching closes in behind them. MacReady loses his grip on the rope and is blown toward the main building.

He crawls along looking for an opening.

Nauls slides near the outside entrance to the dog kennel.

He climbs down through the open stairwell.

INT. PLANT ROOM

MacReady has found the broken window. He rolls through it, landing on the frozen plants below. Something smashes at the glass above his head, trying to get in. He sprints for the door. Fuchs' frozen body is still pinned to it with the ax. MacReady grapples with the stiff torso which blocks the knob.

He finally gets it open and lets himself out, slamming and locking the door from the hall. Fuchs' body swings eerily, back and forth.

INT. HALLWAY

MacReady charges up the stairs from the plant room. He zooms down the twisting corridors, opening and closing doors. He rounds a bend and crashes into Nauls coming the other way.

CUT TO:

INT. REC ROOM – CLOSE ON SANCHEZ

pouring gasoline into empty bottles, preparing Molotov cocktails.

Garry is connecting an electrical device: wires attached to two portable generators. MacReady appears to be injecting something into empty contact capsules. The men work feverishly.

Nauls rushes in with another box of dynamite.

NAULS

What about Childs?

MACREADY

Forget about Childs. He's over.

Nauls begins cutting the wicks off the dynamite.

GARRY

Make 'em short. They'll go off quicker if we need to use them.

The wind belts into the roofing overhead. Garry sets the wiring to the main doorway. MacReady begins blocking off one of the other entrances with a large computer.

SANCHEZ

What if it doesn't come?

MACREADY

It'll come. It needs us. We're the only thing left to imitate...

(to Sanchez)

Give me a hand.

They block off a door with two heavy electrical games.

MACREADY

(to Sanchez)

You and Nauls got to block off the west side bunks, the mess hall and the kitchen.

NAULS

(protest)

You crazy? He might be inside already?

MACREADY

Chance we got to take. We got to
force him to come down the east side
to the door we got rigged.

Nauls starts lacing his skates.

SANCHEZ

He might just wait us out.

MACREADY

I'm going to blow the generator when
you get back. He'll have to come for
us -- or freeze.

MacReady further barricades the door with small couch.

MACREADY

We've got portable heaters -- we'll
last longer.

Sanchez and Nauls start to leave.

MACREADY

...Hold it.

He dispenses the capsules.

MACREADY

Sodium cyanide. We place them between
our cheeks and gums... This Thing
can't imitate anything that's dead.

A grim silence.

MACREADY

If it gets a hold of you -- bite
down... They're supposed to be fast
and painless... Now move.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR

Sanchez and Nauls inch their way through.

INT. REC ROOM

MacReady rips linen, soaks the strips in gas, and stuffs
them in the Molotov bottles. Garry tests the current on the
door. Popping, sparks, smoke.

MACREADY

Looks good.

GARRY

One thousand volts. Should be enough.

INT. KITCHEN

Nauls pushes a stove, reinforcing a locked door. Five yards
away, Sanchez maneuvers the refrigerator in front of another
outlet.

Sanchez hears a quiet purring, bubbling sound. He turns to
Nauls.

SANCHEZ

You hear that?

NAULS

Hear what?

A blaring. They whip their attention to stereo speakers on either side of the kitchen. Rock music screams out. Top volume.

INT. REC ROOM

The same loud music. MacReady and Garry look to the three speakers attached to the walls. MacReady yells his incomprehension to Garry. Garry tries to respond. Their voices drowned out.

INT. HALLWAY

Empty. Another of the stereo speakers that line the walls, thunders.

INT. KITCHEN

Nauls, in sudden realization, screams over the din and points back in the direction they came.

NAULS

It's got into the pub! It's turned on the stereo!

SANCHEZ

What?!

NAULS

It's in between us and them!! How we going to get back?!

SANCHEZ

I can't hear you.

INT. REC ROOM

MacReady, cursing, rips the speakers off the wall.

MACREADY

What are they doing out there?!

The music is now subdued within the room, but continues booming throughout the camp. Nauls' scream can be barely heard.

GARRY

What's he saying?

INT. KITCHEN – NAULS

at the top of his lungs...

NAULS

MacReady! We been cut off!!

A sharp, red, talon-like fingernail, pierces the top of the door above Nauls' head. It saws downward, quickly.

Black goo drips through the slit. The sawing obscured by the music.

Sanchez, eyes bulging, points. Nauls turns. A claw rips through the wood. Nauls dives to the floor.

In the opposite direction, behind Sanchez, another arm splits through the door and the refrigerator, extends itself five feet and yanks Sanchez back as if he were a puppet.

Sanchez struggles, looking imploringly at Nauls. He bites down on his capsule. Nauls takes off like a speed skater.

INT. REC ROOM

The sound of the screeching over the music.

MACREADY

Got to get to the generator.

He opens the door. Looks down the hall. No one. The speakers -- blaring music.

NAULS

full speed down the maze. Left. Right. Totally reckless. He hits a straightaway.

SANCHEZ'S BODY

from out of nowhere, blasts through the hallway wall, directly in Nauls' path. A thick arm pins the body to the other side. Unable to stop, Nauls skids out of control, banging into the sides of the wall, his cyanide capsule flying out of his mouth.

Whatever the rest of it is, it starts to crumble through the wall. Nauls dives over the arm, somersaults to his feet and takes off.

INT. MAIN HALL

MacReady, running, spots Nauls careening out of a turn, heading toward him.

NAULS

Get back!!

MACREADY

The generator!

NAULS

Screw the generator!!

Nauls blazes by him. MacReady hears the snarls and screeches heading his way. He streaks after Nauls.

INT. REC ROOM

They make it in. Lock the door... MacReady tries to catch his breath. Nauls shakes, pants.

NAULS

Got Sanchez... World War Three
wouldn't mess with this fucker...
Can go through walls... And it's
like all over the place...

MACREADY

Calm down and get in your position.

NAULS

Position, my ass...

Garry fiddles with the two generators.

GARRY

I'm going to bump this up, much as I
can.

NAULS

Boulder Dam might do it.

The loud music in the compound is turned off. MacReady shuts off the lights. The men spread out. Silence.

CUT TO:

INT. REC ROOM

The men watch all the doors. Dead silence. Dark. Whispers.

GARRY

How long's it been?

MACREADY

Little over two hours.

NAULS

Maybe it ain't coming.

MACREADY

Then we go after him.

NAULS

Bet the last place you ever go.

The sound of a door opening and closing. Far off.

Another creaking door is opened. A rustling. Still far off. MacReady and Nauls spread further apart.

The soft bubbling, cooling sound. A slight scratch at the door. Garry's hand tightens around the generator switches. The scratching gets more pronounced. MacReady cautions Garry with a whisper.

MACREADY

Wait...

The door begins to pound from the outside. Nauls and MacReady light two cocktails each.

The door booms. The room's foundations shake. The ceiling quivers. The gas bombs are cocked.

From the roof The Thing roars down into their midst.

Stunned, the men stumble back. MacReady throws his gas bomb. Nauls the same.

For a moment it stands silhouetted in flame. Enormous.

Grotesque.

Garry bolts for the main door. The Thing's tongue spirals from his mouth and spears him. The good two-thirds of its body follows its tongue and engulfs Garry by the door.

Another leg slaps Nauls to the ground. MacReady dodges still another appendage, dives on the generators and throws the switch.

The current rips through the door. Garry dies instantly.

One of The Thing's talons, still caught in the door, sends it writhing in pain. It literally rips the door from its lathings and pounds it to the ground, trying to shake it loose. Nauls, hobbles, scrambles, out of the opening.

MacReady dives through the window and out into the storm.

CUT TO:

INT. COMPOUND - HALL

The distant sound of a motor. Nauls, battered and bloodied,

his leg apparently broken, crawls along the ground. Another sound, a bubbling and gurgling is heard well to his rear. But closing.

The terror forces him to drag faster, oblivious to the pain.

He reaches the bathroom stall. Crawls in. Locks it. The gurgling nears. Leaning on the toilet seat, he looks about himself, frantically.

The Presence pauses at the door. A scratching. Nauls paws, rips at a cracked and weathered slab of wood, cutting his fingers as he tries to break it off the siding.

A strong blow begins to breach the stall door. Nauls finally unhinges the piece of wood, brings the jagged end to one side of his throat and rips...

INT. LAB WALL

The motorized rumbling nears. The wall seems to explode. The tractor barrels into the lab. Its enormous shovel scooper tearing half the room to shreds.

MacReady drives. His eyes glint like a wild man's; he looks stark raving mad.

His frostbite, now in an advanced stage, resembles black war paint. He clenches a stick of dynamite between his teeth, like a buccaneer's cutlass. Two large, compressed air tanks have been tied together at the top and are draped around his neck. They are marked -- HYDROGEN.

They are used for the weather balloons.

He pulls the tractor to a stop, yanks the stick from his mouth, grins and bellows.

MACREADY

Okay, creep! Just you and me now! Be on your toes! We're going to do a little remodeling!

MacReady guns it through the next wall and into the infirmary. Medical equipment goes flying. The machine is powerful; the prefabricated walls buckling under its force.

INT. COMPOUND

A trail of viscous yellow ooze leads around a bend.

Boom.

MacReady rams into the mess hall, sweeping away tables, chairs. He sings out loud the lyrics of some Mexican song. All the while he keeps his eyes on everything.

Through the kitchen. The foundation is crumbling. He sings on.

NARROW PASSAGEWAY

Gurgling and hissing. A taloned arm slinks around a corner in retreat.

MACREADY (O.S.)

Chime in if you know that words, old boy.

MACREADY

plows through several more rooms before ending up in the pub

area. He backs it up and retrieves a bottle of liquor from the bar.

MACREADY

You like whiskey? Come on, join me for a drink. Be good for you. Grow fangs on your chest.

He takes a drink and rams through another wall.

INT. REC ROOM

The tractor blazes into the rec room. MacReady parks it directly in front of the hole in the roof, created by The Thing when it surprised them earlier.

MACREADY

Damn it, ran out of gas.

He pulls off the heavy hydrogen tanks and drapes them over the tractor. As he talks his eyes move like a hawk passing from roof, to doorways, to rubble.

Wind and ice bristle through the gaping holes, stinging MacReady with the cold. He winces at his mittenless, blackened fingers.

MACREADY

Sweetheart, it's going to get mighty cold in here soon... You better make your move... I mean, hell, I'm only one person...

He takes a swig from his bottle.

MACREADY

I know you're bugged because we ruined your trip, right? Spiffy little toy you had there.

A slight tremor perks his eyes and ears. He looks up through the hole, then around. He lights a lighter and cups it in his hand near the stick of dynamite in his lap.

MACREADY

But your real hang up is your looks...

A stronger tremor. The adrenalin pumps.

MACREADY

(wants him bad)

Atta boy. I know you're around.

The floor shakes. MacReady stands, his head whirling around the room.

MACREADY

Come on, sucker.

The tractor inches up off the ground. MacReady falls forward and looks straight down through the chassis and into the vile and grinning face below. A claw flashes up, splitting the steering wheel but missing his face.

He depresses the ignition, bolting the tractor ten feet.

He jumps, hanging onto the edge of the hole in the ceiling. The Thing's face and arms burst through the metal plating of the tractor. The reaching claws just miss him as he pulls himself through.

EXT. ROOF

He lights his fuse, drops in the stick, turns and runs.

Half of The Thing's grotesque and angular torso bolts up through the hole, howling in fury. An appendage springs outward and winds around MacReady's jacket, hissing like acid into the fabric.

An immense explosion. The hydrogen tanks send a white fireball fifty feet into the sky. The Thing's body disintegrating almost immediately.

The force of the blast sweeps MacReady off the roof. He and the severed appendage crash to the hard ice in flames. He rolls over and over trying to smother the fire and tear off the insidious limb.

CUT TO:

INT. CAMP

A ruin. One half of it burnt almost to the ground.

MacReady wears a thick blanket which covers him like a shroud, from his shoulders to the floor.

He walks bent over and in much pain, trying to blunt patches of fire with an extinguisher. It is futile. He gives up.

CUT TO:

INT. PUB AREA

Mostly untouched by the fire, but like most of the rest of the camp, exposed to the outside. The storm has settled considerably.

CLOSE ON MACREADY

lighting a cigar. His hands are heavily wrapped. He pours himself a drink.

A puffy white hand, missing two fingers, enters the frame and whirls a startled MacReady around. It is Childs.

White and black blotches cover his frostbitten face.

CHILDS

Did you kill it?

He looks as weak as MacReady. A beat.

MACREADY

I think so.

CHILDS

What do you mean "you think so?"

Both men speak guardedly and stare at each other suspiciously.

MACREADY

Yeah. I got it.
(refers to Childs'
condition)
Pretty mean frostbite.

Childs steps back, keeping his distance. He indicates his puffy white hand.

CHILDS

It'll turn black again soon enough.
Then I guess I'll be losing the whole

thing...
(refers to feet)
...Think my toes are already gone.

MacReady, carrying the bottle and glass, limps over and sits down behind a gaming table. There is a chess set and several decks of cards. The two men continue to eye each other.

CHILDS

So you're the only one who made it.

MacReady begins setting up a non-electronic chessboard.

MACREADY

Not the only one.

CHILDS

The fire's got the temperature way up all over camp... won't last long though.

MACREADY

Neither will we.

CHILDS

Maybe we should try and fix the radio... try and get some help.

MACREADY

Maybe we shouldn't.

CHILDS

Then we'll never make it.

MacReady puffs on his cigar. He reveals a small blowtorch from under the table and places it beside him on top.

MACREADY

Maybe we shouldn't make it.

CHILDS

(beat)

If you're worried about anything, let's take that blood test of yours.

MACREADY

If we've got any surprises for each other -- we shouldn't be in any condition to do anything about it.

(beat)

You play chess?

They regard each other for a moment. Childs painfully sits down across from MacReady.

CHILDS

I guess I'll be learning.

MacReady grins and hands the bottle to Childs. Childs smiles back and takes a healthy swig.

EXT. COMPOUND - NIGHT

The fires smolder on. Bright embers dance in the blackness -- pushed by the souging wind.

FADE OUT:

THE END

Thing, The



Writers : [John W. Campbell Jr.](#) [Bill Lancaster](#)

Genres : [Action](#) [Horror](#) [Sci-Fi](#) [Thriller](#)

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