THE THING

Screenplay by

Bill Lancaster

From the story "Who Goes There"

by Don A. Stuart

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:

A 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 put 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 stakes 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 GARRY

... Craziness... ... Quit the griping

This is goddamn insane... 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 soughing 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:

A 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 muthers 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 MACREADY

No! You can't let I ain't going anywhere

people leave... 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.

CHESS 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

be 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...

Nauls 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.

PALMERS

(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

Gotchya.

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, Mac.

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 steadying 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 mewing 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, shooing 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

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

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

latchings 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. LAD 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 soughing wind.

FADE OUT.

THE END