

Angel's Deep

by  
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2nd Draft

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PROLOGUE:

EXT. A CANYON, NEW MEXICO DESERT - DAY - ESTABLISHING

The ragged red landscape is riven by a deep canyon as the unforgiving sun blazes overhead.

Title Card: New Mexico.

Title Card: Three years ago.

EXT. A CANYON, NEW MEXICO DESERT - DAY - ESTABLISHING

Closer, we see that water winks at the bottom of the canyon. We pick up a tiny group of ants that resolves itself into a small clutch of people as we close in.

EXT. CANYON FLOOR - DAY

On the cool canyon floor, we find that the grubby group of people is in fact a team of scientists. Collected around a fissure in the wall of the canyon, they've left their equipment unattended. A field lab is set up beside a couple of Land Rovers, with a table sitting beneath a flapping tarpaulin stretched between the vehicles. The table is piled high with the equipment used by paleontologists. The wind teases baggies with soil samples; test tubes tinkle in a wrack, endless photographic gear competes for space with paperwork and half a dozen laptop computers. A generator hums and a reflection-seismology machine sits idle. The excited voices of the scientists draw us to the fissure.

At the front of the crowd, Charlotte Miller dons a hard-hat with a headlamp attached. She picks up a digger's pick and a few brushes as the voices become agitated. She's the only woman in the group and she doesn't seem to have noticed. Tough and earthy, she's earned her place on this dig.

FRANK

Charlotte, I'm not sure about this.

CHARLOTTE

We'll be ten minutes. Less. If there's nothing immediately visible, we'll come right back out.

FRANK

Why can't you wait until we -

CHARLOTTE

Frank, you saw the imagery as good as anyone. There's something in there. Something new.

FRANK

What we saw could have been an upside-down T-Rex, we were just looking at it wrong! You don't know what the conditions are like in there. We should wait until -

MICK

Frank, Jesus. Leave her alone.

FRANK

I just don't think -

MICK

Look. Anyone wants to stay out here, fine with me. Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE

(grinning)  
Like hell.

MICK

Good. Anyone else? Tiny?

TINY

I'm coming. I want my naming rights. Tiny-saurus.

He grins wickedly and Charlotte laughs. Mick takes in the anxious faces of his less field-worthy companions and shrugs a farewell. He leads Charlotte and Tiny into the blank void of the cave.

INT. CAVE - DAY

Charlotte's head lamp blazes to life and light bounces off the red walls of the cave. Ahead of her, Tiny brushes his hand along the wall and sand pours off the fresh surface.

TINY

Chossy.

CHARLOTTE

Freshly exposed.

They move forward. The narrow cave seems to be getting tighter. Soon the three scientists have to take off their backpacks to continue - a few feet further and they've had to turn sideways and even their hard hats are scraping the walls.

MICK

Dammit! Looks like this is it.

CHARLOTTE

Betya I can go a bit further.  
What can you see, Mick?

MICK

It rounds a bend. Looks like it keeps going at least another few feet.

CHARLOTTE

Okay, let me past.

She has to climb over the other two, and does so with obvious ease. Once she's in front of Mick, she takes a torch from him and smiles fearlessly.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Cheer up, boss. I'll name the first invertebrate after you.

Mick gives a strained smile and Charlotte turns toward the narrowest section of the cave. Wriggling through, she moves around a bend and out of sight of the other two. The cave begins to open out immediately, and the walls change from the chossy red sandstone to a darker, harder rock. Charlotte soon finds herself standing in a chamber the size of a small room. She plays the flashlight around the cave and gasps as the light reveals something that's out of frame. Mesmerised, Charlotte approaches the object, reaching out as if to touch it, but withdraws her hand at the last moment. We see it: a skull - something unlike any earthly creature - enormous teeth and deep, alarming eye sockets.

TINY (O.S.)

Charlotte! What's happening?

CHARLOTTE

There's a... something in here.

MICK (O.S.)

Well! What?

CHARLOTTE

I don't... I'm not sure. A carnivore... I've never seen anything like it.

MICK (O.S.)

A raptor?

CHARLOTTE

No, it's something totally new.

BEAT.

MICK (O.S.)

Could you say that again?

## CHARLOTTE

I'm looking at a perfectly preserved fossil from an unknown genus, Mick.

Mick lets out a whoop of joy.

Charlotte smiles suddenly as the magnitude of the discovery reaches her. She pulls out her phone and holds it up to take a photo of the ancient creature when a heavy fall of dust lands on her shoulders. A rising roar. She looks up as more dust comes down and a palpable tremor shakes the ground. The quake becomes stronger, Charlotte loses her balance and staggers to her knees, terror overtaking her. As we lose her in the cascade of dust, she covers her head with her arms and cowers.

Fade to black.

## EXT. CANYON FLOOR - DAY

Lying on a stretcher, Charlotte is pulled from the wreckage of the cave. She's been underground, without food or water, for a long time. Her haunted eyes scour the area. Where the entrance to the cave was, there is now a huge pile of rocks. Charlotte stares in horror at a crushed Land Rover and the smashed field lab. People are talking to her, but she ignores them, staring at the carnage. We glimpse a line of body-bags before Charlotte is pushed into a waiting 4 wheel drive ambulance.

As the ambulance pulls away, Charlotte stares outside at the perfect, cloud-studded sky. Tears slide down her cheeks, making rivulets in the dust caking her face.

## ROLL OPENING CREDITS

## BEGIN MONTAGE SEQUENCE:

## INT. AMBULANCE - MOVING - DAY

Charlotte lies on her stretcher, being jolted from side to side as the vehicle bumps along a rough road.

## INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Charlotte stares out the window, looking a bit better. On the nightstand, a photograph of the team sits beside a tacky 'get well' card and a wilted bunch of flowers.

## INT. CHARLOTTE'S HOME - DAY

A key turns and the front door swings inward, revealing Charlotte, overnight bag in hand.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S HOME / KITCHEN - DAY

Charlotte stares bleakly in the fridge. She takes out a glass milk bottle. Its contents are more than curdled - they're solid and green.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S HOME / BEDROOM - DAY

Charlotte pulls a suitcase out from under the bed and begins packing. She comes across a pair of mens socks in her underwear drawer and slumps down on the bed, turning the socks over and over in her hands.

INT. AN AIRPORT / DEPARTURE LOUNGE - DAY

Charlotte runs up to the counter with her boarding pass, gets it stamped and hurries aboard the plane.

EXT. SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA - DAY

A commercial plane swoops into view over the extraordinary skyline of Sydney on a good day. The white fins of the opera house push against a vivid sky, the Harbour twinkles, the Bridge presides benevolently over the scene.

END MONTAGE SEQUENCE.

ACT I.

Title card: Sydney, Australia.

Title card: Present day.

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS / LECTURE HALL - DAY - MUCH LATER

Charlotte stands before a group of about thirty students dotted throughout a huge hall. She closes her laptop and switches off the projector.

CHARLOTTE

The exam's not testing your  
knowledge of Latin, okay folks?  
We're looking for best practice  
in identifying an unknown  
specimen. So I want to see common  
sense, not rote learning. Okay?  
Any questions?

BEAT. Nobody has any. The timid-looking students begin to pack their things and head off for their next class. One young man remains behind - Stephen - a good looking kid dressed in the latest fashion. As Charlotte finishes packing up, he approaches the lectern.

STEPHEN  
Dr. Miller?

CHARLOTTE  
Yes?

STEPHEN  
I have a question for you.

CHARLOTTE  
(gently, kindly)  
Look, it's a first year exam,  
it's really nothing to worry  
about -

STEPHEN  
Actually, I'm not one of your  
students.

CHARLOTTE  
Oh, I'm sorry.

An awkward pause.

STEPHEN  
I represent of a group called  
CASP. Do you know our work?

CHARLOTTE  
Of course. One of my colleagues  
is on secondment to you at the  
moment.

STEPHEN  
Yes, Dr. Griffiths.

BEAT.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)  
He speaks very highly of you, Dr.  
Miller.

CHARLOTTE  
Well we enjoy working together.  
Now, is there anything I can help  
you with? Because I've got a  
lunch meeting...?

STEPHEN  
Actually, yes. I came down here  
to ask you a question about New  
Mexico.

She just stares at him. Tension rises.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)  
I know it's not something you  
discuss with the media -

CHARLOTTE

I don't talk about that dig.  
Period.

STEPHEN

But that wasn't always the case,  
was it? When you first got here,  
you made quite a few statements -

CHARLOTTE

That was a long time ago. I've  
moved on.

STEPHEN

You've moved on from what you  
once claimed was the most  
significant find of the decade?

She doesn't reply. Another professor walks past the  
entrance to the lecture hall and Charlotte flushes with  
discomfort. Stephen follows her gaze.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

What did you see in that cave,  
Dr. Miller?

CHARLOTTE

Look, I don't know what Andy told  
you, but this is a closed  
subject.

STEPHEN

I'm not the media. The university  
can't object to you talking to me  
-

She brushes past him but he grabs her arm.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

We think we've found more.

CHARLOTTE

What?

STEPHEN

Ever heard of NuCorp Mining?

CHARLOTTE

What? Of course.

STEPHEN

Their operation at Angel's Ridge,  
near Bourke.

CHARLOTTE

I know Angel's Ridge. There's a  
coal mine there.



STEPHEN

Angel's Deep, it's called. The miners have found something they want a paleontologist to take a look at.

CHARLOTTE

Well. You've got plenty of those.

STEPHEN

None with your experience.

CHARLOTTE

I don't do field work anymore.

She disengages his hand from her arm and crosses the room.

STEPHEN

Stan Abrahams was really excited about another of the university's paleontologists being seconded to CASP, you know.

Charlotte pauses. Turns, listens.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

He'll be disappointed when I tell him you wouldn't come.

BEAT.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

(lightly; without a trace of menace)

Your residency visa is dependent on your job, isn't it?

Her face betraying sudden anger, Charlotte leaves.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S OFFICE - DAY

Charlotte storms into the room, angry - and something else - afraid? She slumps behind her desk and opens a drawer, pulling out a dog-eared notebook. Opening it, Charlotte turns page after page of sketches of the creature she saw. From its probable skeleton shape to notes on other unidentifiable fossils found around the world, Charlotte has spent hundreds of obsessive hours filling the notebook. A photo falls out of the pages and she picks it up off the floor. It's a shot of Charlotte with Mick and Tiny, genuine smiles, a blue sky. Charlotte and Mick are holding hands. Charlotte looks up and stares around her beige office bleakly. Stephen taps at the open door.

STEPHEN

(slowly, tentative)

It wouldn't be field work. You'd stay in the lab, we'll hook you up with the team that goes into the mine. Cameras, radios. You'll be above ground the whole time.

She looks at him intently.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

The Department of Mining has closed down the operation for forty-eight hours only. If nothing comes out of this, you'll be back here in three days, nothing lost. On the other hand, if they've found something... Something like what you saw in New Mexico... The geography's very similar, isn't it? Here and New Mexico? I think Australia and North America were even joined together once, weren't they..?

He opens his hands in a gesture of possibility.

INT. STEPHEN'S CAR - TRAVELING

Charlotte is pensive in the passenger's seat.

STEPHEN

Your charter leaves in about an hour.

She looks out the window.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

The mine manager... ahh..

He drags a laptop onto his lap and opens an email.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

...Craig Henderson, will meet you and the other scientists at the airfield and organise your accommodation.

CHARLOTTE

You're not coming?

He's evasive, typing and driving and pretending he doesn't notice her concern.

STEPHEN

Not straight away. I'll be there by the end of Friday, so we can debrief before you come back. If you want to come back.

EXT. ANGEL'S DEEP MINE - AERIAL

A light plane approaches the mine site. The sky is a perfect cobalt-blue, contrasting the barren red earth. Occasional scraps of life cling to the rocky landscape, making little oases of green in the stark red dirt.

INT/EXT. ANGEL'S DEEP MINE - AERIAL

As Charlotte's plane swoops over the mine site, she leans close to the window. Three low-set buildings and a deeply-rutted road are the only immediate signs of life. In the distance, a pair of conical cooling towers mark the existence of a power station.

The pilot leans over and keys his headset.

PILOT

I'm putting down on a cattle station about two clicks from the mine.

Charlotte nods and watches the shadow of the plane slide across the landscape below. The day is ebbing. The plane swoops low over the buildings and we see they are emblazoned with the NuCorp insignia. We move toward the power station.

CHARLOTTE

How far are we from the real world?

PILOT

It's about 400ks to the nearest town, Angel's Ridge, but I wouldn't call that the 'real world!'

CHARLOTTE

What's that?

She points out the window to the looming cooling towers. A man-made dam comes into view. Built-up levee banks give it a perfectly rectangular shape. The dam stands between the cooling towers and a pair of tall coal silos.

PILOT

It's the power station the mine supplies with coal. See that turkey's nest?

CHARLOTTE

What?

PILOT

The dam. It's the only water between here and Bourke. Comes from an underground bore, almost two kilometres deep. Awesome.

CHARLOTTE

Yeah.

PILOT

Here we are.

She watches the cattle station come into view. The horizon is looking ominously cloudy. The pilot follows her gaze.

PILOT (CONT'D)

Looks like the Monsoon's coming a long way south this year. Never seen anything like it. Climate change, eh?

She smiles absently as the plane lines up for landing.

EXT. CATTLE STATION - DAY - ESTABLISHING

The plane sinks toward a grass airstrip in the home paddock of a sizeable cattle station. Livestock contemplate the aircraft benignly as it touches down and taxis. A dusty-looking fellow of about 30 waits as the pilot taxis. Charlotte jumps out, hoists a backpack onto her shoulder and marches toward the man. As we close in, we see that **Dr. Sam Pritchard** is a dashing Aussie guy with a great smile - which he now aims at Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE

Dr. Pritchard! What are you doing out here?

SAM

Serving queen and country, Dr. Miller. Taking some time away from your busy schedule educating the country's youth?

CHARLOTTE

We'll see.

She climbs in.

INT. UTE CAB - TRAVELING - DUSK

The ute bounces along a dirt road toward a low ranch-style farmhouse.

SAM  
So how are you, Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE  
Never better.

SAM  
I read your article in *Scientific American*. Very cool.

CHARLOTTE  
Oh yeah? Which one?

He gives a chuckle.

SAM  
Touche. The 'new directions in neolithic paeleontology.'

CHARLOTTE  
Oh, that old thing?

Another smile, she's winning.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)  
You still making school girls swoon with your edge-of-the-seat geology talks?

SAM  
You know, for someone I can only recall meeting once or twice, you seem to be following my career pretty closely.

She turns a bit red.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Actually, I've been off the lecture circuit for six months.

CHARLOTTE  
Doing what?

SAM  
A book.

CHARLOTTE  
Good lord. He reads, he writes... must be moving up in the eligible bachelors list by the hour.

He gives her a good-natured grin as he pulls up at the house.

SAM

You know, I'm surprised to see you here. Didn't think this would be your bag at all.

He gets out and leaves her sitting in the passenger's seat, staring blankly at the farmhouse.

CHARLOTTE

Neither did I.

INT. FARMHOUSE - DUSK

Charlotte dumps her backpack on a couch and takes in the main living room of the house. It's comfortable and run-down, with a huge pine dining table in the middle of the room. As she takes in the room, **Andy Griffiths** enters from the kitchen. He's boyish, vulnerable, keen... wide-eyed enough to make us worry.

ANDY

Dr. Miller?

She turns to greet him.

CHARLOTTE

(cool but not unkind)

Call me Charlotte, Andrew. You graduated.

He stops instantly, catching her tone.

ANDY

It's good to see you, Charlotte.

She goes to answer as **Dawn Perez** enters in Andy's wake. She's a thin, wrung-out woman with a gaunt sort of beauty.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Charlotte Miller, this is Dawn Perez. She's an anthropologist with AusTech, seconded to us for two years.

CHARLOTTE

Nice to meet you.

ANDY

We've been working together to minimize the operation in Kakadu.

CHARLOTTE

Big job. How's it going up there?

DAWN

Good to get away from it.

ANDY

Dawn's not a fan of field work.

DAWN

Give me labs and lecture halls any day. I've been reading about your work in Scientific American. It's an interesting thesis.

CHARLOTTE

Oh, er -

ANDY

And this is Michael Grey. I don't even know where we got you, Michael?

Michael looks up distractedly from reading a sheaf of papers. He's very bookish, seems distant and disconnected.

MICHAEL

Oh, hello.

He goes back to his reading and Andy rolls his eyes.

ANDY

You hungry, Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE

Famished.

INT. THE SAME - LATER

The scientists have gathered around the table. The remains of dinner is scattered before them.

SAM

But the real point of the project is that the formations are much, much older than we first thought.

DAWN

And...

Sam is getting excited.

SAM

Well, it means that the estimations of the land-bridge could be out by as much as ten thousand years. You see what I'm getting at?

ANDY

Just ignore him, he's always like this.

SAM

I'm serious. What we're saying is that there's no way anyone could have walked here during the window when we believe that people first arrived in Australia. You see what I'm getting at?

DAWN

No.

ANDY

Boats. Sailing ships.

SAM

No, don't -

CHARLOTTE

He's saying that the first Australians might have arrived on seafaring vessels.

DAWN

But there's no archaeological evidence of any -

CHARLOTTE

Exactly.

SAM

It's a theory. That's all. But...  
Imagine...

Sam spreads his hands in a gesture of possibility.

MICHAEL

So was geocentrism, Dr. Pritchard.

Beat.

ANDY

Geocent - you mean the theory that the Earth was centre of the Universe?

Michael nods.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Ouch.

Beat. Michael gets up and leaves the table.

SAM

(unfazed, smiling)  
Well, true. It did last for a while, though.



Everyone looks sceptical. Sam grins disarmingly at the group.

EXT. THE FARMHOUSE / VERANDAH - NIGHT

Charlotte stands on the wooden deck, leaning on the ancient railing and pondering the pitch black landscape populated by lowing cattle. In the distance, lightning flashes. Andy comes out with a couple of cups of tea.

ANDY

Hey, there you are.

CHARLOTTE

Hey.

ANDY

Um...

She just lets it hang. More lightning.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Dr - Charlotte. Have I done something to offend -

CHARLOTTE

Stephen Wallace seems to think highly of you. You should be proud of yourself. I hear good things about your work at CASP.

ANDY

Well, thanks.

CHARLOTTE

Your reputation's important, you understand. In our field, politics rules the day.

ANDY

Well, I like Stephen. He's a good sort.

CHARLOTTE

But when you make new connections, it's important not to forget where you came from.

ANDY

I'm not sure -

CHARLOTTE

We're competitive people. There's only so much money in the physical sciences... Most of it gets siphoned into climate change research...

ANDY

I've noticed.

CHARLOTTE

So you don't screw your friends,  
right? Never know who the next  
minister or head of department  
will be.

ANDY

Right.

CHARLOTTE

So we agree on that, then.

ANDY

Charlotte -

CHARLOTTE

It's easy to get carried away,  
try and associate yourself with  
people and events you don't know  
anything about.

ANDY

I just said that I thought the  
University came down too hard on  
you -

CHARLOTTE

And what makes you think that?

ANDY

Well... er - you just sort of  
stopped talking about it - it was  
kind of sudden, and then you're  
refusing to discuss your find -

CHARLOTTE

I remember the first day you  
walked into one of my lectures,  
do you know that?

ANDY

- no -

CHARLOTTE

Well, I do. You had an answer for  
every question. Must have read  
your textbooks from cover to  
cover before term even started.

ANDY

(self conscious)  
I was pretty keen.

CHARLOTTE

Just remember, fieldwork hardly ever has anything to do with what you read in a book.

BEAT.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Don't ever discuss New Mexico with anyone again, is that clear? You were not there. Period.

She leaves him alone with the distant lightning.

EXT. THE FARMOUSE - DAWN

The sun rises, turning everything mauve and eggshell. We pick up a battered old Land Rover carving a dusty path to the house. It pulls up out front and **Craig Henderson** climbs out. He wears a shirt emblazoned with NuCorp. He dons a NuCorp baseball cap and heads for the house.

INT. LAND ROVER - TRAVELING - DAWN

Craig is driving; Michael, Dawn, Sam, Andy and Charlotte are crammed in.

CHARLOTTE

Quite an operation you have here, Craig.

CRAIG

Yes it is. We employ 200 miners and an additional hundred or so at the power station.

CHARLOTTE

I saw that on the way in. Looks impressive.

CRAIG

We power a quarter of the state, in geographic terms. It's one of the oldest power stations in the country that's still operational.

CHARLOTTE

Where does everyone live? I didn't notice many buildings at the mine site?

CRAIG

NuCorp flies miners in on a weekly rotation.  
(MORE)

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Most of them are based at Angel's Ridge, but we're in the process of buying up local land to build a proper settlement here. Used to be, you could pay your blokes well and ask em to deal with living off-site. But nowadays, everyone wants his wife and kids within spitting distance, so shipping them in from a town 400kms away isn't really the way to go anymore.

CHARLOTTE

It's a long commute.

CRAIG

Not that bad, if you only do it once a week. Then, for the rest of the week, you're living right at work - none of this sitting in traffic like you get in the big smoke, eh, Dr. Miller?

He gives her a wink and she can't help but laugh.

CHARLOTTE

Call me Charlotte.

SAM

Craig, can I get a look at the geos surveys before we go underground?

CRAIG

I'm not sure about that, Dr. Pritchard. All our computer systems are shut down for the evacuation.

MICHAEL

What data do you have on the discovery?

CRAIG

Not much, I'm sorry to say, Dr. Grey.

DAWN

Surely your men collected samples?

CRAIG

Look, all your questions will be answered in good time. For the moment, I can't tell you any more than I told CASP.

(MORE)

CRAIG (CONT'D)

All I can say is that you are free to do all the tests and take all the samples you need for the next 36 hours - and after that, unless I get another injunction from the Department of Mining, I'm afraid we'll have to get the operation going again.

EXT. ANGEL'S DEEP - DAY - ESTABLISHING

The Land Rover pulls up on the bare dirt beside the mine office and the team follows Craig into office, a prefabricated demountable building.

SAM

Come on, is this the best you can do?

CRAIG

Most of the operation is underground. We have offices at Angel's Ridge, this place is hardly used at all.

INT. MINE OFFICE - DAY

As the team enters, Bob Mercer is presiding over a collection of radios and hard-hats. He wears the typical attire of a miner - a set of overalls with dayglow striping on the arms and legs.

CRAIG

Folks, this is Bob Mercer, who'll be your guide for the next couple of days.

BOB

Hello.

The team ad-libs greetings. Dawn and Charlotte commandeer a workspace and begin setting up testing gear - microscopes and so on.

CRAIG

Charlotte will be staying in the office with me. You'll be in radio contact with us at all times.

Sam shoulders his backpack and makes for the door.

SAM

Let's get down there.

BOB

Only four of us go in at any time, mine regs. Who else is staying up top?

DAWN

I will.

BOB

Okay folks, hard hats on at all times.

Sam, Andy, Michael and Bob don their hard hats. Bob hands Michael and Sam a hand-held camcorder each.

CHARLOTTE

Get us some good images, okay guys?

SAM

Yes boss.

BOB

Before we go down, a couple of points to remember. The mine is laid out like a grid. Around the perimeter, there are crib rooms spaced every 200 metres along the outer tunnel.

He has gradually gone on autopilot and now we know he's repeating a dialogue that he's spoken many times before.

Each crib room contains food, water, communications apparatus, an independent air supply. Crib rooms are capable of sustaining you for up to four weeks. These are marked by a metal door and a green light. If you become disoriented, head for a green light. If your radio fails, head for a green light. In the event of a fire, flood, rockfall or other hazard, head for a green light.

Beat.

BOB (CONT'D)

So, where do you go if you lose radio contact?

Sam rolls his eyes but plays along. Michael replies studiously:

EVERYONE ELSE  
 (in unison)  
 Head for a green light.

BOB  
 Where do you go if there's a cave-  
 in?

Dawn flushes.

EVERYONE ELSE  
 Head for a green light.

BOB  
 And if you become disoriented?

EVERYONE ELSE  
 Head for a green light.

BOB  
 That'll do.

The team nods, some looking worried, some smiling easily. They head for the elevator top station. It's a cubic cage of bright yellow bars, with an industrial-style elevator box that's all metal grille and no solid doors or walls.

EXT./INT. ELEVATOR TOP STATION - DAY

Beside the elevator is a board with little metal tags dangling from a hundred nails. Each tag corresponds to a name, and it can be hung on a red nail or a green one. All the tags are on green nails. Bob moves his tag from the green nail to the red one, then does the same for 3 tags marked 'visitor.'

He opens the lift door and a bell rings as the team steps onboard. Sam steps onto the platform he can see the shaft below disappearing into darkness. Sam and Michael play with their handheld video cameras.

BOB  
 Better not to look down.

SAM  
 No kidding.

The lift descends into the black shaft. Bob lights his headlamp and the others do likewise. Bob's overalls make a skeletal glow-in-the-dark figure in the light of the head torches.

Michael clears his throat nervously and Sam glances up at him, blinding Michael with his headlamp. Michael overreacts - his fear is close to the surface.

BOB

Better not to look each other in  
the eye, either.

SAM

Thanks for the tip.

The lift clangs to a stop at the bottom station and Bob opens the safety gate. The bell rings out in the dark chambers, echoing away to silence.

INT. MAIN MINE SHAFT - DAY

The three scientists follow Bob off the lift and he sends it back to the surface. He wordlessly sets off through the mine. The room-and-pillar mine is operated all on a single level. Each 'pillar' is the size of a small building, so the layout is similar to a city map. Some of the tunnels are big enough to drive a Mack truck through - some are barely five feet high. The walls are quartz and anthracite - shiny, crystalline rock that bounces light and casts strange shadows. They stop at a solid metal door in the wall of the tunnel. There's a bare green bulb illuminated above. Bob points to it.

BOB

As part of the Department of  
mining occupational health and  
safety regulations, I must now  
inform you that this crib room is  
the closest one to the area where  
we'll be working. Clear?

Everyone nods. Michael's eyes shift from the green light down the seemingly endless tunnel - and as we follow his gaze, we see dozens of green lights, spaced along the tunnel. It must be kilometres long.

Following Bob, Andy plays around with his camera, grinning into the lens. At the end of the first tunnel, Bob turns corner after corner, leading the team further into the mine. They reach a blind tunnel with a perfectly square hole cut in the floor.

BOB (CONT'D)

It's down there. Watch your step  
on the ladder.

Bob, Andy, Sam and Michael descend the ladder into a chamber with rough, oddly-shaped walls that cast weird shadows into the room. The chamber is obviously natural, with coal seams running around the walls and ankle-deep mud pooling on the uneven floor. The scientists explore the room with the beams of their flashlights.



Bob slides down the ladder last, splashing confidently into the mud and breaking a light stick that casts a red glow all around the room. The sound of water trickling.

MICHAEL

Jesus! Try and be a bit more careful, will you?

He looks down at his trousers and his headlamp illuminates a huge blotch of mud.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You might have just destroyed a delicate artefact, the way you crash-landed.

BOB

Well that's what'll happen when you wear your delicate artifacts down a mine, Dr. Grey.

Andy and Bob share a grin.

BOB (CONT'D)

In any case, I'll wait outside, shall I?

There's a twinkle in his eye as he climbs back out of the chamber.

INT. MINE OFFICE - DAY

Charlotte and Dawn have set up a nice looking field-lab and Charlotte's widescreen laptop is just loading up a split-screen relay of the feeds from Andy and Sam's cameras. The two scientists sit down and watch. Craig leans on a table behind them. Charlotte keys her radio.

CHARLOTTE

Sam, what's the geophys?

Sam turns his camera to his face at the mention of his name and nods on-screen to Charlotte, then begins exploring the chamber walls with a flashlight and the camera.

INT. UNDERGROUND CHAMBER: SPLIT SCREEN AS RECORDED BY SAM AND ANDY'S CAMERAS

SAM

It's metamorphic, same as the rest of the mine. No signs of anthracite here, looks mostly like quartz. The coal bed is all above us... Formation is clearly natural.

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

I'll bring some samples, but I'm guessing early Carboniferous, late Devonian period, judging by the quality of the rock... This chamber's been here a long time. Gas pocket maybe? Something highly inert or we'd have evidence of burning.

He looks down the barrel of his camera.

SAM (CONT'D)

Definitely a natural formation.

He leans over the dark thing in the centre of the chamber.

SAM (CONT'D)

Will you look at this little bastard.

The scientists crowd around a dark mass in the centre of the room.

EXT. MINE OFFICE - DAY

Outside, the wind has picked up dramatically and dark, heavy clouds and knitting together overhead. A peal of thunder rolls across the desert.

INT. UNDERGROUND CHAMBER: SPLIT SCREEN AS RECORDED BY SAM AND ANDY'S CAMERAS - DAY

The two cameramen circle the creature, opposite each-other, so that in the split-screen frame we can see both Andy and Sam.

The creature lies on its side, two-thirds buried in mud. Its skin is coated in mud, so colour is impossible to determine and the outline is fairly vague. It is reminiscent of an insect and a reptile at once; something resembling a grasshopper's leg is protruding from the mud.

INT. MINE OFFICE - DAY

Charlotte, Dawn and Craig all lean into her laptop.

DAWN

Is that - ?

CHARLOTTE

Yes.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)  
Michael, what're your initial  
impressions?

INT. UNDERGROUND CHAMBER - DAY

Michael crouches gingerly in the mud.

MICHAEL  
Er, I'm not really - there's a  
lot of mud. It's - well it could  
be insectoid... But it's really -  
I mean - it's at least 10 feet  
long... I can't tell how tall it  
stood, since it's half buried.

He produces a field spade, with which he starts to move the  
mud away. It's very wet: mud slides into an area as quickly  
as he can clear it.

INT. MINE OFFICE - DAY

A huge flash of lightning startles Craig, Dawn and  
Charlotte. The laptop screen flickers for a moment. The  
radios hiss wildly.

EXT. MINE OFFICE - DAY

Another flash of lightning and the storm breaks. Cascades  
of rain pummel the buildings, pooling on the dead, cracked  
earth.

INT. UNDERGROUND CHAMBER - DAY

Michael, exasperated, drops his spade.

MICHAEL  
(agitated)  
God, can't we do something about  
all this mud? It looks like it's  
rising.

SAM  
Easy mate, we're a long way off  
drowning.

BOB (O.S.)  
(calling out)  
It has come up a bit. I'll bring  
a pump down when we come back  
after lunch.

Michael snorts his disapproval.

SAM

Andy, grab me some samples of the different striations in the wall, okay?

ANDY

Already did it.

Andy passes a sample kit to Sam, who shoves it in his backpack.

SAM

Jeez, you are a keen bean.

Crouching in front of the fossil, Michael reaches out and wipes mud off the skin. It's translucent. He turns to Sam.

MICHAEL

You getting this?

INT. MINE OFFICE - DAY

Charlotte, Dawn and Craig lean into the laptop screen to see Sam's view of the strange translucent skin. We can see almost through the creature - there's a suggestion of small sharp teeth and something that looks like a crab's claw.

Michael's hands reach into frame and he uses a scalpel to scrape a sample of the fossil's skin into a glass phial. He holds it out to Sam.

MICHAEL

Can you hold on to this for a moment, please?

Sam's hand enters frame and he takes the phial. Michael turns his back on the camera and returns his attention to the creature.

Suddenly, the camera seems to rush at the creature, bashes into it and goes black. On the other half of the screen, the camera wheels wildly around and we see rapid movement. The radio is alive with screams and yells of fright - and a long yell that turns from fear to agony. The camera wheels around again, catches more glimpses of movement and is dropped to the mud before the image blacks out.

CHARLOTTE

(on her radio)

Sam? Andy? What's going on?

The radio is dead. Charlotte and Dawn share a look. Dawn swivels to look outside and we follow her gaze. Rain pounds.

CRAIG

What happened?

CHARLOTTE

I don't know. Does the weather interfere with communications?

CRAIG

Yeah, but that was very sudden.

CHARLOTTE

I know.

DAWN

Something terrible is going on!

CHARLOTTE

We don't know that for sure - maybe Sam just tripped over and took Andy with him.

DAWN

What about the other guy?

CRAIG

You mean Bob?

DAWN

He's not even in the same room with them.

CRAIG

(on his radio)

Bob, are you reading me?

The radio hisses. No response.

DAWN

Oh my God!

CHARLOTTE

Calm down, it's probably just a technical hitch.

DAWN

A technical hitch made them scream like that?

CHARLOTTE

Well, someone is obviously injured. Craig, I'd like to go down there.

CRAIG

Out of the question.

Charlotte glares at him for a moment, then nods. She picks up a backpack and a torch, grabs a hard hat and a radio from the shelf by the door as she leaves the room. Craig races after her.

EXT. MINE OFFICE - DAY - HEAVY RAIN

Charlotte strides from the mine office to the elevator top station, Craig bursting out the door behind her and following. He feebly tries to shield his face from the stinging raindrops.

CRAIG

I'm telling you, you can't go down there!

CHARLOTTE

I heard you the first time.

She reaches the elevator and pulls the lever as we saw Bob do earlier. The bell rings and the elevator begins its ascent.

CRAIG

Jesus, I'm in charge of this little party and I'm telling you, missy, that you're not going anywhere.

CHARLOTTE

Listen to me. Obviously there's been an accident - a cave in, maybe -

CRAIG

We would have heard it on the radio.

CHARLOTTE

- or something. You heard what I heard. Someone's hurt. We need to provide first aid assistance. So, I'm going down there with, or without you.

CRAIG

You have no idea which way to go once you get there. It's not a straight corridor, you know. There are over 20 kilometres of tunnels down there.

CHARLOTTE

Then you'll have to show me.

CRAIG

(revealing his fear)  
I'm not going anywhere.

Beat.

CHARLOTTE

(suddenly calm)

What did it cost NuCorp to shut this place down for two days? I bet you're still paying all the workers, aren't you?

Craig glares at her, not sure which way she's going.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Well, what if I report to the Department of Mining that this is an unsafe site? That three of my scientists had an accident down the mine and you wouldn't even go down and see what happened to them?

CRAIG

We have procedures -

CHARLOTTE

What? Wait?

CRAIG

No, we call emergency services. Come back inside and we'll do it right now.

She opens her mouth to answer but the elevator arrives and Sam plunges out of it, staggering in the light. There's a gash on his arm that's bleeding quite badly and a big bump on his forehead. He's badly disoriented.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Jesus!

Charlotte grabs him and helps him to the ground.

CHARLOTTE

Sam, what happened? Where are the others?

SAM

I don't know - there was...  
Something was in there with us.  
Something - I don't know -

He shakes his head, then looks up at Craig.

SAM (CONT'D)

What the fuck is down that mine?

CRAIG

I - what? I don't know - you probably just got disoriented...

SAM

Like hell. There was someone - or something in that chamber with us. When I came out, I couldn't find your guy, Bob - he just disappeared, right?

CHARLOTTE

We heard screams -

SAM

Yeah, I don't know what happened to Andy. Michael was -

His voice catches in his throat and he takes a moment to recover.

SAM (CONT'D)

I need some water.

Charlotte nods and helps him up. They enter the mine office, Craig following. The door slams in the wind behind them.

INT. MINE OFFICE - DAY

Dawn stands around Sam, looking worried, while Charlotte bandages his arm. Craig is across the room, trying to dial out on the landline.

SAM

I musta fallen against something sharp.

Craig can't get a phone line. He picks up his mobile and switches it on. The screen reads: "No Signal."

CHARLOTTE

You'll live. There. Feeling better?

Sam nods.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Listen... Sam. Craig here doesn't feel that it'd be a good idea to go down there.

CRAIG

We should wait for the emergency -

DAWN

He can't get a phone signal! You can't, can you?

Craig opens his mouth to answer -



CHARLOTTE

I need to find the rest of my team. Will you show me the way?

Sam gives her a long look before nodding.

SAM

I think it'd be a good idea to take weapons.

Dawn and Craig both react with horror.

CRAIG

What! This is absurd!

Dawn is getting close to hysteria.

SAM

You weren't down there, mate. I didn't see much - but there was something in that chamber, I'm telling you.

CRAIG

Christ! Okay, what if there was? What do you think it was? A vampire?

SAM

Not unless vampires recently got much bigger.

DAWN

Oh, God, I can't believe this!

CRAIG

Well, what are you taking for weapons then? We don't keep any guns around here, you know.

Charlotte rummages around on a shelf, finds nothing. She looks up forlornly and her gaze passes through the window to a shed standing alongside the elevator.

CHARLOTTE

What's that?

CRAIG

What? Oh - a maintenance shed. So what - you gonna attack each-other with spanners?

CHARLOTTE

Do you have keys?

CRAIG

What are you -

Sam stands up in front of Craig and squares his shoulders.

SAM  
Give them to her. Now.

EXT. MINE OFFICE - DAY - HARD RAIN

The day is darkening prematurely. Charlotte and Sam cross to the shed and she opens it. They go in out of the storm.

INT. MAINTENANCE SHED - DAY

The collection of tools adorning the walls would make any engineer swoon. Aside from a hundred nails hung with spanners, screwdrivers and saws, there are dozens of shelves full of all manner of tools - an axe, a chainsaw, lengths of pipe, hammers, chisels, work harnesses and - we close in - welding gear.

Charlotte goes straight over and grabs a couple of portable acetylene fuel cells and the welder. She saws off the line leading from the fuel cells to the welder and uses gaffa tape to attach it to a metal mop handle, which she holds like a gun. She hunts around a bit more and comes up with a long barbecue lighter that's trigger-operated, like the ones you'd find in a supermarket. Taping that onto the broom handle, she quickly wraps a couple of straps of webbing over the fuel cells and hoists them onto her shoulder. She takes the contraption outside, Sam following, looking a bit puzzled.

EXT. MAINTENANCE SHED - DAY - HARD RAIN

Charlotte stands under the eaves of the shed and lights the barbecue lighter. A little flame pops out and wavers feebly in the wind. Sam comes up behind her, watching curiously. Charlotte opens the valve on top of a fuel tank and there's a hiss as oxyacetylene gas races down the tubing. An enormous flame erupts from the end of the tubing, surging almost 20-feet in front of Charlotte and Sam. After a moment, she closes the valve and the flame dies.

SAM  
Crikey. Where'd you learn how to do that?

CHARLOTTE  
I grew up in Illinois. With brothers.

SAM  
Right.

She goes back inside.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Americans.

He follows.

INT. MINE OFFICE - DAY

Craig and Dawn face Charlotte and Sam.

CRAIG  
Flame-throwers? Are you completely out of your minds? Do you know what we do with coal? We burn it. It's a fuel.

SAM  
You don't say.

CRAIG  
So do you have a death-wish then?

SAM  
Let me see... Nope, no suicidal urges today. Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE  
Not since breakfast.

SAM  
I guess we'll have to steer clear of setting the walls on fire, okay? Anthracite coal has a very high ignition temperature, so we should be fine if we don't aim at the walls.

CHARLOTTE  
Sounds like a plan. Dawn, I want a carbon date on that chamber and as much as you can work out about this fossil.

DAWN  
Oh... okay.

CHARLOTTE  
(softer)  
We're counting on you, okay? You'll be fine up here. We'll get the rest of the team and be back in time for dinner, alright?

Dawn bites her lip and nods. Charlotte turns a stern look on Craig and holds out an axe for him.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)  
We're gonna need all hands,  
Craig. Last chance to help.

He shakes his head and takes the axe.

CRAIG  
This is stupid.

CHARLOTTE  
Think positive.

They leave. Dawn pulls herself together and sets to work.

EXT. ELEVATOR TOP STATION - DAY - HARD RAIN

Craig, Charlotte and Sam run across to the elevator and climb in. The bell rings, announcing their descent.

ACT II.

INT. ELEVATOR BOTTOM STATION - DAY

A bell rings in the darkness and three headlamps descend into view. Charlotte breaks a light stick and tosses it into the tunnel. It casts green light for about 10 feet in each direction. Charlotte and Sam exit the elevator cautiously, Craig hovering back, brandishing his axe.

SAM  
Craig, make yourself useful and  
fire up the big light.

Craig pulls out a huge xenon flashlight and switches it on. Its beam strafes the dark corridor; bouncing light puts everyone on edge. Charlotte jumps at a shadow. She grins foolishly and they move on.

INT. MINE OFFICE - DAY

Dawn takes out the glass phial Sam collected and scrapes a piece of skin onto a slide. She positions it under a microscope and looks through the lens.

INT. MINE / NEAR ELEVATOR - DAY

Craig follows Charlotte and Sam down the corridor. Sam indicates for them to turn left and Charlotte nods.

CRAIG  
Hellllooooo! Bob! Can you hear  
me?!

Charlotte and Sam both jump in horror at Craig's shout. Sam grabs him and clamps his hand over the guy's mouth. Craig drops the flashlight and as it hits the ground, we see a large black mass dart across the beam. Charlotte gasps and grabs the flashlight, which is mercifully still working. She shines it on the spot where she saw movement, but there's nothing there. Sam takes his hand off Craig's mouth.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

(softly, spitting venom)  
What the hell do you think is  
down here?

SAM

Someone - or something not good.  
So try not to give them our exact  
position, okay?

CRAIG

Yeah. I'll leave that to the  
light.

A radio hisses to life. Dawn's voice bursts forth, badly broken up with interference.

DAWN (O.S.)

Dr. Miller? Can you hear me?

Charlotte indicates for them to stop and Sam keeps watch.

CHARLOTTE

Yes Dawn.

DAWN

I've never seen it at all.

CHARLOTTE

Say again, Dawn. Repeat what you  
said.

DAWN

--- some kind of reptilian - -- a  
salamander --

CHARLOTTE

Are you saying that it's some  
kind of salamander?

DAWN

--10,000 years old. Not the  
chamber, the --

Charlotte shakes her head, she must have mis-heard.

CHARLOTTE

Okay, thanks Dawn. Let me know if  
you hear from the others.

DAWN

Wait -- - - alive. I repeat, the cells I've got here are alive. Do you hear me?

Beat.

Charlotte and Sam exchange a look.

CHARLOTTE

Can you say that again please?

DAWN

--- is definitely still alive. Hibernating, some kind of dormant state, but alive.

Charlotte doesn't know what to say. She stares blankly at the radio. Sam keys his radio.

SAM

Thanks Dawn. Keep us posted.

He looks up at Charlotte.

SAM (CONT'D)

So, what's that mean?

CHARLOTTE

It can't be right. Did she just say she thought it was 10,000 years old and still alive?

SAM

That's what she said.

CHARLOTTE

Well, that's wrong.

SAM

Why?

CHARLOTTE

That doesn't happen. It just doesn't.

SAM

Aren't some animals capable of living for -

CHARLOTTE

Not thousands of years. Some species of clam live up to 500 years, but - ten thousand? The equipment must be -

SAM

Nothing wrong with it. It's not a particle accelerator, but I've had good field readings from it before.

Beat.

SAM (CONT'D)

C'mon, let's be heroes first and we'll worry about the science later.

They move on.

INT. MINE / OUTSIDE CRIB ROOM - DAY

Rounding a corner, Sam, Charlotte and Craig find themselves facing a crib room with its green light over the door. Sam opens the door and a gooey residue comes off on his hand. He doesn't notice, Craig moves up behind him and the three stand in the threshold, shining their light into the room.

It's chaos.

Shelves are on their sides, cupboard doors hang off their hinges, a mattress has been torn to shreds. The sticky residue is everywhere. Charlotte enters cautiously and she's immediately hit by an awful stench. She reels, almost passes out, and staggers back into Sam. Craig catches the smell and gags violently.

CHARLOTTE

God, what is that?

SAM

It's hydrogen sulphide. Come back out. There's no-one here.

They back out of the room and close the door.

CHARLOTTE

How'd it get like that?

SAM

Got me. Craig, I think it's about time you told us what's going on here.

CRAIG

I'm not kidding - I have no idea. This is totally new to me, I swear.

Beat. Nobody believes him.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Maybe one of the miners' dogs got loose down here? I've heard about that, they go wild from the darkness.

CHARLOTTE

Right. A dog. Have you ever had gas problems down here? Natural gas pockets, that sort of thing?

CRAIG

I don't handle the geophys - I'm a manager.

SAM

Anthracite coal and H<sub>2</sub>S pockets wouldn't be found in the same location... Be like finding a palm tree growing on top of Everest.

CHARLOTTE

So how'd it get here? Craig?

CRAIG

Jesus, it's just a bad smell - what makes you think it's hydrogen whatever at all? It could be a rotten tin of tomatoes, for all we know.

SAM

D'you know what happens when you breathe H<sub>2</sub>S? It embeds in your mucus glands and turns into sulfuric acid. Which then burns you to death, from the inside out.

CRAIG

Like I said, how do you know it's not just rotten -

CHARLOTTE

(cold rage)

Enough.

The other two are stunned by her tone.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

We are clearly dealing with something bigger than stray dogs and rotten tomatoes, so if you insist on coming up with these ridiculous theories, the least you could do is keep them to yourself.



Craig's initial shock passes; he's about to respond -

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

I don't want to hear another  
fucking word from you unless it's  
helpful. Are we clear.

Craig nods; she releases him. He makes a show of coughing  
and rubbing his throat.

CRAIG

I s'pose they were right when  
they said you were never quite  
right after New Mexico. You never  
shoulda come down here.

CHARLOTTE

You better hope you're wrong  
about that.

She picks up her flamethrower and turns her back on him.

INT. MINE / NEAR THE NATURAL CHAMBER - DAY

Charlotte and Sam approach the ladder leading down into the  
natural chamber. Craig hangs back, using the big light to  
search the area behind them. Charlotte leads the way down  
the ladder.

INT. UNDERGROUND CHAMBER - DAY

Charlotte steps off the ladder into thigh-deep mud and  
water. She plays her headlamp beam around the chamber and  
holds her weapon at the ready. Sam drops into the water  
behind her.

SAM

Whoa, the water's come up a bit.

CHARLOTTE

Yeah. Look.

She points to the middle of the cavern. There's nothing  
there: the fossil is gone. Sam wades over to where it was -

SAM

Maybe it's just submerged -

But he doesn't bump into anything underwater. He stands in  
the middle of the cavern and looks bleakly around. His head-  
torch beam alights on a dark void a couple of feet across  
and about seven feet off the ground. He points. They move  
to the wall underneath the hole.

SAM (CONT'D)

Give me a leg-up.

CHARLOTTE  
Not unless you lose 30 pounds.

He realizes she's right and instead offers to hoist her up. She clambers through the hole.

INT. SECOND UNDERGROUND CHAMBER - DAY

Charlotte comes out of a crawl-space into another chamber that's filling with muddy water. Looking around, she sees more of the slimy residue from the crib-room. There are several indentations in the mud, and moving closer, Charlotte sees the distinct impression of large insectoid legs in the mud. There's nothing else of interest in the room.

Turning back to the gap that leads back to the original cavern, Charlotte's headlamp beam catches a large smear of blood on the rock. She moves closer, reaches out and touches it. Her fingers come away stained red. She sets her jaw and crawls back through.

INT. UNDERGROUND CHAMBER - DAY

Sam helps her down into the water.

SAM  
(murmuring)  
Anything?

CHARLOTTE  
Either we have a second specimen  
or the one that was in this  
cavern started in there.

SAM  
So there could be more than one.

CHARLOTTE  
And I found blood.

They share a look.

EXT. MINE OFFICE - DUSK

The preternaturally dark day is drawing to a close, with the rain still pounding the mine office. A warm glow emanates from the lighted windows; the silhouette of Dawn moving around inside the office.

INT. MINE OFFICE - DUSK

Dawn is looking in a microscope when her laptop lets out a couple of beeps.

She rolls her stiff neck and gets up to see the latest. As she stands, a low roar begins to build all around her. She looks out the window as the sound reaches fever-pitch. The ground begins to vibrate.

Staggering to keep her balance, Dawn watches the dark window. A lightning bolt illuminates the immediate area and she catches a glimpse of a huge mud slide surging downhill toward the mine office. It carries with it a bull carcass, a huge uprooted tree and the massive tire from a mining truck.

Driven by sheer terror, she grabs the Land Rover keys off a hook by the door and races out into the storm.

EXT. MINE OFFICE - NIGHT

Running through the pounding rain, Dawn glances back over her shoulder. The mud slide, moving perpendicular to her direction of travel, completely engulfs the mine office. It picks up the office like a twig, and, driven by the terrific force of the mud, the building is hurled into the elevator top-station, which is torn apart on impact.

Dawn reaches the Land Rover and jumps in. She starts it with shaking hands, throws it into gear and careens off up the slope, perpendicular to the slide.

INT. UNDERGROUND CHAMBER - NIGHT

Charlotte and Sam stagger in the chamber as the roaring sound of the mud slide reports through the corridors to them. The booming sounds of shafts collapsing echo around them. The ground heaves and vibrates. Screaming in terror, Craig throws himself through the hole into the chamber, splashing into the mud at the base of the ladder. Charlotte loses her footing and goes under. A huge crack rips open in the wall.

INT. LAND ROVER - TRAVELING - NIGHT

Spinning the wheel frantically, Dawn veers around a shrub and just manages to keep the vehicle under control. She slows to a more sensible speed and a slightly demented smile crosses her face - she's gonna make it!

She takes a deep breath, glances out the driver's side window.

A raging torrent of mud smashes into the driver's side and flips the truck. Pushed along on its side, the truck slides down the slope toward a huge crack that's opening in the ground before it.

It plunges over the brink and tumbles, down the crack, headlights lighting its wild descent. After a long fall, it hits level ground and explodes wildly.

INT. UNDERGROUND CHAMBER - NIGHT

The sound of the explosion reaches Sam, Craig and Charlotte. They cower as the worst of the quake passes.

Slowly, they begin to assess their position. Craig stands up and shakes his flashlight, which comes back to life. The mine seems to have stabilized. Sam helps Charlotte to her feet.

SAM

You okay?

She nods, then feels something brush past her leg. She reaches down and picks up one of the video cameras the scientists used earlier.

CRAIG

I think we should go back to the surface and wait.

Sam nods slowly, checks for Charlotte's agreement, then makes his way over to the ladder. He's struck by an overwhelming stench as he passes the new crack in the wall.

SAM

Jesus.

He recovers, recognizes it.

SAM (CONT'D)

Quick, everyone out, now!

The smell hits Charlotte as he speaks and she wades over the the ladder, which Sam is already climbing. She pushes Craig up the rungs in front of her.

CHARLOTTE

Go, go, go!

Craig slips on a rung and his foot sails past Charlotte's face, missing it by inches. Sam reaches the top of the ladder, leans down and hauls Craig upwards. Charlotte is right behind.

INT. MINE / NEAR THE NATURAL CHAMBER - NIGHT

The three of them tumble out of the hole in the ground and sprawl out.

CRAIG

Quick, we've got to go -

SAM

Calm down, mate. It's heavier than air, we should be okay here.

CRAIG

What the hell was all that?

SAM

Felt like an earthquake to me.

CRAIG

But we don't get earthquakes in Australia.

Sam gets to his feet. Charlotte is sitting stock still, breathing hard.

SAM

You've never heard of a place called Newcastle?

CRAIG

Let's go back to the elevator.

Sam notices Charlotte and hunkers down beside her. She jumps when he touches her arm.

SAM

You okay?

CHARLOTTE

Been better.

SAM

Let's get outta here for now.

CHARLOTTE

And the others?

SAM

We'll come back when we know it's stable.

She allows herself to be helped to her feet and follows Sam as they set off in the direction of the elevator.

INT. MINE / NEAR ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Rounding a corner, Sam, Charlotte and Craig come to the bottom of the elevator shaft. Craig pulls the lever and the bell rings. He steps into the lift, and a sound of tearing metal comes from above. Sam hears it, grabs Craig and drags him out of the elevator as the machinery from the top station plunges downward. They move out of the way just as the elevator winch and cable crash into the lift car, sending an explosion of dust and debris out into the mine shaft.

Sam gets up, dusting himself off. Craig rises shakily to his feet.

CRAIG  
That... Thank you.

SAM  
Don't mention it.

They stare at the wreckage. Mud begins to pour down the shaft.

CHARLOTTE  
Is there another way out?

CRAIG  
The ore conveyor, I s'pose.

CHARLOTTE  
How do we get there?

Craig points down the shaft, where the green lights disappear into the distance. As they're all looking, something large moves in front of one of the lights, then the next closer light, then the next. It's coming toward them.

SAM  
Is there another way?

CRAIG  
Follow me!

He takes off down the shaft in the other direction and turns off at the first corner. Charlotte and Sam follow Craig's flashlight beam, which is bouncing crazily around the walls as they turn corner after corner. Behind them, a very high-pitched scream, that develops into a frequency beyond the upper limit of hearing.

Sam turns to face it and gives a huge blast with his flamethrower. In the blinding orange light of the flame, a strange shape is glimpsed moving back into the shadows. Its translucent-white outline is the only part that's visible - and then it's gone.

They come around a corner into the same shaft as the elevator - but they've circled around the dark shape to the blind end of the corridor. In the cul-de-sac is the bottom of the ore conveyor. It's on fire, burning wildly out of control. The machinery at the end of the belt is letting out sparks.

Sam turns away from it and looks back down the long corridor. The green lights are all visible - nothing seems to be moving. Behind him, the machine lets out one final blast of sparks, and the lights in the corridor all blink off.

SAM

It musta shorted out the whole system.

CRAIG

Maybe we can put the fire out and move past it?

An unearthly scream pierces the darkness, followed by an enormous roar that grows closer and louder. Sam turns quickly toward the conveyor belt. The fire is not only burning the machinery and the belt, it seems to be licking at the walls of the shaft as well.

SAM

Jeez, look at that. The coal seam's on fire. Now we're really in trouble.

CRAIG

I thought you said that couldn't happen!

SAM

No, I said we wouldn't make it happen.

CRAIG

The whole mine is in danger!

SAM

Screw the mine, d'you hear what I'm hearing?

The roar has reached an impossible pitch, along with the screaming. Sam and Charlotte light their pilot lights and stand ready to fight whatever comes out of the darkness. Craig cowers behind them and Charlotte grabs his light, points it in the direction of the noise and indicates that he should hold it there. When she lets go, the beam wobbles from his shaking hands.

Out of the darkness, a fast-moving figure catches the light. It's Michael, running, screaming toward them, with smears of blood on his face and hands. He's blinded by fear and he's lost his hard-hat and head-torch. Ripped clothing, a missing shoe - he looks brutalized.

Charlotte lowers her weapon, but the roaring sound that's following Michael doesn't abate... There's something else coming.

CHARLOTTE

Michael, Michael, are you okay?

He stops screaming, rushes up to her, panting, and throws his arms around her. He gets tangled in the line of her flamethrower and drags them both to the ground.

The roar increases. A bright white light seems to glow in the shaft, which is filling with smoke. Craig starts coughing, Charlotte tries to get up, but Michael clutches at her, mumbling unintelligibly. He breaks out of his delirium for a moment as another scream echoes out above the growing roar.

MICHAEL

It's the creature! It's coming!  
It'll kill us all!

CHARLOTTE

Michael, let me up.

SAM

(grimly)  
Here it comes...

From around the corner directly ahead of them, an enormous mining truck bursts into view and skids to a halt. The driver's door opens and Bob Mercer grins down at them.

BOB

Fancy a ride?

Sam lets out a laugh and the four of them climb hastily into the cab. As Charlotte closes the door, another scream erupts and Bob throws the truck into gear. He turns the vehicle around and speeds down the main shaft.

INT. MINE TRUCK - TRAVELING - NIGHT

Charlotte climbs into the rear seat of the dual cab truck and joins Michael and Sam. Craig stays up front, switching off his flashlight and staring, wide-eyed, down the tunnel.

CHARLOTTE

Is there a first aid kit in here?

BOB

Under my seat.

She bends down to retrieve it.

SAM

Nice wheels Bob.

BOB

Thanks kid. Have you guys seen  
the other one, what's his name?

Charlotte pops up with the first aid kit and turns to Michael, who is in and out of consciousness.

CHARLOTTE

Andy. No. Is there a radio in  
here?



BOB

Yeah, there's one here on the dashboard. Thought it might get through where the handsets couldn't - but it's all silent up-top.

Charlotte wipes at a bloody gash on Michael's arm with a swab. Craig picks up the radio receiver and keys it.

CRAIG

Hello? Can anyone hear me? Is anyone listening?

Silence.

SAM

So does that mean there's too much interference or that Dawn's not responding?

BOB

Hard to tell.

CHARLOTTE

Look at this.

Sam leans over and she wipes more blood from the wound. It has the jagged shape of tooth-marks in it. There's also a puncture wound that passes right through Michael's upper arm. Michael groans.

SAM

Jesus.

Beat.

SAM (CONT'D)

Bob, what happened when we were... attacked?

BOB

Beats me. I heard your yelling and came over to take a look, but someone came rushing up the ladder and knocked me clean out. When I came around, nobody was there, so I headed for the closest crib room. It was...

SAM

We saw. How the hell do we get outta here?

Bob and Craig exchange glances.

BOB  
It's the only way that's not  
blocked.

SAM  
What is?

Bob hesitates.

CRAIG  
Alright, do it.

SAM  
What's going on?

BOB  
There's an underground rail that  
leads to the power station. It's  
about a mile long.

SAM  
So why the hesitation?

BOB  
There was a cave-in during the  
week.

SAM  
Is that right.

CHARLOTTE  
Sam, calm down.

SAM  
Don't you get it?

CHARLOTTE  
Get what?

SAM  
If there was a cave-in during the  
week, the mine wasn't evacuated  
for us to come down here at all.  
Isn't that right, Craig?

CRAIG  
The cave-in has nothing to do  
with -

SAM  
Bullshit! You allowed CASP to  
send a team in here, knowing that  
it was dangerous. Why?

CRAIG  
I'm not getting into this -

SAM  
Why, you slimy little shit?

CRAIG  
 Shut up -

CHARLOTTE  
 (raising her voice)  
 So they could bill the government  
 for the shut-down. Isn't that  
 right, Craig?

Beat.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)  
 How long ago did your miners find  
 the fossil?

CRAIG  
 Well it's hardly a fossil, since  
 it's alive and attacking us,  
 something you failed to recognize  
 -

CHARLOTTE  
How long?

BOB  
 Months.

Beat.

BOB (CONT'D)  
 Sorry, boss. The boys found the -  
 whatever - months ago. There was  
 talk about getting a team of  
 scientists in here right away,  
 but the penny-pinchers didn't go  
 for it. When the rail shaft  
 collapsed, the geophys guys said  
 it'd be fine to explore the part  
 of the mine where the creature  
 is, as long as we didn't go near  
 the railway.

SAM  
 Like hell they did. How much were  
 they being paid on the side? This  
 whole area is plainly unstable. I  
 should've guessed -

CHARLOTTE  
 You couldn't have guessed until  
 things started falling in.

Bob slows the truck to steer around a section of collapsed  
 wall. They all stare out at the rubble.

CRAIG

Even if what you say is right,  
there's no harm in leaving a  
fossil undisturbed until we could  
get the right people in -

CHARLOTTE

Except if it wasn't a fossil.

Michael groans and Charlotte tries to soothe him.

SAM

How is he?

CHARLOTTE

I don't know. Scared more than  
anything, I think.

BOB

Look, not to dwell on the  
negative, but do we have any idea  
what this mine-wraith is?

CHARLOTTE

Dawn did an analysis of the skin  
sample. She said it's genetically  
similar to a salamander.

(to Sam)

I've been thinking about what she  
said, you know, about it being  
10,000 years old.

BOB

She said that?

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, I thought her transmission  
was garbled... But there's an  
Australian animal, a lungfish,  
related to a salamander. It's a  
kind of fish, but it can live out  
of the water. When a drought  
comes and its waterhole dries up,  
it can lie dormant in the mud for  
as long as forty years - without  
food or water. Then when the rain  
comes, it comes out of its  
hibernation and resumes normal  
life.

BOB

Sometimes this country gives me  
the heebie-jeebies.

SAM

And you think this... Wraith...  
is like a kind of lungfish?

CHARLOTTE

No, obviously it's completely different... it doesn't need to stay in the water or it wouldn't have moved from a chamber that was flooding... But the principle could work.

CRAIG

And... What would this creature want?

CHARLOTTE

After a long dormancy, its primary objective would be to feed.

They don't like that.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

And find a more suitable habitat.

BOB

So... When it can't find any more food, what are you saying, that it will leave the mine?

CHARLOTTE

That's what I'm saying.

CRAIG

I really think you're jumping the gun here -

CHARLOTTE

Your opinion just ceased to be of any interest. To anyone. Clear?

He turns away. Sam leans over to Charlotte and speaks *sotto voce* -

SAM

Thank you.

CHARLOTTE

For shutting him up? It won't last.

SAM

No, for coming down here. For helping.

CHARLOTTE

It's fine.

SAM

I'm serious. After New Mexico -  
well, you got goolies, that's all  
I'll say.

She laughs at his slang, her smile lingering, answered by  
his.

CHARLOTTE

Where are you basing yourself  
while you work on your memoirs?

He laughs.

SAM

Hadn't decided, really. Got any  
recommendations?

CHARLOTTE

I hear that Sydney's nice at this  
time of year.

SAM

Oh yeah?

He looks doubtful.

SAM (CONT'D)

Well, I don't really know anyone  
there, so I'd probably get lost  
all the time... wouldn't know  
where the cool parties were...

CHARLOTTE

(enjoying herself)  
I could show you round.

SAM

Would you do that? For me? Jeez,  
Charlotte, that's sweet.

CHARLOTTE

But you're on your own for the  
cool parties. They stopped  
inviting me ages ago.

They laugh.

INT. MINE / MAIN TUNNEL - NIGHT

The truck rumbles through the endless echoing tunnel.  
Ahead, a dull orange glow becomes brighter.

INT. MINE TRUCK - TRAVELING

BOB

Looks like another fire ahead.

Charlotte, Sam and Craig look up.

BOB (CONT'D)

There should be a couple of big extinguishers back there.

Sam leans over behind his seat and retrieves two large extinguishers, then rummages around for more useful gear. He finds a wrench almost as long as his arm and leans forward, tapping Craig on the shoulder.

SAM

I saw you lost your axe.

He hands the wrench to Craig, who nods his thanks. Sam unearths more useful stuff - a flashlight and half a dozen flares, as well as a handful of glow sticks. As they get closer to the fire, they begin to see the outline of a vehicle... A truck..

CRAIG

That can't be...

SAM

Is that?

BOB

Bloody hell. That's your Land Rover, isn't it, boss?

CRAIG

Yes.

BOB

Well how the hell did it get down here?

Sam opens his door.

CRAIG

Don't get out -

But he's already out, moving closer to the fire. Charlotte joins him and they stare at it together. The truck lies at the bottom of a huge fissure that leads all the way to the surface. Their step on something soft, and Charlotte looks down. The ground around the bottom of the shaft is a spreading pool of mud. Charlotte bends down and picks up a twig with leaves still clinging to it. Rain sifts down through the fissure.

CHARLOTTE

This came from the surface.

SAM

Dawn.

He nods at the driver's seat, and we just make out a burning skull.

CHARLOTTE

Oh my god.

She looks away. Sam takes a step toward the wreckage and looks up.

SAM

There must have been a landslide -  
that quake we felt.

CHARLOTTE

But how'd she get in the car?

SAM

She would have seen it coming.  
Mud moves pretty slow,  
relatively.

He clenches his fist, marches over to the truck and opens Craig's door.

CRAIG

What are you - ?

Sam drags him bodily over to the edge of the fire and points to the Land Rover.

SAM

(rage)

You want to explain to me how you  
have a mine operating under an  
overburden that's so fucking  
unstable that you get mud slides  
in the rain?

Craig realizes what he's looking at, tears his eyes away. As Sam releases him, he staggers. Sam stalks back to the truck, Charlotte with him.

An inhuman scream pierces the air, and Sam and Charlotte spin around to see Craig standing at the very edge of the light, a dark shape rearing up behind him. He's staring into the shadows, paralysed with fear. Silhouetted in the glow from the fire, a cloud of gas seems to be ejected from the creature, engulfing Craig's head. He screams and turns to face Charlotte and Sam - and we see that the acid gas is liquefying his eyes, blistering his skin, turning his lungs to mucus. His scream is choked by bloody froth.

An insectoid limb reaches out of the shadows, encircles his waist and snaps his spine, dragging his limp shape out of the light.



The creature's scream erupts again, the shadowy shape looms. A deafening machine-gun blast rings out in the tunnel and Charlotte and Sam spin to see Bob standing on the running board, his door shielding him, with an AK47 machine-gun his hands. He fires another burst at the creature.

BOB

Get in!

Sam and Charlotte race for the truck and jump in as Bob closes his door and savagely throws the truck into gear. The huge vehicle lurches forward, driving over the spot where the creature was with a satisfying *crunch*. He speeds up. Sam and Charlotte sit, shocked, in the front seat, with the AK47 between them and Bob.

SAM

Is that standard mine-issue?

BOB

What, Priscilla?

He pats the gun in a friendly way.

SAM

Er, yes.

BOB

No mate. The Legion let me keep her. We've seen some fun times, me and Priscilla.

CHARLOTTE

The Legion?

SAM

As in 'French Foreign?'

BOB

You're a bright spark.

SAM

Well how the hell did a former French Foreign Legion officer end up working in an outback mine?

BOB

Weather's nice here. Don't usually get shot at. Seemed like a good retirement plan.

SAM

(laughing)

Fair enough. Bet you're having second thoughts now.

Bob grins at him.

BOB

Not for one minute, my son.

Charlotte and Sam grin a little manically at each other.

INT. MINE / MAIN TUNNEL - NIGHT

The truck has finally reached the end of the main tunnel and the beginning of the underground rail. The tunnel carved out for the train was once almost as large as a subway station, with a set of oversized train tracks disappearing around a gentle curve. But the tunnel has suffered an enormous collapse, and a huge pile of rubble stands between the mine truck and the rail line.

INT. MINE TRUCK - NIGHT

Charlotte, Sam and Bob stare at the carnage.

BOB

Looks like we're on foot.

SAM

Where's the train?

BOB

At the other end.

Michael sits up in the back seat.

MICHAEL

What train?

CHARLOTTE

You're awake, good timing. How do you feel?

MICHAEL

Awful. What train?

He looks down the tunnel.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Oh. Where's it go?

SAM

To the power station. Can you walk?

Michael nods. Sam and Charlotte collect their flamethrowers and Bob reloads his machine-gun with an alarming dexterity. Michael's eyes widen when he sees the gun. They all get out. Michael grabs a fire-extinguisher and brandishes it, but even he knows that he's not very convincing. He hurries to join the others.

INT. MINE / MAIN TUNNEL - NIGHT

The four survivors move cautiously toward the rubble pile, then begin clambering over it. They stand together on the brink of the pile, staring down the rail tunnel. The beam from the truck's headlights is cut off by the rubble-pile, so the tunnel is totally black. Sam turns on the xenon flashlight and spears the darkness with it. They move forward.

INT. UNDERGROUND RAIL TUNNEL - NIGHT

Charlotte and Sam move ahead with Michael between them, Bob sweeps his gun across the tunnel to their rear. They sidestep around caved-in sections of rubble and Michael looks fearfully up at the ceiling.

MICHAEL

What happened here?

BOB

There was a cave-in a week ago.  
We're still not sure why. Watch  
your step.

They continue down the mine. A distant wraith - scream echoes through the mine. As they walk on, Michael's light catches the shadow of a crack that's opened in the wall of the tunnel. The group approaches cautiously and Sam shines his headlamp into the crack, which leads away at a bend. Anthracite coal and iron pyrites glitter and flash in the light. They hesitate.

BOB (CONT'D)

Let's move on, eh?

The group turns away from the crack to continue on their way, when a scream echoes out of the fissure. It's human. Charlotte reacts instantly.

CHARLOTTE

Andy! That's Andy! Can you hear  
me Andrew?

She moves closer to the gap and looks at the others imploringly.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

We can't leave without at least  
looking for him.

SAM

You're right. Bob, think you and  
Michael can stick around for a  
minute?

BOB  
Don't be long.

Sam and Charlotte approach the fissure and disappear inside.

INT. CAVERN - NIGHT

Coming around the bend, Charlotte and Sam find themselves in a massive chamber with walls of anthracite and iron pyrites. The black-and-gold cavern is impossibly beautiful, strafed with stalactites, glittering in their torch beams.

SAM  
Smell that?

CHARLOTTE  
H2S.

SAM  
If you start to feel strangled,  
that's sulfuric acid building up  
in your lungs, so get out, fast.  
Okay?

CHARLOTTE  
Alright.

She moves her hand to light the pilot light of her flamethrower.

SAM  
One more thing.

He places his hand on hers.

SAM (CONT'D)  
H2S is highly flammable.

CHARLOTTE  
Oh.

He shoulders his flamethrower and pulls out a wrench, which he brandishes as they move forward.

They move into the centre of the cavern, exploring the geography of the room. The fissure they've come through is one of many caves leading off in several directions. In the centre of the room, the stalactites hanging from the ceiling are so long that they meet the stalagmites growing up from the ground. In this forest of rock, reflection and shadow play games.

Charlotte and Sam slowly become aware of sound and movement coming from one of the adjoining caves, and press themselves against a rock pillar to keep out of sight.

Charlotte flinches away from it and her hair pulls away with a sticky mucus. Looking closer, we suddenly realize that the cavern is not only shiny because of the minerals that make it up - every surface is coated in this slimy residue. From her new position of vantage, Charlotte shines a beam into a corner of the cavern, taps Sam on the shoulder and points.

The corner is filled with human remains. The dismembered limbs and bones from at least a dozen bodies are piled on top of each-other. Some are so thoroughly decomposed that the only thing left is bones bearing tooth-marks.

There's a snarl and an animal scream from the cavern where the creature is concealed.

ANDY (O.S.)  
(screaming)  
Oh God! Oh noooo!

Charlotte steps impulsively out from her cover.

CHARLOTTE  
Andy! Where are you?

ANDY (O.S.)  
Dr. Miller! Help me, please!

The sound of his voice is clearly coming from the same cave where the creature is snarling. Charlotte takes a step toward it, and in the shadows the beast comes to its full height and lets out another of its high-frequency screams.

Sam and Charlotte approach slowly.

A sudden burst of machine-gun fire sounds from outside the cavern, accompanied by shouts from Michael and Bob.

BOB (O.S.)  
Time's up in there, kids!

Michael wails in terror, then a sickening crack and the sound is abruptly cut off. More gunfire.

Charlotte looks desperately in the direction of Andy's shouts, takes a step toward it, but she's hit by a blast of foul air. Coughing, she reels backwards, and the H2S fumes hit Sam, who grabs her and starts heading for the exit.

SAM  
We can't stay here -

ANDY (O.S.)  
Dr. Miiiiiiiiiiiierrrr!

Charlotte tries to pull away but Sam lifts her off her feet and hauls her out of the cavern.

## INT. UNDERGROUND RAIL TUNNEL - NIGHT

Charlotte and Sam burst out of the fissure into the rail tunnel, which is totally dark. There are sounds of animal snarls, and the room is suddenly lit by the muzzle-flashes of Bob's AK47. In the staccato light, we see a creature towering over Bob, who stands his ground. The creature seems to have many limbs, flailing around in the dark as it's repeatedly hit by machine-gun rounds.

Sam pulls out a flare and strikes it - and the scene is revealed. Four of the creatures are advancing on the humans, and Michael's dismembered body is being torn apart by a fifth. They're huge and translucent, with domed heads and dripping jaws. Strange sacs pulse and bulge just below each creature's head, slowly inflating.

Sam lights his pilot light and aims his flamethrower squarely at them. Charlotte steps up beside him, and together they let loose.

The jets of flame don't stretch far enough to incinerate the creatures, but they do cause them to retreat from the heat and light.

Bob stops firing and picks up the bloodied flashlight that Michael carried, pointing it down the tunnel in the direction of the power station.

BOB

Come on!

He begins down the tunnel and Sam and Charlotte follow. The screaming, snarling creatures abandon their attack and fall upon Michael's corpse in a feeding frenzy.

## INT. UNDERGROUND RAIL TUNNEL - NIGHT

Charlotte, Bob and Sam sprint along the tunnel, a small circle of light moving through a huge void.

Out of breath and on the point of collapse, they finally reach the platform beneath the power station. Climbing onto the platform, they continue toward a huge roller door that leads into the power station's ore elevator.

## INT. ORE ELEVATOR - NIGHT

They stand on a wide platform designed to move ore cars up into the station proper and the silos beyond. Bob pulls the lever to operate the elevator and nothing happens.

BOB

Power's out here, too.

SAM  
Is there another way to the  
surface?

BOB  
Maintenance shafts.

He leads them out of the elevator and through an open door into a hallway.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The corridor is wide enough for the three of them to walk abreast. They proceed quickly down its length, Bob in front, until they round a corner and he stops abruptly.

The body of a maintenance worker lies sprawled before them, his right leg torn off. A trail of blood leads away down the corridor. There's no sign of the leg. There's a scream from around the next corner and Sam straightens up, arms his flamethrower and waits.

SAM  
(sotto voce)  
Is there another way up?

BOB  
No.

SAM  
Okay.

The creature lumbers around the corner and for the first time we see it fully revealed in the beam of Bob's torch. Its eyeless head is a milky translucent colour, but the rest of the creature is almost transparent. Its innards are visible through its belly, and its shape seems to be an amalgum of amphibian and insect. The high-frequency sound comes again.

CHARLOTTE  
Sonar. It's using echolocation.

SAM  
Guess we'll leave the lights on,  
then.

The creature's air-sac is inflating, bulging hideously. Sam and Bob share a look.

The creature's air-sac is fully inflated and it arches back, revealing a belly-button-like valve in the middle of the bulging appendage. The valve is about an inch long and as thick as a small finger, with a nasty-looking valve at the end of it.

As Bob opens fire, the creature shoots a jet of gas toward its attackers. The cloud of gas is strafed by bullets and ignites instantly. The ball of flame engulfs the creature, which screams in agony. As it burns, a shower of beautiful, bright yellow crystals and water droplets rains on the ground around the dying creature. Steam rises. The rest of the carcass catches fire and it flails wildly in its death-throes before twitching to stillness.

Sam, Bob and Charlotte stare in disbelief.

CHARLOTTE

What just happened?

SAM

Rotten eggs.

BOB

What?

SAM

That air-sac thing it had, that must have been full of H<sub>2</sub>S. That's why we keep smelling it.

CHARLOTTE

A defense mechanism.

SAM

I dunno, I s'pose. See those yellow crystals? That's what happens when you burn H<sub>2</sub>S in an oxygen-poor environment.

CHARLOTTE

What happens when you burn it in an oxygen-rich environment?

SAM

Run the other way. If you like breathing. The by-product is very toxic. It's much more explosive in the presence of fresh air, too.

Bob approaches the dead creature.

BOB

Will you look at that?

They stand over it, enthralled by its terrible form.

SAM

We should move on, all this sulfur isn't good for my complexion.

They step over the creature and continue around the corner.



INT. POWER STATION BASEMENT LEVEL - NIGHT

Opening a door, the three survivors emerge into the bottom level of a power station. The thrumming of machinery echoes through the building - everything is running, but there are no people about.

SAM

Is it normal to keep everything going at night?

BOB

It never shuts down.

SAM

Not even for an evacuation?

BOB

No reason to shut the plant down, we're over a mile from the mine.

SAM

Then where is everyone?

The power station is completely deserted. A high-pitched scream answers Sam's question.

SAM (CONT'D)

(to Charlotte)

How many do you think there are?

The scream is joined by another, and another, until the creatures are singing to each-other like whales.

CHARLOTTE

Lots.

SAM

Which way out?

CHARLOTTE

Wait. These - wraiths. They're not just your average predator, right? They're completely unknown to the local ecosystem.

BOB

So?

CHARLOTTE

So they can't be allowed to escape.

BOB

Well, when we get outta here, we'll have to call Animal Rescue and send em in, okay?

CHARLOTTE

Listen. It could be days before we contact anyone. By then, it'll be too late for containment.

SAM

Didn't you say the bus comes on weekends?

BOB

Yeah, it picks up all the blokes on Friday and comes back Monday to drop them off.

CHARLOTTE

Where is it stored during the week?

BOB

Angel's Ridge.

CHARLOTTE

Is there any other vehicle we could use?

BOB

Not that I know of. Just Craig's Land Rover.

CHARLOTTE

So we're walking out of here, when we get to the surface.

BOB

I s'pose so.

CHARLOTTE

300 miles in the outback, with no supplies? We'd be lucky to make it at all.

SAM

Take at least a week.

CHARLOTTE

Right. So we can't leave these things for a week.

BOB

We can call the -

SAM

The storm took out communications, remember?

Bob looks doubtful.

SAM (CONT'D)

What did you have in mind,  
Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE

We blow up the power station.  
It's the only other way out of  
the mine.

BOB

Whoa, whoa, that's a bit extreme,  
isn't it?

CHARLOTTE

Did you see those creatures? How  
long do you think it'd be before  
they get out and wipe out the  
local fauna?

BOB

So you wanna kill them all?

CHARLOTTE

I want to contain them. When they  
run out of food, they'll go back  
to dormancy, and we can go back  
down there and make a proper  
study of them.

BOB

Now just a second -

CHARLOTTE

Look, Bob, every animal that's  
ever been introduced to Australia  
has caused mass extinctions,  
damaged local systems, even  
caused irrevocable damage to the  
land, right Sam?

SAM

The Victorian deserts are a  
direct result of rabbit  
introduction.

CHARLOTTE

So letting this thing escape is  
not an option. This eco system is  
hundreds of millions of years  
old. It's worth more than three  
lives.

Beat.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

You know what Sam and I found in  
that cave off the rail tunnel?  
Bodies. A dozen at least.  
(MORE)

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

The company must have known something was going on for a long time.

BOB

You're talking about destroying a huge -

CHARLOTTE

None of us will be held accountable for this, Bob. NuCorp is responsible for everything that's happened here.

Bob is slowly coming round.

SAM

I'm sold. How?

CHARLOTTE

Bob, what do they use to blast the coal face?

BOB

Dynamite.

CHARLOTTE

Where's it kept?

BOB

We store small amounts in the mine itself, but most of it is off-site, mining regs.

CHARLOTTE

How far?

BOB

Angel's ridge.

SAM

Bugger.

CHARLOTTE

Then we use the only other explosive thing around here.

SAM

What?

CHARLOTTE

(referring to the creature)

You saw how that one lit up.

Sam smiles at the boldness of the plan.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)  
More explosive in a bigger space,  
right?

SAM  
Right. We'll have to get them all  
in one place.

CHARLOTTE  
Did someone say 'bait?'

He and Bob laugh grimly.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)  
Bob, is there a blueprint of the  
power station somewhere?

BOB  
Yeah, there's full plans on every  
floor, near the fire escapes.  
Come on.

They follow him through the dark humming engine room.

INT. POWER STATION / FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

Bob, Charlotte and Sam stand before a wall-mounted plan of  
the station.

SAM  
So this area here is directly  
below the main incinerator. If we  
set a big enough fire here, it  
should burn through into the main  
engine and bring the whole place  
down.

Bob and Charlotte nod.

BOB  
This room here, is the  
observation station - so we can  
get all these things together and  
barricade ourselves in there.  
Once we're ready to blow them up,  
we can get out here, through this  
fire escape.

SAM  
Okay. Charlotte, if you take the  
East wing, I'll bring em in from  
the South, Bob, you head down  
this corridor and see if you can  
find any up there.

More nods.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Remember, those air-sacs they  
have will kill you instantly if  
you get too close and they  
release their gas.

Beat.

SAM (CONT'D)  
See you back here in ten minutes.

They leave in different directions.

ACT III.

INT. POWER STATION / MACHINERY ROOM - NIGHT

Charlotte reenters the engine room from the door by which they left. She turns to her side and shines a flashlight around the space. Boilers, terminals and various metal-clad machine parts break the room up. The floor is metal grille, the ceiling is crossed by dozens of pipes of all sizes. Charlotte stops to listen, hears a low snarl from the far side of the room and begins toward it.

INT. POWER STATION / SOUTH WING - NIGHT

Sam opens a door and finds himself in a foreman's office, with glass windows looking down across the machinery room. He watches Charlotte's light move across the room, then turns back to the office and heads for a door at the far end.

INT. POWER STATION / CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Bob moves cautiously down a corridor like a guy who knows how to handle himself. A sound behind him; he spins and his flashlight catches the shadow of a rat as it scuttles away. He turns away from it and continues.

INT. POWER STATION / MACHINERY ROOM - NIGHT

Charlotte moves slowly along a wall of the room, searching with her light. She comes to a section of the wall that's collapsed and explores the rubble with her light. Something shiny catches her eye - iron pyrites. She moves closer and aims the beam at the section where the wall has fallen away. There's a gap in the earth on the other side, and a natural cave glinting with anthracite, just like the stalactite cavern she and Sam explored. Leaning close, she hears something faint -

ANDY (O.S.)  
Please, someone help me...  
Please...

Charlotte stares in disbelief.

Suddenly there's a scream in the machinery room, and she swings the light around wildly, to find two of the creatures coming toward her, fast. She turns and runs.

INT. POWER STATION / SOUTH WING - NIGHT

Sam enters a corridor and hears movement up ahead. He stands a few feet back from a corner and waits, bracing himself for the imminent attack.

Around the corner, there's a lot of scuffling, the sound of movement, breathing....

Sam holds his light steady on the corner.

Something is coming around the corner. There's a flare of light, Sam is blinded - when he shades his eyes and looks, it's Bob. Sam lets out a laugh.

SAM  
Jesus mate, you had me going.

Bob smiles apologetically.

SAM (CONT'D)  
What are you doing here, anyway?

Bob's smile turns cold as he levels his gun and pulls the trigger. There's a click; the AK has jammed.

Sam's shock only lasts a moment before Bob launches himself toward him, pulling a knife. Sam leaps out of the way and the knife slices right through his flamethrower gas line. Oxyacetylene hisses out and Sam pulls the cylinder off his back as he dodges Bob's knife blows. He swings wildly at Bob with it, misses, retreats further.

SAM (CONT'D)  
What the hell?

BOB  
I'm afraid I don't care for your plan.

SAM  
Well there are more civilized ways of expressing your disagreement.

BOB  
I didn't think you'd go for that.

Bob lunges again, Sam parries with his fuel tank, but the ex-Foreign Legion fighter is clearly making ground.

SAM

You didn't strike me as the corporate type.

BOB

Everyone's a corporate type, my son, the only thing that differs is the price.

Sam has reached the end of the corridor - the only way out is back through the office. He leaps through the door and slams it behind him.

Looking out through the glass, he sees Charlotte, pursued by two of the creatures, racing across the machinery room. Through the door, we hear Bob clearing the jammed case out of the breach of the AK, followed by a short burst from the gun. The door lock explodes. Sam runs through the other door and doesn't look back.

INT. POWER STATION / MACHINERY ROOM - NIGHT

Charlotte has almost reached the door leading back to their meeting-point when a third creature appears in front of her, and she veers away from it. Glancing over her shoulder, she sees that the creatures pursuing her are filling their air-sacs. The three creatures come together and make a few insectoid clicking noises at each-other before resuming the chase.

Charlotte rounds a corner behind an iron-clad boiler and stops to catch her breath. The creatures advance more slowly now, coming at her from the direction of the exit. They all come around the same side of the boiler, and Charlotte moves to the far corner.

Glancing around, she can see a clear pathway to the exit, but it takes her right past where the creatures are. She waits for them to move a bit further from her escape route.

The sound of glass shattering and machine-gun fire explodes in the darkened space. The *ping* and *tang* of ricocheting bullets sounds around her. She looks up in disbelief and sees muzzle-flashes coming from the office overlooking the room.

Charlotte sees her opportunity and goes for the door. The creatures wheel on her as she passes but she manages to get through the open door.

As she runs, we stay with the view of the office. A light rushes toward the muzzle-flashes - it's Sam, rushing at Bob. Sam swings the torch and it smashes into the side of Bob's head. The gun falls from his hands.



INT. POWER STATION / CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Halting for a moment in the corridor, Charlotte looks back and waits for the creatures to realize where she is. As they begin the chase again, she sprints off down the corridor.

INT. POWER STATION / SOUTH WING - NIGHT

In the office above, Sam and Bob are engaged in a savage fight. Sam has the upper hand in size but Bob is lightning-quick. A couple of staggering blows to the face and Sam is on the ground, where he sees the gun lying on the floor between a desk and the wall. He goes for it but Bob stamps hard on his hand - bones crack - and kicks him in the side. Sam screams in agony and involuntarily curls up to fend off the blows. Bob steps over him and reaches for the gun, and Sam, lying on the floor, picks up a shard of glass from the broken window. He plunges the shard into Bob's calf, bringing him to his knees. Bob yells in agony, Sam strikes again and gets him in the thigh this time. Blood spurts - he's hit a major blood vessel.

Bob is still reaching for the gun and Sam knows he's outclassed as a fighter. He staggers to his feet just as Bob gets a hand around the stock of the Kalashnikov and swings it toward Sam - he's going to fire -

Sam takes a step back and puts the desk between them, then heaves on it and it comes crashing down on Bob's prone body. Bob yells out in pain and Sam makes a break for the door.

INT. POWER STATION / CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Charlotte reaches a cross-roads in the corridors. She's about to turn left when something grabs her attention to her right. She shines a light down the corridor.

A hundred bodies are sprawled around the corridor - it's obviously a nest. She stares in disbelief at the carnage. They're mostly men, all are dressed in the bright colours of power station workers. Legs and arms are missing; the occasional head seems to have no body associated with it. Charlotte gags.

A sound behind her, she looks and sees her pursuers dangerously close. One is preparing to fire its poison gas at her. She turns left, sprints.

INT. POWER STATION / BRIEFING ROOM - NIGHT

Charlotte bursts through a door and enters a large briefing room - whiteboard at one end, a hundred plastic chairs set out in rows.

At the back of the room is a one-way mirror, and she quickly crosses to a door that stands ajar beside it.

INT. POWER STATION / OBSERVATION ROOM - NIGHT

Entering the observation room, Charlotte closes the door quietly. The three creatures come into the briefing room and she watches through the one-way mirror. They explore the space, move to the far side, but don't come near the observation room. Charlotte starts to breathe again. She looks around the room. There's a door marked "Emergency Exit" at the back of the office, various ordinary office furniture. Another door leads out into the same corridor from which she entered the briefing room. Charlotte crack-opens the door and peers out into the corridor. There's no movement.

INT. POWER STATION / CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Sam enters a control room and looks around carefully. The only weapons he still carries are a few flares, and his only remaining light is his head-torch.

He steps in a pool of mucus.

Looking up, suddenly on edge, he hears the strange clicking noise the creatures use to communicate. Sam's about to back out of the room when he hears the noise from behind him as well.

INT. POWER STATION / OBSERVATION ROOM - NIGHT

The door to the corridor opens and Charlotte aims her flamethrower in readiness.

Bob comes slowly through the door. Bloodied and limping, his gun is slung over a shoulder. He smiles disarmingly at Charlotte. She steadies her weapon at him.

CHARLOTTE

You shot at me.

BOB

Sorry about that.

He appears to realize that she's serious and he lets out a low chuckle.

BOB (CONT'D)

Kalashnikovs are rubbish over a distance, I shouldn't have gone for those things. You looked like you were in a tight spot though.

She still has her doubts. He glances out into the briefing room where the three creatures are still nosing around.

BOB (CONT'D)  
I needn't have worried, by the looks of it.

She relaxes a little.

BOB (CONT'D)  
They can't tell we're in here?

CHARLOTTE  
Not so far. You're injured.

He looks down at his blood-soaked trouser-leg. He's wrapped a torn bit of cloth around it.

BOB  
Just a scratch. Can't they hear us?

CHARLOTTE  
They use echolocation... I think we're okay if we're in another room.

BOB  
They don't smell?

CHARLOTTE  
I didn't see any nostrils, did you?

He shakes his head.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)  
Any sign of Sam?

BOB  
No.

CHARLOTTE  
No more of our friends either?

He shakes his head.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)  
It sounded like there were more than three.

BOB  
Looks like your boy's got his work cut out for him.

## INT. POWER STATION / CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Sam is surrounded by the creatures, and their air-sacs are inflating. The one directly in front of him advances, and he swings at it with a wrench. The creature reaches out with one of its rear limbs and we see for the first time that it has a pair of claws, like a crab. It grabs the wrench with its claw and drags it out of Sam's grasp. In its vice-like grip, the wrench slowly bends out of shape. The creature roars in Sam's face and he takes a step back.

With an unnatural speed, two dagger-sharp forelegs shoot forward and spear Sam through the upper arms. The creature bears its weight forward and Sam screams as he's pinned to the ground. A desk falls over beside him and stationery supplies are scattered across the floor. Paperclips, staples, a glue stick and a jar of pens go skittering - as well as a large 'bulldog' clip.

The creature is now on top of Sam, its mucus-dripping jaws right over his face. As the creature prepares to kill him, it lifts its head and arches backwards, revealing the bulbous air-sac with its hideous protruding valve, which it's aiming directly into Sam's face. Despite his pinned arm, Sam manages to pick up the bulldog clip and clamp it down firmly on the creature's valve.

The response is instantaneous.

The creature screams in agony, retracts its forelegs and reels backwards, crashing into another of the creatures. The second animal takes a huge snap at it, and the first fights back, giving Sam the window he needs.

He scuttles out from between them all, another of the creatures swiping at him with its claw and missing by millimetres.

Sam gets to his feet and bolts out of the room, with all the creatures following except the doomed animal with the bulldog clip. In agony and terror, it tears at the bulldog clip with its claw and snags the soft skin of its underbelly. The air-sac ruptures, the creature screams and falls to the floor, where it lies twitching and bleeding.

## INT. POWER STATION / CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Sam sprints through a corridor, six of the creatures in pursuit.

## INT. POWER STATION / OBSERVATION ROOM - NIGHT

Charlotte watches the three creatures through the window into the briefing room. She is becoming completely absorbed, having forgotten her earlier suspicion of Bob. He watches her closely, waiting for a moment of weakness.

BOB

Fascinating, aren't they.

CHARLOTTE

Amazing. Look how socialized they are. When I saw the first skeleton in New Mexico, I couldn't have imagined I'd ever see them alive - be able to observe their behaviour. It's incredible.

She leans closer to the glass and Bob sees his moment. He pulls his knife, prepares to slit her throat -

In the next room, Sam bursts through the door.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM - NIGHT

Sam plunges into the room and sees the three creatures almost too late. He veers, slips in a pool of mucus and we hear a sickening crack as his ankle snaps. Sliding on the slick floor, he goes right past one of the creatures, yelling in pain, and skids into the corner of the room. The creatures bear down on him, he grabs a chair and uses it as a shield.

SAM

Deja vu all over again!

He readies himself to go down fighting, and suddenly the six creatures that pursued him are coming into the room and they're all gathering to greet each-other. Charlotte opens the door to the observation room.

CHARLOTTE

(stage whisper)

Sam!

He sees her scuttles for the door. They close it quietly once he's in the office. The creatures hear the door close and turn toward the sound. They begin advancing on the observation room.

INT. POWER STATION / OBSERVATION ROOM - NIGHT

Sam slumps against the door, relieved - until he sees Bob. He opens his mouth to warn Charlotte and Bob brandishes his knife. She sees it out of the corner of her eye and manages to avoid his first blow. Lighting the pilot light on her flamethrower, she brings it around in one movement as Bob goes for her again, and blasts him in the shoulder at point-blank range.

He screams in blinding agony.

The glass observation window shatters and a translucent pincer shoots through from the briefing room. The creature grabs Bob and drags him out through the window. Charlotte and Sam freeze. The sounds of Bob screaming as he's torn limb-from-limb.

Sam steals a glance over the window sill. Bob is suffering a fitting demise.

Sam and Charlotte wordlessly agree to leave, and crawl, unseen, into the corridor. They close the door behind them.

INT. POWER STATION / CORRIDOR - NIGHT.

Charlotte leans Sam up against a wall and has a look at his injuries. He's bleeding badly and looking faint. His ankle is clearly not operational.

CHARLOTTE

Listen. I need to go back into the mine. Andy's in there -

SAM

Charlotte -

CHARLOTTE

When I was in the machinery room, I found another passage leading toward the mine. I heard him calling out. If he's survived this long, he must have found a way of defending himself. I've got to try.

Sam relents. He nods at the briefing room.

SAM

Those things won't stay in there for long.

CHARLOTTE

You go for the surface. I'll set the fire as I come through with Andy.

Sam looks doubtful.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

They're not going anywhere until they finish their meal.

He nods reluctantly.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Do we have enough of them in there?

SAM

I reckon so.

She gives him a smile.

CHARLOTTE

I still owe you a tour of Sydney,  
right?

SAM

Right.

She checks her gear and he hands her a couple of flares. She nods once more and she moves off down the corridor. Sam opens the door leading back into the observation room. It's deserted. From the briefing room, he can hear the sounds of the creatures eating. He crawls across the floor and opens the door marked "Emergency Exit."

INT. POWER STATION / CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Charlotte sprints down a corridor. A creature looms in front of her and she blasts it. It backs up hastily around a corner. She continues straight on.

INT. POWER STATION / MACHINERY ROOM - NIGHT

Charlotte re-enters the machinery room and goes straight for the collapsed wall. She strikes a flare and tosses it in.

CHARLOTTE

Andy! Can you hear me?!

ANDY (O.S.)

...hello...?

CHARLOTTE

I'm coming, just hang in there!

She plunges into the cave.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Charlotte makes her way down the narrow passage as it curves downhill. Andy is humming tunelessly in the distance, his voice sounds cracked and hysterical as it echoes against the darkly gleaming walls.

INT. CAVERN - NIGHT

Charlotte emerges in the cavern, back-lit by the glowing flare she left in the cave behind her. The cavern is alive with glistening movement.

She moves cautiously into the space, then realizes what she's looking at. Hundreds of smaller creatures are moving all over the cavern. They're identical to the monstrous creatures she's been facing, but each one is only the length of her hand. She shines her headlamp onto one that crawls at her feet, fascinated. The creature lifts its head toward her as she looks down at it and it leaps two metres straight into the air - aiming for her face. Charlotte flinches away from it but the creature latches onto a lock of her hair with its claw, scrabbling at her face. She grabs the lock of hair with one hand, breaks a flare with her other hand and steps alongside a stalagmite. Holding her hair and the creature against the rock, she plunges the burning end of the flare into it and it squeals as it dies.

Charlotte shakes the creature's carcass off the flare and holds it up to get a better view of the room. The miniature creatures have responded as one to the squeal, and they coming fast toward her. Charlotte blasts them with flame.

CHARLOTTE

Andy, where are you?

Andy's singing stops.

ANDY (O.S.)

Is that you, Dr. Miller?

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, where are you, I can't see you.

ANDY (O.S.)

Oh, well, I never thought you'd come back, that's really nice.

CHARLOTTE

Keep talking.

She approaches the entrance to a tunnel and waits. The scrabbling sound of more creatures coming up behind her. One leaps onto her shoulder and she rips it off. Its pincer grabs her finger and she smashes it into a rock. It releases her. Another leaps and she ducks.

ANDY

Hey, Dr. Miller, I'm really sorry about all that stuff with CASP, I was a bit out of line, wasn't I?

She turns away from the tunnel and approaches another. His voice seems to be coming from directly above her. She looks up.

CHARLOTTE

Don't worry about it, Andy.



ANDY

You know these - things - they release some kind of gas? It's pretty awful, I think it's a kind of tranquilizer.

She shines her light around the ceiling and spots a gap in the wall about eight feet off the ground.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Hey, I can see something, there's a light.

CHARLOTTE

That's me, Andy, can you move toward it?

His head appears in the gap and he leans over.

ANDY

Hey, there you are!

He's bloodied and bruised, and his eyes are extremely bloodshot.

CHARLOTTE

Well how'd you get up there?

ANDY

The tranquilizer gas is heavy, I thought it'd be good to get off the ground.

A creature leaps past her.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Wow, looks like you brought friends.

CHARLOTTE

Can you climb down?

He nods and wriggles out of the gap, clumsily fails to grab ahold of anything and tumbles to the ground.

ANDY

Ow!

She picks him up.

CHARLOTTE

Can you walk?

He nods, takes a step, swoons, and she supports him.

ANDY

Sorta. You know something, Dr. Miller?

CHARLOTTE

How many times do I have to tell you, Andy, call me Charlotte.

She blasts a path through the creatures and they begin moving together to the exit.

ANDY

Okay, Charlotte. You have nice eyes. Do you know that? I always thought you looked like a nice person - you know, genuinely nice - when I was at uni. You were my favourite lecturer.

CHARLOTTE

Thanks.

She pushes him ahead of her into the cave, turns and blasts a couple of creatures that are coming after them.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Quickly now, okay, Andy?

ANDY

Oh, hey, I found something in the crib room that I thought you might like.

He reaches around and hands her a stick of dynamite.

ANDY (CONT'D)

There was heaps of it, but I lost a couple of sticks. I guess that's where they store it.

He crawls ahead of her. She grins.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

They make their way slowly back toward the power station. Andy resumes his humming, Charlotte strikes a flare and uses it to bat off the creatures that pursue them.

INT. POWER STATION / MACHINERY ROOM - NIGHT

Andy tumbles out into the room and slumps against the wall. Charlotte follows, helps him to his feet and shines her torch around the room. Movement. A fully-grown creature stands directly in front of them. It roars.

Charlotte blasts it with the flamethrower, and even as the creature screams and recoils, the flame dies. She tries again, but she's out of fuel.

The creature recovers, lunges at them and she swings the fuel tank at it, knocking it to the floor. She takes Andy by the hand and they run for the exit.

INT. POWER STATION / CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Andy and Charlotte reach the door to the observation room and she signals him to be quiet. She opens the door a little and looks in. One of the creatures is scrabbling around inside. Charlotte closes the door quietly. She looks at Andy and then down the hall to the entrance of the briefing room.

CHARLOTTE

Andy, I need you to wait here,  
okay?

He starts to look panicky.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

When I call out, I want you to go  
through this room, up the fire  
escape. Don't wait for me, okay?  
I'll be right behind you.

He opens his mouth to argue, she puts a finger to her lips. He nods feebly. Charlotte moves down the corridor and opens the door into the briefing room. She steps in.

INT. POWER STATION / BRIEFING ROOM - NIGHT

Charlotte stands, unarmed except for the stick of dynamite, at the entrance to the room. The creatures slowly become aware of her presence.

CHARLOTTE

Hey, you!

She points at the creature in the observation room.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

I'm talking to you! Get your ass  
in here, it's lunch time!

The creatures are advancing. The one in the observation room raises its head and lets forth a high-pitched scream, then slowly climbs through the broken window and joins the advance.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Now, Andy!

INT. POWER STATION / OBSERVATION ROOM - NIGHT

Andy throws the door open and heads straight for the exit.

INT. POWER STATION / CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Charlotte lights a flare and throws over the creatures into the observation room. She does the same again and again, until five flares sit in a pile in the middle of the room, burning brightly. The linoleum floor begins to smoke.

The creatures are inflating their air-sacs in preparation to attack. The leading creature lunges at her and she just ducks out of the briefing room as it smashes into the door frame.

She bolts down the corridor toward the observation room and goes in.

INT. POWER STATION / OBSERVATION ROOM - NIGHT

Charlotte enters the room and grabs Bob's gun. She sweeps the flares into a pile and throws a sheaf of paper onto them. It ignites immediately. The first of the creatures comes through the door, its air-sac fully inflated.

It senses the fire and hesitates, but the creatures behind it keep forcing it forward, and it is pushed into the room. Charlotte moves to the exit sign, tosses the stick of dynamite onto the pile, and bolts up the stairs.

The creatures keep pushing through the door, despite screaming protests from those at the front of the bunch. Their air-sacs fully inflated, they scabble around the burning room. The dynamite lies in the middle of the fire for a moment before it reaches ignition point.

It explodes.

EXT. POWER STATION - DAWN

Charlotte plunges out of the power station to find Andy and Sam waiting anxiously.

CHARLOTTE

Run! Run!

She hooks one arm around Sam's shoulder, and with Andy supporting him as well, they move as fast as they can.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Go for the lake!

The three of them begin up the bank of the man-made lake as the first explosion rips through the power station. The ground heaves and bucks under their feet, and the three scientists plunge into the water as the power station is ripped in half by the enormous explosion.

EXT. LAKE - UNDER WATER - DAWN

From the bottom of the lake, the growing light of dawn is augmented by the explosion. Debris rains into the water around Charlotte, Sam and Andy as they swim away from the power station.

EXT. POWER STATION - DAY - LATER

Dawn, Andy and Sam sit on the bank of the lake, watching the power station burn. The clouds are clearing, the bad weather has passed. Around them, the desert is in full bloom, brimming with life after the violence of the storm. Sam takes Charlotte's hand. She smiles up at him.

ROLL END CREDITS.