

"THE ANIMATORS"

by

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Based on the story  
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"THE ANIMATORS"

1 EXT. TANTALUS RIFT VALLEY. DUSK 1

A cratered, potato-shaped moon -- Phobos -- rolls across a darkening purple sky.

Below, a manned, six-wheeled electric buggy PURRS across a dusty plain stretching between vast mountain ridges.

Superimpose: 'TANTALUS FOSSAE - MARS'

The buggy is heading for a dome-shaped habitat huddled at the foot of the escarpment on one side of the valley.

The lights of the base are a welcoming sign of life in the ever-darkening alien landscape.

CUT TO:

2 INT. BUGGY 1. DUSK 2

Inside the pressurised cabin a lone figure, LANE, drives the buggy. She's young and atypically attractive. In a tight-corner, you sense she'd get stuck in and help out.

Ahead, the lights of the base grow brighter as the buggy approaches ...

... then they abruptly wink out.

Lane instinctively slows the buggy. Frowns.

She drives onwards cautiously, the buggy headlights now the only illumination. The base looks completely dead.

LANE  
(into headset)  
Base, this is Lane. Is there a  
power-failure or what?

No reply.

Pensive, she rolls the buggy to a stop beside the dome's airlock. Leaves the headlights on as she heads for the exit, putting on her helmet.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. BASE. NIGHT 3

The rear door of the buggy HISSES open. Lane jumps out.

She approaches the dome warily, the darkness and continued silence beginning to spook her.

LANE  
(into helmet radio)  
Base, reply please, over.

No answer.

She presses the button to open the airlock door.

Nothing happens.

Her breath RASPS inside her helmet, fear creeping into her voice as she POUNDS impotently on the door.

LANE (CONT'D)  
Brunel? Harrington? Anyone.

She heads away from the airlock, making her way around the dome's perimeter.

Stops to peer into the thin black slit of a reinforced window. Seeing nothing, she continues around ...

... then something catches her attention.

A hundred metres away, previously hidden by the dome, sits the squat, insect-like shape of a Manned Landing Vehicle.

Seven suited ASTRONAUTS are running towards it. The first pair reach it and hurriedly climb aboard.

Lane's breath CATCHES in her throat as panic grips her.

LANE (CONT'D)  
What are you doing? Wait!

She begins to run towards the Lander -- but the other astronauts have a massive head start. She's way behind.

LANE (CONT'D)  
Answer me, what's happening?  
What're you running from?

No reply. Five have now clambered aboard. The last two are almost there, glancing behind fearfully as if afraid that something is chasing them.

Now Lane glances behind as she runs. Sees nothing in the darkness -- but her trepidation builds nevertheless.

The last astronaut climbs aboard and SLAMS the hatch shut.

LANE (CONT'D)  
Stop! You've got to wait for --

Flames BLAST from the Lander -- and the ascent-stage SURGES upwards into the night sky.

Lane stops and watches in disbelief, choking back a SOB.

The Lander continues upwards on a searing tongue of FLAME which lights-up the plain around her like a second sun ...

... illuminating something that catches the corner of her eye. She snaps her head around to look.

CLOSE ON HER FACE: sheer terror --

-- as an indefinable black shape, seen only reflected in her visor, SWOOPS in and engulfs her.

CUT TO:

4

INT. BUGGY 1. DAY

4

Lane SNAPS awake -- shaken by the nightmare.

She's seated in the driving seat of the buggy, red daylight streaming in through the windscreen.

The rift valley is spread out before her, the white-domed base visible in the distance. Serene alien stillness.

VINCENT -- unassuming but stoic -- appears from the passenger-cabin behind her. Smiles benignly.

VINCENT

You nodded off. Left you to it.

Lane sits up, groggy, an electronic clip-board on her lap. Focusses on the myriad gauges she's tasked with checking.

LANE

I should patent this maintenance log. Fail-safe insomnia cure.

VINCENT

I'll finish up here if you want to go help Kim. She's grabbing one last batch of core samples.

At the mention of Kim, Lane throws him a knowing look.

LANE

Suddenly, this job doesn't seem so bad. How many more samples does she need, anyway?

VINCENT

She found the cave in the first place, let her knock herself out.

LANE

If only.

(on Vincent's smile)

I didn't mean that. I'll go help her if you really want me to.

VINCENT

No, I'll do it. I'd like a last look around in there, anyway.

LANE

Getting sentimental already?

Vincent returns her smile, picking up his helmet and eyeing her with a hint of concern.

VINCENT

You look pale. You okay?

LANE

Nasty dream.

VINCENT

(wry)

Join the club.

He heads for the airlock at the rear, saying no more.

CUT TO:

5 EXT. SITE 3. DAY

5

Vincent, helmet on, opens the rear door of the six-wheeled, all-terrain buggy and climbs down.

The buggy is parked beside a huge spur of weathered rock, jutting from the escarpment at the side of the valley.

The spur is pitted with cave entrances, and one cave in-particular has been sealed with a bulky airlock.

Vincent crosses to the airlock and presses the button.

CUT TO:

6 INT. SITE 3. DAY

6

A vertically-mounted coring-drill goes into reverse with a SCREECHING WHINE. Draws a half-metre core from the ground.

KIM turns off the power and extracts the sample. She's young, dynamic, utterly focused. No time for smiling.

She's in a huge, pressurised, downward-sloping cave -- geological equipment scattered around.

At one side of the cave sits a portacabin-type mini-lab, housing a dust-free environment for microscopic analysis. Next to it the CO2 scrubbers, oxygen tanks and power-plant.

Vincent, meanwhile, enters through the airlock. Walks down to join Kim at the end of the cave, taking off his helmet.

VINCENT

Buggy's loaded and everything else is stowed away. You done?

KIM

I want one more sample, from that ledge over there.

VINCENT

Brunel wants us back for the briefing.

KIM

So he'll wait five minutes.

Vincent lifts his hands in surrender, heads away to collect up the last few core samples, already sealed in tubes.

As he does so he looks around the cave.

VINCENT

Think the next crew'll appreciate what we've done?

KIM

Appreciate it? They'll think it's Christmas. We bolt it together, they get to play with it.

VINCENT

Guess that's the price we pay for being first.

Kim's only answer is to DRAG the coring drill over to the rock layer she had her eye on, irritable.

CUT TO:

7

INT. BUGGY 1. DAY

7

Lane settles into the driving seat, glancing at her watch, as Kim and Vincent enter with the final samples in hand.

VINCENT

Okay, let's go.

Lane POWERS UP, points the buggy towards the base a third of a mile dead-ahead, and accelerates to top-speed.

Kim joins her -- always wanting to be where the action is -- and Lane notices she's eyeing the speedometer.

LANE

We're running late.

KIM

I'll take the heat, don't worry.

She says it gently, sincerely, surprising Lane. She can occasionally be human, after all. She sits, relaxing.

LANE

Get all the samples you wanted?

KIM

Not even close. Running water cut through that cave, only two million years ago. And there's a subterranean glacier underneath, just waiting to be dug into.

(shaking head)

I'd give my legs to stay on for the next mission.

Outside, a small meteorite STREAKS down and PUNCHES a hole in the ground, a hundred metres to the left. Lane eyes it.

LANE

Me, I'm ready for a blue sky. What about you, Vincent? Set for the trip home?

VINCENT

You bet.

Lane catches the hesitation in his reply -- but before any more can be said a VOICE comes over the radio.

BRUNEL

Buggy one from base, what's your position?

Kim rolls her eyes. Lane reaches for the head-set.

CUT TO:

8 INT. BASE - CONTROL ROOM. DAY

8

A wedge-shaped control room -- a one-sixth section of the circular dome, which is divided up by plastic bulkheads.

Half the room is taken up with sky-link comms, the other half with ground-control. In this latter-section sit SHAW, DALBY and BRUNEL, listening on the radio as Lane responds.

LANE

(over radio)

Base, sorry we're late. There in two minutes.

Brunel is annoyed, but he sucks it in.

BRUNEL

Can I take it we're done-and-dusted at Site Three?

LANE

All ready for the relief crew.

BRUNEL

Received. Straight inside when you get back, please. Lots to do.

Brunel's forty-plus, palpably the mission commander. Tough, fair, competent -- but as we'll see, a soft-touch.

The ground-radar in front of him is PINGING, and he idly peers out of the horizontal slit-window. Sees that the buggy, in the distance, really is coming.

Then he turns to Shaw (cool intelligence, a watcher) and Dalby (female, intuitive, conscientious), sipping coffee.

BRUNEL (CONT'D)

They'll have the buggy to unload. May as well bump the briefing ten minutes.

(pause)

So. Are all the wind-down assignments ready to hand out?

They consult touch-screen clip-boards.

DALBY

No, the weather-sensor at Sipylus mesa needs replacing.

BRUNEL

Vincent's out that way tomorrow, closing down Site Four. He can swing by. Anything else?

SHAW

Only the pre-flight psych and med checks. Me and Dalby can do that tonight, if you like.

BRUNEL

Yes, let's get it done.

(rising)

Okay, back here in ten.

Shaw and Dalby depart while Brunel heads over to sky-link.

Here, HARRINGTON sits at a bank of monitors. His young, easy, surfer-exterior hides a naive, sensitive soul -- and he's the only one left who still jumps at Brunel's bark.

As he talks on the radio he watches a graphic-display of a Mars-bound space trajectory, with a ship shown on-approach.

HARRINGTON

... Received, Aurora. When's your course correction?

AURORA COMMANDER  
 (over radio)  
 Final burn in fifty-six minutes.

HARRINGTON  
 Copy that. Bring her in safely.  
 We need that ship to get home.

AURORA COMMANDER  
 Will do, Tantalus. Fourteen-  
 eleven zulu, Aurora signing out.

Harrington turns to Brunel, who is waiting expectantly.

BRUNEL  
 What's her latest ETA?

HARRINGTON  
 Moved up five hours. Orbit at  
 twelve-ten tomorrow, touchdown at  
 six the next morning.

BRUNEL  
 Just a day and a half left, then.

HARRINGTON  
 Gonna be weird, skip. Handing  
 over the base and heading home.

BRUNEL  
 Tell me. At least, your age,  
 you've a shot at coming back.  
 (wistful)  
 Reset the touchdown clock.

Brunel looks up at the three digital clocks on the wall --  
 one reading Greenwich Mean (zulu) Time, the second reading  
 local Mars Rotational Time.

The third is a countdown-clock marked 'AURORA TOUCHDOWN'.  
 The numbers flicker, then reset to 39 hours 48 minutes.

CUT TO:

9

INT. BASE - CORE & LABORATORY. DAY

9

Dalby and Shaw are in the circular corridor surrounding the  
 core of the base. They chat idly as they approach the lab.

SHAW  
 ... Bit of luck we'll get through  
 this with a clean bill of health.

DALBY  
 An appendectomy would've been  
 nice. Tonsillitis, even.  
 Something to show I was here.

SHAW

We multi-task. You were here.

Dalby smiles, reassured, and pauses by the door of the lab.

DALBY

I'll tell Pugh about the meeting.

Shaw gets the message that she wants to go in alone. He gives her a knowing smile and departs.

She enters. Walks past banks of scientific equipment and joins PUGH, who's lost in the eyepiece of a microscope.

She looks at him as he works -- her eyes betraying the fact she's stuck on him -- but he's oblivious to her presence.

She picks up a hand-held, long-bladed power-saw used for cutting rock cores. It WHINES briefly as she turns it on.

Pugh looks up.

DALBY (CONT'D)

Meeting's delayed ten minutes.

But Pugh is still lost in his thoughts, excited.

Looking at her, he makes a decision. Switches the digital microscope image up onto a monitor screen.

It displays a 20,000 angstrom, oddly segmented worm-shape.

PUGH

You're the medic. What do you make of that?

Dalby takes in the image -- then looks at him sideways.

DALBY

This is a wind-up, yes?

PUGH

No. Swear to God.

DALBY

(stunned)

I know what it looks like, but...

PUGH

Rock sample from Site Nine. One point two million years.

DALBY

It's got to be contamination. Or a processing artifact.

PUGH

It's neither. It's in the rock.

DALBY

Then something non-organic. How big is it?

PUGH

E. coli scale, slightly smaller diameter.

Looking at the ugly fossil shape, Dalby unaccountably gets the shivers. She hides the moment with a forced smile.

DALBY

Lane's the biologist. Ask her.

PUGH

What I need is a proper sample. I pulled this out of a random five-millimetre core.

Pugh jumps up, heading out -- then he pauses.

PUGH (CONT'D)

Hey. I don't want to look an idiot. Our secret?

DALBY

Do you really need to ask?

For the first time, Pugh's eyes display affection. He touches a finger to her lips -- a surreptitious gesture as intimate as a kiss -- then heads out.

CUT TO:

10

INT. BASE - CONTROL ROOM. DAY

10

Brunel is working beside Harrington, uploading mission-data. Pugh appears next to him.

BRUNEL

What's up?

PUGH

I need to go out to Site Nine.

BRUNEL

Forget it, we've got a briefing. Besides, you'll be out there tomorrow anyway.

PUGH

It won't wait.

Pugh's face oozes urgency. Brunel takes him aside.

BRUNEL

Okay, what have you found?

PUGH

Look, I can't say until I can confirm it with another sample. But it's potentially massive.

BRUNEL

How many times have I heard that this trip? Anyway, sun's going down in less than two hours.

PUGH

Exactly! And tomorrow's written-off with shutting up shop.

BRUNEL

(finding excuses)

What's your radiation exposure for this week?

PUGH

I'm under the limit. I'm fine.

Brunel is wavering. Pugh closes in for the kill.

PUGH (CONT'D)

Skipper, I'm the archaeologist. And I'm asking you to trust that I'm not just screwing around.

Brunel wrestles with it -- being drilled by Pugh's pleading gaze. Finally, exasperated, he gives way.

BRUNEL

Take Harrington.

Pugh yanks his fist in victory. Heads out, SLAPPING Harrington on the back.

PUGH

Let's go, pal. Buggy two.

Harrington rises, bemused, and Brunel nods confirmation.

BRUNEL

Just make sure you're back by eighteen-hundred for the medical.

CUT TO:

11 INT. BASE - UTILITY ROOM. DAY

11

The inner-airlock door opens with a HISS. Kim, Lane and Vincent step out, taking off their helmets and equipment harnesses and slim-line back-packs.

They cross with Pugh and Harrington, already suited up.

LANE

Where're you two going?

Pugh answers only with a teasing smile and a wink. They enter the airlock and close the door.

KIM

Terrific! So we bust a gut to get back while those two ...

Kim furiously UNZIPS her environment suit and heads into the female locker-room. Lane and Vincent exchange a look.

VINCENT

Gonna be fireworks.

CUT TO:

12 EXT. BASE. DAY

12

Pugh and Harrington step outside from the airlock.

They bypass the buggy that Lane has just parked, and head to an identical vehicle parked adjacently. Climb in.

CUT TO:

13 INT. BUGGY 2. DAY

13

They enter the inner door. Pugh tosses his helmet aside and goes straight to the forward cabin. Begins POWERING UP the buggy. He's a man in a hurry, eager but frustrated.

PUGH

Six months, then this kicks off at the last minute.

HARRINGTON

What kicks off? I still don't know what the gig is.

PUGH

Okay. What've we achieved here, tell me that?

HARRINGTON

Are you serious?

Pugh's glance says he is. Harrington plays along.

HARRINGTON (CONT'D)

Duh! How about proving there was surface water just, like, yesterday? Couple of extinct oceans, a bunch of amino acids, atmospheric methane, not to mention --

PUGH  
 Won't even rate a footnote. Not  
 if this pans out.

He CLICKS the buggy into gear and SURGES forward.

CUT TO:

14 INT. BASE - CORE. DAY

14

Vincent is in the circular corridor, grabbing a coffee from the machine. Lane joins him, pulling on her base casuals.

Through an adjacent door, in the control room, they can see Kim and Brunel exchanging low but heated words.

LANE  
 Who's your money on?

VINCENT  
 Are you kidding? Kim'll win  
 every time.

Lane smiles. Grabs a coffee for herself.

LANE  
 Ask you something?

VINCENT  
 Shoot.

LANE  
 What did you mean earlier? 'Join  
 the club'?

VINCENT  
 Bad dreams. Everyone's had them  
 at different times, so Shaw says.

Lane is surprised. Vincent shrugs, 'No big deal'.

VINCENT (CONT'D)  
 Something to do with being so  
 isolated. We're eighty million  
 miles from home.

(pause)  
 Nobody's ever been this alone  
 before.

LANE  
 (relieved)  
 Don't laugh but I was starting to  
 think they were some kind of ...  
 (wry shrug)  
 It's just, we've gone this whole  
 time without anything bad  
 happening.

VINCENT  
 Dreams, I can cope with.

There's an edge to his voice suggesting there's something he can't cope with -- but at that moment Shaw joins them.

SHAW  
 Someone mention dreams?

LANE  
 If you're looking for a patient,  
 try Kim.

Kim approaches, still fuming from her argument with Brunel.

SHAW  
 (low)  
 I know that look. Pressure  
 cooker.

Kim arrives, trying hard to calm herself, She picks up a cup to get a coffee, forcing small-talk.

KIM  
 So what do you reckon? We get  
 back home, we're all gonna start  
 painting pictures and writing  
 poetry, like the Moon walkers.

VINCENT  
 (shrug)  
 It changed them. They all said  
 it.

SHAW  
 (shaking head)  
 It didn't change them. It  
 revealed who they were.

KIM  
 Woooo. Deep.

But her forced calm won't stick. She suddenly SLAMS down the cup and spins away towards the lab.

Shaw throws Lane and Vincent a look that says, "Told you so," -- then they all follow after her, curious.

CUT TO:

15 INT. BASE - LABORATORY. DAY

15

Kim is at Pugh's work-station, checking his computer.

The others watch, staying out of it -- but Dalby also enters. She sees what Kim is doing, and is outraged.

DALBY  
Hey, what the ...?

KIM  
I want to know what's so fucking urgent.

DALBY  
You can't go through his private log. Vincent, tell her!

VINCENT  
Don't look at me.

Exasperated, Dalby turns and heads out. Vincent SIGHS.

VINCENT (CONT'D)  
Dalby's right, Kim.

KIM  
Why's Pugh's work more important than mine?

VINCENT  
It isn't. You're a deputy mission commander, same as me. We need to be here for briefings.

KIM  
Eat me. We should be --

She stops, stunned, as the microscopic worm-shape image pops up onto the screen.

They all gaze at it in awe -- then Kim snaps out of it.

KIM (CONT'D)  
Okay, before you get too excited, how many times have people claimed to find fossils in Martian meteorites?

LANE  
Yes, but see those cavities in the rock around it? They look like microbial borings.

Lane gets on the computer. Pulls up the sample's mineral analysis.

LANE (CONT'D)  
No offense, but did Pugh understand any of this? Check out the hydrocarbons.

KIM  
Yeah, so? PAH's can be formed non-organically.

LANE

Not in these ratios. And the carbonate crystals have a biological signature. Is the sample still under the scope?

They fiddle with the scope as Dalby returns, Brunel in tow.

BRUNEL

Alright, now what the hell?  
(Kim & Lane ignore him)  
Anybody?

SHAW

Give them a minute, skipper.

Kim adjusts the sample under the scope.

LANE

... no no, back a bit. There.  
Refocus in that crack.

The image shifts depth-of-field. Two more frozen worm-shapes melt into focus, hidden in a narrow crack.

One is half-inside a bore-hole, the other is longer and pinched tightly in the middle, as if about to split in two.

LANE (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ.

BRUNEL

That looks like ...

LANE

Bacteria caught in the middle of dividing.

(pause)

You're looking at proof that life evolved on Mars.

CUT TO:

16 EXT. MARE BOREUM. DAY

16

The buggy crests a small rise -- and stretched out before it is a vast plain, once the bed of a long-extinct ocean.

Far out across the plain, a twister swirls through the middle of a distant Martian dust-storm.

CUT TO:

17 INT. BUGGY 2. DAY

17

Harrington gazes at the spectacular view.

HARRINGTON

Imagine an ocean the size of the Arctic out there.

(pause)

How cool would it be to surf in forty percent gravity?

But Pugh's not even looking. He steers left and follows the ancient, cratered shore-line.

PUGH

Site Nine's just the other side of that ridge.

HARRINGTON

I hope you're not gonna be long. Sunset in an hour, and the temp's already down to minus forty.

PUGH

It takes as long as it takes.

He steers around an outcrop of rock -- and before them is

SITE 9

huddled in a shallow depression: comprising a two-man storm-shelter and clusters of archaeological equipment.

Pugh parks the buggy and powers down. Jumps up and begins grabbing gear from the overhead lockers.

PUGH (CONT'D)

Listen, if you want to speed things along, prep the sample boxes. Date, grid reference, and prefix MA-1 for microscopic anomaly. Bring them out.

HARRINGTON

Hazardous areas, we're supposed to go out together.

PUGH

The only thing hazardous out there is the dehydrated snack I left behind.

Harrington starts to argue -- but Pugh SLOTS on his helmet and steps into the airlock. Begins CYCLING the pressure.

Left alone, Harrington SIGHS. Begins unloading sterile sample boxes from the lockers.

CUT TO:

Brunel heads into the control room, the others in tow.

BRUNEL

We'll upload the scans and data to mission control. See if they confirm Lane's conclusion.

DALBY

Pugh is gonna have a flying fit! Can't you at least wait for him?

LANE

If he'd just asked me, Dalby, I could've saved him the trip.

KIM

(a snort)

Too much like sharing credit.

DALBY

Oh, says the expert on self-sacrifice!

KIM

And you're sticking up for him out of pure altruism?

Dalby flushes, busted. Turns to Brunel.

DALBY

Sir, let him report it, at least.

BRUNEL

Nobody's trying to take his discovery away, Dalby, but if Lane's right, this thing ...

He shakes his head at the enormity of it. Meanwhile, Lane has realised something.

LANE

Woah, Pugh. We need to stop him.

BRUNEL

What? Why?

LANE

Skipper, Site Nine's just become the most important spot in the entire solar system.

VINCENT

She's right. It needs sealing off for a full forensic excavation. We can't risk destroying a single grain of sand.

SHAW

Pugh's an archaeologist. He's  
not going to --

KIM

There's never been a discovery  
like this in the whole of human  
history. Do we want to risk it?

Point taken, Brunel heads for the radio.

CUT TO:

19

INT. BUGGY 2. DAY

19

Visible through the windscreen, about twenty metres away,  
Pugh is busy working at Site Nine.

Meanwhile, inside, Harrington is about to put on his helmet  
and join Pugh when the radio CRACKLES into life.

BRUNEL

Buggy two from base, urgent. Are  
you at Site Nine yet?

Harrington picks up the head-set from the driver's seat.

HARRINGTON

Got here a few minutes ago.  
What's up, skip?

BRUNEL

I'm declaring the site off-limits  
until we confirm protocols with  
mission control. I repeat, do  
not extract samples.

HARRINGTON

(stalling)  
Stand by, base.

Harrington quickly switches to another frequency.

HARRINGTON (CONT'D)

Pugh, we're on a private channel.  
Did you copy base?

CUT TO:

20

EXT. SITE 9. DAY

20

Pugh is crouched beside a low fracture zone, where the rock  
has sheared and tilted upwards, exposing shelved layers.

He's carefully splitting layers with a hammer and a chisel,  
lifting small, flat rock samples.

PUGH  
 (into helmet radio)  
 Negative.

HARRINGTON  
 (over radio)  
 You mean you really didn't hear,  
 or you didn't want to hear?

PUGH  
 Look I'm busy, okay? Tell them  
 the signal's breaking up. Tell  
 them ...  
 (freezing)  
 Christ on a bike!

He's found something.

We don't yet see it -- but it's clearly a stunning find.

PUGH (CONT'D)  
 I don't believe it. Harrington,  
 get out here.

HARRINGTON  
 What is it?

PUGH  
 Just get out here. I've found  
 something.  
 (still stunned)  
 Where's the camera?

He stands, reaching for the tool box -- and there's a  
 sudden SPLINTERING CRACK.

The ground shifts an inch.  
 Pugh freezes.

Looks down at his feet where a jagged fissure has appeared.

Next second, the whole thing GIVES WAY -- and Pugh plunges  
 into blackness.

CUT TO:

21 INT/EXT. BUGGY 2/SITE 9. DAY

21

Harrington is still watching through the windscreen. Where  
 Pugh previously stood, there's now a gaping black hole,  
 dust billowing out.

HARRINGTON  
 (a yell)  
 Pugh!

The reply is nothing more than a CHOKING RASP.

FOLLOWING HARRINGTON

as he jams on his helmet, grabs a rope and emergency oxygen-bottle and bolts for the

AIRLOCK

SLAMS the door and HITS the button. Locks on his helmet as the air HISSES out of the confined space.

HARRINGTON (CONT'D)

Come on. Come on!

Green light.

PUNCHES the 'open' button.

Jumps outside.

Runs over to the

CAVE-IN

The dust is clearing.

Pugh is at the bottom of a three-metre deep pit, CONVULSING violently. Hands pressed to his cracked visor. A DEATH-RATTLE in his throat.

HARRINGTON (CONT'D)

Hold on!

Harrington tosses the oxygen bottle down.

Runs to the buggy and HOOKS the rope onto a utility bar. Feeds it out as he runs back to the pit.

But Pugh is already lying contorted, deathly-still.

CUT TO:

22

EXT. SITE 9. DAY

22

The sun now low in the purple sky, buggy one RACES along the shoreline, churning up dust. SKIDS to a halt behind Harrington's buggy.

Brunel and Dalby jump out -- Dalby hauling a shoulder medical-kit -- and run for the pit.

Pugh is lying exactly as we last saw him. Harrington is slumped against a rock at the edge of the pit, SOBBING.

BRUNEL

Oh my God.

DALBY

(to Harrington)

Have you been down to him? Why aren't you down there!?

HARRINGTON

He's gone.

She explodes into action. Grabs the rope to climb down.

BRUNEL

No, Dalby ...

DALBY

He could still be alive.

BRUNEL

It's been fifteen minutes. His visor's cracked open.

DALBY

The cold could've put him into mini-hibernation, like immersion hypothermia. He could still --

She SLIPS as the edge of the pit CRUMBLES -- nearly falls -- SCRAPING her suit on the razor-sharp rocks.

Brunel grabs her, furious.

BRUNEL

You're gonna rip your suit or break your neck. I'm not risking another life so stand down!

DALBY

(sobbing)

I haven't pronounced it yet.

BRUNEL

I'm pronouncing it. He's dead!

Dalby PUNCHES him. BATTERS him with her fists in a silent scream of anguish and denial, trying to break his grip ...

... until she sags to her knees, spent -- and he finally, gently, lets go of her.

For a few moments, as the tragedy fully sinks in, the three of them remain still and silent.

Then Brunel notices something. Slowly moves around the pit, studying it.

BRUNEL (CONT'D)

Almost a perfect circle. As if ...

Brunel shakes his head -- dismissing the crazy thought -- but he steps back from the edge a couple of paces.

Harrington notices his concern.

HARRINGTON  
He said he'd found something.  
Just before the cave-in.

BRUNEL  
Found what?

Harrington shakes his head, numb -- but Brunel's caution has been reinforced. He heads back towards the buggy.

BRUNEL (CONT'D)  
Nobody's going down there until  
we've spoken to mission control.

DALBY  
You can't just leave him. It's  
not ... not decent.

HARRINGTON  
I'll stay with him.

DALBY  
No. I need to do it.

Brunel seems about to argue -- but her eyes warn him off.

BRUNEL  
You don't try to go down there.  
You understand?

Dalby nods, regaining her composure.

DALBY  
Fifteen minute delay to get a  
return message from Earth, pack  
the lifting gear, you'll be back  
in an hour. Right?

BRUNEL  
As soon as.

He turns for the buggy, Harrington getting to his feet and following, still dazed.

BRUNEL (CONT'D)  
(into helmet radio)  
Base, this is Brunel. Send to  
mission control. Confirmed  
fatality.

CUT TO:

Chaos. The group has been shattered by the news of Pugh's death and each of them vent their angst accordingly.

Lane is particularly outraged, confronting Brunel.

LANE

What!?! You're seriously suggesting we leave Pugh down there?

BRUNEL

You haven't seen that pit. The sides may not be stable.

KIM

Even if we got him out, what then? There's no freezer on the ship back to earth.

VINCENT

So we give him a proper burial, at least.

KIM

And we risk other lives for that?

HARRINGTON

(anguished)

I can't believe you're even arguing about it. What's wrong with you?

KIM

Hey, I'm not the one who let him go outside alone.

Harrington loses it -- GOES for her -- but Shaw and Vincent haul him back under control.

KIM (CONT'D)

See, he's falling apart.  
(looks at Brunel)  
Like everything else around here.

BRUNEL

What the hell does that mean?

VINCENT

For Christ's sake, Kim, don't start.

KIM

Tell me you don't know what I'm talking about.

SHAW

(interrupting)

Alright, enough!

Shaw's voice silences the group. He continues, calmly.

SHAW (CONT'D)

Y'know, Harrington's right.  
What's the matter with everyone?  
A colleague is dead.

(he lets it sink in)

We've been here too long and we  
got complacent. Let the rules  
slide one by one. Forgot just  
how totally fucking hostile it is  
out there.

(a glance at Kim)

We're all to blame.

The others take the hit. Chill themselves out.

Harrington grabs a pack of cigarettes from a locker -- his  
guilt-ridden eyes daring anyone to complain. Lights up.

There's a moment of introspective silence.

LANE

When are we telling mission  
control about Pugh's bacteria?  
They need to know. That's his  
discovery.

BRUNEL

First things first.

Just then, the sky-link status-monitor BLEEPS, announcing  
an imminent communication.

VINCENT

Incoming.

They gather around a screen as it flashes a ten-second  
countdown. Then a FLIGHT DIRECTOR appears, sombre-faced.

FLIGHT DIRECTOR

Tantalus base from mission  
control, responding your code-six  
fifteen-twenty zulu.

(then, more personal)

What can we say, guys? We're all  
in deep shock. Pugh's family have  
been informed. Brunel, we copy  
your safety concerns, but it's a  
go for retrieving the body.  
Morals aside, we can't allow it  
to decompose and contaminate the  
surface. Use all caution,  
protocols for storage to follow.  
Horrible way to end the mission,  
fellas, but we're behind you a  
hundred percent. More soon.  
Fifteen thirty-six, mission  
control out.

The screen flashes up 'TRANSMISSION ENDS'. They absorb the message for a moment, grim and silent. Then:

BRUNEL

You heard him. Pack the heavy-duty suits and lifting gear.

The group breaks up, but Shaw hangs back for a quiet word.

SHAW

You okay?

BRUNEL

The commander sets the tone. And if it slips ...

SHAW

Like I said, we're all to blame.

BRUNEL

I'm the one who let Pugh go out.

Brunel's face betrays anguish and self-doubt -- and we see now just how much he relies on Shaw for guidance.

SHAW

What would your wife say if she could hear you?

(gently)

Shit happens. It's how you deal with a crisis that counts, not how you got into it.

BRUNEL

And what if you're not thinking straight?

SHAW

Define 'straight'?

BRUNEL

The cave-in. It almost ... this sounds insane ... it almost looked engineered. Like a trap.

SHAW

That's not possible. Is it?

After a moment Brunel shakes his head, and banishes his doubts with a wry smile.

BRUNEL

Don't you get sick of being right?

(rising)

Not fair on Harrington to take him along. He can stay and watch the store with Kim.

Shaw nods an 'attaboy' at Brunel.

CUT TO:

24 INT. BUGGY 2. DUSK 24

Dalby is seated in the buggy, eyes wet, watching as the sun finally sinks behind a distant mesa.

It is briefly, poignantly stunning -- Phobos and it's stationary twin Deimos caught in the dying rays overhead...

... then it's over.

In the ultra-thin atmosphere, night falls abruptly -- and during the last few seconds of twilight, Dalby looks over at the black maw of the pit ...

CUT TO:

25 EXT. SITE 9. NIGHT 25

Helmeted-up, heavy-duty torch in hand, Dalby climbs down from the back of the buggy.

But once outside in the darkness, it suddenly hits home how utterly alone she is.

She hesitates, as if briefly having second thoughts. Then, irresistibly drawn, she heads over the pit.

She stops, uncomfortably close to the edge.

Shines the torch down into the blackness.

Pugh's corpse still lies as it was left -- but his twisted face, visible behind the cracked visor, is now sunken and freeze-dried.

She gazes at the body for a moment, anguished, then begins to shift the torch beam away ...

Pugh's arm seems to twitch.

She snaps the torch-beam back quickly.

Jesus, did she really see that!? Or was it just the optical-illusion of a shifting shadow?

She stares at it. Hard. Willing it to move again.

Nothing.

Glances quickly at the rope that still hangs down into the pit. Tempted to go down. Then back again at the body.

But there's no movement.

Finally, she lets out her breath, realising she'd been holding it. Chides herself -- "Seeing things."

Then the oppressive darkness once again gets to her.

She turns to head back to the buggy, unintentionally kicking up a patch of loose shale at her feet --

-- uncovering something that instantly grabs her attention.

Part of a fossilised creature.

Stunningly preserved -- a clutch of thick tentacles which sprout a mixture of vicious barbs and mole-like claws.

She crouches, awed. SWEEPS more of the loose shale aside, uncovering a slug-like body with a grotesque skin-texture and what looks like a cluster of cold, faceted eyes.

It's around a metre-long in total -- totally fascinating but frighteningly, repulsively alien.

DALBY

(stunned, into radio)

Base from Dalby, I've found the thing Pugh uncovered before the cave-in. It's incredible.

KIM

(over radio)

Dalby, you're breaking up. Repeat, please.

Dalby tries to clear the interference via the control panel on her wrist, but then shakes her head, impatient. Climbs to her feet and hurries back towards the buggy.

DALBY

I'll use the buggy transmitter, stand by.

Meanwhile, down in the pit, the ambient glow from her retreating torch casts shifting, darkening shadows which play around Pugh's corpse, seeming almost to animate it ...

... and we hold on it with dreadful, growing expectation...

CUT TO:

26

INT. BUGGY 2. NIGHT

26

Outside the windscreen, all is now pitch-black.

Breathless with excitement, Dalby tosses her helmet aside and climbs into the driver's seat. Powers up the radio.

DALBY  
Base from Dalby. I've found a  
fossil. Some kind of primitive  
creature.

KIM  
(over radio, disbelief)  
Are you serious?

CUT TO:

27 EXT. BASE. NIGHT

27

Brunel, Vincent, Shaw and Lane are suited up, outside the base, loading the lifting gear into utility lockers on the side of buggy one.

Brunel cuts in on Kim and Dalby's radio conversation

BRUNEL  
Dalby, this is buggy one, we're  
just setting off to join you.  
Where is this thing you found?

CUT TO:

28 INT. BUGGY 2. NIGHT

28

DALBY  
At the edge of the cave-in. I  
don't know what else to call it -  
a fossilised animal.

BRUNEL  
(over radio)  
Are you sure it's not just a  
pattern in the rock?

Dalby opens her mouth to argue -- but there's a faint SCRAPING sound from somewhere.

She cocks her head, puzzled. Was it a burst of interference on the radio? Or did it come from outside?

She SWITCHES on the buggy headlights. Peers outside.

Nothing to be seen.

BRUNEL (CONT'D)  
Dalby?

Dalby dismisses the sound. Re-focusses on the radio.

DALBY  
Sorry ... Yes, it's definitely a  
fossil. You'll see for yourself.

Suddenly, the buggy SHIFTS fractionally on it's suspension -- then the outer airlock door closes with a CLUNK.

Dalby registers confused surprise.

DALBY (CONT'D)  
Who's here, sir? Has somebody  
come ahead of you?

BRUNEL  
Negative. Everybody's with me or  
inside the base.

Holy shit!

Dalby looks as if she's been doused with ice-cold water.

She begins to tremble uncontrollably -- staring at the gauge of the airlock as it climbs slowly towards green.

BRUNEL (CONT'D)  
Dalby?

But she's reeling with disbelief, unable to answer.

CUT TO:

29 EXT. BASE. NIGHT 29

Brunel and the others have stopped to listen to the radio.

BRUNEL  
Dalby, what is it?

DALBY  
(choked, over radio)  
Somebody's coming in ...

CUT TO:

30 INT. BUGGY 2. NIGHT 30

Dalby stares transfixed at the airlock as the gauge swings into green -- full pressure.

The door-seal cracks with a HISS. Begins to open.

CLOSE ON DALBY: Her face a mask of terror ...

CUT TO:

31 INT. BUGGY 1. NIGHT 31

Brunel is driving, steering along the extinct shoreline by the beams of the headlights.

Lane and Shaw watch pensively as Vincent, on the radio in the co-driver's seat, switches through the frequencies.

VINCENT

Dalby, respond. Come in, please.  
(giving up)  
No reply on any band.

BRUNEL

We've had static from Site Nine all day. Radio could be down.

SHAW

Doesn't explain her last message.

Brunel shakes his head, unsure what to say. And as he steers around the familiar outcrop of rock, we see

SITE 9

Dalby's buggy is parked where it was left, headlights still burning -- but the rear airlock door is open.

No sign of life.

Brunel swaps an ominous look with the others.

CUT TO:

32

EXT. SITE 9. NIGHT

32

The four of them climb out of the buggy, torches blazing.

BRUNEL

Shaw, Vincent, check buggy two.

Shaw and Vincent head for buggy two as Brunel and Lane check the two-man storm-shelter.

Nobody inside.

Then they move on, approaching the pit.

BRUNEL (CONT'D)

If Dalby went down there after I told her not to ...

They shine the torches down into the pit.

Their faces register shock and astonishment -- and they remain speechless as Vincent and Shaw rejoin them.

SHAW

Nothing in buggy two. Looks as if Dalby --  
(sees the pit, stunned)  
Where's the body?

Only now do we see into the pit.

The body has gone.

Brunel shakes his head, still trying to make sense of it. He paces -- shining the torch around the site -- then returns to look again into the pit.

BRUNEL

Dalby said Pugh could be hypothermic. I didn't listen.

VINCENT

What does that mean?

BRUNEL

No way she hauled his body out of there alone. He's alive.

The others look at him, incredulous.

LANE

You said his helmet was cracked. How could he --

BRUNEL

I don't know! Maybe his suit retained air ... or some weird quirk of the Martian atmosphere.

LANE

And what? He and Dalby just walked away hand in hand?

Brunel ignores the comment, but it's given him an idea. He begins searching the ground with his torch.

The red Martian dust has been trampled by numerous tracks between Dalby's buggy and the pit ...

... but from the back of the buggy, two distinct sets of footprints lead through virgin dust, away from the site.

VINCENT

Christ, you're right. He's alive.

BRUNEL

Disorientated, maybe. Wandered away, and Dalby went after him.

(to Shaw and Lane)

You two stay here in case they circle back. And tell base to get ready for a patient.

Brunel and Vincent hurry away, following the tracks, leaving Lane and Shaw behind.

Shaw walks back to the pit, increasingly troubled.

SHAW

What the hell's going on, Lane?

LANE

Now I'm worried. You're normally the one with all the answers.

She joins him and gazes into the empty pit. Then, as an after-thought, searches the edge with her torch. Spots the weird fossilised creature.

LANE (CONT'D)

Dalby's fossil.

Shaw is visibly repulsed by the long-dead life-form. But Lane crouches in awe.

LANE (CONT'D)

With the accident, we've barely had time to think. But do you know what this'll mean? To science, religion ...

SHAW

It means nothing will be the same. Ever. All bets are off.

Lane looks at him. His face betrays fearful bewilderment -- as if all his prior certainties are being stripped away.

He turns towards the buggy, his slipped mask back in place.

SHAW (CONT'D)

I'll call the news in to base.

Meanwhile ...

BRUNEL & VINCENT

follow the footprints towards a rock outcrop nearby -- but they lose the tracks on harder ground.

BRUNEL

See if you can pick up the tracks that way. I'll go around here.

VINCENT

Is that a good idea?

BRUNEL

Probably not. But Pugh could be in a critical condition.

Vincent sees the point. No time to lose. They split up.

VINCENT

skirts the rocky outcrop, looking for tracks.

Picks up the footprints again in a sandy depression. Turns around to look for Brunel -- but he's already gone.

VINCENT

Brunel?

A CRACKLE of static, but no response.

So Vincent goes on, tracing the tracks with his torch ...

... until they vanish into a dark cleft which splits the tall outcrop of rock.

Vincent pauses, unaccountably troubled.

He looks around again for Brunel's distant, tell-tale torchlight, but it's nowhere to be seen.

Pensive, Vincent reluctantly heads into the cleft.

It's like entering a narrow, dark, winding passageway -- many turns which may hide someone waiting -- many pitch-black crevices to feed a troubled imagination ...

... not to mention the claustrophobia. And this, it appears, is Vincent's problem.

He goes so far -- but at the first tight-squeeze, he stops.

He backs up against one wall, BREATHING hard. Looks up at the tiny crack of starlight, visible above. Then back at the entrance.

He closes his eyes briefly, trying to get a grip. Then shines the torch forwards through the narrow gap. Willing himself to go on ...

A hand lands on his shoulder -- freaks him out.

Brunel.

BRUNEL

I've been calling you. What's the matter?

VINCENT

I ... just need a minute.

Brunel eyes him curiously. Gestures for him to go back. Visibly ashamed, Vincent does so.

BRUNEL

then squeezes through the narrow gap and heads onwards along the passageway, alone.

But before he's gone far, he too appears unsettled -- his imagination working on his nerves.

The footprints have again vanished on the stoney ground.

He turns a corner -- and in the rock wall to the left is a gaping black crevice. A perfect ambush.

He's reluctant to pass it.

BRUNEL

Dalby, are you there?

No answer.

Brunel gathers himself ...

... and darts forwards, shining the torch into the crevice as he hurries past.

Relieved when nothing looms out of the darkness, he hurries onwards, rebuking himself for his fear.

Suddenly, he's at the other side of the rock outcrop, and a cratered, boulder-strewn plain stretches out before him.

The twin set of footprints track away into the distance.

CUT TO:

33

EXT. ROCK OUTCROP NEAR SITE 9. NIGHT

33

Vincent is waiting at the entrance to the cleft as Brunel reappears. He opens his mouth to explain himself, but Brunel speaks first, more concerned with other things.

BRUNEL

They're long gone. Across the outflow from the rift-valley.

VINCENT

How can Pugh walk so far? And where the hell are they going?

BRUNEL

(shaking head)

We drive around it to avoid the boulders - but on foot, it's the quickest way back to base.

On their joint unease and confusion

CUT TO:

34

INT. BASE - MEDICAL UNIT. NIGHT

34

A small emergency surgery. Kim and Harrington quickly ready the equipment -- oxygen, drip, thermal blanket, etc -- Harrington visibly overjoyed.

HARRINGTON  
I can't believe he's alive.

KIM  
Say that again. But you realise  
he'll be in a bad way. Severe  
frostbite, oxygen deprivation ...

She sees she's puncturing his euphoria. Back-pedals.

KIM (CONT'D)  
But, hey, if he's walking ...  
(then, awkward)  
And about what I said earlier ...

HARRINGTON  
You can be a bitch. Is that the  
gist of it?

KIM  
Not in so many words. But, yeah.

The ice is broken and Harrington returns her smile -- then  
he cocks his ear, straining to listen.

There's a faint PINGING sound, coming from another room.

HARRINGTON  
The ground radar.

CUT TO:

35 INT. BASE - CONTROL ROOM. NIGHT

35

Harrington and Kim enter and approach the control desk.

They look at the screen, which intermittently registers a  
tiny, glowing double-blob as the radar sweeps in a circle.

HARRINGTON  
Barely registering above the  
terrain. About fifty metres out.

KIM  
It's got to be Pugh and Dalby.  
But how ...?

HARRINGTON  
Who cares? They're okay, that's  
all that matters.

Kim gets on the radio.

KIM  
Dalby from base, respond.

Nothing. She moves instead to the slit-window. Peers out.

HARRINGTON

You won't see them. They're coming around the back.

KIM

Something's not right.

Troubled, she heads out into the

CORE

following the circular corridor, illuminated only by energy-saving night-lights. Walks past the lab, around to the

COMMUNAL ROOM

where she heads over to another slit-window. Peers out.

KIM'S POV

of the dark plain outside the window.

Two faint, moonlight shadows -- cast by unseen, shuffling figures -- are just shifting out of sight at the edge of her field of vision.

BACK TO SCENE

as Kim pushes away from the window, frustrated she couldn't see them but sensing that something is very wrong.

She presses an intercom button.

KIM (CONT'D)

Harrington, lock the doors until we establish comms.

HARRINGTON

(over intercom)

Wha--? Are you crazy?

KIM

Why would they walk back?  
Nothing about this is right.

Meanwhile, back in the ...

CONTROL ROOM

Harrington watches as the radar picks up another return -- two larger signals PINGING right at the edge of the screen.

HARRINGTON

It's okay, the buggies are coming back. Three or four minutes out.

But the smaller, man-sized traces have already reached the centre of the radar screen.

They're right outside the base.

KIM  
(over intercom)  
Did you hear me? Lock the doors.

Conflicted, Harrington's finger hovers over the 'LOCKOUT' button on the control panel ...

... but he hesitates a second too long.

The airlock 'IN USE' light suddenly glows, and he hears the faint, muffled HISS of the outer door opening. Then the CLUNK as it shuts.

Off the hook, he hurries out into the

CORE

bumping into Kim as he does so.

HARRINGTON  
Too late. They're in.

He hurries onwards into the Utility Room, clearly eager to see Pugh.

But Kim hangs back, gripped by an inexplicable anxiety ...

... so she doesn't see -- only HEARS -- as the inner airlock door HISSES open in the utility room.

Only HEARS Harrington's shocked reaction.

HARRINGTON (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Oh, Christ ... Jesus Christ!

And only now does she hurry forward to the door of the

UTILITY ROOM

and looks in on a scene which numbs her to the bone.

In the gloom of the night-lights, Pugh and Dalby are advancing towards Harrington.

Pugh's helmet is off.  
His face, a mask of dried, dead flesh.  
His eyes clouded almost white.  
A hammer in his hand.

Dalby, the same dead, clouded eyes.  
And in her hand, a scalpel from her medical kit.

Harrington SCREAMS.  
Tries to back away but TRIPS.

Pugh SMASHES him with the hammer.

STAYING ON KIM

as she runs for her life. STUMBLES blindly back into the control room and races for the desk.

SLAMS her hand on the radio button.

KIM  
(a yell)  
Mayday, Mayday ...!

CUT TO:

36 INT. BUGGY 1. NIGHT

36

Vincent is driving, Brunel in the co-driver's seat, as Kim's message BLASTS over the radio.

KIM  
(over radio)  
... they're attacking, Christ  
almightly, get back here --

A SCREAM, a WRENCHING SOUND -- and the channel goes dead.

BRUNEL  
(into headset)  
Kim? Harrington!?

There's no response -- and Brunel loses it, panic-stricken.

BRUNEL (CONT'D)  
What the fuck is going on!? Is  
this all some kind of sick joke?

Vincent ACCELERATES to full speed, ashen-faced. Meanwhile, Lane's worried voice comes over the radio.

LANE  
Buggy one from buggy two. Did  
you copy that last message?

Brunel quickly pulls himself together. Glances at Vincent. It's his turn, now, to feel ashamed at his loss of control.

BRUNEL  
(into radio)  
Stay off the air in case they try  
again, and follow us in.

CUT TO:

37 EXT. BASE. NIGHT

37

Headlights blazing, the two buggies sweep around the side of the dome and SKID to halt near the main airlock.

Brunel, Vincent, Lane and Shaw jump out.

BRUNEL

Shaw, Lane, check the windows.  
Radio if you see anything.

Shaw throws Brunel a pensive look -- but Brunel's face says, "No more self-doubt. I'm on it."

Then Shaw and Lane depart -- skirting the dome's perimeter, peering in the widely-spaced slit-windows.

Brunel doesn't wait. He opens the outer airlock door.

Vincent tries to step in with him -- but Brunel blocks him.

BRUNEL (CONT'D)

Stay here.

VINCENT

Look, if you're thinking I'll let you down in there ...

BRUNEL

We don't know what's waiting. No point both of us walking into an ambush.

VINCENT

Then I'll give it a minute and follow you in.

BRUNEL

No. If you're coming in, I can't get back out. Stay here unless I call you - that's an order.

Reluctantly, Vincent nods -- and Brunel steps inside.

CUT TO:

38

INT. BASE - AIRLOCK. NIGHT

38

Brunel closes the door behind him. The cycling air HISSES as it fills the confined space.

As he waits, Brunel's face betrays his struggle between fear and the determination to take control.

The airlock door has a reinforced-glass porthole, and he peers pensively into the utility room. He sees nothing ...

... but jumps as Lane's voice CRACKLES over the radio.

LANE

Skipper, we can't see anything but the lab doesn't have windows.

BRUNEL  
Okay, radio silence.

The air finishes CYCLING. The gauge turns green.

Bracing himself, he presses the button. The door OPENS and he steps through into the gloom of the

UTILITY ROOM

Takes off his helmet so he can listen. Then moves on. He's barely gone three paces before he spots something.

Harrington's body -- slumped behind a locker.

Brunel crouches quickly -- checks Harrington's pulse. But his reaction shows there's no hope. Harrington is dead.

Before Brunel can react further he hears a muffled CRASH from somewhere inside the base, followed by a YELL.

Kim.

He bursts into action. Runs to help.

CUT TO:

39 INT. BASE - LABORATORY. NIGHT

39

Equipment SMASHES as Kim vaults over a workbench -- just escaping a slash from Dalby's scalpel.

Dalby and Pugh move clumsily, as if not quite in control of their bodies.

Pugh tries to cut Kim off -- but she swings the heavy articulated arm of an x-ray scanner. BASHES him aside.

She races for the door with lithe, desperate speed.

SLASHED across the back by Dalby.  
Keeps going with a CRY of pain.  
Darts through the bulk-head door into the

CORE

and SLAMS the door shut behind her --

-- catching Dalby's hand, TRAPPING her fingers.

Dalby feels no pain. Tries to pull the door open again.

But Kim repeatedly YANKS on the door, SMASHING Dalby's fingers. Manages to close it.

Holds onto the door-lever for dear life as Dalby and Pugh BATTER it from the other side.

Brunel appears in the nick of time.

KIM  
Get something to brace this!

BRUNEL  
Holy God, what the ...?

But Brunel doesn't need any further explanations. He can see Pugh and Dalby for himself as they begin HAMMERING at the reinforced-glass panel in the door.

He snatches up a nylon equipment harness from nearby. Ties the door's handle in place.

BRUNEL (CONT'D)  
What about the other door?

KIM  
Jammed it, but it won't hold for long. We need to get the hell out.

BRUNEL  
We can't abandon the base. How would we --

Glass SPRAYS everywhere as Pugh's hammer comes through it, followed by his groping arm.

No more argument -- they run like hell.

Around the central circular corridor, back to the

UTILITY ROOM

where Kim snatches a lightweight environment suit off the rack and pulls it on -- Brunel ZIPPING her in.

They grab a helmet and turn for the airlock ...

... then freeze in their tracks as Harrington's body sits bolt-upright in front of them. Blocking the way.

Swivels it's head as if searching for a bearing -- then the clouded eyes lock onto them.

Reeling with horror, they back away.

Harrington crawls towards them --  
-- then suddenly LUNGES at Kim.  
Grabs her.

Brunel SMASHES Harrington with the helmet.  
Splashing blood across Kim.  
Then KICKS Harrington backwards, off balance.

He and Kim run.

BRUNEL (CONT'D)  
Emergency airlock!

They race around the central corridor. Past the sleeping quarters and toilets. Into the room housing the

EMERGENCY AIRLOCK

It's little bigger than a broom-closet. Emergency suits on a rack -- and in the outer wall at knee-height, the small crawl-way hatch of the emergency escape.

Only big enough for one at a time.

Brunel stays by the door, holding the handle closed.

BRUNEL (CONT'D)  
Go. I'll follow you.

KIM  
How will you -- ?

BRUNEL  
Go! Leave a helmet inside for me, and cycle the pressure when you get out.

Kim grabs a spare helmet, POPS the hatch and crawls in. SLAMS it behind her ...

... just as Harrington begins SHOULDERING at the room door, catching Brunel off-guard.

The door is FORCED part-way open -- but Brunel manages to SLAM it closed again.

He braces the door handle, terror etched on his face.

Through the glass door-panel, Harrington's dead face peers back at him as he KICKS at the door.

Then a moment later, behind him, Pugh and Dalby appear.

BRUNEL (CONT'D)  
Oh, shit! Move it, Kim!

CUT TO:

40

EXT. BASE - EMERGENCY EXIT. NIGHT

40

Kim scrambles out of the coffin-like airlock.

SLAMS the outer hatch shut behind her. PUNCHES the button to re-cycle the air.

KIM  
 (into radio)  
 Vincent, Lane, anyone. I'm at  
 the emergency exit. Need help.

VINCENT  
 (over radio)  
 Kim? Stay there, we're coming.

Kim crouches by the hatch porthole, peering back inside.

CUT TO:

41 INT. BASE - EMERGENCY AIRLOCK. NIGHT 41

Brunel is losing the battle. Strains to hold the door  
 handle closed under the combined ASSAULT.

Glass CRACKS but holds as Pugh HAMMERS at it.

Brunel glances behind. Sees the airlock gauge turn green.

Three urgent, deep BREATHS ... then he abandons the door  
 and leaps for the airlock.

HITS the button.  
 POPS open the hatch.

Behind him, the door CRASHES open.

Scrambles through the hatch.  
 Pulls it closed --

-- but not quick enough. The hatch is snatched back open.

And Brunel is dragged out by his legs, SCREAMING.

CUT TO:

42 EXT. BASE. NIGHT 42

Kim watches impotently through the porthole as the three  
 undead assailants fall on Brunel -- ripping and slashing.

She SOBS, appalled.

Then chokes back her tears as she sees Dalby crawling into  
 the airlock. Coming after her.

Kim immediately KICKS at the airlock control panel.  
 SMASHES the cover.  
 RIPS out the circuits, disabling the mechanism.

At that moment, Vincent, Lane and Shaw come running from  
 around the base -- but Kim rushes to intercept them.

KIM  
Main airlock. Got to jam it.

VINCENT  
What? Where's Brunel?

KIM  
Got to lock them inside!

She pushes past them. The others run after her, baffled -- skirting the base until they reach the Main Airlock.

In her panic, Kim begins BASHING at the control panel with her elbow, trying to smash it.

VINCENT  
Whoa, easy!

Vincent pulls the outer airlock door open.

VINCENT (CONT'D)  
The inner door can't work if this one's open. What's going on?  
Whose blood is on your suit?

KIM  
Harrington's ... He's dead ...  
Brunel too.

She's hyperventilating -- and the next moment her knees buckle as the stress-reaction becomes too much.

Shaw and Lane support her, disbelief on their faces.

Vincent steps quickly inside the airlock. Peers through the porthole of the inner door ...

VINCENT'S POV

... just as Pugh approaches the door from the other side. Still carrying the hammer. He's splashed with blood.

He JABS clumsily at the button, trying to open the door.

BACK TO SCENE

Vincent backs away, shocked and horrified. Steps outside.

VINCENT  
Kim. Kim! What happened?

She shakes her head, as if unable to believe it herself.

KIM  
Pugh and Dalby killed the others.  
But Harrington ... he got up  
again ...

Shaw and Lane react with incredulity -- but Kim is adamant.

KIM (CONT'D)  
Maybe Brunel will do the same.

SHAW  
She's not making sense.

VINCENT  
Then you'd better look inside.

Shaw and Lane break off to look -- just as Pugh begins HAMMERING furiously on the airlock door.

They catch a glimpse through the porthole, then back away.

SHAW  
He's gone insane.

KIM  
You still don't get it. He's  
dead. They're all dead!

Shaw blanks her as if she's deluded. But Vincent and Lane aren't so sure.

LANE  
Either way, if he gets through  
that door ...

VINCENT  
(shaking head)  
Carbon compound - hammer on it  
all night. More to the point,  
everything we need is still in  
there. Air, water, radio ...

SHAW  
It's just a guy brain-damaged by  
hypoxia. We need to get back in  
and take him down.

KIM  
It's not just him in there.

LANE  
What about the cave? We can take  
refuge in there. Wait for the  
relief ship.

VINCENT  
No transmitter.

LANE  
But they'll know something's  
wrong when we don't answer comms.  
It'll at least give us time to  
think.

At that moment Pugh ceases hammering.

Silence.

Vincent cautiously peers through the porthole again.

VINCENT

He's gone.

KIM

They're up to something. Can they get through the windows?

VINCENT

Pressure-reinforced. No chance.

KIM

Is there any other way out?

VINCENT

No, walls are a foot-thick, filled with rigid foam. You'd have to ...

He trails off with a dreadful realisation.

LANE

What is it?

Vincent turns to the taut plastic skin of the dome wall. Runs his gloved hands over it, feeling for vibrations.

Then he rests his helmet against the plastic, listening. There's a muffled WHINE.

VINCENT

Power saw. He's cutting through.

He backs away involuntarily. Lane and Kim likewise.

SHAW

The decompression'll kill him.

KIM

It won't.

WHOOSHING sound as a CUT appears in the skin of the dome. Air begins VENTING, condensing in the sub-zero atmosphere.

SHAW

He's breached it. Suicide.

But within moments, further cuts appear in the wall as the long, powered blade RIPS through the foam and plastic --

-- and the interior pressure suddenly PUNCHES out a ragged, gaping hole.

A second of tense anticipation ...

Then Pugh, helmet-less, begins squeezing through the gap.

Shaw is rooted to the spot, utterly aghast. Vincent, Lane and Kim back away in horror, equally appalled.

LANE  
Get to the buggies.

KIM  
Take too long to get through the  
airlocks. They'd be all over us.

VINCENT  
Then Site Three!

He, Lane and Kim turn and run -- out across the plain towards the cave, a third of a mile away.

LANE  
Shaw, move it!

Shaw finally snaps out of his paralysis. Turns and runs.

Behind them, Pugh crawls from the hole and drops to the ground. Climbs haltingly to his feet as Dalby begins squeezing through the ragged gap behind him.

KIM, LANE, VINCENT & SHAW

have a head start on the undead, but they're struggling against the weight and restrictions of their suits.

Five hundred metres ahead, they can see the distant white shape of the airlock set into the cave-mouth at Site Three.

They keep glancing back. The dome is receding behind them, but they can still see what's happening.

Dalby is now through the gap, also without helmet, and Harrington is following.

LANE (CONT'D)  
How do you stop them if they  
don't even need air?

Finally, a reanimated Brunel climbs through the ragged hole and joins the other three undead crew-members. They begin trudging in pursuit ...

... but then they stop -- as if realising something -- and they turn towards the buggies.

Kim, Lane, Shaw and Vincent register this -- and panic.

LANE (CONT'D)  
Faster!

VINCENT

It'll take them a minute to get  
through the airlocks ... power up  
... then thirty MPH max ...

KIM

Gonna be close.

They're already PANTING from exertion. Vincent looks back.

The undead are inside the buggies, but the vehicles are not yet moving.

He runs on further. Glances back again.

One of the buggies is STIRRING into life.

It moves forwards -- then stops, as if the driver is struggling with the controls -- then moves forwards again.

It's facing the wrong way, so it begins a wide turn. The second buggy starts after it.

VINCENT

They're coming.

Then the vehicles lock on target and aim towards them.

SITE 3

is now only a hundred metres away.

However, the fugitives are staggering, GASPING with each ragged breath. Behind them, the buggies draw ever closer.

Fifty metres to go.

Vincent looks back.

The buggies are almost on them.

Aiming to literally run them down.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

(a yell)

Watch it!

They scatter aside at the last second as the first buggy RACES through them ...

... then again as the second one bears down -- just missing them by inches.

The buggies SKID to a halt.

Kim, Lane, Shaw and Vincent stagger past the buggies -- the Site Three airlock now just twenty metres away.

The buggy airlocks HISS as the air inside cycles. Any second now, they're going to open.

Ten metres to go and Lane STUMBLES. Falls flat-out.

The first buggy door POPS open -- then the second.  
The undead climb out.  
Come after them.

Vincent and Kim DRAG Lane to her feet.  
Stagger the last few metres to Site 3 as Shaw HITS the  
button to open the door ...

... and they collapse inside, SLAMMING the door behind them  
just in the nick of time.

CUT TO:

43

INT. SITE 3. NIGHT

43

Lane works the switches on a wall-mounted control panel,  
turning on the lights and POWERING UP the life-support.

She checks that the inner airlock door is wedged open, then  
rejoins the others, slumped on cargo boxes stacked nearby.

Meanwhile, Kim unzips her suit. Checks the wound on her  
back.

LANE

That needs stitching.

Kim gestures dismissively. She stands and steps warily  
back into the airlock to look out through the porthole.

Having caught his breath, Vincent joins her. Looks out.

VINCENT'S POV

Ominously, the four figures are standing totally immobile  
outside the airlock, silhouetted in the pale moonlight.

Waiting with inhuman patience.

BACK TO SCENE

VINCENT

I think I'd prefer it if they  
were hammering on the door.

KIM

They can reason. Make plans.

Vincent looks at her questioningly.

KIM (CONT'D)

Why else would Pugh and Dalby  
walk back to the base? To catch  
us off-guard.

Shaken anew, they rejoin Lane and Shaw. Shaw is saying very little, still apparently unable to take it in.

SHAW

It's unbelievable.

VINCENT

(to Lane)

How? I mean, biologically. How can this be happening?

LANE

Something in the atmosphere maybe? Who knows?

KIM

It's not just how - it's why. They're trying to kill us. That's all they seem to want.

LANE

Right now, all I need to know is that they can't get in here.

VINCENT

I don't see how. The airlock's the only way in or out.

KIM

Unless we dig another way out.

LANE

Why would we do that?

KIM

Think about it. Without a high-gain transmitter we can't warn the crew of the relief ship. They're gonna land out there. And if we don't get to them before those things do ...

VINCENT

So what do you suggest?

Kim opens up one of the storage boxes and begins searching.

KIM

Before we pressurised this place we ran a complete geo-phys.

She finds a lap-top. Powers it up as she speaks, then pulls up a geo-physical radar scan on the screen.

KIM (CONT'D)

There's a glacier under here and radar says there are interlinked cavities. Lots of them.

LANE

Which means, another way out?

KIM

Possibly. And if we have an exit that they don't know about ...

VINCENT

There may not even be a way out. And if there is, you depressurise this place as soon as you dig through into the cavities.

KIM

Not necessarily.

VINCENT

Too risky, and too speculative.

KIM

Says who!?

Kim spits the words out, her patience at breaking point.

VINCENT

I just think we'd be better off conserving our strength.

KIM

Conserve it for what? To try and fight our way out of the airlock?

VINCENT

Which we'll have to do anyway if your plan doesn't work.

KIM

At least I've got a plan. So I guess it's down to which one of us is running this show.

VINCENT

You obviously think it's you.

KIM

(losing it)

Yeah, and I'm the only one who's knocked heads with those things! Where were you while all that was happening?

Vincent is visibly wounded by the comment -- but he takes it on the chin, quietly and humbly.

VINCENT

(after a moment)

You're right. Go for it.

Lane looks at Vincent curiously, surprised he backed down.

Kim, meanwhile, suddenly appears to regret her barbed comment. She cools off, conciliatory.

KIM

Listen ... why don't we all look around. See what we can find to use as a weapon.

SHAW

How do you fight something that's not alive?

KIM

The relief ship orbits in about twenty hours. We've got until then to figure it out.

CUT TO:

44 INT. SITE 3. NIGHT

44

Lane and Vincent search through the cargo boxes containing equipment left for the relief crew.

LANE

Is Kim really the best person to be giving the orders?

Vincent glances at her. Decides to confide.

VINCENT

Brunel's dead because of me.

LANE

(incredulous)  
How do you work that out?

VINCENT

I froze. While we were looking for Pugh and Dalby. And he didn't want me with him when he went inside the dome.

LANE

I heard you two over the radio. That's not what he said.

VINCENT

It's what he meant.

Lane's expression tells him she's not buying it.

LANE

Anyway, what do you mean, you froze? What was the problem?

VINCENT

The thought of spending three months trapped in that tiny capsule on the way home.

LANE

You were fine on the way here.

VINCENT

I wasn't. And I've had six months to think about it. Dread it.

Lane considers what he's said.

LANE

Guess we've all got our demons.

Vincent frowns, curious.

LANE (CONT'D)

You ever notice I didn't look out the capsule window? The others couldn't get enough of it. The stars ... the vastness of it...

(pause)

But it terrified me. It's the abyss.

VINCENT

(after a moment)

Have you spoken to Shaw about it?

LANE

Why would I?

VINCENT

Well, you're telling me.

LANE

Maybe that says more about you than it does about Shaw.

They exchange a look. A moment of sharing -- and more.

Then Vincent looks away as he finds a small box in the cargo container. Looks inside.

It's half empty, but nestled in the foam packaging are four compact silver cylinders.

VINCENT

Excavation charges. I'd say those might be useful.

Lane acknowledges the thought, grim.

Meanwhile ...

SHAW & KIM

are at the other end of the cave.

Kim is positioning the coring drill in a flat depression where the subterranean glacier is exposed. Shaw joins her, displaying a few makeshift weapons.

SHAW

Flammables from the lab. Hand-held flares. And this.

He holds up a climber's ice-pick, feeling the weight.

Kim nods, then finishes positioning the drill, checking it with the geo-phys scan on the lap-top.

KIM

Should be right over a cavity that extends under the back-end of the cave.

Vincent and Shaw join them.

VINCENT

If you're really going through there we'll need to suit up.

KIM

(nodding)

Ice is a metre thick. I'll punch it with a fifty-millimetre core. If we get full-on decompression we can plug it again.

(pause)

You don't wanna sit around in helmets, go in the mini-lab. It's airtight.

She gestures towards the hi-tech portacabin laboratory.

Lane suddenly has an idea -- looking at the streaks of blood on Kim's environment suit.

LANE

The lab ...

(thinking)

You said that's Harrington's blood on your suit. Did you get it before or after he ... y'know ...

KIM

Reanimated? After.

LANE

Then I'd like to look at a sample of it under a microscope.

Kim spreads her hands, looking down at herself.

KIM  
Be my guest.

CUT TO:

45 INT. SITE 3 - MINI-LAB. NIGHT

45

A cramped but dust-free lab with an array of equipment.

With the MUFFLED WHINE of Kim's coring-drill in the background, Lane prepares a slide for the microscope.

LANE  
(to herself)  
The blood is the life ...

VINCENT  
Sorry?

LANE  
You asked, how is it happening.  
Let's see what this tells us.

She places the slide under the scope. Works the controls.

LANE (CONT'D)  
After sudden death, catecholamine  
levels should be elevated, so ...

She trails off, mortified.

The image has been displayed on a screen beside a blood-chemistry readout -- but the analysis is not required --

-- because the blood is visibly swarming with live bacteria. The same segmented worm-shapes we saw earlier.

CUT TO:

46 INT. SITE 3. NIGHT

46

Kim's drill SCREAMS as it reverses slowly out of the ice.

KIM  
Get ready.

The core PULLS out -- and air begins to RUSH into the hole.

Next to Kim, Shaw is at the lap-top, reading the Site 3 'AIR PRESSURE' gauge remotely. It's dropping.

Over by the oxygen tanks and CO2 scrubbers, a KLAXON begins to blare -- and an amber light flashes a visual warning.

SHAW  
Pressure dropping fast.

KIM  
The tanks'll compensate. Wait.

SHAW  
We need to plug it.

KIM  
Wait!

A tense few moments as they watch the gauge ...

... then the rate of decrease begins to slow.

KIM (CONT'D)  
Cavity's filling up. We're okay.

SHAW  
But that means it's just another enclosed space. No way through.

KIM  
We may be able to dig up through the ice. Turn that alarm off.

Shaw kills the alarm remotely as Kim SNAPS open the seal of her helmet. Takes it off.

Seeing the all-clear, Vincent and Lane exit the mini-lab and quickly head over to join them. Lane hands Kim a hard-copy frame-grab from the monitor.

LANE  
The Martian bacteria. They're infected with it.

KIM  
Oh, Jesus ... This is Harrington's blood?

LANE  
(nodding)  
It's not just in the fossil record - the bacteria's alive, even now.

KIM  
There must be pockets where it survived, lying dormant.

LANE  
Until Pugh stirred it up. A bacterial infection spread on contact.

They process the revelation -- and the implications.

VINCENT

A bug that infects and galvanises  
dead bodies. Then kills others  
to propagate itself.

KIM

Maybe that's its evolutionary  
secret. A corpse has no defence.  
No immune system.

SHAW

But the fossil bacteria was found  
in the same rock layers as the  
animal fossil. How could the two  
live alongside each other?

LANE

They couldn't. If each corpse  
revives and kills, sooner or  
later there's nothing left alive.

KIM

At least, not alive as we know  
it. Planet-wide extinction.

SHAW

But if all the animal life on  
Mars turned into - what? - the  
living-dead ... then where are  
they? They'd still be here.

VINCENT

(shaking head)

You know what the radiation's  
like out on the surface. Few  
thousand years - few hundred  
thousand years - they'd've been  
fried to dust.

LANE

Then we came along. The dormant  
bacteria found a new foothold and  
the whole cycle's started again.

KIM

(after a moment)

I don't know if I feel better  
listening to this, or worse.

(pause)

But it's even more important that  
we get to the relief ship first.

And with that she FIRES up an oxy-acetylene torch --  
adjusting the flame into a long, blue, searing needle ...

... which she lowers onto the ice at her feet with a HISS.

CUT TO:

47

INT. ICE TUNNELS. NIGHT

47

An incomplete circle has been cut into the roof of the ice cavity. Melt-water SPILLS down as the FLAME closes the gap.

Suddenly, the huge plug of ice CRACKS free and drops to the floor with a CRASH.

A moment later a metal ladder drops, then KIM climbs down, helmet in hand, shining her flash-light around the cavity.

It's a narrow, irregular ice-tunnel, winding away into the darkness and intersected by other tunnels.

In places, layered sedimentary rock breaks through the curiously smooth, curved walls of ice.

KIM

Get a load of this.

VINCENT

(from above)

What is it?

KIM

Tunnels. Thermal vents, maybe.  
Or post-glacial watercourses.

Shaw, laden with rope and equipment, joins her, having to crouch under the low roof.

Kim, meanwhile, has moved ahead -- and has found something in an outcrop of weathered rock poking through the ice.

It's another fossil. Similar to Dalby's -- same slug-like body and barbed tentacles -- but much larger. Two metres.

KIM (CONT'D)

Oh ... It's beautiful. Is this the same species Dalby found?

SHAW

Except this is bigger. God, look at the size of it.

Kim runs her fingers over the smooth rock. Smaller, different fossil-species peep through in places.

KIM

Eroded, once, by flowing water.  
Melt the ice, this place'd be an evolutionary treasure-trove.

SHAW

Fossils all through the layers below. But nothing above.

KIM  
Which confirms what we said.  
Mass-extinction.

LANE  
(from above)  
You need us down there?

KIM  
No, we're cool. We're going on,  
see how far this thing extends.

And shining the torch ahead, Kim leads the way.

CUT TO:

48 INT. SITE 3. NIGHT

48

Vincent and Lane look down into the hole cut through the ice, watching as the glow from Kim and Shaw's torches fade.

Vincent is repelled by the claustrophobic cavity below.

VINCENT  
They do find a way out, the next  
problem is to drag me down there.

Lane smiles at his wry humour.

CUT TO:

49 INT. ICE TUNNELS. NIGHT

49

Kim and Shaw shuffle in a crouch along the winding, uneven tunnel, occasionally squeezing through a narrow gap.

They reach an intersection. Kim pulls a glow-stick from a bundle in her pocket. CRACKS it into life and drops it as a marker. Then chooses a tunnel and heads on.

Their torches bore holes through the pitch-blackness ahead -- but the shifting shadows only emphasise the eeriness.

Shaw is increasingly pensive as he follows behind. He unconsciously echoes Brunel's earlier words.

SHAW  
These walls. Almost look carved.

Kim glances behind, pulling a face at his unease.

KIM  
What happened to Mister Rational  
Explanation? Your clinical world-  
view taken a dent?

SHAW  
More than a dent.

KIM  
Well, if it's any consolation ...

She trails off, but Shaw gets her message: She's just as frightened and uncertain underneath as he is.

A grateful nod from Shaw, then they move on.

CRACKING SOUND -- and a shower of ice-crystals fall from the roof. It's clearly not stable.

Kim and Shaw freeze. Exchange an ominous look.

KIM (CONT'D)  
Warm air flowing in from the cave. Gonna make things dicey.

SHAW  
Then let's hurry up.

With a wary glance at the roof, they crouch lower and move ahead with extra care.

Another junction. Drop another glow-stick. Then onwards.

Along another tunnel, until they reach a partial blockage.

Sand and rocks have, at some stage, broken through a side-wall and spilled across the gap before freezing again, almost sealing the tunnel.

KIM  
Looks like a chamber at the other side. Pass me that ice-pick.

Kim HACKS at the frozen sand and rock. It's not compacted and she's able to CHOP it away in lumps. Clears a gap. Then she squeezes through, into a small

PERMAFROST CHAMBER

A taller, wider space than the tunnels, with a floor of sandy permafrost which slopes upwards to join a thin, translucent roof of ice. Darkness shows through from above.

KIM (CONT'D)  
Give me the GPR.

Shaw unslings the portable Ground Penetrating Radar unit from his shoulder. Hands it to Kim.

She climbs unsteadily up the ragged slope. Holds the flat, box-like unit against the ice roof. Takes a reading.

The box displays a geo-phys graphic of what's beyond.

KIM (CONT'D)

Yes! Thirty centimetres of ice,  
then nothing for three metres.  
We're under another cave.

A CRUMBLING sound -- and loosened clumps of frozen sand  
ROLL down the slope, near where she's standing.

Kim moves quickly off the unstable permafrost slope. Now  
that her weight is off it, all seems well.

KIM (CONT'D)

Let's get back. We can cut up  
through the roof when we need to.

She turns and leads the way -- getting on her knees to  
crawl back through the narrow gap, out of the chamber ...

Tentacles BURST out from the side wall and WHIP around  
Kim's arm.

She SCREAMS.

Simultaneously, a second clutch of thick tentacles PUSH  
outwards from the slope behind them.

They LATCH onto Shaw's legs -- barbs sinking in.  
He ROARS in pain and horror.

At the other end of the groping tentacles -- only half-  
glimpsed in the torchlight shadows -- a huge, slug-like  
body struggles to claw itself free from the permafrost.

CUT TO:

50

INT. SITE 3. NIGHT

50

Vincent is near the airlock, checking the explosive charges  
he found. Lane is still near the hole in the ice.

LANE

Vincent. I thought I heard  
something.

Vincent looks over at her -- then, on instinct, heads into  
the airlock to look out through the porthole.

VINCENT

Nothing happening out-- Wait!

VINCENT'S POV

Pugh, still standing outside with the other undead crew,  
turns his head as if alerted to something.

Looks away from the airlock and studies the rock-face else-  
where, as if looking for another cave.

Then he and Harrington turn. Walk away. Leaving Dalby and Brunel still guarding the airlock.

BACK TO SCENE

as Vincent dashes from the airlock and runs over to Lane.

VINCENT (CONT'D)  
Something's going on.

He grabs a torch -- not even stopping for his helmet -- and scrambles down the ladder into the ice-hole.

CUT TO:

51 INT. PERMAFROST CHAMBER. NIGHT 51

Quick glimpses of panic-stricken action in the narrow beams of torch-light:

Kim HACKS at the tentacles with the ice-pick.  
CHOPS clean through one of them.

Pulls her arm free from another tentacle with a YELL -- the barbs RIPPING lumps from her suit and her flesh.

Behind her, Shaw is engaged in a similar battle.  
KICKS furiously at the second creature.  
TEARS himself free.

He and Kim SCRAMBLE backwards ...

... as the undead creatures -- mummified like ancient mammoths in the permafrost but still animated even now -- try to squirm free from the frozen sand, tentacles groping.

The way out is blocked by one of the creatures -- but Shaw spots another half-collapsed tunnel in the torchlight.

They DIG furiously -- terror-stricken -- clearing a path.

CUT TO:

52 INT. ICE TUNNELS. NIGHT 52

Lane hurries down the ladder behind Vincent, who is already crawling along, shining the torch ahead.

VINCENT  
(a shout)  
Kim? Shaw?

An answering YELL, distant and echoing.

Vincent hesitates, sweating -- torn between his claustrophobic fear and the need to help.

It's crunch time -- but Lane's look says, 'I'm with you.'

LANE  
Blue sky. Big, open blue sky.

Her words -- and her presence -- do the trick. He forces himself forward, Lane following close behind.

CUT TO:

53

INT. PERMAFROST CHAMBER. NIGHT

53

Barely visible in the darkness, one of the creatures BREAKS completely free from the permafrost. SQUIRMS, slug-like, towards Shaw and Kim.

And as if things aren't bad enough, someone begins SMASHING at the ice-roof from above with a hammer.

Pugh.

His and Harrington's shapes are vaguely discernible above, through the cracked thickness of ice.

Kim CLEARS away a final obstruction and pushes herself through the gap ...

... but as she does so she dislodges a section of tunnel roof that CASCADES down behind her, blocking Shaw's exit.

He's again grabbed by the ankles as the creature closes in.

He tries to KICK himself free whilst CLAWING at the sand and rock -- Kim DIGGING furiously from the other side.

KIM (O.S.)  
I'm coming!

She BREAKS through.

Half-DRAGS Shaw through the gap, his legs RIPPING free from the lethal clutching tentacles ...

... and at that moment, Pugh SMASHES through the ice-roof.

BLAST of wind as the air immediately begins VENTING out through the hole -- being SUCKED through the ice-tunnels, from the pressurised cave, like a hurricane.

CUT TO:

54

INT. ICE TUNNELS. NIGHT

54

Vincent and Lane are knocked off their feet by the sudden suctioned BLAST of air.

Behind them, back in the cave, the life-support KLAXON begins screaming its warning.

VINCENT  
(shouting)  
Helmets. Got to go back!

Reluctantly, they drag themselves on hands and knees back towards the ladder.

CUT TO:

55 INT. ICE TUNNELS - ELSEWHERE. NIGHT 55

Shaw and Kim, meanwhile, quickly lock on their helmets --  
-- then begin struggling back along the tunnels as fast as  
then can go.

Shaw leads the way, torch-beam boring through the darkness.  
Fighting against the ongoing BLAST of air.

But this isn't the way they came in.

SHAW  
(panic-stricken)  
Which way?

KIM  
Left, go left.

Shaw heads down the left tunnel as Kim quickly shines her  
torch behind to see if they're being followed.

Big mistake.

Pugh and Harrington are crawling after them -- quicker and  
more co-ordinated than previously.

With an inarticulate MOAN of horror she SCUTTLES onwards,  
not looking back again.

CUT TO:

56 INT. SITE 3. NIGHT 56

Vincent and Lane pull themselves up through the hole in the  
ice. Here, the OUTFLOWING air is at it's strongest, and  
it's a struggle.

Lane makes it out first. Helps Vincent. Then they run to  
grab their helmets, Vincent shouting over the NOISE.

VINCENT  
Tanks are pumping out air, but  
once they're empty ...

They SNAP on their helmets and instantly get on the radio.

VINCENT (CONT'D)  
 (into helmet radio)  
 Kim, what's happening?

CUT TO:

57 INT. ICE TUNNELS. NIGHT

57

Shaw and Kim run past one of their glow-stick markers.  
 Battle on against the HEADWIND. Shaw still in front.

KIM  
 (into helmet radio)  
 Tunnels are breached. Pugh and  
 Harrington are inside.

VINCENT  
 (over radio)  
 Okay, we're coming.

KIM  
 No, stay there! Find something  
 to stop them.

Run past another glow-stick.

SHAW  
 Almost there.

KIM  
 This is where the roof was  
 unstable. Watch out for --

EXPLOSION of ice-crystals as Kim PLUNGES through the floor.

CRASHES down hard into a circular ice-pit -- smaller but  
 remarkably similar to the pit Pugh fell into ...

... except this one is already occupied.

Two more of the vile creatures are down there -- and they  
 squirm towards Kim.

KIM (CONT'D)  
 (screaming)  
 Shaw! Help me!

Shaw stops and looks down, horrified.

He tosses one end of the rope down to her.  
 She grabs it.  
 Pulls herself up, YELLING, as tentacles reach out for her.

Shaw takes the strain, pulling her up ...

... but then he spots Pugh and Harrington, scuttling towards him from along the tunnel beyond the pit.

And he drops the rope.

Kim SLAMS back down into the pit, and the two creatures instantly WHIP their tentacles around her.

Above, Shaw turns and runs.

Leaves Kim to her fate.

Her SCREAMS are abruptly cut off as one of the creatures pulls itself onto her -- and the huge slug-like mouth beneath the tentacles clamps over her face.

SHAW

stumbles blindly onwards, almost hysterical.

Looks behind once. Sees Pugh and Harrington stop by the pit in the tunnel floor, unable to get past.

But then they take a side-tunnel, looking for a way around the obstacle.

Shaw SCRAMBLES onwards, back towards the cave ...

... yet, even now, a fifth creature BREAKS free from a crumbling tunnel wall, grabbing at him as he runs past.

CUT TO:

58

INT. SITE 3. NIGHT

58

In the cave, Vincent and Lane make frantic preparations.

Vincent BREAKS the seal on the box of hand-held flares. Lane POURS the flammable chemicals into a spare helmet.

What the hell are they doing? We'll soon see.

Shaw CRIES OUT from the tunnel below.

Vincent stops what he's doing. Picks a huge screwdriver from a toolbox to use as a weapon.

Scrambles part-way down the ladder, hanging from it as he looks to see what's happening.

ICE TUNNEL

Along the tunnel, Shaw RIPS himself from the clutches of the last creature. Races towards Vincent, panic-stricken.

Vincent catches a brief glimpse of the creature. Reacts with horror.

Then Shaw arrives, frantic, almost climbing over Vincent.

VINCENT  
Where's Kim?

SHAW  
She's gone! Let me up!

There's no time for Vincent to react -- because Pugh and Harrington now appear along the tunnel, coming towards him.

Shit! He quickly CLAMBERS up the ladder, Shaw in tow ...

SITE 3

... and they jump up from the hole just as Pugh and Harrington arrive below.

Vincent tries to pull up the metal ladder, but Pugh and Harrington cling onto it from below.

Then Pugh begins climbing up.

VINCENT  
(to Lane)  
Okay, do it. Now!

Vincent FIRES UP a hand-held flare.  
Lane SPLASHES the chemicals down over Pugh.  
Then Vincent tosses the flare after it.

Pugh BURSTS into flames -- the rushing air FANNING the fire and turning him into a blazing human torch.

But even now, Pugh keeps coming.  
Claws his way out of the ice-hole.  
Flames ROAR around him, burning away both suit and flesh.

Vincent and Co. snatch up the flares and charges -- and the three of them run for the airlock ...

... with Pugh still lumbering after them, unstoppable.

CUT TO:

59 INT. SITE 3 - AIRLOCK. NIGHT

59

Lane SLAMS the airlock door behind them. HITS the button to CYCLE the air. They sag, catching their breath.

Visible through the outer porthole, Brunel and Dalby wait.

Visible through the inner porthole, Pugh approaches.

He's terribly burned but still functioning, the flames now dying as the air in the cave finally runs out. Beyond him, Harrington climbs from the ice hole.

Vincent & Co are caught between two equally perilous scenarios. Their faces reflect the dreadful predicament.

The air HISSES as it cycles, the gauge heading for green. In a matter of seconds, the outer door will unlock.

VINCENT

(to Shaw)

You positive Kim didn't make it?

SHAW

I saw it ... Those creatures ...

LANE

What? What's he talking about?

VINCENT

Animals ... reanimated. Still surviving down there.

Vincent shakes his head, sickened -- then manages to focus.

Because now -- in this moment of crisis -- the other two are looking to him to take the lead.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Buggy's our only hope. We take one, disable the other.

SHAW

My suit's torn.

VINCENT

Nothing we can do except turn your suit pressure down, slow the venting. But you can make it.

(to them both)

Ready?

Shaw adjusts his suit pressure, reluctant and terrified, then nods. Lane likewise.

Vincent pulls out three of the small excavation charges. Primes the digital clock on each -- five second delay.

The airlock gauge hits green. The outer-door locking-bolts CLUNK open.

Vincent CLICKS the switch on a charge. Opens the outer door and tosses it out. PULLS the door shut.

Brunel and Dalby move menacingly towards the door --

-- then they're BLASTED off their feet as the charge explodes like a grenade.

Shrapnel CLATTERS against the outside of airlock door -- then Vincent pushes it open and they run for their lives.

CUT TO:

60

EXT. SITE 3. NIGHT

60

They run straight for the buggies, parked nearby, ten metres apart, the rear doors still open ...

... but Shaw's suit begins VENTING air as soon as they're outside. It's a race against time.

They reach the first buggy.  
Vincent tosses two charges into the back as they pass.  
Run on towards the second buggy.

But Shaw is faltering, PANTING for air.

Brunel and Dalby are already climbing back to their feet -- chunks blown out of their flesh, but still coming back for more. Dalby still clutching the scalpel.

DOUBLE EXPLOSION as the two charges go off -- lifting the rear of the buggy off the ground before it CRASHES back down, a smoking wreck.

Shaw, Vincent and Lane are KNOCKED off their feet by the shockwave.

Brunel and Dalby are rocked sideways but they keep coming relentlessly -- their capability growing.

Shaw can't get up, GASPING -- so Lane and Vincent DRAG him.

They get him to the second buggy, pushing and pulling him up into the airlock ...

... but he's a dead-weight -- takes too long -- and just as they're pulling the door shut, Brunel and Dalby arrive.

Dalby YANKS the door back open.  
Vincent KICKS her in the stomach.  
Doubles her up, then STOMPS on her head.

She goes down, seemingly knocked senseless.

Now Brunel takes a turn.  
Grapples with Vincent, trying to pull him out.

Vincent almost falls -- but Lane BOOTS Brunel in the face.  
Knocks him backwards ...

... but as she reaches out to pull the door closed, Dalby suddenly leaps upwards again, fast and unexpected ...

PLUNGES the scalpel into Lane's stomach.

Lane CRIES OUT.  
 Vincent KICKS Dalby away once more.

Then he SLAMS the door just as Brunel comes at them again.

CUT TO:

61 INT. BUGGY 2. NIGHT

61

Brunel is POUNDING on the outer door as Vincent and Co collapse through the inner door into the passenger cabin.

Shaw is still GASPING for breath, Vincent is supporting the injured Lane.

VINCENT  
 (to Shaw)  
 Go, before they think to get the  
 tyres!

Shaw struggles to the front as Vincent lifts Lane onto the seats lining one wall. Quickly unzips her suit.

LANE  
 (pale)  
 I'm okay, I'm okay ...

But she's not. Blood is welling from the puncture-wound.

Vincent pulls off his gloves. Uses one to pad the wound, applying pressure, as Lane forces a brave face.

LANE (CONT'D)  
 You did it. You got us out.

VINCENT  
 (anguished)  
 You want me to celebrate?  
 (a shout)  
 Shaw, move it!

Up front, Shaw is POWERING UP the buggy ...

Jumps as Dalby suddenly BATTERS the windscreen beside him, trying to smash her way in with her fists.

Shaw JAMS the buggy into gear and LURCHES forwards, getting the hell out of there ...

... but the sudden forward momentum makes the inner airlock door -- which they'd purposely left open -- SLAM shut.

LANE  
 Shit, Vincent, the door!

Vincent makes a dash for it, stumbling off-balance because of the movement -- but it's too late.

Brunel's already hit the button outside and entered. The gauge begins CYCLING. Vincent is horrified.

VINCENT  
Brunel. Coming in.

Shaw peers back at him from the front in abject terror. Lane likewise. They've only got seconds to prepare.

Vincent begins a desperate search of the overhead lockers. Lane joins in, holding her injury with one hand.

Vincent finds a coil of rope, Lane grabs a heavy wrench -- and they take up position either side of the airlock door.

VINCENT (CONT'D)  
(to Lane)  
Brace yourself.  
(to Shaw)  
When I say, hit the brakes.

The airlock gauge reaches green. The door seal CRACKS open ...

VINCENT (CONT'D)  
Now!

Brakes JAM on -- and Brunel is THROWN forward through the airlock door. CRASHES to the floor.

Vincent and Lane are on top of him instantly.

Brunel THRASHES violently -- trying to throw them off whilst clawing at them with his hands.

Lane BELTS him repeatedly with the wrench but to no avail.

Finally, Shaw joins in. JUMPS onto Brunel's head and helps hold him down while Vincent hog-ties him with the rope.

Brunel continues struggling against the bonds for a few more moments ...

... then, chillingly, he seems to realise it's pointless. Suddenly lies deathly still.

But his eyes are still open, watching. Waiting.

Vincent, Lane and Shaw back away, exhausted and sickened. But the pressure is still on.

LANE  
The others will be following. We need to go.

Shaw nods, and quickly returns to the driver's seat.

CUT TO:

The calm after the storm.

The buggy PURRS onwards, rocking slightly as Vincent bandages a pressure-dressing around Lane's wound.

At the back of the cabin, Brunel has been dragged into a corner. He lies motionless -- but his clouded eyes remain locked on Vincent wherever he moves.

Vincent, for his part, keeps his eyes on Lane.

VINCENT

We need the med unit at base.

LANE

If I was bleeding out I'd already be hypotensive.

VINCENT

You still need --

LANE

Not gonna happen, so forget it.

Vincent tapes the bandage in place. It's all he can do.

For a moment they ride in silence. But they can no longer ignore Brunel's unblinking stare. Vincent looks at him.

VINCENT

It would be Brunel, wouldn't it.

LANE

They're getting quicker, did you notice? Learning how to use their bodies.

VINCENT

Question is, what do we do with him?

LANE

You don't suppose he ...

(pause)

What I mean is, they can drive, operate the airlocks ... So they must think. And remember.

VINCENT

That's what worries me.

LANE

I'm serious. If they remember then the brain - the memory - still works. And something of Brunel must still be in there.

VINCENT

(dubious)

Is a person just a collection of memories? Or is there something else?

LANE

A soul?

(shaking head)

I'm a biologist. But either way, maybe there's a way to get through to it. To him.

VINCENT

You mean, reason with it?

LANE

Okay, it sounds crazy, but it's a functioning entity, doing many of the things it did before. Look! If there's air, it even breathes.

Sure enough, Brunel's chest is rising and falling ...

... but then it stops abruptly -- as if he's deliberately taunting them.

LANE (CONT'D)

It's listening. It understands.

Vincent clearly doesn't think that's good news. Lane, for her part, isn't sure either way ...

... and Brunel now looks away from Vincent. Begins staring at Lane -- as if deciding to concentrate on her instead.

Lane is unsettled, but before any more can be said, Shaw slows the buggy. Stops. Joins them in the passenger cabin.

SHAW

Got to be far enough away by now.

He hovers, uncomfortable.

SHAW (CONT'D)

Thanks, by the way. For pulling me along.

VINCENT

What happened back there? To Kim, I mean?

SHAW

The tunnel floor caved in. Two of those creatures got her.

(pause)

I couldn't do anything ...

VINCENT

Okay.

SHAW

I know I haven't been handling things very well ... It's just --

VINCENT

I said, okay.

Shaw belatedly drops it. Self-conscious, he changes the subject, gesturing at Brunel.

SHAW

They knew me and Kim were in the ice tunnels. How did they know?

Vincent shakes his head -- then he thinks about it further.

VINCENT

I saw Pugh reacting to something, but he can't have heard your shouts. Not from outside.

LANE

(to Shaw)

Did Pugh find you before or after those creatures appeared?

SHAW

After.

LANE

Maybe that's it. Both animals and humans are reanimated by the same bacteria, so ...

They exchange glances of unease, thinking the same thing.

VINCENT

Species intelligence. Collective consciousness.

LANE

What one sees, they all see.

They look at Brunel with renewed revulsion.

CUT TO:

63

EXT. LANDSLIP ZONE. NIGHT

63

Brunel's body THUMPS down to the ground -- dropped from the back of the buggy. Shaw and Vincent DRAG it away through the dust. Lane holds a torch, illuminating their path.

They've stopped near a jagged landslip zone scarred by deep fissures in the ground. Magnificent moonlit desolation.

After a few yards they dump the body and step away. Even now, Brunel continues looking at Lane.

LANE

You realise this won't make any difference. If they want to come after us, all they have to do is follow the tracks of the buggy.

VINCENT

Maybe so, but it'll make me feel better.

SHAW

So we just leave him?

VINCENT

Why not? He can't move.

Lane interrupts, spotting something.

LANE

Oh, I don't believe it ...

She's looking out across the moonlit plain. In the far distance, two tiny human figures head towards them steadily, remorselessly.

LANE (CONT'D)

They're not gonna quit. They're gonna follow us wherever we go.

SHAW

Two. Why only two?

Lane quickly crosses back to the buggy. Opens a utility box at the side and pulls out a pair of digital binoculars.

Zooms in on the advancing pair.

LANE'S POV - THROUGH BINOCULARS

A grainy, enhanced, night-scope image of the two figures. One clearly has Harrington's slim physique. The other, defined by her distinct figure and hair, is Kim.

She's carrying the ice-pick. Something appears to be wrong with her face -- but she's too far away to see clearly.

BACK TO SCENE

LANE

(chilled)

One of them's Kim.

Shaw turns white -- shaking his head as if it was something he had never anticipated: Kim returning. Coming for him.

LANE (CONT'D)  
Which means Pugh and Dalby are  
somewhere else.

She scans the rest of the horizon, anxious. Sees nothing. Vincent, meanwhile, turns back to Brunel.

VINCENT  
Once they get here they'll free  
him - and we're outnumbered  
enough as it is.

Shaw finally looks away from the distant Kim. Briefly shaken, he's now calm. As if the shock has, paradoxically, snapped him back to his old, confident, logical self.

SHAW  
(re: Brunel)  
Cut him up. Into pieces.

LANE  
God almighty, you can't be ser--

SHAW  
Then use the explosives.

VINCENT  
Only one charge left. We need it.

Shaw looks at one of the nearby fissures. Grabs Brunel by his suit's metal O-ring collar and begins DRAGGING him.

SHAW  
Give me a hand.

Vincent joins in. DRAGS Brunel to a long, deep fissure -- only two metres wide, but seemingly bottomless.

They lie him next to the edge -- then hesitate, as if reluctant to commit the final act of destruction.

Shaw is the first to reach down to roll the body into the fissure -- but Brunel's face suddenly changes.

His expression registers fear -- his clouded eyes pleading.

Shaw recoils involuntarily. Lane is similarly shaken.

LANE  
He's aware. He's frightened.  
(to Brunel)  
Brunel ...

SHAW  
It's a trick.

Brunel moves his lips. Silently mouths "Help me."

LANE  
He's trying to speak.

VINCENT  
Shaw's right, he's faking. He's working on you.

LANE  
But think about it for a second. If he really sees what they see, we could use him against them.

VINCENT  
It's not Brunel.

LANE  
How do we know? He could be fighting it ... fighting whatever's controlling him ...

SHAW  
He's dead! How could he fight it?

LANE  
How can he walk? Do anything? We don't have the first fucking clue what's going on inside --

Shaw KICKS Brunel over the edge.

A last fleeting glimpse of Brunel's horrified expression -- then the body drops, CRASHING against the sides until it vanishes into the black depths.

End of discussion. Lane can't believe it.

CUT TO:

64 INT. BUGGY 2. NIGHT

64

Lane enters ahead of the others, still fuming, clutching her stomach in pain.

She UNZIPS her suit and sees that she's bleeding again.

LANE  
Shit!!

Shaw tries to pass her to get to the driving seat -- but she blocks his path, her anger boiling over.

LANE (CONT'D)  
Who says you decide where we go?

SHAW

What?

LANE

I'm tired of being bounced around without having a say.

VINCENT

Lane, they're coming. We need --

LANE

And if you hadn't let Kim take charge we wouldn't be in this mess. I'm not gonna die out here! Do you get me?

VINCENT

Alright. Okay. Let's hear it.

Lane breathes hard for a moment, calming herself.

LANE

The buggy's solar-powered, and it's night. The batteries won't last forever. That's number one.

(pause)

Two, we've only got so much air. We need to know the numbers. Conserve it.

Vincent nods, reluctant to interrupt but doing so.

VINCENT

Do me a favour. While we're talking, switch on the radar.

Lane relents. Reaches into the front cabin and FLICKS on the radar. It begins BLEEPING -- two traces closing in.

SHAW

Three hundred metres.

LANE

Third, before we move, I need to know we have a plan. Something that's actually gonna work.

VINCENT

Shaw, why'n't you check the O2 gauges - and watch that radar.

Shaw moves to the front, while Vincent racks his brain.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Okay ...  
(thinking aloud)  
(MORE)

VINCENT (CONT'D)

If we could reach the base transmitter we can warn the relief ship. Get them to land somewhere else and meet us.

SHAW

You really think those things'd leave the base unguarded?

VINCENT

Probably not. But we can't keep running forever.

LANE

We need some way to hide the tracks. Stop them following.

VINCENT

(shaking head)

There's dust in every direction.

(getting an idea)

Unless we could find a storm ...

Suddenly buoyed, Vincent and Lane join Shaw up front. Ignoring the approaching BLEEPS Vincent switches through different modes on the radar.

But he's quickly disappointed.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Nothing within range. We need to find a weather front.

LANE

Then let's go for it. At least there's a hope.

But meanwhile Shaw has been checking the O2 numbers on a calculator. He looks at Vincent and Lane, shocked.

SHAW

No go. There's not enough air.

Shocked, Vincent quickly rechecks the gauges. Then again runs the numbers through a calculator.

He's visibly stunned.

VINCENT

Barely two-thirds of what we need.

The words take several moments to sink in. It's a death sentence -- for all of them, or at the very least, one ...

... and when they look at each other again, they do so through the filter of that new-found knowledge.

Finally, numb, Vincent switches the radar-mode back to proximity alert. The two BLEEPs are dangerously close.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

We have to go.

This time, Lane doesn't object. Vincent climbs into the driver's seat and POWERS UP.

CUT TO:

65

INT. BUGGY 2. NIGHT

65

They're driving in silence -- Lane in the co-driver's seat, Vincent at the controls, Shaw perched on the seat just inside the passenger cabin.

Feeling Shaw's eyes on her, Lane glances back. Sure enough, Shaw is gazing at her, his mind ticking over.

Lane clearly doesn't welcome the cold scrutiny -- and after a second, Shaw looks away.

Lane shifts her attention to Vincent. He's lost in his thoughts, gazing ahead blankly.

On the radar screen the two traces, still BLEEPING, have receded back to the edge of the screen.

Seeing the pursuing figures are now at a safe distance, Vincent slows. Makes a decision.

VINCENT

No choice. We need to head for the base and take our chances.

LANE

I thought we'd already decided it was suicide?

VINCENT

We need O2. It's either that, or one of us gets off the ride here.  
(on Lane's look)  
It's what we're all thinking, isn't it?

LANE

Some of us, obviously.

She glances at Shaw, who avoids her look. Vincent SIGHS.

VINCENT

This is where one of us nobly steps up and volunteers.

LANE

Usually the injured party, isn't it?

VINCENT

I was thinking more of the Captain.

(pause)

Except this is real life. And I'd rather go down fighting for half a chance.

LANE

Even if it means ending up as one of those things?

Vincent shrugs. There's no answer to it. He looks at Lane for a moment longer -- and she finally nods. "Go for it".

Vincent turns the wheel and ACCELERATES, circling back -- but Shaw speaks up.

SHAW

Whoa, don't I get a say?

VINCENT

If you've got a better idea, yes.

SHAW

Pugh and Dalby are gonna be waiting for us, you realise that? Assuming they haven't already emptied the oxygen tanks and smashed the transmitter.

VINCENT

Like I said, half a chance.

SHAW

And what the hell do we fight them with?

VINCENT

I dunno, Shaw! Whatever happened to the power of positive thinking? You used to be full of it!

Shaw suddenly lunges for the throttle to power down.

SHAW

Stop this thing and talk. You've no right --

Vincent elbows him away -- Shaw pushes back -- and just as it looks as if there's going to be a scrap, Lane steps in.

LANE

Wait! Knock it off!

They pause, looking at her half-sheepish, half-expectant.

LANE (CONT'D)  
There might be another way.

CUT TO:

66 EXT. MARE BOREUM. NIGHT 66

The buggy crawls along the shoreline towards Site Nine -- the headlights now dim, barely illuminating the way ahead.

CUT TO:

67 INT. BUGGY 2. NIGHT 67

Filled with trepidation, Vincent steers cautiously towards the familiar rock ridge, behind which is Site Nine.

VINCENT  
This could be a blind alley.

LANE  
No point putting up a storm-shelter at the camp if there's no oxygen to ride out a storm.

VINCENT  
Good point.

They head onwards. To their right, out over the oceanic plain, a distant bolt of lightning briefly splits the sky.

Vincent and Lane exchange a look that says, "Typical".

VINCENT (CONT'D)  
Just when you don't need one.

Lane smiles -- then they're around the rock ridge and

SITE 9

comes into view. Vincent stops a short distance away. Studies the seemingly deserted camp.

All is as it was left: storm-shelter, scattered equipment, and the yawning pit.

The weak headlights cast pools of black shadow behind the piles of equipment and surrounding rock outcrops -- any one of which could hide a waiting enemy.

The radar is inconclusive -- the geology throwing back multiple returns -- the only movement being the two traces following relentlessly behind at the edge of the screen.

They continue to eye the site warily. Then:

VINCENT (CONT'D)  
No sense wasting the batteries.

He gets up and heads reluctantly into the passenger cabin, Lane following. Shaw watches silently, thoughtfully, as Vincent picks up a helmet.

Lane helps him, checking his suit-seals. There's both a hint of apology, and intimacy, in her actions.

LANE  
Guess there's no point me saying  
'be careful'.

VINCENT  
Hey, I'm no hero. Just don't go  
anywhere without me.

A further look between them -- but as Vincent lifts on his helmet, Shaw suddenly speaks up.

SHAW  
I'll go.

Lane and Vincent look at him, taken aback. He appears torn and remorseful.

SHAW (CONT'D)  
I've got some making up to do.  
Let's leave it at that, okay?

Then he takes the helmet and puts it on quickly, as if fearful of changing his mind.

Grabs a torch -- plus the wrench Lane used as a weapon previously -- and steps into the airlock.

CUT TO:

68 EXT. SITE 9. NIGHT

68

Shaw opens the rear door of the buggy. Shines the torch around, checking for danger, then warily climbs down.

He creeps towards the camp, staying within the cones of illumination thrown by the headlights.

VINCENT  
(over radio)  
First hint of movement, get the  
hell back in here.

Shaw doesn't reply. He's sweating, his entire being focussed on his surroundings. Menacing shadows all around.

About twenty metres ahead is the creepy black maw of the pit, but he needn't go near it. The equipment caches and storm-shelter are closer by.

He approaches a cargo container. Makes to open it -- then pauses, suddenly afraid of what it may contain.

Holding the wrench ready to strike, he FLIPS up the lid.

Nothing.

He moves on to the compact, plastic, two-man storm-shelter.

He pauses, BREATHING hard. Girds himself once again -- then WRENCHES open the door.

Nobody inside.

However, there are boxes and filled ruck-sacks in the corner, containing water and emergency supplies --

-- and, hallelujah! Three portable tanks of O2.

Shaw can't prevent a GROAN of relief escaping his lips.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

(over radio)

What is it? Have you found it?

Shaw is about to answer -- but then he pauses, brooding.

LANE

(over radio)

What're you waiting for? Bring it in.

SHAW

I don't think I will.

CUT TO:

69

INT. BUGGY 2. NIGHT

69

Through the windscreen, Lane and Vincent look at Shaw in the distance, stunned by his comment.

VINCENT

(into radio)

What are you saying, Shaw?

SHAW

(over radio)

If we split up, we stand a better chance.

VINCENT

How do you figure that?

SHAW

They're following the buggy.  
That'll leave me free to move  
around on foot. More chance that  
one of us can get to the Lander  
before those things do.

Vincent and Lane exchange a look, not buying it.

VINCENT

Problem is, there were three of  
us in here breathing the air for  
too long. Won't be enough left  
now even for two of us.

SHAW

There will if you're careful.

VINCENT

We need those cylinders.

Shaw doesn't reply -- and Lane loses it.

LANE

Shaw, you son of a bitch!

SHAW

What, you think this is about me  
saving my own skin? I'm trying  
to save all of us.

VINCENT

I'm gonna give you three seconds.

SHAW

Listen, you'd better get going.  
They won't be far behind, now.

Lane and Vincent glance at the radar. The two pursuing  
traces have moved significantly closer. Decision time.

VINCENT

Shaw's lost it. I'm going out.

SHAW

(over radio)

Just go! You're gonna bring  
those things down on all of us!

But Vincent grabs his helmet and continues out.

CUT TO:

Shaw panics. Dodges into the shelter. Empties a ruck-sack  
of it's supplies and jams in the oxygen cylinders.

DRAGS it outside, hoists it over his shoulder, turns to make his escape --

-- and runs smack-bang into Pugh.

Shaw YELLS in abject fear.

Swings the tanks into Pugh, KNOCKING him backwards, then runs back towards the buggy ...

... but Dalby steps quickly out from behind a boulder, blocking his path with scalpel in hand.

SHAW  
Vincent! Help me!

He takes off in a third direction -- but Pugh has already recovered and closed in from behind.

SMASHES Shaw across the shoulder with the hammer. Sends him CRASHING to the ground in agony.

Then Dalby closes in with the scalpel ...

VINCENT

hears Shaw's SCREAMS over the radio as he jumps from the rear door of the buggy. Rushes to help.

But it's too late. Dalby is crouched over Shaw, STABBING him repeatedly.

Pugh has already broken off and is coming towards the buggy, carrying one of the O2 cylinders.

Vincent back-tracks instantly ...

... only to see Kim and Harrington closing in from the rear, twenty metres away. A pincer movement.

Now we can see Kim's face -- half eaten-away, bone exposed.

Vincent SCRAMBLES back inside the buggy airlock, horrified.

CUT TO:

71 INT. BUGGY 2. NIGHT

71

Lane climbs quickly into the driver's seat as Vincent shouts over the radio from the airlock.

VINCENT  
I'm inside. Go!

She POWERS UP as Pugh comes straight towards the wind-screen, swinging the O2 tank like a club.

SMASHES it against the reinforced glass.  
Lane CRUNCHES the gears, unable to get into reverse.

Pugh SMASHES the windscreen again.  
CRACKS it.

Into gear and Lane THROTTLES up -- sending the buggy LURCHING backwards as Pugh BASHES the glass once more, lengthening the crack.

Lane tries to steer via the side-mirror.  
Can't see where the hell she's going.  
CRASHES the buggy into a huge boulder, stalling.

Now, Kim and Harrington begin POUNDING at the back of the buggy, while Dalby abandons Shaw's sprawled body and joins in the attack.

Vincent finally CLAMBERS into the cabin from the airlock and runs to the front.

SMASH against the windscreen yet again and a fine plume of air begins HISSING out through the crack.

VINCENT (CONT'D)  
Get us out of here.

LANE  
What the fuck do you think I'm --

JAMS the gears into drive and POWERS forwards ...

... CRUNCHING into Pugh and ROLLING OVER him with the balloon tyres before swinging in an arc and getting the Christ away from there. Out across the plain.

Vincent grabs a spray from an overhead locker. SQUIRTS epoxy foam over the crack in the glass. Seals it.

But they're still not out of the woods.

The dashboard lights begin to dim, the WHIRR of the engine faltering.

LANE (CONT'D)  
Barely making twelve MPH.  
They'll catch up.

Multiple pursuing traces BLEEP from the radar, but Vincent desperately switches modes.

VINCENT  
Where the hell is that storm ...?  
(pause)  
There! Ninety-six degrees east.

Lane alters course as Vincent begins THROWING switches, turning off everything they don't need.

In darkness, the buggy WHIRRS slowly onwards -- sickly -- while Vincent and Lane hold their breath.

Willing the buggy onwards with every fibre of their being.

Then, a bolt of dry-lightning CRACKS down to the left, and the next moment they're BUFFETED by a gust of wind.

On their palpable relief

CUT TO:

72

EXT. MARE BOREUM. NIGHT

72

The buggy ROLLS along, leaving furrows in the sand -- but within moments the tracks are scoured away by the wind.

Nearby, a TWISTER forms in the airborne dust-cloud, burns out briefly, then forms again, growing in strength. More dry-lightning CRACKLES, rending the air.

Finally, the buggy stops, now barely visible through the swirling dust. The last of the lights wink out.

CUT TO:

73

INT. BUGGY 2. NIGHT

73

It's later. Outside, the wind HOWLS. Inside, Vincent and Lane huddle opposite each other in the darkness.

Vincent rests, eyes closed, recovering. Lane quietly opens up her suit and dressing to look at her wound. Her t-shirt is soaked with blood -- and the wound is badly infected.

She covers it up again.

LANE

Air's getting thick.

Vincent opens his eyes. Looks at his watch.

VINCENT

Nine hours before they make orbit. If they come down immediately instead of waiting...

He's trying to sound hopeful, but Lane's not buying it.

LANE

I'm ... I'm frightened.

VINCENT

Hey, nobody's giving up. Not yet.

LANE

The more those things got it  
together, the more we fell apart.  
(pause)  
All except you.

VINCENT

(a snort)  
You definitely need more oxygen.

Lane smiles, comforted by his humour.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

But you're right about one thing.  
They've run rings around us.

LANE

They keep getting better. More  
co-ordinated. What next?

VINCENT

They must have limits. They may  
think, but they don't create.  
They just destroy and use.

LANE

Do you think they can feel? I  
mean, emotion?

VINCENT

No. They'll never be like us.

Their eyes connect and hold -- and Vincent's generic 'us'  
suddenly takes on a much more intimate resonance.

It becomes a silent, mutual declaration of affection ...

... broken only when Lane winces, in pain.

LANE

Wound's infected.

VINCENT

(a flicker of anguish)  
You're alive. Your body will  
fight it.

LANE

Without antibiotics? Even with  
them there'd be no guarantees.

Vincent struggles, not knowing what to say. Lane lets him  
off the hook. Speaks in his place, introspective.

LANE (CONT'D)

I never believed in the soul ...  
But if it exists, what happens if  
your body can't find peace?

VINCENT

You're wondering, is it still in there? Trapped inside?

(pause)

Better pray it isn't.

LANE

Suppose Brunel really did know what was happening to him. Do you think he could've found a way to resist? Even for a short while?

VINCENT

(unconvincing)

Maybe.

LANE

That's the worst thing I can imagine. For some part of you to still be aware after death, but have no control ...

(pause)

I don't want to be like that, Vincent. I'm gonna try --

VINCENT

Shhh.

It's not a command to be quiet, it's a hush to a child at bedtime. A reassurance that all will be well.

She looks at him, grateful. She seems to want to say more, but doesn't know how. Yet, her eyes carry the message.

Without a word, Vincent eases up his aching body and crosses the cabin, huddling down next to her. Puts a comforting arm around her shoulder. She welcomes it.

They close their eyes.

CUT TO:

74

INT. BUGGY 2. NIGHT

74

Vincent opens his eyes. For a moment, he can't remember where he is -- then the HOWLING wind reminds him.

He realises Lane is no longer next to him. Looks around for her in the darkness.

She's standing by the airlock, her back to him.

LANE

It's cold outside ...

Then she turns to face him. Her eyes are clouded.

LANE (CONT'D)  
... so I let them in.

She opens the airlock door -- and Dalby steps out, scalpel in hand, the others following behind ...

CUT TO:

75 INT. BUGGY 2. NIGHT

75

Vincent SHAKES himself awake.

Rouses Lane at the same time. She's still huddled next to him. The wind outside has eased to an occasional GUST.

He looks around, still wired from the nightmare -- and spots the 'INCOMING COMMUNICATION' light flashing on the dashboard, triggered automatically.

A moment of disbelief -- then he hurries to the radio.

LANE  
What is it?

A BURST of static -- then, over the speaker ...

AURORA COMMANDER  
... standard orbit and preparing an emergency descent. Clear the landing area near the base. If you're receiving, please respond.

VINCENT  
Holy shit, they're here! They must've burned fuel when they lost contact.

Hope surges through them as Vincent picks up the head-set.

VINCENT (CONT'D)  
Don't know if we've got enough juice, but ...  
(into radio)  
Aurora, this is Tantalus acting-commander, come in.

Nothing.

VINCENT (CONT'D)  
Aurora, this is --

AURORA COMMANDER  
If anyone's receiving, we'll be down ASAP. Out.

VINCENT  
They can't hear us.

Anguished, Vincent climbs in the driver's seat. POWERS UP.

LANE

At least they know something's wrong. They won't --

HARRINGTON

Aurora, Tantalus base receiving.

Harrington's flat, hollow voice coming over the radio hits them like a slap in the face.

VINCENT

It can't be. It's Harrington!

AURORA COMMANDER

Christ, Tantalus, what the hell? You've been off-line for thirteen hours. Status report.

HARRINGTON

Power failure. Need assistance, but ready to receive you.

LANE

(a yell)

For God's sake, don't listen to him! Aurora, that's not --

AURORA COMMANDER

Copy, Tantalus, glad to know we can breathe again. All hands ready to assist. Stand by.

Reeling, Vincent CRUNCHES the buggy into gear and THROTTLES UP to the best speed the dwindling batteries can make.

CUT TO:

76

EXT. TANTALUS RIFT VALLEY. NIGHT

76

A black sky awash with brilliant stars, all deathly still.

But through them moves one particularly bright star, crossing the heavens gracefully.

As we watch, a smaller star breaks away from it and begins a slow, steady descent.

Meanwhile, below, Vincent and Lane's buggy struggles over the crest of a rise ...

... then begins to pick up speed on a long, shallow incline down into the rift valley.

CUT TO:

77

INT. BUGGY 2. NIGHT

77

Vincent KNOCKS the buggy out of gear and allows gravity to take over. The speedo climbs to twenty. Twenty-five.

Far ahead down the length of the valley, barely visible in the distance, are the lights of the dome.

Meanwhile, Vincent's mind churns through his options.

VINCENT

If we're too late, I'm gonna ram  
the Lander.

(she looks at him)

If those things get up to the  
Orbiter ... get back home ...

She nods. "Do it."

The speedo's up to thirty-five and Vincent is having a job avoiding boulders. But no choice. Can't afford to slow.

They hit the bottom of the incline and race onwards.

Vincent looks up momentarily ...

Sees the Lander, the squat insect-shape now clearly visible -- it's trajectory taking it slowly down towards the base.

... then he looks forwards again, too late.

A ridge -- too close to avoid -- and they SLAM over it.

The buggy is airborne for a second before CRASHING down, the wheels digging in and SKEWING to the left ...

... then the buggy SMASHES full-on into an outcrop of rock.

Vincent and Lane are pitched forwards, SLAMMING into the dashboard, Lane hitting awkwardly. She CRIES in pain.

Vincent GOOSESES the throttle, trying to get going again -- but is answered only by a sick, impotent WHINE. No go.

Fuck!!

Almost sobbing with anguish, he grabs a helmet, jams it onto Lane, then snatches another for himself.

LOCKS it on then immediately HITS the 'EMERGENCY DE-COMPRESSION' button.

EXPLOSIVE HISS as the air VENTS from the cabin and the airlock doors SPRING open simultaneously on auto.

He grabs Lane and drags her from the buggy.

CUT TO:

78

EXT. TANTALUS RIFT VALLEY. NIGHT

78

Abandoning the buggy, Vincent and Lane run desperately onwards -- but there's still several hundred metres to go.

Ahead and above, the Lander FIRES its retros, braking to a hover near the base.

Meanwhile, underneath, five fully-suited figures walk calmly out of the base, assembling to wait for touchdown.

One of them even raises an arm. Waves to the Lander.

VINCENT

Everything looks normal. They're gonna land and open up.

But Lane is lagging behind, GASPING, barely able to answer.

LANE

Vincent ... can't make it ...

She struggles on a little further, then collapses, SOBBING.

Vincent pulls up. Back-tracks to help her -- but is shocked when he sees her drawn, deathly-pale face.

LANE (CONT'D)

Bleeding again ... You go on ...

VINCENT

(torn)

I'll come back. Do you hear?  
I'll come back for you.

She manages a weak nod -- but as he tries to rise, she clings on to him, as if having second thoughts ...

... then, she lets go. Vincent reluctantly gets up and runs onwards, hugging the rock outcrop for cover.

The Lander is on final descent, ENGINES FIRING, insect legs splayed for landing. Dust billows underneath -- then she's down, settling on the springs as the ENGINE cuts out.

The dust clears, and the five waiting, suited figures approach the Lander, helmets hiding their dreadful faces.

Vincent staggers closer, SHOUTING into the helmet radio, switching through the channels on his wrist control panel.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Aurora, do not open up, repeat,  
do not open up ...

But the hatch on the front of the Lander opens and the AURORA COMMANDER climbs down -- followed one after the other by the remaining seven RELIEF CREW.

The undead calmly wait in a group, letting the others disembark as the Commander approaches.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Aurora, no!

Too late, he hits the correct frequency on his radio. HEARS a brief word of greeting from the Commander --

-- then the undead strike.

Stabbing, cutting, hacking -- smiting down the unarmed relief crew one-by-one -- mercilessly and relentlessly.

With the SCREAMS of the victims in his ears, Vincent collapses to his knees in abject despair.

He can't bear to look. Can't bear to listen. Switches the radio channel so he doesn't have to. Then ...

LANE

(over radio)

Vincent ...

Desolate, he looks around. Lane is about twenty metres behind, approaching unsteadily, leaning against the rock outcrop for support.

Too shocked and exhausted to move, he waits for her, looking back towards the Lander with utter resignation.

VINCENT

Got one charge left ... blow up the ship. We're finished anyway.

Lane doesn't answer -- and Vincent suddenly senses something amiss.

He spins around, alert.

Lane pauses a few feet away, steadying herself against the rock -- looking back at him with dead, clouded eyes.

This time, it's for real. Vincent's face registers sick horror -- but Lane's expression pleads for help.

LANE

Vincent ... It's still me.

Is it really still Lane speaking? Or is it a lure? Vincent hesitates, torn.

LANE (CONT'D)

It's not like we said. I can fight it ...

She takes a step closer but her knees buckle, weak -- and Vincent instinctively reaches out to keep her upright ...

VINCENT

It's okay. I'm here.

... holds her tenderly for one brief moment ...

SCREAM of rage as she abruptly turns on him, SMASHING his helmet back against the rock face, fingers CLAWING at the seal, trying to twist it off.

Vincent tries to push her away, but she's all over him. BASHES his helmet against the rock again.

He SLUMPS down beneath her, dazed.  
Lane TEARS at the oxygen hose on his back.  
Trying to rip it out.

For a second it's almost as if he can't bear to fight back.

Then he grabs a rock.  
Twists around.  
SMASHES it clean through Lane's visor.

Lane staggers, blinded by blood and shards of glass sticking in her eyes.

Vincent WRENCHES off her helmet and tosses it aside so she can't use the radio -- then spins her around and PUSHES her with all his strength. Sends her SPRAWLING flat-out.

She rolls onto her knees, disorientated -- groping for him, but unable to see.

He looks at her one last time, utterly bereft ...

... then, with a shudder of anguish and disgust, he turns and runs, still hugging the rocks, towards the

LANDER

which is already powering up with a WHINE of turbines as his undead colleagues climb aboard, wasting no time.

The relief crew lay sprawled on the ground, dead.

Vincent pauses at the end of the rock outcrop, still unseen, the Lander now only about fifty metres away. He catches his breath -- only one chance to get this right.

The last man aboard, Shaw -- now reanimated and integrated into the group -- pauses outside the hatch.

He scans the terrain one last time, sensing something ...

... then, seeing nothing, he climbs in. Closes the hatch.

Vincent immediately breaks cover and runs, PANTING for breath, across the open ground to the Lander.

He steps over the relief-crew's bodies as the Aurora Commander -- sprawled face-down, dead -- begins to stir.

Vincent climbs quickly up the ladder. Pulls open the hatch and -- as the WHINE of the turbines abruptly increases -- clammers inside.

CUT TO:

79

INT. LANDER - AIRLOCK. NIGHT

79

A cramped, cube-shaped space. Vincent closes the hatch behind him, the noise masked by the incredible RACKET from the turbines.

He looks up at the inner-hatch, above his head, expecting it to be pulled open at any second ...

... but his entry remains undetected. He cautiously inches closer to the tiny inspection-slit in the hatch.

VINCENT'S POV

Up inside the cabin of the Lander, his undead colleagues are taking their flight seats, Kim already strapped in at the controls.

She reaches forward and presses a button.

BACK TO SCENE

as Vincent is SLAMMED backwards by the sudden G-forces.

CUT TO:

80

EXT. TANTALUS RIFT VALLEY. NIGHT

80

ROAR of engines as the ascent-stage of the Lander BLASTS upwards into the night sky ...

... the downward thrust SEARING the bodies of the relief crew just as they're stirring into reanimation.

CUT TO:

81

INT. LANDER - AIRLOCK. NIGHT

81

Vincent is hyperventilating -- squashed back against the deck in the claustrophobic space -- buffeted by the incredible VIBRATION and the ROAR of the engines.

We can imagine what inner-demons he's fighting, as we've seen a hint of it already. His face tells us the rest.

He screws his eyes shut. Rides it out.

And as they reach escape-velocity, the G-forces slowly begin to ease.

He opens his eyes. Gets a grip. Remembers what it is he has to do.

He reaches into one of his pockets. Pulls out the last remaining explosive charge.

Sets the digital LED display on the side of the small cylinder. Ten-second countdown.

A final moment of hesitation -- extinction staring him in the face -- then he FLICKS the switch.

Closes his eyes.

9 .. 8 .. 7 .. 6 .. 5 .. 4 .. 3 .. 2 .. 1 ...

A beat.

Nothing happens.

Vincent opens his eyes, adrenaline awash in his system.

The LED display is flashing 'ERROR'.

He fumbles with the device. Resets for five seconds. Repeats the whole process. Watches the countdown ...

'ERROR'.

The look on Vincent's face is almost indescribable -- a mixture of rage, anguish and despair.

CUT TO:

82

EXT. MARS ORBIT. NIGHT

82

The Lander makes orbit and the ENGINES finally cut out.

Far below, the eerie red Martian surface is still in darkness, flashes of lightning arcing through the atmosphere.

The Lander closes quickly on a larger craft -- the Orbiter -- matching the latter's speed ready for docking.

The Orbiter consists of a thin central tube with a Command Module at one end and the engines at the other. To either side of the tube are huge cylindrical living-quarters. The entire ship can be spun on it's axis to simulate gravity.

The Lander FIRES it's control jets and glides in towards a docking portal at the Orbiter's mid-point.

CUT TO:

83

INT. LANDER - AIRLOCK. NIGHT

83

A muffled CLUNK and the Lander JOLTS violently, docking. Then all is still.

Impotent and terrified, Vincent inches closer to the inspection slit. Peers into the cabin above.

VINCENT'S POV

as his undead crew-mates open up the docking hatch and, one by one, pull themselves through in the zero-gravity.

BACK TO SCENE

Vincent opens up the visor on his helmet, taking several deep, steadying breaths as he thinks.

Then he remembers something. Rifles through the utility pockets of his suit.

Pulls out the last of the hand-held flares --

-- and his face registers the formulation of one last, desperate idea.

He peers again through the inspection slit. All clear.

Then he silently opens the inner hatch and pulls himself up into the

LANDER CABIN

Every spare inch is crammed with supplies and oxygen cylinders, destined for the surface but never unloaded.

He eyes the supplies briefly -- then squeezes between the crew seats, fast and graceful in the zero-G, and pauses at the docking hatch.

CUT TO:

84

INT. ORBITER - CENTRAL TUBE. NIGHT

84

Vincent peers out from the docking hatch, almost sick with fear but determined to carry out his plan.

He's in a circular tube about thirty metres long and two metres wide, ladders running the entire length.

Gloomy red emergency lighting is the only illumination.

At the bottom end of the tube is the Engine Module, at the top end, the Command Module -- and this is where his undead colleagues are heading.

One by one, they're pulling themselves up the ladder and through the hatch into the Command Module. Their movements are now fluid, fast and co-ordinated -- in total control.

Meanwhile, Vincent is aiming elsewhere. Slightly above him and to either side are access hatches into the twin cylindrical living-quarters.

He waits for the last of the undead to climb up into the Command Module -- then he glides out of the docking hatch and pushes himself upwards.

If one of the undead looks down now from the open Command Module hatch, Vincent is finished ...

... but he remains undetected -- and within moments he ducks sideways into the

#### LIVING-QUARTERS

Gets his bearings in the compartmentalised, cylindrical space. He knows the ship's layout and immediately goes right, heading towards the service area.

Floats through a doorway -- and immediately freezes.

Harrington is dead ahead, his back to Vincent.

He's working at a control panel, but he begins to turn ...

Christ! Vincent quickly pulls himself behind cover, between banks of equipment.

Did Harrington see him? He daren't look.

A second later, Harrington floats past Vincent's hiding place, unaware. Heading back out into the central tube.

Sweating, Vincent emerges from hiding. Heads onwards.

A background HUM begins, then another at a higher PITCH, as ship-systems begin to be brought on-line.

Vincent pauses briefly by the control panel Harrington was using. Looks at the status-display on the monitor.

Even as he watches, a series of warning icons switch from red to green, then a larger icon appears on the screen -- 'MAIN ENGINES' -- and a six-minute countdown is triggered.

Holy crap! Vincent springs back into action. Pushes himself onwards, through a bulk-head hatch into the

#### SERVICE AREA

RIPS a panel from a wall -- making NOISE but no time to worry -- revealing a densely-packed row of O2 cylinders.

Jams the remaining hand-held flare into one of the straps holding the cylinders, so it rests snug against a tank.

CUTS an oxygen hose with a penknife and bends it around to point at the flare, a fast stream of oxygen HISSING ...

... then IGNITES the flare.

The pure O2 instantly turns the flare into a BLOW-TORCH, the super-heated chemical-burn already beginning to heat the thick casing of the oxygen tank.

He quickly JAMS the panel back in place. Spins around and pushes himself through the hatch into the

LIVING QUARTERS

He quickly retraces his route, hope rising that he can get back to the Lander undetected.

Pulls himself through the hatch-way to the central tube --  
-- and SLAMS straight into Harrington coming the other way.

Harrington instantly goes for Vincent's throat.

Vincent tries to pull free, but can find no purchase in the zero-G. Has to fight back.

Now, he's locked in close-quarter, hand-to-hand combat -- vicious, dirty street-fighting against a murderous, unstoppable, fully-agile foe.

They spin, SCRAPPING like animals. PUNCHES Harrington in the throat -- no effect -- Harrington CLAWS at Vincent's eyes --

Vincent grabs Harrington's fingers and BREAKS them -- still no effect -- Harrington HEAD-BUTTS Vincent -- and he almost blacks out --

They SLAM into a wall -- purchase at last -- Vincent holds on and KICKS Harrington away with his legs ...

... only to find Dalby rushing at him with the scalpel.

Two against one.

SLASHED across the hands as he parries the strike -- KNEES Dalby in the face -- but Harrington is back -- GRABS him from behind as Dalby STRIKES again -- SLASHES his chest --

Vincent ROARS in pain -- SMASHES his helmet backwards into Harrington's face -- breaks free and twists Dalby's wrist, SPLINTERING the bones -- snatches the scalpel --

-- but then Shaw appears -- Shit, now three against one!

Shaw grabs Vincent and BATTERS him -- Vincent STABS him in the eyes with the scalpel -- once, twice -- yet still Shaw holds on -- blinded but still PUNCHING --

Then the other two join in -- all three coming at Vincent simultaneously --

He twists -- HITS a red button on a control panel ...

CUT TO:

85 EXT. MARS ORBIT. NIGHT 85

The attitude jets FIRE sideways, sending the Orbiter into a sudden axial spin ...

CUT TO:

86 INT. ORBITER - LIVING-QUARTERS. NIGHT 86

... which wrenches everything out of zero-G -- catching Shaw, Harrington and Dalby off-guard -- SLAMS them against the outer wall --

-- while Vincent clings on to whatever he can, pulling himself towards the doorway into the next section.

But Dalby regains her footing quickly -- and just as Vincent climbs through the doorway, she GRABS him.

Vincent SLASHES through her wrist with the scalpel, severing the tendons and releasing her grip --

-- then he YANKS her head down by her hair and PLUNGES the blade deep into her spine.

Her legs give way, useless -- and Vincent KICKS her aside.

SLAMS and LOCKS the door just as Harrington comes at him yet again -- POUNDING from the other side.

Vincent looks desperately around for another exit.

Spots an inspection cover in the opposite wall and scrambles across to it.

RIPS the cover free and looks inside.

It's an engine maintenance crawl-way -- the tightest squeeze you can imagine -- almost pitch black.

Vincent looks around the room again -- got to be another way out of here -- but there isn't ...

.. so no choice. He climbs inside -- just as Harrington SMASHES through the door behind him.

## ENGINE MODULE CRAWLWAY

Vincent pulls himself into the dark crawl-way, squeezing between pipes and fuel tanks ...

... fighting against the pull of the centrifugal spin ...

... and if the Lander's cramped airlock was bad enough, this is many times worse. He's almost sobbing with fear.

Harrington crawls in after him.  
Grabs Vincent's feet and tries to pull him back.

Vincent KICKS wildly.  
Breaks free and drags himself onwards --

-- Harrington coming after him, just inches behind.

Vincent reaches a dog-leg. Squirms through ...

... but his suit-harness catches on something.

He's stuck.

He's gripped by panic.  
Harrington GRABS his feet again.  
Vincent KICKS, CRYING OUT incoherently.

Twists off his helmet and sheds his equipment harness.

VINCENT  
(fast, under his breath)  
Blue sky ... blue sky ...

Manages to get a grip on himself.

He wriggles free -- but Harrington crawls after him yet again, still CLAWING for his legs.

Vincent shuffles onwards.

Squeezes inbetween rows of narrow, sub-zero coolant pipes -- the dry-ice-coating stripping his flesh on contact.

Struggles through, YELLING in pain --

-- and still Harrington squirms after him -- feeling no pain at all as he touches the coolant pipes.

Vincent STOMPS Harrington in the face, trying to drive him back, but no effect --

-- then a moment of inspiration ...

He STOMPS on a coolant pipe instead. Once, twice --

SNAPS it at the joint so that super-cooled liquid nitrogen SPRAYS out, all over Harrington --

-- coating his face and shoulders and instantly freezing his flesh solid -- the ice rapidly spreading and sticking him, immobile, to the walls.

Vincent crawls quickly onwards ...

CUT TO:

87 INT. ORBITER - OXYGEN CYLINDERS. NIGHT 87

... as the hidden flare continues its super-heated BURN, the oxygen tank now glowing red-hot ...

CUT TO:

88 INT. ORBITER - ENGINE MODULE CRAWLWAY. NIGHT 88

Vincent crawls ahead and reaches a hatch. He PUSHES it open and climbs out, back into the

CENTRAL TUBE

Relief washes over him as he SCRAMBLES along the ladder towards the Lander docking-hatch, now only fifteen blessed metres away.

Catches sight of a countdown-clock along the way -- 1 min 35 secs ... 1 min 34 secs ...

Just enough time left.

Makes it to the docking hatch and starts inside --

-- but Pugh is waiting for him.

LURCHES out from the hatch, his face a burned, murderous, rictus snarl --

SLAMS Vincent back against the far wall of the tube.

GRABS Vincent's throat with one hand and swings the hammer with the other -- Vincent twists aside at the last moment and the hammer SMASHES into the wall --

-- he tries to wrestle it from Pugh's grasp --

-- but Pugh braces the handle across Vincent's throat and begins CRUSHING it against the wall.

Vincent can't breathe.

PUNCHES Pugh in the face, but to no effect.

KICKS but can't get free, his strength draining away.

And now Kim appears from the Command Module.

Crawls towards them, ice-pick in hand.

Vincent can't even fight back against Pugh, let alone her as well.

Within seconds, it'll be game over. *Finis.*

But with his last shred of strength, Vincent gropes with his fingers.

Feels a bundle of electrical cables in a duct running along the wall.

RIPS one of the cables free --

-- and STABS the bare wire-ends into Pugh's mouth.

Pugh CONVULSES as the current ZAPS through him, short-circuiting nerves and muscles, loosening his grip --

-- and Vincent tears the hammer from his grasp -- SMASHES Pugh across the face, bashing him aside.

Scrambles through the hatch into the Lander ...

CUT TO:

89

INT. LANDER. NIGHT

89

... yet even now, Pugh tries to follow.

Vincent SLAMS the hatch on Pugh's head.  
Does it AGAIN.  
And AGAIN.

Finally BANGS the hatch closed and SPINS the locking-wheel as Pugh CLAWS at it from the other side.

Vincent leaps for the Lander's instrument panel.  
HITS the 'DE-COUPLE' button.

The Lander SHUDDERS as it breaks away from the Orbiter, thrown clear by the centrifugal spin.

As the Lander slowly falls away, Vincent peers back through the hatch porthole ...

Christ almighty!

Pugh is still clinging to the hatch from the other side --

-- even now -- out in the vacuum of space which is boiling away the last vestiges of moisture from his burned flesh -- Pugh is trying to turn the locking wheel of the hatch --

-- trying to open it and get in.

Vincent quickly PUNCHES another button -- FIRES the control jets and sends the Lander into a SPIN ...

... faster and faster, the G-forces building -- Pugh still outside the porthole, clinging on with inhuman strength ...

But Vincent abruptly CONTRA-FIRES the jets --

-- and the sudden lurching-stop WRENCHES Pugh loose.

Sends him tumbling away, utterly helpless at last, down towards Mars's surface.

Vincent watches Pugh through the main windows as he falls silently away, getting smaller and smaller.

Only then does he switch his attention back to the Orbiter. Peers out, anxious ...

VINCENT'S POV

... just as an EXPLOSION rips through the Orbiter -- the booby-trapped O2 tanks finally blowing ...

... followed a split-second later by an even BIGGER EXPLOSION as the fuel-tanks go up.

The Orbiter, and all left aboard, are split asunder.

BACK TO SCENE

as Vincent slumps back, utterly exhausted -- silent tears of horror and desolation mixed with those of victory.

Meanwhile, out through the main windows overlooking Mars, Pugh's distant body still tumbles end over end ...

... now little more than a tiny speck, which begins to glow, then flame, as it falls through the atmosphere.

CUT TO:

90

INT. LANDER. NIGHT

90

Later.

Vincent finishes bandaging his injuries, then reaches into the stored supplies of food, water, O2 and medicines. Pulls out a blister-pack of broad-spectrum antibiotics.

Will they work? Who knows?

He shrugs. Washes a couple of pills down with water as he checks the ship-status readings on the instrument panel.

The fuel gauge reads a tiny amount -- just short of 'ZERO' -- but this doesn't surprise him. All else seems well.

Reaching for the radio head-set, he throws a switch.

A monitor screen displays 'OUTGOING TRANSMISSION'. Counts down 3, 2, 1 ...

VINCENT

Mission control this is Aurora Lander. Mayday, repeat, Mayday.

(pause)

Lander's in stable orbit but the Command ship's lost with all hands. Ditto Tantalus base. Virulent infection of unknown origin.

He winces in pain. Feels his bandaged arm -- uncomfortably reminded of the wounds inflicted in that last battle.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

I've got the supplies destined for the base. Might last long enough for a rescue mission. So here's the deal:

(pause)

It's possible I'm infected - but I'm not gonna let myself wind up like the others. So I need to know that you can pick me up and throw everything you've got at this bacteria.

(pause)

If not, I've just enough fuel left to drop out of orbit and burn up in the atmosphere. It'll be fairly quick ... and final.

He looks at the large red 'ENGINE' button on the control panel -- then closes his eyes briefly, as if in prayer.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

You'll get this in about seven minutes, so I'll be waiting for your answer. Six-eleven zulu, Aurora Lander out.

He takes off the head-set and rests back in the seat, resigned to whatever fate brings.

He looks out through the window at the eerie red Martian surface, crawling past far below. Then he glances again at the 'ENGINE' button.

Waiting for the reply.

Waiting ...

CUT TO BLACK:

THE END