

RELIC

a screenplay by Amy Holden Jones

based on the book by Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child

March 16, 1995

TITLE CARD... BELEM BRAZIL - JULY...

EXT. BELEM STREETS - NIGHT

A taxi careens down narrow roadways at breakneck speeds.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

In the back seat is WHITTLESLEY. Early 40's, the wreck of a once handsome man. Unshaven. Sweat stained. Rail thin. Scratches on his arms, a fresh scar on one cheek. As the taxi roars downhill towards the harbor, Whittlesley leans over the front seat. (*Italics indicate Portuguese to be subtitled*)

WHITTLESLEY

Faster! We won't make it.

DRIVER

You want to die?

Whittlesley pulls out A KNIFE, puts it to the driver's jugular vein.

WHITTLESLEY

Do you?

Sweat pouring down his brow, the driver re-doubles his speed.

EXT. BELEM STREETS - NIGHT

The taxi swerves around a corner, nearly crashing into a fruit cart, flies out of sight.

EXT. HARBOR - BELEM - NIGHT

Light rain obscures the bulky outlines of tethered freighters. We hear faint laughter leavened with Portuguese phrases, distant Calypso music from waterfront bars. One of the smaller boats, the SANTA LUCIA, is loading as the TAXI fishtails to a halt.

Whittlesley gets out, sees the boat still at dock. His face floods with relief.

WHITTLESLEY

Thank God.

He tosses a handful of bills into the driver's lap, sprints up the pier as the driver shouts curses after him in Portuguese. Whittlesley shoves past the dock hands as the last load goes onto the Santa Lucia. The boat's engines churn to life.

WHITTLESLEY

*I need to speak to the captain!
Where is he?*

The sailors hold Whittlesley back.

WHITTLESLEY

*Get your hands off me! I'm trying
to save your lives, you fools!*

Several crew members murmur the word "loco". Hearing the commotion, a squat man wearing a billed hat and smoking a cigar approaches. CAPTAIN FRANCO.

FRANCO

American?

WHITTLESLEY

Yes. Thank Christ somebody speaks English. I'm Dr. John Whittlesley. You have some crates of mine on board. They were shipped by mistake to the Natural History Museum. We have to get them off the boat.

FRANCO

You have I.D.?

Whittlesley runs a trembling hand through his hair, trying to keep control and appear reasonable.

WHITTLESLEY

No. Let me explain. I was on an expedition for the museum on the Upper Xingu. Something horrible happened. I'm the only one who got out alive. I lost everything, my I.D., everything. I have to make sure no one else dies. The crates, the crates were sent out before we knew. There's something unspeakable inside. If your boat leaves harbor with those crates on board, I can't be responsible. My God, if they reach New York...

Whittlesley's fists clench spasmodically. Franco looks to his men.

FRANCO

Loco.

WHITTLESLEY

No! I'm not crazy! As God is my witness, I'm telling the truth.

Franco barks an order and several sailors grab Whittlesley by the arms. They start to lead him back to shore.

WHITTLESLEY

Don't do this! You have to believe me. Your lives are in danger.

The sailors laugh. But with an almost super-human strength born of desperation, Whittlesley throws them off. He pulls out his wallet.

WHITTLESLEY

Cash. Cash, you see? American money.

Whittlesley throws the money down on the deck. The breeze scatters the bills across the bow and all the men, including Captain Franco, scramble for the money, chattering in Portuguese. While they are occupied, Whittlesley slips by unnoticed and disappears below deck.

INT. HOLD - SANTA LUCIA - NIGHT

Whittlesley ducks between cages of goats, boxes of farm equipment, his movements jerky with panic. As he continues searching, the camera moves past him, into the darkness of the hold. We hear Whittlesley mumbling between low, ragged breaths. At the back of the boat the camera finds...

A STACK OF CRATES... clearly labeled NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM. Move in on these as... The CRATES VIBRATE. The boat has started to move!

Whittlesley stands bolt upright, realizing what's going on.

WHITTLESLEY

No!

Too late. He turns to run back on deck but then stops, sniffs the air. A look of desperation fills his eyes. With one hand he pulls out THE KNIFE, and unexpectedly puts it to HIS OWN NECK. Better to kill himself than face what comes next. The knife touches...

A NECKLACE of TWO ARROWS, one gold, another silver.

Whittlesley stares wide-eyed into the blackness of the hold. The goats start BLEATING in blind panic. A shaft of moonlight comes through a porthole as the boat turns. The moonlight falls on

THE CRATES. Whittlesley's eyes lock onto them and he inches towards them, drawn inexorably closer... closer...

WHITTLESLEY

No... no...

He begins mumbling a prayer.

MOVE IN ON HIS EYES... filled with dread as he falls to his knees, staring, always staring at THE CRATES...

EXT. DOCKS - NIGHT

The crew tends to business and the Santa Lucia points out of the harbor, disappears into the night.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LOUISIANA COAST - DAY... TITLE CARD... JUNE

Squad cars roar down the back roads, sirens flashing. In the center of the column is an unmarked car.

INT. UNMARKED CAR - DAY

At the wheel is a strikingly dignified and imposing black man wearing a simple, old-fashioned dark suit, narrow black tie, and white shirt. This is SPECIAL AGENT PENDERGAST, FBI.

A BACH SONATA for violin and harpsichord plays on the tape deck. Pendergast hums along as he drives. A SMALL TOWN COP rides shotgun. The cop is intimidated both by Pendergast and the morning's events. He sweats heavily as he brings Pendergast up to date.

SMALL TOWN COP

One of the locals found it at dawn.
Didn't believe him 'till I saw it

myself. Even then I didn't believe it. Scared my men shitless. Me too. I mean... hell... You could smell it a half mile away, Mr. Pendergast.

PENDERGAST

(unperturbed)

Any of your men go on board?

SMALL TOWN COP

No sir. No way. None of us wanted to, I'm the first to admit it. I said, "Don't get within a mile of this thing. It's way to big for us. I'm calling the FBI."

Pendergast nods his approval, resumes humming along with a particularly intricate harpsichord riff. As always, the man is unflappable and totally calm as he drives.

EXT. LOUISIANA BEACH - DAY

The ocean is still, the air stifling and close. A hot sun beats down on the deck of the SANTA LUCIA. The boat lists at a crazy angle where it has been washed up on the shore. At first glance, it appears to be deserted. A barrel rolls back and forth as the boat is rocked by each successive wave. We hear sirens approaching and the phalanx of squad cars pulls up. Joining them now are TWO AMBULANCES.

PENDERGAST gets out along with the others. All of the cops immediately cover their faces, gagging violently at the smell. Pendergast sniffs once and frowns. Apart from this, he doesn't react.

SMALL TOWN COP

(choking)

Goin' up-wind if you don't mind.

Pendergast nods. The cops all fall back in revulsion. They watch from a safe distance as Pendergast approaches the ghost ship. His shiny laced wing-tips sink in the sand. He leans down, pulls them off one at a time. He balls both socks, puts them carefully into his shoes and proceeds barefoot towards the boat.

Using a piece of driftwood as a plank, Pendergast leans it against the Santa Lucia. With surprising agility, he leaps up the plank to the deck. At the top he touches a rail. It's covered in a DARK STICKY LIQUID.

BLOOD. Flies buzz loudly. A LARGE MACHETE lies abandoned in the stern. Chairs are overturned. A DEAD GOAT, eviscerated, lies in the bow. A lifeboat hangs half off the stern. Pendergast moves aft. The COPS watch from the sand below, unwilling to get any closer. Pendergast

hears A DOOR slamming open and closed. He follows the noise and sees...

THE DOOR TO THE HOLD. He approaches, pushes it open and looks down the stairwell. Below deck are

BODIES... stacks of them. They've been TORN TO SHREDS.

THE CAMERA MOVES down to one particular man who is nearest the top of the stairs. It's CAPTAIN FRANCO. His face is frozen in a howl of terror. Flies congregate in the eye sockets. With his foot, Pendergast nudges the body over. The skull has been torn open.

THERE IS NO BACK TO FRANCO'S HEAD.

FADE TO BLACK:

Silence then we begin hearing sounds of the city... horns, traffic, construction work.

SUPER TITLE... NEW YORK CITY, FOUR MONTHS LATER as we...

FADE IN:

ON A NECKLACE of TWO ARROWS, one of gold, the other silver. The twin to the one seen on Whittlesley. Widen to...

EXT. ROOFTOP GARDEN - MARGO'S NEW YORK APARTMENT - MORNING

And the woman wearing the necklace... MARGO GREEN. She sips her morning coffee as she makes notes on several large FOSSILIZED TEETH. Her hair is neatly combed. No make-up. She doesn't need it. She has a natural, unselfconscious beauty and a mind like a steel trap.

At Margo's elbow is a small T.V. A CNN world news report plays. Margo's New York Times is open to the crossword puzzle, which she's been doing rapidly, in ink. Clearly this is a woman who likes order, with a mind that can handle more than one thing at a time.

An alarm on her watch beeps and she fills in the last two lines of the crossword puzzle, makes one final note on the fossil specimens, and shuts off the T.V. She reaches for her back pack and looks out at CENTRAL PARK with remarkably clear eyes.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - MORNING

HELICOPTER SHOT... Swooping over the fall foliage of the Park, a riot of color and botanical life... The camera picks out MARGO'S BICYCLE making its way along the winding roads, dodging taxi cabs. Margo wears jeans, a work shirt, a fine blue gabardine jacket with a rhinestone DOUBLE HELIX PIN. On her back is a LEATHER BACK PACK which holds her lap top computer. She emerges from the park, catches the green light and rolls up to...

EXT. MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY - DAY

As Margo arrives, the camera moves up and over the building, comes to rest on the imposing turrets, intersecting roof lines, and Gothic arches of the MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY. This is not an ordinary building; it's a 19th century monument to science and mankind. The structure fills an entire city block.

Happy visitors pour into the museum as Margo takes the imposing wide stone steps two at a time. We hear SCREAMS of pleasure and release, the normal raucous noises of a large group of THIRD GRADE CHILDREN. Margo is amused to find herself surrounded by kids. Their teacher, MRS. BEASLEY, a stern woman in glasses with a thick New York accent, calls after them as they all head inside.

MRS. BEASLEY

Don't run, children! Stay with your partner and do not run! If anyone runs they will be sent back to the bus!

Ignoring Mrs. Beasley, TWO BOYS charge past Margo. HENRY and LARRY. Henry has a buzz cut; Larry has rasta dread knots. Both are 8 years old, wear high top sneakers and shorts so big they graze their ankles.

MRS. BEASLEY

Henry! Larry! What did I just say! You walk right this minute! Did you hear me?!

Reluctantly, Henry and Larry slow to a rapid race-walk as they reach the huge doorway flanked by two Northwest Coast Indian totem poles. Above the doorway WORKMEN are hanging a LARGE BANNER. It reads: "SUPERSTITION EXHIBIT... OPENING OCT. 29"

INT. MUSEUM ROTUNDA/STAIRWELL - DAY

The school children burst into a three story space dominated by a life-sized statue of a HERD OF ELEPHANTS. The kids chatter with excitement, look up in awe. Margo nods to a GUARD who smiles as she pins on a plastic I.D.

GUARD

Morning, Dr. Green.

MARGO

Morning Joe. Beautiful day.

Henry watches Margo pass through the turnstiles without paying. He swaggers over.

HENRY

You work here?

MARGO

Yes, I do.

HENRY

What do you do?

MARGO

(leans down, amused)

I'm an Evolutionary Biologist. What do you do?

HENRY

Nothing. I'm in third grade. What's a revolutionary what ch'a ma' callit?

MARGO

Evolutionary Biologist. I study how life on earth evolved over millions of years.

HENRY

(brightens)

Way cool. Then you know where the dinosaurs are.

MARGO

Fourth floor, West wing, but stay with your class.

Mrs. Beasley heads into the museum and Larry and Henry merge with the rest of the kids. Margo turns towards the stairwell, passing...

IAN CUTHBERT... Museum Director... a pudgy man in wire rim glasses who dresses and thinks like a banker. Hired for his amazing ability to raise money, Cuthbert is one of a new generation of Museum Directors whose focus must always be on the bottom line.

MARGO

Hello, Ian. Everything ready for the opening of the Superstition Exhibit?

CUTHBERT

I'm on my way to get the last piece out of storage right now.

MARGO

I'd wish you luck but I'm not superstitious.

CUTHBERT

You will be after tomorrow night.

Cuthbert waves merrily. A workman uses a LADDER in the stairwell. Cuthbert is about to walk under the ladder, stops and carefully walks around it instead. Margo smiles, goes on upstairs.

INT. MUSEUM BASEMENT - DAY

Cuthbert enters from the lower stairwell. He is now in one of the hundreds of areas of the museum that are closed to the the general public. He follows a labyrinthine route down a dim passageway lined with rumbling steam pipes. There are storage areas on both sides labeled ORNITHOLOGY, HERPITOLOGY, CENTRAL ASIA EXPEDITIONS, AKELEY EXPEDITIONS, WHALE BONE FOSSILS and so on. Finally Cuthbert comes to a door marked

"WHITTLESLEY EXPEDITIONS 1978-95". Cuthbert pauses and gets out a key, but to his surprise the door pushes open. The lock and doorknob mechanism are both broken off! Cuthbert frowns.

CUTHBERT

What the... ?

He goes inside.

INT. WHITTLESLEY COLLECTION BASEMENT - DAY

Cuthbert flips on a light to see a tall, narrow space. Stacks of metal shelves reach up into the gloom. Everywhere we see spears, shields, masks, various artifacts. Ancient tribal costumes lie shrouded in plastic like corpses against the walls. And in the middle of the gloom, sitting ominously in the light of a sole hanging bulb are...

THE WHITTLESLEY CRATES. The same ones last seen in the hold of the ill-fated Santa Lucia. They are scattered about in disarray. One in particular has been broken open, its contents spread on the floor. Cuthbert mutters in surprise and dismay, kneels by the crate.

CUTHBERT

No, it can't be.

Cuthbert feels gently through the packing material, lets out a sigh of relief as he pulls out a figurine. It is a small, beautifully carved statue of A MONSTER crouched on all fours.

The room falls totally silent as Cuthbert studies THE RELIC. It's a truly frightening piece... massive, razor sharp claws, large round nostrils, enormous teeth and red rimmed eyes. Suddenly Cuthbert sees a DROP OF BLOOD on his hand! He's been CUT!

CUTHBERT

Damn.

Cuthbert rises, shakes his finger in pain. Blood drips on the floor. He pulls out his pocket handkerchief and wraps the wound. The handkerchief rapidly soaks through. Suddenly a HAND CLAMPS on Cuthbert's shoulder! He's not alone! He lets out a YELP, almost dropping the Relic and spins to see...

A MUSEUM GUARD standing behind him. His nameplate reads... BEAUREGARD. He's a gentle young fellow with white blond hair and a rolling southern accent.

CUTHBERT

Beauregard! You scared me half to death.

BEAUREGARD

I'm sorry, sir. You okay?

CUTHBERT

Someone broke into this room.

BEAUREGARD

Anything missin'?

CUTHBERT

Doesn't look like it. We're damned lucky. This statue is priceless.

Cuthbert holds up the RELIC of THE MONSTER. Beauregard stares.

CUTHBERT

Mbwun. A South American warrior deity. He carries a powerful curse. Every member of the expedition that found this statue, died.

Beauregard sees Cuthbert's cut finger.

BEAUREGARD

Looks like the curse is still at work.

CUTHBERT

The claws are sharp... I must have cut myself.

(uneasy laugh)

Better move these crates to the secure storage area where they'll be safe.

Beauregard studies the door as Cuthbert heads out with the figurine.

BEAUREGARD

Don't know if it'll do any good, Mr.
Cuthbert.

CUTHBERT

Why not?

BEAUREGARD

No one broke into this room, sir.
Someone broke out. That lock was
torn off from the inside.

Cuthbert glances at the evil face of Mbwun, pales. As he exits, HOLD ON BEAUREGARD, left alone with the crates.

INT. PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY LAB - DAY

Huge centrifuges, hissing autoclaves, electrophoresis apparatus, glowing monitors, elaborate blown-glass distillation columns and titration set-ups. One of the most advanced technical facilities of its kind. And mixed in with all the modern machinery are

SKELETONS OF ALL KINDS. Complete homo sapien specimens are scattered around the room. Standing midst all this is GREGORY KAWAKITA, early twenties. Kawakita makes sharp, jerky overhead movements with his left hand, waving something about. He's practicing casting. We hear the zing of a line and the whirring of the fly reel as MARGO ENTERS. A fly whips out, passing right under her nose.

KAWAKITA

Third from the end! Right shoulder.
Aleut, provenance unknown.

The fly zooms across the room and lights on the shoulder of the third skeleton from the end, labeled "Aleut, provenance unknown." Margo rolls her eyes and Kawakita smiles with pride.

KAWAKITA

If I spent half the time on my
Fractal Evolution thesis that I
spend on this fly rod, I'd have my
PhD.

MARGO

(small smile)
But at what a price.

Kawakita reels in his line as Margo drops her backpack on her large desk. An enormous MICROSCOPE stands by the equally imposing computer topped by a tiger skull. A screen saver of an animated pterodactyl plays. Margo unpacks boxes of fossil teeth, hits some keys revealing

columns of seemingly indecipherable chemical equations on the computer screen.

MARGO

I have the species identification on these teeth. We can extract DNA and start running tests on the extrapolator program. Call Dr. Frock. He wanted a demonstration.

KAWAKITA

Margo, you haven't heard?

MARGO

What?

KAWAKITA

Frock's been fired.

Margo straightens, stunned.

MARGO

That's impossible.

KAWAKITA

(awkward)

I'm sorry to be the bearer of bad tidings, but you know me. Telegraph. Telephone. Tell Kawakita. I got the definitive word from Cuthbert's secretary. This is Dr. Frock's last week.

Margo is already out the door.

INT. CORRIDORS/STAIRWELL - MUSEUM - DAY

Margo charges through double doors leading into the southwest tower. She half runs down an elegant, Edwardian fifth-floor corridor, her footsteps lost in the thick carpet. At the very end is a heavy oak door bearing a plate entwined with bronze leaves that reads simply "Dr. Frock".

INT. FROCK'S OFFICE - DAY

Margo bursts into the unique office, which is in startling contrast to the modernity of her own. Two large bow windows look out over the park. Upholstered Victorian chairs in a leaf motif sit on needlepoint carpets featuring large red roses. Plant specimens and drawings of flora and fauna line the walls. Cardboard boxes cover the floor. Seated in a wheelchair is a white-haired man in a tweed jacket and a loud floral tie. Glasses slip down his nose.

This is DR. FROCK, and he's in the middle of packing. He looks up, smiles apologetically.

DR. FROCK

Hello, Margo. Sorry about the mess.

MARGO

Is it true? Greg said you'd been fired.

FROCK

Yes. Bit of a shock. But as Cuthbert so tactfully put it, the museum needs new blood. And since I've been here since the Mesozoic Era --

MARGO

I don't believe it.

FROCK

Now Margo, don't overreact. Cuthbert has to cut costs somehow. My leaving makes perfect sense. This isn't exactly early retirement. I've overstayed the party a bit.

MARGO

We can't do without you. You're one of the foremost authorities on primitive pharmacology. You're practically an institution around here.

FROCK

That, apparently, is the problem. I'm yesterday's news. Who needs a Curator of Plant Biology in a museum with one exhibit on plants? Monsters and dinosaurs, cannibals and shamans are the new currency of the realm.

Frock goes back to his work packing to hide his emotion and Margo moves to his side. She pulls Frock's books back out of the box, returns them to his desk.

MARGO

"Phyletic Transformation and the Tertiary Fern Spike" is not going anywhere. I'll talk to Cuthbert and put a stop to this right now.

She starts for the door and Frock wheels into her path. Now for the first time she sees what he's been carefully hiding... the deep pain in his eyes.

FROCK

Please. Don't humiliate me further.

MARGO

Let me help. I can take care of everything.

FROCK

No, Margo. This is one problem you can't solve. You have to stay out of it. The fact is, I want to retire.

MARGO

How can you say that? You know it's not true.

FROCK

Yes it is. I'm tired and I'm no longer needed --

MARGO

My work on fossil intermediates would be crippled without you.

FROCK

With all due respect, dear, that's bull. You dance rings around me with your new technology. You've left me in the dust.

MARGO

(stubbornly loyal)

Your work is highly relevant. What about your display on Primitive Pharmacology? Cuthbert told me himself he was going to feature it prominently in the Superstition Exhibit.

FROCK

Healing plant use among the Ki tribe of Bechuanaland has been cancelled to make room for Tibetan Erotic Art.

Frock reaches out and squeezes her hand gently with a look that says the discussion is over.

FROCK

Come on. I'll walk you back to the elevator.

MARGO
I'm not giving up.

FROCK
You must.

INT. MUSEUM HALLWAYS - DAY

Frock rolls back down the hall the way Margo just came. Margo is beside him, downcast. She's not used to defeat.

FROCK
This isn't a death sentence. Greg has promised to teach me fly fishing. I'll garden. I'll write.

MARGO
You are this museum. It won't be the same without you.

FROCK
Everyone needs a change of scenery. I've been rolling down these halls for forty-odd years. That's quite enough.

Margo gets in the elevator reluctantly. He smiles and meets her eye.

FROCK
I'll see you at lunch.

He waves her off merrily. But once the doors close and Margo's out of sight, Frock's smile fades and his shoulders sag. He ducks his wheelchair quickly into the Hall of African Mammals.

INT. HALL OF AFRICAN MAMMALS - AFTERNOON

Two stories high, dark and dramatic. A very special display. Dioramas of lions, hippos, wart hogs etc. In the middle is a large statue of a GORILLA beating its chest. Frock takes refuge in the darkness of the exhibit. His wheelchair sits in a quiet corner and we see him quickly wipe the back of his hands across his eyes.

INT. MOLLUSKS EXHIBIT - DAY

Shells and sea life line the walls. A sign announces the exhibit "Mollusks and Our World." The THIRD GRADE CLASS sweeps in. Larry and Henry start to sing "Mollusks and Our World" to the tune of "Welcome to Our World", the F.A.O. Schwartz theme song. Mrs. Beasley shoots them the evil eye and Henry whines...

HENRY

Mrs. Beasley, it's almost time to go
and we still haven't seen the
dinosaurs!

BEASLEY

If you ask me about the dinosaurs
once more, I'll strangle you both!

She starts to lecture about horseshoe crabs in a droning monotone.
Henry and Larry hang back.

LARRY

(whispers)
This room sucks.

HENRY

She's never going to take us to see
the dinosaurs. That lady said they
were on the fourth floor.

LARRY

Let's ditch and find them ourselves.

They dart off down a side corridor and up a wide stairs.

INT. REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS ROOM - DAY

Larry and Henry emerge and walk wide-eyed among the cases of lizards,
chameleons, tortoises. High windows light the room. Outside the sun is
going down. A woman pushing a child in a stroller exits and the boys
have the hall to themselves.

LARRY

Look at this. A Komodo dragon.

As Larry checks out, the huge, dragon-like reptile, which has just
sunk its Jaws into a stuffed boar. Henry points to a stuffed Gecko
climbing vertically up the side of its case.

HENRY

Check out this one. It can walk up
walls.

Larry already has his eyes on the far end of the hall where temporary
barricades have been put up to prevent access to the next room.
Painting is in progress. Scaffolding just begs to be climbed. Henry
runs over and starts up the scaffolding. Larry hesitates.

LARRY

We're not supposed to go back there.

HENRY

Chicken. This is a great short cut.

Henry drops on the other side of the scaffolding and Larry follows. In a moment both disappear from sight.

INT. MUSEUM HALL OF BIRDS - DAY

Windowless and dark. A closed display under maintenance. Thousands of little stuffed birds line the walls from floor to ceiling, white cotton poking out of sightless eyes. Henry and Larry enter and slow down. Larry's getting scared.

LARRY

I don't want to go this way.

HENRY

Don't be a wuss. Come on.

The boys continue onward more slowly, their footfalls echoing in the silence.

INT. BACK HALLWAYS - DAY

The children are now far from the other tourists and their class. Larry is frightened. The hall takes a sharp dog-leg, ending in a darkened cul-de-sac full of display cases filled with hideous carved masks. Against the side of the chamber is a barricade of wood which looks much like a wall. Henry tugs at it and the barricade moves. He looks behind.

HENRY

Hey, there's a secret staircase back here. Cool.

Henry disappears behind the barricade leaving Larry completely alone in the dark room with the Shaman masks.

LARRY

Henry, come back!

Henry doesn't respond. The lights in the cases throw strange shadows. Larry starts to snuffle, falls to hiccuping, sits down. He pulls on a little flap of rubber that's coming off the toe of his sneaker, all bravado gone.

LARRY

Henry! Henry!

No answer. Larry rises and peeks behind the barricade. He sees the circular stair. It descends into total darkness. From below comes a strange smell that makes Larry's nose wrinkle.

LARRY

Henry?

No answer. Larry puts his first foot on the stair.

LARRY

Henry! Come up! Please!

With no other option but staying alone in the dark, Larry follows Henry down.

INT. SPIRAL STAIRCASE - DAY

Larry clutches the banister, whispers...

LARRY

Henry? Where are you? Henry?

Larry takes another step. Another. And another. He stops. Below him he hears SNUFFLING, rather like a large dog. Larry freezes, starts to cry.

LARRY

Henry! Henry! It smells awful.
Answer me! Are you all right?

Larry can barely see a dim hallway stretching out in two directions. He pauses near the bottom of the stairs, eyes wide, holding his breath. There appears to be a darker area of SHADOW at the end of the hall. It's gliding TOWARDS THEM!

Suddenly something CLOSES on Larry's leg and he YELPS. It's HENRY. Henry pulls Larry the rest of the way down the stairs. They stand alone together in the darkness. Henry hisses.

HENRY

Quiet!

LARRY

What is it?

HENRY

I don't know. But I think it's bad.

They keep their eyes locked on the shape at the end of the hall as they back up, step by step. Move in as their faces suddenly TWIST WITH FEAR. THE BOYS... SCREAM BLOODY MURDER... The sound echoes in the darkness as we...

CUT TO:

INT. MARGO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Margo sits up in the darkness, gasping. Moonlight cuts across the bed. It takes a moment for her to realize that she's had a nightmare. She reaches for her light. As she switches it on, we see a photo on her bedside table. It shows a group on a mountain in TIBET. There are several people with their arms slung around each other. At the end is a younger MARGO holding hands with JOHN WHITTLESLEY. They appear to be more than friends.

ON MARGO... she looks at the photo a moment, then turns off the light and lies back, alone in her bed.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK WEST - DAY

Yellow crime tape encircles the museum. Dead leaves swirl in clusters and the sky is overcast. Overnight, fall turned to winter. The front of the museum is ringed with police cars. Margo rides up on her bike and pauses, startled at the sight. We watch as she crosses, has a few words with one of the officers who motions her to a side entrance. She wheels her bike under a stone tunnel as we pick up...

A TAXI CAB arriving at the front entrance. Out steps SPECIAL AGENT PENDERGAST.

INT. LOWER ROTUNDA - DAY

Margo enters. The huge hall is taken up by an enormous boat carved from the trunk of a single tree. Inside it are mannequins of Northwest Coast Indians. Milling around are at least twenty COPS. One approaches.

COP

ID.

Worried, Margo hands it over.

MARGO

What's going on?

COP

All employees are to go to the IMAX room for a briefing, Dr. Green.

INT. SIDE HALL - MUSEUM - DAY

Several cops go by with tracking dogs. Margo looks back at the dogs, increasingly uneasy, almost bumps into...

HENRY AND LARRY. Surprisingly, they are alive and well and seated with MRS. BEASLEY outside an office. Margo exchanges a look with both boys, remembering them from yesterday. A tentative smile starts but Henry and Larry don't return it. Serious and chastened, they drop their

eyes. Margo continues on.

TWO COPS stand outside the door to the rest room, their backs turned to Margo as she approaches.

COP ONE

What was that? Six?

COP TWO

Lost count.

Margo glances past them to see an OLDER MAN wearing the badge of a NIGHT WATCHMAN, leaning over a sink. He wipes his mouth. Margo's eyes move down to see... THE MAN'S SNEAKERS are soaked in blood.

INT. HALL OF ADVANCED FOSSIL MAMMALS - DAY

More cops gather, surrounded by skeletons of primates... humans, monkeys, gorillas. It's an odd sight. They all look up with interest as in walks the imposing figure of...

SPECIAL AGENT PENDERGAST. He turns to a young eager beaver, OFFICER BAILEY, flashes his badge. Bailey straightens to attention.

PENDERGAST

Could you please take me to the officer in charge?

INT. CIRCULAR STAIRWELL - DAY

Pendergast follows Bailey as they descend the rickety old metal staircase that goes into the bowels of the museum. The hall below them is narrow and lit by an occasional bare bulb. The stairway opens onto a maze-like set of rooms in the basement. Everything around them is STREAKED and SPATTERED in BLOOD. There are trails of it on the floor, the walls, the overhead light.

Several COPS stand guard as DETECTIVE VINCE D'AGOSTA goes over the area. He is a round, balding, man with an unmistakable air of authority. A modern knight in shining armor in disguise... deep disguise. He has on a cheap polyester short sleeved shirt. His t-shirt is plainly visible underneath. On his worn plastic belt is a badge.

D'AGOSTA

Don't touch anything until the S.O.C. has finished with those stairs. Keep everyone clear of the perimeter. I don't want any contamination. There's an incredible amount of blood evidence down here. We need more light. Where's the photographer? Tell him to quit

eating donuts, I need him.

As Pendergast enters, D'Agosta looks up at this serious African-American in simple black suit, white shirt and dark tie.

D'AGOSTA

Who are you? The undertaker?

PENDERGAST

Special Agent Pendergast. FBI.

D'AGOSTA

Vince D'Agosta. Am I out?

PENDERGAST

Not at all. I think we may be working on the same case. If so, I could use your help.

The two men shake hands. They couldn't be more different. Pendergast is an elegant intellectual... D'Agosta a working class spark plug who operates from the gut. Pendergast gestures to the form on the ground.

PENDERGAST

The body?

D'AGOSTA

What's left of it.

PENDERGAST

Mind if I have a look?

D'Agosta calls to A POLICE PHOTOGRAPHER who comes down the staircase carrying lights, a donut stuffed in his mouth.

D'AGOSTA

We need light in here, stat.

PENDERGAST

Where's the head?

D'Agosta points to a lump the size of a bowling ball that's in the corner.

D'AGOSTA

Careful. That mess on the ground is brains.

PENDERGAST

Whose footprints?

D'AGOSTA

Night watchman who found the body.

Sweet old man. Been tossing his cookies for over an hour. Not a likely suspect.

The photographer is finally ready and he floods the dark room with light. And now everyone (but not us) gets a very clear look at the body.

THE PHOTOGRAPHER... spits out his donut. His eyes roll up and he drops in a dead faint. Just like that. D'Agosta swallows hard.

D'AGOSTA

Woof.

Pendergast looks down, utterly impassive.

PENDERGAST

Yes, I'd say we're definitely working on the same case.

INT. IMAX ROOM - DAY

An old 19th century theater. Balconies. Heavy curtains. It looks like the theater where Lincoln was shot, with the exception of the most recent addition, an IMAX SCREEN five stories high. The room is filling with museum employees, all murmuring anxiously. Margo sits down next to Frock's wheelchair. Her face is ashen.

MARGO

Dr. Frock, I just saw a man back there who'd been wading in blood.

As Greg Kawakita sits in the chair next to Margo...

MARGO (CON'T)

For once I'm glad you're rumor central. What in the world is going on?

KAWAKITA

Someone's been murdered. Not shot, strangled or stabbed, either. Torn limb from limb. There's talk of a psychotic killer or even an animal.

FROCK

For heaven's sake, Greg, someone's been killed. Look, it's Cuthbert. Let's hear what really happened.

At this everyone falls silent and IAN CUTHBERT steps forward to address the crowd. He appears drawn and grey.

CUTHBERT

This has been a tragic and upsetting morning. I have terrible news for us all. A member of our security force has been found murdered. The police have just informed me it was Daniel Beauregard.

(murmuring fills the room)

Quiet. Please. With the help of our head of security, Mr. Ippolito... the museum has been secured.

IPPOLITO... rises in the back and nods to the crowd... He's an imperious looking, pompous man with shifty eyes. Right now he's defensive. Overnight, his job is on the line...

CUTHBERT

The police are satisfied we're in no danger, that we're all perfectly safe. We've been asked to remain in the Gem Room and be available for questioning for the rest of the day. Obviously, we will all do everything we can to cooperate. Are there any questions?

Ippolito raises a hand.

IPPOLITO

The party for the opening of the Superstition Exhibit... I imagine in the light of what's happened it will be pushed back.

CUTHBERT

No action has been taken yet. The opening of the exhibit is crucial to the financial health of this museum. So for now, we expect that the Superstition Exhibit will open on schedule, tomorrow night.

Ippolito registers surprise. The audience buzzes again.

INT. GEM ROOM - DAY

Margo, Dr. Frock and Greg Kawakita enter. The room is full of spectacular displays of gemstones of every type. Greg drapes himself over a grey sofa. Margo leans on a giant geode.

MARGO

That Cuthbert. What a piece of work.
Someone's dead and all he cares
about is his Superstition Exhibit.

FROCK

Cuthbert's counting on the
exhibition's success. The museum is
in debt. Contributions and public
funding have dried up. Admissions no
longer cover overhead. The last big
infusion of cash we had was the King
Tut exhibit. Cuthbert was hired to
get us out of the red. If the
Superstition Exhibit isn't
lucrative, he'll have to start
auctioning off some of these gems.

KAWAKITA

With all this bad publicity, it's no
wonder he looks like that.

They glance over and see Cuthbert in the corner. He appears ill, is
compulsively fingering his watch chain from which hangs a RABBIT'S
FOOT. Frock goes over to speak to him, followed by Margo and Greg.

FROCK

Ian. Are you okay?

CUTHBERT

(shakes his head)

Beauregard. I can't believe it. I
may have been the last one to see
him alive. He was with me just
yesterday, when I got out the statue
of Mbwun.

MARGO

(taken aback)

Mbwun.

KAWAKITA

(sensing more gossip)

What's that?

Margo frowns, suddenly uneasy. She and Dr. Frock exchange a look.

MARGO

Warrior deity of the Kothoga, an
extinct South American tribe. Dr.
John Whittlesley led an expedition
that found the only known
representation of Mbwun. The statue

is said to carry a curse.

(she looks away, quiet)

Every member of Whittlesley's expedition died.

CUTHBERT

I got the relic out yesterday to put on display. Beauregard was there. The crates had been broken into and the contents were strewn about. But nothing was missing. It was downright weird. We joked that it was the curse of Mbwun. I'm not laughing now.

FROCK

Come, Ian. We all know you're superstitious. But you're among scientists here. We deal in facts. That statue had nothing to do with what happened to Beauregard.

CUTHBERT

All I know is, everyone who has come in contact with that relic, is dead.

INT. BUSINESS OFFICES - MUSEUM - DAY

D'Agosta has set up a temporary command post among the antique desks and chairs. The room is on the ground floor with a view of the park. Gawkers are outside looking in. D'Agosta pulls the blinds in their faces.

D'AGOSTA

(mutters)

Get a life.

Pendergast is looking closely at one of the large paintings of birds that line the walls.

PENDERGAST

An original Roger Tory Peterson of a Red-Breasted Merganser. Amazing. I have a copy of this in my office at home.

D'AGOSTA

Can't really focus on birds at the moment, Pendergast. I'm tryin' to keep my breakfast down.

PENDERGAST

In this violent world, I believe the only way to stay sane is to take time to notice beautiful things.

D'AGOSTA

I drink. After hours of course. On duty, I smoke.

(he pulls out a fat cigar)

Do you mind?

PENDERGAST

Not at all. I enjoy the smell of a good cigar.

D'AGOSTA

Then you won't like this one. It's a piece of shit.

He bites off the end, spits it out on the floor.

PENDERGAST

Lieutenant --

D'AGOSTA

Call me Vince.

PENDERGAST

Did you read about a boat that washed up outside of New Orleans about four months ago? Twelve bodies on board.

D'AGOSTA

Who didn't? Big news. Out of Brazil, wasn't it?

PENDERGAST

Yes. That's my case. Now it's yours. All the corpses were badly mutilated in a very particular way. Decapitated. Brains extracted. Limbs torn to shreds. It looked like the work of a large animal, but there was no sign of an animal on board.

D'AGOSTA

So the method of death is the only connection?

PENDERGAST

No. There's more. There were crates from this museum in the hold of the

boat.

BAILEY enters, interrupts.

BAILEY

Uh, Vince. Sorry. This won't wait.

D'AGOSTA

It better be good.

BAILEY

There are a couple of kids who were lost yesterday near the site of the murder. Claimed they saw a monster. They're pretty determined to tell you their story. You want to see them?

D'AGOSTA

(rolls his eyes)

No.

PENDERGAST

If you don't mind, this could be important.

D'AGOSTA

You're kidding.

PENDERGAST

Unfortunately, no.

INT. MUSEUM CLASSROOM - DAY

A modern classroom that has been taken over by the police for the purpose of interrogation. Seated on small chairs at a plain table are...

HENRY and LARRY, looking like two little boys with a story they are desperate to share. Standing behind them is MRS. BEASLEY, starchier than ever. D'Agosta takes a chair across from the boys, at their eye level. By this time of day he looks pretty rumpled and tired. Pendergast stands upright and unruffled in a doorway behind. This isn't hard duty for D'Agosta. He's surprisingly genial and at ease with kids. Larry kicks his sneaker against the table leg in excitement. Henry tugs his t-shirt.

D'AGOSTA

Hi. I'm Lieutenant D'Agosta. You can call me Vince. This is Special Agent Pendergast. You can call him...

(he looks to Pendergast, so formal)

Special Agent Pendergast.

BEASLEY

This is Henry Weiss and Larry
Bowers.

D'AGOSTA

So... Tell us about this monster.

LARRY

We were lost and trying to find a
short cut to the dino--

Henry elbows him hard. Larry shuts up.

HENRY

We were just lost, okay? And we went
down this curvy staircase. At the
bottom was a big shadow.

LARRY

Big as a house.

HENRY

Not that big.

LARRY

Well almost. Depends which house. It
smelled like old hamburger, and it
made this weird noise.

Henry makes a low GROWL in his throat. D'Agosta suppresses a smile,
shoots Pendergast a look. But Pendergast watches the kids intently.

LARRY

And it snuffled the ground like a
dog.

HENRY

Like this.

He goes on hands and knees, sniffs the ground.

LARRY

It had a long tongue, teeth this big
and yellow eyes.

HENRY

They were green eyes and they were
slit like a lizard's.

LARRY

They were yellow!

HENRY

You're color blind.

BEASLEY

Boys, please!

(to D'Agosta)

These two get in a lot of mischief
and they tell some amazing whoppers.

D'AGOSTA

I can see that.

HENRY

This isn't a whopper! It's the
truth.

Pendergast now moves forward, pulls up a chair as if deeply
interested.

PENDERGAST

How did you get away?

HENRY

We ran and screamed and stuff. And
we got through a little door just in
time. There was a guard there and he
went back to check.

PENDERGAST

A guard? Do you remember his name?

LARRY

He was wearing one of those I.D.
badges. His name was Bo... something.

D'AGOSTA

Beauregard?

LARRY

Yeah.

EXT. MUSEUM - DAY

An ambulance pulls away, lights flashing. Pendergast and D'Agosta walk
to a squad car.

D'AGOSTA

I've got to admit, that was a damn
sight better than "the dog ate my
homework".

PENDERGAST

How do you explain the part about
Beauregard?

D'AGOSTA

They heard the victim's name and
wove him into their story. Nice
touch.

PENDERGAST

I believed them.

D'Agosta stops, stunned.

D'AGOSTA

You think what we've got here is a
monster as big as a house that
smells... like hamburger?

PENDERGAST

No. I think what we've got here is a
psychotic killer wielding some kind
of unusual weapon... who wants us to
believe he's a monster.

D'AGOSTA

(totally confused)

Oh.

INT. NEW YORK CITY MORGUE - EVENING

D'Agosta and Pendergast thread their way down a hall lined with bodies
on gurneys. It's dark and quiet. They go into the autopsy room.

INT. AUTOPSY ROOM - AFTERNOON

A large gurney, currently empty, sits like an uninvited guest under
the bright lights of the autopsy suite. Beside it is a tall, imposing
doctor in her late 50's, with intense eyes. This is DR. ZIEWZIC. With
her are the PHOTOGRAPHER seen passing out at the museum, and a young
intern, DOCTOR GROSS.

DR. ZIEWZIC

You're late, Vince.

D'AGOSTA

Sorry Dr. Ziewzic. This is Special
Agent Pendergast. Pendergast, Dr.
Ziewzic. She runs the best chop shop
in New York.

PENDERGAST

We've met. The Hacksaw Murders. '89.

DR. ZIEWZIC

Oh yes! Who could forget. Afterwards you sent me that amazing case of Chateau Lafitte.

PENDERGAST

I hope you liked it.

DR. ZIEWZIC

Lovely bouquet. After our last case, Vince took me out for a draft beer. As I recall we split the check.

D'AGOSTA

(grumbles)

It's been one of those days.

DR. ZIEWZIC

(she snaps her rubber glove)

Shall we get down to it, then?

Dr. Gross wheels the gurney over to the morgue bank and slides open a drawer. The shape under the plastic seems too small to be human. To the side of it is a large bump, presumably the head. The two pieces of cadaver are slid onto the gurney and wheeled under the lights. A stainless steel bucket is placed under the gurney's outlet pipe. Dr. Ziewzic fiddles with a microphone hanging above the body, she taps it and it gives off the proper static.

DR. ZIEWZIC

(for the microphone)

This is Dr. Matilda Ziewzic, assisted by Dr. Frederick Gross. It's Oct. 28, six fifteen p.m. We are joined by Lieutenant Vincent D'Agosta of the NYPD, Special Agent Pendergast of the FBI and a police photographer. Let's see what we've got.

They pull off the sheet and D'AGOSTA swallows hard, closes his eyes to keep his stomach in check. The photographer goes green, but is determined not to clutch this time. PENDERGAST leans closer, totally impassive. He puts on a small pair of wire rim glasses, assumes an expression much like a man reading a menu in a restaurant.

DR. ZIEWZIC

Caucasian male. Age about 27. Blond. Height well I can't give a height because Mr. Beauregard has been decapitated. The state of the body

is such that other identifying marks are out of the question. There are numerous lacerations proceeding from the left anterior pectoral downwards through the sternum and terminating in the abdomen. This is a massive wound, two feet long and a foot wide. The head has suffered severe trauma and the occipital portion of the calvarium has been crushed and removed. It almost looks like...

DR. GROSS

(beat)

A bite.

Ziewzic turns to Pendergast.

DR. ZIEWZIC

What are we talking about here?

PENDERGAST

Someone who makes the Hacksaw Murderer look like Mother Teresa.

DR. ZIEWZIC

Right.

(back to work)

The entire brain appears to have been extracted. May I see it, please?

Gross passes over a grey, watery mass that sits in a stainless steel pan. Ziewzic studies Beaugard's brain, or what's left of it...

DR. ZIEWZIC

Curious. There's something missing.

PENDERGAST

The thalamus and the hypothalamus, perhaps?

DR. ZIEWZIC

(looks up, surprised)

Yes. Two organs the size of a walnut have been removed with what looks like surgical precision.

D'AGOSTA

What happened to them?

PENDERGAST

If you don't mind a suggestion, you
might try a saliva test.

Ziewzic, Gross and D'Agosta look at Pendergast. The photographer is
staring at the wall, silently mouthing multiplication tables to keep
from woofing all over the place.

D'AGOSTA
(incredulous)
Saliva test? You mean, you think
someone ate part of the brain?

PENDERGAST
Correct.

A long moment of silence, then... Zwiezic uses a swab for the saliva
test, puts the result in a petrie dish.

DR. ZWIEZIC
Okay. One saliva test. Now... let's
look at these lacerations. They
start wide and then converge.

D'AGOSTA
Long fingernails? Scratches?

DR. ZWIEZIC
Too extreme. Perhaps some kind of
weapon. I'm now probing the wound
and... there's a piece of foreign
material deep in the muscle, lodged
on a rib. Photograph.

The photographer gathers his courage, steps forward with D'Agosta and
Pendergast. Zwiezic rinses the object off in a beaker of sterile
water. It turns brownish red. She holds it up. They all stare in
astonished silence. D'Agosta swallows.

D'AGOSTA
Sweet Jesus.

DR. ZWIEZIC
It's a claw.

The photographer's flash goes off.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

A black and white heads uptown.

INT. COP CAR - NIGHT

Pendergast sits in silence. D'Agosta is visibly disturbed.

D'AGOSTA

I don't like animals. Never have. Dog bit me when I was little. After that I gave up on pets. Animals are irrational. Give me a psychotic killer any day. If there's one thing that makes me queasy it's being part of a food chain. My first case as a rookie, two brothers climbed a fence at the zoo. It was late August. Over ninety. The polar bear was inside his cave. Kids didn't know he was in there. All they saw was the pool. They got to swimming and splashing. The noise woke up the bear. By the time I arrived, both little boys were in pieces. The bear was dragging one kid around by the foot. I can still hear the mother screaming --

PENDERGAST

This isn't an animal, Vince. I've been on this case four months, remember? I've learned a few things.

D'AGOSTA

You've been holding out on me Pendergast. You have a suspect capable of this?

Pendergast looks over, nods quietly.

PENDERGAST

Let me tell you about it, Vince.

EXT. NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM - DUSK

The yellow crime scene tape is torn and flapping in a light rain. Most of the emergency vehicles have left. The police have released the employees who are now headed home. We see Frock and Kawakita exit. Cuthbert isn't far behind. Pendergast approaches them, headed back inside.

PENDERGAST

Excuse me. Has Dr. Green left?

KAWAKITA

Before eight? You must be joking.

She's in the physical anthro lab
making up for lost time.

Pendergast nods his thanks.

INT. MUSEUM HALL OF THE GEMS - NIGHT

The gems glow in the darkness as Pendergast passes through the now empty room.

INT. METEORITE ROOM - NIGHT

Pendergast's footfalls are lost in the carpet as he goes down the far stairs.

INT. HALLWAY - MUSEUM - NIGHT

Pendergast goes down a long, dark hall alone. He arrives at a door marked PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY LAB, enters.

INT. PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY LAB - NIGHT

The skeletons throw odd shadows on the ceiling. Margo's computer screen glows at the end of the room, casting the only light. But her chair is empty. The room is quiet. Pendergast approaches slowly, looks around.

PENDERGAST

Dr. Green?

No answer. Pendergast glances at the computer screen, sees graphs and complicated notations. He scrolls down, leans closer. He can't figure it out. He slides into Margo's chair, fascinated. Then...

MARGO (OS)

You have a warrant to look at that?

Pendergast leaps up. Margo has appeared in the doorway behind him, a cup of coffee in her hand.

PENDERGAST

Special Agent Pendergast. FBI.
Forgive me. I guess I was snooping.
What is this?

MARGO

An invention of mine. It's a computer program designed to describe the characteristics of a given species from a reading of its DNA. I call it the Genetic Sequence Extrapolator.

PENDERGAST

How does it work?

MARGO

With a DNA analysis from a fossil you can use this program to tell the species and sex of the animal, whether it was nocturnal, what it ate, how it hunted, how big it was...

(abrupt)

You aren't here for a lesson in DNA.

PENDERGAST

No.

(a moment)

I came to talk about Dr. John Whittlesley.

Margo turns to put down her coffee. She takes a moment to compose herself. When she turns back, her voice is quiet.

MARGO

Somehow, when all this happened... I knew it would come back to John. Is he really dead?

PENDERGAST

Maybe not.

MARGO

If he were alive he'd have contacted me.

PENDERGAST

You have time to talk?

INT. MUSEUM HALLS - NIGHT

Pendergast and Margo walk together through various exhibits and halls. They pass dioramas of ferocious wild animals that have been tamed and stuffed behind glass.

PENDERGAST

Dr. Whittlesley was last seen in Belem, Venezuela a week after the rest of his expedition disappeared. A taxi driver drove him to the harbor where he boarded a cargo boat. That boat washed up in my district. Everyone on board was killed.

MARGO

And John?

PENDERGAST

Disappeared. His body wasn't among the victims.

MARGO

I don't understand.

PENDERGAST

The people killed were mauled and their brains were eaten. Just like Beauregard. One part of the brain was extracted with surgical precision. The hypothalamus and thalamus to be exact.

Margo pales.

MARGO

John couldn't have anything to do with a horrible thing like that. He was a fine man despite his problems --

PENDERGAST

You loved him.

MARGO

(a moment, taken aback)

Yes. Once. We met at Columbia. John held the Cadwalader Chair in Statistical Paleontology when I was a grad student there.

PENDERGAST

You were going to be married.

MARGO

How did you know that?

PENDERGAST

I ran an internet search on Dr. Whittlesley. Got a list of his scholarly articles and the engagement announcement in the Times. I also found a record of your restraining order.

MARGO

That was two years ago. John was still in love with me.

(she looks down)

He wouldn't leave me alone.

PENDERGAST

You were afraid of him, weren't you?

MARGO

He was afraid of himself. He tried suicide once. He was ill. Manic depressive. He had wild emotional highs and lows. Not a happy affliction for a scientist. He'd been revered in our community. By the end he was a joke.

PENDERGAST

Tell me about the last expedition. What was he looking for?

MARGO

A legendary monster called Mbwn.

PENDERGAST

A monster?

MARGO

Yes. He developed his own theory that he called the Calisto Effect. It held that evolution wasn't always gradual or driven by natural selection. The environment would sometimes cause sudden and grotesque changes which could result in a "monster species". It made no sense. But he felt he had evidence that Mbwn was such a monster, living in isolation on the tepui for thousands of years.

PENDERGAST

What happened?

MARGO

No one knows. The Kothoga who live on the tepui are cannibals.

Margo's voice catches again. Pendergast reaches for his handkerchief but she shakes her head, determined to keep control.

MARGO

No. I'm all right. I won't let this affect me anymore. John wouldn't get help. His ego endangered the lives of others. His theory came first.

PENDERGAST

What if Whittlesley arrived on the tepui and no monster was there? Was he desperate enough to create one?

MARGO

I don't understand.

PENDERGAST

Something came up in autopsy tonight. Imbedded in Beauregard's body we found a claw.

MARGO

My God. Then it was an animal.

PENDERGAST

I don't think so. I think we were meant to think it was Mbwun. Did Whittlesley's monster have claws?

MARGO

I don't know. He sent back a statue that's supposed to be an exact representation. But I've never seen it. It's in the exhibit.

PENDERGAST

Would you mind showing it to me?

INT. SUPERSTITION EXHIBIT - NIGHT

This exhibit is unlike anything we've seen in the museum. Horrifying artifacts under single spots appear to float in a velvet blackness. Patterns of light and shadow play over skeletons and voodoo dolls. There are tombs, a torture chamber, and endlessly curving, maze-like, winding halls.

PENDERGAST

Where would we find it?

MARGO

I'm not sure. We should split up. You take that hall and I'll take this one.

PENDERGAST

All right. I'm as macho as you are.
Perhaps.

Without further discussion, Margo takes the right fork leaving Pendergast behind.

ON MARGO...

As she finds herself alone. The silence is intense. She heads slowly into another long, dark, tunnel passing a set of Maori tattooed heads. The eyes are stuffed with fibers, the shriveled lips are drawn back from rotting teeth. Margo passes without a look.

ON PENDERGAST

In another part of the exhibit, he nears a Mayan tomb. A skeleton in the center wears a headdress and tribal robes. Gold rings encircle bony fingers. Pendergast takes a moment to appreciate it, heads into the next hall.

ON MARGO

getting farther from pendergast, and ever deeper into the gloom. The walls around her are lined with symbols of witchcraft. There are shaman dancers, masks covered in grasses and shells. From the New Guinea coast there is Kokpah, God of a secret male society, and Zoe-ba, an awesome mannequin in black costume with an angry pointed mask.

Finally the walls open up into another gallery. Beyond it is more of the shadowy hall. Margo stops and for the first time she wavers. This gallery is the most frightening yet. It features images of THE DEVIL from different cultures around the world.

In the dim light, Margo is dwarfed by abhorrent statues of SATAN, TORNARSUK (the Eskimo evil spirit), INCUBI from India, Tibet, New Guinea etc. And there in the center of the gallery sitting on an altar and lit by a spot, is a small figurine. Margo is instantly drawn to it. As she gets close enough she sees the label in Gothic letters.

MBWUN

Savage God of the Kothoga, also
known as "HE WHO WALKS ON ALL
FOURS".

The statue is terrifyingly life-like. Margo stares at The Beast. Mbwun is covered in scales and stiff hair, with glittering green eyes and crude, reptilian features. The figure is hunched over in a threatening crouch. It's long forearms trail to the ground ending in THREE LARGE CLAWS!

ON MARGO... she starts, then remembers Pendergast.

MARGO

Mr. Pendergast! I found it.

No answer. She turns, tries again, louder.

MARGO

Pendergast! Over here --

Her voice catches as she stops and sniffs the air. A STENCH rolls over her. She covers her face, backs up, holding her breath.

MARGO

What the...

She steps directly into a nasty statue of the Tibetan lord of the Dead. Margo starts, steadies the statue. The room is silent once more. But then, unmistakably... she hears it. An odd rustling sound. Slow. Deliberate. Maddeningly soft on the thick carpet. And another wave of THE SMELL. Margo looks in the direction she came, down the long dark hall. Her voice comes out a bit frightened as she calls...

MARGO

Pendergast?

(no answer)

Who's there?

But now she freezes. At last she's truly scared. A shadow, black against black, is gliding stealthily towards her, moving over the display cases and grinning artifacts!

Margo stands stock still, her eyes on the shadow. She lets out a small gasp of shock. She can't believe her eyes. It defies reason. Slowly, she backs up. She slips quietly through the exhibit and out the other side. In the next room she pauses again, listens... now hearing a distinctly animal, SNUFFLING SOUND!

Something large is TRACKING HER! There's no doubt.

Overcome by a blind panic, Margo turns and runs. She passes through a display on mythical creatures, disappears down another winding dark hall.

Behind her comes...

THE POUNDING OF SOMETHING IN A HEAVY, LOPING RUN! Whatever it is, it's charging after her! She turns another corner. And another, tearing as fast as she can! But now the walls up ahead are narrowing, leading to ... a DEAD END!

Margo slams up against a locked door with a window of glass. The hall features displays of terrifying totem poles. All around the ghoulish carved faces seem to leap out! She pounds on the door but it's

useless. She's trapped. And the thing is coming behind her! It's just around the last bend when it stops! Silence again envelops her. She's afraid to turn. She can hear HEAVY BREATHING, and something like a low growl! Reflected in the glass of the door in front of her is the long dark hall. Margo starts as a face appears IN THE REFLECTION...

The image is wavering and unclear. It's a large, hulking form behind her! TWO GLOWING SLIT GREEN EYES in the dark! Margo SCREAMS as the thing leaps forward, hitting one of the totem poles. Margo sinks to the ground, unconscious. At last we hear Pendergast calling as darkness falls.

PENDERGAST

Dr. Green! Dr. Green!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SUPERSTITION EXHIBIT - NIGHT

ON MARGO... lying on the carpet. There's a large, nasty bump on her forehead. The totem pole is on the floor beside her. Leaning over her is PENDERGAST. Margo starts to sit up. Pendergast gently restrains her.

PENDERGAST

What happened?

MARGO

I don't know.

PENDERGAST

I heard you calling and I ran after you, but you kept disappearing and I couldn't keep up.

MARGO

(she touches her forehead)

You were behind me? Running after me?

Pendergast nods. As Margo rises he tries to help her but she waves him off, collecting her thoughts.

MARGO

It's okay, I'm all right. I remember now... It was an animal. Something large! I could smell it. It was hunting me. I saw two green eyes in the dark.

PENDERGAST

Where did you see it?

MARGO

Behind me. Over there.

Margo turns and points behind her to...

A large NORTHWEST COAST INDIAN MASK. It's carved out of wood in a horrible grimace, inset with two glowing green eyes. Pendergast sees it too, says nothing.

MARGO

That's not what I saw.

PENDERGAST

All right. If you're positive.

She leans against the wall, touches her forehead, panic overcoming her again.

MARGO (CON'T)

I can't think straight at the moment. I know how crazy this seems. Please, Mr. Pendergast, I need some fresh air. Could you get me out of here?

EXT. ROTUNDA FRONT ENTRY - EXHIBIT - NIGHT

THREE COPS including MCNITT, RODRIGUEZ and ROGERS prepare to enter the exhibit. All are armed. Margo watches as Pendergast gives them instruction. She appears rattled and confused.

PENDERGAST

Stay in formation together. Take it room by room. Check for footprints, any signs of disturbance. If you see or hear anything the least bit suspicious, I want to know.

He points to DOYLE, an older red-haired cop who takes up a post outside the exhibit. Pendergast hands Doyle his walkie talkie.

PENDERGAST

Bailey's going to be in the guard house outside. Officer Van Dorn is right down that hall. When McNitt's done, he'll relieve you.

Doyle nods. Pendergast and Margo walk out.

EXT. MUSEUM - NIGHT

Margo and Pendergast exit. The cold air is like a slap in the face.

PENDERGAST

Dr. Green...

MARGO

I didn't imagine it. I know what I saw. Are you sure there are enough men in there?

PENDERGAST

They're all heavily armed.

MARGO

(stops)

All right. This is hard for me. I'm a scientist. I like order and logic. Sometimes too much. There's got to be an explanation. There can't be an animal in there. But I saw something.

PENDERGAST

What was it?

MARGO

I don't know.

(she has a thought)

Mr. Pendergast. Do me a favor. Get me a DNA readout on that claw.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MUSEUM - NIGHT

All is quiet.

INT. MUSEUM FRONT - EXHIBIT FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

The doors to the exhibit are closed. Doyle looks at his watch, impatient. It's almost eleven now. He pulls out his walkie talkie.

DOYLE

Bailey? Doyle here. I'm still waiting outside the exhibit. Where the hell is McNitt?

BAILEY

Should be there any minute. They came out a side door a while ago. Said the exhibit's clear. McNitt's headed back to spell you.

DOYLE

I'm on double over-time, man.

BAILEY

I know. You can go home if you want to. I'll come relieve you myself.

Doyle shuts off his walkie talkie, frowns. He fidgets, looks at his watch once more.

DOYLE

What the hell.

He turns, takes off the walkie talkie and leaves it, but then he hears something, stops. It's a low SCUFFLING from inside the exhibit, coming from behind the closed doors. Doyle freezes, turns.

DOYLE

McNitt?

No answer. Doyle pauses. His hand goes to his gun for reassurance as he hears a footstep and a muffled thump. He moves to the door of the exhibit, opens it and takes a step inside.

DOYLE

McNitt? Cut the crap. I know it's you. You're not scaring me. Come on.

Silence meets him. The shadows of the exhibit loom. Doyle takes one more step inside, scanning the darkness with his gun. Does he hear BREATHING? He freezes. Yes, he does. The hair on his neck rises and he loses the spit in his mouth. He takes a step backwards, but he's half a second too late. The door SLAMS BEHIND HIM and a HUGE DARK FORM LEAPS OUT!

INT. EXHIBIT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Officer MCNITT enters from a side corridor, zipping up his fly. The hall is still. McNitt checks his watch, sees Doyle's walkie talkie and turns it on.

MCNITT

McNitt here. I'm outside the exhibit. All's quiet. But I don't see Doyle.

BAILEY (OS)

He called a minute ago looking for you. He starts vacation tomorrow and he wanted out. I said you were on the way. He could split.

MCNITT

Well he's gone.

BAILEY (OS)

Any sign of a green-eyed monster?

MCNITT

(chuckles)

Nope.

McNitt shuts off the walkie talkie, settles at his post.

INT. SUPERSTITION EXHIBIT - NIGHT

In the blackness a large shape is MOVING QUIETLY, dragging it's prey across the floor. We move in on the lifeless form of DOYLE. His face is rigid with terror, his eyes frozen, open wide. The last thing we hear as the hulking form heads back into the darkness, is the SNAPPING of Doyle's skull.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MUSEUM - DAY

Signs announce that the Superstition Exhibit opens tonight. The museum is back in business, but not many people are going in. A crowd lingers at the margins, pointing at the building. Several hold a copy of the POST with a graphic photo of the bloody floor by the circular stair.

INT. CUTHBERT'S OFFICE - DAY

Cuthbert stands by the window of his palatial office, looking out at the scene below. His face is pinched with worry. Slumped in a chair is Lieutenant D'Agosta. Pendergast surveys some paintings on the wall.

PENDERGAST

I had no idea the Museum had a complete collection of Piranesi's Forum sketches.

CUTHBERT

If you like them, they're for sale. Another day like yesterday and half the collection will be on the block.

PENDERGAST

I've read about the Museum's financial troubles.

CUTHBERT

We've been operating in the red for years. That was the whole idea behind the Superstition Exhibit. It was designed to pull people in.

We've spent every penny we have on advance publicity, betting everything on the opening's success. If we postpone at the last minute... No. I don't want to think about that.

D'AGOSTA

(chews on his toothpick, mild)
We all love the museum. I come here myself with my kids. We're trying to work with you.

CUTHBERT

I appreciate that.

PENDERGAST

If the party goes forward, and that's a big if... I've arranged for a large police presence.

CUTHBERT

Do they have to wear uniforms?

PENDERGAST

Yes.

CUTHBERT

I don't want to scare people.

PENDERGAST

I understand. But Mr. Cuthbert, we've got bigger problems. Depending on what we find today, we may have to shut you down.

Cuthbert looks grim.

INT. PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY LAB - DAY

D'Agosta examines the huge centrifuges, autoclaves, electrophoresis apparatus, monitors, computers etc. as Margo and Greg Kawakita look at the claw.

KAWAKITA

What do you make of it, Margo?

MARGO

It's not mammalian, that's for sure. I think it's reptilian.

PENDERGAST

That would jive with what we got
from the preliminary DNA read-out.
Here, have a look.

He hands them a computer read-out. Margo checks it quickly as Kawakita looks on.

MARGO

According to this, twenty-five
percent of the claw DNA is
unidentifiable, about a third is
homo sapien, and the rest is
Hemidactylus Turcicus.

D'AGOSTA

(looks over)

What's that?

Margo pulls off her glasses.

MARGO

Turkish Gecko, I believe. A lizard.

KAWAKITA

Lizard DNA and human DNA on the same
strand? Impossible. The sample must
be contaminated.

MARGO

There's another possibility. A lot
of repeated base pairs could suggest
a high level of genetic damage.

PENDERGAST

Genetic damage?

MARGO

When DNA is defective, it often
uncontrollably replicates long
repeating sequences of the same base
pair. Viruses can damage DNA. So can
radiation, certain chemicals. Even
cancer. Let's let the G.S.E. sort it
out. I have to get started. This
will take several hours.

PENDERGAST

We need someone to take us to the
secure storage area.

KAWAKITA

Try Dr. Frock. He's the curator of

Plant Biology. All the curators have keys. And he knows every inch of this museum. The rest of us still get lost.

INT. MUSEUM HALLWAY AREA - DAY

Pendergast, D'Agosta and Dr. Frock get off are in an older, plain corridor with a long row of locked heavy steel doors. The doors are numbered up to eight, then the corridor turns.

As the three go forward, the creaking of the wheelchair echoes faintly in the hall.

PENDERGAST

Thank you for taking the time to help us with this, Dr. Frock.

FROCK

Happy to be useful. It's rare enough these days. According to security, Beauregard put the Whittlesley crates in storage area 1012.

PENDERGAST

How many storage areas are there?

FROCK

They fill seven floors. We have the largest collection of mammals and dinosaurs in the world. Just to give you an idea, there are more than three million insects specimens. Not to mention amphibians, reptiles, birds, anthropological artifacts, meteorites, minerals and gems. Only about five percent of the museum collection is actually on display.

D'AGOSTA

This place is a maze.

FROCK

I'm one of the few who know every inch it, now that John is gone.

PENDERGAST

(looks over)

Do you mean Dr. Whittlesley?

FROCK

Yes. John made quite a study of the

whole museum. He had a copy of my original plans.

Frock heads through a double door that leads to a FREIGHT ELEVATOR that's as big as a small room. The operator, KARL has it decorated with a table, chair, and PICTURES.

MARGO

Osteo prep, Karl.

The doors creak closed. They are now inside...

INT. FREIGHT ELEVATOR - DAY

Headed down. D'Agosta chews on a toothpick, stares at Karl's home-made picture show. The photos have all been cut from nature magazines. They are of ANIMALS MATING in extreme positions and undreamed of ways. D'Agosta turns to Pendergast, dead pan.

D'AGOSTA

My kind of art.

Karl, who is sixty and wears a red toupee, leers.

KARL

They keep me company. Gets kinda lonely sometimes.

D'AGOSTA

My favorite is the two camels.

KARL

Really? I'm partial to the skunks.

Finally the doors open and they exit to a hail, enter another set of doors. Now they are in

INT. OSTEOLOGICAL PREPARATION AREA - DAY

It looks more like a bizarre industrial kitchen than anything else. Deep stainless steel tanks line one wall. On the ceiling near the tanks hang massive pulleys and grappling hooks for the larger carcasses. In a far corner of the workshop is a stainless-steel gurney bearing a DEAD GORILLA. A pink faced eighty year old man is working on the carcass with sharp tools. This is DON OSTERBAAN.

FROCK

Did you ever wonder where we get all our skeletons? This is the laboratory where animal carcasses are reduced to bones.

(to Osterbaan)

What's cooking today, Don?

DON

Zebra.

Frock looks into a large maceration tank with Pendergast and D'Agosta. A zebra carcass can be seen under the muddy surface, its flesh and soft tissues falling off.

D'AGOSTA

Man, that's ripe.

Frock now opens the door on a humid closet adjacent to the main room. Inside on a stainless steel table lies the corpse of a fox. It's crawling with BLACK BEETLES which are devouring it. D'Agosta and Pendergast watch the grizzly scene, properly impressed.

FROCK

Dermeid beetles. The second method of preparing a skeleton, used in Natural History Museums world wide. Bugs are clean and highly efficient. They'll polish that fox off in no time.

As Don casually peels back the gorilla's whole face exposing the skull...

OSTERBAAN

Want to have a look at a gorilla brain? Got one right here.

FROCK

Thanks Don. We're in a hurry. Some other time.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

More rows of stainless steel doors under hissing steam pipes. The light is dim here, and several bulbs are burned out. But the numbers on the storage rooms are much higher now. The three men come out of the darkness. Frock rounds a last corner and wheels to a stop.

FROCK

This should be it. Can you read the number?

Pendergast reaches up above them and TAPS THE LIGHT BULB. It comes on and they all see the heavy steel door of the storage area. D'Agosta's jaw drops and his toothpick falls out. The door has been scored from top to bottom by long, vicious, CLAWS!

D'AGOSTA

Holy shit.

Frock stares in amazement, shaken. He runs a finger down the deep ruts.

FROCK

Something tried to get into this room!

PENDERGAST

And failed. These doors are solid steel.

FROCK

This means there must be an animal loose in the museum!

PENDERGAST

I wouldn't be so sure.

Pendergast takes Frock's keys and opens the door. It swings wide on oiled hinges. D'Agosta turns on a light.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

They all enter. Nothing has been disturbed. The crates sit in the middle of the small room, untouched. Pendergast kneels by the only one that's been opened.

PENDERGAST

This must be the one that held the statue. Let's see what else is inside.

Pendergast removes the lid and hands it to D'Agosta, pulls out a BLOW DART GUN, SEED PODS, a CARVED STONE. D'Agosta takes the lid and turns it.

D'AGOSTA

The lid of this crate is scratched with claw marks, just like the door.

As D'Agosta studies the lid, a brittle, water damaged envelope slips out. D'Agosta picks it up. The envelope bears an imprint of TWO ARROWS, one silver overlaid with another of GOLD.

D'AGOSTA

Look. It's some kind of letter.

FROCK

(excited)

May I see that?

D'Agosta hands the letter to Frock.

FROCK

It's from John. Those two arrows were his insignia. It's addressed to Louis Moriarty, a patron who financed his expeditions.

PENDERGAST

Read it out loud.

FROCK

"Dear Louis,

Tomorrow we go to the south end of the tepui where we'll be in the greatest danger, so I'm sending Carlos back with the crates. You always believed in me, Louis, even in the darkest days. So it gives me great pleasure to tell you your faith has been rewarded. We've made an incredible find. I enclose a representation of Mbwun. Note the exaggerated claws, the reptilian attributes, the hints of bipedalia. It's beyond belief, but this statue is accurate. I know because I've seen the beast."

Frock stops, looks up at D'Agosta and Pendergast. His face flushes with the thrill.

FROCK

Did you hear that? My God. He says that Mbwun is real!

D'AGOSTA

(snorts)

Pardon my French, but bull shit.

FROCK

This on top of the scratches... isn't it proof!

PENDERGAST

I think the scratches were put there to scare us. Perhaps even lead us to this note.

Pendergast looks out to the dark corridors.

PENDERGAST

You said John Whittlesley made a study of your blueprints of the museum.

FROCK

Yes.

PENDERGAST

Are there any hidden rooms or staircases? Places where someone could hide?

FROCK

Not really. Just the sub-basement.

D'Agosta and Pendergast exchange a look.

PENDERGAST

Where is that?

FROCK

I don't know. It was walled over. No one's been down there in years.

PENDERGAST

You said you had plans of the museum. Could we see them, please?

EXT. MUSEUM SIDE DOOR - DAY

A series of boxes labeled "PROFESSOR FROCK" sit on the loading dock. A small moving van, partially loaded with the contents of Frock's office, sits waiting. Frock delves through one of the boxes while Pendergast and D'Agosta look on.

FROCK

I know they're here somewhere. It's a good thing we caught the movers in time. They're nineteenth century blueprints from when the museum was built. I remember the sub-basement was below the regular basement, linked to the city sewer. I only know about it because it flooded all the way up to the museum during the hurricane of '49. I lost so many precious books.

Frock continues to unload boxes, scattering things right and left. It's the most amazing assortment of paraphernalia. A collection of wildflowers, soil samples, a stuffed owl. Finally he pulls out some very old blueprints and flashes a triumphant smile.

FROCK

Eureka. Who says it doesn't pay to be a pack rat? Now please be careful with these. When you're done, I'd like them back.

INT. HALL OF THE AFRICAN MAMMALS - DAY

Visitors scatter as Pendergast enters with D'Agosta, TWO DEPUTIES, a dog handler, JONATHAN HAMM and Jonathan's pair of HUGE BLOODHOUNDS. The deputies are armed with large shotguns. Pendergast scans the blueprints as they walk.

D'AGOSTA

How big is the sub-basement?

PENDERGAST

Apparently it's huge.

D'AGOSTA

I think I should come with you.

PENDERGAST

We haven't got time. You have to meet with museum security so we can make a decision about tonight.

INT. MUSEUM - STAIRCASE - DAY

Pendergast, Jonathan, his dogs and the deputies make their way down an industrial set of stairs into the basement.

INT. BASEMENT CORRIDOR - DAY

In a moment they arrive at the site of Beauregard's murder. The area at the bottom of the spiral stairway is still littered with chalk, crime tape, spray paint and the remains of scores of people tramping in and out.

PENDERGAST

These plans indicate there's a walled over entrance to the sub-basement right around here.

They move carefully down the dark corridor which we remember from the time we last saw it with Henry and Larry. Unknown to Jonathan or Pendergast, the dogs are walking directly towards the spot where the boys faced the monster.

JONATHAN

The dogs are picking up something, Mr. Pendergast.

The dogs start barking in animation, sniffing the wall. Pendergast studies the blueprints with a flashlight, moves to the spot. There's nothing to be seen. He shines his flashlight over the water-stained, uneven stucco between two steel beams. The dogs sniff furiously at the point where the wall meets the floor. Pendergast moves his fingers to the joint between the stucco and the beam, shoves hard. The wall pushes back. It's a door!

INT. STAIRWELL - SUB-BASEMENT - DAY

They enter a dank stairwell with brick stairs. Water drips on the walls.

DEPUTY ONE

What is this? A dungeon?

Jonathan looks uneasy, double wraps the dogs' leashes around his black-gloved hands. The two deputies remove their 12 gauges from their shoulders. Then they all follow the animals, descend down the inky stairwell.

INT. SECURITY COMMAND CENTER - MUSEUM - DAY

The place looks like the control room of a nuclear power plant. Two SECURITY GUARDS monitor a battery of closed-circuit screens. D'Agosta is now accompanied by the pompous head of security, IPPOLITO. Clearly Ippolito feels D'Agosta is pissing on his territory and he's trying to assert control.

IPPOLITO

This huge police presence tonight isn't necessary, Lieutenant. You'll just scare people off. I can handle the security behind scenes with this system. It's state of the art.

D'AGOSTA

The cops are non-negotiable, Ippolito. Why don't you just tell me how this space station works.

IPPOLITO

It's fool proof, basically. I designed this whole thing myself. Every valuable object in the Museum carries a small electronic chip. If anything's moved so much as an inch, we get an alarm pinpointing the exact location of the attempted theft.

D'AGOSTA

That's great if you're stopping a burglar. Not our goal here. Are there motion detectors?

IPPOLITO

In every exhibition room. The museum's divided into five cells. The reception and exhibit are in cell five. We could arm the motion detectors in cells one to four, then seal the perimeter with our fire doors.

D'AGOSTA

That would leave one exit for hundreds of people. You'd be violating every fire regulation on the books. We'll guard the perimeter with my men and engage the motion detectors in the other cells. One more question. I see a big hole. If this entire thing is run by computer, what happens if the power fails?

IPPOLITO

(snorts)

You don't know much about computers, Lieutenant. There are safeguards built in. We have back-up systems with redundancies. There's no way these computers can fail.

INT. PHYSICAL ANTHRO LAB - DAY

Margo, Kawakita and Frock are studying the contents of the crate.

FROCK

I can't help thinking there's something that Pendergast overlooked. If the scratches were made by whatever killed Beauregard, it wants something that's in here.

MARGO

A blow dart. Seed pods. A plant press. Pretty unimpressive stuff.

FROCK

Let me see the plant press.

Frock opens the plant press and sees a specimen inside.

MARGO

What is it?

FROCK

I'm not sure. As you know, the Kothoga lived outside civilization on the tepui for thousands of years. Species flourished in isolation when man and pollution rendered them extinct. This could be one of the last remaining samples of an unknown plant.

MARGO

Whatever it is, it must be common on the tepui. John used it as packing material.

FROCK

You're right.

Kawakita lifts out a bit of the fibers, as does Frock.

FROCK

They're curiously fleshy.

KAWAKITA

And they smell delicious.

Kawakita TAKES a NIBBLE.

KAWAKITA

Taste great.

FROCK

I wouldn't put that in your mouth until we do a chemical analysis, Greg.

KAWAKITA

I can handle that for you while we're waiting on the G.S.E.

Kawakita rises and exits with some of the plant.

MARGO

What about those seed pods? Are they from the same plant?

Frock takes a moment to study them, looks up.

FROCK

Margo, these aren't seed pods.

MARGO

What are they?

FROCK

They're eggs.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT - DAY

Black as night. The only light comes from the men's flashlights. They're at a crossroads. Crooked corridors, with arched ceilings barely the height of a man stretch in several directions. Jonathan is crouched down, resting with the panting dogs. The deputies are having a smoke. They all look both uneasy and exhausted except for Pendergast. He stares at the blueprints.

PENDERGAST

Hard to read in this light. The ink is so faded.

JONATHAN

The dogs have lost the scent, Mr. Pendergast. Maybe we should head back.

PENDERGAST

Not yet. Let's try the fork to the left.

The men reluctantly shoulder their shotguns and push on. The hounds walk ahead, carelessly nosing the ground. The flashlight beams illuminate lime-encrusted, cave-like walls.

DEPUTY TWO

This place gives me the creeps.

At this the dogs begin to WHINE. The HAIR on their backs rises in a ridge. Pendergast turns as a BREEZE stirs his clothes.

JONATHAN

They've got something.

PENDERGAST

Keep the light up. I can't see.

The dogs strain and pull forward, sniffing the air ahead. The deputies raise up their shotguns as they all move deeper into the darkness. The flashlight beams streak crazily in all directions, barely penetrating the gloom. Suddenly the dogs break into a terrifying BAYING which bounces off the walls.

PENDERGAST

Shut them up!

JONATHAN

Heel Argo! Hobbes! Heel!

The dogs drag Jonathan forward, paying no attention, foaming at the mouth. Jonathan is now frightened.

JONATHAN

They're going crazy! I need help!

Too late. As Jonathan tries to grab the collars, one of the dogs LEAPS forward, and the leash slips through Jonathan's hands.

JONATHAN

He's loose! Argo!

Argo BOLTS into the darkness. The men start after the dog, following the frantic barking which echoes farther and farther in the distance. Pendergast is in the lead. Suddenly he throws out his arms, halts.

PENDERGAST

Stop!

JONATHAN

Holy mother, what is that?

A goatish odor envelops them all.

DEPUTY ONE

Smells God-awful. Like rotten meat.

JONATHAN

Argo! Come!

PENDERGAST

Quiet!

A SCUFFLING sound of claws dragging on brick is heard followed by a ROAR. The men all freeze. The other dog leaps and twists with excitement. In the confusion it also breaks free! It tears after the first dog, disappearing into the darkness. Now Jonathan is wild-eyed.

JONATHAN

No! Hobbes!

The deputies are terrified, retreat. The darkness is stifling, claustrophobic. The flashlights are small help. Pendergast alone remains dead calm. His voice is cool and commanding.

PENDERGAST

Forget the dogs. You two, get back here. Don't point that gun at me.

The deputies regain control and follow Pendergast's orders. They fall into position, pump their shotguns and aim them down the hall. In the echoing darkness ahead of them, the barking falters and stops.

There is a moment of silence, then a terrible, unearthly SHRIEK. The deputies quail, frozen in their tracks. Jonathan leaps forward.

JONATHAN

Argo! Hobbes!

PENDERGAST

Get back! Now!

At that moment a SHAPE hurtles at them from the darkness! The men YELL in terror. There are two stunning BLASTS from the shotguns, two FLASHES of light accompanied by a deafening roar. The rumble echoes and dies and there's an intense silence, followed by a sob.

JONATHAN

You shot my dog!

Hobbes lies five feet from them, a black shadow of death. Jonathan kneels by the dog, tears in his eyes. Down the animals side is a GASH.

JONATHAN

My dog...

DEPUTY ONE

(stammers)

He was coming right at me...

In the distance they can hear a terrified howl. It's the second dog, hurt or frightened. It's a pitiful sound.

DEPUTY TWO

Let's get out of here!

JONATHAN

I'm not going anywhere! Not without my dog!

Pendergast grabs at Jonathan who slips from his grasp. Jonathan inches back down the hallway calling desperately.

JONATHAN

Hobbes!

DEPUTY ONE

Get back!

Jonathan shakes his head no.

JONATHAN

There's something out there! Let's go get it now! That's why we came down here, isn't it?

PENDERGAST

(to the deputies)

He's right. Follow me.

But the two deputies are terrified. They cling to the wall, inching backwards, sheer horror in their eyes.

DEPUTY ONE

No way. I say we get help. A lot more guns.

PENDERGAST

I'm ordering you! Cover me!

DEPUTY TWO

We'll cover you from here!

Jonathan is disappearing in front of them. Pendergast has no choice. Grim faced, he pulls his Colt .45 Anaconda from a shoulder harness. It's a narrow and evil-looking gun. From a pocket comes a handful of 255 grain wadcutter and 147 grain FMJ flatnose ammunition. He loads up, goes after Jonathan, who's no longer in sight. Pendergast passes down a long, sloping hallway into cavernous blackness ahead. At the bottom Pendergast stops. He has to stoop down as he goes through an archway and into...

A VAST ARCHING ROOM...

A dark stream of water runs between concrete walls with tunnels going off from all sides. It appears to be part of the sewer system. The dog cowers in a corner. Jonathan moves to his side.

JONATHAN

Look. It's Hobbes! He's all right.

PENDERGAST

Come on. Let's get back to the others. We can't leave them alone.

JONATHAN

It's alright. I can tell by the way the dog's acting that whatever was out there is gone. What is this place?

PENDERGAST

Not on the map. Looks like it connects with the city sewer.

Pendergast calls back down the tunnel for the deputies.

PENDERGAST

We're coming back!

The words go unanswered. From the hall comes a loud REPORT. It's the shotguns, blasting desperately. Something flies up all around them as the sound echoes. BATS!

Pendergast and Jonathan shield themselves from the flurry of beating wings. Finally the animals settle and Pendergast and Jonathan exchange a look. The silence is filled by a soft RUMBLING SOUND. They stand together, waiting. Pendergast points his gun at the hall leading back to the deputies. A ridge of hair on the dog's back rises and it growls.

PENDERGAST

Identify yourself! Who's there?

No answer. The rumbling continues, growing louder. Then a dark object appears. It comes rolling out of the hallway, bounces in front of them and stops. Pendergast shines his light on...

DEPUTY ONE'S HEAD! The mouth is open wide in terror. Across the cheek is a vicious claw mark.

JONATHAN

Oh... my... God!

PENDERGAST

(hisses)

Quiet.

And now they hear a GUT WRENCHING SHRIEK that's abruptly cut off, followed by a second rumbling sound! Jonathan grabs Pendergast by the shirt, panicked.

PENDERGAST

Stay calm.

They head quietly for the exit at the other end of room which seems to slope up. After they're gone a few moments the head of DEPUTY TWO rolls to a stop.

EXT. MUSEUM - NIGHT

Cabs and limousines tangle outside the west entrance. A huge rotating SPOTLIGHT is now turned on. Elegantly dressed men in dinner jackets and women in gowns rush to get out of the pelting rain, umbrellas

jousting.

INT. CUTHBERT'S OFFICE - EVENING

Cuthbert's putting on his tux. He adjusts the cummerbund, humming happily as D'Agosta looks on. D'Agosta paces, highly agitated and worried.

D'AGOSTA

I'm telling you, something's wrong.
I still haven't heard from
Pendergast. I think you should call
it off.

CUTHBERT

It's too late now. Guests are
arriving. The Mayor's car is pulling
up.

D'AGOSTA

I'll go down and speak to him.

CUTHBERT

(irritated)

You haven't got the authority. Only
Pendergast can pull the plug.

D'AGOSTA

Pendergast may be in trouble. Don't
you understand? He still hasn't come
back. It's been over three hours --

CUTHBERT

He'll be back. Relax. We're in good
shape. Your security is air tight.
There've been no more incidents,
nothing suspicious. There's no
reason to call off the opening now.

INT. GREAT ROTUNDA - NIGHT

Resounding with the echoes of several hundred expensive shoes crossing the marble expanse and heading down the rows of palm trees leading to the Hall of Heavens. The palms themselves are festooned with orchids and violet lights. Somewhere inside, an invisible band is playing "New York, New York". An army of waiters in white tie thread their way through the guests carrying large silver platters crowded with champagne glasses. Cuthbert enters and crosses to meet The MAYOR and THE MAYOR'S WIFE. Photographers step forward and flashbulbs pop.

INT. HALL OF THE HEAVENS - NIGHT

Food is out. Hundreds of tables are set with black linen table cloths. Decorations have a dark, haunted house theme. A hum of activity floats up past the vast Corinthian columns into the circular dome above.

INT. MARGO'S LABORATORIES - NIGHT

An explosive sneeze rattles the beakers and dislodges the plant specimens. Margo interrupts her work at the computer to hand Greg a tissue as Frock looks on.

KAWAKITA

What kind of egg is it?

MARGO

It's reptilian.

FROCK

Like the claw.

MARGO

(cautious)

Let's not jump to conclusions. This egg could belong to any number of reptiles, Dr. Frock.

FROCK

(excited)

Come on, Margo. We're on the verge of something huge. Let's consider the possibility, just the three of us, alone in this room. What if John was right. I mean, what if? And he sent back an egg of his monster in the crates. When it got to the museum, it hatched.

MARGO

Several problems with that theory. For one thing, this egg is intact. For another, according to Pendergast, the crates were shipped here on a boat. Everyone on board was killed like Beauregard. If the thing hatched in mid-ocean, where did it go?

Frock has no answer. Greg gestures to his computer screen.

KAWAKITA

I guess you're not interested in this plant anymore, but the chemical analysis is done. Frock reads the

computer over Greg's shoulder.

FROCK

"Genus: Unknown. Family: Unknown.
Order: Unknown. Phylum: Unknown.
Cripes, Margo, what did you give me?
Is this an animal or one funky
shrub?"

(to Kawakita)

I see you've been programming the
computer vocabulary again.

MARGO

(points to a hexagonal symbol)
Look at this. An ambyloid reovirus
protein. That explains why the
computer's confused. The plant's
infected with a virus.

FROCK

That's not so unusual. Many plants
carry viruses. Like the burls on
Maple trees.

MARGO

But a virus normally codes for other
viruses. This one's making human and
animal proteins. Listen to this.

(reads)

"Glycotetraglycine collagenoid.
Weinstein's tropic hormone. 4-
monoxytocin supressin hormone."

KAWAKITA

These plant fibers are loaded with
hormones!

MARGO

What kind of hormones?

Kawakita pulls a heavy book from the shelf. The Encyclopedia of
Biochemistry, thumbs to a page and reads.

KAWAKITA

4-monoxytocin is... "A hormone
secreted by the human hypothalamus
gland."

MARGO

Try Weinstein's tropic hormone.

The tension is rising in the room. Frock takes the book, looks this

one up, reads silently and removes his glasses.

FROCK

A hormone secreted by the human
thalamus gland.

Kawakita and Frock look puzzled. Margo rises in agitation.

MARGO

This is it. This is what he, or
it... is after! The plant has high
concentrations of the same hormones
found in minute quantities in the
human brain!

KAWAKITA

So what?

MARGO

Pendergast told me the killer
extracts and eats the hypothalamus
and thalamus of the victim's brains!

KAWAKITA

(pales)

Eats them?

MARGO

Yes. Whatever killed Beauregard may
have lived on this plant. When the
crates were put in secure storage,
they were out of reach. The killer
couldn't get them, so it got the
next best thing.

FROCK

Beauregard's head.

There's a moment of stunned silence. Then a LOUD BUZZER makes them all
jump.

MARGO

It's all right. That means the
G.S.E. has finished analyzing the
claw DNA. Greg, you go find
Pendergast and Lieutenant D'Agosta
now.

INT. MUSEUM HALLWAYS - NIGHT

Kawakita tears up the dark stairs. He turns a corner and something
JUMPS OUT at him. He almost screams. It's a DRUNK.

DRUNK

Hey, where 'za little boys room?

KAWAKITA

Down that hallway. But don't stay long. You don't want to be here alone.

INT. MARGO'S LAB - NIGHT

Margo and Frock enter and huddle over a sheaf of papers that the printer has spit out.

MARGO

All right, assuming the program is accurate, this is a description of the animal with that claw.

(she reads)

"Species unidentified. Genus: unidentified. Phylum unknown. Male, weight in excess of 240 kg. Brain capacity, 900 centimeters." That means it's highly intelligent. "Quadrupedal."

FROCK

Quadrupedal! The other name for Mbwun. "He Who Walks on All Fours."

Margo and Frock exchange a look. Holy shit. Margo swallows and keeps reading.

MARGO

"Nocturnal. External hair and bony plates. Locomotor speed 60-70 kilometers. Reduced optic chiasm"... poor eyesight. "External mucoid nasal glands,"... very keen scent... "Morphological characteristics: Highly robust. Aggressiveness: extreme."

FROCK

So the claw came from a huge creature with a preternatural sense of smell and poor eyesight that hunts at night.

MARGO

With the intelligence of a human being, the speed of a greyhound, and

the strength of a grizzly bear.

FROCK

(a long moment)

Margo, what you've just described is a killing machine.

MARGO

And it's hungry. It's been two days since it's eaten. There are five hundred people arriving right now. The animal hunts at night and it has a keen sense of smell! All those people in one enclosed space...

FROCK

It's like ringing the dinner bell.

INT. ENTRANCE TO SUPERSTITION EXHIBIT - ROTUNDA - NIGHT

The crowd is now packed into the rotunda as the MAYOR cuts a red ribbon across the entrance to the exhibit and everyone applauds. Cuthbert is by the mayor's side. He steps forward and raises his hand for quiet. The crowd falls silent.

CUTHBERT

Thank you everyone and welcome. We're glad all of you were willing to brave the inclement weather to be with us tonight. Our special thanks to his honor, the mayor and his lovely wife.

The Mayor takes a bow. More applause.

CUTHBERT (CON'T)

Some people have questioned whether a superstition exhibit belongs in a Museum of Science. Spells, incantations, demons, magic... these are forces that defy the natural laws. Superstition provides answers to the great questions based on fear. Science provides answers to the great questions based on truth. Science and superstition, then, are polar opposites. Mortal enemies, if you will. And that is why we are here tonight. We have come to learn more about the enemy, and thus to bring about its defeat. For every good, there is an evil, for every

dark, a light. And so tonight... my
friends, I give you ignorance,
terror, unreasoning fear, pure evil.
(smiles, gestures to the exhibit)
Have a great time.

Everyone laughs, applauds again as Cuthbert and the Mayor lead the way inside. Kawakita is making his way over to D'Agosta. The crush at the entrance is incredible.

KAWAKITA
Lieutenant! It's me.

D'AGOSTA
What is it?

KAWAKITA
Dr. Green has to see you!

D'AGOSTA
Got my hands full here.

KAWAKITA
It's important. Please. You have to
come! Pendergast, too. She's found
out something.

D'Agosta pulls out his walkie talkie.

D'AGOSTA
McNitt? D'Agosta here.

INT. SECURITY COMMAND CENTER - MUSEUM - NIGHT

Officer McNitt stands in the corner of the computer room, bathed in neon light. Running the security system is GEORGE, your basic computer nerd. Multiple screens all over show various rooms in the museum. Most are empty with the exception of those showing the exhibition. On these, the crowds can be seen entering the various rooms. McNitt holds his walkie talkie.

MCNITT
Yeah Lieutenant? I'm here.

D'AGOSTA (ON RADIO)
I'm heading to the Evolutionary Bio
labs. Any sign of Pendergast?

MCNITT
Not yet.

At this moment a NOISE comes from the adjoining room. McNitt's head SWIVELS. It's a LOUD THUMP.

MCNITT

Hold on Lieutenant.

(to George)

What was that?

GEORGE

Probably just something wrong with the air conditioning. There's a shit load of electrical rooms back there.

George is playing an elaborate computer game and not paying attention. McNitt returns to his walkie talkie as the THUMP comes again. Now he looks distinctly nervous.

MCNITT

Lieutenant? There's something wrong in the computer room.

D'AGOSTA (ON RADIO)

Goddamn it. I'll get Ippolito and send him up.

George rises.

GEORGE

You're over-reacting. Sounds like the air conditioning to me.

McNitt watches uneasily as George opens the door, disappears into the next room.

INT. ENTRANCE - SUPERSTITION EXHIBIT - NIGHT

D'Agosta turns to Kawakita who waits, shifting from foot to foot.

D'AGOSTA

Damn. There's some kind of problem in the computer room. I have to go get Ippolito. You wait here.

D'Agosta heads into the exhibit before Kawakita can protest.

INT. SUPERSTITION EXHIBIT - NIGHT

We see various cuts of people as they move into the different rooms. A TEENAGE GIRL (LAUREN) and her FATHER (DAVID) examine a lidless, rotting European style coffin, complete with corpse. A white haired gentleman (DR. POUND), leans on his cane as he looks at a display on primitive medicine practiced with implements that look like torture tools.

Cuthbert and Ippolito are at the head of a press of people, giving the

MAYOR and HIS WIFE a guided tour.

CUTHBERT

Here we have a very rare sacrificial table from Mesoamerica. The priests would kill the victim on this slab, cut out the heart and eat it while it was still beating.

MAYOR

I could use one of these things in City Hall.

Cuthbert laughs right on cue. They pass a Congo power figure with its bulging eye sockets and torso riddled with sharp nails. Several people recoil from it, looking repulsed. The MAYOR'S WIFE sees it and looks distressed.

MAYOR'S WIFE

You're letting kids see this? I should think they'd have nightmares.

CUTHBERT

Kid will love it. They're our target audience. Nothing here is as violent as what they see on T.V.

They pass a MUMMY dripping in BLOOD. The Mayor gestures to it.

MAYOR

I don't know. That could be a little over the top. It's not even scientific. Mummies don't bleed.

Cuthbert's smile fades as he sees the mummy.

CLOSE ON... the MAYOR'S WHITE CUFF as he extends his hand to point at the mummy. The pristine white of his cuff is suddenly colored by a falling RED DROP OF BLOOD.

Cuthbert sees it. So does the Mayor and Ippolito. They look up as another DROP OF BLOOD falls right on Cuthbert's face. And yet another droplet falls on THE MAYOR'S WIFE'S white bosom, exposed by her low cut dress!

CUTHBERT

Oh... my... God...

THEIR POV... above the mummy's head, the top of the case is cut away, exposing a ceiling crawling with steam pipes and ductwork. A hand, a watch, and the cuff of a blue shirt protrude over the edge of the case. A small icicle of blood hangs from the middle finger. And

another drop FALLS.

CUTHBERT SCREAMS AT THE TOP OF HIS LUNGS! Conscious of the panic factor, Ippolito yells.

IPPOLITO

Quiet everyone!

But it's too late. The room is packed with people. And D'Agosta himself is just pushing through the door as another woman cries out...

WOMAN

There's a body up there!

A ripple of fear goes over the faces in the room, titters as people wonder if it's a joke. At that moment from the darkness above, the ceiling buckles and something FALLS!

It's OFFICER DOYLE'S HEADLESS TORSO, dripping blood!

UTTER PANDEMONIUM breaks loose! The close space ECHOES with screams and shouts. People claw at each other, stumbling desperately trying to get to the door. A YOUNG WOMAN falls and D'Agosta runs to her to keep her from being trampled in the stampede.

INT. COMPUTER ROOM - NIGHT

McNitt is staring in horror at the remote camera images showing the chaos in the exhibition, the faces registering blind fear. Alarms start going off all over the place. McNitt calls out... panicked...

MCNITT

George! Get out here, now!

McNitt looks around, desperate. But George still isn't here. The door to the electrical room is still open. The ceiling shudders from thundering feet. McNitt can hear distant SCREAMS! It's raising the hair on the back of his neck. He calls out.

MCNITT

George! Where are you?

No answer. He moves to the open door, a new fear in his eyes. He looks inside.

INT. ELECTRICAL ROOM - NIGHT

BLACKNESS. McNitt can't find a light switch. He stays in the doorway, silhouetted by light from the computer room. With shaking hands McNitt pumps a slug into the chamber of his shotgun. There's a strange, low, gurgling sound. It's McNitt's stomach. He silences it, swallows.

MCNITT

Hey you? George! Damn it. Where are you? No response.

McNitt edges into the darkened rooms. The first one's empty. He tries the next.

MCNITT

George! We've got an emergency! Are you here?

Suddenly there's a HUGE THUMP and a scuttling to his left! It's a terrifying sound! McNitt drops to his knees and pumps three rounds, each with a light and a deafening blast! A SHOWER OF SPARKS and a gout of flame licks upwards, illuminating the room with orange light. A HUGE DARK SHAPE ducks out the door!

MCNITT

Oh God. Oh God!

Gunpowder hangs in the air like a blue fog. On the far wall, a mounted metal box is smoking from three large, ragged holes! With a sudden pop, an electrical arc slices across the ruined box, followed by a crackling and a shower of sparks. McNitt ducks back into the computer room, slams the door and locks it, breathing hard.

INT. COMPUTER ROOM - NIGHT

Every single screen flickers and dims. But to McNitt's relief, George has returned. He is sitting with his back to the doorway in his chair.

MCNITT

George! I saw something in there! I fired but I think I missed it!

George remains still, his back to McNitt, staring at the computer game on the flickering screen.

MCNITT

George, for Chrissake answer me!

McNitt puts a hand on George's shoulder, swivels his chair around.

ON GEORGE... His face ripped off.

INT. ELECTRICAL ROOM - NIGHT

ON THE CENTRAL SWITCHING BOX... sparking and shorting as an ENORMOUS CLAWED ARM SWIPES IT OFF THE WALL!

INT. HALL OF THE HEAVENS - NIGHT

Everyone pours out of the exhibit, running for the door leading to the Rotunda. People are getting trampled. It's a terrible crush. Screams!

Tables over-turned everywhere. Food scatters to the floor. D'AGOSTA pushes his way out of the exhibit, crosses to Kawakita, who is appalled. Above, the chandeliers are flickering.

KAWAKITA

What happened?!

D'AGOSTA

There's a dead body in the exhibit!
People are panicking, trampling each other trying to get out.

Ippolito runs over to join them.

D'AGOSTA

What the hell is going on?!

Above them THE LIGHTS dim again and come back on.

IPPOLITO

The whole system is shutting down!
We have to get out quickly before the fire doors fall!

D'AGOSTA

What doors?

IPPOLITO

I told you! They seal off all the cells. They were designed to fall automatically in a system failure --

D'AGOSTA

You said the system couldn't fail!

At this there's a low rumble from above. D'Agosta looks up and sees A LARGE METAL DOOR IS DESCENDING from a slot in the ceiling, and not in an orderly fashion. It's falling fast. Below are crowds of people, all pushing to get out! Officer Bailey, near the door, sees it.

BAILEY

Above you! Look out!

His voice is lost in an ocean of screaming. Kawakita stands in total horror a moment, then joins Bailey and D'Agosta.

All of them try to restrain people from trying to beat the door. Ippolito, on the other hand, elbows his way to the front of the fleeing crowd!

D'AGOSTA

Ippolito! Get back here!

IPPOLITO

Like hell!

Ignoring D'Agosta, Ippolito pushes past. He barrels over an OLD MAN who stumbles and falls DIRECTLY BENEATH THE FALLING DOOR! Ippolito jumps over him and is out!

The old man looks up at the descending wall of steel and SCREAMS! D'AGOSTA runs forward, dives for the old man but he's not in time.

Kawakita covers his eyes, unable to watch as the lights flicker a third and last time. The room is plunged into darkness. And over the screams we hear the rumble and CRASH, the horrifying cries of the old man, as the door comes down.

INT. MARGO'S LAB - NIGHT

Margo and Frock stand in the darkness. Through a high window we can see lightning flash.

MARGO

What's going on?

FROCK

Some kind of power failure. Maybe it's the storm. Do you have a flashlight?

MARGO

I think so.

She gets one from a cupboard.

FROCK

Greg's been gone over a half hour. We'd better get out of here. Get the crate.

INT. HALLWAYS - NIGHT

Frock wheels his chair as fast as he can. Margo runs beside him carrying the crate with the fibers inside. A peel of thunder ends and distant screaming is heard. Margo stops, appalled.

MARGO

Dr. Frock. Did you hear that?

FROCK

Don't stop now.

Up ahead they hear METALLIC RUMBLING and a CRASH! They round a corner and come up against a huge STEEL DOOR.

MARGO

What's that?

FROCK

It's one of the fire doors. Good
Lord, Margo. We're trapped!

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Pendergast stands at the end of a cul de sac, studying the blue prints by a stone wall. Jonathan and the dog are with him, exhausted and terrified. Jonathan keeps an eye on the corridor behind them as Pendergast works.

PENDERGAST

I know where we are now. We're
getting out, Jonathan. This should
be another door.

Taking a pen knife from his pocket, Pendergast places it into the plaster and gently twists the blade. A piece of plaster the size of a dinner plate falls, revealing the tracings of another doorway. Pendergast shoves the door open to reveal a dark, dusty room.

JONATHAN

Hallelujah, Pendergast. Where the
hell are we now?

INT. "ALCOHOLIC" ROOM - NIGHT

Jonathan and Pendergast enter quickly from the hidden rear door. Pendergast shines his beam on dusty shelves filled with specimens. All are stored in jars of alcohol. There are fetuses of many different species. We see a pig, a cow, a duck billed platypus as well as brain sections, a disembodied monkey head. One rectangular glass container holds a skinned human foot.

JONATHAN

Jesus, what is this?

PENDERGAST

Another storage room.

Pendergast tries the light switch to no effect.

PENDERGAST

Something's happened. The power's
out.

They cross the room to the main door and exit. Now they're in...

INT. OSTEO PREP - LAB - NIGHT

Pendergast shines his light on the maceration tanks. The humming of the bugs can be heard in their cabinet.

PENDERGAST

All right. I know where we are. This is the osteo prep lab. I was in here earlier. We're safe now.

With these words, the dog GROWLS. Jonathan freezes and sniffs the air.

JONATHAN

Oh no. I smell it.

PENDERGAST

Keep the animal quiet.

Jonathan kneels by Hobbes as Pendergast listens, every nerve on end. A sound comes from the adjacent hallway that leads to the secure storage area. It's unmistakable HEAVY BREATHING and the creeping movement of claws. Pendergast lifts his gun.

PENDERGAST

Go out the other doorway. There's a stair at the end of the hall. Up five flights is a corridor that leads to the Hall of the Heavens. Find Lieutenant D'Agosta. Bring help.

Jonathan doesn't have to be told twice. He takes the dog and exits from the other side of the lab leaving Pendergast alone. Pendergast waits a moment until Jonathan's safely out of sight. He switches off his flashlight, backs up slowly, step by step. He opens the door to the alcoholics storage. As he slips inside a DARK SHAPE appears.

INT. "ALCOHOLICS" STORAGE - NIGHT

Slowly, making no sound, Pendergast lifts the .45 Anaconda, passes his finger over the cylinder, checking the loaded chambers. Then he steadies the revolver and levels it at the door. The hideous pickled specimens seem to hover all around him. The smell is overwhelming and the snuffling is louder now.

It's coming closer. After a long moment there is a faint bump at the door. This is followed by a low scratching noise... Pendergast watches frozen in horror, holding his breath.

THE DOORKNOB BEGINS TO TURN! Not knowing what else to do, Pendergast simply grabs it from the inside and holds on!

OUTSIDE he hears an AMUSED SNORT, then a LOW GROWL. There's ONE HARD HIT and the door shivers. THE DOORKNOB FALLS OFF! It's over now.

Pendergast kneels down, bracing the gun in both hands. From this position he can see right through the hole where the doorknob fell. His mouth literally drops in astonishment as he sees...

a HUGE, red-rimmed, GREEN EYE!

Involuntarily Pendergast LEAPS BACK, nearly falls and drops the gun! Beakers crash around him. He scrambles in the darkness. The flashlight falls and pops back on. The beam streaks up crazily. It's chaos. Pendergast is an easy target now. He grabs for the light, the gun, steadies himself, breathing fast and low. His heart pounds. But nothing more happens. The silence is heavy. The eye is gone. And suddenly Pendergast understands.

In the distance he can hear HUMAN VOICES and a rolling wheelchair! Somewhere nearby are MARGO AND FROCK! The monster has left him to get bigger game. Fear for Margo and Frock lights Pendergast's eyes. All panic and disorganization are gone. He holds his revolver at 12 o'clock and KICKS the door open, leaps out as

A HUGE DARK SHAPE DARTS FROM THE ROOM. It's headed for the secure storage areas again! Pendergast takes off. Not knowing how else to address this thing he finds himself calling...

PENDERGAST

Halt!

INT. SECURE STORAGE HALLWAY - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Pendergast runs into the hallway but he's already too late. The hulking shape of the quadruped is moving at incredible speed.

ON PENDERGAST... as he levels his gun and shoots.

THE CREATURE... stops, rears back on its haunches, looks once at Pendergast, pissed. As the VOICES around the far corner fall silent, Pendergast FIRES. The shot blasts off a piece of the wall.

With astonishing speed and agility for its bulk, the beast turns and leaps around the corner, passing out of Pendergast's sight.

PENDERGAST

Margo! Frock! It's coming! Run!

AROUND THE CORNER...

Are MARGO AND FROCK... Frock holds the keys to secure storage area 1012 in his hand. Margo has the flashlight and the crate with the fibers. They can hear the sound of thundering movement.

FROCK

Look!

Margo points her light in the distance and illuminates the beast! It's descending like a freight train. One split second of sheer amazement, then...

MARGO

Dr. Frock! Quick!

Frock, immobilized in his wheel chair, stares at the monster, like a trapped rabbit looking at a descending hawk. Margo grabs his keys from him, fumbles desperately to open the door. It swings wide at last. She grabs the handles of the wheelchair, tugs with all her might. The wheels bump into the door frame but somehow she wrestles the damn thing inside.

INT. SECURE STORAGE AREA - NIGHT

Margo shoves Frock behind her, slams the door shut. Seconds later, the beast throws itself against the storage door. They hear it outside, growling in fury, claws lashing out. Margo and Frock press back in the darkness, terror in their eyes.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Pendergast runs forward in the echoing hallway, his gun drawn, his flashlight on. A few more steps and he holds hard. His eyes go wide in astonishment as his light illuminates the beast. It's tearing at the steel door furiously with incredible force.

As the flashlight beam hits it, MBWUN roars and looks up. Now we see it clearly for the first time. The monster is MASSIVE, putrid, rank. Slit reptilian green eyes are rimmed in red. A ridge of stiff black hair rises on the creature's buffalo-like humped back. The withers are muscled and covered with plates. A forked TONGUE licks out as purple lips draw back exposing razor sharp teeth. The claws raise up to fend off the light.

PENDERGAST steadies himself with difficulty, takes a few seconds to aim with the greatest care. Mbwun makes a move towards him and he squeezes the trigger hard. The gun echoes in the hall. A split second and a white streak moves right up the beast's cranium. A direct hit. The shot echoes and Mbwun drops it's claws.

The flashlight continues to shine like a high beam right into the beast's eyes. Angry and blinded, the creature turns and in a moment, lopes off. Pendergast watches, unimaginably relieved. Realizing what just happened, his knees start to buckle. He catches himself, wipes one hand across his eyes. A voice comes from the storage room.

MARGO (OS)

Pendergast? Are you all right?

PENDERGAST

No. I think I'm hallucinating.

The storage door opens slowly and Margo looks out.

MARGO

You're not. Where is it?

PENDERGAST

(shakes his head)

Gone.

MARGO

Wounded?

PENDERGAST

No. A chromium alloy tipped .45 caliber bullet bounced off that thing's skull like a spit ball. I think it was bothered by my light.

MARGO

That would fit. It's nocturnal. Quick. Come inside.

EXT. MUSEUM - NIGHT

As hundreds of the guests emerge into the pounding rain... crying, terrified, unclear what exactly happened. These are the lucky ones. Among them we find IPPOLITO. His walkie talkie is squawking. The windows of the museum behind him are black.

D'AGOSTA ON RADIO

Ippolito! Where the hell are you?
We're trapped in here! We need help!
Ippolito! Come in, dammit!

Ippolito sits down on the steps in the rain, knowing the extent of what he's done. The wheels are working hard now, trying to figure out damage control. The walkie talkie keeps calling. He doesn't respond.

INT. HALL OF THE HEAVENS - NIGHT

Tables are overturned, food lies on the ground, people cower in the darkness. D'Agosta crouches in some broken glass with his walkie talkie. He shuts it off, rises, looks around. Light comes from a few sputtering candles.

Most of the guests still trapped inside are grouped around the lowered steel door. Among them are KAWAKITA and CUTHBERT. From the BODY of the man crushed underneath the door extends a large puddle of blood. Bailey is working in desperation on a brass panel by the door.

BAILEY

Manual overrides aren't working. I'm getting nothing, Lieutenant.

D'AGOSTA

Great.

Frank, the father of the teenage girl, Lauren, steps forward.

FRANK

There's no power. The whole system's down.

The crowd starts to murmur. One man yells.

MAN

We're trapped! And there's a killer in here!

D'AGOSTA

We'll get out safely if everyone stays calm. Is anyone else hurt?

The MAYOR stands. His wife's forehead is bleeding.

MAYOR

Yes. My wife.

D'AGOSTA

Is there a doctor?

The distinguished grey haired man with a cane comes forward. DR. POUND.

POUND

I'm Dr. Pound.

D'AGOSTA

Check this woman and see if anyone else needs you.

Pound moves off. Everyone spins now at the incongruous sound of a DOG BARK. D'Agosta pulls his gun. The door to a stairwell at the far end of the room opens and Hobbes bounds into the hall! He's followed by Jonathan, who is filthy and wild-eyed.

JONATHAN

(calls)

Lieutenant D'Agosta! Don't shoot.

D'AGOSTA

Where's Pendergast?

JONATHAN

(crossing, breathless)
Five flights down. We were lost in the sub-basement. Something's down there. It killed our two deputies. When I left Pendergast it was coming back. He sent me for help. We have to hurry.

D'Agosta makes a quick sweep of the room with his flashlight. The remote corners of the hall are so black the light seems to disappear. In the center, two men are bending over a still form. One of them is Dr. Pound.

D'AGOSTA
Both of you. Get back here.

POUND
But he's still alive --

D'AGOSTA
Get back now!

The urgency in D'Agosta's voice gets everyone's attention. The Mayor brings his wife over. Cuthbert comes too. They huddle apart from the others. Cuthbert's white with fear.

CUTHBERT
What's going on?

D'Agosta speaks low.

D'AGOSTA
There's some kind of animal loose in the museum. Pendergast's alone. He needs help. I want volunteers to go with me.

BAILEY
I'm in.

KAWAKITA
(swallows)
Me too.

CUTHBERT
(voice rising in fear)
I'd do it gladly but someone needs to stay with these people.

D'AGOSTA
All right. You're elected. Bailey, get all the guns and flashlights,

give the mayor your walkie talkie so we can keep in touch. Cuthbert, keep everyone together and make sure they stay quiet.

Frank steps forward.

FRANK

I was in the Marines. Give me a gun. I'd go with you, too, but I've got my daughter.

D'AGOSTA

What's your name?

FRANK

Frank.

D'AGOSTA

All right. You guard these people and your daughter.

D'Agosta gives Frank his service revolver.

MAYOR'S WIFE

(to D'Agosta)

Where are you going? Don't leave us alone!

The remaining crowd begins to whimper. The Mayor rises.

MAYOR

Everyone quiet. The Lieutenant's in charge.

Bailey and D'Agosta carry shot guns. They quietly move to the back stairwell at the far end of the Hall of the Heavens. Everyone else bunches together and watches.

D'AGOSTA

Bailey, we'll go first and check the stairwell. Jonathan, you and Greg guard the door.

Jonathan gives Hobbes' leash to the Mayor. D'Agosta hands Greg Kawakita a shotgun, tightens his grip on his own. Then he gives the signal and Bailey yanks open the door to the stairwell.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

D'Agosta and Bailey go in slowly. Jonathan stays in the doorway, sweeping the stairwell with his flashlight. Kawakita gingerly holds his shotgun. He's scared out of his mind. He turns to Jonathan,

whispers.

KAWAKITA

Excuse me. Could you tell me how
this thing works?

JONATHAN

Oh Jesus. Don't point it at me. Just
aim and shoot.

D'Agosta heads down the stairs in the lead, with Bailey close behind. The stairwell is windowless and dark. D'Agosta shines his light and it cuts into the blackness. He moves quietly, makes the first landing and stops. Bailey watches his back from several steps behind as D'Agosta signals for him to wait. The flashlight flares into a glass door one flight down. D'Agosta raises his hand.

D'AGOSTA

(low)

Hold on. I thought I saw something.

Everyone stops. Bailey pumps his shotgun. So does Jonathan. Kawakita fumbles to do like the others. They wait. D'Agosta moves alone down several more steps. The silence is heavy. Suddenly D'Agosta wrinkles his nose.

D'AGOSTA

Whoa... You smell that?

JONATHAN

Lieutenant! Get back!

Too late. At this something DROPS FROM ABOVE! A huge dark shape LEAPS INTO THE STAIRWELL, descending two floors! It lands, pounces on BAILEY and the marble walls echo with a ROAR.

D'AGOSTA

BAILEY!!!

Bailey SCREAMS in terror as Mbwun pins him down!

BAILEY

NOOOOO!

CLOSE ON BAILEY... Three claws close on his neck and WRENCH HARD! There's a horrifying snap as Bailey's HEAD COMES OFF! Blood SPURTS all over and drips down the stairs.

D'AGOSTA levels his shotgun at the monster and fires, with no apparent effect. When the shots stop echoing we hear SCREAMS and FRANTIC BARKING from the hall.

MBWUN'S GREEN EYES look up and it's FORKED TONGUE LICKS OUT. The

monster LEAPS PAST Bailey's body and heads for the door! D'Agosta, seeing what's happening, screams at the top of his lungs.

D'AGOSTA

Jonathan! Don't let it get into the hall!

ON JONATHAN... frozen in the doorway, Kawakita by his side. Both of them are rigid with horror. Disbelief in their eyes. The BEAST leaps up directly at them as they jump to try and close the door.

D'Agosta keeps firing until he's pumping an empty chamber. Plaster is falling all around. SCREAMS resound in the Hall of the Heavens as D'Agosta stumbles up the stairs.

INT. HALL OF THE HEAVENS - NIGHT

D'Agosta throws open the doors and charges into the Hall. Jonathan lies on the ground, dazed. Kawakita stands to one side, teeth chattering in shock. His hand shakes so badly that the barrel of the gun swings in his hand.

D'AGOSTA

(yells)

Where is it?!

JONATHAN

I don't know! It hit me hard.

D'Agosta pumps two shells in the shotgun. Screams can be heard from the people crouched together at the edge of the room. Hobbes is barking wildly, foaming at the mouth. It's too dark to see what's happening.

D'AGOSTA

(screams)

Somebody tell me! Where is it now?

MAYOR

(quiet)

Lieutenant. In the south corner.

D'Agosta sweeps his light to the Mayor who stands rigid in front of the others, points to his left. The light moves to the far end of the room where THE DARK SHAPE OF MBWUN crouches over the body of a man. It's lunging up and down with odd, jerking motions. The man is long past making a sound. From the monster comes a faint crunching and slobbering. Jonathan rises, comes to D'Agosta. So does Frank. They stand shoulder to shoulder, raise their guns. D'Agosta motions for Kawakita.

D'AGOSTA

On three.

Kawakita stumbles to join them, tries to join in. The barrel of his shot gun still swings wildly. He steadies it by taking it in both hands.

D'AGOSTA

One, two... three.

All three fire. There's a loud report. The kickback knocks Kawakita backwards. Screams erupt from the huddled group. Hobbes abruptly shuts up. The men fire and fire until there's nothing left. D'Agosta reaches for more shells, comes up empty.

D'AGOSTA

Jonathan! Get everyone behind me!

Jonathan moves. D'Agosta sweeps his light across the room but already the shape is gone. Cuthbert hides behind the Mayor, calls out in a terrified squeal.

CUTHBERT

It went out the door to the rotunda!

D'Agosta runs across the room to a set of double industrial doors. There's a noise in the darkness beyond and he just manages to slam both doors. He picks up a metal chair and jams it through the handles. Backs up. The doors shudder as something hits them hard.

D'AGOSTA

Get everyone into the stairwell!

Jonathan, the Mayor, Cuthbert and Kawakita together herd everyone towards the stairwell. They move inside.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Dark and close. The smell of gunpowder and death. The Mayor's Wife sees Bailey's body and clutches her mouth so as not to throw up.

CUTHBERT

Sweet Jesus!

D'AGOSTA

Get his gun and his walkie talkie,
Jonathan. Move.

CUTHBERT

My office is on the third floor!
There's a walk-in safe and a
portable phone! We can lock
ourselves in the safe and call for
help!

D'AGOSTA

I have to help Pendergast. Kawakita and Jonathan stay with me. The rest of you can go with Cuthbert!

MAYOR

I think we should stick together!

FRANK

(taking Bailey's shotgun)

Me too.

CUTHBERT

I'm leaving. Whoever wants can come with me.

No one follows.

D'AGOSTA

Wait!

Cuthbert's gone.

D'AGOSTA

Jonathan, go with him! He isn't armed.

Jonathan grabs Hobbes' leash from the Mayor and bounds up the stairs.

MAYOR

Good luck!

Everyone else follows D'Agosta. Together, they head down.

EXT. MUSEUM - NIGHT

Police cars are pulling up outside the museum. Sirens wail. Torrents of rain limit the number of onlookers. Crowds of people are scattered about. There's disbelief on everyone's faces. Many people are in shock. Ippolito sprints through the pelting rain to a GUARD STATION near the gate. He yanks the door open and jumps inside.

INT. GUARD STATION - NIGHT

A number of museum security personnel are milling in confusion.

IPPOLITO

All right everyone. I'm in charge.
Status report.

One of the security men, WATERS, rises.

WATERS

Swat teams are on the way. Fire trucks with them. Everything's slowed down because of the rain. We're bringing in portable generators. They'll get the emergency lights working but they won't pump enough power to lift the doors.

Ippolito pulls out his walkie talkie.

IPPOLITO

D'Agosta? Ippolito. Come in.

D'AGOSTA (ON RADIO)

(a string of curses followed by...)
Where the hell are you?

IPPOLITO

I made it outside. I'll co-ordinate the rescue efforts from here. Help is on the way. Just sit tight.

D'AGOSTA (ON RADIO)

It's a little late, you son of a bitch. There's a friggin' monster loose in here! Get the FBI, the fire department. Find metal cutters, cut through. And bring a cannon. The damn thing is huge.

A long moment as the men look at each other.

WATERS

Did he say monster?

IPPOLITO

Panic attack.

INT. MUSEUM STAIRWELL - NIGHT

D'Agosta's group has reached a lower floor. Here this stairwell ends. Ahead stretches the hall of the Asian peoples.

IPPOLITO (OS)

D'Agosta, put on the Mayor.

D'Agosta passes the walkie talkie to the Mayor.

MAYOR

Mayor Jordan here.

IPPOLITO (ON RADIO)

This is Ippolito, head of museum security. Relieve D'Agosta and take command.

MAYOR

Don't tell me what to do you chicken shit bastard. I saw you cut and run! Lieutenant D'Agosta stayed with us. He is in charge. There is a monster. I saw it. Cut through those doors and get us out of here, now!

The Mayor shuts off the walkie talkie and they round another corner and disappear from sight.

INT. SECURITY ROOM - NIGHT

Ippolito finds Waters and the others staring at him. Humiliated, he swallows hard.

IPPOLITO

All right. The steel doors are designed to retard cutting. We can go through them, but it would take hours.

WATERS

The quickest way in would be to go through the roof, sir. Cell two goes up to the fifth floor. There are sky lights up there.

IPPOLITO

Co-ordinate with the fire department and SWAT teams. Move.

INT. HALL OF THE ASIAN PEOPLES - NIGHT

It's very dark. The huge shape of MBWUN can barely be seen sliding out of the stairwell and into the Hall of the Asian Peoples. Then DIM RED HALL LIGHTS come on in the corners of the ceiling. The monster utters a low growl. The emergency generators are beginning to come on. The animal lopes to the spot where we last saw D'Agosta and his group, sniffs the ground. It looks up and, with a curiously human gesture, cocks its massive head.

The silence is broken by VOICES! They're in the distance and muffled, but definitely there. The monster crouches eagerly, lopes forward with great stealth. The voices are getting louder. We follow as it goes through the hall and down...

A STAIRWELL... At the bottom, Mbwun quickly turns a corner... The voices have stopped. Mbwun creeps forward, enters...

INT. HALL OF MARINE ANIMALS - NIGHT

A huge room several stories high. A WHALE hangs suspended from the ceiling. Dioramas of fish line all the walls. Mbwun pauses next to a diorama of the gentle, vegetarian sea cow, THE MANATEE. The two make a startling contrast.

A pause and then the voices are heard again, much louder now. The source is right around the edge of the Manatee display. Mbwun LEAPS FORWARD, claws lashing out. He turns the corner and crashes through a wall of GLASS as he grabs at the source of the voices...

A display of small, extraordinarily life-like TALKING HOLOGRAMS! They've been re-activated with the emergency power system. Each little talking figure is no more than five inches high. They move around a small three dimensional display of marine animals, explaining the lung systems of fish.

MBWUN... stands in the pile of broken glass, stares at the holograms, mesmerized. He makes a noise that sounds astonishingly like a CHUCKLE! Then he reaches out one long claw and tries unsuccessfully to touch one of the holograms. But the shadowy creatures can't be caught. The beast seems to realize this, SNORTS and moves off. As he goes he passes behind a

LARGE GLASS ELEVATOR. It stands in middle the open room. The elevator is designed to carry people upstairs and down in the two story exhibit. In the dim light, with his poor vision, the monster doesn't see D'Agosta, the Mayor, Kawakita, and their entire group SANDWICHED INSIDE. The monster exits the exhibit and quietly D'Agosta slides the doors open. Everyone, all thirty-five people in evening clothes, quickly get out and run across the exhibit to another stairwell at the far side of the hall.

INT. SECURE STORAGE AREA 1012 - NIGHT

Margo, Frock and Pendergast wait in the darkness. Pendergast, for the first time, seems fazed.

PENDERGAST

I don't know how to deal with this.
It's hellish. Like nothing I ever
saw. I'm not trained to deal with a
monster, a supernatural creature
like that.

MARGO

It's not supernatural. Mbwun is an

animal. Part lizard, part human, a genetic freak of some kind, like the half-goat, half-sheep they found last year in the jungles of Vietnam.

PENDERGAST

But this isn't the jungle! This is New York. How did it get here? A thing like that crossed two continents. It makes no sense!

FROCK

(lame)

We think it may have something to do with the eggs we found in the crate.

PENDERGAST

I don't believe it.

MARGO

None of that matters now. The people upstairs need us. We have to help.

FROCK

We can't. We've managed to get inside the one place that's safe. I think we should sit tight and wait for reinforcements. If we go outside, we're risking more lives. You have to accept it, Margo, there's nothing we can do. The building must be swarming with police by now. It won't take long for them to get through the doors.

MARGO

That thing could kill ten people in a matter of minutes.

PENDERGAST

But what can we do? Our guns are useless --

MARGO

We have the fibers. Don't you see? The creature is hungry. It wants the hormones in these plants. It would take hundreds of human brains to supply what's in these fibers. We're just a poor substitute. To make it stop hunting, we have to give it what it wants.

INT. CUTHBERT'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Cuthbert enters with Jonathan and the dog, Hobbes. Cuthbert locks the door with shaking hands. He mutters to himself in terror.

CUTHBERT

Solid oak. Two inches thick. Tell me they'll hold.

Cuthbert scurries to his desk and pulls out a Ruger .38 Magnum.

CUTHBERT

I got it after I was mugged in the subway last spring.

JONATHAN

Where's the walk-in safe?

CUTHBERT

Behind you.

JONATHAN

What's the combination?

CUTHBERT

I'll do it. Just let me find my portable phone.

He rummages in the darkness, going through his desk.

JONATHAN

Forget it!

CUTHBERT

Calm down. I found it!

Cuthbert flips the phone open and turns it on.

CUTHBERT

Battery's dead. Shit.

JONATHAN

Let's go!

Cuthbert crosses to a huge wall safe, starts frantically turning the tumblers. Jonathan follows with the dog.

CUTHBERT

That thing won't come after us, right? It's going for bigger game. The group blundering around in the basement. Poor fools.

JONATHAN

Hurry up!

CUTHBERT

Just a minute. I'm shaking! Take the gun.

Cuthbert fumbles to hand over the Ruger. As he does, something drops.

CUTHBERT

Oh God! I dropped my rabbit's foot!

Cuthbert drops to his knees, groping in the darkness.

JONATHAN

For Chrissake, I'll do it. What's the combination?!

CUTHBERT

To the left twice then five no... sorry... I think it's fifteen... it's been a while...

JONATHAN

Oh Jesus...

Jonathan starts again, sweating. The tumblers fall with agonizing slowness. Cuthbert continues groping frantically for his good luck charm. Meanwhile, unnoticed by Jonathan, the dog is staring at the oak doors. We see the HAIR ON HIS BACK rise!

JONATHAN

Fifteen... what's next?

CUTHBERT

Eight to the right! Look! I found it!

Clutching the rabbit's foot like a talisman, Cuthbert leaps up just as the last tumbler falls.

At this the oak doors behind them CRASH OPEN, splintering like so many match sticks.

Cuthbert SCREAMS in a high pitch whine at the sight of the beast. The dog barks wildly at Mbun! Jonathan lifts his shot gun. But the monster barrels past him and zeros in on Cuthbert!

A HUGE RED TONGUE LICKS OUT and encircles Cuthbert's waist! It squeezes him horribly, drags him towards the open jaws! Cuthbert bellows like a lamb being led to the slaughter. He opens his hand and the rabbit's foot drops! The last Jonathan sees of Cuthbert is his

head disappearing down Mbwun's throat.

Hobbes barks and whines in terror. Jonathan takes the leash and drags the animal out.

INT. MUSEUM HALLWAYS - NIGHT

Jonathan and Hobbes tear down the hallway and disappear. Behind them comes a roar so loud it rattles the walls.

INT. HALLWAYS - SECURE STORAGE AREA - NIGHT

The door opens slowly and Pendergast appears. He shines his beam in both directions.

PENDERGAST

All clear.

Margo and Frock quickly come out. Margo holds the crate. Frock tries to follow in his wheelchair.

FROCK

I'm coming with you.

MARGO

No, Dr. Frock. You can't.

PENDERGAST

You'd slow us down and put Margo in danger.

MARGO

Unlock one of the other storage rooms. We're going upstairs. We'll leave a trail back to 1012 and try to trap the monster in here.

FROCK

Margo, this is too dangerous. You always think you can solve everything. This time you don't have enough information. The animal might behave in unexpected ways.

(to Pendergast)

Leave her here with me. Don't put her in danger.

PENDERGAST

He's right.

MARGO

No. You'll need me --

At this a LOUD SOUND comes from upstairs!

FROCK

What's that?

PENDERGAST

Footsteps!

MARGO

No, not footsteps! People running
for their lives!

All three know this ends the discussion. Frock opens the door to room 1010. Inside are shelves of priceless ivory tusks. Margo takes Pendergast's handkerchief and wraps her hand. She quickly sprinkles some of the fibers inside the door to room 1012. Before Dr. Frock disappears into room 1010, he looks back to Margo one last time.

FROCK

Come back and get me.

MARGO

We will.

FROCK

Remember, it has poor eyesight. It
hunts with its sense of smell. So
for God's sake, Margo, don't get
those fibers on your clothes!

INT. OSTEO PREP - NIGHT

Margo and Pendergast emerge from the hall to the storage rooms and run for the far stairs. From somewhere above the sound of running is louder now.

INT. PLANETARIUM - NIGHT

D'Agosta and his group enter the large domed space in disarray. They're spread out and panicked, the young helping the old. Dr. Pound is finding it hard to keep up. Frank and his daughter Lauren bring him along. The Mayor quietly urges people forward. His wife's face is streaked with tears. Kawakita runs with D'Agosta.

KAWAKITA

It's still back there!

D'AGOSTA

I know.

Now a voice is heard in the distance.

PENDERGAST (OS)

Where are you? Who's there?

Everyone stops. D'Agosta shines his light into the large space. Above them constellations glow. D'Agosta calls out...

D'AGOSTA
Pendergast!

INT. HALL OF NORTH AMERICAN MAMMALS - NIGHT

Margo and Pendergast run. Margo carries the crate carefully wrapped in Pendergast's jacket.

PENDERGAST
That was D'Agosta.

MARGO
The planetarium!

PENDERGAST
(calls out)
Vince!

D'AGOSTA (OS)
Over here!

There's a double steel fire door at the end of the hallway. Pendergast and Margo run for it. Pendergast shoves at the door. It won't budge. There's a small glass window. In it, D'Agosta's face appears.

D'AGOSTA
(through the window)
Pendergast! Help! It's right behind us!

PENDERGAST
This door's locked. Try shooting the hinges off.

INT. PLANETARIUM - NIGHT

D'Agosta turns to his group.

D'AGOSTA
Step back!

D'Agosta, Frank and Kawakita aim their guns at the door and shoot repeatedly. The shots echo wildly. The sound is terrifyingly loud. The small glass window shatters. Then the men lean heavily on the door. It still won't budge. D'Agosta looks through the window.

D'AGOSTA
It's no use. We have to get out of

here!

(to Kawakita)

Give them your walkie talkie.

Kawakita hands his walkie talkie through the window. Margo takes it.

KAWAKITA

Is Dr. Frock safe!

MARGO

Yes, he's fine. Greg... take care of yourself!

INT. HALL OF THE NORTH AMERICAN MAMMALS - NIGHT

Pendergast looks desperately at the blueprints.

MARGO

Is there another way around?

PENDERGAST

No. The planetarium is in the next cell. This is one of the fire doors...

Pendergast returns to the window.

PENDERGAST

Vince? There's no way we can get to you with the fire doors down. There's an entrance to the sub-basement in the hall off the north side exit.

D'AGOSTA

The sub-basement?

PENDERGAST

I've been down there. It links up to the old sewer system. I can guide you out.

D'Agosta turns to the others.

D'AGOSTA

How much ammo do we have to make a stand?

KAWAKITA

You're asking me? I don't even know how to load this thing.

FRANK

Four rounds...

There's a movement of air... and a ripe, fetid smell.

D'AGOSTA

Oh shit.

D'Agosta pumps his shot gun.

D'AGOSTA

I smell it. It's here.

PENDERGAST

Go out the north exit! There's a hallway and a false wall by the Greek vases. Run!

D'AGOSTA

Everybody. Get behind me.

The others move past. D'Agosta, Frank and Greg Kawakita hold the rear. The group runs to the side exit to the planetarium and in a moment, disappears.

INT. HALL OF THE NORTH AMERICAN MAMMALS - NIGHT

Pendergast remains at the window watching anxiously. From the south entrance to the planetarium, an ENORMOUS DARK SHAPE slinks into view! Pendergast steps back from the doorway, turns to Margo.

PENDERGAST

Hide quickly!

MARGO

What are you going to do?

Pendergast checks his gun, totally calm.

PENDERGAST

Buy them some time.

Margo turns and looks around at the looming dioramas. There's a plain door at their end of the hall. Pendergast faces the broken window.

HIS POV... the beast is slinking away after D'Agosta and the others, headed to the north exit from the Planetarium!

PENDERGAST calls out...

PENDERGAST

Hey you big tub of lard! Over here!

THE BEAST PAUSES, turns.

Pendergast puts his palms up at his ears, wiggles his fingers and makes a face through the window.

PENDERGAST

Come on, you smelly pile of refuse.
Come get me. I dare you!

A LOW surprised GROWL comes from the beast. It crouches as if to pounce. Pendergast makes more faces, sticks his tongue out. The beast watches in silence, its evil eyes fixed.

ON MARGO... watching Pendergast. She can't leave him yet.

MARGO

What is it doing?

PENDERGAST

(loud)

It's scared of me.

Suddenly there's a CRASH and the door BENDS like cardboard. TWO HUGE SETS OF CLAWS lash through! Margo screams as the claws pass inches from Pendergast's face. He leaps back, lifts his gun which looks like a pea shooter in the face of Mbwun.

Two sets of claws curve around the bent edges of the door, then Mbwun simply LIFTS it out of the frame. This leaves Pendergast face to face with the foul, enormous monster! It regards him evenly, blinks once. Then the tongue slides out, licks its lips eagerly and...

Pendergast FLICKS on his high powered FLASHLIGHT, shining it at close range right in the beast's eyes! Then carefully, with total calm he FIRES ONCE, TWICE. The beast howls more in anger than pain, REARS UP and swipes at Pendergast. Pendergast dives to one side and, the claws miss again by inches as the beast is temporarily blinded by the light. Now Pendergast spins and runs for all he's worth. Margo's been waiting, holding the door.

PENDERGAST

Drop the fibers!

She leaves the crate behind as Pendergast dives inside with her. Margo shoves the door shut hard as Mbwun, still blinded, leaps into the hall. But now, suddenly, all is quiet. No sign of Margo and Pendergast. The beast moves forward, snuffling slowly. It starts for the door which hides Margo and Pendergast, but stops as it finds...

THE CRATE! The beast moves to it, clearly surprised. It pokes at the crate carefully, inhales the fragrance and grunts. The monster seems to be struggling with itself! It sniffs the fibers, lifts a few out carefully, then SHOVES THE CRATE AWAY HARD. Then it rises on its

haunches and squints into the dark.

On all sides are glowing displays of stuffed buffalo, gazelle, wild horses, wolves, giant elk, sabre tooth tigers. Mbwun moves close to one after another. Suddenly we notice, in the back of one of the dioramas...

Margo and Pendergast! They stand frozen, crouching behind mannequins of native Americans riding horses across the plains. The beast sniffs RIGHT AT THEIR WINDOW, then turns away. Confused, it heads back towards the Planetarium and slinks from the room.

INSIDE THE DIORAMA... Pendergast and Margo exchange an astonished look. They whisper.

PENDERGAST

What happened?

MARGO

Its eyesight is worse than I thought. It couldn't see us. And it couldn't smell us through the glass.

PENDERGAST

It didn't want the fibers. What does that mean?

MARGO

I think... it means it's full.

PENDERGAST

Then it won't go after the others?

MARGO

No. It's still hunting, but not for the hormones.

PENDERGAST

For what?

MARGO

I think... for the pleasure of the kill.

INT. HALLWAY - MUSEUM - NIGHT

Greg, the Mayor, D'Agosta and the others are in a hallway lined with at least a dozen vases. A GREEK VASE has been shoved aside revealing the outlines of a door. Behind is a sloping dark corridor. The last of the thirty-five people pack in. Greg and D'Agosta cover the corridor.

D'AGOSTA

That's it, let's go!

Grim-faced, D'Agosta follows Kawakita as they duck through the doorway, shutting it behind them. The impact rattles the wall and the Greek vase falls.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT - NIGHT

Kawakita and D'Agosta reach the bottom and turn to see the Mayor, his wife, Dr. Pound and their whole group standing in several feet of rushing water. Lauren is shivering. Her father has his arm around her tight. Behind them are two corridors, one forking left and the other straight. D'Agosta gets out the walkie talkie, clicks it on.

D'AGOSTA
(into walkie talkie)
Pendergast. We made it. You all
right?

INT. DIORAMA - NIGHT

Pendergast has the plans open as he studies them. He speaks into the walkie talkie. Margo paces behind him, thinking hard.

PENDERGAST
We're fine. Take the left fork
behind you. You'll be in a straight
passage. When the hall forks again
in fifty yards go right. Then radio
back.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT - NIGHT

D'Agosta shuts off his walkie talkie. Everyone's staring at him.

D'AGOSTA
All right. Kawakita, cover the rear.

KAWAKITA
Oh shit.

FRANK
No, Lieutenant. He's not a good
enough shot. I'll do it if you take
care of my daughter.

D'Agosta nods. Frank expertly reloads. D'Agosta holsters the walkie talkie and they plunge down the left hand passage. Kawakita takes charge of Lauren, who is confused and terrified. The tunnel has a slight downhill grade, and the water begins to move faster, tugging at everyone's legs. People slip and slide as they half make their way down the hill. D'Agosta calls behind them.

D'AGOSTA

Damn. It's getting deep. See anything?

ON FRANK... back not far from the first fork. He looks towards the head of the tunnel, calls out...

FRANK

You'll be the first to know.

Frank turns and plunges after the others. But then suddenly, he stops.

ON D'AGOSTA... he reaches the second fork and takes a right. This tunnel is narrower and consequently the water is even deeper. Slimy plants hang down and slap at their faces as they push on. D'Agosta pulls out his walkie talkie.

D'AGOSTA

Pendergast? I made the right hand fork. We're already in about three feet of water. Where should we go?

But before Pendergast can answer, D'Agosta hears the loud report of Frank's gun! Everyone freezes in the darkness. The walkie talkie cackles and D'Agosta shouts!

D'AGOSTA

Hello!

FRANK (OS)

Sweet Jesus, help!

They hear SPLASHING in the water. Lauren SCREAMS, tries to run back. Kawakita grabs her. There's more thrashing water and then silence.

D'AGOSTA

Frank! Are you all right!

D'Agosta starts for Frank but the Mayor catches his arm and holds him.

MAYOR

It's too late!

Everyone waits, staring into the darkness. Still no answer. Lauren SCREAMS AGAIN.

LAUREN

Dad!

D'Agosta turns his flashlight on the water. It's running red! He spins to the Mayor, points down the tunnel.

D'AGOSTA

Run!

People start to cry and whimper as the Mayor urges them on. He takes charge of Lauren. Only Greg Kawakita stays with D'Agosta. They stand shoulder to shoulder and completely alone. Thrashing in the water can be heard as the beast comes closer. There's a low, pleasurable growl! Both men lift their guns.

D'AGOSTA

On three.

Kawakita nods. Behind them in the tunnel is total blackness. Ahead is equally dark. The noise of their friends gets ever fainter. The water now rushes half way up their thighs. Kawakita's teeth start to chatter. He bites them shut, steadies his gun.

D'AGOSTA

One... two...

Silence as the water murmurs. D'Agosta holds the count. A long, agonizing moment. Kawakita takes his eyes away from the tunnel.

KAWAKITA

I think it's gone.

Suddenly a HUGE CLAW snakes out of the water right in front of them and the beast roars up! It was beneath the surface, directly before them! The claw closes on D'Agosta and his shot gun goes off. D'Agosta screams as the beast lifts him towards its mouth!

For one horrible moment, Kawakita is frozen. Then he leaps forward, shoves the barrel of his gun behind D'Agosta, right in the beast's open jaws! He pulls the trigger and the shotgun explodes, the recoil throwing him back, ass over tea cups in the water. With a roar of pain the monster drops D'Agosta and retreats in the dark. D'Agosta grabs Kawakita.

D'AGOSTA

I think you took its tonsils out!

They haul ass down the tunnel, firing behind them as they go. Ahead is another fork. The group is waiting. When they see D'Agosta and Kawakita, a cheer goes up.

MAYOR

Which way!

As he runs up, D'Agosta grabs for his walkie talkie. The holster IS EMPTY, the walkie talkie gone! Without missing a beat he registers what's happened, then covers it up with the next breath. He points to the right as if there's no doubt and says...

D'AGOSTA

This way!

D'Agosta exchanges a look with Kawakita, who understands exactly what happened. As they plunge into the right tunnel, Greg mutters...

KAWAKITA

Holy shit.

INT. HALL OF THE AFRICAN MAMMALS - NIGHT

Pendergast and Margo come out of the door leading to the back entry to the dioramas. Pendergast holds the walkie talkie, desperate.

PENDERGAST

Vince? Can you hear me? Vince!

Nothing but static comes in response. Margo paces in agitation.

MARGO

We have to try and draw it off!

PENDERGAST

How?

MARGO

The answer's right in front of us.

She points to one of the dioramas. It shows a bird being stalked by a fox.

MARGO

That's a ptarmigan, feigning a broken wing. The bird pretends to be injured to draw the fox away from its nest!

PENDERGAST

(starts running)

It's deceptively simple. Like a Bruckner Symphony or a Matisse.

Margo heads for the Planetarium, calling...

MARGO

Help! Please someone! Help!

They disappear down the hall with the Greek vases, both calling with all they've got.

EXT. MUSEUM ROOF - NIGHT

There are increasing numbers of SWAT vehicles around. A HELICOPTER lands on the roof. The rescue effort continues to be slowed by rain

pouring down. Ippolito is in the thick of the action. The S.W.A.T. commander, JENNINGS, comes over buckling an ammo belt over his fatigues.

JENNINGS

We're ready. We've got enough
firepower to turn a herd of lions
into a fine red mist.

IPPOLITO

Then do it.

Jennings nods, goes off. As Ippolito watches the S.W.A.T. team break the glass skylights, gets ready to go in.

INT. HALL OF THE REPTILES - NIGHT

Jonathan crouches in the staircase at the end of the Hall of the Reptiles. Hobbes is still by his side. He keeps the gun pointed out into the room, his eyes scanning the dark. He whispers to Hobbes, as if to comfort both of them.

JONATHAN

It's okay, Hobbes. We'll be all
right. Help has got to come
eventually... We'll make it. We'll be
fine.

Suddenly he sees something. What appears to be a BODY lying on a glass case! Jonathan pumps his gun, approaches slowly. The man wears a tuxedo, is lying very still. As we get closer we see it's THE DRUNK Kawakita ran into in the stairwell so long ago! He suddenly HICCUPS. Jonathan starts. Now the man gently snores. Jonathan moves to him, shakes the drunk's shoulder.

JONATHAN

Hey! Wake up!

The man snorts, opens his eyes and frowns.

DRUNK

Who the hell are you?

JONATHAN

You first.

Jonathan helps the drunk off the glass case. The man's a little unsteady as he tugs at his tux.

DRUNK

I got lost tryin' to find the
bathroom. I was walkin' in circles.

I lay down for a nap. What's going on?

JONATHAN

You wouldn't believe me if I told you.

Hobbes has started to wag his tail and tug at the leash to draw Jonathan's attention.

JONATHAN

What is it, boy?

From above comes the beating of a distant HELICOPTER and then the sound of breaking glass. Hobbes pulls Jonathan back to the staircase. Jonathan grins, follows behind with the drunk.

DRUNK

Where we going?

JONATHAN

I think we're going home.

INT. HALL OF THE DINOSAURS - NIGHT

Huge skeletons of Tyrannosaurus, Stegosaurus and Brontosaurus loom in the darkness. Rain is pouring in. Jonathan, Hobbes and the drunk enter, looks up to the sky lights. A FLASH OF LIGHTING hits, illuminating the dinosaurs and a S.W.A.T. team which is descending on a series of ropes. It's a sixty foot drop. Jonathan steps forward.

JONATHAN

Hello! We're over here!

They run across the long hall and wait as the the men descend. The first one down is Jennings.

JENNINGS

Are you hurt?

JONATHAN

We're fine. I don't know about the people downstairs. In the Hall of the Heavens. The basement... you'll need help. There's a monster down there.

A sling suspended on ropes is lowered down.

JENNINGS

The rescue workers will lift you out one at a time.

Jennings signals to a group of five men, heavily armed and in flack jackets. They prepare to get the drunk out.

INT. HALL WITH GREEK VASES - NIGHT

Pendergast and Margo are at the top of the long, narrow shaft. Pendergast's flashlight sends a circle of light onto a sheet of black, oily water below. Both of them continue calling, trying to draw off the monster.

MARGO

Help someone!

PENDERGAST

Oh God! Help!

They suddenly hear the sound of splashing. An updraft rustles their clothes. Margo sniffs the air, turns to Pendergast.

MARGO

You smell that?

PENDERGAST

It's coming. Run.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT - NIGHT

The group has reached another intersection of tunnels. The left fork turns back uphill. D'Agosta indicates this tunnel.

D'AGOSTA

At least we'll be dry.

They all press forward in the low vaulted darkness. As they move steadily upwards the water recedes. Kawakita's flashlight flickers and he bangs it. It comes on again.

KAWAKITA

I believe in you a hundred percent,
Vince, but that's the second time
we've been at that intersection.

D'AGOSTA

Not so loud.

D'Agosta shines his light forward and they see that the shaft ends in a large round PIPE.

KAWAKITA

What's that?

D'AGOSTA

All right everybody, hold up!

Kawakita and D'Agosta move past the shivering people who are strung out along the sides of the tunnel. D'Agosta touches each person as he passes.

D'AGOSTA

We don't know what's in there. Let me go first.

INT. PIPE - NIGHT

The Mayor follows behind with the group as Kawakita and D'Agosta lead the way. The pipe is dry and rusted. They move forward with stealth. In twenty feet the pipe ends abruptly in darkness. D'Agosta steps out first.

INT. CAVERN - NIGHT

The group huddles at the mouth of the pipe, confused, as D'Agosta pans his flashlight around the huge space. The walls are carved out of dirt and rounded like a cave. From the ceiling hang huge cobwebs. There's a large pile of sticks in one corner fashioned rather like a bed. On a mound of dirt beside this bed rests a battered duffel bag.

Greg moves to it, shines his light on the side. A name is written in marker.

D'AGOSTA

What does it say?

KAWAKITA

(looks up, shocked)
Dr. John Whittlesley.

D'AGOSTA

What's that doing here?

KAWAKITA

I don't know. I thought Dr. Whittlesley died in South America.

MAYOR

(interrupts)
Look. There's a ladder at the end. I think it goes up to the street!

They move forward into the darkness eagerly, towards the ladder which leads up to a manhole. But as they pass the bed of twigs, something loud CRUNCHES underfoot.

KAWAKITA

What is that?

D'Agosta shines his light down and everyone freezes. Then one woman SCREAMS!

The wide dirt floor around them is carpeted in clean white BONES! The HUMMING noise is louder and we see its source. Atop the bones is the body of CUTHBERT! It's covered with BLACK DERMESTID BEETLES. They're stripping the skeleton clean, devouring the flesh!

The group panics and breaks for the ladder. Kawakita and D'Agosta once more guard the rear.

KAWAKITA

Dear God. Where are we, Lieutenant?

D'AGOSTA

I'd say we're in its home.

INT. HALL OF THE NORTHWEST COAST INDIANS - NIGHT

Pendergast and Margo run down the long dark room, passing an enormous hollowed-out canoe. As they exit the far end, the dark shape of Mbwun emerges. It leaps forward, closing in fast.

INT. HALL OF THE ASIAN PEOPLES - NIGHT

Margo and Pendergast enter a series of maze-like room with hidden corners, nooks and crannies with cases full of esoteric Buddhist and Japanese Art. They're running through the twists and turns as fast as they can.

PENDERGAST

We're not going to make the storage room!

MARGO

Listen to me, Pendergast. Mbwun's DNA is part homo sapien. In primates, the eye is a direct path to the brain! If you get a clean shot, there's only one place you can kill it. Shoot it in the eye!

AT THIS THEY ROUND A CORNER AND MBWUN LEAPS OUT! It circled ahead and was waiting in front of them! The animal swipes at Margo and Pendergast. The force of the monster's blow sends Margo reeling and slams Pendergast into the wall. He falls, crumples and drops his gun! The case beside him SHATTERS spewing relics, as Mbwun pushes past. Pendergast groans and gets to his knees with difficulty.

MARGO is frantically crawling away in the dark! The beast makes a low sound of pleasure and reaches out one claw, easily pins her down. Pendergast looks frantically for any kind of weapon!

ON MARGO now PINNED BENEATH the heaving body of the monster! Powerless, she looks up into the horrible face of death as Mbwun raises an enormous claw! Pendergast, desperate, cries out --

PENDERGAST

Please, no! Don't hurt Margo!

Oddly enough, the beast pauses for once. Talking to the damn thing is the one tactic no one has tried! The claw halts in mid-air. The beast blinks once and looks from Pendergast to Margo. Margo sees a flash of something unexpectedly HUMAN in its eyes! In astonishment, she whispers...

MARGO

My God. You understand.

As they stare, amazed, imperceptibly, the beast appears to narrow its eyes in response! Margo controls her voice, keeps it even.

MARGO

Please let me go. We won't hurt you.

A strange noise comes out of the monster. A low, confused growl. He doesn't loosen his grip on Margo, but he leans down to look at her closer with one green, unblinking eye.

She struggles not to turn away in revulsion. His enormous jaws are right near her throat. Everything is very still. And then...

A BARRAGE OF FIRE breaks out! The S.W.A.T. team is in the doorway, laying down everything they've got. The creature ROARS as if betrayed, leaves Margo and LEAPS UP. It barrels down on the S.W.A.T. team, picks up Jennings and SPIKES HIM TO THE GROUND. Jennings hits the floor with his neck at a crazy angle. It snaps like a twig. The other men drop back. Mbwun follows, tearing through the men, cutting a deathly swath!

Pendergast moves to help the S.W.A.T. team. Margo struggles to her feet and her hand touches the wall. Beside her is a FIRE HOSE in a cabinet! In a split second Margo hauls it out, throws a switch and gets a BLAST OF WATER. She turns it on the beast as it grabs for Pendergast. The force of the water is enormous. It pushes the monster out the end of the hall.

Pendergast runs towards her, takes the hose and holds it.

PENDERGAST

Run!

She takes off blindly in the maze-like room. From somewhere behind her she hears a horrible HOWL.

ON MARGO... as she twists and turns through the rows of display cases,

tearing blindly in the dark. Ahead is a door. She dives through it and finds she's in...

INT. MEN'S ROOM - MUSEUM - NIGHT

A row of mirrors and urinals line the wall. It's a huge room, designed to handle crowds of visitors. Margo ducks into one of the stalls as MBWUN crashes in. Margo looks through a crack in the door to see...

THE ANIMAL AT FULL STOP. IT'S STARING AT ITSELF IN THE ROW OF MIRRORS! The sight appalls it and the beast lets out a hideous sound! The claws lash out, breaking every mirror in the place, littering the floor with glass!

Then the beast turns and backs up, groaning, as if cornered. Margo sees now that one limb is dragging, leaving a trail of blood. The mouth, too, appears to be bleeding. The S.W.A.T. team's bullets had an affect.

Margo presses back in the stall, bracing as the beast gets closer. It's just outside. It sniffs the air once and suddenly turns, rears up, furious and crashes through the bathroom door. Margo screams and the thing grabs her! It holds Margo up before it and roars. It closes its massive claws around her as if she is somehow responsible for everything. The claws tighten! She struggles and fights to no purpose ... but then the beast pauses... it's seen something!

THE NECKLACE WITH TWO ARROWS AROUND HER NECK!

It stops and its grip loosens! A pained look flashes across its bestial face...

And in that split moment Margo looks down...

A NECKLACE OF SILVER gleams around the beast's throat too! The necklace is the twin to her own!

ON MARGO... Can it be possible? She stares at the thing...

MARGO

John's necklace! You killed him!

Incredibly the beast shakes its head. A noise comes from it... a sad noise, like a groan. And now Margo gets it! She can hardly believe it. Her eyes widen in astonishment. She whispers...

MARGO

Oh Jesus. John?

The name is a knife through the monster's heart!

MARGO

No. It's not possible!

The last piece of the puzzle falls. The monster is John Whittlesley! Margo, still desperately frightened, tries to keep control.

MARGO

John? If it is you... I can help.

The monster shakes its head no and releases her. As she watches he moves away, quickly limps out the door.

INT. HALL OF THE ASIAN PEOPLES - NIGHT

Mbwun now drags himself across the grey carpet, headed for the stairs. In the darkness of the hall of Asian Peoples, Pendergast is waiting. He lifts one of the S.W.A.T. team rifles which he holds in his hands. He aims, is about to fire, but then Margo comes up behind him.

MARGO

No! Don't kill him! Pendergast, you were right. It's John!

PENDERGAST

What?

MARGO

That thing is John Whittlesley. I should have seen it before! The fibers are infected with a virus. You eat them, and the virus alters your DNA! He became addicted to them in South America, followed the plants back to the states. He probably entered the country as a man. It would have taken several months for the change to take place. That's how he got from the boat to the museum!

Pendergast looks over and sees the monster. His eyes show disbelief. Mbwun looks back at both of them briefly, then it disappears up the stairs.

PENDERGAST

I don't believe it.

MARGO

You have to! Listen! All viruses pass on their own DNA. Instruct the cells of the host to make more viruses! This one was different. It inserted a whole array of genes into John. Reptile genes, sixty five

million years old. Those genes
remade him! It's not his fault!

PENDERGAST

Whatever that thing is, we have to
kill it!

Margo tries to stop him, but he shrugs her off.

EXT. MUSEUM ROOF - NIGHT

A helicopter hovers outside pouring a circle of light down on the
roof. Ippolito watches as the drunk is pulled up through the hall in a
sling. Waters approaches, holding the walkie talkie.

WATERS

We can't raise the S.W.A.T. team. No
one's answering! What do you want to
do?

Ippolito eyes are fixed on the room below them.

IPPOLITO

Holy shit. Pull him up.

Lightning throws horrible shadows of the hulking dinosaur skeletons
all around as MBWUN LIMPS INTO THE HALL! The men on the roof stare
down astonished. Their mouths hang open at the sight!

IPPOLITO

Get more guns! Now!

The men get the drunk up and abandon the sling, leaving Jonathan
trapped below.

INT. HALL OF THE DINOSAURS - NIGHT

Jonathan and Hobbes take cover behind one of the dinosaurs and hide.
Mbwun sees Jonathan, lifts both claws, SWINGS at the skeleton, sending
it crashing down! Jonathan SCREAMS, Hobbes is caught and falls. He
scrambles into a corner, whimpering, as Pendergast and Margo appear in
the door. Fifteen more S.W.A.T. team members with rifles now line the
hole in the roof. They all point their guns at Mbwun.

IPPOLITO

Get back! We're going to shoot!

Now Margo runs forward.

MARGO

No. Wait! Let me talk to him first!

IPPOLITO

(screaming)
Kill that thing! Kill it now!

MARGO
No!

MBWUN... turns and sees Margo. She speaks desperately.

MARGO
John... you can give up now! Just lie
down where you are!

Mbwun seems to consider for a moment, but then its eyes gleam and it
ROARS. With renewed vigor it leaps to the wall and starts to WALK UP
IT like a GECKO, ON ALL FOURS! ON THE ROOF...

Some of the S.W.A.T. team fall back in terror! Now that the monster is
on the wall it's out of range of their fire!

WATERS
Holy shit it's coming this way!

IPPOLITO
It's headed for the roof. Run!

Ippolito turns and takes off once more in sheer terror. Astonished,
Waters tries to regain control.

WATERS
Get back here, you asshole! We can't
let it get out!
(to the S.W.A.T. team)
Surround the opening and kill it!

But the men are terrified, retreating like Ippolito. Waters shouts.

WATERS
Back, everybody! That's an order!

But the team is in chaos and losing precious time.

INT. HALL OF THE DINOSAURS - NIGHT

The MONSTER is now half way up the wall. Margo is distraught, crying.
Her cool demeanor is cracked. Pendergast is with her. She shakes her
head.

MARGO
Just like John. He won't listen.

PENDERGAST
I have to shoot.

MARGO

Do it, quickly. Please. Aim for the eye.

Pendergast raises a HIGH POWERED RIFLE with a laser sight. He aims the red laser beam directly at Mbwun's left eye.

PENDERGAST

He has to look here or I won't get a clear shot. Call him, Margo.

MARGO

I can't!

PENDERGAST

You have to. Do it now!

Margo takes a moment, her eyes streaming. She has no choice, she calls out.

MARGO

John! John, look at me!

The beast looks down, sees Pendergast's rifle. There's a long, awful, moment. Suddenly it emits a sound like a wail.

ON JONATHAN... staring, stunned.

PENDERGAST... steady...

MARGO... She's crying as she raises her arm as if to say good-bye.

And the gun EXPLODES.

ON MBWUN... its head shoots back in pain, and it falls... sixty feet straight down to the ground. Silence. Thunder rolls.

It's over. Pendergast turns to Margo and quietly folds her in his arms.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MUSEUM - NIGHT

There are cops and journalists, ambulances, and medivacs all over the place. Greg Kawakita, wet and bedraggled as a rat, runs up from Columbus Ave. Behind him the Mayor and D'Agosta help the rest of the company to the ambulances.

Waters is on the steps of the museum, helping to organize the rescue efforts as Kawakita runs up to Pendergast.

KAWAKITA

Margo Green. Have you seen her?

PENDERGAST

She's over here.

Greg turns to see Margo come out of the Rotunda with Frock, Jonathan and Hobbes. Her face is devastated. He moves to her side. She reacts as she sees him, and teacher and pupil hug.

D'AGOSTA is lost in the swirl of people. And he likes it like that. He rests against a large stone lion, pulls out a cheap cigar in cellophane, unwraps it carefully and tries to light it with a wet match.

He's struggling hopelessly. Finally he tosses the useless pack of matches, sighs. But then a flame lowers right before his face. He looks up to see Pendergast holding a silver engraved lighter. D'Agosta smiles, takes a nice long hit.

PENDERGAST

Nice to see you, Lieutenant.

D'AGOSTA

The sub-basement, huh? Great idea.

We go to a wide shot of the museum as we slowly pull back...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM - DAY - SUPER TITLE: SEVERAL MONTHS LATER

Christmas decorations are up. A light snow is falling. There is a very long line.

INT. NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM - GIFT SHOP - DAY

All the registers are doing a booming business. People are buying Mbwun posters, t-shirts and hats.

INT. SUPERSTITION EXHIBIT - DAY

School tours, old ladies, parents and children, foreign tourists with cameras snake through the displays. In the room with the Relic, there's a tremendous crowd.

INT. MARGO'S LABORATORY - DAY

Margo closes her computer, looks out a window at the falling snow. She turns and walks into the back office. Kawakita is working there alone. His fly-fishing rod stands in the corner, untouched. Margo goes to it, smiles softly.

MARGO

No time for fishing anymore?

Greg looks up from his work and smiles.

KAWAKITA

Got to finish this thesis sometime.

MARGO

How about lunch?

KAWAKITA

Not today. Besides, I think the director of the museum is expecting you.

MARGO

Okay.

Margo exits. Greg returns to his work.

INT. HALLWAYS - MUSEUM - DAY

Margo heads down the hall to the Director's office. She walks through the new double oak doors to find DR. FROCK seated at Cuthbert's old desk.

MARGO

Dr. Frock?

FROCK

Look who's here, Margo.

PENDERGAST and D'AGOSTA rise out of two high-backed chairs. Margo smiles for the first time, takes Pendergast's hands.

MARGO

I'm so glad to see you. What's the occasion?

PENDERGAST

I'm in town on a case. Dropped by to see Vince and we thought we'd see the new display.

INT. HALL OF THE SOUTH AMERICAN MAMMALS - DAY

Margo, Pendergast, and D'Agosta follow Frock past the familiar dioramas.

PENDERGAST

Dr. Frock, I was wondering. What happened to the rest of Whittlesley's plants?

FROCK

They were sent to the Center For
Disease Control in Atlanta.

D'AGOSTA

Shouldn't a drug that powerful be
destroyed?

FROCK

The virus itself might have positive
applications. They'll keep the
plants in secure lock up while the
studies are made.

(beat)

Greg isn't joining us?

MARGO

He's changed. He's always working on
his thesis. He comes in early, stays
late. I tried to get him to join us,
but he never takes a break.

They pause on a NEW DIORAMA. It's huge, filling one entire end of the
hall. In the center is a life-sized representation of MBWUN standing
on the tepui amid the plants. Behind is a painting of John Whittlesley
as he once was. He wears the necklace with the two arrows, of silver
and gold. As Margo looks, she touches her own. Pendergast turns to
her, sympathy in his eyes.

PENDERGAST

We did the right thing, Margo.

Margo smiles warmly.

MARGO

Yes. I know.

INT. MARGO'S LABS - DAY

Greg Kawakita wears gloves, high powered glasses, works in solitude in
the lab. Suddenly he stands up, throws off the glasses, then he sits
down again. He seems to be struggling with himself. He glances over
his shoulder to make sure he's alone. Quickly he moves to a locked
drawer. He opens it with a key from his pocket and takes out a small
envelope, looks inside.

INSERT... the envelope is full of the PLANT FIBERS! Greg has managed to
keep his own cache!

Moving quickly, with jerky motions, he lays one fiber down on a slide
with a shaking hand. With an exacto knife, he cuts off a tiny sliver,

pops it into his mouth. He closes his eyes in ecstasy and savors the taste. Then he cuts one more infinitesimal sliver, leaves it on the slide. He takes a deep breath, returns the envelope to the drawer. He turns the key carefully and we GO CLOSE ON HIS HAND...

On the back is A ROW OF SCALES...

FADE OUT: