

CONSUMED

by

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A black screen.

Faintly in the distance are sounds like the RATTLING OF BONES, an INHUMAN CLACKING, that increases in intensity until it fills the air.

Underneath this monstrous sound comes a LOW RUMBLE from deep inside the earth.

The cacophony builds, overwhelming the clacking, becoming a DEAFENING CATAclysm.

An earthquake of Biblical proportions arrives.

People SCREAM.

Buildings COLLAPSE.

The world sounds as if it's coming to an end.

After what seems like an eternity, the devastation ends.

Silence returns.

But then, softly...

...the CLACKING begins again.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE BASEMENT - DAY

Dust settles.

Shafts of light cut through a jumbled ceiling of building debris - wiring, pipes, concrete, rebar - creating a lattice-work of sunbeams.

The growing illumination finds PARKER (early 40s, balding, out of shape), covered in concrete dust, facing up, his body bent from the large pack strapped to his back.

Parker stirs. He blinks.

He slowly raises himself. His head pounds. His ears ring.

He makes a move to stand...

...but something is stopping him.

In a daze, he looks down at his feet. He discovers that his lower leg is pinned under a slab of concrete, at the bottom of a crumpled flight of metal stairs.

He tries pulling free, but it's no use... He's held firm.

Parker tries to push the debris off him. But he can't twist around to gain any leverage. The concrete is just too heavy.

He COUGHS. And winces. It hurts.

His bulky backpack weighs on his injured body. With effort, he undoes the clasps. The backpack slides to the floor. He pushes it out of his way.

Parker wipes the dirt from his eyes and face. Trying to focus, he takes in his surroundings.

In the dim light, across the small space, he sees CAROLINE (early 40s, tanned, fit). She's unconscious, splayed out in the debris.

PARKER
(half-whisper)
Caroline!

Caroline doesn't respond. She has a bandana over her mouth... He can't tell if she's breathing.

PARKER
Caroline!

Caroline's head slowly rolls to the side.

PARKER
Caroline! Are you okay? Caroline!

Caroline jerks awake. GROANS.

She's completely disoriented. Grimacing, she makes a feeble effort to sit up. She pulls down the bandana.

PARKER
Caroline!

CAROLINE
(weakly)
Wh... Where...

A slow awareness creeps into her consciousness. Her wooziness becomes panic.

CAROLINE
They're coming!--

She frantically tries to get to her feet.

PARKER
Caroline! We're okay!

Caroline crouches like a trapped animal, scrabbling at the debris, struggling to process her surroundings.

CAROLINE
Right behind us!...

PARKER
Easy! We're safe! It's okay.

Caroline slowly comes down from her frightened state. Still wary, she lowers herself onto the debris.

PARKER
Are you hurt?

Caroline rolls her shoulders, bends her neck side to side, extends her arms, flexes her knees.

PARKER
Are you--

CAROLINE
(cutting him off)
I'm fine.

They both take in their surroundings. They are in a basement, surrounded by the remains of the building that was above. Their bubble of safety is only a few yards wide and high. A ruptured pipe drips water.

In the background... the unearthly sound of the CLACKING. The noise is soft, but nearby.

And ever present.

Parker wriggles his leg.

PARKER
I'm okay. Just think I'm stuck here.

Caroline doesn't pay attention to his comments. She's more concerned with their predicament.

CAROLINE
What happened?

PARKER
Earthquake. A big one.

CAROLINE
 (despondent)
 An earthquake...

PARKER
 Must have been "the Big One".

Caroline absorbs the severity of their situation. She grips a jagged piece of debris, feeling its solidity.

PARKER
 All I remember is a loud "snap".
 Everything started shaking. Then
 something hit me, in the back.
 Knocked me into you.

Caroline's head drops into her gloved hands.

PARKER
 (tugging at his leg)
 Hey, come here, get this thing off
 me. My circulation is getting cut
 off.

Caroline hugs herself. Her eyes are filled with tears.

CAROLINE
 (to herself)
 This isn't happening...

PARKER
 (ignoring her pain)
 Caroline, my leg...

CAROLINE
 I want to get out...

She starts working her way around the room, pushing and pulling at the building debris.

PARKER
 Caroline, stop it!

CAROLINE
 I have to get out of here!

She's becoming hysterical.

CAROLINE
 I can't stay down here!--

PARKER
 You're going to bring the place
 down on us!

Caroline's efforts wane as she realizes that they are indeed trapped below ground.

Leaning against a broken slab of flooring, she hangs her head.

PARKER
Come get me out of here.

Caroline doesn't respond.

PARKER
I'm stuck--

CAROLINE
(snapping)
I HEAR YOU, PARKER!

As soon as the words leave her mouth, she freezes.

Parker freezes.

Fearfully, they turn their eyes to the fractured ceiling above them.

They listen intently.

The constant, unearthly CLACKING seems distant.

After a few moments, nothing happens. Caroline exhales.

PARKER
(still half-whispering)
Keep your voice down!

Caroline waves him off. She knows she screwed up.

Suddenly she clutches at her side. She's missing something.

She crouches down where she came to. She picks at the debris, tossing chunks aside in haste.

She uncovers a worn leather strap, and breathes a SIGH of relief.

Trying to be quiet, she tugs a battered leather satchel from under the rubble.

Digging into it, she retrieves a small black flashlight.

She CLICKS on the light. A strong bluish-white beam pierces their dim surroundings.

Caroline begins swinging the light around. She looks intently into the dark spaces around them.

PARKER
What are you doing?

CAROLINE
We had a dozen clackers on our heels!

PARKER
They weren't even close.

CAROLINE
(pointing up)
Do you hear that?

The sound of clacking, always in the background, wafts in and out.

CAROLINE
What if they got caught in the collapse?

PARKER
I think we'd know if they were down here with us.

Caroline doesn't listen to him. She continues with her flashlight searching.

Eventually she relaxes. They don't appear to be in danger.

PARKER
You need to get me loose.

Again Caroline ignores him. She sticks the flashlight into her belt.

She dives back into the satchel. She retrieves a two-way radio.

She CLICKS it on. It HUMS to life. Good, it's still working.

CAROLINE
(softly)
Caroline to Philip. Caroline to Philip. Over.

She listens for a reply. Nothing but STATIC comes back.

CAROLINE
Caroline to Philip. Are you there?
Over.

More STATIC.

CAROLINE

We're trapped. Did the quake get you?

Nothing. Her shoulders sag.

Parker watches her face, her body language, with great interest.

Caroline looks into the satchel, finds two more battery packs. She checks their indicator lights: they're charged. So she leaves the radio on, clips it to her belt.

Tired of being ignored, Parker struggles to get his foot loose.

He purposefully makes a commotion. Caroline realizes, if she doesn't help him, he's just going to keep thrashing about.

Caroline stands. Her head just touches the precarious ceiling above.

She takes a small step, but totters on her feet. She's light-headed.

She feels at her temple. She winces... something stings.

Removing her hand, she sees bright red blood on her glove.

CAROLINE

Crap.

Hunched over, steadying herself against the debris, Caroline makes her way over to Parker.

She leans towards him. His face lights up. Salvation!

But she reaches past him, and goes for his discarded backpack.

Caroline opens it and fishes through the contents. Parker scowls at her.

PARKER

What are you doing? My ankle's starting to hurt!

CAROLINE

Do you see this?

(pointing to her wound)

I have to take care of this before it gets contaminated.

PARKER
Well hurry up.

CAROLINE
You were in such a rush to get down here... you can wait a few minutes.

They stare daggers at each other.

She turns her attention back to the backpack. She finds a bottle of water, some energy bars, a heavily dog-eared Bible, some rope...

PARKER
Let me have the Bible.

Caroline keeps rooting. Parker sticks out his hand, makes "gimme" motions.

PARKER
Caroline!...

Without looking at him, Caroline thrusts the book into his needy hand.

Parker flips through it, landing on a passage.

PARKER
(out loud, to himself)
"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea..."

Caroline doesn't feel like sitting around listening to his liturgies. She takes the bag and moves back to the other side of their space.

She continues her search in the backpack: some maps, a roll of duct tape, a small pair of old binoculars...

She stops. She shakes her head in disgust.

She holds up a crushed, half-empty pack of cigarillos.

CAROLINE
You are not still smoking.

PARKER
I've had that pack for months now. Sometimes I need something to take the edge off.

CAROLINE
God, they smell so awful.

PARKER
Well, I won't be having one today.

CAROLINE
No, you won't.

PARKER
Don't throw them away!

CAROLINE
I'm not. We can use them for fires.

She stuffs them down into the bag.

She continues her search through his backpack.

Ah, success! Caroline finds what she's been looking for: a small first aid kit.

She swigs some water, taking in Parker with a look of mild disgust.

Digging through some of the loose debris at her feet, she finds a piece of broken pane glass. She props it up against her legs, to where she can see her temple in the reflection.

Yikes. It's a big gash.

CAROLINE
Damn.

She takes off her tattered work gloves. Her hands are tanned and dirty. There is a light band of clean skin on her ring finger.

She opens the first aid kit, finds the equipment for stitching up wounds.

Carefully she threads the needle.

Caroline takes a deep breath, steels herself for pain. She begins the first stitch.

It hurts. She inhales through clenched teeth.

She has to take a moment, do a couple of deep breaths, before continuing.

She finally gets into something of a rhythm, stitching up her wound.

Parker's prayers trail off as he notices what she's doing.

After a few moments, she's done. She puts some disinfectant on a big adhesive bandage, then gently places it over her sutures.

She holds up the glass, angling it so she can see her handiwork.

PARKER

How did you learn all that?

CAROLINE

One of the group training sessions.

PARKER

(disbelieving)

"Training sessions".

CAROLINE

Yes. With Philip.

"Philip". Parker's eyes go dead... That name obviously affects Parker in a negative way.

He begins wrestling with his pinned leg again.

Caroline rolls her eyes. She has to help him now. She puts away all her gear. She pulls on her gloves.

She lifts herself up. But she's still a little woozy.

She steps sideways onto a piece of debris that shifts and falls, making a NOISE.

She freezes.

Parker stops wriggling and freezes.

They watch in terrified silence as something passes in front of the sunlight above. Something slow. Something shuffling.

Something CLACKING.

The thing blocking their light lingers. There is the sound of fingernails RAKING against stone.

Neither Parker nor Caroline even dares breathe.

Whatever is above ground moves on, the sound of its HEAVY FOOTSTEPS receding into the distance.

Caroline relaxes. That was close.

She continues making her way around the space, using the pipes and concrete to keep her steady.

Eventually she comes to Parker. He's still thrashing about in an exaggerated manner, trying to make an immature point.

Caroline bends down, examines the debris holding his foot. She checks both ends, looking for a way to move it. It looks pretty wedged in.

PARKER
(impatient)
Come on! Hurry up!

CAROLINE
Give me a minute!

PARKER
It hurts!

Caroline steps over to the other side of the concrete slab.

She looks up what was the stairs they were on earlier. They're bent and smashed beyond hope. At the top, an impossibly heavy pile of building debris blocks the way they came in.

She SIGHS. They are truly trapped.

She turns back to the task at hand. She grabs the large concrete block by the far edge, tries to pull it away from, and off of, Parker's leg.

She strains, but to no avail. It's too heavy.

Parker pushes weakly against the slab.

PARKER
Nnnnggh! It's not moving!

Already out of breath, Caroline reevaluates her options. She looks around for something to use.

Parker has reached the end of his rope. He begins to melt down.

PARKER
(whining)
I can't believe this is happening!
I owned an entire warehouse full of
construction equipment!

CAROLINE
C'mon, Parker...

PARKER

I could've called Brian to bring
the backhoe and get us out of here
in two seconds!

CAROLINE

Please, please, please be quiet. My
head is pounding.

PARKER

Lord, take pity on your loyal--

CAROLINE

Shut. UP!

Her tone shuts down his tantrum. Parker takes a breath, then continues reciting prayers under his breath.

Caroline rubs her eyes, trying to ease her headache.

A few feet away, she spots a potential tool: an intact piece of rebar, jutting out of some loose cement. She has to use both hands to retrieve it.

Wedging the metal into the debris holding Parker down, she puts all her weight into applying leverage. She grimaces.

The chunk shifts just a bit. A faint glimmer of hope appears on Parker's face.

PARKER

Press harder! Don't stop!

CAROLINE

(angrily)

I swear to Christ, if you don't--

BOOM!

A huge aftershock hits!

The entire building RATTLES and JUMPS.

The damaged ceiling SHIFTS and CRACKS.

A support beam above Caroline and Parker SNAPS in half.

Caroline throws herself backward.

The beam falls on top of Parker, pinning him flat on his back, trapping an arm.

Another part of the ceiling CAVES IN...

...dropping two undead CLACKERS into the space.

One of them is a rotting MIDDLE-AGED MAN. The other one is just the decayed UPPER TORSO OF A BLACK WOMAN, with only one intact arm.

The back of their heads are swollen and rippling. Short black tentacles writhe in the sockets where their eyes used to be. The pallid skin is pulled taut, revealing their CLACKING TEETH.

They both CLAW and TEAR at Caroline.

CAROLINE

No! NO!!!!

They pull themselves towards her face, the teeth just inches from slicing through her flesh.

She gets a knee up, staving off the bigger clacker.

Using what leverage she has, she shoves the torso away.

It falls to the floor, a few feet from Parker.

It "sees" him, and with a HISS begins dragging itself towards him.

PARKER

Dear God!...

Caroline wrestles with the relentless clacker. Her arm is braced against the monster's neck, but it's overpowering her.

Parker, his face caked with dust and only one hand free, tries to grab his backpack... but it's just beyond his reach.

The torso slides closer, closer, closer...

Caroline is almost out of strength. The clacker is all over her.

CAROLINE

GET OFF!!! GET OFF!!!

She frantically digs into her satchel...

...and pulls out a silver handgun.

With a supreme effort, she forces the barrel under the clacker's jaw...

BLAM! The back of the clacker's head EXPLODES outward. The tentacles whip into the skull.

The monster convulses, goes limp.

It slides down her body into a heap on the floor.

The clacker attacking Parker is right on top of him.

He finally gets his hand on the rebar Caroline was using before the aftershock knocked her over. He swings it up and brings it down on top of the torso's skull. The skin splits, the skull CRACKS, and a purple goo oozes out.

Using what leverage he can get, he BEATS the swollen, veiny mass at the back of the head over and over and over.

The clacker SCREECHES, flops about, and goes slack.

Panting, Caroline draws up onto her knees, tries to gather her strength.

She leans her forehead against the barrel of her gun.

CAROLINE
(softly to herself)
Thanks, Dad.

Parker desperately thrashes, the lifeless torso just inches from his face.

PARKER
Caroline! This thing... It's too
heavy! I can't get out!

Caroline takes him in with a look of disdain, watching his pinned body flailing about.

He cranes his neck, trying to see her.

PARKER
Caroline! CAROLINE! I... I can't
move!

Caroline scrabbles over, drops down right in front of his face.

CAROLINE
(hissing)
Quiet! There could be more!

Her threat cuts through his panic. Parker physically calms down, but he's still stressed.

They wait, tensed and fearful. Sweat pours down Caroline's face.

After a few moments, it seems that they're in the clear. Caroline sits back roughly.

Parker is even more delirious now. He's on the verge of harming himself as he struggles to get free.

PARKER
Nnngh! Can't... get... free!

CAROLINE
Did it get you?

PARKER
Get me out! Get me out!!!

CAROLINE
Parker! Did you get bitten?

PARKER
(stressed)
No! No, it didn't get me. Did it get you?

CAROLINE
No. I'm good.

She leans back against the rubble. She's spent.

PARKER
You... have to... get me... loose!

CAROLINE
(so tired)
Parker, I can't lift that thing. It's too big.

PARKER
You have to try! You have to!

CAROLINE
Parker...

PARKER
GET ME OUT!!!

Caroline grabs his wrist. The act shocks him.

CAROLINE
I. Can't. Move it.

She lets him go. He's no longer spastic. His free arm slowly drops to the floor. He realizes that his predicament is hopeless for the moment.

Caroline ejects the gun's clip: only two bullets left. Frustrated, she clicks the clip back in and returns the gun to her satchel.

Parker painfully cranes his head back to see what she's doing...

...only to find the clacker he killed is still RIGHT NEXT TO HIM. He freaks.

PARKER

Get it away! Get it away from me!
Get it away!!!

CAROLINE

Shut up! All right!

With what strength she has left, she uses her taped-up boot to slide the body over to where her clacker lies on the cement floor.

Their tentacle-filled eyes stare back at her. She shudders.

The undead monster removed from his space, Parker quiets down again.

Caroline unzips her jacket, tries to get comfortable. She's hot and sweaty and dirty and tired.

PARKER

What are you doing?

CAROLINE

I'm trying to keep myself from
blowing my brains out. What do you
mean?

PARKER

You... you have to get rid of them!

Caroline goes silent. Parker tries to look back at her. He's really concerned.

PARKER

Caroline! You can't just sit there!

CAROLINE

Not now, Parker...

PARKER

You have to! I'm stuck!

CAROLINE
 (angrily)
 But you would get rid of them,
 wouldn't you? In a heartbeat.

PARKER
 They're going to--

CAROLINE
 I'll think of something.

PARKER
 You're going to kill us both--

CAROLINE
 NO! No. I said... I'll think of
 something.

A heavy silence hangs in the air between them.

Parker reaches out over his head. He feels about, finding
 what he was looking for: his Bible.

He pulls it close, finding comfort in its very nearness.

PARKER
 (praying quietly)
*"For the living know that they
 shall die; but the dead know not
 any thing, neither have they any
 more a reward for the memory of
 them is forgotten..."*

The radio CRACKLES.

PHILIP'S VOICE
 Philip to Caroline! Philip to
 Caroline! Over!

Caroline jumps. She rips the radio off her belt.

CAROLINE
 (excited)
 It's Caroline! I'm here!

PHILIP'S VOICE
 (panting)
 Oh my God, where are you?

CAROLINE
 I'm trapped... The earthquake...

PHILIP'S VOICE
 Caroline...

CAROLINE
The building just came apart--

PHILIP'S VOICE
Caroline, Caroline... calm down.
Take a breath.

CAROLINE
(collecting herself)
...Okay, okay.

PHILIP'S VOICE
We've been looking all over for
you. Where are you?

CAROLINE
I'm in some building... A big gray
warehouse, in that industrial part
of town.

PHILIP'S VOICE
You're... across the river? Why in
the hell did you go there?!?

CAROLINE
After check-in this morning, Parker
told me he found a big store of
provisions over here yesterday. He
wanted me to help him bring them
back.

PHILIP'S VOICE
...Parker's there?

Caroline holds the radio out at arm's length.

PARKER
Phil, we're trapped! You have to
come get us! I'm stuck under--

PHILIP'S VOICE
When did you find this stuff?

PARKER
...Yesterday. I made a run because
I thought--

PHILIP'S VOICE
You took the van yesterday? We
needed that to pack up all those
car parts and tires we found.

PARKER
I thought th--

PHILIP'S VOICE
We had to leave a lot of stuff
behind.

PARKER
We can always go back--

PHILIP'S VOICE
Parker. Why didn't you tell us
about these supplies this morning?

PARKER
I... wanted to surprise everyone.

PHILIP'S VOICE
That wasn't very smart. We can't
afford to split up like that
anymore.

PARKER
(changing the subject)
Hurry up and come get us! I'm stuck
under a huge piece of concr--

Caroline pulls the radio back, cutting him off.

CAROLINE
Are you guys okay?

PHILIP'S VOICE
We're banged up, but I think we're
okay. Which building are you in? Do
you know?

CAROLINE
(getting frustrated)
No, no, I wasn't paying attention.
We had clackers on our ass.

PHILIP'S VOICE
Parker? Which building?

Caroline reluctantly holds the radio out again.

PARKER
It's on Prospect Street. It's the
one with--

GUNSHOTS from the radio cut him off.

PHILIP'S VOICE
Oh shit! Where did they come
from?!?

A wave of CLACKING builds in the background. More GUNSHOTS ring out.

CAROLINE
Philip! What's happening?!?

PHILIP'S VOICE
Run! Everyone, back! Run! Joan!
Look ou--

The radio goes dead. Caroline stares at it in a panic.

CAROLINE
Philip? Philip! PHILIP!!!

No response. Just STATIC.

Caroline is shaken.

PARKER
We should pray for them.

He holds out his hand for her to take.

Caroline cuts him a look. She turns her back on his offer.

He realizes she's not joining him. But it doesn't stop him.

PARKER
*"Our Lord, who art in Heaven,
please shine your mercy down upon
our companions..."*

Caroline does her best to tune Parker out. She concentrates on the radio, trying to will Philip back on the air.

Another small aftershock rattles their prison.

Metal and cement CLANK and GRIND as the earth gently rocks.

Caroline props herself up as their pit moves from side to side. Small chunks of debris drop all around.

Concrete dust showers Parker, getting into his eyes and mouth.

PARKER
No, no, no....

The shaking eventually stops.

Parker can't take it anymore. He FREAKS OUT, frantically wiping at his face.

PARKER
I can't see! I can't see!

Wearily, Caroline makes her way over to where he's prone. She opens the bottle of water.

CAROLINE
Open your eyes.

She pours the water into Parker's eyes. He SPUTTERS and GAGS as the water gets into his nose and his mouth.

He blinks several times, finally getting his vision back.

She checks the water level in the bottle. They've got about half left.

PARKER
Please try to get me loose. You have to. I can't take this.

CAROLINE
I told you, I can't budge it. We have to wait.

PARKER
No, you can! You can! Just take that pole, and get right under--

CAROLINE
(tired and fed up)
Parker. I can't free you. We have to wait for the group to come get us.

She lies back, closes her eyes.

Parker goes still.

CAROLINE
(to herself)
God, please get us out of here...

PARKER
(closing his eyes in prayer)
God, please deliver us from our situation...

CAROLINE
Parker, please. Stop.

PARKER
I was praying with you.

CAROLINE
I wasn't praying.

PARKER
You called to God.

CAROLINE
I didn't call to him. If
anything...

PARKER
What?

CAROLINE
...Nothing. Never mind. My head
hurts. Just... let me get some
rest.

She tries to get comfortable, despite her injuries.

PARKER
(quietly)
He hears you.

CAROLINE
...What?

PARKER
God. He hears you. Every word.

CAROLINE
No. He doesn't.

PARKER
It's true. He hears your prayers.

CAROLINE
If he heard my prayers, then I
wouldn't be here right now.

PARKER
Sometimes it's hard to see God's
plan. He knows better than you do
what you need.

CAROLINE
(frustrated)
Oh, so God's best case scenario for
me, is that I'm trapped underground,
under who-knows-how-many monsters
waiting to kill me, with a husband
who has no idea what he's talking
about?

PARKER

God leads us to exactly where we
should be.

CAROLINE

(groaning)
Parker, I swear, one more fucking
word--

A SOUND FROM ABOVE interrupts them. They both quickly look
up.

Another FIGURE above passes through their available light.

Then another.

Then another.

They both watch the shadows slowly move past. The clackers
lurk above them.

After a few moments, the CLACKING and SHUFFLING fades into
the distance.

Parker and Caroline are both left with nothing but the
tension between them.

The radio CRACKLES.

PHILIP'S VOICE

(almost crying)
Caroline! Caroline, come back,
over.

The signal goes in and out. Caroline works the adjustment
knobs on the radio.

CAROLINE

Philip! Philip! I'm here! Over!

PHILIP'S VOICE

Car(BZZZ) we l(BZZZ) no
chance(BZZZ)...

The signal is weak. Caroline moves to the other side of the
pit. She gets up on debris, holds the radio closer to the
ceiling.

CAROLINE

Philip! Say that again! You were
breaking up!

PHILIP'S VOICE
 We... we got hit by a swarm.
 They... they got Joan.

CAROLINE
 (shaken)
 Oh, my God...

PHILIP'S VOICE
 ...and Courtney.

Caroline gasps. She tries to collect herself.

CAROLINE
 Courtney?...

PHILIP'S VOICE
 (voice cracking)
 They were just on top of us, and...

CAROLINE
 (unbelieving)
 She was due in two weeks...

PHILIP'S VOICE
 I promised Brian that... I'd take
 care of her... and the...

He loses it. Caroline finds herself crying sympathetically.

Parker shows no emotion whatsoever.

PHILIP'S VOICE
 We... We didn't get to her
 before... before she turned...

CAROLINE
 Philip... I'm so sorry...

PHILIP'S VOICE
 But we have a problem. We have
 to... "take care" of them... but we
 don't have enough gas.

CAROLINE
 No, I filled up the cans in that
 mall parking lot yesterday. Joan
 and I... we did it together.

PHILIP'S VOICE
 A wall fell on the van. It's a
 total loss. We only have the one
 can now. I was hoping you'd know
 where the spare can is.

CAROLINE

The spare? What spare?

PHILIP'S VOICE

The little blue one. With the star sticker on it. Wayne can't find it. It's not in the RV.

CAROLINE

I've never even seen that one. I only knew of the two big ones.

PHILIP'S VOICE

Damn. More stuff we lost. I guess we'll have to find some lumber or something flammable. I don't want to let them sit too long. They've... suffered enough...

A moment of silence hangs between them. There's not really much more to say.

PHILIP'S VOICE

(collecting himself)

Ah, I'm sorry. We got cut off earlier. You... how are you?

CAROLINE

I'm... we're... okay. I got a cut on my temple, but patched it up.

PHILIP'S VOICE

And Parker?

CAROLINE

He got pinned under concrete. It's too heavy for me to move. He seems to be okay.

She looks over at Parker. He's just laying there.

PHILIP'S VOICE

Provisions?

CAROLINE

I didn't bring a lot of anything. I hadn't planned on getting trapped. We've got a couple of energy bars, but just a little water left.

PHILIP'S VOICE

Make the water last. Try not to over-exert yourself.

CAROLINE
Well, it's a little too late for
that. That aftershock dropped a
couple of clackers on us.

PHILIP'S VOICE
(concerned)
Did you?--

CAROLINE
No, neither one of us. We took care
of them.

PHILIP'S VOICE
You burned them?

The slight smile on Caroline's face fades, replaced with a
deep sadness.

At the mention of "burning", Parker cranes his neck as far as
he can in Caroline's direction.

PHILIP'S VOICE
Caroline?

Caroline's voice fails her.

PHILIP'S VOICE
Caroline!

Caroline clears her throat, tries to swallow the sadness.

CAROLINE
I'm here.

PHILIP'S VOICE
Did you burn the heads?

CAROLINE
...N-no.

PHILIP'S VOICE
(upset)
Caroline, you have to burn them.

PARKER
(loudly)
That's what I told her!

PHILIP'S VOICE
You have to burn them.

CAROLINE
Philip...

PHILIP'S VOICE
Caroline, you have to.

CAROLINE
I know, but...

PHILIP'S VOICE
If they dry out, then the spores
will get in the air. And then...

Caroline can't bring herself to answer him.

PHILIP'S VOICE
Caroline.

CAROLINE
(weakly)
Yes...

PHILIP'S VOICE
Caroline, if the spores get into
the air, you can't stop them--

CAROLINE
I know, I know. But... I can't...

PHILIP'S VOICE
Because of Debbie?

Hearing the name, Caroline chokes back a sob. She fights to keep her emotions from spilling over.

PHILIP'S VOICE
I'm so sorry...

CAROLINE
It's... only been a week...

PHILIP'S VOICE
I know you're still grieving. I
know this is horrible. But she
would want you to do whatever it
takes to keep living.

CAROLINE
I just... hear her... screaming...

PHILIP'S VOICE
I can't get off the radio until you
promise me you'll burn them.
Promise me.

CAROLINE
 (inhaling deeply)
 ...I promise.

PHILIP'S VOICE
 Thank you.
 (muffled voices)
 Okay, got it.
 (back to Caroline)
 Caroline, I have to go. We have to
 take stock of everything here. Be
 strong, okay?

CAROLINE
 I will.

PHILIP'S VOICE
 Okay. I'll be in touch. See you
 under the stars.

A small smile flits across Caroline's face.

The radio connection ends.

Caroline sits with her thoughts. She is torn.

She looks over at the two dead clackers. Their ashen faces
 stare right back at her. She shivers.

PARKER
 I told you!

CAROLINE
 I know.

PARKER
 You have to burn them now.

CAROLINE
 Just let me think...

PARKER
 I don't want those things to kill
 me!

CAROLINE
 I'm going to do it. Just... give me
 a moment...

PARKER
 They're going to spore! Do it now!

CAROLINE
 I said I'm going to--

PARKER
They'll infect us!

CAROLINE
Parker--

PARKER
BURN THEM!!!

CAROLINE
GODDAMMIT SHUT UP!

Her outburst catches them both off guard.

They retreat into themselves, listening again for clackers.

Nothing happens. They're in the clear.

Caroline takes a deep breath. She steels her reserve.

She steps down off the debris, starting towards Parker.

But her foot slips out from underneath her. She lands on her backside.

Painfully, she sits up, looking at the bottom of her boot...

...finding a VISCOUS, STICKY SUBSTANCE dripping from the sole.

CAROLINE
(puzzled)
What is...

She looks down on the floor...

...and sees a SLIMY TRAIL that leads to the back of the head of the torso that Parker "killed".

Her blood goes cold as Caroline realizes...

...there are NO TENTACLES in the eye sockets of the dead torso. And that she can see through the sockets and the empty skull.

The clacker parasite... is gone.

Caroline breaks out in a terrified sweat.

CAROLINE
(terrified)
Oh shit...

Parker hears the fear in her voice.

PARKER
What? What is it?!?

Caroline slowly gets into a crouch as she looks around their pit.

CAROLINE
(whispering)
Be quiet...

PARKER
What? Why?

CAROLINE
Shhh!!!

PARKER
(whispering)
What is it?

CAROLINE
You didn't kill it!

PARKER
What? What do you mean?

CAROLINE
The parasite! It's gone!

PARKER
No! I killed it!

CAROLINE
You didn't!

PARKER
Well, I... I... I couldn't reach!
You didn't get me loose--

CAROLINE
Quiet! Quiet!

She listens intently, but there are sounds all around them.

Concrete CRUMBLES.

Water DRIPS.

Metal GROANS.

And the CLACKING filling the air above their prison still hangs in the background.

Caroline slowly pivots on the balls of her feet. She scans their chaotic surroundings, desperately trying to see through into the darkness beyond.

Without looking down, she gingerly reaches towards her satchel.

Parker twists his neck as far as he can, frantic to see what's going on.

Her hand slides into the main pouch. She retrieves the gun. As quietly as she can, she clicks off the safety.

PARKER
Where is it?

CAROLINE
(hissing)
Shut up!

A SCRAPING deep in the bowels of the debris snags her attention.

She takes a crab-step forward, brandishing the gun, every muscle taut.

PARKER
AAAAH!

She spins, ready to fire.

CAROLINE
What? What is it?

PARKER
It's on my leg! My leg!!!

She bounds over, looking behind the cement pillar that holds him down, her finger on the trigger...

...but there's nothing there.

Just a loose wire, slowly bobbing up and down in the air currents, tapping his pants.

PARKER
Get it! Get it!

CAROLINE
Calm down.

She bends the wire back. Shaking her head, she returns to her spot in the center of the pit.

Her nerves are almost shot. She finds that her gun hand is shaking. She flexes her fingers, tightening them around the grip, steadying her arm.

Behind her, Parker lays in an impotent panic. Sweat rolls down his temples.

Something drips onto his forehead.

He swipes at his face, wiping away an opaque, sticky goo.

At first he has no idea what he's looking at.

Then his eyes widen as he realizes...

...the injured CLACKER PARASITE hangs from the beam above him. Resembling a purple, veiny brain, it clings to the concrete with six spindly legs ending in sharp claws.

Parker SCREAMS.

Caroline whips around. With only a second to react, she FIRES.

The bullet CLIPS OFF one of the parasite's legs, RICOCHETING into the debris.

The parasite SCREAMS. It SCUTTLES back into the jumbled detritus.

Caroline runs over to Parker.

PARKER
Did you get it?!? Did you get
it?!?!?

She grabs his face roughly, checking him for bites. For infection.

But he's clear.

SCRATCHING and SCRABBLING comes from the other side of their prison.

She comes to her feet, ready for anything.

Caroline breathes shallowly as she scans the perimeter. Where is it? WHERE IS IT?!?

Something metallic DROPS to her left. She spins.

Nothing is there.

Dust falls from the ceiling just to her right. She turns, looks up at the area...

...when the parasite drops from the other side of the ceiling, landing on her shoulders.

Caroline SCREAMS, THRASHES about, trying to peel the thing off her.

The claws sink into her jacket. The small mouth filled with teeth on its underside opens and closes hungrily, trying to chew into the back of her head.

She pulls and tugs, but it won't come loose.

Flailing helplessly, she accidentally SLAMS THE GUN into the damaged water pipe overhead.

The gun FIRES. The bullet CAROMS uselessly into the debris.

The pipe breaks in two. Untold gallons of water spill out, falling directly on Parker's face. He can't turn his head away to catch a breath through the deluge.

Caroline falls backward, desperately trying to stave off her demise.

Crying, panicking, she feels the end coming...

...when her hand lands on the rebar.

She grabs it, swings it hard against the parasite.

WHACK! She connects with the bulbous body, but also catches herself in the skull.

Green blood spurts everywhere. With a HISS the creature convulses, lets go of Caroline.

She rolls free.

Coming to her knees, she brings the rebar down like a sword. It pierces the brain.

She continues stabbing, creating seeping hole after seeping hole.

Eventually she runs out of steam, panting and exhausted. The parasite is dead.

CHOKING on the endless water, Parker SLAPS the concrete floor with his palm, trying to get Caroline's attention.

She comes out of her dazed state. She sees Parker drowning.

Caroline snaps into action. She jumps up, grabs the end of the pipe, tries to push it to the side. It budes, but just barely.

He's still being smothered with water.

She doesn't know what to do. She's about to panic...

...when she sees the end of a silver tube of ductwork sticking out of the debris.

She scrabbles over, grabs the tubing, pulls it free. She has ten or twelve feet of it.

She digs into Parker's backpack, retrieves the duct tape.

Working as quickly as she can, she fits the end of the ductwork over the pipe.

Water GUSHES around the sides, getting into her face and drenching her jacket. She spits the water out of her nose.

Getting several inches of the ductwork onto the broken pipe, the water diverts down the tubing and off into the debris.

Using her teeth, she tears off long pieces of tape, and secures the duct to the pipe.

Coughing, she steps back, checking her handiwork.

Parker SPUTTERS and COUGHS, trying to clear his air passages of all the filthy water.

PARKER
(spitting)
Couldn't... breathe...

Satisfied that they're out of the woods, Caroline sits heavily.

She HOCKS the water out of her throat.

CAROLINE
Oh God... I think it's... toilet
water...

She RETCHES. Parker tries to catch his breath.

PARKER
Is there... a shut-off valve...

Caroline scans the parts of the pipe she can see. No valves, just a sleek tube of gray metal.

CAROLINE

No. No way to shut it off.

They sit for a moment listening to the water continue to SPLASH into the darkness beyond their prison.

She realizes the gun is laying at her feet. She picks it up, ejects the clip, sees that it's empty.

Tears fill her eyes as she SNAPS the clip back in place. She gives the gun an almost loving caress...

CAROLINE

(to herself)

Thanks, Dad. You saved me for the last time.

...before kissing it and tossing it into the jumble of debris surrounding them.

PARKER

What are you doing?!? We need that!

CAROLINE

I don't have anymore bullets. It's useless now.

Caroline checks the holes in her jacket where the parasite's claws got her. No blood. Just tears in the fabric.

CAROLINE

(flatly)

Once again, you didn't kill the parasite.

PARKER

I did! I beat the thing--

CAROLINE

You can't just hit it. You have to...

With a violent, unexpected surge of emotion and movement, she comes off the ground, grabs the loose rebar, and STABS it into the parasite's body.

CAROLINE

...stab it. In the brain.

The parasite quivers, pulsates... then goes limp.

This exhausted the last of Caroline's energy. Weakly, she uses the loose piece of rebar to slide the remains of the parasite over to its previous host.

CAROLINE
All you did was stun it.

PARKER
What do you want from me?

CAROLINE
I want you to keep us from getting eaten alive!

PARKER
I'm eff-ing stuck under here! I did what I could! You're the one who's free! You should have taken care of it!

CAROLINE
I'm tired, Parker. I can barely keep my head up. But, you know what? You're right, I'll take up your slack and do both our jobs.

She drops the rebar. It CLANGS loudly against the floor. But she doesn't seem to care about the noise.

CAROLINE
And now I have to... to burn the goddamn things.

She takes a deep breath, sits up.

She reaches out and grabs Parker's backpack. She drags it over to where she sits.

She roots through it, looking for something. Whatever it is she's looking for... it doesn't seem to be there.

CAROLINE
Where's your lighter?

PARKER
...Lighter?

CAROLINE
Your dad's lighter. The one he brought back from London?

PARKER
Oh. It... should be in there.

CAROLINE
I don't see it. Could it be in your pockets?

PARKER

No, if it's anywhere, it's in the bag.

CAROLINE

It's not here.

PARKER

Oh, oh right. I forgot. I lost it a couple of weeks ago.

CAROLINE

How could you lose it? You said it's the only thing of his you kept!

PARKER

I don't know! I can't keep track of every little thing!

CAROLINE

Whatever.

She tosses the bag aside. He's useless.

The clackers are starting to look dry. She doesn't have much time left.

She takes a moment to catch her breath. Her attention turns absentmindedly to the dust dancing in one of the shafts of light cutting through the air.

Suddenly she gets an idea. She snatches Parker's backpack. She pulls out the binoculars and the cigarillos.

She unscrews one of the lenses from the end of the binoculars.

She slips a cigarillo out of the pack.

Moving to the light beam that held her attention, she holds the lens in the light above the end of the thin cigarette.

She adjusts the angle and the height of the lens, until the sun rays streaming through it are focused into a small point.

CAROLINE

Come on, come on...

She maintains this setup for several moments. Eventually, the spot on the cigarillo where the lens is pinpointed begins to smoke.

A smile breaks out on her face. She blows softly and gently. The smoke intensifies. The edges of the focused light begins to glow red. She blows again.

A small flame bursts forth. She can't contain a relieved LAUGH.

Carefully, she puts the plastic tip to her mouth. She tries to draw in air without inhaling the smoke. Despite her best efforts, she does. She COUGHS a bit.

The cigarette now burns in her hands.

Quickly, she steps over to where the clackers lay. She touches the lit end to the tentacles sticking out of the eye sockets of the creature she killed.

Grimacing, she bends down and draws in on the plastic tip.

The lit end glows red as it fires up.

The oily black tendrils catch fire instantly. They burn back into the skull. Thick purple smoke curls out of the eye sockets, the nose, and the ears, as the parasite burns.

She does the same to the exposed clacker. As it cooks, it curls up, becoming white with crust.

Caroline sits back, legs crossed. She stubs out the cigarillo on the debris.

Tears stream down her face as she watches the two infected bodies SIZZLE. The blackened eye sockets, the gaping mouths... She can't avert her gaze.

Parker, however, shows no emotion. He watches the shadows flicker against the jumble of building materials that form the walls of their prison.

Eventually the flames die out, as the parasites are reduced to ash.

Caroline and Parker sit silently in the acrid haze.

The smoke fills their tiny space, highlighting the sunbeams. For a moment, Caroline and Parker seem to be in a sacred space, lit from above in a divine manner.

Caroline takes the rebar, pokes at the skull of one of the clackers. It's now a pile of purple ash.

CAROLINE

(to herself)

"A person's a person, no matter how small."

PARKER

Was that Gandhi?

CAROLINE

Dr. Seuss. My third graders loved that book. I'd read it to them every couple of months. I'd like to think they got something more out of it than just the funny pictures.

A scowl darkens her face.

CAROLINE

These poor fucking things. All this suffering. All these people dead. Just because some clueless scientist had to play God.

PARKER

What do you mean by that?

CAROLINE

Back when we were still in Nebraska. When we were trying to find other groups, maybe team up. Philip contacted some people via shortwave that said they had been around when it all started.

PARKER

Really? I don't remember that.

CAROLINE

Maybe you should have attended some of Philip's strategy sessions. Been part of the team. Instead of hiding away doing whatever.

Parker tightens his grip on his Bible. Caroline spares a moment to glare at him.

CAROLINE

Anyway. They said a guy "turned" in a movie theater in Denver, and it started from there. The cops found out this guy worked at a government lab that was doing research on genetic mutations, life extension, things like that.

(MORE)

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

But before anything could be verified, the parasites got going, and...

(looks around them)

To think that some crazy smart person could be so stupid to think they could screw with Nature and not have it backfire.

PARKER

It was a government conspiracy, then.

CAROLINE

Not a conspiracy, but... an accident? Somebody made a mistake? Or maybe some foreign sabotage or something.

PARKER

Mm-hmm.

CAROLINE

Whatever it was, they got loose...

She angrily SWATS the clacker with the rebar.

CAROLINE

...and they destroyed the world.

They sit with their silence again. A clacker wanders by overhead, but Caroline doesn't even react this time.

PARKER

(softly)

That's not what happened.

CAROLINE

What?

PARKER

(normal voice)

That's not what happened.

CAROLINE

Parker, come on...

PARKER

Man can't create life. Even life like... these things.

CAROLINE

Don't tell me: you have some "divine origin" for these things.

PARKER

These things... this plague... God is delivering his judgment on mankind.

Caroline drops her head into her hands.

CAROLINE

Here we go again. You can't really believe that.

PARKER

Why not?

CAROLINE

These creatures were grown in a lab. They were bacteria that got zapped with radiation, or something.

PARKER

"Phil" told you that.

CAROLINE

Yes, Philip said that's what he heard.

PARKER

From faceless voices that could have been coming from anywhere.

CAROLINE

I don't want to rehash this. Jesus, not now.

She tries to physically remove herself from both the conversation, and his presence, despite the restrictions of their confined space.

PARKER

What happened to your faith?

CAROLINE

(laughing)
My "faith".

PARKER

You used to believe.

CAROLINE

(thoughtfully)
Yes. Yes I did.

PARKER

You'd pray. You'd Witness before the congregation. You seemed to take joy in the Word of God. What happened?

CAROLINE

You can't be serious! Parker, look around... After everything that's happened? After two years of death? Two years of barely surviving? What happened to my faith? What do you think happened? I spent years believing in a God that's supposed to be loving and caring and all that nonsense. But then, on a whim... he could kill off most of mankind because they're not following his rules correctly? That's what God does? No, Parker. There's no God.

PARKER

(calmly)

You're wrong. This ruined world, it's proof that God exists. God is disappointed in what His children created. And to show us His displeasure, like in Genesis, He created a viral flood that will erase the stain of man's sin from the world. He is clearing the way for a second Garden Of Eden.

Caroline is in tears. She's lost her husband.

CAROLINE

Parker, God didn't do this. Any of this! It was some unthinking asshole in a white lab coat who did it.

PARKER

God works His will through His vessels. He worked through the scientists, directing them, providing them inspiration to carry out His desires.

CAROLINE

Can't you hear how crazy that is? That God is so mad at everyone, that he wants the entire world to die?

PARKER

God looked down and He despaired.
And He made the decision to take
mankind to task for his evils. To
punish us all for our evils. The
undead, the infected, are suffering
because of their sins.

Caroline is fed up. She can't take it anymore. She slides
over to Parker, so that he can see her face.

CAROLINE

And Debbie? An eight-year-old girl?
What sins did she commit that
deserved to be punished? To die?

She grabs him by the hair, making sure she's got his
attention.

CAROLINE

(trembling with anger)
Was she evil?

Parker stares back at Caroline with zero emotion.

The radio CRACKLES.

PHILIP'S VOICE

Philip to Caroline. Philip to
Caroline. Over.

Caroline disengages from Parker. She relocates back to the
far side of the pit.

CAROLINE

I'm here.

PHILIP'S VOICE

We're packing up here, getting
ready to move out.

Caroline sighs with relief. Despite her weariness, she
smiles.

CAROLINE

Oh, that's the first good thing
I've heard all day.

PHILIP'S VOICE

We... said goodbye to Joan, and
Courtney. Everyone was pretty
emotional. But... Brendan said a
little something. The sun even came
out for a bit.

CAROLINE
That sounds lovely. I wish I could
have been there to say goodbye.

PHILIP'S VOICE
I wish you could have been here
too.

Caroline sheepishly darts her eyes over in Parker's
direction. If he heard, he's not reacting.

BOOM! An aftershock RATTLES the building. Caroline SCREAMS in
surprise. Chunks of concrete rain down around her and Parker.

She cowers in fear until the shaking ceases.

PHILIP'S VOICE
Did you feel that?

CAROLINE
(shakily)
Yeah. Yeah, we felt it.

PHILIP'S VOICE
Are you okay?

CAROLINE
Oh, sure. Peachy.

They share a weak laugh over the airwaves.

CAROLINE
(changing the subject)
How long will it take you to get
here? It's getting a little
claustrophobic down here...

PHILIP'S VOICE
Ah, well, this call isn't all good
news...

CAROLINE
...What? What is it?

PHILIP'S VOICE
The quakes... they damaged the
Queen Street bridge.

CAROLINE
Oh no. How bad?

PHILIP'S VOICE
Pretty bad. A large section in the
middle broke free.
(MORE)

PHILIP'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Dropped into the river. Ray put on some of his gear and climbed out to inspect the remaining bits, but he found a big crack in the center support. It's just too damaged to use.

CAROLINE

Is there a shallow part? Or someplace you can drive across?

PHILIP'S VOICE

No, the river's up because of all the rain from the last couple of weeks.

CAROLINE

So we're stuck.

PHILIP'S VOICE

Maybe not completely. Ray checked the map. There's a railroad bridge several miles north of here. We're going to see if we can get the cars on it. If not, then it's a haul up Highway 29 to the next crossing.

CAROLINE

(exasperated)

So what are we looking at?

PHILIP'S VOICE

Best case? An hour or so.

CAROLINE

Worst case?...

PHILIP'S VOICE

...Might not be until nightfall.

Caroline sags.

PHILIP'S VOICE

You still there?

CAROLINE

Yeah, yeah. I'm just... That's not what I wanted to hear right now, you know?

PHILIP'S VOICE

I know. I'm sorry. Just sit tight, stay frosty. We'll be there when we can.

CAROLINE
(trying to be playful)
Hurry!

PARKER
Pedal to the metal. See you under
the stars.

The connection CLICKS OFF.

Silence returns to the basement, a silence underscored by the faint CLACKING above ground. Has the noise gotten louder? Closer? It's impossible to tell.

Caroline resigns herself to waiting. She opens up one of the energy bars. It's beaten to hell, but she takes a bite.

She chews thoughtfully, keeping an eye on their surroundings.

Her gaze falls on Parker. Trapped, helpless, impotent... Despite her anger and resentment, she feels sorry for him.

Taking her time, she scoots over to Parker. She snaps the bar in half, and puts a piece into his hand.

CAROLINE
Eat something. We're going to be
here a while.

Her small act of kindness brings a smile to his face...

...a smile that quickly fades when he notices the light band of skin on her finger, where a wedding band used to be. But she is oblivious to the change in his mood.

He takes a big, angry bite.

The only sound in the basement is the CRUNCHING of their chewing.

Parker swallows noisily. He makes a point of examining the energy bar wrapper.

PARKER
These are really good.

CAROLINE
(disinterested)
Mmm.

PARKER
We had these on our trip.

CAROLINE
When did we take bars on a trip?

PARKER
The desert trip.

CAROLINE
Desert trip... Death Valley?

PARKER
No, Sedona. When we hiked into
Valley Verde.

CAROLINE
Oh, that's right. Before we moved
out of the old house. That seems
like a million years ago. We drove,
right?

PARKER
Your dad's Forerunner.

CAROLINE
Before his surgery. We went with
Jesse, and that girl he met at the
airport. What was her name?
Brenda... Barbara...

PARKER
Bridget.

CAROLINE
Bridget! With the purple boots. She
couldn't eat the beef jerky we
brought.

PARKER
She said that all the fluoride in
the drinking water made her teeth
too soft.

CAROLINE
(smiling)
And she had that lizard tattoo on
her neck.

PARKER
An iguana. She said it was her
totem animal.

CAROLINE
But then when we found that little
brown lizard on the trail...
(MORE)

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

She freaked out and tripped over the rocks when she was running away from it!

PARKER

She sprained her ankle and hit her head. Jesse had to piggy-back her out.

CAROLINE

And she threw up all over his neck!

They both can't help it: The LAUGHTER comes pouring out of them. A good hearty laugh.

Then they catch themselves... the noise! They try to stifle their amusement, which just becomes giggling.

CAROLINE

(wiping her eyes)
Oh God! She was so difficult!

PARKER

That didn't stop Jesse from asking her to marry him.

CAROLINE

Yeah, but Bridget didn't even make it to the dress fitting. I wonder what happened there.

PARKER

Jesse told me that, the night before she was going to look for dresses, Bridget said, "If we were Fated to be together, then that means I'm not in charge of my own destiny. So I need to go find a lover on my own, to show the Universe that I can make my own choices".

CAROLINE

Holy shit. She told him that?

PARKER

It was in a letter. A letter she tied to the cat's collar.

CAROLINE

Jesus.

PARKER

Jesse came home and found she'd packed up and left.

CAROLINE

Wow. Jesse was never one of my favorites, but he deserved better than that.

PARKER

Nobody deserves to be treated like that.

The light mood becomes heavy again. Caroline thoughtfully finishes her half of the energy bar.

Parker studies Caroline intently.

PARKER

I didn't mean for this to happen.

CAROLINE

For what to happen?

PARKER

This. I had hoped today would go... differently.

CAROLINE

Being trapped below ground wasn't on my list of things to do today, either. Joan and I were going to try fishing at the riverside. But now...

PARKER

I was just trying to do something good, you know? For the group.

(hesitating)

For us.

CAROLINE

I know. Finding all those supplies was a good thing. It would've been a big help. It's just... If a couple of people had come with us, maybe we wouldn't be stuck...

She takes a swig of water. The last swig.

CAROLINE

I'm just mad at myself for not telling anyone where we were going.

(MORE)

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Not taking two seconds to tell Philip, or Ray, or someone. You caught me off-guard. All I could think was how badly we needed that food.

PARKER

But you were upset from the moment we left. Actually, even before we left, when I told you to come with me.

CAROLINE

Well, it's just... You keep doing your own thing. You disappeared yesterday for hours. We couldn't raise you on the radio. We were about to risk taking one of the cars to go look for you... Then suddenly you pop up, just walk right back into camp. La la la, no worries. Without a word about this treasure trove you say you've found. You've been isolating yourself more and more. No one can seem to get through to you.

She tosses the plastic bottle aside. It bounces into the jumble of debris.

PARKER

And you haven't been pulling away too?

CAROLINE

What's that supposed to mean?

PARKER

You can't say that you haven't been distant as well.

CAROLINE

Do we have to do this now? I'm too tired to fight with you.

PARKER

Too tired to be honest with your husband?

CAROLINE

I'm just tired. Period. Ever since the Turning, it's been two years of... of violence, of pain, of struggling.

(MORE)

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Every day has been a struggle. Just to get a little food, we have to risk our lives. I lay awake at night, I can't sleep, because I can't relax. Every moment, every second, is a chance that...

She looks at the dead clackers. A chill runs through her.

CAROLINE

I want just a moment of something normal. Something familiar. The smell of popcorn at the movies. To soak in a hot bath. Pulling weeds in our herb garden. Hell, I'd give anything just to hear my students complain when I spring a pop quiz on them!

She drifts off. Parker watches her face go through a myriad of emotions.

CAROLINE

We had a life. Maybe it was simple, but it was ours, and I loved it. But all of that was destroyed. Everything familiar, everything comforting, was ripped away overnight. And then the man who was supposed to be my rock, he...

She looks at him. He twists his neck, trying to look up at her.

CAROLINE

He changed. He went off the deep end with his religious nonsense. I couldn't relate to him anymore. So I lost my husband to this nightmare.

Caroline is trying not to cry, but it's hard to hold the emotions back.

CAROLINE

There was nothing left of that world. Nothing left of my life. Nothing left to keep me from putting this gun in my mouth and pulling the trigger. The only thing - the only thing - that made me get up in the morning, and fight to stay alive... was Debbie...

A sob bursts out of her chest. She can't go on.

PARKER
(emotionlessly)
She was turning.

CAROLINE
(crying)
You didn't wait for me!

PARKER
I couldn't risk the group getting
attacked.

CAROLINE
I didn't get to say goodbye... to
my little...

She breaks down again.

Parker watches quietly as a sea of tears floods out of Caroline. Her body shakes as all her backed up emotions finally find release.

PARKER
I did what was best for her.

Caroline silently waves at him to be quiet.

PARKER
I purified her in the sight of God.

CAROLINE
Jesus Christ, would you SHUT UP!!!

Parker's made his point. He doesn't utter another word.

He flips open his Bible, begins reading silently to himself.

The well of sadness in Caroline finally runs dry. She spends a few moments collecting herself, getting her composure back together.

Her eyes fall on the bodies, the clacker hosts.

The man, the one she dispatched, is wearing a torn fast-food uniform, a name tag that says "DANNY" dangling from the breast pocket. A large tattoo of a pirate adorns his upper arm.

And the female torso, despite being so rotten, also carries traces of its previous life. A turquoise and silver necklace is buried in the soft flesh of its upper chest.

A bracelet fashioned from old typewriter keys dangles from its ragged wrist. The fingers on the remaining hand sport broken fake nails.

CAROLINE

Poor bastards.

PARKER

Who?

CAROLINE

They woke up one morning, thought they were just going to spend another day slaving away or dealing with their finances or whatever... But life had a different day planned for them. Like us. Like the group.

A CLACKING SHADOW passes by overhead. She looks up, actual compassion on her face this time.

CAROLINE

All of them. One minute they were fathers and mothers and sons and daughters... just people. And then the next minute...

(snaps her fingers)

It's all over. Everything they've worked for, hoped for, prayed for... Taken away. In a violent second.

She looks at her hands. Dirty, scraped, bruised... but ALIVE.

CAROLINE

The first day, when we were waiting for the train... That girl on the other side of the platform got attacked by that big homeless guy. We had no idea what we were looking at. And when she turned... It just didn't make sense. It looked like she was dancing. And then, the infection... it was like a wave...

(makes wave motions with hands)

...just running down the entire platform, down the stairs, through the station, and up to our side.

Tears well up in her eyes.

CAROLINE
 All I could think of was, "Run".
 And we did. We didn't try to help.
 We just ran. And we haven't
 stopped.

She recovers, collects herself.

CAROLINE
 What made us different from them?
 Why did they get infected, but we
 escaped?

Parker stops flipping through his Bible.

PARKER
 We're blessed.

CAROLINE
 (laughing)
 You can't be serious!

PARKER
 We have been spared because we're
 without sin.

CAROLINE
 I don't think they're that
 discerning.

PARKER
 All our close calls, and yet...
 here we are. The plague has passed
 us over, like the Hebrew slaves in
 Egypt. With God looking down on us,
 we'll be safe.

CAROLINE
 I wish I shared your confidence.

PARKER
 As long as we're without sin, we're
 untouchable. Unless... you have
 something you need to Witness
 before God...

At this, she goes quiet. He waits for a response, but she
 says nothing.

She's done with him, again.

CAROLINE
 Fuck.

Caroline picks herself up, tries to shake off what just happened.

She unclips the radio. She clicks the button, but there's no sound at all. Not even static.

She checks the battery indicator. It's dead.

She fishes a fresh battery pack out of her satchel, pops it on.

The radio CRACKLES to life.

CAROLINE
Caroline to Philip. Over.

No response.

CAROLINE
Caroline to Philip. Are you there?

PHILIP'S VOICE
Car(BZZ) on th(BZZ) gettin(BZZ)...

She shakes the radio in frustration.

CAROLINE
You're breaking up. Did you find a way across?

PHILIP'S VOICE
We tr(BZZ) over th(BZZ) Ray did(BZZ)...

She moves back to the "sweet spot" on the far side of the basement.

CAROLINE
Please repeat! Over!

PHILIP'S VOICE
BZZZZZZZZZZ...

She tries a different channel. She tries fine tuning the frequency. It's no use.

Caroline returns the radio to her belt.

In the meantime, Parker has flipped open his Bible. He's reading to himself again.

PARKER

(praying softly)

*"Do not be conformed to this world,
but be transformed by the renewal
of your mind, that by testing you
may discern what is the will of
God, what is good and acceptable
and perfect."*

Caroline tunes him out. She's numb to him now.

Lost in thought, she finds herself peering deep into the bowels of their prison.

Eventually her focus shifts to what is on the other side of the debris. The wheels in her mind turn.

Caroline pulls the flashlight out of her belt.

She clicks it on, checks the strength of the beam. The batteries are still fully charged and ready to go.

She trains the light into the shadows behind all the concrete. She bends and stretches, looking through holes of various sizes.

Parker senses that she's doing something. He tries to look back and see, but the angle is too sharp.

Caroline continues moving in a slow circle about the perimeter, scanning the spaces for something.

After a few steps, she comes into Parker's field of vision.

PARKER

What are you doing?

CAROLINE

We're out of water. I thought I might be able to reach some of the provisions you said were down here.

PARKER

You shouldn't waste the batteries. We might need them later. If they don't get here before the sun goes down...

CAROLINE

No, these are brand new. I put them in yesterday. I can spare a few minutes to find us some water.

PARKER

(even more concerned)
That's not a good idea. There might
more parasites back there. You'll
attract them!

CAROLINE

I don't hear anything moving. I
think we're safe.

She continues moving, stepping over and around Parker.

CAROLINE

Besides, it would be a shame if we
came all this way, went through all
this, and came away empty handed. I
hope some of it is still
salvageable.

Caroline eventually circles back around to where she started.

She turns off the flashlight. She's puzzled.

CAROLINE

What did you say you found?

PARKER

It was hard to see. I had clackers
chasing me. I barely got out of
there with my life.

CAROLINE

Out of "there"? You mean "here"?

PARKER

Yeah. "Here".

CAROLINE

You said there was water. Cans of
food. First aid supplies.

PARKER

Yeah, all that stuff.

She turns the flashlight back on. She does another close
examination of the space. Shaking her head, she clicks the
light off again.

CAROLINE

I don't see anything.

PARKER

It's pretty dark back there.

CAROLINE
Yeah, but, I should see a reflection, or a glint of light, or something. Were there shelves?

PARKER
Shelves. Yeah, there were shelves.

CAROLINE
No, I don't see any shelves.

PARKER
Well, the room is big. You might not be able to see all the way across.

CAROLINE
No...
(clicks on the light)
I see the far wall. It's just a few yards away.

She thinks for a moment.

She tucks the flashlight into her belt. She pulls the bandana from around her neck, up over her mouth and nose.

From his position on the floor, Parker watches her.

PARKER
What are you doing?

CAROLINE
There's an opening here I think I can squeeze through. Maybe I can get us some of the water. Or, if we're really lucky... there might be another way out of here.

PARKER
No! Caroline, if there's another aftershock, you could be crushed...

CAROLINE
I think I can risk it. We don't know how long we're going to be stuck here. And I don't want to wait anymore.

She bends down, gauges the size of the opening.

Confident that she can fit, she pushes her way into the gap.

PARKER

Caroline. Don't go. Caroline!

But it's no use: she's already half-way in.

Caroline pulls herself along, bending around jagged spurs of metal and sharp edges of glass.

Her breathing becomes labored as she contorts and struggles, making her way deeper into the basement.

She tries to slide forward, but finds her progress impeded.

Something has her. She looks back, and discovers that her utility belt is caught.

She pulls the flashlight out of her waistband. She clicks it on, pulls her bandana down, puts the light in her mouth.

With difficulty, she unbuckles the belt, lets it slide off her waist. She continues crawling forward.

She comes through the jumble of debris, falling into an open space on the far side of the basement.

Dusting herself off, she tries to stand. There's a little more headroom than the other space, but not much.

She looks up. The flooring is really damaged on this side of the building. No holes for light to come through. Her flashlight is the only illumination she has.

The CLACKING is louder here. Clackers must be right on top of her.

Stepping carefully, she begins a small reconnoiter of the perimeter. She's against the wall of the basement, in a corner.

Despite the damage from the earthquake, the area is clear enough for her to see...

...there are NO PROVISIONS.

No water. No food. No shelves.

Nothing.

What the hell?

She throws the light around on the ground. Maybe there's something that fell during the quakes.

But again, nothing.

She catches something white in the beam.

Bending down, she picks the object out of the dirt on the floor.

She holds it up in the light. It's a plastic cigarillo filter, the tobacco smoked all the way down.

She tosses it aside.

She regards the basement with a shrug. What a waste of time. She may as well go back.

She makes one more sweep with her light...

...stopping when she sees something glint behind some fallen debris.

She makes her way over to the wall. Pushing aside loose-hanging pipes and flooring substructure...

...she finds a door. The silver handle is reflecting her flashlight. A broken exit sign dangles from its wiring over the jamb.

A way out?

BOOM! A small aftershock rolls through the ground under her feet. She steadies herself against the wall. The foundation CRACKS and GROANS as the tons of debris above are dislodged.

The shaking subsides. She exhales. Still safe.

Caroline tries the door. The knob turns, but it's stuck. The frame is skewed from the earthquake damage.

She puts the flashlight back in her mouth. Using both hands, she grabs the knob, puts her foot against the jamb.

Desperate to escape, she puts her back into a big yank.

CRACK! The door BREAKS OPEN.

Caroline falls back.

The flashlight arcs off into the darkness.

And an obese, putrid cLACKer tumbles into the room.

It falls onto Caroline's legs, HISSING and SCRATCHING.

She SCREAMS. The undead creature drips ooze and blood all over her.

PARKER (O.S.)
Caroline! What is it?!?

Kicking with all her might, she SNAPS one rotten arm off at the shoulder.

Wriggling free, she fumbles and falls back towards the way she came in.

Despite its size and condition, the clacker lurches after her.

Caroline throws herself into the opening. The concrete and metal scrape and pierce her exposed skin, but she ignores the pain.

The clacker SLAMS into the opening. Its bulk wedges it tight. It CLAWS at the debris, hungry for its prey.

With a sick wet RIPPING SOUND, the monster's pallid skin and fat TEAR AWAY from the body, allowing the stripped-down cadaver to slither forward after Caroline.

Caroline grunts and strains, desperately trying to escape the thing chasing her.

The clacker, slick from all the exposed tissue, comes up behind her fast.

It gets its remaining hand on her boot.

Caroline KICKS and THRASHES, trying to get free.

PARKER (O.S.)
Caroline! CAROLINE!

With its inhuman strength, the clacker pulls her back towards its SNAPPING JAWS.

Caroline grabs at the rubble around her, doing her best to anchor herself.

With a Herculean yank, she wrenches her foot out of her well-worn boot.

She puts her all into making it through the remaining few feet of the tunnel.

With a final effort, she throws herself forward, collapsing onto the floor in front of Parker.

Before she can even react, the clacker appears in the opening. It HISSES at the sight of two helpless victims.

PARKER

Shit!

Caroline flips over, jams her remaining boot against the clacker's neck. The monster is pinned against the gap, unable to move forward any further.

She looks back behind her. The rebar she's been using lies on the floor just a few feet away. But to get it, she'll have to release the clacker.

The clacker fights against her tiring leg. She doesn't want to give in, but she's flagging.

She has no choice.

She drops her leg, and makes a dive for the rebar.

The clacker surges forward, aiming for Parker.

PARKER

NO!!!

He throws up his free arm in a pathetic attempt to save himself...

...when Caroline jumps forward, THRUSTING the rebar through the clacker's torso.

The metal pierces through the rib cage, becoming embedded in the broken concrete below it.

The clacker THRASHES and FLAILS, but it's not going anywhere. It's trapped in place.

Caroline pushes herself back away from the pinned creature.

She's exhausted. Spent. Injured.

The clacker HISSES, CLACKS, CLAWS at the air. Right in front of Parker.

PARKER

It's still alive!

CAROLINE

It's... not going... anywhere...

PARKER

Kill it! Kill it!

CAROLINE

Not going... to burn... anything...

PARKER
It'll get free!

CAROLINE
You want it dead... you kill it...

She pulls herself up onto her hands and knees. Painfully, she crawls over to where her satchel is. She uses it as a pillow, and lies down.

Parker flinches with every snap and GROPE made by the pinned clacker.

CAROLINE
I didn't... see anything...

PARKER
What?

CAROLINE
No water. No food. Nothing. Doesn't seem like... there's anything down here... but us.

PARKER
Maybe... it was a different building...

Caroline can't believe what she's hearing. Despite her exhaustion, she stares daggers at him.

He can't look at her... he can't take his eyes away from the creature that's trying to kill him.

CAROLINE
You think... this is the wrong building?...

PARKER
(defensively)
They're all big gray warehouses.

CAROLINE
For God's sake, Parker...

PARKER
I was being chased by--

CAROLINE
By clackers! I know! You keep saying that! Oh, my God... We're stuck down here... for nothing...

She tears up. What hope she had is shot now.

She sits herself up, so upset she can't be comfortable on the floor anymore.

CAROLINE

You took the van, without telling anyone. You drove miles off our route, wasting what little gas we had left. Do you know how dangerous that was? Do you want to die? Is that it?

PARKER

Wouldn't it be better if I were dead?

CAROLINE

What? No! Jesus. Don't talk like that.

PARKER

Admit it. No one would miss me.

CAROLINE

You're delirious.

PARKER

You wouldn't miss me.

CAROLINE

That's not true.

Her reply doesn't sound very convincing.

A thin, evil smile spreads over his face.

PARKER

You'd be okay. You'd still have "Phil" to fuck.

The clacker is the only noise in their prison, the CLACKING and THRASHING filling the dead atmosphere.

Caroline tries to keep a poker face. Her mind races.

Her entire body deflates. She's too tired to deny it. Too tired to fight anymore.

CAROLINE

(unsteady)

I never meant for--

PARKER

(cutting her off)

The training sessions...

(MORE)

PARKER (CONT'D)

You'd always be the last one to leave. The runs for provisions... You'd volunteer so quickly, and come back so late. Your wedding ring... It disappeared.

Caroline flexes her hand, looking guiltily at the light band of skin on her finger.

PARKER

You always made fun of me for being clueless. For being checked out. But I ran a construction company. A company I founded. I'm no idiot. I got to where I am by paying attention to the markets. To the competition.

On that last word, he cuts his eyes up, looking past the clacker, towards her. She meets his stare.

PARKER

For two weeks, I've been laying next to my wife. The woman I swore before God to love and honor. Waiting for her to be honest with me. To Witness the secrets in her heart.

CAROLINE

I was used to you not being around. You were wrapped up in the company. Every time you missed dinner, or had to cancel on me, I knew you were working towards something bigger. And I had my time with you, when you could steal away. I made my peace with that.

Caroline painfully leans forward, resting her bandaged head in her ravaged hands.

CAROLINE

But the man I married is not the man I know now. Ever since the Turning, it's like some hidden, dark part of you got set free. The first time you hit me...

She grimaces at the memory. Parker stares upward into the tangled ceiling of debris.

CAROLINE

I just had to believe it was the stress. We were both under the gun, all the time. Me at school, you running all over the state making deals. But your anger, it just never went away. And then somehow you fell into all this religious nonsense. Every day, I felt more cut off from the man I met all those years ago.

She regards the radio, almost like she's talking to Philip and not Parker.

CAROLINE

After the run where we lost the Delgados, I was a mess. I watched them get Ana Elisa not ten feet from me. Her face...

(choking back tears)

I tried to talk to you, but... you just weren't present. You were like a stone. We'd been traveling with them for eight months. They were like family. But you didn't even tell their son you were sorry.

She looks past the clacker at Parker. He is no longer cowed by the monster right in front of him. He's lying completely still.

CAROLINE

So I took myself outside the camp. Just to be alone and miserable. I wound up at the supply table, where Joan had put up all those Christmas lights. I just sat there, lost, with those little white lights twinkling overhead. It was so peaceful.

She looks upwards. A sense of lightness enters her.

CAROLINE

At some point, Philip came to find me. He saw me run off. He was concerned. And he comforted me. He listened to me. He held me. Oh God, for the first time in years, I felt... heard. And... things just happened. We... we were together...

PARKER
 "Under the stars"?

CAROLINE
 I don't regret it. It gave me something I'd been missing, some tiny bit of humanity that I'd lost. But I never stopped thinking: The man I loved, who proposed to me under a waterfall, who held my hand at my father's funeral... was he still there, somewhere?

Her fists clench. She starts to shake.

CAROLINE
 But, no... I knew that was man was gone, was dead inside, when...

Her body shakes as the words explode out of her.

CAROLINE
 ...when he BURNED OUR DAUGHTER ALIVE!

She SOBS.

Parker watches her coolly.

CAROLINE
 (spent)
 The sound... I didn't know what I was hearing. But I realized... it was screaming. A young girl, screaming. And then... I saw the smoke! I could see the light flickering on the walls!

She suddenly leaps over the clacker's body, drops right in front of his face. She's seething.

CAROLINE
 And when the jeep pulled around to camp, there you were, standing there, her body right in front of you! Philip and Joan kept me from throwing myself on top of her! But you didn't shed a tear! You were just watching! Praying! I screamed at you to tell me what happened! But all you said was... was...

She can't finish her sentence.

PARKER
 (calmly)
 ...She was purified by God.

CAROLINE
That was the moment, I knew my
 husband was gone.

Caroline sits back.

CAROLINE
 I can't remember what happened
 after that. I think I yelled at
 you. Maybe I hit you. All I know is
 I woke up the next day in Joan's
 tent. But whatever happened, it was
 clear to me that night. Whatever we
 had between us... it died with my
 little girl.

A pained silence hangs in the air between them.

The obese clacker snaps and squirms, still intent on reaching
 its prey.

Caroline wipes tears from her eyes.

Parker just stares at her.

PHILIP'S VOICE
 CAROLINE!

The sudden outburst startles them both. Caroline fumbles for
 the radio.

CAROLINE
 Philip! Philip!

GUNFIRE and SCREAMS blare through the speaker.

CAROLINE
 Philip! What's happening?!?

PHILIP'S VOICE
 They're everywhere! A swarm--
 (clacking, hissing,
 firing)
 Oh God, dozens of them-- Ray! On
 the right!
 (chaotic fighting)
 I'm sorry! I'm so--

A pop of STATIC. The radio goes dead.

CAROLINE
 (trembling)
 Philip! Are you there?

PARKER
 Caroline...

CAROLINE
 Please, Philip!

PARKER
 You're making too much noise!

CAROLINE
 Philip! Philip!! PHILIP!!!

Parker sees one of their precious shafts of illumination go dark.

Something has heard Caroline. The CLACKING grows louder.

PARKER
 (hoarse whisper)
 Caroline!

CAROLINE
 PHILIP! PHILIP!!!

Another overhead light is blocked. The sound of SCRAPING mixes with the inhuman CLACKING.

Parker is agitated now. He renews his struggles to get free.

PARKER
 Caroline, shut up!

CAROLINE
 PHILIP!!!!!!

PARKER
 God-DAMN-it, Caroline--

Their dim lighting winks out completely.

The scraping becomes the sound of BONY FINGERS DIGGING maniacally at concrete and stone.

The air fills with the CLACKING OF BROKEN, ROTTEN TEETH.

PARKER
 My God...

The noise shakes Caroline out of her daze. She looks up...

Dozens of clackers now surround them above ground.

Thin, pale arms jut through the cracks in the debris that had been their only source of sunlight.

Dead eyes filled with tentacles stare through the gaps.

Clawing hands reach down into their sanctum, grasping at the dusty air...

...growing closer and closer to their prey.

Caroline, overcome with grief and terror, finally loses it.

Her flagging strength invigorated by her raging emotions, she takes violent swings at the clackers.

CAROLINE

Go away! Go away!!! Stop it! STOP
IT!!!

She BREAKS OFF a clacker's arm at the elbow. It falls to the ground. She furiously STOMPS on it.

CAROLINE

Go to hell! Go to hell!

PARKER

Caroline, stop! Stop!!!

She keeps FLAILING at the clackers.

Eventually she tires. Panting, she looks at the swarm of decaying hands reaching down for her.

CAROLINE

Philip... He can't... Philip...

She throws herself onto the rubble. Using the rebar she begins frantically digging.

CAROLINE

I'm coming... I'm coming...

PARKER

What are you doing? Stop that!

She throws the rebar aside, tears into the debris with her hands.

She claws. She pulls. She kicks.

PARKER
It's going to fall in on us!
STOP!!!

She doesn't hear him anymore. She pulls, she pulls, she pulls...

...until her efforts dislodge a large mass of metal and concrete. It COLLAPSES onto her, chunks HITTING her head and KNOCKING her onto her back.

Still hysterical, but rocked by the impact, she tries to bring herself upright, to continue her tunneling.

But she stops short when she sees that the collapse has uncovered...

...a burlap sack.

Her surprise at seeing something in the rubble pauses her mad scramble.

PARKER
Caroline! What is it? Are you okay?
Caroline!

CAROLINE
It's... a bag...

Parker freezes.

PARKER
Keep away from it! It could be dangerous!

Caroline eagerly pulls it free, begins undoing the ties.

CAROLINE
It could be water...

PARKER
You can't be sure--

She finally rips the bag open...

...and stops in disbelief.

PARKER
Caroline...

Caroline pivots, drops the bag on the ground where Parker can see it. It hits the floor with a deep METALLIC THUMP.

Not taking her eyes off of him, she pulls down the bag...

...revealing a blue gas can with a star-shaped sticker on it.
She looks at Parker incredulously.

Parker's face transforms, from distraught to dark. He turns his head back to the ceiling.

She moves the bag. Something CLINKS against the can in the bottom of the sack. She reaches in...

...and pulls out a silver lighter, an enamel replica of the British flag on its side.

The clackers, the basement... it all fades into the background, as Caroline's mind reels.

CAROLINE
What... what is this?

Parker doesn't say a word.

CAROLINE
Goddammit, speak to me!

Parker's visage doesn't change. If anything, his eyes become darker.

PARKER
I saw you.

CAROLINE
(frustrated)
What are you babbling about now?

PARKER
That night you left the camp... I did go looking for you. I wanted to see how you were doing. But I found... You and "Phil". The two of you, together. I wanted to leave... but I couldn't. I watched. I watched another man have my wife. "Under the stars".

He lets that phrase sink in again.

PARKER
I watched my wife commit sacrilege against the vows we made. The holy vows we swore in the presence of God.

Above them, a clacker BREAKS THROUGH, wedging its head and shoulders through a widened gap.

PARKER

I watched until you had finished. And then... I ran. I ran and I ran and I ran. I ran until I couldn't take another step. And I found myself on the steps of a burning church. Damaged from the quakes. Burning in bright orange flames. And as I watched, there were the infected, stumbling out of the fire.

(closes eyes)

"For the Lord will execute judgment by fire and by His sword on all flesh, and those slain by the Lord will be many."

(opens eyes)

I watched the flames dance across their skin. Burning the diseased flesh away. Purifying them. And that was when God spoke to me. I fell to my knees, as through the fire, I heard His voice. And He told me that my family was infected. Infected with your sin. And the only way to save our souls, was to purify them through the flames of God's love. God told me your sin wasn't contained to just you. It had touched us all. So I waited until you had left on a supply run, so that no one would be there to prevent me... from cleansing our daughter.

A look of horror comes to Caroline's face.

PARKER

She resisted, at first, but I prevailed. I was given authority by the Lord above. And when she lay before me, prone, I set her free with a lightness in my heart.

CAROLINE

Debbie... wasn't bitten?...

PARKER

She had been infected by something worse: the sins of her mother.

Caroline physically shrinks, trying to escape his presence, but there's nowhere to go.

PARKER

And then... it was time for your salvation. But I knew it would raise too many questions, both of my family members experiencing the same fate. Not everyone in our group shares my faith. So I took it upon myself to find a place, a hidden secret place, where I could enact God's final will, and cleanse you in the manner that He dictated.

Another clacker forces the upper part of its body through the ceiling. Its grasping hands are right above Caroline's head.

PARKER

But now, we're here. And I still have the Lord's work to do.

Caroline absorbs Parker's words. The death hanging above their heads, closing in on them, is forgotten.

Her horror slowly turns to anger... a seething, vengeful rage.

CAROLINE

You... monster! You fucking weak, spineless son of a bitch! You... you murderer!

Caroline lurches to her feet. The clackers' hands scrabble at her shoulders, her hair.

CAROLINE

You killed... our daughter...

She reaches down, grabs the gas can.

She slowly steps forward.

CAROLINE

You killed... our daughter...

She unscrews the cap. It drops to the ground and bounces off into the debris.

Parker suddenly realizes what she's doing. His cool, judgmental demeanor turns to concern.

PARKER

Caroline, don't...

Her teeth gritted, Caroline tips the can forward.

Gas pours out, splashing Parker's exposed face and arm.
He panics. He tries in vain to reach her, to get her to stop.

PARKER
(spluttering)
No! Caroline! Stop! Please!!!

Caroline pours, and pours, and pours...
...until the can is drained. She tosses it aside.

CAROLINE
You want God to purify your soul?

Not taking her eyes off him, she flips open the lighter.

PARKER
Caroline, stop!

Caroline is lost in her horror, her rage. With a flick of her thumb, she lights the flame.

CAROLINE
Let me do it for you...

Parker is now the one in tears.

PARKER
Caroline, no! NO!!!

She stands over him, watching the flame dance before her eyes.

She cocks her arm to throw...

BLAM! A GUNSHOT from above ground!

Both Caroline and Parker look to the ceiling of their prison.

The clackers reaching through the debris pull back, returning the meager illumination to their prison.

Amid the sound of their clacking, there are IMPACTS. GUNFIRE. YELLING. HISSING. The ROAR of engines.

The battle above ground seems to go on forever.

Then... silence.

Caroline holds her breath, unwilling to believe.

PHILIP (O.S.)
Caroline!

She laughs out loud. It's him! Not on the radio, it's his voice!

CAROLINE
Philip! I'm here!

PHILIP (O.S.)
Oh thank God!

CAROLINE
(delirious)
You're here... you're here...

PHILIP (O.S.)
Watch out!

She steps back, trying to flatten herself against the wall of concrete.

An engine REVS. A huge slab of concrete above their heads SHIFTS and GROANS, moved by some unseen force.

Dust falls in sheets. Muffled voices CALL OUT.

The engine REVS to the point of exploding.

And the giant piece of concrete ratchets upward, secured by chains and cables.

Light streams into the pit. Caroline has to shield her eyes.

The sudden movement of all the piled-up debris shifts everything loose.

The rebar holding the obese clacker in place comes loose as the underlying concrete comes apart.

The clacker slides down the length of the rebar, headed straight for Parker.

He SCREAMS as it barrels towards him. He flails his one free hand, trying to hold it back.

PARKER
Caroline!

Caroline watches dispassionately. She's beyond caring.

Parker wedges his hand around the thing's neck. But it's heavy, it's hungry, it's relentless.

Parker feels his strength waning...

BLAM! The clacker's head EXPLODES from a rifle shot. The goo showers Parker.

Caroline looks up into the blinding sunlight.

A figure leans in, blocking the harsh sun.

Caroline's face breaks into a huge smile...

...it's PHILIP (50s, round face, balding)! In the flesh! He's bruised, bleeding, filthy... but he's alive!

Overcome with emotion, Caroline begins to sob.

PHILIP
(to a companion)
We need some light! Anything!

Someone outside the opening tosses a big tangle of green wires down into the hole. They flicker to life... Christmas lights.

Philip reaches down, extending his hand to her.

PHILIP
You're safe now...

Safety, compassion, love... it's just an arm's length away.

With her last vestige of strength, she reaches up to him.

Their fingers entwine. Their hands clasp.

PHILIP
I told you I'd see you again...

The twinkling lights reflect in their eyes.

CAROLINE
(weakly)
Under the stars...

Philip smiles at her.

It's over. Caroline's safe.

BOOOOOOM!

Without warning, a massive quake strikes.

RAY (O.S.)
Oh shit! The warehouse...!

From above ground, the sounds of WALLS COLLAPSING and the SCREAMS OF PEOPLE BEING CRUSHED.

And then...

...an unholy chorus of CLACKING, a swelling sonic tidal wave of death.

GUNSHOTS ring out, but they don't stop the sudden surge of undead.

The remaining members of the group SCREAM as they are attacked.

The cables and chains holding up the concrete go slack.

The slab falls with all its weight...

...SLAMMING into Philip, almost cutting him in half.

He SCREAMS. Blood ERUPTS from his mouth, SPLATTERING Caroline's face. She recoils in horror.

Through the gap between the slab and the surrounding debris, Caroline sees a clacker wrap its rotten fingers around Philip's exposed leg.

The undead creature takes a massive bite out of his calf.

He SCREAMS in pain.

Caroline SCREAMS in fear.

She drops the lighter. The small flame stays lit.

It lands just a few feet from Parker, still laying trapped in a pool of gasoline.

The screams from above stop abruptly, as one by one, the group dies violently.

But Caroline doesn't hear any of it. She only sees Philip, hanging upside down, GASPING for breath.

CAROLINE

Philip... no, no, no...

Philip GURGLES something unintelligible.

Caroline clammers on top of debris, barely reaching Philip's face.

She puts her hands on his temples, looks into his eyes.

CAROLINE
 (softly)
 Don't leave me... please...

Philip's skin begins to blanch as his blood is drained.

His veins TURN BLACK, as the parasite works its way into his system.

CAROLINE
 Don't leave me... I need you...

Philip's eyes TURN RED, the blood vessels BURSTING in his sockets.

The back of his head SWELLS, as the clacker parasite takes hold and begins to gestate.

His skin PULLS TAUT. His lips pull back. His mouth TEARS at the edges, exposing Philip's graying gums and teeth.

Philip FLAILS and JERKS, his nervous system disintegrating as it stews in a soup of toxins secreted by the parasite.

Caroline looks at him lovingly, tenderly, watching the light going out of his eyes.

The change is almost complete. She has lost him.

She pulls his face close...

PARKER
 No! NO!!!!

...and she kisses Philip deeply, passionately.

Suddenly his eyes BULGE, they SWELL...

...and POP, showering Caroline with viscous liquid.

Small black tentacles unfold from the empty eye sockets. They begin SWIRLING, reaching for the live prey right in front of them.

The thing that used to be Philip suddenly tears into Caroline's face.

His hands grab her head, pinning her against his snapping teeth, as he infects his victim.

Caroline SCREAMS, her body wracked with spasms.

PARKER
 God no! NOOOO!!!!

After one final savage bite, Caroline tears herself free from Philip's clutches.

She drops heavily onto the debris in front of Parker, limply sliding down to the floor.

Philip still hangs above her, clacking, flailing at the air, dripping blood and mucous.

From above ground, what sounds like an army of clackers claws and rakes at the debris.

Caroline's breath comes in rasps, as she chokes on her blood.

PARKER

(sobbing)

Caroline... I'm sorry... I loved you... I couldn't take losing you... I... I didn't know what to do...

Caroline surprises Parker by LAUGHING. Her body flinches with the effort.

CAROLINE

You... you fucking... weakling...

PARKER

I'm sorry... I'm sorry...

CAROLINE

You'll never... see Debbie...

PARKER

Caroline...

CAROLINE

(struggling)

When I get you... your soul... will go straight... to Hell... unnnGGGHH...

The light goes out of her eyes. Her body contorts, her neck twists...

The turning has begun.

Parker watches impotently as Caroline changes right in front of him.

Her skin whitens.

The black veins seep through the surface.

The swelling at the back of her head pulls the skin of her face taut.

Her lips recede back over her gums.

Black tentacles erupt from behind her eyes.

Her teeth begin CLACKING together, hungrily.

She's gone.

Caroline's infected body spasms. She flops forward. Slowly, she begins pulling herself across the broken floor.

Straight for Parker.

Parker freaks out. He begins babbling Bible quotes.

PARKER

(frantically)

"For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ!"

As she SCRAPES along the floor, Caroline's broken chin wedges against the EDGE OF THE LIGHTER.

With every jerk forward, she pushes the flickering flame in front of her.

Parker flails with his free hand, desperately trying to stave off his undead wife.

PARKER

"Nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ!"

The monster that was Caroline lurches closer to Parker.

PARKER

"The love of God in Jesus Christ!"

The FLICKERING FLAME inches nearer.

Trapped beneath a concrete beam... soaked in gasoline... covered in dust, blood and ooze... terrified beyond all rational thought...

Parker SCREAMS...

PARKER
JESUS CHRIST!

...as the thing that was once Caroline makes ONE FINAL
LUNGE...

SMASH CUT TO BLACK