

Episode #Pilot  
Script #101  
Production #1001



UNIVERSAL CABLE PRODUCTIONS

# Tremors

“Pilot”

Written By:  
Andrew Miller

Based on the kick-ass film written by S.S. Wilson and Brent Maddock

Directed By:  
Vincenzo Natali

**PRODUCTION DRAFT:**

9/18/17 WHITE  
10/4/17 FULL BLUE  
10/11/17 PINK REVISIONS  
10/16/17 FULL YELLOW  
10/19/17 FULL GREEN  
10/22/17 FULL DOUBLE WHITE  
10/30/17 DOUBLE BLUE REVISIONS

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Surrounded by mountains and canyons, the valley is cut off from the rest of the world -- the desert floor scorched like it hasn't taken a breath for decades. But when we look closer we feel the faintest trace of a *pulse*. Grains of sands shift. A pebble rolls off its rocky perch. As though life is trying to break through. Or maybe it's just the wind.

A YELLOW PICK-UP TRUCK speeds past. **VAL MCKEE: Graboid Hunter & Handyman** is painted on the truck's door. The Black Crowes' "Hard to Handle" blasts from the radio and is drowned out by:

VAL (O.S.)  
*Hey little lady labeedabetabeda,  
Cause mama I'm so hard to handle...*

VALENTINE MCKEE sings with the passion of a guy who doesn't know how awful he sounds. Or cares. 50's. A much older version of the coolest guy from your high school. Or a much older version of the coolest guy from a movie you saw when you were *in* high school. Trouble in a beat up cowboy hat.

THE TRUCK ABRUPTLY TURNS OFF THE ROAD AND SKIDS TO A STOP. Val leaps out like a man possessed and runs to the edge of a deep canyon... Unbuckles his pants to take a piss. But nothing comes out. Annoyed, he glares down at his penis.

VAL  
Think this is funny?

He zips up and heads for the truck... But stops halfway there and quickly yanks down his pants again because THIS IS HAPPENING RIGHT NOW. Except again, nothing happens.

VAL (CONT'D)  
Come on man, we're a *team*. When I was a kid we could hit a target 15 feet away. 20. Or how 'bout when we wrote Rhonda's name in the sand? Rhonda Penelope LeBeck. It was a goddamn masterpiece and that kind of technique doesn't go away so let's just do this the way I know we can...

He closes his eyes. Breathes deeply, then... Nothing. Frustrated, he tilts his head toward the heavens.

VAL (CONT'D)

God, I know we don't talk much but you see how screwed up this is, right? So if you wouldn't mind bestowing some of your holy magic--

A HIGH-PITCHED SHRIEK pierces the valley. Startles Val.

VAL (CONT'D)

Did I say something wrong?

Then from beneath his feet comes FAINT RUMBLING. Val immediately tenses and looks down at the ground where rocks vibrate on the crusty surface. He's terrified.

He checks the truck. 25 feet away. Can he make it? Has to. Takes a few soft steps... but the rumbling gets closer. Too close. Val freezes. Braces for the unfathomable --

A SEAM IN THE GROUND RIPS OPEN right in front of him--

And out pop *SIX PRAIRIE DOGS*. Not at all what he expected. They scatter, running scared. Val dances out of the way as they scurry under his feet but loses his balance and FALLS ON ONE, smashing his shoulder into the ground. He yells out as they run off --

VAL (CONT'D)

Goddamn dog rats.

He struggles to stand. The rodent squeezes out from under Val and limps away but doesn't get very far. He's hurt. Val sees.

VAL (CONT'D)

Sorry.

He brushes sand off his shirt and jeans, then notices a wet spot next to the zipper. He grumbles and heads for the truck. When he looks back, the prairie dog is gone.

CAMERA IS LOW as Val's truck finds the dusty road. In the foreground is the spot where the prairie dog was. We notice drops of blood. And SAND IS FILLING IN WHERE A HOLE JUST WAS.

**TITLE: TREMORS**

The Edward Hopper-esque desert landscape is tainted by the inexplicable presence of TWO BRAND NEW TECH STRUCTURES, shiny solar panels tilted on their roofs, surrounded by a metal fence...

Through which a VAN emerges and heads down a dirt road leading onto the MAIN ROAD. It speeds past a "WELCOME TO PERFECTION -- Home of the Graboids" sign featuring a giant worm-like monster with tentacles reaching out of its mouth.

4 EXT. PERFECTION - DAY

4

A small town with a big identity crisis. The van drives past quaint ma and pa shops crammed between cheap, 90's era stores and offices. But the conflicting styles are unified by two themes. The first is failure. Most of the offices and stores are boarded up, creating a depressing, ghost town feel.

The second is Graboids. Images of the worm-like monster are everywhere. Grabercize fitness, Grab-A-Coffee and Graboid Museum & Art Center that boasts a GIGANTIC STATUE OF VAL RIDING A GRABOID LIKE A COWBOY out in front.

HARLAN (PRELAP)

What if none of this is real?

5 INT. CHANG'S MARKET - DAY

5

Groceries, household goods and a greasy diner -- everything the other stores used to carry. Heavy on Graboid decor.

HARLAN MAYLOR, the guy we just heard, is a scruffy mess in his late 40's. He sits at the counter talking to NICO DURAN, 20's. Nico's a cool, cowboy-type. Eating alone. Writing in a journal.

NICO

Definitely feels like a nightmare.

Framed newspaper and magazine articles covering the walls: "MONSTERS ATTACK SMALL TOWN," "TERROR TUESDAY IN PERFECTION."

Then, "NO MORE MONSTERS," "WHERE'D THE WORMS GO?" "PRESIDENT BUSH DECLARES: GRABOIDS GONE FOR GOOD!"

Most articles feature photos of a young Val: "HANDSOME HERO SAVES TOWN", "HUNKY GRABOID HUNTER", "VALENTINE MCKEE WORMS INTO AMERICA'S HEART." Even Patrick Swayze's SEXIEST MAN ALIVE 1991 People magazine cover has a photo of Val in the corner with the caption "Graboid Hunk is Pure Perfection."

HARLAN

There's a theory that what we think is reality is really just a consensus of opinion.

(MORE)

HARLAN (CONT'D)

Because the concept of true existence is so overwhelming, trying to comprehend it would fry our tiny human brains... And so instead we just go with the reality everyone else is cool with. Which means "truth" isn't true at all, it's just the word we use to describe the perception of something that got the most subconscious votes.

Nico wasn't asking for this discussion but he isn't afraid of either...

NICO

So if everyone stopped thinking of this place as a wasteland, it would stop being one?

HARLAN

Ahh. But that's where it gets interesting. As Anais Nin said, "We don't see things as they are; we see them as we are."

NICO

Is she calling me a wasteland?

HARLAN

She's saying the reality we create around us comes from inside us.

JAI CHANG suddenly clears Harlan's unfinished breakfast plate, muttering --

JAI

Then my life should be way more awesome.

She's 17 with the coolness of a teen assassin. Harlan starts to protest but GRACE CHANG intervenes. She owns and operates the place. 60's. Acerbic, intimidating, scary but still sexy.

GRACE

You're done. What did I say about spewing your self-help bullshit in here? It freaks people out.

Harlan looks around at the otherwise empty place then slides over to a stool closer to Nico.

HARLAN

You want to leave because you hate it here. But if you *did* contribute to it's creation, the aspects you hate will follow you.

NICO

I sure as hell didn't make any of this.

HARLAN

Then why haven't you left yet?

NICO

Maybe I have. Maybe I'm just a fragment of reality you all can't let go of.

SMACK. A Graboid Beer Cozy HITS HARLAN IN THE FACE.

GRACE

See? You've broken him.

THE DOOR OPENS AND A GROUP OF MEN WALK IN. Six of them. TOBY KINDT, a professional type with a big smile and twinkle in his eye approaches the counter.

TOBY

Morning. Six large coffees to go, please.

The request gets a sneer from GRACE who turns to the coffee machine. Toby takes it in stride. Extends his hand to Harlan.

TOBY (CONT'D)

Hi, Toby Kindt.

HARLAN

Yeah. You guys all done up there?

TOBY

You bet. The servers are online and unmanned so these gentlemen are the last nerdy strangers you'll see lurking around your lovely town. I hope we haven't been too much of an imposition this past year.

GRACE returns to the counter empty handed.

GRACE

Sorry. Coffee's all gone.

Toby looks over at the full pot of coffee.

TOBY

Oh... But--

NICO

Dude, just go. Everyone hates you.  
They were promised a tech boom and  
got two giant tombstones.

TOBY

Tech boom? We're just a data  
storage company--

THE DOOR BURSTS OPEN. It's Val, in a fresh pair of jeans.

VAL

Gonna be a great goddamned day.

He grabs the stool next to Harlan. Grace immediately sets  
down a coffee and a beer.

VAL (CONT'D)

Just coffee today, thanks.

Grace reaches for the beer but Val has second thoughts and  
takes a quick sip. Grace leaves it on the counter.

HARLAN

What time does Emily get here?

He quickly checks the Graboid clock on the wall. It's bad.

VAL

Ah, shit. I got sidelined. Grace,  
you got my package?

He notices Toby and the Datalux techs for the first time and  
quickly slips into charming/salesman mode.

VAL (CONT'D)

Datalux, right? I never heard back  
from you guys about choosing  
Graboid World for all your special  
event needs. We put the chills and  
thrills in everything from office  
retreats to Bar Mitzvahs.

HARLAN

Too late. They're leaving town.

VAL

How about a going away party?

TOBY

These boys are headed home but I'll be around a few more days.

VAL

Then you're in luck. My daughter holds the record for consecutive VIP tour-guide-of-the-month awards and she'll be here any minute.

GRACE

No tours. Park's flooded.

VAL

Huh?

GRACE

Jai saw. Yesterday.

VAL

Why didn't you tell me?

JAI

How could I have guessed today was going to be your peak season?

VAL

Goddamit.

HARLAN

Go. I'll wait for Emily.

Val nods. Grace hands him a wrapped package as he starts out of the store.

NICO

Hold up, I'm coming with.

VAL

Relax, kid. If I take a dump I'll be sure to holler.

NICO

I can't let you near any pipes without an Earl's employee present.

Val stops, glares at Nico, his blood starting to boil. Eyes an old framed photo of him arm in arm with EARL BASSETT.

VAL

Well, it's my damn park. So he can mind his own business.



NICO

His pipes his business. I'll get my tools.

He starts for the door. Val follows.

VAL

Earl'd be nothing without me. He's a man without vision. Can't even see how lucky he was to know me.

NICO

And yet he just expanded into his sixth city.

VAL

Only proves how full of shit he is.

6

EXT. CHANG'S MARKET - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

6

As Val comes out he's blasted with a bright reflection in his face. He swats at it like it's a swarm of flies. Harlan is right behind him.

VAL

Goddamn Datalux.

It's coming from the sun-bouncing solar panels on top of the Datalux buildings in the distance. Val heads for his truck.

HARLAN

Let him help. The faster you fix it the sooner you'll be back. How long is Emily staying?

Val smiles. Confident and knowing.

VAL

Well that's the magic question isn't it. She hasn't said. Not lately, anyway.

It takes Harlan a second to figure out what he means...

HARLAN

You made that deal a *long* time ago.

VAL

But don't you say time's like a pancake? And everything we do has already happened and will happen again. And again and again?

(MORE)

VAL (CONT'D)

So yeah, me and Em might have ordered that tall stack of flapjacks twenty years ago, but we also ordered it twenty seconds ago too, right?

A LOUD CRACK spins both their heads to Grabercize Fitness just up the street. SOMETHING IS BREAKING THROUGH ONE OF THE BOARDED UP WINDOWS. Val takes a nervous step forward.

A woman's leg emerges from the window. It belongs to ZOE. Mid-20's, climbing out the window. A pastiche of ethnicities, piercings and tattoos. Val settles down at the sight of her but Harlan notes his anxiety.

Two other girls emerge behind Zoe. They all wear yoga gear. When Zoe sees Val and Harlan she smiles.

ZOE (O.S.)

Morning, boys.

VAL

You ladies sweatin' to the oldies?

ZOE

Yoga. You should join us sometime. Harlan, I bet you know your way around a Bharadvaja twist.

HARLAN

Enough to know I'd never get out of it alive.

VAL

Where's Charlie Manson?

ZOE

(smiles appreciatively)  
Setting up our new irrigation system.

Nico slams his tool box in the back of Val's truck.

NICO

Hate to interrupt your flirting...

7

EXT. DESERT - DAY

7

TWO CARS RACE DOWN A DESERT HIGHWAY and disappear into a tunnel. As they pass, the earth shakes ever so slightly...

8

EXT. TUNNEL - DAY

8

The cars emerge from the tunnel's other side and pull off to the side of the road. MELVIN PLUGG steps out of the first. 40's. Not nearly as slick as he wants to be. JESSICA HALE comes out of the other car. Also 40's. Smart and accomplished well beyond the shitty situation she now finds herself in.

JESSICA

So what happened to the hot guy who killed all the Graboids?

MELVIN

I grew up. Got rich.

JESSICA

No, really hot. Cowboy eyes and amazing hair. My best friend had his poster in her locker. And in her bedroom. We had a sleepover--

MELVIN

Yes, Val. And you know what he's been doing the last 25 years? After the press and Army and tourists got sick of waiting for Graboids to show back up? Fuck all. So stop acting like a fan-girl and start engineering.

JESSICA

This tunnel can't be made any wider.

Her certainty infuriates Melvin.

MELVIN

You haven't scanned or x-rayed--

JESSICA

Don't have to.

MELVIN

This is the only way in or out and I'm expecting a lot more traffic. So find a way to sign off.

JESSICA

I'd lose my license.

Melvin changes tact. His tone drips with repulsiveness...

MELVIN

You're an aging black woman playing a young, white-man's game. And your hard-on for safety sounds like nagging which is why you're out here in the middle of nowhere with me. I need your integrity and you definitely need my job.

JESSICA

You're an asshole, you know that?

MELVIN

Asshole, hero. Let's let destiny be the judge.

8A INT. VAL'S TRUCK - DAY

8A

Val brings the truck to a stop. Nico rides shotgun.

NICO

When's the last time you had an actual paying customer?

VAL

You don't know shit about the amusement park business. It's cyclical. Why do you think Walt Disney froze himself?

Val gets out of the truck. Nico follows. They're parked outside a giant GRABOID HEAD ENTRANCE that leads into a run down amusement park. Graboid roller coaster, Graboid water slide. Val collects equipment out of the back.

9 EXT. GRABOID WORLD - PERIMETER FENCE - DAY

9

Val and Nico walk along the outskirts of the park. Both men wear coveralls and boots.

NICO

How's Emily getting in from the airport?

VAL

Can't see how that matters to you.

NICO

What, Emily? No, I expect not.

VAL

What's that smirk supposed to mean?

NICO

Nothing.

They enter an area marked, "EMPLOYEES ONLY."

VAL

Let me save you some humiliation, kid. You got decent hair but Emily's way out of your league and if you knew her at all, I wouldn't have to tell you.

NICO

Actually we spent a lot of time together on her last visit.

VAL

Bullshit. I was there.

NICO

(sly smile)

For most of it, sure... But you think you know what's *really* going on with her? What her favorite band is? Or beer? The kind of books she reads? The kind of guys she dates? Probably lots of things you don't know.

He has successfully gotten under Val's skin. But --

VAL

I know how she's getting in from the airport.

He opens large metal storm doors buried in the ground. Nico puts up his hand.

NICO

I got this. I do it everyday.

VAL

Don't mean you do it right.

He climbs underground.

10

OMITTED

10

11

INT. CORRUGATED HOUSING PIPE - DAY

11

Val descends into 4 foot diameter pipe, along the top of which run the park's water, sewage and electrical pipes.

He puts a small flashlight in his mouth and crawls through the dark, claustrophobic space. Water running along the bottom of the pipe adds an annoying layer of discomfort.

NICO (O.S.)  
Wanna turn back?

He yells this louder than is necessary and the echoing sound pisses Val off. But he turns and presses on. Slowly and awkwardly... until HE HEARS A GROWL coming from around a bend in the tunnel. What the fuck was that? Animal? Mechanical?

He uneasily pokes his head around and sees only that the CORRUGATED HOUSING HAS BEEN BASHED IN from the outside, causing a ruptured water pipe. He advances and reaches up for a VALVE nearby. Takes out a wrench, water spraying in his face as he tries to turn off the water when --

ANOTHER GROWL. Loud. This one is quickly followed by a DEEP THUD. Something banging into the outside of the housing pipe. Fear washes over Val's face and he twists his body around to crawl back out.

ANOTHER GROWL followed by ANOTHER THUD. The sound echoes through the metal pipe and shakes Val to his core. He drops the flashlight and digs for it in the water but comes up empty and madly scrambles the last few feet toward the pipe opening but STOPS SUDDENLY. His eyes fill with panic.

Something has his leg. He looks back but without the flashlight it's too dark to see. He desperately tries to yank himself free --

VAL  
HELP.

NICO (O.S.)  
What?

VAL  
Graboid. It's got my leg.

Nico reaches into the pipe and grabs Val's arm. He pulls as Val pushes against the walls to move forward until finally something gives and Nico yanks Val up --

11A EXT. GRABOID WORLD - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

11A

Val scrambles out of the storm doors, terrified.

VAL  
It's still in there. LET'S GO.

NICO

No, I think you killed it.

He points to A TUBE WRAPPED AROUND VAL'S LEG. Val sees it but doesn't understand. There's no way that's what grabbed him.

12 EXT. PERFECTION - MAIN ROAD - DAY 12

The DATALUX VAN drives into view. As it moves across frame we hear a HIGH-PITCHED SHRIEK. The same one Val heard earlier.

It speeds away from us, past a "LEAVING PERFECTION - We'll Miss you!" sign. CAMERA LINGERS BEHIND. A moment later, THE SIGN JERKS TO THE SIDE. As though it was hit from below the ground --

13 EXT. DESERT - DAY 13

CAMERA TRACKS WITH A BICYCLE TIRE rolling along the desert floor. *Bouncing, dragging and slamming* into the ground. It's a constricting view that suggests imminent danger.

Jai's riding. She spins around a sunken, abandoned cement bunker when a WOMAN APPEARS OUT OF NOWHERE. It scares the shit out of Jai who goes flying to the ground.

The woman rushes over. MINDY STERNGOOD, 30's. Blonde hair, inviting but mischievous eyes, carrying a METAL BRIEFCASE. It's clear that neither of them wanted to be caught out here.

MINDY

You okay?

JAI

Where the hell did you come from?

MINDY

Nowhere. I'm just... walking.

Jai knows this is bullshit and is about to question her--

MINDY (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

Now it's Jai who doesn't want to answer. Suits Mindy fine.

MINDY (CONT'D)

Let me take you to the clinic.

JAI

I'm fine. Thanks though.

She nods to Mindy, jumps back on her bike and rides off. Mindy breathes a sigh of relief.

14 EXT. TUNNEL - DAY 14

Melvin struggles to find a phone signal while Jessica takes measurements inside the tunnel. The Datalux van appears over the crest of a hill, driving erratically. It turns a corner and CRASHES INTO THE ROCK WALL.

15 EXT. CHANG'S MARKET - DAY 15

Nico and Val get out of Val's truck. Val limps badly. Nico's really enjoying himself.

VAL  
I heard something.

NICO  
And what would you've done if it was a Graboid? Kill it with your old man smell?

Nico continues as they walk into --

16 INT. CHANG'S MARKET - DAY (CONTINUOUS) 16

NICO  
Challenge it to a duel? Fax it an angry note? Pump it with viagra?

Val's finally had enough and bears down on Nico.

VAL  
I was killing Graboids when you were still shitting your diaper so when I say I heard something--

EMILY (O.S.)  
Hey, Dad.

Val spins around to see EMILY sitting next to Harlan at the counter. Early 20's. Magnetic and appealing.

VAL  
Princess!

He wraps her up in a wet, dirty, stinky hug.

EMILY  
Why are you limping?



VAL

It's nothing. Let's go home and get you settled. Where's your stuff?

EMILY

Can we talk? Outside?

VAL

'Course.

Val shoots Harlan a confident wink as he follows her outside.

17

EXT. CHANG'S MARKET - DAY

17

Val can't stop smiling as they stroll down the steps.

EMILY

So dad, here's the thing...

VAL

Hey, why don't I grab us a couple of ice cream sandwiches? Remember how we used to eat them out here and share stories about our days?

EMILY

I had ice cream. You had beer.

VAL

I could get us a couple beers...

EMILY

No, I'm good thanks. What I wanted to say is between exams and internship applications I barely got my thesis in on time. Which is why I haven't called much lately.

VAL

Totally get it. I never got my school stuff in on time either.

EMILY

Okay, well I've been going through it with a crew of girls and we wanted to have one last blow out together. In Vegas. Tonight. It was supposed to be next week but one of the girls... I'm really sorry.

VAL

So I'll see you in a few days.

EMILY

Well, that's the other thing... you know those internships? I got one. A good one. But it starts Monday in Greenland. For two years.

VAL

Shit. That's a lot of years.

EMILY

I know. But it's such a great opportunity. And I'll be working with a really important biologist. An old colleague of mom's.

Val tries to hide to his intense disappointment.

VAL

Sounds awesome. I guess I could come visit, right?

EMILY

Absolutely. You'd love Greenland.

VAL

Course I would. And I could knock it off my bucket list. Give me a reason to make a bucket list.

EMILY

Settled. So... you're not mad?

VAL

Hell no. Just proud.

She smiles. Val opens the passenger door of his truck for her. Helps her up and goes to the other side.

VAL (CONT'D)

We'll make the most of the time we got. Starting with a grilled-cheese-french toast celebration lunch.

EMILY

Definitely haven't had one of those in a while...

Emily smiles as they start driving down the street. Nico comes out of Chang's and watches them go. But Val doesn't get far when a CAR COMES BARRELING DOWN MAIN STREET and skids to a stop in front of the MEDICAL CLINIC. Melvin leaps out.

MELVIN

Is Mindy here?

VAL

Doc's not in town, Melvin. And what you need is a shrink, anyway.

MELVIN

She's on her way, asshole.

Jessica's car pulls up behind Melvin's and she gets out, still shaken. Val is stunned by the sight of this refined visitor in town.

VAL

Howdy, ma'am. If you're here with Melvin I'm going to assume it's under duress. Give me a signal and I'll call the police.

JESSICA

Thanks but it's not me who needs your bravado...

Melvin opens the back door. A lifeless arm flops out.

VAL

Whoa!

Harlan and Nico come out of Chang's and immediately see the driver. Harlan recognizes him first. He's deathly pale, eyes rolled back in his head and his veins, abnormally pronounced.

HARLAN

It's the Datalux driver.

ANOTHER CAR SPEEDS DOWN THE MAIN STREET. Mindy jumps out and rushes to examine the driver. Everyone crowds in to see.

MINDY

I've got a pulse.

She turns to Val. Her tone is soft and concerned.

MINDY (CONT'D)

Hey. You okay? What happened?

MELVIN

Im the one who called you. I was there. The van smashed into the side of a cliff.

JESSICA

Why does he look like that?

MELVIN

(leans in to driver)  
Probably saw himself in the mirror.  
Look at those creepy eyes...

He steps toward the driver but Mindy stops him.

MINDY

Don't touch him.

HARLAN

Where are the other guys?

JESSICA

What other guys?

NICO

He was driving five Datalux techs.

HARLAN

So where'd they all go?

No one knows. With trepidation, Val offers a suggestion --

VAL

Graboids. That's where.

Everyone turns and looks at him like he's crazy.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

18 EXT. DELIBERATES COMPOUND - DAY

18

Just outside town is the crumbling ruin of an ancient mining project now converted into a Millennial utopia.

Jai pulls up and removes the front tire of her bike. ARTHUR BRANDT approaches, holding a bicycle tire in his hands. 20's. Fire in his eyes. Smoking a very big joint.

ARTHUR  
My delicate Asian flower.

JAI  
Not any of those things.

Arthur swaps Jai's tire with his and hands her an envelope of cash. She checks to make sure the money is right.

ARTHUR  
Stay. We've got a new strain.

JAI  
I can smell it. And might never smell anything else again.

ARTHUR  
Your senses have been programmed by synthetic lies designed to separate you from nature and soften the guilt you feel for destroying it. This roots you back to the earth.

JAI  
I'm good with the money, thanks.

ARTHUR  
It's just paper. And embracing Perfection's energy vortex is infinitely more fulfilling. We came a long way for the privilege and have not been disappointed.

JAI  
I have intimacy issues. Vortex hugs freak me out.

She turns. Just as Zoe and her friends walk up from the road. Zoe smiles at Jai flirtatiously as she passes.

ZOE

Hey, Jai.

Jai nods. Zoe goes to Arthur and whispers conspiratorially...

ZOE (CONT'D)

I had another vision.

Arthur's eyes light up and he turns to her eagerly. Zoe nods.

ZOE (CONT'D)

She's getting closer.

19

EXT. CHANG'S MARKET - DAY

19

Val, Melvin, Harlan, Jessica and Grace are spread out around Chang's porch across from the clinic.

VAL

What else would make the prairie dogs so scared?

MELVIN

Probably you. What were doing out there? Pissing on them?

VAL

So what smashed up the pipes under Graboid World? I heard some--

GRACE

Those were voices inside your head telling you to stop being crazy.

MELVIN

Yes! See? She knows.

GRACE

And you never stop talking long enough to hear the voices telling you to stop talking.

JESSICA

(to Val)

I thought you killed all the Graboids?

VAL

So did I. So did the world. But maybe we were wrong. Maybe they've been hibernating, who knows?

HARLAN

How does that explain the driver?

VAL

Maybe he saw a Graboid and got scared stiff.

JESSICA

That's a horrifying thought.

MELVIN

Don't listen to him. He's like a PTSD vet at a fireworks convention.

Melvin laughs at his joke but no one else does.

VAL

Yeah, I was there.

MELVIN

So was I.

VAL

You spent the entire time on a roof, screaming like a little girl.

JESSICA

Do girls scream differently than boys when they're being attacked by monsters? I'll try to be more boyish if they come for me.

She walks off to find cell reception. Val tries to process what he said wrong.

HARLAN

There must be another explanation. We've had false alarms before.

VAL

Now, you're on his side?

MELVIN

Pal, I'm on your side.

(off Val's dubious look)

Oh yeah. I'm praying you're not as bat-shit crazy as we all know you are because if they did come back we'd have another Graboid-boom and whoever wasn't massacred would be rich.

(beat)

But they're not.

(MORE)

MELVIN (CONT'D)

They're dead, you're insane and if Perfection doesn't evolve it's finished.

GRACE

What happened to becoming the Silicon Valley of the South West Valley?

MELVIN

Datalux obviously didn't attract the business I hoped but at least I'm trying.

VAL

Keep your goddamn voice down. If they're under there, they'll hear our vibrations. We shouldn't even be outside.

GRACE

Stop with the Graboids.

VAL

Fine, bury your heads in the sand-- Which if I'm right is a really stupid place to put your heads. I'm going to fire up the Early Warning System, just in case.

HARLAN

It's broken.

VAL

What? Since when?

HARLAN

Five months ago. Ten, maybe?

VAL

We've been sitting ducks?

MELVIN

Not even remotely.

HARLAN

Safety precautions take money...

VAL

I'll fix it my damn self.

HARLAN

I'll fix it, I built the thing. You need to spend time with Em--



But when they turn to Emily... she's not there.

VAL

Shit. Em?

He looks around then starts off down the street. Calls out to Jessica standing on a picnic table out in front of the Graboid Museum, stretching for cell service.

VAL (CONT'D)

Have you seen my daughter? Red hair, smile that melts your heart--

JESSICA

Nope. Sorry.

VAL

Careful. Things around here have a fondness for falling apart.

She nods in a "don't patronize me" kind of way seconds before A BOARD BREAKS AND SHE TOPPLES OFF THE TABLE. Val rushes to catch her. And does -- just before she crashes to the ground. But the gallant move YANKS HIS BAD SHOULDER.

JESSICA

You okay?

She slides out of his arms then stumbles, noticing that the heel on her shoe has broken off. Figures.

VAL

Let me take a look.

JESSICA

No, it's fine I'll take care of it. It's my fault for wearing them to a place like this.

Said with noticeable disdain... Val picks up the heel then walks to his truck. Grabs the metal top to a mason jar and a small gasoline can then brings it back to the bench. He takes Jessica's coffee cup and tosses what she hasn't finished.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

I was still drinking that.

VAL

Perfection isn't always welcoming to outsiders.

He breaks the styrofoam cup into pieces and puts them in the metal top. He pours a little gasoline onto the cup and stirs.

VAL (CONT'D)  
Or insiders either, I guess.

Slowly, the styrofoam breaks down and creates a sticky glue.

JESSICA  
So why are you still here? You must  
have had lots of chances to leave.

He takes Jessica's leg and puts on top of his. It's a lot of  
contact.

JESSICA (CONT'D)  
Oh, okay...

Then with a knife from his pocket he pastes the glue into the  
heel and presses it back on her boot.

VAL  
There's more to Perfection than  
meets the eye. And hell, when  
something ain't working like it's  
supposed to, it ain't right to just  
walk away.

Jessica eyes him curiously. Points to the sign on his truck --

JESSICA  
Are you speaking metaphorically, or  
as a handyman?

VAL  
You're funny. I like that. Excuse  
me.

He places her leg back on the ground, stands and gives his  
flirtiest smile before walking off, calling out for Emily.  
Jessica wiggles the heel but it doesn't budge. Looks up at  
Val, walking away. Now even more curious. Harlan is nearby.  
Watching Val too.

HARLAN  
I know. Tough guy to peg...

Framed photos of young Val posing with tourists VIBRATE TO AN  
UNIDENTIFIABLE PULSE. The glass case of electric Graboid-rods  
and rack of camo-jumpsuits also shake to the same erratic  
rhythm. And as we move deeper into the store WE HEAR A WOMAN  
GASPING FOR BREATH. It sounds like she's being attacked --

Until she lets out a long, sustained guttural sound of unmistakable ecstasy. On the other side of the picture wall we find Emily and Nico. Half dressed, completely satisfied.

EMILY

I have to go.

NICO

Stay. You can be the Graboid this time.

EMILY

You couldn't handle it. And I have to see my dad.

NICO

Why? You've avoided him all year.

She glares at him like he's just crossed a line.

NICO (CONT'D)

I wish you told me you were coming.

EMILY

We said no long distance contact.

NICO

You said.

EMILY

I'm pretty sure you nodded.

NICO

Nope. I was still as a statue.

EMILY

But isn't it so much hotter this way? No trying to decipher text-tone, no "I thought you were going to call last night?" No "who commented so hot on that photo you posted." No bullshit...

(kisses him)

Just this.

NICO

You trying to convince me or you? Because I was with you just now and I know you feel more than you're speaking-tone implies.

She's slow to respond. Just slow enough to think he might have a point. Then she covers with an irresistible smile.

EMILY

Yeah. It was amazing. And I can't wait to see you again. *Whenever* that may be.

Nico isn't remotely satisfied by the answer --

VAL (O.S.)

Em?

Shit. Emily throws on her shirt and steps out from behind the wall to see Val at the doorway.

VAL (CONT'D)

There you are.

Nico comes out behind Emily. Emily discretely glares at him but he smiles back. Val tries to keep his cool but the sight of them together is unsettling.

VAL (CONT'D)

And there you are. What's going on?

EMILY

Nico wanted to see the photo of you and Crocodile Dundee.

She points to the photo behind her. Val eyes Nico who looks at the photo for the first time. Emily moves quickly --

EMILY (CONT'D)

Ready for our celebration lunch?

VAL

Of course.

EMILY

Great. Let's go.

Emily shoots Nico a look as she leads Val out of the store.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

21 EXT. HUNTER'S POINT ACCESS ROAD - DAY 21

Val's truck blows down a dirt road in the middle of empty desert. An area meant to be phase two of a large housing subdivision.

22 INT. VAL'S TRUCK - DAY 22

Emily rides next to Val but he's preoccupied, eyes fixed on the barren landscape. Anxious. He notices something way off in the distance. A trail of dirt shooting up -- like something's traveling very quickly along the desert floor. Or beneath it. He looks closer. IS THE GROUND MOVING BENEATH THE TRAIL?

Emily sees him getting lost. Tries to bring him back.

EMILY

So how've you been?

VAL

Good. Real good. You?

EMILY

Good. Busy.

Steals a look back out at the desert but whatever he saw is gone. He shakes it off and focuses on Emily.

VAL

What kind of music you listening to these days?

EMILY

I don't know. Different kinds.

Silence.

VAL

How's your mom?

EMILY

Good. Great, actually.

VAL

Still with... Terrence?

EMILY

Tim. Nine years. Really happy.

VAL

I'm glad. Your mom's special. I was never equipped to do right by her. Lord knows I tried but we were just too different.

EMILY

Yeah, so you've said.

VAL

Why, does she say otherwise?

EMILY

She barely talks about life back then. I guess that's one of your big differences.

They turn into the development's PHASE ONE, where the houses were all built but are now mostly abandoned. Val drives down a street that dead ends at the desert -- the abrupt conclusion of a plan frozen in time.

Parked in the driveway of the last house before oblivion is a bright pink Jeep with a big ribbon on the hood. Val pulls in behind it.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Did I miss your birthday?

VAL

No, that's... Harlan's.

Emily isn't buying it.

VAL (CONT'D)

He left it the other night. Too much to drink.

EMILY

(concerned)

He's drinking again?

VAL

Just the one time. He's fine now. But best to keep this between us.

EMILY

Why is there a bow on it?

VAL

If I had a nickel every time I had no idea what he was thinking I'd be the richest man in Perfection.

23 OMITTED 23

24-26 OMITTED 24-26

27 INT. CLINIC - DAY 27

The Datalux driver is on a bed, hooked up to an EKG monitor. Mindy checks his milky white eyes with a penlight but he's completely unresponsive. Melvin hovers nearby.

MELVIN

It's weird we don't hang out more in Bixby, don't you think?

MINDY

My hours are crazy --

MELVIN

You find time to come here.

Mindy stares at the monitors. Baffled.

MINDY

Some kind of shock? Neurogenic...

MELVIN

You know Adele's? I'm working with the chef. How about I get him to do a tasting menu for us? Friday?

MINDY

I'm on call.

Mindy scrapes the bottom of the driver's foot with her pen. There's no physical response but the rhythmic beeping from the EKG machine changes ever so slightly. Mindy catches it.

MELVIN

Yeah, Friday's no good for me either. Saturday then?

Mindy makes a fist and drives her knuckles hard into the guy's chest. No physical response. But the EKG spikes and beeps loudly. BEEP BEEP BEEP. Melvin jumps back.

MELVIN (CONT'D)

Jesus Doc, don't kill the guy.

MINDY

His brain's reacting to stimuli but not his body. I need a CT scan.

She pulls out her phone to dial. Not happening. Finds a land line but it's dead. Of course it is.

MINDY (CONT'D)

Do you have a signal?

He checks his phone then shakes his head. Mindy's anxious.

MINDY (CONT'D)

Golgowski's got a satellite phone. Call the hospital and tell them to send an ambulance.

MELVIN

Sure. And you know what else I'm going to do... I'm going to get the chef to have something for us after we save this guy. We'll be starving.

She looks at him with a lifetime of getting-hit-on experience.

MINDY

Is desperation really the way you want to play this?

Melvin is excited by the brutality of her response.

MELVIN

Not my first choice, no. But I like having your attention. One ambulance coming up.

He runs out. Mindy checks to make sure he's gone then looks back at the driver, her brain spinning. She walks to a cupboard and pulls out the well-concealed SILVER METAL BRIEFCASE she was carrying earlier:

SURGICAL instruments on one side and VIALS of BLOOD, TISSUE AND CULTURE SAMPLES on the other. All of them marked, "DATALUX." She takes out a scalpel and a tissue sample container. Cleans a section of the driver's arm then brings the scalpel to his skin.

MINDY

If you can hear me you're going to feel a small prick. Like a bee sting.

She carefully makes an incision. THE MONITORS START TO GO WILD...



27A-F OMITTED

27A-F

27G EXT. DESERT - DAY

27G

Zoe sits cross-legged, covered in mud, eyes closed. Arthur studies her. Willing her success. Incense sticks burn. Silence... Then frustrated --

ZOE

Nothing.

ARTHUR

There's never nothing. The connection between you is always there. Find your breath. Match it with the earth's heartbeat.

Zoe settles in. Breathes deeply. With purpose.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

That's it. She'll come.

27H EXT. GOLGOWSKI'S TRAILER - DAY

27H

Melvin approaches an RV buried in a sea of metal formed into art pieces, sculptures and chimes. The door's wide open.

MELVIN

Raymond?

No answer. Melvin pokes his head inside.

MELVIN (CONT'D)

Ray, you home?  
(under his breath)  
Please don't be naked...

Still nothing. So he goes in.

27I INT. GOLGOWSKI'S TRAILER - DAY

27I

Empty. But the kettle's boiling. Weird. Melvin hears a LOW HOWL from the bedroom.

MELVIN

Ray, you back there?

Something's definitely wrong. Melvin proceeds down the hallway with caution. His heart races as he inches toward the bedroom.

He slowly crosses the bedroom door's threshold and immediately sees that the howl is being created by wind whipping through A GIGANTIC HOLE IN THE WALL. Like a man-sized chunk has been ripped out. Melvin steps to the edge and looks out into the desert.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

28-30 OMITTED 28-30

31 INT. VAL'S HOUSE - DAY 31

Val's in the kitchen, working on french toast batter. Adds cinnamon, then carefully grates some nutmeg...

VAL

Who was the guy that first decided to shave a nutmeg ball?

32 INT. VAL'S HOUSE - EMILY'S BEDROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS) 32

Emily refamiliarizes herself with her bedroom. A little girl's room updated with a smattering of adolescent treasures like Bratz dolls, VHS tapes, Twilight books. Which makes the presence of a newish iMac seem extremely out of place.

EMILY

Uh... I don't know.

VAL (O.S.)

After he got famous do you think he tried shaving other nut balls? Like... walnuts? Pistachios?

EMILY

Why is there a computer on my desk? You hate computers.

VAL (O.S.)

No, I love them now. I'm a computering whiz.

EMILY

It's not plugged in.

VAL (O.S.)

Afraid my lightning fast typing might set the old wiring on fire.

EMILY

There's no mouse.

Val pops into the room, quickly ripping open the package he got from GRACE earlier.

VAL

I keep it with me. In case I want to do any mousing on the road.

EMILY

Dad, is this for me? Did you think I was coming back... to stay?

VAL

No.

EMILY

And the Jeep? Because Harlan falling off the wagon is a terrible thing to lie about--

VAL

Fine. How else did you want to get around town? There's no way your roller blades will still fit.

EMILY

This about the deal we made, right? When I was six? That I'd move back when I finished school.

VAL

You always knew what you wanted.

EMILY

I meant Kindergarten.

Val is suddenly struck with a brainstorm of an idea --

VAL

Hey. What if you did your internship here?

EMILY

Study the pelagic process of the Greenland Sea?

VAL

Forget that. Lead your own project.

EMILY

Dad, no...

VAL

Your mom never finished her work. None of them did. Graboids are still a mystery. Hell, you could change their name to Emilys.

EMILY

All their evidence led nowhere.

VAL

Because they quit.

We can see how much this bothers Emily but she holds back.

EMILY

Mom didn't quit. Their funding was pulled. She was the last one here.

VAL

Things might be very different now.

EMILY

Can we talk about *anything* else?

Suddenly a LOUD SIREN IS HEARD IN THE DISTANCE...

EMILY (CONT'D)

I think lunch is burning.

VAL

It's the Early Warning system.

He runs to the walkie talkie base station in the living room.

VAL (CONT'D)

Harlan, you there? What's going on...? Over.

INTERCUT WITH:

32A INT. GRABOID COMMAND - DAY

32A

An above ground cement bunker filled with outdated monitors and computer equipment. Their guts have been ripped out and rewired. Harlan stands over it. Anxious.

HARLAN

It's a mess. I'm getting false readings all over the place.

VAL

Keep at it.

HARLAN

I don't know Val... This is a road I never wanted to go down again--

VAL

Road? No, no. You're barely standing on the sidewalk. You're fine.

But Harlan's anything but fine.

HARLAN

You know better than anyone how bad things got--

VAL

Everybody had a little Graboid fever back then. Just fix the system and meditate yourself back to normal--

HARLAN

It's not that easy-- Val, I broke your jaw.

VAL

You were pissed off. I refused to believe the Graboids were talking directly into your brain. Calling to you from the mountains--

HARLAN

Because they weren't. The mountains were 5 miles away. I was losing my shit. Trying to justify why I came here to begin with.

EMILY

Dad, leave him alone. Forget it, Harlan.

VAL

But hang on a second. Maybe you were right. Maybe they were out there, hiding this whole time. Don't you want to know for sure? I mean, deep down, isn't that why you stayed?

HARLAN

No. I stayed to overcome those very tendencies. To find peace within myself. To live in the present.

VAL

Well the present's knocking pal. And we need to be ready. Or it's going to eat us. Over and out.

32B INT. VAL'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

32B

Val hangs up and turns to Emily.

VAL

We gotta go.

EMILY

He said it's a false alarm. The system's messed up. You heard him.

VAL

Too many coincidences for one day.

33-35 OMITTED

33-35

36 INT. VAL'S TRUCK - DAY

36

Val down the main road toward town. Emily rides shotgun, worried about his speed.

VAL

How about we do your graduation lunch in the Graboid bunker?

EMILY

It's okay, forget it. I should get going anyway.

VAL

No, not yet. There's tons of good stuff. Freeze dried cake, freeze dried ice cream--

EMILY

Just watch the road.

VAL

You love the bunker. It's where we had your favorite birthday.

Emily turns and looks out the window.

VAL (CONT'D)

You were turning five. We stayed there all day watching movies. Way after we knew it was a false alarm. Hey I bet that "It Takes Two" VHS tape is still there.

EMILY

I don't care about the Olsen Twins.  
Never did. I loved that birthday  
because I got to be with you and  
mom. For the last time.

THUD. They've hit something and the truck LEAPS INTO THE AIR.  
On the landing Val smashes his bad shoulder.

Through the back window they see a HUGE BUCKLE stretching  
right across the road.

VAL

Where'd that come from?

EMILY

Have you been drinking?

BOOM! The TRUCK HITS SOMETHING ELSE and jumps up in the air.  
Once again, Val smashes his shoulder and yells in pain.  
There's an IDENTICAL BUCKLE IN THE ASPHALT BEHIND THEM.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Must be seismic. Probably what was  
tripping up Harlan's system--

Val TURNS THE CAR OFF THE ROAD and into the desert.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

VAL

I can't lead this thing into town.

EMILY

Thing? No. Dad, stop.

He swerves to avoid a rock and the TRUCK SOARS HIGH INTO THE  
AIR. When it crashes to the ground, Val really smashes his  
shoulder. He looks back in the rear view mirror.

VAL

You still with me, asshole?

EMILY

There's nothing back there!

HE MAKES A SHARP TURN and races toward the edge of a cliff.

VAL

Trust me.

The truck's shaking like it might burst. BUMPING UP AND DOWN  
AGAINST THE GROUND, FLYING OVER ROCKS...



VAL (CONT'D)

This is how I beat these dumb bastards last time 'cause they don't realize they've run out of ground so he's going to shoot out the side of the cliff and crash to the bottom of the canyon. Hulk Hogan named a wrestling move after it. The "Valentine Bamboozle."

They're just a dozen feet from the edge and the HUGE, EMPTY CANYON THAT AWAITS THEM.

EMILY

STOP!!

He SLAMS ON THE BREAKS AND YANKS THE WHEEL. The truck skids, spraying dirt everywhere as it drifts toward the edge...

THEN STOPS. Just a few feet from the 200 hundred foot drop. Val jumps out of the car, runs to the edge and peers over. Emily comes out and looks over too. But nothing shoots out of the cliff. Nothing.

37

EXT. CHANG'S MARKET - DAY

37

Val's truck pulls in front of Chang's. Emily jumps out and heads straight for her rental car. Val rushes after her.

VAL

Em, wait. I'm sorry.

EMILY

We could've died.

VAL

I thought they were coming for us--

Emily stops and turns back to him. Livid.

EMILY

You want them back. So badly. Just like the good old days. Like how you want everything. Look at your clothes. Your hair. You're trying to live in a memory that doesn't exist anymore because everything else has changed. Including me.

VAL

I know that. Of course--

EMILY

How? You visited once.

Harlan, Jessica and Jai come out of Chang's to see what's going on.

VAL

I didn't want the move to be any harder for you than it had to be.

EMILY

That was twenty years ago. I've adjusted.

Mindy and Melvin come out of the clinic...

VAL

When your mother left she made it very clear--

EMILY

Don't you dare blame her. *You* left us. You were an angry drunk and you pushed us away. How come you don't remember *those* stories? Disappearing for days to sign autographs at a grocery store opening in bumfuck Idaho? Passed out in your truck, or on the lawn, or in the bathtub and scaring the crap out of us. Accusing mom of breaking up the family whenever she got a job offer and when she was finally given the chance of a lifetime, refusing to come to California with us. You broke her heart, of course she didn't want to talk to you. But she never wanted you to stay away from me. She's the reason I kept coming to visit. She's the only reason I'm here now. To say goodbye. Because you sure as hell aren't coming to Greenland. You can never leave because the people out there would see you for who you really are and your fantasy would shatter.

She stares at him. Heartbroken and angry. Then --

EMILY (CONT'D)

Bye.

She gets into her car. All eyes on Val. He's crushed. Shell-shocked. And can't stop her as she pulls out and drives away.

38

EXT. DESERT - DAY

38

Arthur and Zoe are packing up their stuff. Zoe's despondent.

ZOE

Maybe the visions are bullshit.

ARTHUR

Zoe--

ZOE

A subconscious wish because my dad--

ARTHUR

She came to you--

ZOE

Then where is she?

His answer is passionate and powerful. Sexy.

ARTHUR

The needs of mankind have brought nature to its knees so to serve her we must bend lower. Replace our ego with her will and never waiver in the belief that even diminished, her power is boundless. *And she chose you.* Which just confirms the supreme divinity of her judgement and prevents me from ever questioning her motives.

MAN (O.S.)

Hey!

They turn to see a DATALUX TECH limping toward them. His deep relief barely noticeable through layers of pain and fear.

DATALUX TECH

Thank god.

ARTHUR

What happened?

DATALUX TECH

Just get me out of here.

ZOE

Okay, hang on.

She eases him to the ground then rushes to help Arthur grab their stuff. When she glances back at the driver she notices a cloud of dust in the distance. And extending from it A TRAIL OF DISPLACED SAND AND ROCK as though something is moving beneath the surface... Heading right at them.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Arthur... Something's out there.

He looks up but the second he does THE TRAIL STOPS, like whatever caused it just descended deeper underground.

ARTHUR

I don't see anything.

Then suddenly THE TECH IS PULLED UNDERGROUND. Zoe and Arthur run to the spot where he disappeared. Nothing.

A HAND PUNCHES OUT of the sand. The tech is back. Zoe grabs his hand and helps pull him out. She pulls out his head, then other hand, arm, chest... He's yelling, struggling to find safe ground. But even with pooled strength, they can't get the rest of him out.

Then something gives and Zoe goes flying back. Still holding the tech's hand. EXCEPT HE'S BEEN CUT OFF AT THE TORSO.

She sees and SCREAMS. Arthur pulls her away. Just as WHAT'S LEFT OF THE TECH IS VIOLENTLY YANKED DOWN BENEATH THE SURFACE.

After which the ground settles like nothing happened.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

39

INT. CHANG'S MARKET - DAY

39

Val is drinking a beer. Not his first. He's gutted. Harlan is next to him. Everyone else is keeping their distance.

VAL

I stayed away for Emily's sake. I didn't know anything about raising a little girl. And believe me, Rhonda never missed a chance to tell me how bad I was screwing up.

HARLAN

She was worried. About your drinking, about the future--

VAL

A future *she* made herself by the way. But I respected her choice and gave them a chance to start fresh. Knowing in my heart that one day I'd get my chance with Emily. And instead she hates me.

HARLAN

She doesn't hate you.

VAL

Were you not listening?

HARLAN

I heard a girl who wants a deeper relationship with her father. To be what you care about most.

VAL

Then why didn't she stay?

JAI

Because you picked the Graboids.

VAL

I was trying to protect her from them.

MINDY

And if he was right we'd owe him our lives. Again.

MELVIN

I'm so tired of that bullshit story. He saved you, not me. He used me as bait. Like the self-obsessed jerk Emily said he was.

HARLAN

That's enough, Melvin.

A flash of anger from Harlan who stands and backs Melvin away from Val to the counter.

MELVIN

Enough what, Harlan? Enough truth?

Mindy follows after Melvin.

MINDY

Don't listen to him Val. He's petty and jealous and doesn't know what he's talking about.

MELVIN

Jealous? Of what? I feel sorry for the guy.

HARLAN

I said enough.

The dark warning in his voice catches both Mindy and Melvin by surprise. And shuts Melvin up quick. Harlan recovers...

HARLAN (CONT'D)

Jai, can we get some coffee's please?

JAI

(re: Harlan and Melvin)  
Decaf for you two.

Meanwhile, Jessica quietly sits down next to Val --

JESSICA

My dad was a real bastard when I was growing up. But I never told him like your daughter just did.

VAL

Lucky guy.

JESSICA

So he spent his life wondering why I didn't want him in mine. Which made me feel really superior.

(MORE)

JESSICA (CONT'D)

But on the other hand I never got to have a father. If I'd given him a chance, maybe he would've made things right... I don't know. I wasn't brave enough to find out.

Val's moved. THE DOOR SWINGS OPEN. Arthur and Zoe enter. They're actively trying to appear un-anxious.

ARTHUR

You have any more fertilizer, Grace?

Zoe hangs back and sneaks behind Val. When she's satisfied that Arthur isn't looking she grabs Val's arm. She looks freaked out and whispers to him in a low, terrified voice --

ZOE

When you looked into the eyes of the Graboid... Did you see a Goddess? Or a monster?

Her fear is unnerving. But before Val can respond Arthur appears with a bag of fertilizer and yanks her away. The terrified look on Zoe's face disappears out the door.

Val spins to Harlan, eyes blazing.

VAL

Did you see that?

HARLAN

I smelled it.

VAL

The fear?

HARLAN

No, whatever that kid is smoking. It literally smells like shit.

VAL

I'm talking about Zoe. I know that look. She saw something.

It takes Harlan a second to realize what he's suggesting.

HARLAN

Hang on. You're upset, but don't run away from it. Turning your focus to the Graboids is exactly what brought you to this point--

VAL  
I know what I saw.

40 EXT. CHANG'S MARKET - DAY

40

Val comes running out. Harlan right behind him. With Melvin, Jessica and Mindy on his heels.

VAL  
That David Koresh kid was buying fertilizer. I bet they're making a bomb to blow up the Graboid.

MELVIN  
Or fertilizing their weed crop.

VAL  
I gotta stop them.

MELVIN  
You do that, Chicken Little.

MINDY  
I'll help.

MELVIN  
No! You can't. What about the driver?

MINDY  
Rachel's there now. And I can't move him until we get an ambulance.

HARLAN  
I'll come too.

MELVIN  
What?!

Even Val's a little surprised.

HARLAN  
Right or wrong, I want to be there.

VAL  
Appreciate it.  
(then)  
I sure am glad Emily left now.

Harlan nods. He is too.

MINDY  
What do you want us to do?



VAL

Find the hippies. I'll grab some equipment and catch up.

He goes to his truck. Mindy follows, calls to Harlan.

MINDY

I'll help Val.

She jumps in the passenger seat and Val drives away. Leaving Harlan, Melvin and Jessica. Melvin's pissed.

JESSICA

I don't know what's going on, but I'm not waiting around to figure it out.

She starts for her car and looks back to see if Melvin is leaving too. But he doesn't move.

MELVIN

I'm staying.  
(off Harlan's shock)  
I want to be there when you all realize Val's a fraud.

Jessica laughs at the depths of his pettiness as she gets into her car and drives off.

GRACE (O.S.)

Zen man!

Melvin goes to his car while Harlan lumbers to the steps of the market where Grace is waiting. When she's sure Melvin is out of earshot she looks at Harlan with genuine concern.

GRACE (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

HARLAN

Val needs me.

GRACE

It's not him I'm worried about.

She picks up his hand and he holds it in the air, like a gunslinger proving his steadiness. But his hand is trembling.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Squeeze my boob.

HARLAN

I'm better. The medication--

GRACE

Then squeeze. Hard.

He checks to make sure Melvin isn't looking then squeezes one of Grace's boobs. It hurts. Him, not her. But she's satisfied.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Don't do anything stupid. Like die.

Harlan leans in and gives her a tender and very loving kiss.

41

EXT. TUNNEL - DAY

41

Emily's car curves around the dusty road but comes to a sudden stop outside the tunnel entrance --

THE TUNNEL HAS COMPLETELY COLLAPSED. She gets out to look. There's no way through. Nico pulls up on his motorcycle.

NICO

What happened?

EMILY

I have no idea.

(frustration mounting)

Shit.

NICO

You weren't going to say goodbye?

EMILY

I did. You weren't listening.

NICO

Well, I'm coming with you. To Vegas then Greenland.

EMILY

Nico, don't--

NICO

I've stayed here, working in shit so I could have the life of my choosing. And I choose you.

EMILY

And you think the universe is going to bend to your will? Just because you made a decision? The universe doesn't care.

NICO

You don't need to do that.  
Emotional firewalls are your dad's  
thing.

EMILY

You think you know me?

Nico shrugs. Yeah, he does. Emily shakes her head.

EMILY (CONT'D)

It doesn't matter. Nobody's going  
anywhere.

NICO

There's another way out of town.

EMILY

No, there isn't.

But the certainty in his eyes creates doubts in Emily's.

42 INT. GRABOID TOURS HQ - DAY

42

Val and Mindy open every drawer, cupboard and case to find  
the very best in Graboid-hunting equipment. The gravity of  
the moment juxtaposed with extremely strange weapons.

43 EXT. GRABOID TOURS HQ - DAY

43

Val finishes loading the truck and winces in pain as he  
throws a pile of Graboid-rods into the back.

MINDY

What's wrong with your shoulder?

VAL

Nothing.

She moves behind him and expertly slides her arm through his  
and around to the back of his head. Val stiffens.

MINDY

Breathe and relax.

Val doesn't do either. So Mindy presses against him and pulls  
back his shoulder, demonstrating her control.

MINDY (CONT'D)

I'm not going to ask again.

Val submits. And as he lets out a deep breath, Mindy yanks his arm back and pops his shoulder -- then turns him around so their faces are just inches apart.

MINDY (CONT'D)  
Feel better?

She eyes him like a toy. Killer coquettishness. Val's head is spinning. Uncomfortable and intrigued and confused --

MINDY (CONT'D)  
I'm not the little girl who used to bounce around on a pogo stick.  
(dripping with promise)  
But I still love to bounce.

HARLAN (V.O.)  
Val, you there?

Val is frozen. Mindy's body still pressed against his. She slowly reaches down to his crotch -- where the walkie talkie hangs from his belt. She hands it to him. Val responds...

VAL  
Yeah, Harlan. Over

HARLAN (V.O.)  
We've got Arthur. Near Trident Rock. Things are getting weird.

44 OMITTED 44

44A EXT. MAIN ROAD - DAY 44A

Jessica drives away from Perfection, past an empty rock quarry. Excavator, bulldozer... CAR HALF BURIED IN THE GROUND. She gives the odd sight a second look when a light flashes from the driver's side window of the buried car and hits her in the face.

Anxious to leave, she keeps driving. Weird town. But curiosity and concern gnaw at her so she stops. Looks back. The light flashes her again. It's a hand mirror reflecting the sun into her eyes. She gets out to investigate.

44B EXT. DESERT - ROCK QUARRY - DAY 44B

Jessica walks toward the car, calling out:

JESSICA  
Hey! Is somebody there? You okay?

The mirror is replaced with a piece of paper. Jessica isn't close enough to read what's been written on it.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

You alright in there?

She moves closer, trying to decipher the handwriting. Closer and closer until she's finally able to read, "STOP TALKING!"

She stops. The paper is replaced by a WOMAN'S FACE. Scared. Eyes wide, she brings a finger to her parsed lips. SHHH!

The woman rolls down the window. She's wearing a construction uniform and her leg is cut. Jessica helps pull her out of the car and onto the ground. The woman whispers into her ear --

WOMAN

*Not a sound.*

She steps away. Confused, Jessica looks around... Notices blood on the excavator door. A bloody helmet on the ground. She looks to see the woman already halfway towards her car, waving at her to hurry. Jessica does. Taking quick, soft steps when CRACK. Her heel breaks. The one Val fixed.

The woman looks at her, panic in her eyes. Imploring her to shut the fuck up then climbing between strips of barbed wire next to Jessica's car. She reaches for the door when A LOUD SQUAWK chirps from the WALKIE TALKIE on her belt. She immediately turns it off, terrified. Then looks around. Waits. Scared --

And is VIOLENTLY RIPPED DOWN BELOW THE SURFACE.

Jessica screams. Then covers her mouth and turns around. With the Graboid between her and the car, she spots the highest ground she can find... A huge pile of rocks. And RUNS FOR IT AS FAST AS SHE CAN.

She looks back over her shoulder and sees a RIDGE FORMING IN THE DIRT -- heading her way. She TRIPS and falls to the ground. Fuck. Quickly recovers and races for the rock pile like a woman possessed. The dirt trail gaining on her...

But she makes it to the rock pile first. She scrambles up the rocks as the DIRT TRAIL SUBMERGES BELOW THE ROCK PILE AND OUT OF SIGHT. On top of the rocks, Jessica squeezes herself into a ball, sucking back tears. Scared out of her mind.

44C EXT. DESERT - DAY

44C

Emily's on the back of Nico's motorcycle as he navigates the empty desert, stopping at the same sunken, cement bunker where Jai saw Mindy appear out of nowhere.

He gets off and takes a crowbar from one of his saddlebags. Wedges it along the edge of the cinderblocks that cover the doorway. He strains and finally gets the cinderblock wall moving. He opens it entirely to REVEAL A HIGH TECH TUNNEL that stretches into darkness.

EMILY

What is this?

NICO

If you really want to leave... I can get you out of the valley.

Emily gets off the motorcycle to get a better look. She eyes Nico with suspicion.

EMILY

How do you know about this? Who else does?

NICO

Not you. Okay?

EMILY

No, not okay. Why is it a secret?

He walks into the tunnel.

NICO

You want to learn about Perfection or leave it?

She hesitates... then takes a step into the tunnel.

EMILY

No what?

A DEAFENING, MONSTROUS GROWL. They look at each other, stunned then turn to the doorway -- but the cinderblock wall automatically SLIDES SHUT. Locking them in.

45 EXT. DESERT - DAY

45

Harlan quietly leads Val and Mindy to a boulder. Melvin is already there, hiding. A few dozen yards ahead ARTHUR, ZOE AND SIX OTHER DELIBERATES ARE GATHERED IN A TIGHT CIRCLE.

MELVIN

They've been circle jerking like that for twenty minutes. Is this what you were hoping to see?

Val takes out jump suits, boots and helmets.

VAL

Put these suits on. They're made of Graboid proof dyneema fiber. The boots cut down on vibration and helmets will keep your breathing in check so they won't hear--

MELVIN

Oh get over it.

He reaches past the protective clothing and grabs a shoulder-fired missile launcher.

VAL

Melvin, don't be an idiot--

But Melvin's up before Val can stop him. He steps out in front of the boulder and calls out to the Deliberates --

MELVIN

Any of you freaks seen a big worm?

The Deliberates all turn to see him. None of them surprised. Or worried about the rocket launcher in his hands.

ARTHUR

As a matter of fact...

He and the others step away and reveal they've been hiding a GRABOID HOLE. Covered with ripped clothing and fresh blood and guts. Lots of blood. It's a horrific sight.

Val and the others behind the boulder know immediately what the hole is. And realize that goddamn, THE GRABOIDS ARE BACK.

HARLAN

Oh shit--

VAL

Here. Take my keys.

MINDY

Why? Where are you going?

He doesn't answer. Instead, he moves out from behind the boulder and starts toward the Deliberates.

HARLAN

Val, don't--

VAL

You guys happen to know how recently that hole was made?

ARTHUR

Val! Couldn't pass up a chance to be the hero again, huh? We were counting on it.

Val glances to Zoe who shrugs. She lured him here. But Val doesn't care. His swagger is back. This is his moment.

VAL

Well, you got me. No idea why, but that can wait. Because right now I need you to slowly make your way to that boulder behind me. I'll drive as many people back to town as I can then come back for the rest. The Graboids respond to sound and vibration. So step quietly and don't talk. Because if they know where you are they'll kill you.

ARTHUR

Except we're not afraid. We came to Perfection to help them. To help you make amends.

VAL

The hell you talking about?

ARTHUR

The Graboids were created to bring balance back to earth and you nearly stopped them from fulfilling their destiny.

VAL

And what? You want me to apologize?

ARTHUR

Apology? Fuck no. I want you to *sacrifice* yourself. It's the only restitution worthy of your brutality.



VAL

I know you're stoned but the fire  
you're playing with is a cold-  
blooded monster that eats fire for  
breakfast--

Arthur pulls out a gun and FIRES A SHOT NEXT TO VAL'S HEAD.  
Val freezes. Mindy, Harlan and Melvin duck down behind the  
boulder.

ARTHUR

She's not a monster. Now, give me  
your gear.

Val doesn't move. Arthur points the gun in his face.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Give me your gear. And everyone  
else get on the boulder. So you can  
watch Val's empty existence  
miraculously end with meaning.

Val starts to take off his Graboid protective suit. Zoe and  
the Deliberates climb onto the boulder next to Harlan, Mindy  
and where Melvin discretely aims the launcher at Arthur.

MELVIN

(whispers)

I'm going to blow this idiot back  
to Burning Man.

HARLAN

Just don't hit Val.

MELVIN

I'm not hitting Val, I'm saving the  
bastard.

Val is out of his suit and pretends to struggle with his  
boots, but really signals to Melvin and shout/whispers --

VAL

*Launcher. Shoot him on my signal.*

MELVIN

You don't tell me what to do.

Said louder than reason would recommend, his plan is now  
completely exposed. Mindy and Harlan look at him in  
disbelief.

ARTHUR

Put down the launcher dipshit.

Arthur points the gun at Melvin who immediately complies.  
Arthur smiles and paces around Val.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

You're the monster here, Val. You disgust me. The persona you cling to is based on an act of genocide. And somehow you've deluded yourself into believing you're more powerful than nature. Which as we're about to see, isn't the case.

He slips into Val's boots and puts the gun to his head and leads him forward.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Walk. Keep going.

He pushes Val to keep walking while he takes a position on a medium sized rock.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

There's good. Right there. Now sing. And dance. Loud enough for her to hear you.

VAL

You don't want to do this.  
Whatever you think is going to happen, isn't. I promise.

ARTHUR

I SAID DANCE, OLD MAN!

VAL

*25 years and my life is still.  
Trying to get up that great big  
hill of hope...*

Each time his foot hits the dirt we can practically feel the vibrations shoot through the ground. Everyone watches nervously. Arthur paces around Val.

ARTHUR

Louder!

VAL

*And I scream from the top of my  
lungs, what's going on?*

MINDY

Val!

THEN THEY ALL SEE IT. A hundred yards away. Dust in the air. MOVEMENT JUST BENEATH THE SURFACE. A Graboid. Coming closer. Fast. Arthur's eyes go wide in ecstasy.

50 feet, 40 feet, 30 feet...

With Arthur's eye on the Graboid, Melvin picks up the launcher. He aims at the monster, carefully sizing up the shot then... SHOOTs. There's a puff of smoke but THE MISSILE LANDS TWO FEET IN FRONT OF HIM. A dud. Val's heart sinks. Melvin's embarrassed and really frustrated.

MELVIN

Nothing works here.

ARTHUR

You're wrong, dipshit. Perfection's working on a cosmic level your tiny brain can't comprehend.

The Graboid hasn't slowed. 25 feet, 20 feet. Val calls out to Mindy, Harlan and Melvin.

VAL

When it's busy with me, run to the truck and get out of here.

MINDY

We're not leaving you.

VAL

Well I'm leaving you.  
(then, difficult)  
Tell Emily she's the best thing  
that ever happened to me.

Fear and anger and sadness have given way to acceptance and Val turns away from Mindy and the others and walks straight toward the oncoming Graboid. 15 feet, 10 feet... He braces for the inevitable as the creature arrives at his feet --

THEN GOES RIGHT PAST VAL

And straight to ARTHUR, who barely manages to say --

ARTHUR

But I'm wearing the boots--

THE EARTH OPENS AND A GRABOID EMERGES FROM THE DEPTHS. Bigger and more disgusting than the old photos. Its huge mouth opens -- a dark cesspool of fangs. It SCREAMS IN ARTHUR'S FACE.

Then inexplicably, the Graboid closes its mouth, DIVES BACK UNDERGROUND AND DISAPPEARS as quickly as it appeared.

Mindy, Harlan and Melvin run from their boulder toward Val, yelling at the bewildered Deliberates to get the hell out of there. Zoe races to Arthur.

HARLAN

What the hell just happened?

VAL

Doesn't matter. We gotta go. Arthur and nose-piercer get to the rock. That Graboid'll be right back. Harlan, Mindy, Melvin run to my truck.

But Arthur doesn't move.

VAL (CONT'D)

Arthur, RUN.

Doesn't even flinch. Something's wrong. Then Mindy recognizes the frozen expression of terror on his face and puts it together.

MINDY

He's paralyzed. Like the driver. Trapped in his body. The Graboids are freezing their victims.

VAL

They don't wait to eat. They just kill.

MINDY

Maybe they're getting food for someone else in the pack.

VAL

Trust me, I've been through all this before. They don't play well with others. They don't plan or strategize. There's no pack.

HARLAN

Tell that to them...

He points at the ground around Val and Arthur where THE DIRT OUTLINES OF SIX GRABOIDS RISE UP IN THE SAND in a circle. An organized battalion that's been lurking beneath the surface.

Val can't believe what he's seeing. Then they SUDDENLY START TO BREAK THE SURFACE --

VAL

Forget everything I said. RUN FOR  
THE TRUCK.

He turns to run --

END OF PILOT