

TYLER'S GAP

- where the end begins -

Pilot script : The Awakening

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ACT ONE

1 INT. LOCATION UNKNOWN - THE PAST 1

Running, scrambling, hyperventilating; a single miner's headlamp illuminates jet black walls. We move fast as we can down a tunnel -- a scurry of DOZENS OF RATS outpacing us. THEN: A WALL OF WATER CRASHES INTO US.

NOW WE'RE UNDERWATER, DROWNING. THE DISORIENTATION AND STRUGGLING SOUNDS ARE HORRIFIC. WE CLAW TO THE SURFACE, GET ABOVE THE WATER LINE, GASPING FOR AIR --

2 INT. POLICE STATION, JAIL CELL - MORNING 2

DANNY FLETCHER (35) starts awake, gasping for breath. His hair is a mess, his face slicked with night sweats. We can see, he is in jail.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. BRIDIGAN HOUSE - SAME 3

Horn honk. On the street, a brand new SUV idles. FITCH - a brawny miner in his late 30s - rolls down the window, bopping his head to bad rock.

FITCH
C'mon, Walt man! Your future
awaits.

At the front door of the house: WALTER BRIDIGAN (32) is nervous on his first day of work. His wife, KIM (same), bounces a baby beside their 7 year old, AMANDA.

KIM
Sure you don't want to stick to
teaching 7th graders? -- Not too
late.

WALT
Just say, Walt: I love you. You're
my hero.

KIM
...I love you. You're my hero.

AMANDA
You're my hero, daddy.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: 3

He chokes, gives all a hug & kiss. Horn honk. He goes.

KIM

Be careful.

4 INT. SUV - FOLLOWING 4

Walt jumps in. Up front, JOHN GRANGER (50s) and Fitch.
As we drive through town, we reveal an Eastern industrial town in boom times: new construction, stores, cars.

FITCH

Yo, whattaya think of the vehicle?
Only 8 to the gallon, but check
out these speakers!

He cranks the tunes. Walt looks back at Kim as she disappears from view. John - the mature one - reaches over and switches the radio off, much to Fitch's irritation.

FITCH (CONT'D)

(in the rearview)

Yo, your wife's a looker.

WALT

Uh, yeah. Thanks.

FITCH

Thing is though, man, you can't
get all candy-ass with your girl
on your way to the pit.

GRANGER

He means you get sentimental, you
bring on the bad luck. Leave like
a man, then come home a needy
little boy.

FITCH

Mommy!!

WALT

Got it.

FITCH

You'll be fine. Ain't near as bad
down there as people say it is. I
mean, all you really got to worry
about is using the equipment right
so it don't chew up your arm.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

FITCH (CONT'D)
The rest of it - floods, fires,
black lung. Not a lot you can do
'bout them things.

Walt swallows hard, trying to go along with the humor.

GRANGER
Pay no attention to the man behind
the wheel.

Fitch blows his horn at another car full of miners.

5 INT. POLICE STATION, JAIL CELL - MORNING

5

The honk disturbs Danny as he slouches to the edge of his
cot, head hanging. A WHISKEY BOTTLE rolls onto the floor.

We pull back to reveal the jail cell he's in has been set
up as a make-shift studio apartment.

6 EXT. POLICE STATION - MINUTES LATER

6

Danny emerges. We're surprised to see him wearing a
sheriff's badge and uniform; wrinkled as it is. That and
he's working on three days since he last shaved.

7 INT. DINER - FOLLOWING

7

Danny sits in his unofficial office: booth #9. His DEPUTY
- CHAMBERS - is just leaving.

CHAMBERS
Well what do you want me tell him?

DANNY
Tell him if he shoplifts again,
we'll have to arrest him, whether
or not he's a priest.

CHAMBERS
Will do. Oh and that woman who
works for the mine? She's been
looking for ya.

DANNY
Great.

(CONTINUED)

7

CONTINUED:

7

CHAMBERS

Said the mine's gonna take you to
court and get your Dad's old house
condemned, you don't take the deal
today -

*
*
*

DANNY

Hell of an inheritance my dad left
me.

Walt comes in accompanied by Granger.

JAKE (OWNER)

Kim's on the lunch shift - ?

WALT

I know. Just gettin' coffee for
the guys, 3 regulars.

DANNY

John.

John nods back, but clearly there's bad blood between the
two. Danny turns his attention to Walt, pulls him aside.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Hey buddy. What're you doing?
You're not going down??
(Walt shrugs 'yes')
Why didn't you tell me?

WALT

'Cause I knew you'd talk me out of
it. -- Look man, when they start
paying teachers as much, you'll
know where to find me.

JAKE

(with the coffee)

Mine is where the money is, was
and ever shall be. Saudi Arabia of
coal, right under our feet.

Danny nods, uneasy, as Granger inserts himself:

GRANGER

Payin' 500 a cart now. Just bought
a \$1000. bond for that kid of
yours. At least my grandson will -

DANNY

Yeah, that's great, John.

(CONTINUED)

7

CONTINUED: (2)

7

John looks at Danny's messy uniform, unshaven face -

GRANGER

Your dad never worked a day in his
life unshaven. Took pride wearing
that badge. People don't respect
you, you don't respect yourself.

He heads out.

DANNY

Thanks for the life lesson.

8

EXT. DINER - MORNING

8

Danny & Walt walk out together over to the gas station
where Fitch is filling his sizable tank.

DANNY

How's Kim taking it?

WALT

She thought marrying the college
guy, she'd wind up with something
better than her momma did.

DANNY

I have no idea what you're talking
about. Just ask my ex-wife.

(gesturing to John)

Or for that matter, my ex-father-
in-law --

FITCH

Holy crap!! \$102.67 for one tank?!

DANNY

Yeah, but think of all the hybrid
cars you can crush with your
vehicle.

FITCH

Yes! Dan-the-man! You oughta put
down that badge and come back into
the mine. We'd have fun, man!

DANNY

I have no doubt. Been there, done
hat.

(CONTINUED)

8

CONTINUED:

8

Walt gives him a tight nod, jumps in and they're off. Danny looks down past the town to the smoke-belching chimney stacks of Tyler Water And Power.

9

INT. MINE ELEVATOR - FOLLOWING

9

WHAM! The lever is thrown, the packed elevator starts down, and we're thrust from the vibrant world of the town into the monochromatic and terrifying coal mine.

Walt's work clothes are brand new; John gives him a grin - as the last bit of sunlight disappears and we descend.

Inky black walls ooze slime; huge spiders skitter past; a string of ghastly yellow lightbulbs strobe Walt's face as they go down down down. You can see the fear crawling up Walt's spine. No one else seems bothered in the least.

THEN: WE LAND HARD ON THE MINE LEVEL.

The elevator cage is shoved open and the miners pile out, crouching down to accommodate the 5' ceilings. As they head out, they each tap a sign reading "Way Out" with an arrow pointing up: a superstition. John nods to Walt to do the same.

Fitch, Granger & Walt split off from the main group.

WALT

(wobbly)

Where we heading?

FITCH

To Hell, my man.

THEY MOVE INTO THE CLAUSTROPHOBIC TUNNELS.

The mountain groans; a rat skitters down a side shaft. Walt takes off his helmet, wipes sweat off his brow; takes notice of the picture tucked into the band - Kim and the smiling kids.

Spacing, he whacks his head on the low ceiling -

CUT TO:

10

EXT. DANNY'S FATHER'S HOUSE - DAY

10

Danny and the mine's rep, GLADYS, stand at a cul-de-sac where all but one of the houses has been razed to the ground. It's beyond desolate.

(CONTINUED)

10

CONTINUED:

10

GLADYS

You're doing the right thing here,
Sheriff. I'm sure your Daddy
would've agreed.

*
*
*
*

He gives her a "*you didn't know my Daddy*" look.

*

DANNY

What's the mine gonna do with this
piece of land?

GLADYS

Turning it into a waste facility.

DANNY

Perfect.

11

INT. DANNY'S FATHER'S HOUSE - FOLLOWING

11

A key in the lock, having a hard time getting it to work.
Finally it gives. Danny shoves the swollen door open.

DANNY

Guess it's been a while. I've
been meaning to deal with it,
but...

They move into a hallway lined with piles of books, old
newspapers and into a cluttered living room.

GLADYS

I've seen worse. When we
foreclosed on Jed Lambert's place,
he had these little crucifixes
nailed up every 6 inches along the
baseboards. Every darn room.

DANNY

Nice to know Dad wasn't the
craziest old man in town.

Danny regards a magazine: *Necromancer's Almanac*.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Didn't know how bad it was. Guess
when mom died it really brought
out the demons.

GLADYS

It's been well over a year since
he died. You could've at least
cleaned --

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

DANNY

Yeah. I should've. What can I tell
ya, we weren't exactly close.

Gladys picks her way through the mess --

GLADYS

He didn't die here, did he?

DANNY

I wasn't around, Gladys.

GLADYS

Right. You were off gallivanting.

DANNY

Wouldn't call the Marines
"gallivanting".

GLADYS

Ahn, you go off and see the world.
I've never even *been* to Europe.

DANNY

Afghanistan is not in Europe.

Danny heads up the creaky staircase TOWARD:

12 INT. KID'S BEDROOM - FOLLOWING

12

Danny creaks open the door: a kid's bedroom, circa 1985,
frozen in time. On the wall, a certificate identifying
Daniel Fletcher the valedictorian of Tyler High School,
class of 1991. It's hanging at a decided slant.

He straightens it.

13 INT. FATHER'S BEDROOM, DOWNSTAIRS - FOLLOWING

13

Danny regards the room's contents with unease: books on
the occult, Mayan calendars, catholic iconography...

DANNY

(sorrowful)
Where'd you go, Dad?

GLADYS

(startling Danny)
My advice? Truck it all out to the
dump.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

13

CONTINUED:

13

GLADYS (CONT'D)
Don't mean to be insensitive, just
saying life's too short, ya know?

Danny notices A BEAUTIFUL LEATHER-BOUND BOOK WITH A
BEETLE EMBOSSED ON THE COVER.

DANNY
My son, Aaron might want some of
this stuff.

He tosses the book back into a pile. Gladys picks her way
through the mess towards out.

GLADYS
How do ya get outta here?

She goes to open a door.

DANNY
That's the basement --

She swings open the door - AND IS FACE TO FACE WITH A
BRICK WALL.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Was the basement.

GLADYS
(shaking her head)
What old men do with their time.

Danny examines the brick.

DANNY
This is not one of the things that
comes to mind.

14

INT. MINE, ZONE 7 WORK SITE - SAME

14

A dead end tunnel.

Fitch is on the hammer drill, Walt carting coal, John
doing test holes. They're halfway into their work day,
pleased to be racking up a full cart. Even Walt is
looking a bit more comfortable.

THEN: THERE'S A RUMBLE. Everybody stops.

WALT
What the hell was that?!

(CONTINUED)

14

CONTINUED:

14

John shushes him; Fitch rolls his eyes, leans on his drill, waits. After a few tense beats, John relaxes.

GRANGER

You'll get used to it.

Fitch cranks the drill back up, screams over the whine:

FITCH

Hey Walt! What'd the nun say to the dwarf?

WALT

I don't know. What?

THEN: A DEAFENING RUPTURE AS THE GROUND UNDER THEIR FEET BUCKLES, SLAMMING THE MEN AGAINST THE CEILING, THEN DOWN - PLUMMETING INTO THE VOID WHERE THE FLOOR USED TO BE.

15

INT. MINE, ZONE 7 COLLAPSE SITE - CONTINUING

15

CHOKING DUST AND CHAOS. Granger manages to switch on his headlamp - finds Walt, scared to death, but alive.

GRANGER

You okay?!? Anything broke??

Walt struggles to his feet, then stumbles and falls hard - headlamp SHINING RIGHT INTO FITCH'S DEAD FACE. He scrambles away. Fitch's body is crushed beneath the rock.

16

INT. MINE OFFICE

16

RAY GOWER (50s) approaches SCOTT MOYER (45, hard ass, new management) with a tear-sheet.

RAY GOWER

Got seismic tumbles in Zone 7.

SCOTT MOYER

Yeah and?

RAY GOWER

Could be just a shift.

SCOTT MOYER

Some jamoke probably dropped his friggin' drill.

17 INT. THE COLLAPSE SITE - SAME

17

CLOSE IN ON: John Granger. He hears a sound, then he sees it -- DUST IS BEING SUCKED THROUGH THE CRACKS IN A WALL OF SHATTERED ROCK. Another rumble. Granger starts digging.

WALT

We oughta wait for the --

GRANGER

Nearest crew's a mile away, kid.

No need to repeat. Walt joins John, clawing at the rocks.

THEN, *WHUMP*: they come upon a mass of solid iron.

But what's wrong with this picture? The surface is smooth, obviously not a natural formation. They dig with greater intensity - unearthing A HUGE IRON DOOR. They can just barely read the word "Hope" scrawled into the surface.

GRANGER (CONT'D)

This some kind of joke?

WALT

Maybe an old shaft or something?

With a chunk of stone, John snaps the bolts that hold the doors shut -

18 INT. MINE OFFICE - DAY

18

Gower tears off another seismic readout.

GOWER

Looks bona fide, chief. Zone 7.
Mine Safety flagged it years ago..
Guess we thought we knew better.

Scott Moyer, pissed about it, HITS THE ALARM BUTTON.

19 INT. DANNY'S FATHER'S HOUSE - SAME

19

Danny's boxing up stuff -- but it's the brick wall that keeps his attention.

Sledgehammer in hand, Danny takes his best shot -- and manages to punch a hole in the brick. He looks in - can see nothing in the dark, hears only a hollow wind.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: 19

THEN: THE MINE ALARM CUTS THROUGH THE AIR.

Danny's half-paralyzed by the sound, but he wills himself out of it, grabs his hat and gun belt and heads out.

20 INT. DINER - SAME 20

Kim - in waitress uniform - stops dead. She drops her apron on the counter and heads out.

21 INT. POLICE CRUISER - DAY 21

From Danny's vantage point, we see the town shifting gears:

WOMEN EMERGE FROM HOUSES, throwing on coats and hurrying down towards the mineyard.

A GROUP OF OLD MEN COME OUT OF THE UNION HALL with a tired fatalism.

AT THE SCHOOL, BALLS ROLL AS KIDS at recess stop their games. A TEACHER herds them back inside. One of them (AARON FLETCHER, 12) draws up as Danny passes by.

DANNY
I'll come by later!

Danny continues on - catching sight of Kim hustling down towards the mine. He hits the horn, pushes open the side door. Kim gets in, grateful.

22 INT. CRUISER - CONTINUOUS 22

KIM
He'll be fine, right?

Beat. Then Danny puts the car back in gear, doesn't answer. Kim goes rigid as they drive on.

23 INT. "THE CHAMBER" - FOLLOWING 23

The door grinds back on its ancient hinges.

We read it on Walt and Granger's faces as they enter A VAST, SUBTERRANEAN CHAMBER, lit by phosphorescence. The beams from their headlamps barely penetrate the vapor that permeates the air.

(CONTINUED)

23

CONTINUED:

23

The dimensions of this astonishing space cannot be fathomed in the shroud, but their footfalls echo to infinity. For a moment, they forget their perilous situation, moving further in... THEN:

Granger gets a near fatal surprise when HE ALMOST FALLS INTO A MASSIVE CREVICE.

Their headlamps reveal a pit, 20' in diameter. No light penetrates its depth. Walt tosses a stone in - it doesn't land. A stink rises acrid enough to burn.

And Granger seems afraid of the thing.

GRANGER

Can't be. "And he shall ascend
from the bottomless pit."

WE SEE IT FIRST - the dust on the ground starts to move, as if the pit were *inhaling*. John *knows* it's not good. He grabs Walt, to get out -- but it's too late:

GRANGER STIFFENS WITH PAIN, SLAMMED INTO A SEIZURE.

24

EXT. UP TOP, IN THE MINEYARD - SAME

24

Danny comes to a stop at the edge of the mineyard - already filled with a roiling mass of people. He and Kim get out. As Danny tries to make some order out of the chaos: AN ELECTROMAGNETIC PULSE CRACKLES THROUGH THE AIR.

THEN: ALL THE LIGHTBULBS IN THE YARD EXPLODE.

25

INT. THE CHAMBER - SAME

25

Walt Bridigan's terrified face, up-lit by an ominous, pulsing green glow. What he sees, only he knows.

END ACT ONE

*