

THE LOST CITY OF Z

Written by

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Based on the book by David Grann

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GRAY AND WHITE. \*

Our opening image is uneven lines of gray and white,  
beautiful and abstract. \*

We HEAR WIND. \*

The CAMERA ZOOMS OUT to REVEAL: \*

1 EXT. IRISH LANDSCAPE - LATE DAY 1 \*

A desolate-seeming, visually magnificent landscape. We were  
looking at clouds, and they form glorious patterns in the  
lowered sky. Like a painting by Lorraine, or Corot, or  
Turner. \*

The horizon is dark, almost charcoal black. \*

A thin layer of fog drifts slowly across that abstract  
surface. \*

As the FOG MOVES, it reveals: a MAN. \*

He has been running towards us. A silhouette. Like the rest  
of the opening image, his appearance to us should conjure the  
PRIMAL, the MYTHIC, the ELEMENTAL. It is as though he were  
born out of this fog, this cosmic force. \*

He emerges from the fog. \*

It is PERCY HARRISON FAWCETT. \*

*Thirties and handsome. Not exactly a youngster, but not  
creaky and old, either. Strikes us as cheerful. A gentle  
voice, an even manner. Despite his cheer and charm, however,  
there is something steely about him, resolved, committed.  
His eyes reveal a far more complex person than the exterior  
might first allow; behind their twinkle there lurks a  
capacity for furious wrath and implacable resolution, the  
more dangerous because they are held in leash...* \*

Over the wind now, we begin to HEAR CHURCH BELLS RINGING.  
Fawcett himself gets closer and closer to us... We HEAR a  
WOMAN'S VOICE, distant: \*

WOMAN'S VOICE  
Percy! Percy! \*

The CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal a SILHOUETTE in the foreground, through a doorway. A WOMAN'S FORM.

2                    EXT. CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER                    2

Outside a rural church. A woman steps toward the outer fence, holding a small baby. She is waiting for Percy, it seems. The WOMAN is NINA FAWCETT. The baby is JACK FAWCETT, their newborn son.

*Nina Fawcett, thirties, is bubbly and flighty, but also highly cultured. Brash at times, a woman of independent curiosity.*

There are a few other people, of varying ages and shapes and sizes, right behind her. All look happy, very happy. Among them: JAMES BERNARD, 4th EARL OF BANDON ("LORD BERNARD"), seventies, piercing eyes, intense.

Percy ARRIVES AT LAST. He meets her and the child. He embraces her, and the couple look ecstatic, glowing.

NINA FAWCETT

We'd no doubt you'd be here--  
    (to the baby)  
DID we, Jack.

PERCY FAWCETT

The men made a complete hash of  
drill and I had to set them to  
rights.  
    (looks at the other  
    people)  
Good afternoon all... We're very  
grateful for your attendance today.  
    (back to Nina)  
Shall we, darling?

3                    INT. CHURCH - LATER                    3

It is a rural Irish church, lovely, with history. We are toward the end of a CHRISTENING CEREMONY.

SUPERIMPOSE: "CORK, IRELAND, 1903"

A MINISTER is here, putting the christening robe on the boy. He anoints him with oil, and as he does he speaks. While he speaks, we have a CLOSE SHOT on the INFANT'S HAND. Percy's hand caresses it. Then a CLOSE SHOT on PERCY--a smile, then a kind of regression into thought. HE GETS EMOTIONAL...

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

MINISTER

May God, who has received you by  
baptism into his Church, pour upon  
you the riches of his grace...

WHILE HE IS FINISHING HIS SPEECH: NINA WITHDRAWS AN ELABORATE MANDALA NECKLACE, which she HANGS AROUND the CHILD'S HEAD. The others nearby who see this are flummoxed for a moment. Except for Percy, who touches the mandala with a surprising reverence...

Those IN ATTENDANCE finish things with an "AMEN". The Minister then turns to Percy and Nina and the others:

MINISTER (CONT'D)

As this is a private ceremony, I shall take the liberty to welcome Jack's parents back from Ceylon, where they have been stationed for three years. I know Major Percy Fawcett and his lovely wife, Nina to be fine people, who, though they have often pursued their own path, remain committed to making their family a true support of our Christian community.

A "HERE HERE" from those in attendance. All converge on Percy and Nina and baby Jack. James Bernard, 4th Earl of Bandon ("LORD BERNARD") approaches Nina and Percy:

LORD BERNARD

What a beautiful ceremony. Such a precious child--congratulations to you both. And no doubt, great comfort after such a difficult birth.

\*  
\*

NINA FAWCETT

Thank you, Lord Bernard. It WAS a very near thing, and there was much concern. But all is well now.

\*  
\*  
\*

LORD BERNARD

Of course, of course!  
(turns to Percy)  
A word to the wise--been very difficult for many of the men at the Fort to find a nanny of good character.

PERCY FAWCETT

We intend to raise the boy ourselves, Lord Bernard--we don't wish for our children to be strangers.

(to Nina)

Our children will become our dearest companions.

LORD BERNARD  
 (as though they were insane)  
 Ah... I see...very well, then...  
 I...wish you the very best...

Fawcett nods to Bernard, then, beaming, turns back to his wife. With great expectation and tenderness, to his wife:

PERCY FAWCETT  
 Our lives begin anew today...

We begin to HEAR: a GALLOPING HORSE: THUMPITY THUMPITY THUMPITY... LOUDER AND LOUDER...

CUT TO:

4 EXT. CORK HARBOR, IRELAND - LATE DAY

4

A Fort: large and foreboding.

SILHOUETTED, the sun behind: MOUNTED SOLDIERS ON HORSES, galloping in circles. PERCY FAWCETT is dressed impeccably atop his horse; he wears a crisp uniform with gold buttons and a spiked helmet strapped under his chin.

NEAR A WALL AT THE CHURCH: a GROUP OF OLDER MEN, standing, and WOMEN, seated, with their children. With umbrellas above their heads, fans in hand. NINA is here, holding JACK, NOW AGE 3. IRISH BAGPIPES and DRUMS are playing; children are dancing. LORD BERNARD is here, standing near NINA.

ANGLE ON: a HUNT LEADER, late forties. He is surrounded by the mounted soldiers, ready for a big moment. LOUDLY:

HUNT LEADER  
 Gentlemen! I expect you to behave with distinction on this hunt! The deer will be delivered to the Archduke Ferdinand at the gala! Remember: honor, duty, and good sportsmanship are the cornerstones of our proud civilization! Good luck and godspeed!

Fawcett sees them in the distance. They wave to him. In return, he explodes in warmth, waves. OTHER SOLDIERS circle FAWCETT, ribbing him in their soldierly way:

OTHER SOLDIER #1  
 Could they not fit your rocking chair on the horse, granddad!?

PERCY FAWCETT

You'll all be my gunbearers by  
evening--have no doubt of that!

\*  
\*  
\*

ANGLE ON NINA

\*

Who sits many feet away.

\*

NINA FAWCETT

\*

(in the boy's ear)

\*

Wave, to your father...

The child waves, and PERCY, THRILLED, WAVES BACK.

\*

ANOTHER SOLIDER BLOWS a HORN.

\*

Fawcett and the REST OF THE MEN ON HORSEBACK break out with  
great determination. Fawcett YELLS at, KICKS, his horse...

5

EXT. CORK HARBOR - FIELDS

5

A WILD DEER, a buck with big antlers, speeds through the  
grass. Hounds BARK, running through the terrain...

The PACK OF HORSES, FAWCETT AMONG THEM, chases behind. We  
HEAR the distant WHOOPS, the CHEERS, the HORNS, the  
EXULTATION of the MOUNTED TROOPS charging in pursuit of the  
deer...

PERCY FAWCETT is on his horse, HOOTING, as are the others.

\*

The Other Soldiers RIDE NEXT TO HIM--COMPETITIVE and SOUR-  
FACED that he rides off in a different direction:

\*

\*

OTHER SOLDIER #1

Fawcett! There's no path there!

\*

FAWCETT! You're mad!

\*

FAWCETT RIDES OFF into another direction--where there is no  
path. THE HOUNDS run as though their lives depend on it,  
BARKING rabidly in pursuit... THE DEER is running because  
its life DOES depend on it... The horses are kicked until  
bloody...

\*

\*

HORSE after HORSE tumbles from rough terrain, and many of the  
MEN--UNLIKE FAWCETT--are not able to continue...

FAWCETT kicks/whips his horse with astonishing drive, and  
does an end-run around many of his competitors, cutting them  
off.

The deer, meanwhile, enters a nearby area of dense, tall grass. It runs in a circle, entangled by the weeds. FAWCETT approaches the animal.

Fawcett takes out his RIFLE... HE FIRES. The deer stumbles to the ground. JUST THEN, YOUNG SOLDIERS ARRIVE AT THE SCENE, hounds too. Fawcett watches the animal die.

One of the soldiers examines the deer and calls out, "DEAD!". A CHEER. The men pass a FLASK to Fawcett, who takes a swig:

PERCY FAWCETT  
To death--the best sauce to life!

Some of the men let out another LOUD CHEER as others are considerably more disappointed...

NEAR THE CHURCH

Fawcett goes to his BABY SON and beaming Nina. He kisses Nina, then HOLDS THE CHILD HIGH, kisses him. A HUGE GRIN from the happy father amidst cheers.

Music up: "Avrem Lieta," from Giuseppe Verdi's LA TRAVIATA, a forceful and upbeat waltz: \*

A6      EXT. FAWCETT RESIDENCE - ARMY BARRACKS - NIGHT      A6      \*

Fawcett approaches his barracks door. We PASS a GROUP of SINGING TROOPS. \*

ARMY SOLDIERS      \*  
*And I never get a knock when the*      \*  
*boys call Cock, cockity ock ock,*      \*  
*cock Robin! In my old red vest, I*      \*  
*mean to cut a shine, walking down*      \*  
*the street they call me 'Danger on*      \*  
*the Line!'*      \*

Then: \*

6      INT. ARMY BARRACKS- NIGHT      6      \*

SERIES OF SHOTS:

1. MEDIUM SHOT - The Fawcett RESIDENCE. FILLED WITH CLUTTER. With THREE FOX TERRIERS MOVING ABOUT.

2. CLOSE SHOT - a STATUE OF THE BUDDHA.

3. CLOSE SHOT - a STACK of LEAFLETS on a DESK: "VOTES FOR WOMEN!"

4. MEDIUM SHOT - a JOYOUS little JACK, with his stuffed animal, plays with the dogs.

5. CLOSE SHOT - All the formal wear for Percy Fawcett LAID ON A BED. A HAND REACHES down, PICKS UP a PIECE OF CLOTHING. TILT UP to REVEAL: PERCY PUTTING IT ON. He looks STIFF, but bemused.

6. CLOSE SHOT - A WOMAN, a MAID, is STRUGGLING with SOMETHING. WIDEN to REVEAL: SHE is HELPING NINA get into a CORSET. Nina spots Percy, all finished dressing. He STANDS in the DOORWAY, silhouetted, watching.

(Young ARMY SOLDIERS are outside, chanting:)

NINA FAWCETT  
Oh, this damned thing!  
    (to Percy)  
You must be so pleased with  
yourselves, you men! Making us  
wear these awful things!

\*

She then adjusts her HAIR:

\*

PERCY FAWCETT  
If you keep refusing to wear your  
hair as the others do, at least  
you'll not appear tonight in  
trousers.

\*

\*

\*

\*

The MAID LEAVES. His smiles deserts him; he looks at his  
POCKET WATCH:

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)  
We're going to be late.

Nina fixes herself for another beat, then:

NINA FAWCETT  
Done.  
    (beat; showing herself)  
Well?

PERCY FAWCETT  
Rather lovely.

NINA FAWCETT  
"Rather lovely". Thank you! You  
look "rather" well yourself!

Percy nods. Then says nothing. She eyes him for a moment,  
then, turning back to the mirror:

NINA FAWCETT (CONT'D)  
All right, out with it. What's  
amiss?

PERCY FAWCETT  
I'll be the only man there tonight  
of my rank whose uniform is  
unadorned.

NINA FAWCETT  
My God, that again?

PERCY FAWCETT

The great Secretary Bryce will be  
in attendance.

(mocking voice; as a joke)

"Oh Major Fawcett, have you no  
medals? Oh no, Mr. Bryce--I've  
been quite busy training ancient  
militia men to point their rifles  
at tree stumps. So--no medals for  
me."

He sits down near her. She sits on his lap, KISSES him.  
Then she leans back.

NINA FAWCETT

Who's this Mr. Bryce when he's at  
home?

PERCY FAWCETT

The last man here upon whom we  
might possibly rely for  
advancement.

NINA FAWCETT

I see.

A beat. Then:

PERCY FAWCETT

(more serious now)

I'm getting older, Cheeky. And  
very impatient of lost years. I  
know the tokens are ridiculous. I  
do. But I think of our boy--we  
cannot close any doors to him.

NINA FAWCETT

(smiles gently)

Then let us be off.

7 INT. LORD BERNARD'S MANSION - BALLROOM - NIGHT 7 \*

The MUSIC CONTINUES. The camera BEGINS on a CLOSE SHOT of a  
WALTZING COUPLE, then PULLS BACK TO REVEAL:

A GALA for FRANZ FERDINAND, Archduke of Austria-Este and heir  
presumptive to the Austro-Hungarian throne. An enormous  
ballroom in a mansion, with tens of couples dancing in  
seeming unison, twirling around and around, almost like  
dolls.

CLOSE SHOT: THE DEER. Laid out... THE ARCHDUKE STANDS in a  
receiving line with OFFICERS. SHAKES HANDS, SMILING.

LORD BERNARD and BRIGADIER GENERAL SIDNEY VARNON THORNTON, forties, are here with him.      \*

ACROSS THE ROOM: PERCY AND NINA FAWCETT ENTER, their image reflected multiple times on a wall of mirrors. Fawcett nods greetings to his fellow officers; Nina SPEAKS GREETINGS in GERMAN to an officer from Austria as all women check out the handsome Percy...      \*

Fawcett and Nina move through the crowd. Many recognize them; random PARTYGOERS pass by, say hello.      \*

LORD BERNARD      \*

Good evening, Madame Nina...      \*

You're looking wonderful...      \*

Major... Welcome. So happy to      \*

have you here.      \*

The two acknowledge the hellos.

MOMENTS LATER

Percy and Nina are in the middle of the dance floor. They pose for a moment, about to start a waltz.

And then they start dancing to the rhythm of the Verdi. Fawcett and Nina are fine dancers, blessed with grace but also training.

ANGLE BACK ON THE CHIEF SECRETARY OF IRELAND, JAMES BRICE, here at the head of a receiving line. TROOPS ready the deer to present to the Archduke.

SECRETARY BRYCE

Your majesty--I present to you this fine animal, a gift from our government to yours, and a recognition of our shared history and mutual interests.

The ARCHDUKE BOWS IN GRATITUDE, ACCEPTS THE DEER. Bryce ushers the Archduke toward an antechamber. As he does, Bryce turns to Lord Bernard.      \*

SECRETARY BRYCE (CONT'D)      \*

Lord Bernard, we do appreciate the use of your magnificent home.      \*

LORD BERNARD      \*

Oh, it is my pleasure. We've seen far too little of this type of cheer these past few seasons.      \*

SECRETARY BRYCE

Yes, a fine showing by the men...  
By the way, who got the kill?

LORD BERNARD

(pointing him out)  
That would be Major Fawcett, Mr.  
Secretary.

SECRETARY BRYCE

Well then, invite him in for a  
drink!

Bernard gives a SLIGHT WAVE OF HIS HAND; then:

LORD BERNARD

(moves closer)  
A bit odd. And, may I say, not  
entirely... *fortunate* in his choice  
of ancestors.

SECRETARY BRYCE

(comprehending somehow)  
I see. Right, then...

FAWCETT AND NINA DANCE

Around and around. Fawcett SEES the OFFICERS STARING AT HIM, and he can TELL they are talking about him--and not in a flattering way, either. A LAUGH, a SNICKER...

HE IS DISRESPECTED, AND HE KNOWS IT.

They are toasting each other. Nina sees the line too as they dance and turn:

NINA FAWCETT

They're toasting the kill without  
you.

Fawcett looks, then turns back:

PERCY FAWCETT

Well, I am dancing with you. So  
I've got the better of the bargain.

An OLDER OFFICER, THOMAS FRANCIS BUSBY, cuts in:

THOMAS FRANCIS BUSBY

May I, Major?

PERCY FAWCETT

I'm afraid I've spoken too soon.

As is the custom, Fawcett bows gracefully, nods his assent, gives his wife to Busby, who is short and pudgy. \*

Nina and Percy lock eyes; they are not given chance to speak. Off Busby and Nina go, dancing. \*

Percy takes out a CIGAR. He LOOKS at Secretary Bryce and Lord Bernard and Sidney Thornton and the rest of the officers as they then enter a smaller antechamber. And the DOOR is CLOSED ON HIM. And US. \*

We TILT DOWN. PERCY BREAKS THE CIGAR in TWO.

8 EXT. FORT - OUTSIDE HORSE STABLES - DAY 8 \*

SUPERIMPOSE THE LEGEND: "APRIL, 1906".

Troops load ARTILLERY SHELLS onto CARTS which are dragged by horses. The shells are heavy; and the troops stand knee-deep in the muddy water. Fawcett is supervising an OFFICER: \*

PERCY FAWCETT

Each can contain no more than twelve shells, Corporal... \*

OFFICER

(to the grunts)

Come on! Put your backs into it! \*

The OFFICER CANES A GRUNT. Fawcett cannot hide his distaste. Turning his back to the troops, in the Officer's face, he grabs the cane: \*

PERCY FAWCETT

We lead the men--we don't beat them into submission! \*

The Officer registers this, his head sinking in shame.

A SOLDIER drops a shell; they holler in caution at one another. Then an OFFICER BARKS from behind: \*

BARKING VOICE

Fawcett! \*

Fawcett looks up: COMMANDING OFFICER SIDNEY VARNON THORNTON and THOMAS FRANCIS BUSBY. They approach him. Fawcett salutes. \*

PERCY FAWCETT

Sir!

SIDNEY VARNON THORNTON \*  
 You're off to London tomorrow. To \*  
 the Royal Geographical Society. \*

PERCY FAWCETT \*  
 Sir? The Royal Geographical--? \*

THOMAS FRANCIS BUSBY \*  
 YES, FAWCETT--SOMETHING WRONG WITH \*  
 YOUR EARS?!? \*

PERCY FAWCETT \*  
 No, sir! \*

SIDNEY VARNON THORNTON \*  
 Best bring your long johns. You \*  
 might well be off to the North \*  
 Pole. \*

THORNTON turns and leaves Fawcett standing there. ANGLE ON \*  
 FAWCETT as we GO TO: \*

9 EXT. LONDON STREET - DAY 9 \*

London. Busy, cluttered, noisy, dirty. We PAN TO REVEAL a  
 TOWNHOUSE in CENTRAL LONDON, with a sign in front: "ROYAL  
 GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY". Fawcett approaches, enters.

10 INT. RGS OFFICE - DAY 10

A big wooden space. Regal. Standing behind his desk: SIR  
 GEORGE GOLDIE. Goldie, sixties, with intense blue eyes and a \*  
 keen intelligence. Seated nearby: SIR JOHN SCOTT KELTIE, \*  
 also sixties. Fawcett enters. Goldie does not look up from \*  
 his notes. Keltie does, but says nothing. He merely clears \*  
 his throat, with no reaction for Goldie. After an awkward \*  
 beat, Percy KNOCKS: \*

PERCY FAWCETT \*  
 Sir? Major Fawcett--the War Office \*  
 sent me? \*

SIR GEORGE GOLDIE \*  
 Oh yes yes--come in! I am Sir \*  
 George Goldie. President of the \*  
 RGS. This is Sir John Scott \*  
 Keltie, our Secretary. \*

PERCY FAWCETT \*  
 (as they shake) \*  
 How do you do. \*

SIR JOHN SCOTT KELTIE  
Good morning, Major.

SIR GEORGE GOLDIE  
Our paths did not cross during your  
work here some years back.

PERCY FAWCETT  
No they did not, sir. I was likely  
consumed with my studies at the  
time.

SIR GEORGE GOLDIE  
Of course. Please, sit down...  
(F. does; a beat, then)  
You've gone on several missions in  
the past, I see?

PERCY FAWCETT  
Yes. I've served in Ceylon, and in  
Hong Kong as well. I've...not  
stayed in one place for very long.

\*  
\*

Goldie looks down at a stack of papers. Keltie speaks up:

SIR JOHN SCOTT KELTIE  
You also served in intelligence, in  
Morocco? Is that correct?

NO ANSWER from FAWCETT. Goldie looks to Keltie, vaguely in  
disgust:

SIR GEORGE GOLDIE  
Are you referring to the yellow  
document? The YELLOW document?

SIR JOHN SCOTT KELTIE  
I beg your pardon, sir. Let's pass  
on.

SIR GEORGE GOLDIE  
(beat; back to Percy)  
Your time in Ceylon--there are  
rumors you went Buddhist. Such an  
act would of course be seditious.

PERCY FAWCETT  
Sir, my record speaks for itself.  
No one can question my commitment  
to King and country.

SIR JOHN SCOTT KELTIE  
ARE you a Buddhist, Major?

PERCY FAWCETT

My experience in the Orient taught me that no religion is higher than truth. I make no apologies.

\*  
\*

A pregnant pause. Then Goldie leans forward:

SIR GEORGE GOLDIE

Major, what do you know about Bolivia?

PERCY FAWCETT

In South America, sir?

SIR GEORGE GOLDIE

That's right.

PERCY FAWCETT

Only what I've read.

Goldie chuckles. An atlas is put in front of Fawcett.

SIR GEORGE GOLDIE

Then you can't know very much. This's about as good a map of Bolivia as we have.

The map literally says "UNEXPLORED". Referring to the map:

SIR GEORGE GOLDIE (CONT'D)

Most of it's blank, as you can see. Nothing's really known of it at all. The rivers are all a guess. These are rubber centers here--very profitable. Some are even apparently quite lavish.

As Goldie forwards another book:

SIR GEORGE GOLDIE (CONT'D)

There is now considerable argument between Bolivia and Brazil, over what constitutes their borders. So fantastically high is the price of rubber that war could arise. Do you follow?

PERCY FAWCETT

I do, sir. But with respect--I'm not sure what it has to do with me. Sir.

SIR GEORGE GOLDIE

I'm getting to that.

Goldie moves closer to Fawcett, to the edge of the desk:

SIR GEORGE GOLDIE (CONT'D)  
Neither country will accept mapping  
done by the other, so they've  
requested *us* to act--as referee.

Keltie gets up, stands next to Goldie: \*

SIR JOHN SCOTT KELTIE \*  
As you completed your courses in \*  
mapping here with distinction, you \*  
came under our consideration.

PERCY FAWCETT \*  
Sirs--to be honest, my survey work \*  
was long ago. And I was...I was \*  
really hoping for a posting where I \*  
might be able to see a fair bit of \*  
action. \*

SIR GEORGE GOLDIE \*  
Oh, I do understand your concern-- \*  
we're aware you've never faced a \*  
shot fired in anger. But Major, \*  
this is far more than just survey \*  
work. It's exploration, in the \*  
jungle. The environment is \*  
brutally difficult. There's \*  
terrible disease and murderous \*  
savages. The journey may well mean \*  
your life. But should you succeed, \*  
such an undertaking could earn you \*  
soldierly decoration--AND even \*  
reclaim your family name. \*

Goldie leans back. Then: \*

SIR GEORGE GOLDIE (CONT'D) \*  
You know, we knew your father. \*

PERCY FAWCETT \*  
Did you. I did not.

SIR JOHN SCOTT KELTIE \*  
Terrible thing, a man's love of \*  
drink... And gaming... \*

SIR GEORGE GOLDIE \*  
But: as I say, success in this \*  
venture could change your lot. \*  
Considerably. \*

Fawcett looks back down at the map. "UNEXPLORED".

SIR JOHN SCOTT KELTIE  
Well, Major? What's it going to  
be?

ANGLE ON FAWCETT as he looks up. He SMILES.

11 EXT. NEAR THE FAWCETT HOME - BLUFFS - LATE DAY 11

ANGLE ON JACK, playing in the sand. WIDEN: Fawcett and Nina  
near him. As Fawcett stares at the kid: \*

NINA FAWCETT \*

He'll not know you when you return. \*

Fawcett nods. A beat. Then: \*

PERCY FAWCETT \*

You must protect him from the sort  
of schooling to which I was  
subjected. \*

NINA FAWCETT \*

(of COURSE!) \*

Our minds are as one on this, have  
no fear of that. \*

PERCY FAWCETT \*

(to himself; aloud) \*

I'll not have him caned for wearing  
the wrong frock coat... \*

NINA FAWCETT \*

Puggy-- \*

(beat) \*

I must tell you--I believe I'm  
going to have another child. \*

He turns to look at her directly. A half-smile: \*

PERCY FAWCETT \*

Another child...? \*

NINA FAWCETT \*

But this cannot distract you, or  
lead you to doubt my capacities.  
I'm an independent woman. And our  
children could have no better  
protector than their own mother. \*

PERCY FAWCETT \*

I do not doubt you. \*

(moves closer to her; \*

touches her abdomen) \*

(MORE) \*

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

The thought of you all will be my  
greatest inspiration. I swear to  
you, I shall succeed.

\*  
\*  
\*

12 INT. FAWCETT RESIDENCE - ARMY BARRACKS - EARLY MORNING 12 \*

Still dark. Fawcett is packed and ready to go. A SHOT OF HIS SUITCASES. Fawcett stands just outside Jack's bedroom. Turns around to see his wife. Nina's back is to us; she is about to put Fawcett's coat over his suitcase, but instead chooses to caress the coat with enormous tenderness. As though the coat were a living thing, a beautiful child...

She SLIPS a BOOKLET into his COAT. He comes up behind her, touches her shoulders. She whispers, afraid to wake up Jack:

\*  
\*

NINA FAWCETT

I've given you a book of poems, for  
your journey.

\*  
\*

He nods in appreciation. Matter-of-factly, without self-pity:

\*  
\*

NINA FAWCETT (CONT'D)

One more kiss, please. We may  
never meet again.

\*

But A VOICE interrupts:

JACK FAWCETT (O.C.)

Papa?

13 INT. JACK'S BEDROOM 13

Fawcett enters the bedroom, stands over his son. Also whispered:

\*  
\*

PERCY FAWCETT

It's still very early, my boy. You  
should go back to sleep.

JACK FAWCETT

Where are you going?

PERCY FAWCETT

Far away. You're to look after  
your mother.

JACK FAWCETT

I want to come.

Fawcett sits at the edge of the bed:

PERCY FAWCETT  
Darling, I'm afraid it's no place  
for children.

JACK FAWCETT  
Why?

PERCY FAWCETT  
Because there's great danger.

JACK FAWCETT  
Then why are you going?

PERCY FAWCETT  
We must all do our duty for King  
and country, first and foremost. \*

JACK FAWCETT  
Why?

PERCY FAWCETT  
Well...this is how we keep the  
world civilized.

JACK FAWCETT  
What is civilized? \*

Fawcett laughs at all the questions. Then:

PERCY FAWCETT  
Goodbye, darling.

JACK FAWCETT  
I want to come with you--

PERCY FAWCETT  
Perhaps someday you will. I love  
you most deeply.

Nina enters from behind them.

NINA FAWCETT  
Jack, give your father his present.

Jack grins, reaches under his pillow, gives his father a  
small box. Inside: a gold ring. It's all Fawcett can do to  
not burst into tears. He begins to get choked up:

PERCY FAWCETT  
It's--it's lovely.

An inscription is on it: NEC ASPERA TERRENT.

JACK FAWCETT

What do the words say, Papa?

PERCY FAWCETT

It means, "difficulties be damned".

(beat)

Thank you so much for my beautiful gift. When I see you next, you'll be ready to sit a horse.

NINA FAWCETT

Now give your father a proper kiss so that he may be on his way...

They boy sits up; Fawcett hugs, kisses him tightly as Nina looks on. TEARS BEGIN TO STREAM DOWN FAWCETT'S CHEEKS, but he SMILES TO THE CHILD THROUGH THE TEARS. A SHIP HORN:

14 EXT. OCEAN - OCEAN LINER - DUSK 14

A ship steams on the ocean. The S.S. PANAMA.

15 INT. OCEAN LINER - HOLD 15

Fawcett sits in the cramped, dirty hold, which is filled with toughs and scoundrels. Meanwhile, he looks clean-cut in a starched white collar, focused intently on a SPANISH LANGUAGE BOOK. Passengers drink whiskey, spit tobacco, play dice. And sing in a drunken stupor.

A PICKPOCKET is reaching around, attempting to filch something out of Fawcett's hanging coat.

Fawcett SEES this in the REFLECTION of a MIRROR that a man is using for shaving, across from his bunk. He wraps his hands around a handkerchief, and with great speed, he pulls it around the neck of the Pickpocket and yanks him forward. Pulls out his REVOLVER: \*

PERCY FAWCETT \*

I should think twice if I were you. \*

The PICKPOCKET simply withdraws his hand. A BIG FIGHT breaks out between two DRUNKS in the game. Fawcett turns to look. ANOTHER MAN, clutching a rifle, standing with his arm around a woman who might well be a prostitute, catches Fawcett's eye. The Man takes a SWIG from a FLASK. Fawcett goes back to his reading... \*



HENRY COSTIN

Had to make certain you were up to the task, sir! I'm not looking to get killed because you're too long in the tooth!

\*  
\*

PERCY FAWCETT

You're speaking rather loudly, Mr. Costin.

\*  
\*

HENRY COSTIN

(softer)  
Sorry, sir.

\*  
\*  
\*

Beat.

\*

PERCY FAWCETT

And what if I were?

\*  
\*

HENRY COSTIN

Were what, sir?

\*  
\*

PERCY FAWCETT

Too long in the tooth.

\*  
\*

HENRY COSTIN

Ah--well, then I would assume command. Sir.

\*  
\*

(beat)

I wasn't planning to hurt you.

PERCY FAWCETT

I assumed as much--you're carrying that ridiculous rifle.

Fawcett backs up, puts away his knife. Said as a command:

\*

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

Where's your paperwork.

\*

Costin reaches into his coat, pulls out a stack of paper, along with a small whiskey flask. And a small, tarnished medal with a ribbon. Fawcett looks at all of it.

\*

HENRY COSTIN

It's a medal. For bravery, against the Boer.

(beat)

I'm skilled, with both pistol and rifle, as you can see.

PERCY FAWCETT

(as he looks at the papers)  
I myself have never been in war.

\*

HENRY COSTIN

It was a fine time, sir. Gave us a  
real taste of glory.

\*  
\*

PERCY FAWCETT

You've a family, Mr. Costin?

\*

HENRY COSTIN

None at all.

\*

PERCY FAWCETT

Good. Nothing to shed.

HENRY COSTIN

But you do, I take it then?

\*

PERCY FAWCETT

Yes. A wife and a boy, with  
another child on the way.

\*  
\*

HENRY COSTIN

(vaguely challenging)  
And you'll have no difficulty  
shedding them?

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

PERCY FAWCETT

Mr. Costin, my reputation as a man  
rests entirely on our success. You  
shall find me capable of every  
sacrifice.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

HENRY COSTIN

Well I must say, I for one am fair  
itching for action.

\*  
\*

PERCY FAWCETT

I'm certain you won't be  
disappointed. You'll need every  
last bit of fortitude you've got.  
Therefore, I must insist--

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Fawcett takes Costin's whiskey flask.

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

You'll need no more Dutch courage.

\*

As Fawcett pours it into a nearby sink in the pantry, sotto:

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

[It's] destroyed many a fine man.

The alcohol runs along the sink bottom. We MATCH CUT TO:

18 EXT. BOLIVIAN PLAIN - DAY 18

A TRAIN rockets through the area.

19 INT. TRAIN 19

A crummy and cramped and loud interior. Filled with Bolivian and indigenous peoples. Fawcett talks inaudibly with a Bolivian, then walks toward a seat, holding a map in his hand. He avoids a FRUITSELLER (who is ad-libbing: "*chirimoyas, grenadillas!*").

Costin is seated, READING A NEWSPAPER. THE HEADLINE: "SHACKLETON, MURRAY TO SOUTH POLE". A PICTURE OF SHACKLETON and JAMES MURRAY. REMEMBER MR. MURRAY'S FACE. A Woman with a DOG in a basket stands right near Costin when he moves to accommodate Fawcett; the dog bothers him by continually sniffing his ear.

Fawcett joins him in the empty seat, holding a map and a smaller piece of paper. He seems concerned, remote.

HENRY COSTIN

There a problem?

PERCY FAWCETT

We received a cable, in Asuncion. The political situation appears to have worsened and there's been a change in plan.

(to the map)

We'll need to redirect our line of approach--our first priority must now be to map the Verde River and find its source. It forms a critical part of the border between Bolivia and Brazil.

HENRY COSTIN

It's rather far from here, is it not?

PERCY FAWCETT

It is.

(unfolds the map)

Our survey route for the river would begin here, at, at--Fazienda Jacobina.

HENRY COSTIN

Yes, I've come across it in my reading--it's meant to be quite enchanting.

PERCY FAWCETT

(looking at his telegram)

We're to meet a Corporal Manley there. He's contacted an Indian guide and hired the rest of our crew.

(back to the map)

We must chart our progress with as much survey detail as possible. Hopefully any mail from our loved ones will beat us to the spot.

(as he folds the map)

Time is of the essence. War is at stake and the environment will not be friendly.

Costin battles the dog in the basket; it keeps sniffing his ear:

HENRY COSTIN

We're to stop a war, you and I?  
The two of us, and a couple of mules?

PERCY FAWCETT

(speechless for a moment;  
the odds ARE long; then:)

Mr. Costin--we're going to have to depend on each other. Because neither of us will survive this alone.

HENRY COSTIN

I understand perfectly, sir. However, this DOG will not survive this train ride.

(seeing Fawcett reading  
the journal)

What's that you're reading?

PERCY FAWCETT

It's a poem. For our journey.

Costin looks over at the book. CLOSE SHOT ON HANDWRITING ABOVE THE TEXT: "TO PERCY, WITH LOVE, NINA." We TILT DOWN to THE TEXT, and we HEAR:

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

"THERE'S no sense in going further--  
it's the edge of cultivation,  
So they said, and I believed it--"

20 EXT. ANDES MOUNTAINS - DAY 20

A wide shot. Our two men look like ants. Over this, we HEAR the PREVIOUS SCENE continue, and we CUT TO A SERIES OF SHOTS of our men walking in MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN, then HILLS, then GRASS... Now, NINA FAWCETT's VOICE. SHE IS READING IT:

NINA FAWCETT (V.O.)

"Till a voice, as bad as  
Conscience, rang interminable  
changes  
On one everlasting Whisper day and  
night repeated--so: 'Something  
hidden. Go and find it. Go and look  
behind the Ranges--  
Something lost behind the Ranges.  
Lost and waiting for you. Go!'"

21 EXT. MOUNTAINS - LATER 21 \*

A different kind of vegetation--GREEN. The SOUNDS begin to change, too--much less wind, much more active with insects... \*

Fawcett is sweating. It is starting to get hot. There are rivulets that all seem to be flowing downhill and gaining steam. Costin stops to take notes in a survey book. \*

BACK TO FAWCETT: THERE IS OVERGROWN VEGETATION BLOCKING THE VIEW on the path. Fawcett HACKS AWAY with his machete. \*

He STOPS. SOMETHING SEEMS TO DAWN ON HIM. \*

PERCY FAWCETT \*

Mr. Costin-- \*

Then he starts to HACK AWAY AGAIN! \*

With an astonishing furor. WE PAN WITH HIM with each BLOW. His FEET are in mud; seeing this: \*

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D) \*

Mr. Costin! \*

HENRY COSTIN \*

What is it...? \*

Costin approaches quickly. Finally, a clearing. REVEALING: AMAZONIA. \*

A VAST GREEN. The JUNGLE, which engulfs the riverbanks of the magnificent AMAZON RIVER. It is beautiful and beguiling, and so enormous it fills one with awe. \*

Costin comes up behind him, looking over Fawcett's shoulder.  
He is blown away by the vista.

HENRY COSTIN (CONT'D)

My God...

PERCY FAWCETT

(almost to himself)

It's even grander than one could  
have imagined...

Stifling the briefest of smiles, Fawcett goes right back to  
putting up a steely front. He starts going through his  
things. But he cannot hide his excitement. As he rummages:

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

The manual insists we keep only the  
essentials now and live off the  
land, as best we can.

HENRY COSTIN

Only the essentials, yes.  
(to himself)  
Cricket whites, begone...

22

INT. JUNGLE

22    \*

The camera MOVES THROUGH THE GROWTH, the POINT-OF-VIEW of our characters...

The SOUNDS of the jungle are loud and yet oddly soothing. It should be clear to us from the noises that nature has taken over. BUZZING of unidentifiable creatures...

SERIES OF SHOTS

Of monkeys and birds and snakes and spiders and frogs...

Fawcett, Costin ENTER THE JUNGLE in SILENCE... ONLY THE RUMBLE OF THUNDER... THUNDER, but no RAIN. YET.

23

INT. JUNGLE - LATER

23

Fawcett and Costin's feet sink in mud; a bright YELLOW SNAKE slithers around Fawcett's feet. Costin's eyes widen at the sight of it; Fawcett steps over it with studied calm... Sweat pours off their faces; terrible HEAT... SWARMING INSECTS... SAUBA ANTS... TICKS... CHIGGERS...

Percy Fawcett BREATHES heavily but HACKS away with his machete. Costin is nearby, slightly ahead, HACKING AWAY at the JUNGLE. Occasionally, Fawcett stops to check a map, takes out his surveying equipment. He calls out:

PERCY FAWCETT  
Twenty-nine degrees, 16 minutes,  
south of the equator.

HENRY COSTIN  
Twenty-nine, and sixteen!

PERCY FAWCETT  
(as he starts hacking  
again)  
Tell me, Mr. Costin! What induced  
you to brave this place?

HENRY COSTIN  
Well...I'd studied the natural  
sciences in Africa, and let's just  
say I'd had about enough of the  
army...  
(beat; he stops)  
You know, I'm beginning to miss  
that dog on the train.  
(back to hacking)  
At least I prefer it to all the  
creatures currently crawling down  
my neck.

SMACK. Fawcett hits his own neck. BUGS, which force the men constantly to be swatting their arms and necks. Then Costin stops. Freezes.

PERCY FAWCETT

\*

(as a joke)

Every one we kill is one less  
obstacle in our path!

(preoccupied; to self)

Some of them are edible, though.

\*

HENRY COSTIN

Major--

\*

PERCY FAWCETT

(brought back to reality)

Yes, Mr. Costin--what is it?

(beat)

Why are you not proceeding?

Costin points down. Fawcett SEES a track of FOOTPRINTS.  
Looking around, they SPOT:

THROUGH THE TREES AND THE BRANCHES AND THE SHRUBS: INDIANS.  
STILL. SILENTLY WATCHING THEM.

Fawcett stares STRAIGHT INTO THE EYES of ONE OF THE INDIANS.  
He then gestures to Costin to KEEP MOVING. He and Costin  
both put their hands on their guns as they begin to plod ever  
slower through the greenery.

THE INDIANS OBSERVE FAWCETT AND COSTIN with an astonishing  
stillness; almost like statues.

Fawcett SEES A SEA OF SHRUNKEN HEADS, hanging from trees.

HENRY COSTIN  
(whispered)  
*[Are they] cannibals?*

Fawcett shakes his head just a touch, as if to say, "I do not  
know", and signals to Costin to keep walking... \*

24 EXT. JUNGLE - NIGHT 24

BATS OVERHEAD... THEN SILENT AGAIN.

AND THEN FAWCETT AND COSTIN HEAR IT: OPERA MUSIC.

At first, it is distant. Then, less faint, and as they  
progress, one can even tell the piece: from Gaetano  
Donizetti's DON PASQUALE. Both men wonder if they're crazy.

They reach a clearing, slowly but surely making their way  
through the gauntlet of Indians. And what do they see but...

25 EXT. CLEARING 25

A THATCHED-ROOF MAKESHIFT STAGE that is serving as an "OPERA  
HOUSE". Here, in the middle of the jungle. Positively  
surreal. Fawcett turns to the Indians, who are surrounding  
the two men. In imperfect Portuguese:

PERCY FAWCETT (SUBTITLE)  
This is Fazienda Jacobina?  
(beat)  
Do you understand?

They don't answer. Instead, they back up, melting away back  
into the jungle. Fawcett enters the:

26

INT. "OPERA HOUSE"

26

Fawcett surveys the scene. Even though it's merely a large clearing, the stage is, oddly, MAGNIFICENTLY APPOINTED with antiques from Old Europe. They're scattered about.

Pathetic space, but you'd never know it listening to the singers and the orchestra. A smattering of people dressed to the nines in the audience--wood benches in the middle of the rainforest.

In the back, Indians sit, quietly, listening to the music. A bizarre sight indeed. A DIMINUTIVE LATINO MAN dressed in a tuxedo approaches Fawcett. In Portuguese:

DIMINUTIVE LATINO MAN (SUBTITLE)  
(cheerful, almost like an advertisement)

Welcome to the Grand Opera House of beautiful Fazienda Jacobina--thanks to our Baron De Gondoriz and the Inca Mining Company. Do you have your ticket?

\*

27

EXT. FAZIENDA JACOBINA - RAINY AND THUNDERING NIGHT

27

SUPERIMPOSE: "FAZIENDA JACOBINA PLANTATION, BRAZIL. JUNE, 1906".

The RAIN begins to FALL. HARD. FAR FROM THE ELEGANT PLACE THEY'D EXPECTED. Fawcett enters this nightmare of a rubber town, with Costin right behind.

We PASS TREES with PANS attached to their TRUNKS. LEAKING WHITE FLUID. RUBBER. A DARK-SKINNED MAN is collecting the substance...

\*  
\*  
\*

Fawcett sees that this is not much more than a strip of mud with bamboo huts with one notable exception: a RUBBER BARON'S LARGE HOME, which sits higher on a hill overlooking the city. Shockingly miserable. FIRES all over--in cans, campfires, fires incinerating garbage and remains...

The presence of the Inca Mining Company is clear, with their corporate logo painted on several of the huts.

Fawcett turns, eyes: RAILROAD TRACKS that lead to nowhere. BOLIVIAN ARMY OFFICERS line the fronts of the huts, "on the nod," drunk, all of it. A TEXAN GUNMAN stands out, watching.

Running down the "road," comes: BRITISH OFFICER ARTHUR MANLEY, early twenties, young and cheery but slightly frail. Fawcett is still stunned by the misery as Manley begins:

ARTHUR MANLEY

Major Fawcett? Is that you?? It  
MUST be you!

(MORE)

ARTHUR MANLEY (CONT'D)  
(introducing himself)  
Lance Corporal Manley, sir--liason  
from the Governor General!

\*  
\*

PERCY FAWCETT  
How do you do... This is Corporal  
Costin.

Costin nods.

ARTHUR MANLEY  
You weren't expected for another  
fortnight! I...hate to be the  
bearer of bad news, but--we  
received a telegraph. The Border  
Commission has cancelled your  
mission!

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

PERCY FAWCETT  
Cancelled!? What on earth do you  
mean!?

\*  
\*  
\*

ARTHUR MANLEY  
What I've said, sir! It's become  
far too dangerous--there've already  
been more than a few skirmishes  
between the Bolivians and  
Brazilians, and they won't be able  
to reprovision you as planned!

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

PERCY FAWCETT  
Where is the government office?

\*  
\*

ARTHUR MANLEY  
Government?  
(morbid smile)  
Sir, I'm afraid you've left  
"government" behind a long time  
ago. We're grateful for the road!

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

PERCY FAWCETT  
Then Mr. Manley, you send back a  
telegram--that we will not stand  
down and we shall proceed as  
planned! We will CONTINUE and see  
this through!

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Manley looks at him for a moment.

\*

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)  
Are you WITH me, Corporal?

\*  
\*

ARTHUR MANLEY  
Yessir.

\*  
\*

As Fawcett looks at Costin, as if to say, "My God, this is a terrible place": \*

PERCY FAWCETT \*  
Now what about an Indian guide--did \*  
you get us a guide? \*

ANGLE ON MANLEY as he stops. He turns stone-faced.

ARTHUR MANLEY  
I...I did, sir.

Beat.

PERCY FAWCETT \*  
Well where is he? \*

A VOICE, in Portuguese, then English:

A VOICE (O.S.)  
Cattle! Coming through!

28 EXT. HUT - OPEN VERANDA - NEAR THE BANKS OF THE RIVER 28

A LONG LINE of YOUNG MEN, INDIANS, lumbering, HEADS DOWN, in CHAINS, through the TOWN. Getting off a SMALL RIVERBOAT that's beached. Our men are here: Fawcett, Costin, Manley. Whispered to Fawcett:

ARTHUR MANLEY  
He's one of them now, sir. Name's Tadjui. The company took him.

Fawcett steps out to observe. Guards with whips motivate the line of men by beating.

PERCY FAWCETT  
Who are they?

ARTHUR MANLEY  
Slaves, sir.

HENRY COSTIN  
Slaves?!?

ARTHUR MANLEY  
Kidnapped from the jungle and  
brought here for the rubber  
company.

HENRY COSTIN  
(a sad laugh; sotto)  
I don't believe it...

Fawcett is appalled too, his face souring instantly. Costin seems in shock.

PERCY FAWCETT  
Who's in charge here?

Manley points to the HOUSE, on the HILL:

ARTHUR MANLEY  
That would be the Baron de  
Gondoriz, sir--up there.

Fawcett begins to walk toward the house. Costin runs up to Fawcett. In his ear:

HENRY COSTIN  
Where're you going?

PERCY FAWCETT  
He's got the men we need. \*

Fawcett takes several steps out, into the rain. To Manley:

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)  
Bring the Indian up to the house.  
Tell them we'll pay.

ARTHUR MANLEY  
Yes sir.

MANLEY SPEAKS TO THE GUARDS. A BRAZILIAN GUARD CLAPS his HANDS TWICE, yells out some Portuguese. An Indian, TADJUI, twenties, in chains, is BUTTED, HARD, by a rifle.

He does not react. He then steps out from the huge line as though it were voluntary.

29

INT. RUBBER BARON HOUSE

29

BARON DE GONDORIZ, forty, a stocky and imperious sort, sits on a CHAIR, surrounded by furs and with a Latino woman serving him drink and food. The Brazilian Infantry is here, surrounding (guarding?) him. An INDIAN CRANKS A VICTROLA. DE GONDORIZ'S CHILDREN are here, too, as is his wife. They are dressed in WHITE SUITS and are serious-faced and silent. Champagne is poured like water, and food abounds. It's a real contrast with the street below.

Gondoriz is an imposing figure, to be sure. He has a pet JAGUAR, who resides alongside him. The jaguar seems particularly peeved at Costin, for no reason. It growls at him, and Costin's eyes bulge at the ferocious "pet"...

PERCY FAWCETT

(smiles)

Baron, we're from the British Army. We're very sorry to interrupt your meal. We're to be venturing down the Rio Verde as peacekeepers and will be in need of some of your men.

\*  
\*

No response from the Baron.

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

In exchange, I'm prepared to tell my government of your cooperation.

BARON DE GONDORIZ

You are from England?

\*

PERCY FAWCETT

Yes, we are.

BARON DE GONDORIZ

I've been to London, many times. I have seen the opera there--have you seen my opera house?

\*

PERCY FAWCETT

We did, on our way into town. Congratulations--it was quite impressive.

\*

BARON DE GONDORIZ

I have the best singers from all over Europe. And my conductor, he is sick now, but he trained with the great Hubay.

(beat)

(MORE)

BARON DE GONDORIZ (CONT'D)

Before I come here, I tell myself I  
will not be a savage.

(MORE)

BARON DE GONDORIZ (CONT'D)

And so I bring civilization to the jungle. I brought my family here, and I raised my children to be cultivated people. I am from Portugal, from Sintra. Someday I will return there.

(beat; wistful)

Someday.

The Texan ENTERS with Tadjui, who is CHAINED AROUND THE NECK.

TEXAN GUNMAN

You're goin' upriver, are ya?

PERCY FAWCETT

We are indeed. For surveying.

\*

TEXAN GUNMAN

(smiles)

Well, ain't nobody comes back from up there. Ever.

(looks at the Indian)

This the one you're looking for?

Fawcett eyes him for a beat, then:

PERCY FAWCETT

Yes, we'd like very much to employ him.

TEXAN GUNMAN

He's a rebellious son of a bitch, I'll tell you that. He's been beaten. And he'll be beaten again.

PERCY FAWCETT

All the better I should take him off your hands, then.

Tadjui, Fawcett exchange glares. Fawcett approaches Tadjui:

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

Do you speak English?

TEXAN GUNMAN

We taught 'em. [To] Civilize 'em.

\*

\*

TADJUI

I am speaking little.

PERCY FAWCETT

And you know the river?

Tadjui nods.

\*

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D) \*  
(to Baron De Gondoriz)  
What will you take for him and any  
four men he chooses?

TEXAN GUNMAN  
You got money?

PERCY FAWCETT \*  
I--promise highly favorable  
treatment from my country.

BARON DE GONDORIZ  
Your country is not what it used to  
be.

Fawcett is momentarily at a loss for words.

BARON DE GONDORIZ (CONT'D) \*  
It offends you to negotiate with \*  
me. I see this is true. \*

PERCY FAWCETT \*  
No-- \*

BARON DE GONDORIZ \*  
Please--do not embarrass yourself. \*  
I prefer to speak openly when it is \*  
possible; do you not? \*

(before Fawcett can \*  
answer:)

You come here to make maps. And \*  
why is that? So that there may be \*  
peace. What is peace? Peace means \*  
my business will flourish--I will \*  
flourish. You may hold your nose \*  
when you accept my help, yet \*  
without my help you know you cannot \*  
succeed. The closer you will look \*  
at the truth, the more disgusted \*  
you will grow--not at me but at \*  
yourself. In the end, peace means \*  
only that nothing will change. So \*  
I will help you because you will \*  
make sure nothing will change. \*

Then De Gondoriz notices something. Points to Costin's  
rifle.

BARON DE GONDORIZ (CONT'D)  
That is very beautiful.

TEXAN GUNMAN \*  
There ain't a whole lot of those in \*  
these parts, Baron. A fine piece. \*

Costin seems reluctant. Fawcett looks to Costin, takes him  
aside. Costin is impatient, whispers to Fawcett:

HENRY COSTIN  
It's a family heirloom, sir. It's  
a Henry--my father used it against  
the Zulu.

PERCY FAWCETT  
Consider it your gift to the King.

HENRY COSTIN \*  
You do realize this goes to pay for \*  
a *slave*.

PERCY FAWCETT \*  
(to the others) \*  
Would you excuse me, please. \*

Fawcett leads Costin outside: \*

A30

EXT. RUBBER BARON HOUSE

A30

Under an overhang, on the porch. Starts quiet, but heated: \*

PERCY FAWCETT \*  
We'll hire as many of them as we \*  
can and set them free when we're \*  
done. \*

Fawcett starts to turn back; Costin stops him:

HENRY COSTIN \*  
When we're DONE? Are we \*  
slaveowners now? \*

PERCY FAWCETT \*  
No. As I say, we'll pay them and \*  
treat them as any other in our \*  
party. \*  
(beat) \*  
It's the most we can do under the \*  
circumstances. \*

HENRY COSTIN \*  
I'll not dirty my hands just \*  
because it suits our needs. \*

PERCY FAWCETT \*  
Would your hands be any cleaner if \*  
we left them here to die? We're \*  
the only hope they've got. We need \*  
them and we'll take them with us. \*

HENRY COSTIN

But we've got to report it--

PERCY FAWCETT

(loses a bit of patience)

To whom, Corporal? To WHOM? Have you taken a look around--do you see where we are?

(beat)

I promise you, their story shall not go untold if we survive. I promise you that.

Costin realizes Fawcett is right. He steps forward, and swallowing his pride, he unslings his rifle. Muttering:

HENRY COSTIN

Just as it's always been. One group gets the sugar, the other one gets the shit.

Costin walks past Fawcett, reentering:

B30 INT. RUBBER BARON HOUSE

B30

Costin approaches the Texas Gunman as Percy reenters:

HENRY COSTIN

(holding up the rifle; a hint of sarcasm)

Here. Is your very own handmade rifle. A Martini-Henry. Well done.

The Texas Gunman takes the rifle, looks at it, aims it. Then passes it to the Baron. The Baron looks to Costin, Fawcett, aims, pulls the trigger. CLICK. Then:

30 EXT. BANKS OF THE RIVER - CAMPFIRE - DAWN - CLEAR SKY

30

\*

Fawcett stands by the river. Ties a rope for a boat. WIDEN TO REVEAL: THE INDIAN TADJUI, and he has brought FOUR OTHER LEJO INDIANS with him. They work on the rafts, passing the drink *kachasa* between them. TADJUI, shirtless, has SCARS on his BACK, which Fawcett notices. \*

A SACK OF MAIL is dropped at Fawcett's feet by a local. He sifts through it, finding a letter from his WIFE. \*

FLASH CUT TO: \*

A CLOSE SHOT OF NINA \*

As SHE SITS AT HER DESK, writing. Their SON JACK, in the \*  
background. We STILL HEAR the SOUNDS OF THE JUNGLE. \*

CUT BACK TO: \*

He is about to open it. Merely pockets it. He then walks \*  
over to Tadjui. \*

PERCY FAWCETT \*

Can you show me where we're to \*  
pitch camp tonight? \*

Tadjui traces his finger along the river on the map, then \*  
stops several inches into a blank area. HE TRACES THE SHAPE \*  
WITH HIS FINGER. SEEMS TO KNOW EVERY CURVE. \*

TADJUI \*

Long time on the river before stop. \*

Fawcett looks out, at the RIVER... \*

33

EXT. RIVERBANK - DAY - LATER

33

We then SEE: A GROUP OF SCRUFFY MEN, building rafts with \*  
sticks and twine, shoving *estopa* (beaten palm fiber) into \*  
cracks in the rafts. Costin is working with the group, but \*  
MANLEY SEEMS TO KNOW THEM ALL: \*

HENRY COSTIN \*

This's our party then? \*  
(Manley nods, so:) \*  
It's a bloody desperate lot you've \*  
got us. \*

ARTHUR MANLEY \*

They're as dependable as can be \*  
found here. I'm the only one \*  
who'll pay them. \*

The MEN: DAN, a flamboyant drunk, does a dance as he loads \*  
the raft. WILLIS, a capable Jamaican cook, loads the FOOD, \*  
in large baskets. THREE OTHER WHITE MEN, DESPERADOS, who \*  
look like Jurgen Prochnow's more frightening brothers. \*  
Mustachioed. One is an Austrian named URQUHART. Arthur \*  
Manley has loaded an ACCORDION onto the boat. Fawcett steps \*  
near the men, securing a parcel loaded improperly. He \*  
interrupts one of them trying to tighten: \*

PERCY FAWCETT

(as he tightens the rope;  
then looks at all of  
them)

The river shall be our home for the  
next two years and we'll not turn  
back. Twelve hours a day and no  
less.

MUSIC UP: A SWEET AND MELANCHOLY SONG, PLAYED BY INDIANS.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*



ARTHUR MANLEY

Right, sir.

Manley takes out his ACCORDION. The sounds ECHO, all over the space. MANLEY PLAYS a BRITISH WAR SONG. The accordion sounds like a full orchestra here...

36

EXT. THE AMAZON JUNGLE - THE RIVER - DAY

36

EERIE QUIET. SURVEYING BOOKS: THE MAP IS BEING FILLED IN, slowly but surely. TILT UP: Fawcett is taking photographs. The Indians are assembled in one corner of one of the rafts. Tadjui plays a ZAMPONA (the Incan PAN FLUTE).

Fawcett finishes his work, and folding the tripod legs, observes the mailbag. He reaches into his pocket and opens up the LETTER from his wife. Unwrapping it, a PICTURE FALLS OUT. A BABY, along with JACK and NINA. A NEWBORN with his family. Costin picks it up:

HENRY COSTIN

A new one, Major? A boy? \*

PERCY FAWCETT

It must be so.

Fawcett takes the picture, looks at it.

HENRY COSTIN

Congratulations.

PERCY FAWCETT

Thank you, Mr. Costin.

He then POKETS THE PHOTO. Costin eyes him. FAWCETT TAKES THE PHOTO OUT AGAIN.

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

The boy's name is "Brian".

HENRY COSTIN

Major, if I may venture a suggestion-- \*

Fawcett sees Costin point to the photo, then to his pocket. Fawcett stares at Costin, then, deciding Costin is right, NODS ONCE AND PUTS THE PHOTO BACK in his POCKET:

PERCY FAWCETT

Right, Mr. Costin...

37 EXT. RIVER - MOMENTS LATER

37

The two RAFTS travel one right behind the other, as the overgrowth gets lower and lower over the banks of this narrowing AMAZON TRIBUTARY. They approach an abandoned steamer on the river: a German ship, the ANTONIA. From Hamburg, painted on its back.

As this is happening, Urquhart is on the flat raft, attempting to catch fish with the net. With his thick accent:

URQUHART

Nothing again! Not ONE fish! It's a desert--a green desert!

PERCY FAWCETT

Pull it in, we'll try further down.

Fawcett steps onto the raft, to help Urquhart pull the net in.

SIMULTANEOUS, on the *batelon*:

ARTHUR MANLEY

What on earth's she doing all the way out here?

\*  
\*

PERCY FAWCETT

(turning back)

She's come to load rubber, no doubt.

(to Costin)

Get us closer, Mr. Costin! Maybe they'll have news, or food for us!

HENRY COSTIN

Looks abandoned to my eye!

As he steers, Costin NOTICES a BLACK SPOT IN HIS SKIN. UH-OH.

DAN

(as they get closer, seeing "HAMBURG")

It's German! I say we go aboard and have a beer--I bet they have real German beer, fresh from the cask!

But, as they get closer, they see something macabre: A LONE MAN, maybe dead, maybe not, sits on the top of the boat, still. Nude. Staring at them, not moving. The hull's riddled with arrows.

URQUHART

Is he ALIVE? Try to talk to him!  
See where they are from in--

And he FREEZES. FAWCETT, next to him, is momentarily bewildered. THEN: HE SEES AN ARROW in his BACK.

URQUHART SPINS OFF THE RAFT, TANGLED IN THE FISHING NET. \*

ALL OF A SUDDEN: FLYING ARROWS. FEROCIOUS. AND SPEARS.  
Coming from the trees. We can't SEE any other INDIANS, but they're there, in the forest.

The flurry does not stop. All the men duck for cover. PANIC. The arrows come with tremendous and frightening force, some of them penetrating inches deep into the rafts' wood.

Costin pushes with his long BAMBOO pole. The rafts begin to drift in an altogether different direction, away from the arrows.

38 EXT. CENTER OF THE RIVER 38

Fawcett IS YANKED INTO THE RIVER by Urquhart, who is dying and has tangled the two of them in the fishing net. The arrows continue to fly. \*

The RAFT TILTS DANGEROUSLY with the weight shift.

Costin tumbles as well, but stays aboard, making sure THE MAPBOOKS survive. He loses his JOURNAL book and other personal items in the mayhem, however, as the bag of photographs falls overboard:

HENRY COSTIN  
God damn it! GET THEM OUT! \*

Manley attempts to retrieve the net-- \*

39 INT. UNDERWATER 39

Fawcett is underwater, with Urquhart atop him as the two struggle with the rope. FAWCETT untangles his feet from the rope and pulls himself up, attempting to grab Urquhart as he rises to the surface. One thing gets in the way: \*

PIRANHAS.

Piranhas start nipping at the men. The piranhas focus on Urquhart, who was cut by the arrow--the blood is attracting them. The feeding has begun to turn into a FRENZY.

Getting pinched by the fish as well--though with nowhere near the ferocity, for he has no open wound--Fawcett is forced to abandon Urquhart and PULLS HIMSELF ALONG THE ROPE.

COSTIN GRABS FAWCETT and helps pull him onto the RAFT.



Dan is hallucinating; he mutters about his hallucinations  
aloud: \*

DAN \*  
Months on the river! And--so many \*  
beautiful flowers... \*

Dan has MAGGOTS in his ARM. \*

DAN (CONT'D) \*  
My maggots... Are they...they're my \*  
friends! \*

He SMILES. \*

Fawcett sees Costin, who hides his own skin blemish, on his \*  
arm. Costin makes eye contact, pulling down his sleeve: \*

HENRY COSTIN \*  
It's nothing at all... \*

Percy moves to Tadjui: \*

PERCY FAWCETT \*  
Are we close? \*

TADJUI \*  
Many week to go. The river still \*  
strong. \*

Fawcett looks at his men, then back to Tadjui: \*

PERCY FAWCETT \*  
We won't survive another attack. \*  
If there are more dangerous tribes \*  
ahead-- \*

TADJUI \*  
The river is death. \*  
(beat) \*  
But you will see--many people live \*  
here once. Beautiful city of gold \*  
and maize. Even older than \*  
English. With roads and bridges. \*

Percy SNAPS to attention. He looks at Tadjui as though he is \*  
completely mad. \*

TADJUI (CONT'D) \*  
Deep, in the forest. All gold. It \*  
blaze, like fire. \*

Fawcett turns away, devastated by the prospect that Tadjui is \*  
also going mad. Under his breath: \*

PERCY FAWCETT

*Christ...*

TADJUI

Conquistador try to find it, many  
try. But the white man never find  
it...

Reaching for his RIFLE, Fawcett LOADS IT. POCKETS SPARE  
SHELLS. TADJUI STARTS TO SCREAM:

TADJUI (CONT'D)

I feel sorry for you, English!  
Soon I am free! For the Espanol  
and you, there is no escape from  
jungle--only death!

WILLIS

The river's coming back! Pitching  
camp!

UP AHEAD: A CLEARING.

42

EXT. BY THE CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

42

The members of the group sit with their rifles aimed into the  
darkness. They see the TWINKLES from the eyes of animals out  
into that dark. The noises of the jungle frighten them  
beyond belief. Then the jungle goes SILENT. Then the noises  
pick up again. Terrifying. Even the hounds are petrified.

Fawcett sits near the fire, rifle aimed outward into the  
dark. Costin, without his Martini-Henry rifle, is covered in  
blankets. HUSHED, SHIVERING.

PERCY FAWCETT

(to Costin, whispered)

Mr. Costin? Mr. Costin, are you  
alert?

HENRY COSTIN

(a morbid joke as he  
shivers)

I am, feeling just fit as a fiddle.  
How you have managed to avoid any  
maladies is utterly beyond me.

PERCY FAWCETT

(approaches Costin, still  
whispered)

Even the Indian's gone mad now.  
(MORE)

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)  
He's been going on about gold  
cities. We should be prepared for  
anything.

HENRY COSTIN  
Then I would suggest you keep your  
firearm close and ready, sir.

PERCY FAWCETT  
(nods; then)  
I'd like you to read this to me.  
If you can.

Fawcett reaches into his pocket. Takes out many envelopes.  
Sifts through the letters. Hands one to Costin:

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)  
We may be at the end now and I  
believe it's time.  
(beat)  
I'm afraid it's quite unbearable  
for me to read it myself. Would  
you please?

Costin wordlessly takes it from Fawcett, staring at Fawcett.

HENRY COSTIN  
(beat)  
"My dearest Puggy--"

PERCY FAWCETT  
Feel free to summarize.

HENRY COSTIN  
I was hoping you'd say that...  
She's moved the family to Devon,  
and in your absence is promoting  
your name. Your new son Brian is  
doing well. And your older son  
Jack is excelling, she says in all  
ways...

Fawcett is devastated hearing about all this. Starts to tear  
up. Costin holds up the letter:

HENRY COSTIN (CONT'D)  
Shall I continue?

Fawcett gently takes the LETTER from Costin's hand. HE PUTS  
THE LETTER IN THE FIRE.

Fawcett WATCHES IT BURN FOR A MOMENT. We SEE the SCRIBBLED  
WORDS ON THE PAPER as they get CONSUMED BY THE FIRE.

Fawcett watches the letter burn. He shakes his head at the preposterousness:

PERCY FAWCETT

I see my son's face in my dreams  
now.

(sotto)

What a mistake to come here...

He GRABS HIS HEAD, each palm of his hand on each side of his head. Closes his eyes in ANGUISH. As Fawcett wipes tears from his face:

HENRY COSTIN

Major--I'm not one for speeches.  
And if I should die here, I know my  
name dies with me. But I have  
fought as a soldier, and I have  
tasted victory. What have you  
tasted--besides your unrealized  
dreams? If you allow yourself to  
perish here, you will have achieved  
nothing. Now that my fever has  
come on, I may well not survive.  
Indeed, I am of little use in my  
current state. But you must  
persevere.

(a sardonic smile)

And may I add, if you should manage  
to take me with you, I'll not  
protest.

PERCY FAWCETT

(he smiles as the words  
sink in; checks his  
chronometer)

I shall endeavor to do both, Mr.  
Costin.

(louder, to the group)

Six hours rest. Dawn's  
approaching.

Dan, collapsed at the base of a tree nearby, begs Fawcett:

DAN

Please, Mr. Fawcett--I'm not *fit*.  
I, I think I might be near my end  
in this bloody hell.

PERCY FAWCETT

You can walk, can you not?

Dan can, but does not answer. Fawcett takes out his BIG KNIFE. Moves up to Dan, puts his blade to Dan's throat:

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

If we die, we'll die on our feet--  
unless you prefer the knife.

\*  
\*  
\*

43 EXT. RIVER - ON THE RAFT - NARROW CAVERNS 43 \*

DRIZZLING RAIN. CLOSE SHOT ON FAWCETT. HE'S GOT A WIDE-EYED STARE, with DARK and DEEP-SET EYES.

Fawcett may be frail, but he is at least mentally in control of himself--unlike the others. Costin is either unconscious or DEAD.

PERCY FAWCETT  
Mr. Costin...? Mr. Costin?

Fawcett is visibly upset that Costin does not answer. Tadjui prays aloud... Manley is shivering terribly and covered with maggots; HE IS STICKING HIS TONGUE OUT, TO CATCH THE RAIN AS IT FALLS FOR HYDRATION. Dan is muttering to himself, aloud; he also sticks out his tongue for the rain's water. Even the dogs have gone totally lethargic, and the carcass of one of them slides into the river.

Willis rummages through the food baskets. Nothing but a couple of rotten fruit. He begins to cry:

WILLIS  
No more food! Ain't nothing left--  
NOTHING--

ONLY A ROTTEN BANANA REMAINS. Willis charges for it; Dan and he FIGHT OVER IT BRIEFLY. SEEING this: Fawcett gets up, approaches the men:

PERCY FAWCETT  
Stop it--get--we're not savages!

Tadjui stops playing the zampona. He stands.

DAN  
We're leaving our bones here! And  
for what?!? A map??? We're not  
even lookin' for gold!

Dan STEPS BACK, ARMED. He approaches Fawcett, dangerously close, with his RIFLE POINTED AT FAWCETT:

DAN (CONT'D)

There could be war *already* and we  
wouldn't even know it! Have you  
ever considered that?!

Dan turns to the others. He is ready to CHARGE. MUTINY!?!?

DAN (CONT'D)

Even if we get there, we ain't  
makin' it back with nothing in our  
bellies!

(turning back to Fawcett,  
still directed to others)

Let's have at him!

Fawcett looks at the others. With the exception of Costin  
and Manley, both of whom now LOOK UNCONSCIOUS if NOT DEAD,  
they all SEEM READY TO CHARGE AT HIM. Fawcett seems to steel  
himself.

Dan TAKES A STEP FORWARD, and Fawcett's eyes widen. Then  
FAWCETT CATCHES SIGHT OF COSTIN--WHO HAS TURNED TOWARD US,  
HOLDING HIS PISTOL! (Dan has his back to Costin and cannot  
see.)

Dan takes a step TOWARD Fawcett, ready to do away with him,  
when--COSTIN FIRES! Dan CURLS OVER with a STUNNING VIOLENCE,  
BLOOD POURING FROM HIS EAR. Dan CUPS his ear with his hands,  
howling in pain.

HENRY COSTIN

The next one I'll put between your  
eyes!

\*

AND THEN: wordlessly, TADJUI POINTS. The others turn to  
look, one by one.

EMERGING: THE SOURCE OF THE VERDE RIVER. The men are frozen  
in awe.

44

EXT. LAND NEAR THE SOURCE OF THE VERDE RIVER

44

The water dribbles from a small cliff, down into the base of  
the river. It is a beautiful sight. Fawcett slowly takes  
out his surveying equipment and the camera.

HENRY COSTIN

(proud, almost giddy)

We made it! No one's ever been  
here before! No one! NO ONE!!!

PERCY FAWCETT

Prepare for the group photograph,  
Mr. Costin...

Costin takes the camera and plants it on a TRIPOD for THE GROUP PHOTO, but he is so depleted he can barely move his limbs. The others weakly get into position for the photo. Dan weeps as he slides into his position.

Manley looks around, then calls out:

ARTHUR MANLEY  
Major... We've, we've lost the  
Indian--

FAWCETT SPINS AROUND. TADJUI IS INDEED GONE. As are the \*  
other INDIANS. Fawcett sees footprints, leading off into the \*  
jungle. Manley seems primed to track the footprints when \*  
Fawcett stops him.

PERCY FAWCETT  
Mr. Manley! He got us here, didn't \*  
he...?

Fawcett hears a subtle CRUNCHING NOISE in the brush. ALL ARE  
STARTLED. Takes a quiet step forward.

FAWCETT holds his finger to his lips--"QUIET!" And then ducks  
into the brush. Costin approaches, sees something, or at  
least thinks he does. Turns to Manley, who is standing next  
to him. Whispering:

HENRY COSTIN  
Am I dreaming it? \*

ARTHUR MANLEY  
No--I see it too. \*

LONG-LENS CLOSE SHOT on a DEER.

SEVERAL YARDS AWAY, about 30, deeper into the forest. The  
deer is oblivious. Fawcett has his gun trained on it.

The men now surround Fawcett with the gun. Fawcett is  
silently getting ready to fire. The deer is chewing grass.  
Manley is praying to himself. Dan, also praying but aloud,  
is still panicking:

DAN  
Please... Lord... It's our only  
chance!

WILLIS  
(whispered)  
Shut up!

CLOSE SHOT ON FAWCETT'S EYE as he readies the shot. CLOSE  
SHOT ON THE DEER--which seems to spot FAWCETT.

THE DEER GALLOPS AWAY JUST AS FAWCETT FIRES THE GUN. A TUFT  
OF SMOKE. The deer is gone.

DAN  
(breaking down)  
God damn you, you missed! We'll  
starve for sure!

Without answering, Fawcett charges up to where the deer was.

45

EXT. FOREST

45

The deer is here. On the ground.

DEAD. Fawcett hit it square in the head. The others have  
now joined him around the animal.

HENRY COSTIN  
I couldn't have done that better  
myself.

\*  
\*

The men start to drag the deer to the riverbank. And onto  
the raft.

PERCY FAWCETT  
Start a fire. We'll--

Then FAWCETT FREEZES. He has SEEN SOMETHING. WHITE AS A  
GHOST. Costin approaches, sees it too.

WE CUT TO REVEAL: COVERED WITH MOSS, unmistakably: a SMALL  
STATUE, perched atop a ROCK.

FAWCETT WALKS TO IT. REACHES OUT. TOUCHES IT.

THEN TAKES SEVERAL STEPS FORWARD, as if to continue the  
MISSION DEEPER INTO THE JUNGLE.

HE SEES: PAINTINGS, on ROCKS. He looks to the ground,  
SPOTTING SHARDS OF POTTERY, STATUES. He SEEMS ALMOST LIKE A  
RABID DOG. Under his breath:

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)  
Good Christ--

HE SPINS AROUND TO THE OTHERS:

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)  
There's...pottery--right beneath  
our feet!

Fawcett pockets it, starts to dig.

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)  
It's all over--*deep*, in the  
ground...

Then he takes a few more steps. Fawcett runs his fingers along a ROCK PAINTING.

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

(sotto)

My God, he was right--

(beat)

The Indian was right--

He starts putting all the pottery in his pockets...  
RUMMAGING IN THE MUD, he is covered like a PRIMATE:

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

(to the others)

The Indian spoke of this!

(beat)

He was bloody right! HE WAS BLOODY  
RIGHT!!!

(charges up to Costin)

Mr. Costin, you said no one'd ever  
been here before--

HENRY COSTIN

(stunned)

Yes, Chief. I--I did--

PERCY FAWCETT

No *white* man had, Mr. Costin. NO  
WHITE MEN!

A BEAT as Costin lets it sink in. FAWCETT TURNS BACK TO THE  
BRUSH. A HOUND FOLLOWS HIM. Through some vines, he SEES a  
carving in stone--or so he thinks. About to reach out to it.  
The hound leads the way a bit--

WHEN--A VICIOUS, ENORMOUS BLACK PANTHER CHARGES OUT OF THE  
JUNGLE, RIGHT TOWARD THEM! It TAKES the DOG in its TEETH...

Fawcett and the men BOLT, some yelling in fear, away from the  
panther.

46

EXT. RIVER - ON THE RAFT

46

CLOSE SHOT ON FAWCETT as the mouth of the RIVER RECEDES...

PERCY FAWCETT

We'll follow the watershed and pray  
it brings us out.

(beat)

If we ever make it back, the world  
must know what we've found here...

HENRY COSTIN

That deer better have more meat on  
its bones than we do...

\*

47 EXT. BOLIVIAN GOVERNMENT BUILDING - BRITISH EMBASSY - DAY 47

A magnificent building in busy downtown La Paz. BUSTLING.

48 INT. BOLIVIAN GOVERNMENT BUILDING - DAY 48

A group of very comfortable British soldiers are at work at their desks as one BRITISH SECRETARY types at the front desk. Smiles, joking. Then they STOP.

Percy Fawcett walks into the building. He looks and smells like hell, filthy and unshaven and shaking like a leaf from malnutrition. Hair completely out of control, his beard at epic length.

He approaches an official (CECIL GOSLING) at the front desk. The official, whose nose crinkles up--presumably at the stench of Fawcett--seems bewildered. Fawcett SHAKES LIKE A LEAF; is he mad? \*

CECIL GOSLING  
May I...help you, sir? \*

PERCY FAWCETT  
Tell me please--is there war,  
between Bolivia and Brazil? I'll  
fight if I'm needed.

CECIL GOSLING  
(baffled) \*  
War? No, sir--there's no war. Is  
there something we might do for  
you?

PERCY FAWCETT  
My name is Major Percy Fawcett. If  
you could, please contact my family  
through the Royal Geographical  
Society, in London. \*

SLAM! Fawcett DUMPS a series of frayed map notebooks on the desk. He also EMPTIES HIS POCKETS OF POTTERY SHARDS. A BRITISH OFFICIAL ("SIMON BEAUCLERK") with his back to us overhears this. He seems interested, turns. Approaches. Meanwhile, Fawcett is hurriedly throwing everything on the desk: \*

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)  
I've the maps here, they're,  
they're all completed...  
(MORE)

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

And, and I found these, these bits  
of pottery, and statues, in the  
jungle--a great discovery...to be  
pursued...

SIMON BEAUCLERK  
Major Fawcett?

\*

Fawcett struggles even to nod:

PERCY FAWCETT  
Yes...?

ENTERING, almost crawling in now, behind Fawcett: COSTIN,  
MANLEY, WILLIS.

\*

SIMON BEAUCLERK  
I believe I got your orders on my  
desk just last week. You were  
supposed to arrive here in July  
1908?

\*

Fawcett looks up, sees a calendar on the wall: "AUGUST."

PERCY FAWCETT  
(devastated)  
I'm, I'm so very sorry, it's  
August... We did the best we could-  
-most members of our party did not  
survive.

SIMON BEAUCLERK  
Major, it's August 1907. You're  
eleven months *early*. You've mapped  
the entire Verde tributary a year  
ahead of schedule.

\*

HE AND THE OTHER OFFICERS ARE ASTONISHED. Another British  
Officer, seeing how frail Fawcett looks, runs to get a chair  
and positions it right behind Fawcett:

PERCY FAWCETT  
I can *stand*, thank you.

A whole host of officers now seem to realize what's going on  
and begin to gather around Fawcett.

CECIL GOSLING  
Sir, should you like a bed? Some  
food, or a bath perhaps?

\*

PERCY FAWCETT  
Yes. For ALL of us.

CECIL GOSLING  
Yessir. Of course.

\*

\*

PERCY FAWCETT

And I'd like you to send a telegram  
to my wife, Mrs. Nina Agnes Fawcett  
--HELL VERDE CONQUERED.

\*

And then FAWCETT'S EYES ROLL BACK INTO HIS HEAD. He  
COLLAPSES...

PRE-LAP a MARCHING BAND playing an UPBEAT SONG:

CUT TO:

49

EXT. PORT - DOCK - LATE DAY

49

It is late afternoon and the port is PACKED with people. A  
band plays a MARCH and the mood is an absolute celebration.

A BOAT is at the DOCK. OFF THE BOAT COMES PERCY FAWCETT. A  
CHEER. A HERO'S WELCOME.

He LOOKS THROUGH THE CROWD. He looks for someone...

The CROWD TRIES TO TOUCH HIM, DOES TOUCH HIM.

PUSHING HER WAY toward him: NINA FAWCETT, HOLDING A BABY.  
It's BRIAN. Her other HAND holds the hand of her son JACK,  
now significantly older. To the children, with a huge smile:

NINA FAWCETT

There's your father--everyone's  
here for him! He's the hero of the  
day!

PERCY makes his way through the crowd and the two finally  
spot each other. He PUSHES. She PUSHES. As the shoving  
continues, a RANDOM MAN AT THE PORT:

RANDOM MAN AT THE PORT

Major Fawcett! You've raised the  
Union Jack for all the world to  
see!!!

Fawcett finally gets to her. A beat of silence as they look  
at each other, then:

PERCY FAWCETT

(through happy tears)  
You're the most beautiful woman  
I've ever seen.

NINA FAWCETT

You're different. And yet exactly  
the same.

THEY EMBRACE, KISS. Intimate, through tears:

PERCY FAWCETT

I've missed you so much--though God  
knows, I tried not to...

\*  
\*

They separate. Fawcett looks down. Jack looks at him with  
total dispassion:

\*  
\*

JACK FAWCETT

Are you my father?

\*  
\*

PERCY FAWCETT

I am indeed, my son!

\*  
\*

Percy hugs him so very tightly and bursts into tears BUT:

\*

JACK HAS VIRTUALLY NO REACTION. PERCY REGISTERS THIS; the  
boy COULD CARE LESS. It is AWKWARD; PERCY'S SMILE  
DISAPPEARS. So: standing next to Percy is Brian:

\*  
\*  
\*

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

And this is my little Brian...? My  
little Brian!! Come here--come!

\*  
\*

CUT TO:

CLOSE SHOT of an INVITATION. The Royal Geographical Society  
invitation, to a dinner celebrating Maj. Percy Fawcett. At  
the home of the Honorable Mr. James Murray...

50 EXT. JAMES MURRAY MANSION - LONDON - NIGHT 50

A beautiful structure. A PARTY, with MUSIC.

51 INT. MURRAY MANSION - FOYER 51

Two receiving lines: one for women, one for men. PERCY AND  
NINA FAWCETT enter and immediately are greeted by members of  
their own gender, but extremely WARMLY. (This should be in  
marked contrast to the film's opening gala.) Fawcett is THE  
TOAST OF THE TOWN. Sir George Goldie SWALLOWS him up, moves  
him away from Nina. Nina and Percy exchange bemused looks as  
he is pulled away:

SIR GEORGE GOLDIE

Percy! Come... Meet our host. He  
is most anxious to meet you. I  
must say, he is the most marvelous  
of men. A person of  
considerable... *resources*. And of  
the finest stock.



JAMES MURRAY

Yes, certainly, there's much more  
territory to be charted!

(MORE)

JAMES MURRAY (CONT'D)

You know, I am a biologist and explorer myself--I was second-in-command to Mr. Shackelton on his Antartica expedition.

PERCY FAWCETT

I don't think there's anyone here who's not well aware of your achievements, Mr. Murray. You've distinguished yourself with great bravery.

JAMES MURRAY

(a bit of false modesty)  
Oh, it's nothing compared to Amazonia. Surveying the Amazon's always been a great goal of mine.

PERCY FAWCETT

I would hope the RGS continues its pursuits. But I believe mapmaking should be of secondary interest now. I witnessed many archeological sightings of great significance.

Some guy interrupts MURRAY. He is WILLIAM BARCLAY, thirty-one (more from him later):

WILLIAM BARCLAY

Mr. Murray!

Murray turns to talk to him; Sir John Scott Keltie moves in. To Fawcett; sotto:

SIR JOHN SCOTT KELTIE

My friend--your recent exploits have opened every door to you--so I would suggest keeping such sightings to yourself. Of course, no one here would dispute you believed you saw it. But a trip like that--very hard on the mind. Very hard.

The evening changes now for Fawcett. He DARKENS.

PERCY FAWCETT

Sir John, my mind is perfectly fit--and thank heavens, still open.

Fawcett steps away from Keltie and eyes JAMES MURRAY, holding court. Others around him LAUGH at a joke we cannot HEAR. Then, re a painting behind him:

JAMES MURRAY

I have painted these works. All of  
the home is my work--these  
sculptures as well...

\*  
\*

53

INT. FAWCETT LONDON HOME - FAWCETT'S OFFICE - DAY

53

\*

It is FILLED with artifacts--from Amazonia, from Ceylon, from other exotic locations: spears, Indian blankets, pottery, Incan attire. And the Buddha. The TICK-TOCK and GONG of a grandfather clock...

Young JACK excitedly leafs through his father's SCRAPBOOK, wearing a piece of Amazonian Indian headgear. He is fascinated. Toddler Brian pulls out some Indian necklaces.

\*  
\*

Percy enters:

\*

PERCY FAWCETT

\*

Boys--these are not your toys. If  
you wish to play you may go  
outside. If you wish to remain,  
you must sit quietly.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

We PAN OVER TO REVEAL Nina entering the room. She moves to give Brian his milk. A beat, then:

\*

NINA FAWCETT

You might think to donate much of  
this to the RGS. They can preserve  
it better than we can.

\*

PERCY FAWCETT

\*

(looks at her; beat)  
I'm not going to do that.

\*  
\*

NINA FAWCETT

(surprised, confused)  
Why not?

\*

PERCY FAWCETT

\*

They believe I'm crazed, prone to  
hallucination. They value only the  
survey work. They do not respect  
my archeological discovery at all.

\*

NINA FAWCETT

(re: pottery on the desk)  
Then I suggest you either ignore  
them or you prove your case, in  
public. You have those pieces as  
evidence. You can show them.

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

(MORE)

NINA FAWCETT (CONT'D)

And if we must, we shall find *more* evidence.      \*

(beat)

Then we shall find more evidence.      \*  
As they will noy yet allow a womamn      \*  
through the doors of their august      \*  
establishment, we will look      \*  
elsewhere and prove your case in      \*  
public.      \*

ANGLE ON FAWCETT. His FACE LIGHTENS.

PERCY FAWCETT      \*

If they only knew... you would be      \*  
the true cause of their envy.      \*

54      INT. TRINITY COLLEGE LIBRARY - DUBLIN - ARCHIVES      54

It is the dark and vast archives of the famed library.  
Fawcett is in the stacks, looking through materials.

SUPERIMPOSE: "FEBRUARY 1909."

He takes out some FOLDERS, walks over to the big table where  
Nina sits, her hands full of ancient paper. Fawcett sits  
down across from her, begins to look through the items in his  
own folders.

PERCY FAWCETT

Arrow drawings, meant to represent  
fractional distances, evidence of  
advanced mathematics. It's  
incredible...

(to Nina)

I should have engaged the Indians  
more directly--they no doubt had a  
great deal to teach me.

No response from Nina, who had been sifting through another  
set of old and frayed documents, letters, writings. She  
SEEMS TO HAVE STOPPED. Staring at one YELLOWED PIECE OF  
PAPER, for seconds on end.

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

Cheeky?

(beat)

Cheeky, did you hear me?

Nina does not look over at Fawcett. She does not move, just  
stares at that paper. At last, Nina looks at Fawcett.

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

What is it?

NINA FAWCETT

I believe you have got your proof.

At that moment, the CAMERA TILTS DOWN to REVEAL THE YELLOWED  
DOCUMENT. Then we HEAR:

55

INT. ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY - AUDITORIUM

55

The room is PACKED with dozens of scientists and explorers from across Europe. CIVILIANS line the BALCONIES. In the first level, we NOTICE that MEN sit with each other, and what few WOMEN there are sit in a separate section, fanning themselves.

PERCY FAWCETT is in front of the room, near JAMES MURRAY; NINA SHOWS UP, sits in the WOMEN'S SECTION. \*

HENRY COSTIN and ARTHUR MANLEY enter, all smiles, and go to their seats. SIR JOHN SCOTT KELTIE, the secretary of the RGS, and SIR GEORGE GOLDIE are next to Fawcett, in great humor. \*

SIR GEORGE GOLDIE  
Revel in this, my dear boy. You  
will relive it with your children  
until the end of your days. \*

PERCY FAWCETT  
Yes, Sir George. I shall try. \*

Keltie has stepped up to the podium and is banging on the hammer: \*

SIR JOHN SCOTT KELTIE  
Gentlemen, good afternoon. \*

HOOTS, HOLLERS, CHEERS. WILD APPLAUSE.

(The MEETING IS LIKE A ROWDY BRITISH PARLIAMENT MEETING, with interruptions and yelling par for the course.)

SIR JOHN SCOTT KELTIE (CONT'D) \*  
I should like to introduce one of  
our brothers, whose achievements  
are well-known here and not  
inconsiderable--the Honorable Mr.  
James Murray!

ROUSING APPLAUSE. A BEAMING James Murray stands:

JAMES MURRAY  
I met a remarkable man but a few  
months ago upon his return from a  
place no one here has ever  
ventured. \*

(MORE)

JAMES MURRAY (CONT'D)

Major Percy Fawcett has demonstrated--to me, at least--that there is a place where the explorer can go forth and exhibit perseverance, energy, courage, forethought, and all those qualities of an explorer of the times now passing away. Gentlemen, I give you...MAJOR PERCY FAWCETT!

As Fawcett stands, amidst cheers, we overhear a whisper from William Barclay:

WILLIAM BARCLAY

Now for fairy tales from the resident Buddhist!

PERCY FAWCETT

My esteemed colleagues...it is now my firm belief that Amazonia is far more than the green desert many of us had supposed. I am proposing a that Amazonia contains a hidden civilization--one that may well predate our own.

MURMURS. SKEPTICISM. The room is RESTLESS. Interrupting, STANDING in the CROWD:

WILLIAM BARCLAY

Major Fawcett, I am Mr. William Barclay, of Bedford. I have been in South America.

PERCY FAWCETT

Mr. Barclay.

WILLIAM BARCLAY

To be clear: are you insisting on mythical kingdoms of gold? Those fantasies lured the Conquistadors to destruction--

PERCY FAWCETT

SIR--it was the Conquistadors and WE who have been destroying Amazonia. This is a crime that must be stopped. I have seen with my own eyes evidence of their civilization and I assure you it is real--

RANDOM SCIENTIST

What is your point?

PERCY FAWCETT

Perhaps it is too difficult for some of you to admit. We, who have been steeped in the bigotry of the Church for so long, cannot give much credence to an "older civilization"--particularly one created by a race the white man has so brutally condemned to slavery and death. YET WE MUST ENGAGE WITH THIS RACE, TO COME TO KNOW THEM AND LEARN FROM THEM, UNDERSTAND THEIR CUSTOMS AND LANGUAGES--

WILLIAM BARCLAY

Savages, in Westminster Abbey!

LAUGHTER. Percy, shouting the first word:

PERCY FAWCETT

HENCE your disrespect--but I ask you, what is at stake? If we may learn of a city where one was considered impossible to exist, it might well write a whole new chapter in human history. Man would be shown as a conqueror of his environment and not a slave to it!

Outright BOOING now. Fawcett shouts over the boos:

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

CONSIDER MY EVIDENCE! My sightings of statues and archeological finds!

Fawcett HOLDS UP A PIECE OF POTTERY:

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

Antiquities as sophisticated as any in Asia or Europe, in the middle of the jungle!

RANDOM SCIENTIST #2

Pots and pans, pots and pans!

Many in the ROOM begin to chant, "POTS AND PANS!" Costin, who is finding all of this most amusing, leans forward, cups his hands around his mouth and screams:

\*  
\*  
\*

HENRY COSTIN

Shut your hole!

\*  
\*

Then LAUGHS RIOTOUSLY at his own outburst. Fawcett  
continues, himself most amused at the riot he's causing:

\*  
\*

PERCY FAWCETT

(yelling above the crowd)

AND after my return from the  
jungle, I have examined a signal  
document dating from the  
Conquistadors.

(MORE)

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

It states explicitly the discovery of a lost city in Amazonia! Uncovered earlier this week, a copy in the archives of Trinity College in Dublin. Its original from Rio De Janeiro, written by a Portugese soldier. "Historical account, large, hidden ancient city, 1753. We came upon ruins of an ancient city, bedecked with gold. Stone archways, roads, temple, ancient symbols."

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

WILLIAM BARCLAY

El Dorado!

\*

PERCY FAWCETT

No, gentlemen--I call it "Z"--the ultimate piece of the human puzzle! It is there and we must find it!

\*  
\*  
\*

James Murray stands. Shouts, pointing:

JAMES MURRAY

MR. FAWCETT! I SAY WE RETURN! WE WILL GO AND FIND THE GLORY!!! WHAT SAY YOU?!?

FAWCETT BEAMS. HE POINTS BACK TO MURRAY:

PERCY FAWCETT

MR. MURRAY, I WILL MEET THAT CHALLENGE! I WILL GO BACK!

Fawcett looks around the room. Which begins to explode.

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

MR. COSTIN! I SEE YOU, SEATED UP THERE!

Costin stands, POINTING DIRECTLY AT FAWCETT:

HENRY COSTIN

MR. FAWCETT! THAT JUNGLE IS HELL-- BUT--

(smiles)

BUT ONE KIND OF LIKES IT! I WILL RETURN!

PERCY FAWCETT

Mr. Manley! What say YOU?!?

ARTHUR MANLEY

I WILL INDEED, SIR! I AM WITH YOU!

\*

NINA stands, CLAPPING. ANGLE ON HENRY COSTIN and ARTHUR MANLEY, here too, as they stand on their feet, applauding. JAMES MURRAY is basking, a KING here. Others JEER, however. \*

Slightly humbled, William Barclay SITS DOWN. \*

Percy Fawcett remains standing at the podium, determined, now even somewhat amused by the insanity he's caused... \*

56 INT. FAWCETT LONDON HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT 56 \*

Percy and Nina, in bed. Dark. A beat. They are touching each other's hands. It should have the mood of being post-coital. \*

It is raining outside. After a beat: \*

PERCY FAWCETT \*  
 I have such high hopes, Cheeky... \*  
 (beat) \*  
 Mr. James Murray has added \*  
 immeasurably to the luster of our \*  
 mission. And...with his \*  
 participation, I genuinely believe \*  
 we may have acquired the keys to \*  
 immortality. \*

ANGLE ON NINA as she ponders mentioning something. And then:

NINA FAWCETT  
 (readies herself)  
 I...do believe I am quite ready to  
 accompany you on your next journey  
 as well.

Fawcett is surprised and flummoxed: \*

PERCY FAWCETT  
 What...?

NINA FAWCETT  
 The children will be off to school  
 by the time it would begin. And  
 I've learned to read the stars and  
 navigate, and become very well-  
 versed in the history of the  
 region.  
 (beat)  
 After all, it was I who found the  
 document.

PERCY FAWCETT  
 (dumbfounded; stuttering--  
 with a laugh)  
 That would be--impossible. It's  
 not a place at all for a woman.

\*

She sits up:

\*

NINA FAWCETT  
 Not a place? We believe firmly in  
 the equality between us.

\*

So does he, now:

\*

PERCY FAWCETT  
 Equality, yes--of course. But in  
 mind, not in body. The rigors of  
 such a trip would be beyond your  
 imagination.

She turns away from him, turning onto the edge of the bed. A  
 beat. Then, with her back to him:

\*

\*

NINA FAWCETT  
 I believe it is generally  
 acknowledged that the pain a woman  
 experiences in childbirth far  
 exceeds anything a man must endure.

PERCY FAWCETT  
 This is not about childbirth--

NINA FAWCETT  
 What do you know of childbirth?  
 Have you witnessed a minute of it,  
 much less endured it?

\*

\*

\*

He gets up, out of the bed, walks to face her. Kneeling:

\*

PERCY FAWCETT  
 Cheeky--the jungle is years of hard  
 work and experience in the art of  
 soldiering. It's about maggots in  
 your skin, and deadly snakes, and  
 disease. I love you and I could  
 not bear that.  
 (beat)  
 The children need their mother.

\*

\*

\*

She gets up, off the bed, walks to her dresser. He STANDS,  
 does not approach her (instead, staying close to the bed).

\*

\*

NINA FAWCETT

Somehow I was able to bear the dangers you faced, the years you were gone. This way, we might be together--

\*

PERCY FAWCETT

You're my wife. I need you here, not as a tentmate in need of constant care. Be reasonable.

She turns to him, flush with anger:

\*

NINA FAWCETT

You will throw "reasonable" in my face?

PERCY FAWCETT (SIMULTANEOUS)

I'm simply speaking the truth--

She approaches him, strong and evincing a centeredness:

\*

NINA FAWCETT

Was it reasonable to stay here and struggle to provide for the children while you wandered the jungle? Now you've no relationship with them whatsoever. And you have given no thought to my aspirations.

\*

\*

\*

He turns away from her, his hand slicing the air as he makes his points:

\*

\*

PERCY FAWCETT

Men and women have each performed their roles since the beginnings of time. This is a cornerstone of our civilization. A man does not take his wife into the most dangerous place in the world on a whim!

\*

NINA FAWCETT

I did expect more understanding from you and I am disgraced by your ignorant posture!

\*

Young JACK enters. He stares at the quarreling couple. He GRABS ONTO HIS MOTHER'S LEG with a FEROCIOUSNESS:

\*

\*

NINA FAWCETT (CONT'D)

I'm all right, darling. Your father and I were just having a discussion.

Jack will not let go of his mother as he STARES at HIS FATHER: \*

NINA FAWCETT (CONT'D) (to Jack) It's late, Jack. Return to your bed. I will come tuck you in in a moment. \*

Jack won't budge.

JACK FAWCETT Mother, I love you. \*

NINA FAWCETT JACK! PLEASE! \*

The child finally lets go and leaves the room. She turns back to Percy. A LONG BEAT. Then she moves to him, takes his hand. \*

NINA FAWCETT (CONT'D) I've not prepared myself for the jungle, it is true... \*

They come together. Softly, emotional: \*

NINA FAWCETT (CONT'D) (emotional; sotto) I couldn't bear that you might think my dreams ridiculous... \*

THE SOUNDS OF THE JUNGLE BEGIN TO BUILD. LOUDER AND LOUDER. \*

SMASH CUT TO:

57 EXT. THE AMAZON JUNGLE - RAINING 57

SUPERIMPOSE: "MATO GROSSO REGION, BRAZIL. 1912". \*

The party hacks away. Fawcett, Costin, Manley, two Indian men, and James Murray, bringing up the rear. Two MULES, two HORSES, three DOGS. Fawcett leads and is ferocious, hacking as if he were swatting bees, with a giant machete in one hand and a map in the other. (Fawcett is looking slightly native.) \*

PERCY FAWCETT (calling out) One hundred twenty-one miles until Oviedo's last marking! (to Costin) (MORE)

Costin has stopped, is examining himself. \*

HENRY COSTIN  
Damn these things...

Fawcett then looks down at Costin's arm. He's got MAGGOTS eating his flesh. And an INECTION which has begun in his nostrils--ESPUNDIA. FAWCETT PAUSES. \*

HENRY COSTIN (CONT'D) \*  
My nose now, too. Don't YOU ever  
get so much as a bee sting?

PERCY FAWCETT  
(still to Costin; jokes)  
Mr. Costin, do you not know I have  
not my equal for virtue in the  
service? The insects honor this!

Fawcett is immediately on the move again, slides down a muddy path toward the RIVER. Way behind him: Murray is struggling. The weight of the backpack.

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D) \*  
Where's Mr. Murray? \*

ARTHUR MANLEY \*  
Bringing up the rear, Chief. \*

Calls out: \*

PERCY FAWCETT  
Mr. Murray!

A VOICE FROM WAY BEHIND: MURRAY:

JAMES MURRAY  
Yes, Major Fawcett!

PERCY FAWCETT  
How are you managing?

JAMES MURRAY  
(huffing and puffing)  
Very well, Major! Acquiring many  
samples! But--but my pack's  
getting quite heavy! Perhaps...I  
ought to leave some of my  
accoutrements behind! \*

PERCY FAWCETT \*  
You don't want to be ill-equipped  
for the journey ahead! You'll need  
all you can carry!

JAMES MURRAY

Of course! I'm speaking merely of  
my extra clothes! They're slowing  
me down a touch, that's all!

(MORE)

\*  
\*

JAMES MURRAY (CONT'D)

I'm sure to be moving better if I  
might lose them!

Fawcett looks back at Murray, who is lagging way behind:

PERCY FAWCETT

Very well--when we get to the  
river. But you MUST keep one  
change of clothes and your  
mattress!

HENRY COSTIN

Bugger probably wishes he were back  
on the South Pole...

Fawcett stops. Turns around:

PERCY FAWCETT

(almost peeved at Costin)  
Mr. Costin, he's proven his valor  
beyond doubt when you and I were  
wet behind the ears.  
(beat)  
He'll pull his weight soon enough.

HENRY COSTIN

And what weight.  
(sotto)  
He'll wind up bringing us down with  
him, I tell you...

Fawcett continues to chop away. The group reaches the  
riverbank.

58 EXT. THE AMAZON RIVER - CLOUDY DAY

58

The Group is in canoes. Quiet, except for Manley:

\*

ARTHUR MANLEY

We've gotten ahead of the others...

\*

JAMES MURRAY

A magnificent view, Mr. Fawcett.

\*

\*

PERCY FAWCETT

\*

(MORE)

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

You'll see greater sights than  
this, I promise you...

\*  
\*

JAMES MURRAY

The thought thrills me, Major! I  
assure you, it thrills me!

Murray then puts his handkerchief in the water.

\*

HENRY COSTIN

I don't advise that. We don't know  
what's in that water yet.

\*  
\*  
\*

Murray nods, stops what he is doing.

\*

Beat.

\*

ALL OF A SUDDEN: ARROWS! Arrows and spears rain down on the  
men.

\*

JAMES MURRAY

Savages! Arm yourselves!

MURRAY takes out his RIFLE. In fact, ALL the men--save  
Fawcett--take out their RIFLES and FIRE INTO THE AIR.  
Fawcett sees the Indians through the trees. Costin looks up  
and down:

HENRY COSTIN

We're surrounded!

FAWCETT SPINS HIS HEAD AROUND. They seem DOOMED. The GUNS  
ARE FIRING, IN THE AIR. The ARROWS COME, FAST AND FURIOUS.

ANGLE ON FAWCETT as he seems to think of something...

Fawcett yells to his comrades:

PERCY FAWCETT

Hold your fire! HOLD YOUR FIRE!

The canoes halt on the bank and the men get out, moving  
through the water to the:

59

EXT. OPPOSITE RIVERBANK

59

MURRAY moves near the riverbank, hiding from the arrows under  
tree branches.

JAMES MURRAY

Look for cover, men!

Fawcett instructs Arthur Manley to:

PERCY FAWCETT

Mr. Manley! Play your accordion!

ARTHUR MANLEY

My accordion--?!?

PERCY FAWCETT

"Soldiers of the Queen," come on!

ARTHUR MANLEY

All due respect sir, they seem likely to skin us alive!

PERCY FAWCETT

Mr. Manley! Do as I say!

(to everyone)

Everyone--"Soldiers of the Queen"!

A "YES, SIR," could be heard. Manley begins to play, and the whole party begins to sing:

THE ENTIRE PARTY

*In the fight for England's glory,  
lads, of its worldwide glory let us  
sing!*

Fawcett then unties the handkerchief around his neck and waves it above his head at the Indians. No effect.

60

EXT. RIVER

60

Fawcett enters the water again. Waving his handkerchief. The river gets deeper. He stops somewhere near the middle, with the river around his armpits. THE ARROWS AND SPEARS DO NOT STOP COMING.

He wades directly INTO the fusillade of arrows. He repeats, over and over, in Portuguese and other dialects:

PERCY FAWCETT (SUBTITLE)

Friend! Friend! Friend!

The arrows keep coming, FASTER THAN EVER. Several come INCREDIBLY CLOSE, zooming right by his head. We can even hear a ZIPPING SOUND. But Fawcett braves it nonetheless, holding a SURVEYING BOOK in front of his face to protect it from the arrows. THWACK! An ARROW HITS the SURVEYING BOOK, in front of his face!

\*

Fawcett stands there, a man between two sides of the river, between two worlds maybe, and closes his eyes.

\*

The water surrounds Fawcett's armpits; no one moves.

CUT TO: \*

A61 EXT. CEYLON BEACH A61 \*

A FLASH of shots, over which we STILL HEAR the sounds from the jungle: \*

1. A SHOT OF THE BUDDHA - a statue, surrounded by dark vines; a COLORED RIBBON is TIED to it, BLOWING IN THE WIND \*

2. A SHOT OF NINA and PERCY - on the BEACH. Holding hands. \*

3. A SHOT OF A BUDDHIST PRIEST - standing in front of them. \*

A WHISPERED VOICE (V.O.)  
I will take the Pansil... I vow  
not to kill or injure any living  
thing...nor to take that which is  
not given... \*

CUT BACK TO: \*

B61 EXT. RIVER B61 \*

Then: THE ARROWS AND SPEARS STOP. Fawcett opens his eyes. The sound returns--except that it's gone quiet. A GUARAYO INDIAN peers out from the forest.

61 EXT. RIVER 61

Paddling out toward Fawcett in a raft, the GUARAYO takes the handkerchief from Fawcett; Fawcett motions to be taken across, and the two go to the Indian side with Fawcett kneeling humbly on the flimsy float.

The whole group waits in silence for Fawcett, who disappears into the forest.

JAMES MURRAY  
(to the others, loud)  
All of you! Should the red man  
attack, keep your eye on me! Rally  
to me at all costs!

62 EXT. RIVERBANK - MOMENTS LATER 62

MOMENTS LATER: the Indian emerges, CHEERFULLY wearing Fawcett's Stetson hat. PANIC! IS FAWCETT DEAD?!? THEN:

Fawcett emerges too, smiling. He waves to his men.

JAMES MURRAY  
(to himself)  
Good God.

The group, including Murray, all venture across the river.

63

EXT. GUARAYOS CAMPFIRE AREA

63

The men slowly approach the area. Human skulls abound. A HUMAN BEING'S BODY is BEING COOKED on a SPIT. The troops are spooked. Murray, in particular, seems appalled.

PERCY FAWCETT  
I recognize a bit of the chief's  
language. It's safe for us.

\*  
\*

JAMES MURRAY  
Are you mad?!? They're *cannibals!*

PERCY FAWCETT  
I recognize your reluctance and I  
sympathize.  
(MORE)

\*

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

But I'm asking you to trust my  
experience--we must attempt to  
engage.

\*

JAMES MURRAY

(incredulous)

They've cooked a body, for  
chrissakes! Have you gone insane?

PERCY FAWCETT

It's a dead member of the tribe--  
his spirit will enter them if they  
eat it. It's their custom.

(to the whole group)

They may have critical information  
about our destination.

\*

JAMES MURRAY

(to the others)

They'll kill us, these savages!

(to himself)

I refuse this madness. I refuse  
it!

Manley, Costin, and the others look at Fawcett as though he  
is insane as well. MURRAY STARTS TO BACK AWAY, toward the  
FOREST.

JAMES MURRAY (CONT'D)

Madness!

Fawcett sees the others agree with Murray to a degree. He  
doesn't respond, and a brief look of madness, of possession,  
flashes across his face. So instead he walks to:

\*

\*

64 INT. GUARAYOS TENT

64

The other men eventually, reluctantly follow Fawcett into the  
tent--though conspicuously missing is MURRAY. Packed with  
both our guys and the Guarayos now. A beat of silence, then,  
to Costin:

PERCY FAWCETT

Can you give them something?

HENRY COSTIN

Yes--yes, of course.

Costin stupidly strikes a match, and though panicked, the  
Indians calm quickly when Fawcett takes out a glittering  
necklace:

\*

\*

PERCY FAWCETT (SUBTITLE)

No--it's a gift! A gift! For you.  
And your--your son?

\*

The Chief Guarayo, sitting next to a boy, gestures to him.

PERCY FAWCETT (SUBTITLE) (CONT'D)  
Yes, wonderful... I have sons,  
too.

The Chief smiles, points to Costin, Manley. Fawcett laughs:

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
No no, my sons are far away.

CHIEF GUARAYO (SUBTITLE)  
How can you be so far from them?

PERCY FAWCETT  
(his smile disappears)  
Our world is not like yours...

ANOTHER GUARAYO, A WOMAN, responds: \*

GUARAYO WOMAN (SUBTITLE) \*  
All people are made of the same \*  
clay. \*

The Chief takes a crushed BERRY COMPOUND and gestures to \*  
FAWCETT around his EYES. FAWCETT COMPLIES, spreading the \*  
DARK RED MIXTURE ON HIS FACE. \*

Then one of the GUARAYOS reaches for Costin's ARM. At first, \*  
Costin has trepidation, then allows the man to grab his \*  
forearm. \*

THE GUARAYO WHISTLES LOUDLY, in a STRANGE PITCH. And the \*  
MAGGOTS in Costin's arm STAND UP. The Guarayo simply \*  
squeezes gently and the maggots fall on the ground. Costin's \*  
arm is cured of the maggots--!

Costin TRIES TO WHISTLE like the GUARAYO but cannot: \*

PERCY FAWCETT  
Not sure we have the touch.  
(back to the Guarayo;  
SUBTITLE)  
We're looking for old houses, many  
houses, many many people, deep into  
the forest. Do you know of this?

The Guarayo speaks in his native tongue. Then, to Costin:

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)  
He's heard rumors, but is  
uncertain. Further down the river,  
he believes there'll be others who  
can help us.

Then another Guarayo motions to his mouth. Food.

PERCY FAWCETT (SUBTITLE) (CONT'D)  
Food--yes--thank you!

ANGLE ON THE CHIEF as we GO TO:

65 EXT. RIVERBANK

65

A Guarayo crushes a plant with a stone and lets the juice spill into the water. A milky cloud forms. After a moment, DOZENS OF FISH RISE TO THE SURFACE, gasping. A Guarayo boy wades into the water and pulls out the biggest. Fawcett, who had been making his own face up with beads, bows his head in thanks as he takes the fish.

Fawcett turns and looks at the water.

HENRY COSTIN  
MY GOD! It's only stunned them!  
They don't kill any more than they  
have to! 'S remarkable!

The other fish that the boy didn't withdraw from the water swim away.

66 EXT. GUARAYOS TENT - CLEARING

66

A thunderstorm is coming. Fawcett, with his makeup looking native now, walks into the clearing, and in front of him he sees that here are THOUSANDS of Indians living about. An astonishing discovery. And they are not just savages. They have advanced methods of farming; MAIZE GROWS AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE. Costin approaches:

HENRY COSTIN  
We seem to have lost Mr. Murray.

PERCY FAWCETT  
They've made the jungle into  
farmland somehow. All the families  
are working together--and there is  
no rank or superiority among them.  
It's truly humbling.

\*  
\*  
\*

HENRY COSTIN  
Chief--

PERCY FAWCETT  
Designed at right angles,  
mathematical in its precision.  
(MORE)

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

It confirms so much of what we  
believed.

(to Costin)

Can you imagine what our lost city  
must be like...?

HENRY COSTIN

Chief, did you hear me about Mr.  
Murray? Your great polar  
explorer's gone lost in the trees--

\*

PERCY FAWCETT

Mr. Murray is an accomplished man--  
we're not to fret over him. And  
anyhow, he can't have gone very  
far. Tell the men I've designed  
new rafts--the canoes are riddled  
with arrows and useless now. We'll  
be off on foot in the morning...

Fawcett walks into the field of MAIZE. The wind blows the  
plants, and Fawcett is an incongruous figure amidst the  
Guarayos, who tend to the crops.

Costin watches as Fawcett approaches the LEADER OF THE  
GUARAYOS and teaches him to HANDSHAKE. A GOODBYE OF SORTS...

CHIEF GUARAYO (SUBTITLE)

You may stay here with us. Join  
your spirit to ours.

PERCY FAWCETT (SUBTITLE)

(a beat; awe)

You honor me beyond words. But it  
is not yet time for me to rest.

67 EXT. JUNGLE - MORNING

67

Murray is asleep on the ground. He has gotten lost. Strewed  
nearby: his machete, all the photos of his family. Sitting  
in the mud. Food eaten, the wrappings all over. Turkish  
cigarette butts...

He awakens to see FAWCETT AND THE REST OF THE GROUP,  
approaching him. Fawcett sees all the food's been eaten. To  
Murray, Fawcett must appear a strange figure--with his FACE  
PAINT, now slightly streaked from the rain like tears...

JAMES MURRAY

Thank God you've found me--I--I got  
lost.

(MORE)

JAMES MURRAY (CONT'D)

I didn't think we'd survive in the presence of those horrible savages. My clothes and mouth--full of grit!

PERCY FAWCETT

You'll be looked after. We must be on our way now--

\*

BUT THEN: Fawcett reaches down, finds: AN EMPTY BOX OF CARAMELS. INSIDE THE LID: "For your journey, darling, I love you. Nina". A FAWCETT FAMILY PHOTO IS INCLUDED.

Something changes in Fawcett. DARKENS.

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

This...was from my wife and children...

(beat)

For all of us.

JAMES MURRAY

Yes--I know--I was hungry! It was supposed to be just a short rest. The scrub's incredibly dense and I fell. I think I've a terrible fever...

A BEAT. And then Fawcett looks like he is about to EXPLODE. His EYES BULGE WITH RAGE:

PERCY FAWCETT

Get up.

Fawcett turns, ferociously hacks a branch with a machete.

JAMES MURRAY

Mr. Fawcett--just one more moment of rest... I'm very tired--

Fawcett FREEZES. SPINS BACK AROUND. Raging:

PERCY FAWCETT

You're tired? You have no right to be tired!

(beat)

My own sons--at their tender ages--could be counted on more than you. I could be with them at this very moment, yet I am here with YOU, to attempt great things.

He collects himself, bends down again. Privately:

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

You stole from the group and violated our trust. I won't have this again.

JAMES MURRAY

(shocked)

How dare you speak to me that way! Have you seen my leg? HAVE YOU?!?

Fawcett looks down: Murray's leg has a gash. Fawcett bends down, looks at the wound. The other men surround Murray. Murray's things have scattered all over the jungle.

PERCY FAWCETT

It's not yet infected, but if blood poisoning should set in, you'll be a dead man.

(beat)

If you'd stayed with the group and trusted the so-called savage, you'd be fed--and cured. As it is, we've got to hope for the best.

JAMES MURRAY

(at a loss for words)

Yes, well, I'll, I'll do that!

ANGLE ON MURRAY as FAWCETT walks away. He is STEAMING.

68

EXT. THE RIVER

68

They are rafting. Dizzying. Murray is SHIVERING, VERY SICK, a mess. Maggots have overwhelmed his legs. Fawcett and Costin are maneuvering the raft.

BUMP! The rafts shift with the river's flow. Murray and Costin fall off the raft. Costin knows what to do; he starts swimming to shore. Murray does not.

PERCY FAWCETT

Swim to shore! The water's too rough for piranhas!

Instead, Murray attempts to hold onto the raft and threatens to capsize it.

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

I said, swim to shore!

The raft starts to shift. Fawcett is enraged:

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

God damn it!

(beat)

(MORE)

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

Let go! You pink-eyed weakling--  
LET GO!

The raft tips, and TWO CRATES OF SUPPLIES GO TUMBLING  
OVERBOARD. Manley tries to stop them, to no avail...

\*  
\*

69

EXT. SHORE

69

Fawcett directs the raft to the shore using a bamboo pole. The raft bumps up against the riverbank. Everyone has congregated. All are out of breath. Fawcett eyes Murray with utter contempt.

ARTHUR MANLEY

We've just lost a third of our  
rations!

\*  
\*  
\*

PERCY FAWCETT

(glaring at Murray)

Getting to the city and back was  
already going to be difficult.

\*  
\*

JAMES MURRAY

For heaven's sake, I was drowning!  
Didn't you SEE?!?

PERCY FAWCETT

There was no chance of that! And  
this after you took our food!

JAMES MURRAY

I suppose the honorable course of  
action would be for me to starve,  
then? Is that it? Is that what  
you wish for? My death?!?

Fawcett, to Costin:

PERCY FAWCETT

Where are we now, do we know? Are  
we behind our schedule?

HENRY COSTIN

Yes. We are--

\*  
\*

JAMES MURRAY

You're entirely without mercy! You  
could at least slow down to give a  
lame man a chance for his life!

Still not paying attention to Murray, Fawcett remains fixed on Costin. Seeing a couple of ABANDONED HUTS behind Costin:

PERCY FAWCETT

Pitch camp here for the night,  
we'll determine our progress.

JAMES MURRAY  
And now you ignore me!

70

EXT. CAMP - DUSK

70

One of the HORSES starts to collapse. Looks very ill. A CREWMEMBER turns to the others, shouting:

CREWMEMBER  
Horse down!

The Crewmember takes out his gun, SHOOTS THE HORSE.

ACROSS THE FIRE:

Murray has a fever. Truly sick: swollen, distended, in terrible shape--covered with maggots. A colorful snake hangs from a tree over his head. He moans over and over, shivering. To a noncomprehending Indian, he gets delirious:

\*  
\*

JAMES MURRAY  
I'm going to die too, just like  
that horse. I'm a man of  
property...now worth as much as  
that horse...

SEEING THE MAGGOTS, TEARS COME TO MURRAY'S EYES. COMPLETELY SICK, DYING, DELIRIOUS:

JAMES MURRAY (CONT'D)  
The affrontery of this upstart, and  
his vulgar quest for glory... Like  
a Judas...delivering me over to  
this jungle when he handed over our  
Lord, to be *crucified*... Father,  
forgive me this trespasses,  
As we forgive them that trespass  
against us... But...but let me not  
compare myself to thee, my Lord.  
You have delivered me from other  
evils, Lord. The fierce cold in  
Antarctica, was I weak then?  
(strained smile through  
tears)  
He is not even worthy to kiss the  
hem of my garment, Lord. Even as I  
am not worthy to touch yours...  
Give me strength to survive, to  
forgive this man his sins against  
me...

SEVERAL YARDS AWAY

Costin comes over to Fawcett, who is standing near the fire. Pondering...*something*. Manley is here, too.

HENRY COSTIN

We're about two weeks behind our planned pace. That's my best guess, from the sextant and the charts.

\*  
\*

In the background, James Murray lets out a MOAN.

ARTHUR MANLEY

It appears our Mr. Murray's got blood poisoning now.

PERCY FAWCETT

Yes... I'd noticed that.

(beat)

So much for his good bloodline.

HENRY COSTIN

I caught him with our maize yesterday morning. He claimed it was from his own private store.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Fawcett moves closer. Sotto voce, looking at Murray:

PERCY FAWCETT

I fooled myself for some time, but no longer--the man is a cancer. If we keep him with us we won't survive, much less reach the city and return to our families.

\*

HENRY COSTIN

I say we ditch him, leave him to rot. I've wanted to from the beginning. His Lordship's a coward and a thief.

\*

ARTHUR MANLEY

I'm in agreement, Major--there aren't two sets of rules, one for the high and one for the low.

HENRY COSTIN

What's it going to be, Chief?

\*  
\*

Fawcett eyes Murray.

MOMENTS LATER

PERCY APPROACHES MURRAY, around whom flies swarm. Murray eyes Fawcett suspiciously:

JAMES MURRAY  
What is it...?

Fawcett speaks deliberately, almost as if proving a case in a courtroom. In measured and careful tones, like a speech he has prepared:

PERCY FAWCETT

When traveling in the jungle without other resources, every man must realize that if he falls sick and cannot move with the others that there must be consequences. The others cannot wait and die with him.

(beat)

Do you understand?

Murray seems to get it. An awkward beat, then: Murray starts to grip his revolver.

JAMES MURRAY

You're only here--all of you-- because of the funds I provided!

Costin whips his shotgun out, points it directly at Murray. Pushes the shotgun up against his cheek. A tense moment.

\*

\*

PERCY FAWCETT

Many of us have families back home. And I cannot allow you to further jeopardize the welfare of our entire party.

(to Costin)

Mr. Costin.

\*

As Costin takes Murray's revolver from him:

JAMES MURRAY

You don't care one whit about me or the rest of our party, Mr. Fawcett. You don't even care about returning home--you only care about finding your bloody city!

PERCY FAWCETT

There are some in our group that would have me abandon you here and leave you to die. But I will not. There are mining encampments south of us, along the river. In the morning you'll be on your way to them. I'll give you our last horse with what supplies we can spare and an Indian to guide you.

JAMES MURRAY

You'll pack me off with a bloody  
swamp wog, will you?

(beat)

This calm willingness to abandon me  
is a queer thing to hear from an  
Englishman. But it does not  
surprise me, as I have now  
sufficiently gauged your class and  
character.

71 EXT. JUNGLE - MORNING

71

Murray is placed atop a mule. Manley and Costin have trained  
their guns on him. Fawcett notices MURRAY'S INFECTED KNEE.

PERCY FAWCETT

Godspeed, Mr. Murray--

JAMES MURRAY

(interrupting, with rage)

Let's hope our paths don't ever  
cross again, Mr. Fawcett. For your  
sake.

With that, Murray rides off. Fawcett and the others watch as  
the mule disappears into the jungle.

HENRY COSTIN

Good riddance, I say.

ARTHUR MANLEY

Any chance for him, Chief?

PERCY FAWCETT

Slim, to be sure. But it's the  
best we could do...

(beat)

Let us go.

72 EXT. CANYON - DUSK

72

Fawcett leads the men as they slide down a steep canyon. The  
RAIN comes.

LIGHTNING. THE RUMBLE OF THUNDER.

Fawcett looks up, through heavy downpour: SEES what he thinks  
is a MASSIVE STONE FACE CARVED INTO THE WALL OF THE CANYON.  
A GODLIKE VISION.

Then, A ROAR. The "STONE FACE" CARVED INTO THE WALL OF THE CANYON seems to CRUMBLE AMIDST THE DOWNPOUR...

Fawcett SEEMS in a TRANCE when--

HENRY COSTIN  
Chief!

PERCY FAWCETT  
Yes, I saw it! We're close now! \*

The men are SOAKED. FROZEN. PANTING. FAWCETT, HOWEVER, IS READY TO KEEP MOVING:

HENRY COSTIN  
All our reserves are lost! \*

The CAMERA TILTS DOWN. Costin and the others have flung over the rations CRATES. INSIDE, the rations are COVERED with OIL. Ruined: \*

HENRY COSTIN (CONT'D)  
They're covered in paraffin! The bloody bastard destroyed them!  
(beat)  
We've got to head back!

PERCY FAWCETT  
We can't! We've nothing to show for our efforts--no evidence-- \*

HENRY COSTIN  
MAJOR! With what little we've got on our backs, death would be certain within days! If we'd still had the horse you gave Murray and all it could carry, we might have a fighting chance! \*

Fawcett ponders. Through gritted teeth and deep rage:

PERCY FAWCETT  
God damn me for a fool to bring him!

Then: he bashes the side of a rock repeatedly with his machete. Pure frustration over the whole situation. Over this, we HEAR:

PERCY FAWCETT (O.S.) (CONT'D)

To be sent to the R.G.S.: Mr. James Murray was forced to separate from our expedition to seek medical attention. His location is currently unknown, and he has most likely perished.

73

INT. LA PAZ - BRITISH EMBASSY - DAY

73

Fawcett has arrived in La Paz, Bolivia, to the British Embassy. He is writing on a notepad a message to the RGS, which an English Officer is typing:

PERCY FAWCETT (V.O.)

The British Minister has his case in hand and his family should not be contacted unless there is definitive news of some kind. The rest of the group shall arrive back in England as soon as is possible...

Fawcett looks at the counter. CLOSE SHOT ON a newspaper. The headline, in Spanish, is all about the ASSASSINATION OF THE ARCHDUKE FERDINAND and WAR IN EUROPE. The ENGLISH OFFICER sees Percy looking at the paper. In a jolly tone:

ENGLISH OFFICER

(grinning)

Looks like a war with Fritz! We'd better all get home or we'll miss our chance to fight!

PERCY FAWCETT

(eyes him; then, re telegram)

Please send this immediately.

ENGLISH OFFICER

Yes, sir.

WE SEE PERCY WALK OUT OF THE OUTLET into the distance...

75

EXT. OUTSIDE THE FAWCETT HOME - LATE DAY, SUNNY

75

It's quiet, punctuated only by the sounds of boys playing in the distance: Fawcett's sons play with a rugby ball. \*

CLOSE SHOT on a BEAUTIFUL BABY GIRL, ALMOST A TODDLER, sitting on the ground surrounded by blocks. We HEAR:

NINA FAWCETT (O.S.)

That is Joan, as you might have guessed.

Widen to SEE FAWCETT and NINA in the backyard of the house, eyeing their daughter. Nina has a BROAD SMILE.

PERCY FAWCETT

Beautiful name. For a beautiful child.

(to the toddler)

Joan, I'm your father. \*

SHE SMILES AT HIM, POKES HIS FACE. An instant connection. \*

NINA FAWCETT \*

I'll go and get the boys--they're playing a fierce match-- \*

PERCY FAWCETT

No no. Let them finish. It's good for them... \*

NINA FAWCETT \*

(beat)

There are many urgent telegrams waiting for you, inside. \*

Fawcett nods.

NINA FAWCETT (CONT'D)

Perhaps it's about the war, on the continent--

PERCY FAWCETT

(interrupting her)

It's not. It's about my mission. I'll need to go to London soon, no doubt. There will be a reckoning. \*

He steps forward, watches his boys play in the distance.

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

I came close, Cheeky. I had to turn back, for the good of the men. (fighting tears)

(MORE)

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)  
 I face humiliation now... I did  
 everything I could and I  
 accomplished nothing.

\*  
 \*  
 \*

Her face contorts: ANGRY, she stands over him but remains outwardly calm:

NINA FAWCETT  
 If you have accomplished nothing,  
 then what does that say about us?  
 That all our efforts on behalf of  
 this family have been for naught?  
 Our willingness to live in  
 something less than splendor will  
 not be in vain.

\*  
 \*  
 \*  
 \*  
 \*

Fawcett turns back to face Nina; starts to walk to the house.

PERCY FAWCETT  
 When the boys are done with their  
 game, send them in and I'll tell  
 them what's happened.

Fawcett walks into the house. Looking around, he disappears--  
 but we still see his SHADOW. He buries his head in his  
 hands.

\*  
 \*

76 EXT. ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY - NEW BUILDING - DAY 76

A magnificent structure.

77 INT. ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY - HALLWAY 77

Fawcett walks down the hall and, looking lost, he enters:

78 INT. MAP ROOM 78

An elegant space. FAWCETT EYES THE ROOM. Packed, with Sir  
 George Goldie, Sir John Scott Keltie, and the rest of the RGS  
 gang we know--including Manley and Costin and William Barclay  
 among the roughly twenty in attendance.

\*  
 \*  
 \*  
 \*

SIR JOHN SCOTT KELTIE  
 Major. You know many of us here.

\*

Then a seated man with his back to us turns:

JAMES MURRAY. Fawcett spots him, then moves to a seat; a  
 trial-like atmosphere in the room, tense. A silent beat,  
 then:

SIR JOHN SCOTT KELTIE (CONT'D)  
Mr. James Murray has arrived in  
London just this morning.

Fawcett eyes Murray without a HINT of what has gone on  
between them. If anything, he seems calm, with the trace of  
a smile on his face:

PERCY FAWCETT  
I would like to congratulate you.  
On your safe return.  
(beat)  
A remarkable effort.

No answer by Murray.

SIR JOHN SCOTT KELTIE  
Mr. Murray contends that you  
abandoned him.  
(beat)  
Is this true?

PERCY FAWCETT  
No, it is not. He was sent back  
with both food and money. It was a  
necessary maneuver, in order to  
save lives.

JAMES MURRAY  
He also tried to kill me, Sir  
George. Ask him about THAT--

PERCY FAWCETT  
That's absurd. We almost killed  
ourselves giving you what rations  
we could!

JAMES MURRAY  
Sir John, we spent all our time  
playing around in the mud with  
savages. And may I say, I never  
saw any evidence of a lost city,  
either.

PERCY FAWCETT  
Mr. Murray, you were the reason we  
did not reach our destination!

HENRY COSTIN  
(to Percy)  
Tell them--our rations were covered  
with paraffin!

\*  
\*  
\*

JAMES MURRAY

I reject that accusation--

PERCY FAWCETT

(to the room)

You may ask Mr. Manley here--or ANY  
of the other members of my team--if  
you have doubt of it.

\*  
\*  
\*

SIR GEORGE GOLDIE, who has been listening this whole time,  
STARES AT PERCY. Looks almost DISAPPOINTED in him.

JAMES MURRAY

Sir John, I will not tolerate any  
further insult from this young man!  
I have retained counsel and will  
proceed accordingly. And as for  
his lackeys--they're swine, as  
untrustworthy as their master!

HENRY COSTIN

(to Percy)

It is out of respect for you that I  
do not beat him like the dog he is.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Costin STANDS. Goldie speaks up, looking utterly  
heartbroken, near tears:

\*  
\*

SIR GEORGE GOLDIE

Please. Sit down.

(Costin does so; then)

Gentlemen, our nation is now at  
war, and it ill becomes us to hold  
onto private conflicts. I  
earnestly beseech you to come to an  
understanding.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

A beat. Then:

JAMES MURRAY

Well... I will...very generously  
offer that if Mr. Fawcett were  
willing to apologize--here, in the  
company of the entire society,  
then...I might be inclined to drop  
my claims against him and the RGS.

(beat)

With certain conditions, of course.

\*

SIR JOHN SCOTT KELTIE

What about it, Percy? Will you  
apologize?

PERCY FAWCETT

For the general good, I am willing  
to reconcile.

(MORE)

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

However, I should like to hear Mr.  
Murray's conditions.

JAMES MURRAY

On the night I agreed to join you--  
and allowed your star to enter my  
sphere--your wife was there to  
witness your ascent. My condition--  
my sole condition--is that she once  
again be present. On this occasion  
she will witness your  
acknowledgement of the wrongs you  
have done me.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Fawcett stews, contemplating a response in front of the  
enormous--and uncharacteristically quiet--group. Then:

PERCY FAWCETT

When I last saw you, Mr. Murray, I  
was putting you on our only  
remaining horse and giving you more  
than your share of our food. The  
rest of my men urged me to leave  
you where you lay, but I could not  
bring myself to do so. And as a  
consequence I saved your life.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

JAMES MURRAY

Saved my life, did you?!? You left  
me to die! Yet by my own  
expertise, which you despise, I was  
able to escape the hell to which  
you had abandoned me! And I now  
confound your hopes to bury your  
shame in that filthy jungle!

(to Keltie)

Mr. Secretary--I demand that  
apology!

\*  
\*

PERCY FAWCETT

Yes. I should apologize.  
(looks to Costin, Manley)  
To my crew. I'm sorry that I ever  
believed Mr. Murray to be worthy of  
your company. And that I ever  
mistook a man's rank for his  
mettle. I shall not make that  
mistake again.

\*  
\*

Fawcett stands, walks toward the door.

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

Sir John, what your purpose can be  
in this ambush I cannot say. But  
you need fear no more embarrassment  
from me.

\*

(MORE)

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)  
 I hereby resign myself from this  
 institution. And I shall proceed  
 on my own. Good day.

MURRAY SMILES JUST A BIT as he says:

JAMES MURRAY  
 Mr. Fawcett, no man is an island  
 unto himself--a fact you shall soon  
 discover to your deep regret! I  
 shall teach you what it means to  
 challenge your betters!

79      EXT. FAWCETT HOME - NIGHT

79

Fawcett gets out of a Hanson Cab.

80      INT. FAWCETT HOME - FOYER - NIGHT

80

Fawcett enters. Nina's been in the kitchen, extinguishing  
 the oil lamps. She looks toward the door, looking grave.  
 She and Percy exchange looks. Something is amiss:

PERCY FAWCETT  
 What's going on?  
 (beat)  
 WHAT'S WRONG?

NINA FAWCETT  
 You've received a letter. All  
 former officers not currently  
 posted must send their names to the  
 War Office.  
 (beat)  
 I suppose it's best we try and find  
 your uniform.

She goes back to extinguishing the lamps.

NINA FAWCETT (CONT'D)  
 (upset, trying not to be)  
 Let us hope it's a brief conflict.

PERCY FAWCETT  
 Don't be concerned, Cheeky. I've  
 spent a whole life training for  
 this. Besides, the jungle has  
 never harmed me--a little war  
 cannot beat *that* challenge.

He walks up the stairs.

81            INT. FAWCETT HOME - STAIRWELL

81

Fawcett comes up the stairs, sees BRIAN AND JACK, at their desks from the hall. Presumably doing homework. Jack is now almost a young teen now and Brian a boy. Fawcett stands near the doorway, looking at them. SMILES.

JACK FAWCETT

Father.

BRIAN FAWCETT

Papa.

PERCY FAWCETT

Jack. Brian.

BRIAN FAWCETT

Papa, why are we at war?

PERCY FAWCETT

(nonplussed)

As to that, greater men than we must answer that question.

JACK FAWCETT

You're not going away again, are you? To fight?

PERCY FAWCETT

If the reports are true, I must.

Beat.

JACK FAWCETT

But you've only just returned.

\*

PERCY FAWCETT

I've received my orders, Jack. I'm obligated to serve.

\*

\*

JACK FAWCETT

What about your obligations to mother and to us?

\*

(beat)

We are your family and you have abandoned us for many years.

NINA COMES UP THE STAIRS, ENTERS:

\*

NINA FAWCETT

Jack!

\*

\*

PERCY FAWCETT

(shocked; darkens)

How dare you talk to me in such a  
manner?

JACK FAWCETT

How dare you, Father? You do not think of us. You think of Indians or Germans, or any other path to glory that you can find.

NINA FAWCETT

(appalled)

JACK! You must stop it at ONCE!

JACK FAWCETT

Mother, I will NOT STOP! He's returned a failure. ALL the papers are full of it! And now he wants to abandon us again! It is contemptible!

Percy EXPLODES. He LUNGES ACROSS THE ROOM and SLAPS THE BOY with tremendous and frightening ferocity.

BRIAN FAWCETT

(bursting into tears)

Father!

Brian COVERS HIS EYES, deeply distraught. Nina steps forward to defend Percy, who, though furious, steps back--eyes widened, still in a dazed fit of anger.

NINA FAWCETT

Everything your father has done, since the day you came into this world, has been to better your life, and that of your brother and sister. For your own sake, I hope the day will come when you regret the things you have said to him.

Jack's FACE is buried in his pillow:

JACK FAWCETT

I hate him, Mother! I hope he never comes back!

Percy exits the room. We PAN off this image to the WALL of the bedroom. A LARGE SPEAR from AMAZONIA--

MATCH CUT TO:

82 EXT. BATTLE OF THE SOMME - THE FRONT - CLOUDY DAY 82

A MACHINE GUN on a battle-scarred scene. Total devastation. We PAN past a field scorched by destruction, as far as the eye can see. No vegetation at all. The area is EERILY QUIET, only occasionally punctuated by a RAT-A-TAT-TAT or a distant explosion. We SEE a TRENCH LINE.

SUPERIMPOSE: "THE FRONT, RIVER SOMME, FRANCE. TWO YEARS LATER".

83 INT. TRENCH 83

The trench itself is filled with weary and shattered troops, and rotting corpses. Blood and fumes. Urine and shit and bones and lice and maggots and rats. A dead man has drowned in the slime, only part of his head exposed. HELL ON EARTH.

84 INT. BUNKER - FAWCETT'S SPACE 84

A table, a phone, a lantern, not much else. Dark corners. There's someone in the corner, in that darkness. Manley is here, in uniform. He is reading a letter with a NEWSPAPER CLIPPING. He LAUGHS.

ARTHUR MANLEY

(amazed)

Well what do you know! It appears our old friend Mr. James Murray isn't so powerful after all!

PERCY FAWCETT'S VOICE

What's that, Mr. Manley?

ARTHUR MANLEY

He and his bloody cronies may have put us in this hellhole, but his latest expedition seems to have come a cropper. \*

PERCY FAWCETT'S VOICE

Please give me the details. \*

Manley approaches the dark corner, holding the CLIPPING and putting it in Fawcett's face (presumably). As he does so:

ARTHUR MANLEY

Bastard went off on an arctic expedition with Canadians and mutinied--he's not been heard from since!

ANGLE ON THE DARKNESS. We SEE an ARM REACH UP, out of the dark, and turn up the LANTERN. The LIGHT REVEALS only PART OF FAWCETT'S SHOULDER, SURROUNDED BY LARGE DRAWINGS OF THE AMAZONIAN JUNGLE, FAMILY PHOTOS, ETC. An elaborate shrine.

MANLEY IS LAUGHING. \*

Fawcett enters the light, and it looks like he's aged a THOUSAND YEARS. LOOKING DOWN AT THE MURRAY NEWSPAPER CLIPPING:

PERCY FAWCETT  
Someone should warn the eskimos  
that Mr. Murray is on the prowl... \*

THEY LAUGH. \*

CUT TO:

85 EXT. TRENCH - LATER 85

A young man RUNS from atop the trench, JUMPING DOWN into the trench. He runs toward the small bunker and ENTERS:

86 INT. BUNKER - FAWCETT'S SPACE 86

Where Fawcett is in the midst of writing at his desk and Manley is reading. The TRENCH RUNNER announces himself:

TRENCH RUNNER  
Sir! A message, from Colonel  
Howard!

Fawcett READS THE NOTE. A beat. Then:

PERCY FAWCETT  
Thank you, Private.

The Private salutes. Leaves. Percy looks unsettled.

ARTHUR MANLEY  
What is it, Chief?

PERCY FAWCETT  
(very grave)  
There's movement in the German  
position. Perhaps preparing for  
some kind of attack. \*  
(with disgust)  
We may be asked to withdraw... \*

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

(sotto)  
Fools...

He gets up, looks through the periscope to SEE: MOVEMENT  
AMONG THE GERMAN TROOPS. THEY ARE PREPARING THEIR GUNS.

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

How many men are at our command at  
present?

ARTHUR MANLEY

Seven hundred, sir. And the two  
Indian brigades on horseback.

PERCY FAWCETT

Gather up as many men as you can.  
Cooks and signallers as well.  
We'll go over the top at dawn.

ARTHUR MANLEY

Chief, if plans are being made to  
withdraw--

PERCY FAWCETT

Those plans are absurd. We might  
all die if the Germans attack. Is  
that what you prefer? There is no  
other course open to us but to  
fight it out.

(beat)

There can be no retirement--our  
backs are against the wall.  
Prepare to go over the top. Any  
man who has not written to his  
loved ones should do so.

ARTHUR MANLEY

(humbled)  
Yes, Chief.

Manley turns away, to carry out the orders.

87 EXT. TRENCH - OUTSIDE THE BUNKER - JUST BEFORE DAWN 87

Fires illuminate the space. Fawcett checks his watch, then  
walks through the trench, passing frightened soldiers. Then  
toward the bunker, where he hears a CHEERFUL COMMOTION.

88 INT. BUNKER 88

HE ENTERS THE BUNKER, where his AMAZON ARTWORK is all over  
the walls.

The troops--about twenty--sit around a table, packed into the cavernous room. Seated at the table is MADAME KUMEL, a mystic. The soldiers see Fawcett; HENRY COSTIN is here! Costin shouts out:

HENRY COSTIN  
 Won't you join us, sir! We're having a mysticism--a medium of fine spiritualist skills!

Costin approaches:

HENRY COSTIN (CONT'D)  
 (sotto)  
 She'll bless us for the fight with Fritz. With a bit of the occult--part of the world that isn't right in front of our face, if you know what I mean.

PERCY FAWCETT  
 Yes... I surely do.  
 (to the Madame)  
 We'll be in battle soon, madame. Any spiritual aid we can get--I think we'd all very much like your blessing.

HENRY COSTIN  
 Madame, how 'bout you read the Major?

The whole group CHEERS the idea. Madame Kumel motions for Fawcett to sit down. Fawcett sits and the men CHEER WILDLY. Manley ENTERS the BUNKER.

MADAME KUMEL  
 (the men told her)  
 You are the explorer?

PERCY FAWCETT  
 I am. As are these fine men, who have transferred here, to be with me.

Points to Costin and Manley, who cheer. She reaches over, takes an Indian NECKLACE that Fawcett has wrapped around his hand like a bracelet. She slips it off.

She looks up at the WALL, SEES THE JUNGLE ARTWORK. She begins to HYPNOTIZE THE ROOM. She holds the object and with her other hand holds Fawcett's:

MADAME KUMEL

Feel my hand... Listen to my voice. Only my voice... Only my voice. Empty your mind, the only thing is my voice...

Fawcett stares at the mesmerizing Madame.

MADAME KUMEL (CONT'D)

You have loved ones at home?

PERCY FAWCETT

I do... My wife, and children...

MADAME KUMEL

But you are not home. Can you take me where you are...?

(beat)

Can you take me to where you dream to be?

PERCY FAWCETT

It is far away...

MADAME KUMEL

Is it the forest?

(beat)

You wish to be in the forest?

PERCY FAWCETT

I wish to find a lost city... \*

MADAME KUMEL

Can you see yourself there, now...? Try to picture it, in your mind.

PERCY FAWCETT

Yes. I can. I can see it, in the jungle. My family is with me.

89      EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

89

We SEE Kumel and Fawcett, at the table--which is now situated in the middle of the jungle. NINA and THE CHILDREN are SEATED AROUND HIM--JACK'S BACK is to US. \*

We still HEAR ONLY the SOUND FROM THE BUNKER and the sounds of the WAR. KUMEL CONTINUES: \*

MADAME KUMEL

Your place is beyond the jungle city. A timeless place.

90

EXT. RUINS

90

We are in what looks like a more extensive Machu Picchu. There are GOLD STATUES, ENORMOUS, everywhere. Still, we HEAR ONLY THE SOUND FROM THAT BUNKER. And yes, now Kumel and Fawcett are around the table in the middle of the ruins:

MADAME KUMEL

I see a valley... A valley and a great city, full of jewels.

(beat)

A wealth of real jewels and gold. But also jewels of the spirit...

THE EXPLOSIONS GET LOUDER. AND LOUDER. THEN, a BEAUTIFUL RAIN OF FLAKES OF GOLD COMES DOWN, NOT TOUCHING OUR PROTAGONISTS BUT SEEMINGLY COVERING THE GROUND LIKE SNOW... Kumel continues:

MADAME KUMEL (CONT'D)

Your soul is not quiet. You must find this new world. It is your destiny. You seek escape from our world, escape from its cruelties and customs...

CUT TO:

91

FAWCETT IN THE JUNGLE

91

Seated, by himself. The CAMERA DOLLIES IN, SLOWLY:

PERCY FAWCETT (V.O.)

Our world has set itself afire...and we must look elsewhere to quench the blaze...

ALL OF A SUDDEN, A DEAFENING EXPLOSION SHATTERS THE MOMENT and we are BACK IN:

92

INT. THE BUNKER

92

Which has been hit by a shell. The men all scatter, in panicked chaos... Fawcett covers his head from the falling debris... A close call... The rain of gold flakes was actually falling dirt... Fawcett exits the bunker, into:

93

EXT. TRENCH - JUST BEFORE DAWN

93

The troops, looking weary and beyond battle-scarred, stare at CAMERA as we DOLLY PAST THEM. They cower from the shells. We're in Fawcett's POV. FAWCETT PATROLS THE TRENCH.

Fawcett then looks over to SEE a LOW PRIVATE, shaking like a leaf. The Private has vomited all over his uniform. Fawcett then charges through the trench, YELLING HIS SPEECH:

PERCY FAWCETT

When I was younger, I ventured all  
for King and Country, for place,  
and rank. I believed that to be  
the makings of a man. But my  
travels have taught me that such  
ambitions are mere phantoms.  
Phantoms that exclude humanity from  
the Garden of Eden. My dear  
friends, what DOES matter--the only  
thing that matters--is the esteem  
we show our fellow man. In our  
hearts we fight for our loved ones;  
as they are not here today, we  
fight for each other.

(beat)

Good luck and may God be with you.

HENRY COSTIN

And fuck the bloody Boche!

Everyone laughs, including Fawcett.

Then the men separate, begin to line the trenches. Cleaning their rifles, making sure the bayonets are screwed on tightly. Readyng the charge. Many men start throwing up; others kiss small bibles; others look at family photos which they kiss and place in their breastpockets. Others are merely still, awaiting almost certain death. Fawcett takes a small drawing of AMAZONIA JUNGLE, holds it to his head. Almost like he's praying to it. Then pockets it.

We SEE: ROWS OF HORSES, getting GAS MASKS put on their heads. INDIAN TROOPS are getting ready to mount them, and are adorned in the most elaborate and absurd manner...

94

EXT. TRENCH - BATTLEFIELD - DAY

94

Fawcett takes several steps near the top of the trench. Places a whistle in his mouth. Looks at his men, who are donning GAS MASKS. Raises his arm and BLOWS THE WHISTLE.

Upon blowing the whistle, an army of men charge out of the trench with a collective BATTLE CRY. Among them, the Low Private. ALMOST INSTANTLY, so many of the men are RIDDLED WITH MACHINE GUN FIRE. Others are SET AFIRE with FLAMETHROWERS.

EXPLOSIONS ALL AROUND. Mines. Shells. Brutally loud. THEN: THE TWO INDIAN CAVALRY REGIMENTS GALLOP out of the TRENCHES; the HORSES HAVE GAS MASKS OF THEIR OWN. Absurd.

They charge toward the German position, but are SET ON FIRE by FLAMETHROWERS and HIT BY THE HAIL OF BULLETS. Huge numbers of new troops leap from the trenches, many to be met with a similar fate.

Wounded infantrymen crawl into shell holes. Fawcett himself emerges from the trench. Sees ARTHUR MANLEY, shrieking. Then MANLEY gets his FACE BLOWN OFF. Costin charges right along with Fawcett.

Fawcett whips off the gas mask and starts to yell. Screams to his soldiers, often inaudible from the devastating sounds of war, we can nonetheless tell what he's saying either by reading his lips or by the occasional word peaking through:

PERCY FAWCETT  
Come on! Come on! Come on!

\*

FLASH CUT TO:

95 FAWCETT, URGING ON FELLOW EXPLORERS IN THE JUNGLE; HIS MOTION IS PRECISELY THE SAME AS THE ONE ON THE BATTLEFIELD...

CUT BACK TO:

96 EXT. BATTLEFIELD

96

A GONG sound. CHEMICAL WEAPONS are coming. HENRY COSTIN SCREAMS FROM HIS POSITION:

HENRY COSTIN  
Incoming! Gas!

Fawcett stands in the middle of the battlefield, seemingly a man on his own. And in his own world. Men shrink and charge forward around him; men die around him; men courageously stand their ground.

BULLETS and FLAMES seem mysteriously to avoid him; he seems impervious... SMOKE seems to envelop Fawcett in his crazed, dazed state. He holds up his rifle with its bayonet into the air. He has a THOUSAND-YARD STARE NOW...

AND THEN WE HEAR IT: A GONG SOUND. A nearby explosion. Fawcett falls to his knees. His mouth opens in lockjaw and his eyes roll back into his head. He falls...

WE PAN OFF HIM TO REVEAL: bits of letters and photos that the men carry into battle flutter over the corpses like snow. The CAMERA MOVES through the battlefield, littered with the papers and blood and parts of bodies.

The camera settles, finally, on a piece of BARBED WIRE. Attached to it: the DRAWING BY FAWCETT of AMAZONIA. Stained with blood, moving gently in the wind...

97

INT. MILITARY HOSPITAL - ROOM - DAY

97

Fawcett, in the hospital. In bed, somewhere in England. He awakens, dazed, shocked--by the EYE PATCHES which cover his eyes. NINA FAWCETT is here, with the three children behind her. She approaches the bedside as he moves. She TEARS UP. Fighting the tears, she smiles, puts on a brave face:

\*  
\*  
\*

NINA FAWCETT

Darling, it is I. We're here--the children are here.

\*  
\*

The children walk to Fawcett's side, all muttering "HELLO". Jack is now a young adult; Brian, a young teen; and young daughter JOAN a toddler.

PERCY FAWCETT

Let me kiss you all.

Nina lifts the toddler Joan, and Fawcett kisses her. Fawcett strokes the top of Brian's head tenderly.

\*

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

Joan, and Brian...where's Jack?

\*  
\*

JACK FAWCETT

Here, father.

\*  
\*

Jack steps forward, CRYING. Then to Nina:

\*

PERCY FAWCETT

What's...happened to me...?

NINA FAWCETT

They say you've been exposed to chlorine gas. Your eyes were affected, but with any luck, your sight shall return. And--you're here, darling. You're with us, and that is what matters.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Fawcett lifts his head a bit, straining for sensation. A DOCTOR is here, too.      \*

PERCY FAWCETT      \*

What about Costin? The rest of the men?      \*

NINA FAWCETT      \*

Mr. Costin was unhurt. As for your division, they suffered many losses--but far fewer than others. It is the most death in the history of any battle.      \*

(beat)      \*

But darling, because of your bravery, the Germans have retreated, all along the front. We've made His Majesty aware of what you've done. And they're going to award you with the distinguished service order. They've also agreed to raise your rank to Lieutenant Colonel.      \*

Jack cannot help himself, but, appalled, he blurts out:

JACK FAWCETT

*Lieutenant Colonel?* After all he's done?!!?

NINA FAWCETT

(not now)      \*

Jack...      \*

The young man, still in tears, takes several steps backward and sits on a bench.      \*

NINA FAWCETT (CONT'D)      \*

We'll bring you home as soon as we're able, darling.      \*

PERCY FAWCETT      \*

(beat)      \*

What about--what about my travels? To Amazonia?      \*

Nina cannot answer this. She looks to the Doctor:

DOCTOR

I...I'm afraid you may never be able to return to your jungle.

Percy Fawcett shuts his eyes in quiet disappointment and turns away. The Doctor attempts to cheer him:

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

However, you can take comfort in the fact that here we'll be able to offer you the very best care in all the civilized world.

Fawcett turns back to the Doctor when he hears this:

PERCY FAWCETT

"Civilized"? That word is an obscenity. I've been years in that jungle, with so-called savages. And none would ever bring such horror and destruction on his fellow creatures.

Percy turns away. Everyone takes the hint--Nina pats everyone out. But staying is JACK. Jack sits down in a chair against the wall.

NINA TURNS to OBSERVE:

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

(sotto voce)

Jack...?

Jack approaches his father's bedside. Without being able to make eye contact, Fawcett somehow finds his son's FACE. He TOUCHES it, FEELING ITS CONTOURS--then touching the young man's tear...

98      EXT. FAWCETT HOME - STOKE CANON, ENGLAND      98

SUPERIMPOSE: "STOKE CANON, ENGLAND. 1923".

99      INT. FAWCETT HOME - STOKE CANON, ENGLAND      99

The camera PANS PAST many objects from the Fawcett past. We HEAR an AMERICAN MAN'S VOICE, a reporter whom we never see:

AMERICAN MAN'S VOICE (O.C.)

Our readers have been asking where you've been since the war. America has quite a fascination with you.

\*

ANGLE ON PERCY AND NINA FAWCETT, seated on a couch. Nina holds young Joan; Percy pets the family dog.

PERCY FAWCETT

I'm grateful for their interest.  
You may tell your readers I've  
recovered from my wounds and have  
adapted to home life. The family's  
lived in many places--Jamaica, also  
in America, briefly. We've only  
just returned to England.

NINA FAWCETT

It's been quite wonderful to have  
him with us for this time.

PERCY FAWCETT

Yes--my family's needs are above  
all now.

\*  
\*

AMERICAN MAN'S VOICE (O.C.)

But your pursuits in South America  
led to tremendous interest in  
exploration in the United States.  
There have been many new voyages  
planned.

Percy Fawcett perks up. NEW voyages?

PERCY FAWCETT

Have there...?

\*

AMERICAN MAN'S VOICE (O.C)

Well, Dr. Hamilton Rice is headed  
to Brazil soon...with radio, and  
airplanes.

Fawcett gets up, walks over to a large MAP of South America.  
He stares at it. ANGLE ON FAWCETT still looking at that map:

AMERICAN MAN'S VOICE (O.C. (CONT'D))

He's taking a large and very well-  
armed party.

PERCY FAWCETT

We can only hope that--with all of  
his arms, Dr. Rice doesn't destroy  
what he wishes to discover...

\*  
\*  
\*

(turns back to the  
reporter)

Tell me, how did you find us here?

AMERICAN MAN'S VOICE (O.C.)

(surprised)

Your son, Colonel. He wrote us a  
letter--didn't he tell you?

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ANGLE ON FAWCETT as we GO TO:

100

EXT. LARGE FIELD - CLOUDY DAY

100

We HEAR distant GUN SHOTS. The wind howls. Then we SEE, emerging from over a hill, Jack Fawcett, holding a RIFLE. A RABBIT runs through the grass. Jack raises his rifle, FIRES again. He hits the RABBIT. Percy and Nina Fawcett emerge, having seen the shot.

PERCY FAWCETT

You've become quite expert with that rifle!

JACK FAWCETT

Thank you, father.

After he recovers, he WATCHES HIS SON RUN to GET THE RABBIT. JACK PROUDLY HOLDS UP THE CARCASS. Father stares at son, something on his mind. Then, re the rabbit:

PERCY FAWCETT

No no, I'll retrieve it...

As Percy goes to get the animal, Nina has a private moment with Jack:

NINA FAWCETT

I know you feel remorse about the harsh words you said to him. But that was years ago. He loves you. Go talk with him.

\*  
\*

101

EXT. TOP OF A HILL - LATER

101

The RABBIT hangs from a tree. Fawcett and Jack are settled here, atop a hill, overlooking the field. Fawcett stands, lighting a small cigar; Jack sits, cleaning his gun.

Fawcett PETS THE HANGING CARCASS of the rabbit, then lowers it from the string and begins to prep it for eating.

JACK FAWCETT

Father...?

PERCY FAWCETT

Mmm?

\*

JACK FAWCETT

I realize how fortunate I am not to have lost you in the war. When we came back to England, I saw how few of my friends still had their fathers.

PERCY FAWCETT

(nods; then)

It's been a difficult few years for many.

(beat)

You've been writing to the American newspapers about us, I'm told.

JACK FAWCETT

I have. I've been reading of your exploits. They are quite extraordinary.

Beat.

PERCY FAWCETT

I've something for you.

Fawcett pulls something out of his bag: AN INDIAN NECKLACE.  
He gives it to Jack:

PERCY FAWCETT (O.C.) (CONT'D)

It was from a Guarani Indian. It's yours now.

JACK FAWCETT

Thank you... It's remarkable...

(beat)

The Americans are going to Amazonia now. I'm sickened by the thought that they might steal your thunder.

PERCY FAWCETT

(a broad smile)

I've little enough thunder to steal, my boy. I never did find Z.

\*

JACK FAWCETT

You must not say that! I've read of your achievements--you are a great man! You still believe in Z, do you not? That we have always underestimated the Indian?

PERCY FAWCETT

(beaming at his son's enthusiasm)

Of course...

\*

\*

\*

JACK FAWCETT

Then why don't we go back? You and I, together--to find the lost city once and for all?

PERCY FAWCETT

(taken aback; a flood of  
emotion)

I--I don't know if I able, Jack.

\*  
\*

JACK FAWCETT

I know you are. You easily  
outmatch my strengths.

Fawcett STANDS, looks out at the VISTA as Jack continues:

PERCY FAWCETT

I am touched by your faith in me.  
But--the war took its toll.

\*

JACK FAWCETT

Father, the Americans will venture  
there with their guns. And then we  
must pray they do not destroy the  
Indian. We must beat them to the  
spot.

(beat; he smiles)

I want to go with you so much, I  
want nothing more.

(beat)

We could find Z. You and I can do  
it.

PERCY FAWCETT

On this, Jack, we must consult a  
higher authority.

(beat)

Your mother, I mean.

Jack lets out a laugh. Then:

JACK FAWCETT

Father, there is something else I  
can barely speak of. I wish...to  
apologize for the disgraceful  
things I said to you before you  
went away.

\*

Fawcett turns back, looks at Jack.

PERCY FAWCETT

You were only doing your best to  
protect all of us.

(beat)

The hero in you was speaking.

Fawcett approaches Jack. Offers him a hand:

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

Come. We'll conquer your mother's  
reserve together...

\*

102      INT. FAWCETT HOME - EARLY MORNING

102

Fawcett, silhouetted in the unlit office. He is SILENT.  
Only the daylight illuminates the room. Jack faces NINA.

JACK FAWCETT

Please, Mother. I know it's  
dangerous. But you've said  
yourself with...with all that's  
happened--it's not possible to  
choose a safe passage through life.  
So many men near my own age did not  
return from the war--and who is to  
say it will not happen again?

\*  
\*

NINA FAWCETT

By all rights I should be furious.  
You've used my very own words  
against me.

(fighting with herself)

Yet I do not refute them now--  
indeed, try as I will, I cannot.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

JACK FAWCETT

(beat; gets emotional)

Please...

\*  
\*  
\*

NINA FAWCETT

(looks at Percy; then)

There's little doubt I would worry  
night and day about my two boys in  
the jungle. But...your father and  
I have never let fear determine our  
future--

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Jack gets up and excitedly kisses his mother, who looks less  
than overjoyed.

\*  
\*

JACK FAWCETT

Thank you so much, Mum. Thank you!

PERCY FAWCETT

We're not there yet, Jack. These  
journeys require a great deal of  
money and training.

\*

JACK FAWCETT

Of course, father... But I shall  
begin preparing immediately,  
nonetheless! You and I, and  
perhaps Mr. Costin, too. He'll  
come, I know it!

\*

Jack leaves the room. Fawcett turns to maps on his desk,  
starts collecting them.

\*

PERCY FAWCETT

I admit I'm surprised by your speedy acceptance.

NINA FAWCETT

Did I have another choice? It would be wrong to betray his nature now.

(beat)

If you shall go, the both of you, then you must find Z, once and for all.

PERCY FAWCETT

Yes...we shall see it through... I'll go see Mr. Costin.

(beat; looks at her)

You're concerned about Jack?

She does not answer.

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

He'll perform splendidly. I've learned from the past that character is more important than experience.

The CAMERA PANS to the WINDOW, to SEE JACK RUNNING. OUTSIDE IS YOUNG JOAN, playing. Fawcett watches them both, then:

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

The boy has what it takes, I'm sure.

NINA FAWCETT

(brightening; a laugh)

He should--he is my son, after all!

103 INT. SAVAGE CLUB - LONDON - NIGHT

103

It is the elegant club in London. A place for gentlemen. Not a place for Percy. Men in black tie, men drinking brandy. HENRY COSTIN is here, looking older, simultaneously more settled yet more shattered. \*

Percy sits across from him. Both are in high-backed leather chairs, and a small table sits between the two. Costin opens a large BRIEFCASE sitting next to his chair. Withdraws something... \*

Costin places NOTEBOOKS on the table and slides them to Fawcett. With a smile:

HENRY COSTIN

In fine condition, Chief. All my  
notes. I hope they are of help to  
you.

Percy takes them as one would handle a delicate child.

PERCY FAWCETT

Can I truly not persuade you to  
come with us?

Costin averts Percy's gaze. Percy leans forward.  
Whispering:

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

We were so close before--and think  
of what it would mean, for all  
human history.

HENRY COSTIN

I'm honored you still consider me  
worthy. But...things have changed.  
I've a wife and children now.

PERCY FAWCETT

I would remind you that when we  
went on our travels, my own  
children were younger than yours  
are now.

(leans back, subtly  
introspective)

I did have my fair share of concern  
about their welfare, it's true.

(leans forward again,  
louder)

Yet my son today--if you were to  
see his character, his vim and  
vigor, for yourself, it would tear  
down your resistance in an instant.

A WAITER comes over:

WAITER

Would you like some more brandy,  
sir?

HENRY COSTIN

No, thank you, Nigel.

The Waiter leaves.

HENRY COSTIN (CONT'D)

Chief--I do not doubt Jack's  
excellence. But I'm afraid you and  
I part ways in this regard. For  
me, the search for Z--I can no  
longer bear the cost, you see.

PERCY FAWCETT

(surprised)  
You doubt its existence.

HENRY COSTIN

No. Not for a moment. But I do doubt that it can ever provide all the answers you require from it.

PERCY FAWCETT

You feel I romanticize the significance of Z.

Costin begins to protest. Fawcett stops him:

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

The charge does not dismay me. But let the world stand in judgement once I knock the scales from their eyes. Do not doubt me, my friend.

Costin breaks out into a huge smile.

HENRY COSTIN

God bless you, Colonel--you've not lost your fire.

(beat)

Forgive me, I cannot say yes.

(beat)

I wish you godspeed and the greatest success.

104

INT. DORCHESTER HOTEL LOBBY - PRESS CONFERENCE - DAY

104

SUPERIMPOSE THE LEGEND: "LONDON. DECEMBER 3, 1924".

Percy Fawcett talks to a syndicate of newspapers. A press conference. REPORTERS and PHOTOGRAPHERS pack the room. Jack Fawcett and Nina are here, too, by Fawcett's side. So are a host of cigar-smoking financiers...

PERCY FAWCETT

This will be no pampered expedition. Top-heavy missions get nowhere; they linger on the fringe of civilization and bask in publicity. We will not. Our journey will last three years. A tribesman will take our messages to bring them to you as often as we can, for you to publish.

REPORTER #1

Who is financing this latest journey of yours?

PERCY FAWCETT

The money is generously being supplied by a consortium of American newspapers and Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

REPORTER #2

Are you aware the Royal Geographical Society has just offered to help with the financing?

\*

PERCY FAWCETT

I am glad to see our nation is not to be left behind.

REPORTER #2

What about America's own explorers? They're in South America now, with great technology--

PERCY FAWCETT

I'm not concerned with them--we have our own plans. I would like to introduce to you now my son, Mr. Jack Fawcett.

ANGLE ON JACK, who is beaming.

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

He will be my companion on this historic expedition.

(Fawcett looks at his son)

He is strong as a horse and keen as mustard.

FLASH! go the cameras. Then we HEAR:

SIR GEORGE GOLDIE (O.S.)

Well, we could not very well be shamed by the Americans, now could we.

105

INT. ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY - CONFERENCE ROOM

105

Fawcett and Jack, inside a large conference room. A GROUP OF PEOPLE is standing there, getting ready to SAY GOODBYE to PERCY FAWCETT: KELTIE, WILLIAM BARCLAY, others.

\*

SIR JOHN SCOTT KELTIE (CONT'D)

I'm proud to say, we did finally meet them halfway...

(sobers; sheepish)

Percy, this organization has not...

(MORE)

\*

\*



Fawcett grabs both arms, squeezes. Jack has a smile from ear to ear. Champagne is served, and the men toast--in SILENCE.

106      EXT. STOKE CANON HOUSE - DAWN

106

A TRUCK is idling. Percy and Jack Fawcett are loading it with supplies. Alongside them are the rest of the family: Nina, Brian, Joan.

NINA FAWCETT

All the arrangements are completed--  
we're off to Portugal on the 7th  
and then we meet in Brazil.

PERCY FAWCETT

Good. Now remember: the code with  
the coordinates--a copy is in my  
desk and another is in safekeeping,  
with Mr. Costin.

(beat)

No one will trump us now...

\*

Awkward silence as Nina begins to turn inward.

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

Well, I suppose that's all. I'll  
send you the dispatches, for the  
newspapers.

\*

NINA FAWCETT

Jack--

She gestures to his suit coat handkerchief, which is falling out. Fawcett, meanwhile, moves close to her, out of earshot of anyone else:

PERCY FAWCETT

Cheeky, if I should not come back--  
do not look for me. If one of us  
lives, we all shall live.

NINA FAWCETT

(as though his death is an  
insane thought)

I've complete faith in you. You'd  
better get going, you'll miss your  
boat.

Fawcett moves to Brian, who is quiet.

PERCY FAWCETT

You're a man now, responsible for  
your mother and sister's care.  
It's a fine calling, no less and  
perhaps more virtuous than ours.

No response. Percy Fawcett takes out a sealed LETTER.

NINA FAWCETT

Brian? Say goodbye to your father.  
And tell him how much you'll miss  
him.

BRIAN FAWCETT

Goodbye, father. I shall indeed  
miss you. As I always have.

PERCY FAWCETT

I've written something for you.

Brian takes it. Fawcett kisses Joan:

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

Dear Joan. Take care of your  
mother.

JOAN FAWCETT

Goodbye, father.

PERCY FAWCETT

On to Z, then. And a new history.

Fawcett then leans over, kisses Nina briefly, and  
unsentimentally boards the truck. Jack hugs Nina, who then  
turns and gets in the truck as well.

Brian watches as his father and brother WAVE. He looks down  
at the ENVELOPE FROM HIS FATHER. FAWCETT AND JACK WAVE as  
the TRUCK DRIVES OFF...

107      INT. FAWCETT STOKE CANON HOME - BRIAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT      107

Brian opens the envelope: a poem. Starts reading.

PERCY FAWCETT (V.O.)

*Never forget us, brave little man  
Mother and father trust in you.  
Be brave as a lion, yet kind  
returning*

CUT TO:

\*

108 EXT. AQUITANIA - DUSK 108 \*

The ship at sea, on its way to South America. We STILL HEAR: \*

PERCY FAWCETT (V.O.)  
*Ready to fight and averse to  
 wrong...  
 Never forget you're a gentleman  
 And never a fear you'll do.*

CUT TO: \*

109 STILL PHOTOS of the AQUITANIA, a huge SHIP. WIDE SHOTS. 109 \*  
 Then CLOSE SHOTS of JACK AND PERCY on the DECK, WAVING. \*  
 BLACK AND WHITE STILLs. \*

PERCY FAWCETT (V.O.)  
*Life is short and the world is  
 wide.*

CUT TO: \*

110 SERIES OF SHOTS of Fawcett's house and old Ireland ARMY 110 \*  
 BARRACKS:

THE ARMY BARRACKS in Ireland - empty, save the usual post-move detritus. THE BEDROOM - empty. Dust now. ARMY BACKYARD - empty. Windswept, covered with leaves. THE FRONT LAWN - empty. A child's TOY, covered in dirt.

PERCY FAWCETT (V.O.)  
*We're just a ripple on life's great  
 pond.*

We END with:

111 INT. NEW MADEIRA HOME - NINA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 111 \*

A new ROOM, in Madeira. Nina is asleep with a newspaper on her lap. It reads, "EXPLORERS ENTER JUNGLES TO SEEK LOST RACE". Then we HEAR a LOUD TRAIN WHISTLE:

PERCY FAWCETT (V.O.)  
*Enjoy your life to the best you  
 can,  
 All will help enrich the span,*

112 INT. TRAIN - BRAZIL - NIGHT 112

On the train into the jungle, they pass parades for the Carnival. They pass beautiful fields, vistas.

Crowds wave to them. Jack stands, looking out the window.  
Fawcett remains seated, eyes a map.

PERCY FAWCETT (V.O.)  
*But never forget you're a  
gentleman.*

JACK FAWCETT  
Forty million, father! The  
newspaper said forty million are  
following our journey! Look, even  
here!

Fawcett stands, looks out the train. Sotto:

PERCY FAWCETT  
It is rather marvelous...

Fawcett turns to look at the people waving at the train.  
ANGLE ON A SLIGHTLY WISTFUL YET ALSO ENTHUSIASTIC PERCY  
FAWCETT; he waves back to them.

CUT TO:

113 SERIES OF SHOTS as we STILL HEAR the train: The CAMERA 113  
DOLLIES PAST a sleeping Nina in the MADEIRA HOME. Next: the  
CAMERA DOLLIES PAST a sleeping Brian. Last: PAST a sleeping  
Joan.

CUT TO:

114 EXT. TRAIN 114  
Loses his STETSON HAT. It blows away. THE HAT TWISTS AND  
SPINS AND FLOATS IN THE WIND, eventually leaving our sight.

PERCY FAWCETT  
(to Jack)  
We are getting closer.

The CAMERA SPINS PAST the COUNTRYSIDE--

MATCH CUT TO:

THE CAMERA PANNING, THEN STOPPING, ON THE JUNGLE.

115 EXT. JUNGLE - DAY 115  
CLOSE SHOT: Fawcett. He consults a map. ZOOM OUT: DWARFED  
BY NATURE, THE AWESOME DEPTHS OF THE JUNGLE.

Jack is right behind him. The Peons (Indian messengers) are near but bringing up the rear and looking exhausted.

SUPERIMPOSE: "PANTANAL REGION, BRAZIL. APRIL 30, 1925".

Percy turns to Jack.

JACK FAWCETT

My compass appears to have stopped working.

PERCY FAWCETT

It's nothing to fret over--I've two others. How are you faring? \*

JACK FAWCETT

I've rarely felt better. \*

PERCY FAWCETT

Good. We'll be on the river soon-- and then if we're lucky, to see an opera... \*

116 EXT. FAZIENDA JACOBINA - CLEARING 116

Out of the jungle comes our group. They are close to the hut that served as an opera house...

But it seems abandoned. Fawcett leads the group toward its front doors, which are swinging open...

The old opera hut house is still in the jungle, but this time it is COVERED WITH VINES, overgrown with weeds and spiders.

117 INT. OPERA HOUSE 117

Fawcett cannot believe what he sees. The jungle is swallowing up the structure, with spiderwebs and detritus.

The men stand in the center, stunned. The camera PULLS BACK TO REVEAL A RUIN being OVERRUN BY MONKEYS. PERCY FAWCETT IS LEFT STANDING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DILAPIDATED STRUCTURE as the PRIMATES SWIRL AROUND HIS LEGS.

SWARMS OF VAMPIRE BATS SHRIEK ABOVE THEIR HEADS...

PERCY FAWCETT

A pity you could not see it  
intact...

(brightens)

No matter. We'll hit the river as  
scheduled.

\*

\*

118 EXT. RIVERBANK 118

Percy and Jack and the Peons have made a canoe. They SLIDE  
IT OFF, into the RIVER.

119 EXT. RIVER 119

The men in their canoe. They move through the river.

AND THEN: Bodies. Floating.

WHITE MEN, looking EMACIATED. FACE DOWN. NUMBERING AROUND  
TEN OR SO...

FAWCETT seems to accept it. JACK is terrified... THE CANOE  
MOVES PAST THE CORPSES... THE PEONS are in the canoe behind  
them.

ANOTHER SWARM OF BATS SWOOPS PAST THEM...

120 EXT. CLEARING - LATER 120

Jack hacks away at a tree with his machete, collecting  
firewood. A PEON, looking feverish, approaches Percy as he  
sits by the fire. He has been writing in a notebook. In  
Portuguese:

\*

\*

PEON (SUBTITLE)

Mr. Fawcett, our work is done. We  
warn you, past this point is only  
danger.

Fawcett stands.

PERCY FAWCETT (SUBTITLE)

You have acquitted yourself  
wonderfully. We are grateful for  
your efforts.

(reaching down, into a  
stack of his papers and  
envelopes)

(MORE)

PERCY FAWCETT (SUBTITLE) (CONT'D)  
 Please--if you could deliver this  
 final dispatch...

The Peon nods, takes the ENVELOPE.

MOMENTS LATER

WIDE SHOT of group. The Peons say GOODBYE, shaking hands,  
 and disappear into the jungle. Our men are alone now.

Fawcett and Jack walk off into the jungle in the opposite  
 direction...

PERCY FAWCETT (V.O.)  
 Dearest Cheeky, this is the last  
 letter you shall receive until we  
 reach Z.

121 EXT. THE JUNGLE - DUSK

121

The men get off the canoe and ENTER THE DEEP JUNGLE. They  
 look thinner now, more worn.

PERCY FAWCETT (V.O.)  
 As always, we have encountered some  
 setbacks. But Jack is acquitting  
 himself marvelously. Today we  
 reached a tribe of Bakairi Indians,  
 who told us of a cave entirely  
 unknown to anyone outside their  
 clan.

122 EXT. JUNGLE VILLAGE - DAY

122

A Bakairi village. The men enter the place and speak with  
 the Indians.

CLOSE SHOT of PERCY FAWCETT as HE TAKES PICTURES WITH HIS  
 CAMERA, which is mounted on a TRIPOD. Our CAMERA DOLLIES  
 INTO an EXTREME CLOSE SHOT on the camera's LENS...

PERCY FAWCETT (V.O.; CONT'D)  
 They tell of an enormous rock  
 there, covered with painted  
 pictures of men and horses. Its  
 location is perhaps the gateway to  
 Z...

SERIES OF BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOS of the INDIANS:

In the photos, Jack and Fawcett all pose with the "savages". Standing in different positions, some holding arrows, some merely seated. Other photos show the Indians in the middle of ritual, crouched, dancing, upright, with spears, in a circle, etc.

CLOSE SHOT on PHOTOGRAPHS FLOATING THROUGH THE STREAM, GETTING DEVELOPED, THE IMAGES QUICKLY FADING BEFORE OUR EYES FROM THE HEAT...

123 EXT. THE AMAZON JUNGLE - DAY 123

Near Dead Horse Camp. Fawcett EYES the camp... He and Jack approach it...

PERCY FAWCETT (V.O.)  
...I expect we will be in touch  
with the old civilization within a  
month, and to be at the main  
objective in August.

124 INT. NEW MADEIRA HOME - BEDROOM 124

Nina is at her desk, reading the letter:

PERCY FAWCETT (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Thereafter, our fate is in the lap  
of the gods.  
(beat)  
You need have no fear of any  
failure.

125 EXT. JUNGLE 125

Fawcett and Jack walk down a muddy path. Fawcett takes notes while walking. Then:

JACK FAWCETT  
Father--

Fawcett looks up from his journal to SEE: RED-MASKED SUYA. TENS OF THEM. FAWCETT motions for JACK to stop, then TAKES ONE SINGLE STEP FORWARD. \*

A SINGLE ARROW WHIZZES BY HIS HEAD. SUYA INDIANS are ABOUT 200 YARDS away. STARING. \*

PERCY FAWCETT

Stay calm. I know *precisely* the approach.

Confident, he tries his signature approach with the SUYA. He \*  
begins to walk toward them, waving his handkerchief:

PERCY FAWCETT (SUBTITLED) (CONT'D)

Friend! Friend!

AND THEN: MORE ARROWS COME, FAST AND FURIOUS. FAWCETT WALKS  
CLOSER. THEY DON'T STOP.

THIS TIME, THE SUYA INDIANS START CHARGING TERRIFYINGLY \*  
TOWARD THE MEN. THE INDIANS LET OUT A TERRIFYING WAR CRY...

ALL OF A SUDDEN: WHOOP WHOOP WHOOP WHOOP WHOOP--

A SPINNING CLUB OF WOOD, about three feet in length, comes  
seemingly from nowhere.

WHOOP WHOOP WHOOP--A PUNISHING BLOW TO THE HAND.

A WAR CLUB, then another.

Realizing his tried-and-true plan will not work, Fawcett  
takes his RIFLE OFF HIS SHOULDER AND FIRES:

He shoots one of the Suyas in the stomach. The Indian bleeds \*  
profusely and falls down, dying...

FAWCETT SEES THIS AND HIS FACE WRINKLES IN ANGUISH:

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

Oh Lord...

(recovering)

Into the brush!

Fawcett and Jack bolt into the dense jungle, and so do the  
Indians, in pursuit.

126 EXT. THE JUNGLE 126

Fawcett and Jack run for their lives. A chase on foot has \*  
begun.

127 EXT. THE AMAZON JUNGLE - LATER 127

THE DENSE JUNGLE. VERTIGINOUS. BACK AND FORTH. TREE  
LEAVES, VEGETATION, MUD, BUGS, HEAT.

The camera is HAND-HELD now, tossing back and forth, our characters' POV. DISORIENTED...

A sound: WHIRRING. What is that? CLUBS. CLUBS OF WOOD.  
WAR CLUBS.

The Suyas are HURLING THEM through the trees, presumably. BUT WE CAN'T SEE THEM. ONLY SPINNING CLUBS OF WOOD--A TORRENT OF SPINNING WOODEN STICKS, CUTTING THROUGH THE FOREST. \*

SPINNING AND MOVING AT INCREDIBLE SPEED. And they are coming CLOSE TO US, millimeters from FAWCETT'S HEAD. Fawcett ducks them as he bolts through the trees.

WHOOSH! Jack, away from Fawcett, is hit in the chest. It knocks him over, but he gets up and continues to run.

ANGLE BACK ON FAWCETT

Who is moving through the forest with great speed, determined to survive. In his POV, the denseness becomes DIZZYING, obscuring, difficult. We HEAR the WHIRRING and his HURRIED BREATHING.

Fawcett gets up. He is on the move again as ARROWS DART PAST HIM, PERILOUSLY CLOSE...

128

EXT. RIVERBANK

128

Fawcett reaches the riverbank. Jack is here on his knees, with his back to us. Is he dead? He's oddly still. Fawcett approaches his son. THEN HIS SON TURNS, TERRIFIED. IN SHOCK and SHAKING.

PERCY FAWCETT

They'll keep after us--we've got to keep moving.

Fawcett grabs his son, shakes his head.

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

Do you hear me?!?

129

EXT. CLEARING - LATER

129

Fawcett and Jack are running in tall grass. Then they stop. Surrounded by Indians. They have more PAINT on them, more MUD, than the other group of Indians that were chasing them earlier.

Fawcett and Jack turn around. Indians close in behind them, too. DOOMED?

ONE INDIAN STEPS FORWARD. HE TAKES HIS SPEAR and HURLS IT RIGHT TOWARD FAWCETT. Fawcett thinks this is the END.

Instead, it goes past him, and THWOK! HITS ANOTHER INDIAN, RIGHT BEHIND HIM. KILLS THE MAN. THE OTHER INDIAN, A SUYA, was POISED WITH BOW AND ARROW, ready to kill Fawcett.

THIS INDIAN HAS SAVED FAWCETT'S LIFE. WARRING TRIBES. The Indians fire at each other, as Fawcett and Jack duck down into the grass...

THE SUYAS RETREAT... THE NEW GROUP OF INDIANS SURROUND FAWCETT AND JACK. Fawcett looks up, raises his hands...

130 EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - LATE DAY

130

Fawcett and Jack sit in the middle of the Indian tribal village. A RAIN BEGINS TO FALL. LIGHTNING and THUNDER, though in the distance. A low rumble, then nothing but rain...

Fawcett whispers to his son:

PERCY FAWCETT  
I've encountered this before.  
We're in no real danger.

Jack nods. A KAYAPO INDIAN plays with a FLASHLIGHT that Fawcett has given him. Fawcett and Jack are seated with the Indians surrounding them. The Indian appears thrilled with the flashlight. Two other Kayapos are in a debate:

KAYAPO INDIAN #2 (SUBTITLE)  
The Christian is not one of us.

KAYAPO INDIAN #1 (SUBTITLE)  
He is not one of them, either.  
(beat)  
He is a shadow man, never at  
rest...we must send him back to the  
shadows...

The Kayapo BRING IN THREE CORPSES, THE SUYA INDIANS WHOM THEY KILLED. The bodies are tied up on TREE BRANCHES. And PUT OVER THE FIRE. Jack's EYES POP as he sees this.

PERCY FAWCETT  
They eat the ash of the bodies.  
They believe it saves their enemy's  
souls.

131

EXT. ABOVE A RIVER WITH ROCKS

131

The Kayapo lead Jack and Percy up a PATH of ROCK. They lie them down in a circle of ROCKS. In Portuguese:

KAYAPO INDIAN #1 (SUBTITLE)

Sleep...

Percy nods. The Kayapo SEEMS entirely friendly. And they place ONE TORCH in between TWO LARGE ROCKS.

JACK FAWCETT

Are...are we going to die?

Fawcett looks to his son for a moment, cupping his son's chin in his hand. Then his eyes unexpectedly turn to the heavens, and he begins:

PERCY FAWCETT

"Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days, and caused the dayspring to know his place? Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? Or who hath given understanding to the heart?"

(his head sinks; not making eye contact with his son, but to his son)

Most of life is a mystery. We know so little of the world. But we've made a journey other men cannot even imagine. And it has given understanding to our hearts. We do not need to know the future.

Jack sits up. Then he STANDS.

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

Jack, sit down. They need to know that we trust them.

JACK FAWCETT

Father...

(beat)

Is--is this not Z?

PERCY FAWCETT

No... Zed is over those mountains. Let us hope we'll be on our way soon.

JACK FAWCETT

But--I believe we may have already reached part of Z.

PERCY FAWCETT

Temper your enthusiasm, my boy.  
We've not yet reached our  
coordinates.

JACK FAWCETT

Do you not see the causeways you've  
described? They're perfectly  
straight and stretch as far as the  
eye can see. And a bridge as well!  
The ancient Indians must have  
forged something truly astonishing.  
Imagine the plans, the skill, all  
of them working together, to  
achieve it!

Percy stands and takes a few steps to see the causeway.

JACK FAWCETT (CONT'D)

And you just told me how they were  
saving the souls of their enemies.  
(MORE)

JACK FAWCETT (CONT'D)

That is the sort of civilization  
your opponents always denied could  
exist here.

(beat)

We are IN Z, father! It's all  
around us!

Percy takes a step forward. Looks around. A STUNNING  
REVELATION--in the look of SHOCK--SEEMS TO COME OVER HIS  
FACE. \*

JACK FAWCETT (CONT'D)

One day the whole world will see  
it, without doubt. It's everything  
you've always wanted! \*

Percy EYES his son, then breaks down. He begins to cry. \*

PERCY FAWCETT

My boy, to be here with you, on  
this journey...is everything.

Fawcett tenderly grabs Jack's neck. Percy then withdraws a  
LETTER from his pocket, hands it to Jack Fawcett.

PERCY FAWCETT (CONT'D)

Your mother gave this letter to me  
some time ago. It's given me great  
strength over the years. You  
should have it now.

\*  
\*

Jack takes it. CLOSE SHOT ON THE LETTER, as it is being  
opened. Then, MUSIC UP: A KAYAPO DANCE.

132 EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

132

The Tribe does a ritual dance around Fawcett and Jack. They  
then approach the men, who sit, kneeling with their heads  
down. A Kayapo then begins to paint Fawcett and his son,  
GIVING THEM SOME KIND OF MILKY DRINK. The Indians paint the  
men's chests too, around their necks and sterna.

A close shot on Percy Fawcett. He stares at his son, who  
appears to be at peace. FAWCETT turns away. Seems to drift  
off. We PUSH EVER CLOSER ON HIM. He looks over, at the  
GROUND. He SEES: the LETTER from NINA. Then: all sound from  
the jungle disappears. We:

CUT TO:

133 INT. DINING ROOM - LORD BERNARD HOME - BRIGHT DAY

133

A CLOSE SHOT of NINA, MUCH YOUNGER THAN WHEN WE LAST LEFT  
HER. SHE IS HOLDING A BABY. WIDEN to REVEAL:

A dining table, covered with food. Crowded with presumably  
family and friends. A CHEER goes out. Nina and Fawcett  
stand at the head of the table, having just arrived with  
their newborn: JACK. Lord Bernard is here, too, as are the  
other faces from our story's opening at the church. (The  
scene is UNNATURALLY QUIET, almost like a HALLUCINATION. But  
it's an event that it's happened, a FLASHBACK.)

RANDOM WOMAN

So wonderful, little Jack!  
(to Nina)  
And you--you look so robust, and  
healthy!

NINA FAWCETT

Thank you... Yes. I do feel  
better.

Fawcett pulls out a chair for Nina and the baby. Then:

LORD BERNARD

A toast--shall we?

NINA FAWCETT

Yes, Lord Bernard. But--I--I would like, if I could, to read something first.

\*  
\*

PERCY FAWCETT

(as a joke)

Now I'm in for it!

\*  
\*  
\*

LAUGHTER.

\*

NINA FAWCETT

I wrote it for you. In the event I did not survive the birth.

\*  
\*

LORD BERNARD

Oh, but you did, my dear, thank heavens!

\*  
\*

LAUGHTER. She begins, reading off a small piece of stationery as Fawcett eyes her:

NINA FAWCETT

"My Percy, I know your first instinct will be to grieve, but I adjure you rather to consider our son and the love you must show him--"

(looking at young Jack)

See--? I knew it would be a boy, and born on the birthday of the Buddha, no less!

\*  
\*

(only some laughter; back to letter)

"--Always teach him to dream. For as the Buddha teaches, to seek the unknown, to look for what is beautiful, is its own reward. And I beg you to remember those words so easy to forget, written by our beloved Browning--allow me one last time to repeat them: "a man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?" My dearest love forever, Cheeky."

\*

The women at the table let out a collective "AWWWW" as Fawcett smiles, kisses his wife's hand. He then looks over to the baby, reaching out to touch its hand. We MATCH CUT:

134      EXT. THE JUNGLE AGAIN

134

We're back where we were. Or are we? It's oddly silent, save for Fawcett's breathing. Percy touches his son's hand.

PERCY FAWCETT  
We're here, Jack... You're  
right... Z is all around us...

CLOSE UP ON PERCY FAWCETT as the Indians dance, lifting and moving him somewhat sloppily. It is not tender, but it is not violent, either.

Fawcett turns: musicians and dancers circle what looks like a plaza. In the distance: mound-shaped houses in endless rows.

They hold him aloft... He reaches up. SEES something. Tries to touch it.

We SEE what PERCY FAWCETT SEES: SILHOUETTED: A GATEWAY, a LARGE ARCH, in the distance, through the trees. Across the river.

The Indians carry FAWCETT AND NOW JACK too. The KAYAPO begin a march... They CARRY PERCY AND JACK up toward the GATEWAY, which is HIGH ABOVE the community...

PERCY SEES SCORES OF TORCHES, EVERYWHERE... SO MANY INDIANS, SO MANY PEOPLE...

CUT TO:

A TITLE CARD: "FOUR YEARS LATER"

135      INT. RGS OFFICE - DAY

135

Seated behind his desk: SIR JOHN SCOTT KELTIE. Keltie is near eighty now. ENTERING: WILLIAM BARCLAY. Keltie does not look up from his notes. After an awkward beat:

WILLIAM BARCLAY  
Sir John?

SIR JOHN SCOTT KELTIE  
Yes...?

WILLIAM BARCLAY  
She's outside again.

Keltie seems both sympathetic and peeved. After a beat:

SIR JOHN SCOTT KELTIE      \*

Bring her in.      \*

Barclay spins around, opens the door. Entering the room:      \*

NINA FAWCETT. Keltie gets up, smiles. Puts on his best      \*

behavior in her presence.      \*

WILLIAM BARCLAY      \*

Miss Nina.      \*

SIR JOHN SCOTT KELTIE      \*

Nina my dear, how are you?      \*

NINA FAWCETT      \*

Sir John... Mr. Barclay.      \*

SIR JOHN SCOTT KELTIE      \*

How may we be of help to you today?      \*

Nina speaks, but in a way that is almost interior,      \*

trancelike. Her eyes have a kind of thousand-yard stare, and      \*

she seems to connect, then turn inward, from moment to      \*

moment:      \*

NINA FAWCETT      \*

A man...came to see me yesterday.      \*

SIR JOHN SCOTT KELTIE      \*

A man?      \*

NINA FAWCETT      \*

He was from Brazil. He's seen      \*

Percy, and Jack, living with the      \*

Indians. He says they claim to      \*

have reached Z.      \*

Keltie tries to hide his skepticism, but cannot. Reaches out      \*

to Nina. Tenderly:      \*

SIR JOHN SCOTT KELTIE      \*

My dear, it's been years. Almost a      \*

hundred men now have been sent to      \*

look for your husband and son.      \*

I'm...I'm afraid they are no more.      \*

And I would advise...      \*

He cannot continue. Tears well up in her eyes--and,      \*

amazingly, he gets emotional as well.      \*

NINA FAWCETT      \*

Sir John, I confess that the brutal      \*

wear and tear is great, and I      \*

suffer with heart and soul.      \*

(MORE)

NINA FAWCETT (CONT'D)

It has taken all my strength of will to push horrors out of my thoughts...

Then Nina seems to reconnect:

NINA FAWCETT (CONT'D)

But I beg you not to lose confidence. I cannot doubt--after so many years of sacrifice--it has become my own life's work. It cannot have all been in vain...

\*  
\*

WILLIAM BARCLAY

Miss Nina, we do plan more search parties. We do.

No response. Keltie looks pained. He sits back down, behind his desk.

NINA FAWCETT

The Brazilian gave me this, to give to you. He said Percy told him you would understand.

Nina hands him THE COMPASS. Keltie takes the COMPASS. Tries to reveal not a hint of wide-eyed shock. BUT HE IS SHOCKED!

NINA FAWCETT (CONT'D)

I have trained myself to be impartial to evidence, but surely this is a sign.

SIR JOHN SCOTT KELTIE

(in a state of shock)  
I--I will have it examined...

NINA FAWCETT

Thank you, Sir John. It is all I can ask.

Nina withdraws again. DEVASTATED BY HIS WORDS. A beat, and then she nods, turns, leaves. Keltie looks up after she has left. Takes the compass in his hand, is WHITE AS A SHEET!

SIR JOHN SCOTT KELTIE

(to himself)  
Good God...

WILLIAM BARCLAY

What is it, Sir John? Anything? At all?

Sir John looks up at Barclay. We:

\*

CUT TO:

\*

136 INT. HALLWAY - ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

136

\*

Nina enters the hall. The camera PANS with her. We WATCH her solitary figure walk off, back to us... And as she makes the turn in the hallway, she enters: THE JUNGLE. THE HALLWAY becomes DARK JUNGLE! SHE DISAPPEARS INTO THE DARKENSS. And then we HEAR:

\*

\*

\*

\*

A NARRATOR

Many rescue groups were sent to find Percy and Jack Fawcett, but none was successful. Nina Fawcett kept hope that they would return up until her death in 1954.

137 EXT. AMAZONIA

137

An aerial SHOT of the Amazon river, snaking through GREEN FOREST...

A NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Though many recognized Fawcett's attitude toward the peoples of Amazonia to be ahead of its time, his belief in a lost city was ridiculed for almost a hundred years. But early in the 21st century, scientists were astonished to discover key evidence of ancient roads, bridges, and complex agricultural systems spread throughout the jungle: an advanced civilization.

(beat)

The modern age had come to see, in this way too, that Percy Fawcett was correct.

\*

\*

CUT TO BLACK.

The End

\*