

At the U.S. Antarctic Research Station, Outpost #31, circa 1982 in winter, none of the twelve men stationed can be known with any degree of precision. Of the group, R. J. MacReady, played by A-List Hollywood star, Kurt Russell, is the most developed of the crew. MacReady is a helicopter pilot with a long, curly 70s-era mane, who lives relatively isolated in a small cabin positioned well above the rest of the camp. He serves as the primary protagonist and moral center of the narrative, but while not being the commander of the camp, he later becomes its leader as Garry, the actual designated commander, relinquishes control in the face of a revolt about his supervision of some blood bags. MacReady favors J&B whiskey, hates losing at computer chess, and seems to prefer being alone. Perhaps the second most significant character is Dr. Blair, a researcher who autopsies the first manifestations of The Thing, and the figure who learns early that the camp likely has an infection of one of its members, and that he must urgently prevent the infection from spreading to the rest of civilization. In that sense, Blair is both a protagonist in his desire to protect civilization and an antagonist to the rest of the camp as he potentially endangers them by trying to cut off communication with the outside and by destroying equipment, including the helicopter. A third figure who expires early though unexplainably is Fuchs, probably because he ascertains quite quickly what Blair is learning in his research, though not disclosing, and because he sees the potential of infection even from most minute particles of The Thing. Of the remaining crew, Childs is less developed though he is one of the two survivors at the end along with MacReady. Garry is also less developed though we see him as hot tempered and a bit hurt as he gradually loses his authority. In addition, Palmer, a snide pot smoker, and Bennings, a rather overly serious scientist, are the first to be assimilated with Bennings being the first

to be recognized and destroyed. Furthermore, the manager of the camp's contingent of huskies is Clark, a rather misanthropic individual who seems to prefer the company of canines. Copper is the even-keeled though ill-fated camp doctor while the slightly rotund Norris is the most amiable and restrained of the group before his eventual assimilation. Lesser lights include Windows, who appears to handle communications, and the cook, Nauls, a Stevie Wonder fan who likes to do his work on roller skates. Overall, we know very little about these characters; they are relatively flat and two-dimensional and seemingly anti-social. On the other hand, the antagonist is of course The Thing as well as its assimilated human imitations: Palmer-Thing, Bennings-Thing, Norris-Thing, and eventually Blair-Thing.