



CHANGE-ABLE

PILOT COLD OPEN

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"Our only hope to revive humanity is with the wisdom and collaboration of Earth's indigenous first peoples."

--Oren Ramirez, Founder
Aurora Psychic Institute
Moons of Jupiter, 2124

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Top 100 (Feature or TV Pilot), Table Read My Screenplay Competition Austin 2021

COLD OPEN

EXT. SIMPSON DESERT REFUGEE CAMP - NIGHT

The stars of the night sky are blotted out by billions of bits of shimmering metallic atmospheric debris.

Below, on the otherwise pristine, windswept landscape, decades of fallen space stations reflect the eerie sky.

SUPER: PITJANTJATJARA LAND, SOUTH AUSTRALIA - 2129

Across the desert, plastic trash swirls in a willy-willy (tornado) buffeting the camp fence. Inside, clustered humpies (lean-to huts) crafted from rubbish, wobble in the wind.

EXT. SIMPSON DESERT REFUGEE CAMP - CHARLIE'S HUMPY - CONT.

CHARLIE ANANGU, 13, Australian First Peoples, peeks out between sheets of scrap metal. Her ears are wrapped in cloth. A dilly bag (woven fiber pouch) is slung over her shoulder.

All clear. She slips out silently.

Turning back to the sad humpies, she opens her mouth, but she's too distraught to form words. Shamed, she turns away.

Charlie slips under the perimeter fence and scrambles across a rock gully.

Swallowing her grief, she plows forward.

EXT. SIMPSON DESERT - DAY

Kilometers away from the camp, Charlie surveys the landscape.

EXHALING with relief, she unwraps her ear protection and stashes the cloths in her tattered trousers.

Charlie can 'feel' the sound waves of nature. When she does, we can see the colorless sound waves that she can only feel.

A breeze SLIDES slow thick sound waves around her. She sways slightly as if bathing in the gentle air currents.

Eucalyptus leaves softly SNAP, CLICK, SNAP, creating thin quick waves bouncing and refracting off each other.

CAW-CAWING cockatoos pulse sharp overlapping waves.

In a triumphant expressive dance, her feet STOMP-STOMP the ground, pushing sound into the Earth. The Earth responds and reflects Stomp-Stomp waves back up to her.

Stretching her limbs into the expanse of openness, Charlie smiles at a pristine line of curving sandstone hills.

She feels the sounds of the Rainbow Serpent spirit that we can see. It SLITHERS in arcs, forming the hill's contours.

EXT. SIMPSON DESERT - DAY - FLASHBACK

At the same curving sandstone hills, AUNTIE, 84, and SISTER AUNTIE, 86, both Australian First Peoples, their eyes laced with cataracts, quietly SING and DANCE their SONGLINE.

With their ancient bodies, the Aunties make the sinewy movements of the Rainbow Serpent that formed these hills in the Dreamtime (long ago). YOUNG CHARLIE, 6, is mesmerized.

They gesture to Young Charlie to join. She covers her ears. Sister Auntie lovingly pulls Young Charlie's hands away.

SISTER AUNTIE
(Pitjantjatjara subtitled)
Hear the essence, unlock the story.

Afraid, Charlie re-grips her ears. Sister Auntie smiles. The Aunties fluidly switch from Pitjantjatjara to English.

SISTER AUNTIE (CONT'D)
Your pain is also your gift. It
lives inside you always. You will
use it when you are ready.

Charlie yearns to please, but can't control her own fear.

EXT. SIMPSON DESERT - DAY - PRESENT TIME

Forlorn, Charlie sings their SONGLINE to the curving hills.

She feels, and we see, giant boxing Kangaroo spirits SLAP tails across muddy ground to shape billabong water holes.

The spirit of an enormous scurrying spiny Echidna SPROUTS to transform into a pointy rock outcropping.

Charlie peeks under the outcropping. There, in a collage of chalk-painted symbols, is a line of white circles. Each has a dot in the middle. They are connected by 'V' footprints.

At her feet, pressed into the damp sand, she finds a trail of real-life claw prints. They are the size of baby human hands.

She tracks the prints until she feels the subtle sounds of water LAPPING, claws SCRATCHING, and bursts of CLICK-CLICKING. The Click-Clicking triggers an old memory.

EXT. SIMPSON DESERT REFUGEE CAMP - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Around a campfire, inconsolable Charlie, Auntie, and the six members of their impoverished MOB OF AUNTIES, stare at the deceased body of Sister Auntie, laid on an elevated platform.

As Auntie speaks softly, the Mob CLICK-CLICKs their tongues, echoing what Charlie just heard in present time.

AUNTIE

On the *Sorry Business* of Sister Auntie's death, we tell our mob's timeless story.

(Pitjantjatjara subtitled)

One day, hunting for witjuti grubs near a billabong, Sister Auntie found little Charlie, abandoned.

The Aunties Click-Click lovingly toward sheepish Charlie. She forces a sad smile.

AUNTIE (CONT'D)

From that day, Sister Auntie adopted Charlie as her own.

EXT. SIMPSON DESERT, SOUTH AUSTRALIA - DUSK - PRESENT TIME

As the sun sets, Charlie EXHALES grief for Sister Auntie.

Focusing on the Click-Clicks, she slips her dilly bag off her shoulder and slides down onto her belly. She silently creeps through scrub, right up to the billabong (waterhole).

Eye-level with a clan of scrappy-looking lizards who lap at the water, Charlie smiles. They cock their heads and CLICK CLICK at her as if to say "*G'day. Not bad water, eh?*"

She nabs the closest one by its throat, then stands up and lifts its meter-long body to arm's length. This keeps its flailing claws at bay. The other lizards scatter.

Charlie gazes into the lizard's cataract-laced eyes and nods respectfully. Transfixed, the lizard blinks back at her.

Suddenly, two SILENT Stealth Hovercraft with blinding search lights drop out of the twilight onto either side of Charlie.

Startled, she releases the lizard who scampers away under one of the Hovercraft's electric-blue suspension fields.

Charlie fumbles in her pocket, grabs her cloth wraps, and desperately tries to protect her ears.

She scans around, stunned. She can feel sound waves from the wind-slapped eucalyptus leaves SLASHING each other. But... How are there no sound waves coming from the Hovercrafts?

The Hovercrafts land. The Earth SIGHS under the weight.

The search lights dim.

The Hovercraft door opens with a piercing SHHHICK-POP. Its sound stabs into Charlie, forcing her to jam her fingers into her ears. To her, every sound is magnified to ear-shattering.

An ANGRY BLACK OPS GUARD, in black mask and riot gear, BREATHES HEAVILY with disgust. He steps out of the Hovercraft and THUDS onto the Earth. His sounds shove at Charlie.

Charlie peers into the Hovercraft to see who else is there.

Through the open door, a BUZZING light reveals perennially irritated MAJOR KOWALSKI, 35, CONTROLLED SHALLOW BREATHING.

Charlie screws up her courage, stands up straight, and lifts her chin with shaky childlike bravado.

A SULLEN BLACK OPS GUARD, sneers at her with contempt.

SULLEN BLACK OPS GUARD
Can't be walkabout!

Two more BLACK OPS GUARDS exit from the other Hovercraft, their energized power sticks (EPSs) drawn and activated.

CHARLIE
Me mob's been here for yonks!

ANGRY BLACK OPS GUARD
But ya abandoned your mob, din'cha?

CHARLIE
Walkabout! Needed a tick to meself.
I didn't know how to help them!

The Sullen Black Ops Guard slides a BEEPING scanner over Charlie's body. He nods to Major Kowalski. Charlie bristles.

The Angry Black Ops Guard nudges The Sullen Black Ops Guard.

ANGRY BLACK OPS GUARD
(whispers mockingly)
Grant's 'Princess' wants this mangy
pup for Aurora's psychic school?

They turn away from Charlie to CHORTLE. Charlie darts away.

Major Kowalski scowls and points to Charlie's escape.

The Sullen Black Ops Guard turns, raises his EPS, aims it at Charlie, and fires SIZZLING strands of electric blue energy.

Using her sound sensitivity, Charlie evades the sizzling EPS energy by navigating within the sound waves emanating from the WIND, TREES, INSECTS, BIRDS, and MOANS of the Earth.

Her ability to 'feel' the sounds of her surroundings, and then maneuver a clean, sleek course is truly remarkable.

Sound waves from the Black Ops Guard's pounding FOOTFALLS and HEAVY BREATHING let Charlie know exactly where they are, and in what direction they are moving.

She smoothly loops around a hill to evade them.

Confident that she escaped the Black Ops Guards, Charlie allows herself to slide into a gully to catch her breath.

Suddenly, the dusk horizon lights up with an EXPLODING bomb.

Its SCREECHING pulse-wave rumbles across the landscape like a white-hot seismic wave bearing down on Charlie.

The pulse WHIPLASHES Charlie backwards, THUDDING her onto the ground. She blinks up at the debris filled night sky.

Suddenly, The Black Ops Guards leer over her and LAUGH.

MAJ. KOWALSKI (O.S.)
(via radio)
Florben's bombing the camp for
strip mining! Back to Hovies ASAP!

Charlie stares up at their cruel face masks.

Her terror-filled eyes reflect the flash of another bomb.

Its screeching pulse waves RUMBLE towards Charlie.

BLACKOUT

END COLD OPEN