

The Light At The End

by

Evan Estes

evanestes@outlook.com

FADE IN:

INT. - CAVE - NIGHT

DRIP. DRIP. MORT lies asleep in a dark, wet cave. In his slumber, he rolls over and is hit by a drop of water.

He groans as he awakens.

MORT

Damn roof.

He sits up and notices his surroundings. Alone.

MORT

What the...

Lanterns line the cave walls, giving off a dull, yellow light. A mine cart track leads in both directions.

Mort looks behind him. The light abruptly ends in darkness about 30 yards away. Then he looks forward again. More lights.

MORT

Oh my god, oh my god.

He stands up and frantically searches his pockets. Empty.

Still in his frenzy, Mort kneels and feels around on the cave floor until his fingers touch a wallet.

He opens it, fingers run across a few dollar bills and then across an ID. He slides it out to reveal a woman's picture. Name on the ID states: MARCY GOODWIN.

A woman's laugh catches his attention. He looks down the tunnel of lights and sees nothing.

MORT

Hello?! HELLO?!

He hears another laugh. Mort walks, then runs in the direction of the sound.

MORT

Hey! Help!

He sprints through the tunnel. Light after light whizzing by his head.

The rail cart, straight as an arrow, directs him onward. And then it ends.

He tries to slow down but his momentum plunges him below. His arms outstretched and flailing, Mort hits the bottom of the ditch.

He groans and rolls over on his back, grabbing his shoulder. He rocks back and forth, wincing, until he catches his breath. Staring straight up, he lies with eyes wide open.

MORT
(rubbing his shoulder)
Well, I just hope you aren't
broken.

Mort begins searching for grips on the opposite wall. Finds two for his hands. He raises his leg and finds a place for his foot.

As he thrusts his weight on that foot, he loses his grip. Tumbles back down.

MORT
Come on now, Morty.

His second try is more successful. He manages to climb out on the opposite side he fell.

Mort continues his journey, this time at a much slower pace.

MORT
(singing)
In restless dreams I walked alone.
Narrow streets of cobblestone.

Mort glances up, stops singing. The lights are running out. He sees the last wall lantern, the gateway to an abyss.

DRIP. DRIP. Dripping water echoes throughout the cave. The light shows the track continuing into the darkness.

MORT
(singing)
'Neath the halo of a street lamp. I
turned my collar to the cold and
damp.

Mort enters the darkness and continues singing as he walks.

After walking for a few seconds, a SCUFF can be heard from behind him. He looks back at the dimly lit part of the tunnel. Nothing.

He turns around and continues walking.

FOOTSTEPS can be heard behind him.

Mort swiftly jolts his head around. The outline of a MAN stands in the light about 100 yards away.

Mort slowly starts walking backwards. The Man stands completely still. Mort picks up his pace.

The Man raises his arm and points at Mort.

Mort quickly turns around and starts running through the darkness.

His breathing becomes heavy and his footsteps echo through the tunnel. He can no longer see in front of him. He

continues sprinting until...

THUD! He trips on something and hits the ground.

MORT
(whispering)
Shit! Shit! Shit!

The lit part of tunnel is far off. No sight of a man. The air is silent.

DRIP. DRIP.

Mort tries catching his breath. He feels around on the cave floor like he's blind.

His hands run across a flashlight. Flips it on.

A face appears. Mort drops the flashlight.

He picks it back up and slowly examines the BODY that's propped up against the cave wall. Motionless.

Mort checks it's pulse. Dead. He notices a badge on the shirt that reads: MARCY.

He searches beside the body for any belonging. He finds a canteen lying next to it. He drinks. Saves some.

MORT
(to the body)
I'd love to stay, really.

Mort rises and leaves the body behind, looking back at the lit part of the tunnel.

INT. - CAVE - LATER

Mort hums to himself as he walks, his flashlight fixed on the rails that he's been following.

He hears the sound of screeching metal in the distance.

Mort stops. He turns in all directions to find the noise. Sees nothing. Besides his flashlight, he is in complete darkness.

MORT
Can't lose my direction now.

After several more steps, he hears the metal again. He stops. Nothing there. He keeps walking.

SCREECH!

Mort flashes his light backward down the tunnel. Nothing.

SCREECH! SCREECH!

Mort flashes his light on the rails. Backward. Then forward. Nothing.

SCREECH! SCREECH! SCREECH!

Mort bends down on the rail and turns off the light. The noise gets louder and louder until a strong gust of wind hits him with a low groan.

The screeching is right in front of him. He flashes the light on. A mine cart flies in his direction. Mort dives off the rail just in time.

The cart zips by, along with the noise. The wind dies down.

Mort gathers himself and his belongings.

MORT
Alright, no more fooling around
now, Morty. Eyes on the prize.

He walks in silence. The only sounds coming from the dripping of water throughout the cave.

His light fixed on the tracks, Mort finds a solid rhythm in his footsteps. Determined footsteps.

A faint light flickers in the distance. Mort stops. Flips his light off.

After a few silent moments, the light becomes solid.

MORT
Ahh, bring me home.

He angles his flashlight back at the tracks and flips it on.

Two feet stand on the opposite side of the tracks. Dirty toes and cracked toenails stand still.

MORT
Fuck!

He flips the light back off.

MORT
(breathing heavily)
No, no, no, no.

He flips it back on in the same spot. Nothing. Mort scans the tunnel with his light and finds only empty space.

The sound of two feet patter closely behind him.

He spins and shines the light behind him. Nothing.

Mort walks rapidly away from the scene and toward his faint light.

MORT
Not that much longer, Morty. Keep
your head on straight.

His light glides up and down the tracks.

A woman's laugh can be heard in the direction of the light.
Mort jogs.

The faint light he's headed toward grows bigger.

Mort picks up his pace. The light grows with every step.
Bigger and bigger. And more yellow.

Mort sprints towards it and slows to a stop when he sees
lanterns on the walls, illuminating the track that extends
beyond his sight.

Mort slowly walks into the lit area, turns his flashlight
off, and puts his hands on his knees. He tries to catch his
breath.

MORT

NO! This should have been it!

Mort straightens up and walk leisurely.

MORT

It's okay, Morty. You're just that
much closer. And at least this
part's lit.

He traces his hand along the tunnel wall as he trods along.
His fingers slide across a steady stream of water.

DRIP. DRIP. DRIP.

Mort takes the cap off his canteen and takes a swig. He puts
it back up to his lips but stops before taking a second
gulp.

MORT

Ration, Morty. It might be longer
than you think.

He places the canteen back around his neck and raises his
shirt to wipe off the sweat. Keeps his shirt over his face.

MORT

(screaming into his
shirt)

GAAHHHH!

Mort pauses and looks down both ends of the tunnel.

MORT

It's gotta be this way. Right,
Morty?

He raises his hand up to his forehead and slowly slides it
down the side of his face.

MORT

(starting to smile)
Morty always says to keep going.

INT. - CAVE - LATER

Morty walks on one of the track rails. Head down, focused, as he maintains his balance.

MORT
(to himself)
The tracks will lead us home. The
tracks will lead us home.

Mort glances up and sees the rails abruptly end.

MORT
Wait a sec.

Mort hops off the rail and hurries up to the end. He sees a small ditch, similar to the one he fell in. The rail continues on the other side.

MORT
At least, I saw it this time.

Mort crosses the tracks and walks up to the ditch on the other side. He notices a ledge against the wall that leads to the other side.

Mort traverses the ledge with his back to the wall. He safely arrives on the other side. He brushes his hands off on his shirt.

MORT
Old Mort's still got it.

Mort crosses the tracks back to his familiar side. He walks at a brisk pace.

MORT
(stern)
So, Mort, how were you able to find
your way out on your own?
(normal voice)
Well you see, I stayed the course.
The tracks were pretty straight,
you know.
(stern voice)
Did you ever get discouraged?
(normal voice, growing
more enthusiastic)
Oh, no. Never. Morty always knew
his way out. The great Lord above
told him all the answers.
(smiling)
Yes, he showed me the light.

Mort chuckles to himself. Then notices the lanterns fade off in the distance. The last one is in sight.

MORT
Not again.

Mort jogs to the last line of light and stares at the darkness.

MORT
Morty's ready this time.

He plunges into the abyss with his flashlight on. The beam scans the tunnel as he walks through.

His light hits a pair of work boots in the distance. Mort runs toward them.

MORT
Hello?!

Mort jogs toward the boots.

MORT
Hello? Can you hear me?

As he gets closer, Mort sees the legs lying down on the cave floor. The boots haven't moved.

MORT
Hey! Can you help?

Mort shines his light fully on the figure. The body sits still against the wall.

Mort runs to the body. The shirt looks familiar.

MORT
Geez, how many of you...

The badge reads: MARCY.

MORT
Oh, no. NO. NO!

Mort's flashlight paces back and forth, with Mort following. There's silence in the tunnel.

Mort mumbles nonsensically to himself, then sits down beside the body and turns his flashlight off.

DRIP. DRIP. DRIP. DRIP.

MORT
(smiling)
Morty, you gotta figure something out man. Our lives depend on it.

Mort chuckles.

Mort turns the light on, revealing his devious face, then turns it back off again. Back on, then off. On. Off. On. Off.

Mort continues this without moving or speaking, but his voice can still be heard.

MORT(V.O.)

Ol' Morty can get you out of here.
He always knows the way.

(chuckles)

The tracks will lead us home, isn't
that right, Morty?

Mort flips the light on and stands up. He aims his beam
toward the tracks and follows the light.

A faint light flickers in the distance. Mort's face remains
fixed on the tracks.

MORT(V.O.)

(hysterically)

Yes, yes. The tracks will lead us
home.

FADE OUT.