

THE OFFICIAL MOVIE NOVELIZATION

# UNCHARTED



NOVELIZATION BY **S.D. PERRY**

Based on the PlayStation video game by Naughty Dog  
Screen Story by Rafe Judkins

Screenplay by Rafe Judkins and Art Marcum & Matt Holloway

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BASED ON THE **PLAYSTATION** VIDEO GAME

BY **NAUGHTY DOG**

**TITAN** BOOKS

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“I know not all that may be coming, but be it  
what it will, I'll go to it laughing.”

—Herman Melville

“Oh man, I'm so tired of climbing shit.”

—Nathan Drake

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For Cyrus and Dexter, who are the coolest.

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## PROLOGUE

The sky was beautiful, a deep, dazzling blue. Nathan Drake opened his eyes and for half a second he saw only the wide empty void, only knew its cloudless beauty. A perfect day, the smell of salt on the breeze, the wind in his hair, Sam's ring banging his forehead, his clothes flapping violently—

*Wait, what?*

He blinked, and the world spun. A thousand aches came to life as the wind blasted over him, as he turned his head and saw the endless sea, also blue, about 15,000 feet below wherever he was. Which appeared to be hanging upside down by one leg, whirling through the beautiful sky.

“Oh, *crap*,” he said, abruptly wide awake. His right foot was caught under heavy netting wrapped around a big crate, which was connected to more crates by various chains and cables, the whole string of boxes hanging out of the back of a roaring cargo plane. Which meant *he* was hanging out of the back of a roaring cargo plane.

*The airdrop.* Memory hit like a ton of bricks. The gold, the keys, the map! Sully was gone and—

Nate's foot started to slip out from beneath the netting, that precious web of nylon that was the only thing keeping him from a very, very long fall.

“No no no no *no*—”

He reached up for the thick netting just as his boot slipped free, and the wind whipped him off the crate like he was a feather. Nate bounced into the

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crate whistling along behind him and scrabbled to hold onto it, but the wind had other ideas. He clawed at the next heavy box he slammed into, padded with equipment bags and smaller boxes, then a third, his eyes wide, his fingers grasping. He was nearing the end of the clumsy, waving line of crates and equipment streaming from the plane, could see the last crate, big and square, sturdy-looking, wrapped in nylon straps and dragging a dead, tangled bundle of flopping parachute—and past that, nothing but empty air and the sparkling sea far below. Far, *far* below.

He hit the box and his hands skittered across the thick netting, sliding over one of the bags strapped to the side. For a second he thought he was done for, but his grasping fingers caught the strappy net. He grabbed hold with a death grip and jerked to a halt, slammed down on top of the crate, immediately adding new aches to his battered body.

Nate hunched against the wooden slats. He was *glued* to the crate. He looked up and back to the yawning cargo hold, counting the boxes and bags between him and safety. Four? Five? He could climb back, he *had* to climb back, and fast, before one or more of the villains on board decided to cut their losses and ditch their hazardous tail.

He reached forward, keeping the death grip thing going with his left hand, grasping at the connecting cable with his right—

—and a hand came down on his left calf, thick fingers squeezing like a vise.

“Aaaah!”

Nate jerked around, saw he wasn't the only rider to catch the last crate. One of the bad guys was hanging off the back, his thick ugly face contorted with terror and fury. The man raised his left hand, which held a great big gun, and pointed it at Nate.

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Shocked, Nate kicked out, his work boot landing square in the man's snarling face. The guy lost his grip on Nate's leg and shrieked as he fell away, wheeling his arms and his useless weapon, plummeting to the sea far below.

"Oh my god, that was purely reactive, I really didn't mean to—"

The man was already a flailing speck, too far away to hear Nate's apology, the sound of his diminishing screams lost to the thunder of the plane's engines and the blast of the wind. Nate shut up and turned back to face his climb, pulling himself across the top of the box, reaching again for the main connecting cable.

He'd just touched it when the entire daisy chain of boxes lurched down six feet, as another crate jounced out of the cargo hold to lengthen the whipping equipment tail. How many more were connected? How much weight was still on board, keeping the clumsy line from falling? How much longer before everything was yanked out into the sky, or the ropes gave way?

*THINK LATER, GO NOW!*

Nate grabbed the primary cable between his crate and the next, and pulled himself into a crouch. The crates were spaced just close enough for him to reach up and grab the netting on the one above, but he had to steel himself for the attempt, fully aware of his extremely precarious position. Up on the plane, someone was shooting. A lot. A couple of random lone crates flew out of the hold and plunged past him, disappearing into the blue void.

Nate stood, grabbed the net overhead, and jerked himself up, swinging his legs up after him. He shoved his feet into the nylon net of the penultimate box and threw himself at it, muscles clenched against the unyielding blast of wind that sought to peel him away and drop him into the sea like that poor jerk with the gun.

He edged forward to the top of the crate, making the next jump the same way he had the first, thankful for the millions of crunches he'd endured in his

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short life. Nothing like core strength to fight wind shear. He'd be at the top in no time and—

Ahead of him, near the top of the jostling chain, another mercenary leaned out from his own precarious perch and opened fire with a semi.

“Hey, whoa!” Nate shouted. “No need to shoot—I—”

Bullets slammed into the bulky equipment bags strapped to the box, dug divots into the thick gray plastic of the container. One of the rounds shredded the stabilizing line that kept Nate's crate from being spun like a top, the inevitable result a dizzying spin through the open air, out of the shooter's line of sight. Nate didn't wait to swing back, he'd be a sitting duck—he launched himself at the crate overhead and clambered up the side facing away from the gunman. He could see the shooter's boots sticking over the edge of the flapping net above, and threw himself upward again, deliberately not thinking of how easy it would be to plunge to his death, praying that the guy would blame the sudden shift of weight on the screaming wind.

Nate scaled the netting, coming to the crate's top as the gunman rose into a crouch, his back to Nate as he stared down the line of spinning boxes. There was now only one crate between them and the cargo hold. The man started to turn, scowling through a bushy beard, his gun swinging around—

—and Nate threw himself forward, hitting the guy low, knocking him into the open air while he grabbed the netting, hanging tight to the bucking crate.

The gunman let out a cry and fell—onto the box right below. He clung to the crate's side, padded with duffels and packs of equipment, and immediately started climbing.

*Cut the cable!*

*Great idea, but no knife!*

Nate squinted against the buffeting wind, taking in the straps twined through the netting of his crate, connecting it to the others. Amid the

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fluttering ropes was a flat buckle flush against the plastic, right along the primary cable. Nate flipped the connector and was immediately rewarded—the cable slid free of the netting, all the crates beneath his suddenly dropping away, the plane’s engines roaring.

*Easy-peasy, only one more to go and I’ll be—*

Beard-guy launched himself off the falling chain and snatched one of the flapping straps now hanging off Nate’s crate. He swung wildly, rocking what was left of the equipment train. Nate held on tight, stomach lurching.

The cargo hold was so close, only one crate above. He heard more shots on board, and shouting, but figured he’d rather take a bullet than fall to his doom with Beardo, who was already panting up the side of the heavy crate at his feet. At least he’d lost his gun.

Nate stood and launched himself at the top crate, grabbing the netting under a bulging zippered duffel roped to the side. He brought his feet up and dug them into the nylon on the bottom, pushing himself over the duffel bag. His clawing hands found the top edge of the crate and he hooked his fingers into the net, dragging his head level to the top, just in time to see one of the cable’s smaller connecting straps go *zing*, and disappear.

The box lurched to the right, suddenly unsteady in its cradle of net. Better, the primary cable, the line holding it all together, was sawing itself in half against the steel lip of the open cargo hold, and—

*Ahh!*

Nate’s body was jerked down by Beardo’s weight, the henchman suddenly hanging from his left ankle, gripping with both meaty hands. Nate flailed, left arm swinging out, nearly losing his grip.

“You are an asshole!” Nate screamed. “If we would just help each other, this would—*Jesus!*”

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Beardo was trying to climb his leg, kicking off against his own crate, jerking Nate further off balance. Nate heard another high-pitched *zing* from whatever system of straps still connected them to the plane. He couldn't kick the guy—he'd be hanging by his hands—and the weight was too much to lift and shake off. He hugged the wall of bags and boxes, hooking his right arm through the net, the answer right in front of his face: the zipper of the duffel bag.

He ripped it open, unleashing a small flood of random equipment—flashlights and hand radios, a shovel blade. The stuff smashed into Beardo, who clung ever tighter, ducking his head against the onslaught.

Nate fumbled deeper into the bag, grabbed what felt like a baseball bat, and jerked it out. A long black stick, maybe the shovel's handle? Scaffolding? Who cared. He swung it at Beardo's head, connecting with a solid *whap*. Instead of letting go, Beardo leaned back, still hanging on, pulling Nate's body away from the diminishing safety of the crate's netting and putting his noggin out of whapping range. Nate swung again and got air, the crate shifting along with another tiny, zipping *snap*.

*Shit!* Unless an act of God came along, he was in trouble. Beardo was strong and heavy and he wasn't letting go.

A flash of movement over Nate's head, a heavy scrape across the open ramp, and something big was barreling through the hold. Nate ducked and hung tight as a lone crate was sucked off the ramp and into the air, missing him by inches—before it smashed into Beardo's upturned, grimacing face.

The iron grip fell away from Nate's ankle, the crate and the henchman suddenly dwindling against the sparkling blue below. Nate felt like he'd lost a couple of hundred pounds.

*Go go go!*

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He clambered up the sagging net, bent his knees, and jumped. He could feel the top crate's surface drop away just as his feet left the surface, but his hands touched shuddering cold metal, gripped the rubber strip of insulation at the ramp's edge.

*Got it!* The ramp felt shockingly stable after his wild climb. He shot a look down, saw the clumsy chain of boxes spinning into the distance, speeding away, then hauled himself up and out of the sky, gasping, with arms that felt like rubber. Air was somehow blasting from *inside* the plane, but it was mostly going past him, shuttling around an upended storage locker. Nate tucked his boot under a steel bar on the ramp and stood up. He'd made it, he was finally —

From the hold of the plane, a car revved its engine. Nate braced against the relentless push of the wind, and peered, blinking, into the shadowy hold. Guns were fired, flashes in the dark.

He saw it coming and felt the blood rush out of his face.

“This is just not my day.”

The red 1955 Mercedes Gullwing sped toward the open ramp, toward *him*, and there wasn't time to get out of the way.

Nate jumped straight up and threw himself forward, some idea of shoulder-rolling over the hood his only play, but there wasn't time for that either, the car was suddenly in his face, cherry-red and flying. He crashed flat across the hood—

—and then he was back outside, still thousands of feet above the sea, the Benz's wheels spinning pointlessly as the car rocketed downward and the plane flew away.

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