

FILM TITLE		CIRCLE OF STEEL		APPROVAL	
DOCUMENT NAME		SYNOPSIS			
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SYNOPSIS

Circle of Steel is a feature length feminist dark comedy film about workplace ambivalence in the oil and gas fields of Alberta. What does it really mean to work in Canada's most controversial industry?

The story follows Wendy Lee, a young female engineer who enters the Albertan workforce in a multi-national oil company. With the acerbic observational humour of everyday worklife, the seriousness of the global oil market, and the pains of growing up in a time where youth is considered illegitimate, *Circle of Steel* is a satirical and sympathetic story of workers in Alberta's oil and gas industry.

The world of *Circle of Steel* is distinguished through Wendy's interactions with a diverse set of peers. There's Wendy's engineering colleagues: Kristen, the ambitious and morally dubious modern woman; Joe, the personification of play hard, work enough; and Ian Smith, their comfortable, passive boss. There's Wendy's field associates: Kiki, an ancient field tech; and Bobby, an older Operator with a deadly secret.

It's the height of the 2015 price slump and projects are not only uneconomic, layoffs are a looming reality. Wendy works as an Optimization Engineer in an aging conventional asset in the Albertan foothills. Rumours of the asset's divestiture exacerbate an already sardonic environment. There's the remote, unseen danger: safety moments with tips on how not to die, bullet holes in company signs, the candid drug-use and alcoholism. Kiki's blunt aggression becomes acutely insufferable. Even Bobby, with whom Wendy usually finds solidarity, is acting erratically.

After a lackluster performance review, Wendy vows to save her job by developing a radical and impressive project: use wind energy to power the field's operation of oil and gas production. As Wendy discovers, it's hard to stay ultristic in the mentality of a boom economy where money is king. As Wendy's project progresses, the lines between personal and professional boundaries blur to the point of non-existence. Is Joe's passion for Wendy's project "strictly professional"? Is Kristen's career advancement advice truly beneficial? When is Wendy's mom going to stop asking for payouts?

Little by little, Wendy's illusions about the moral responsibilities of being an adult, of being an engineer, disappear. Joe's adulterous conquests continue on company time. Bobby's pain killer dependency is revealed with horrible consequences. Wendy realizes that what may be personally righteous does not actually carry much weight against the gears of the world. A final, crushing deception pushes Wendy to the point of no-return: does she conform, or does she quit? And what happens next?

On a personal scale, *Circle of Steel* demonstrates that youthful ideals can become endangered by the complications of adult life. Politically, the story is pro-worker: it supports the idea that many people do not and cannot consider the larger consequences of their work. Overall, *Circle of Steel* suggests that circumstance is the greatest influence on individual choice. Ultimately, audiences will see an insider's perspective on the little seen worker's experience of the oil and gas industry.