

CASTLE ROCK

Pilot

"A Meeting of the Minds"

Written by

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What writing is...
Telepathy, of course.

We're not even in the same year together,
Let alone the same room...
Except we *are* together. We're close.

We're having a meeting of the minds.

- Stephen King, *On Writing*

EXT. CASTLE ROCK, MAINE - THE BARRENS - DAY

SLOW PUSH IN on the gaping mouth of a mossy SEWER TUNNEL,
swallowing the light --

DAVID (O.C.)
You're dead, Steve!

DAVID KING (10), sandy-haired and scrappy, jumps into frame
from the top of the tunnel, menacing us with a FINGER PISTOL.

DAVID
I shot you!

REVERSE ON - YOUNG STEPHEN KING (8), dark-haired and
delicate, wearing thick glasses with black frames.

YOUNG STEPHEN
No, 'cause my shield blocked it!

DAVID
Cowboys don't have shields --

YOUNG STEPHEN
-- The aliens gave it to me, and I
buried their spaceship, so you
can't find it!

DAVID
Steve... you are so full of shit.

David laughs, and sprints off down a dirt trail.

YOUNG STEPHEN
I'm telling Mom!

As Stephen chases after him - PULL OUT TO ESTABLISH --

THE BARRENS - an overgrown RAVINE with steep embankments on
either side - a jumble of fallen trees and ivy make it a
perfect natural playground. At the bottom, the large tunnel
marks the entrance to an underground SEWER SYSTEM. At the
top, old TRAIN TRACKS skirt one edge of the ravine --

SUPER: CASTLE ROCK, MAINE - 1955

The boys giggle as they duck around bushes, under branches.

DAVID
I'm gonna steal your spaceship!

YOUNG STEPHEN
No you're not!

Stephen struggles to keep up, losing sight of David in a sea of green. His foot catches a root, and he tumbles into --

A CLEARING - Stephen rolls to a stop. He gets up, finding his glasses nearby, slightly bent. He slips them on, sees --

A MAN (45) crouched against a tree. Tall and handsome, dressed in black with a cowboy hat. Lips in a permanent smirk. Voice a Texas drawl. This is RANDALL FLAGG.

FLAGG

Hiya, Doc.

Stephen just stares at him, spooked.

FLAGG

Come on over here. I wanna show you something.

Stephen remains frozen as Flagg reaches behind his back --

FLAGG

You wanna be a cowboy, right?
How'd you like to hold a *real* gun?

Flagg pulls out a large, shiny REVOLVER, offers it to Stephen grip first. Stephen still doesn't move. Flagg chuckles.

FLAGG

I get it - don't talk to strangers.
Name's Flagg. Nice to meet you,
Doc.

(beat)

You wanna meet my friends? They
float... down underground. You'll
love it.

(then, oozing charm)

Come on, Doc. I ain't gonna bite.

FLAGG SMILES - a freakishly wide grin that eclipses his face, like a shark, filled with SHARP TEETH... like little knives.

STEPHEN TURNS AND RUNS - back the way he came, not daring to look and see if Flagg is following. Finally he bursts into --

THE RAVINE - Stephen stops to catch his breath near the open sewer tunnel. He looks around for his brother.

YOUNG STEPHEN

David! Where are you? I don't
wanna play here anymore!

A TRAIN WHISTLES - Stephen looks up the embankment to --

STEPHEN'S POV - THE TOP OF THE HILL - DAVID stands on the TRAIN TRACKS, holding a REVOLVER, FLAGG crouched beside him.

ON STEPHEN, terror flooding his young face.

YOUNG STEPHEN

David!!

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. THE BARRENS - THE TOP OF THE HILL - DAY

DAVID'S POV - he can't hear Stephen, or the ONCOMING TRAIN. Everything around him is BLURRY AND MUTED... except FLAGG, and the shiny gun in his hand - it seems to hypnotize him.

FLAGG

Go on and point that thing over
this way, son. It ain't loaded.

David levels the gun at Flagg's friendly face, as --

IN THE RAVINE - STEPHEN scrambles up the steep hill, chunks of earth tearing away in his hands as he fights for footing.

STEPHEN'S POV - THE TOP OF THE HILL - ON DAVID, smiling placidly as he points the gun at Flagg, blissful unaware of THE TRAIN WHISTLE SCREAMING, THE ENGINE RUSHING TOWARDS HIM --

ON STEPHEN, stumbling on the slope, he slips and falls - knows he won't make it. He lies there, screaming --

YOUNG STEPHEN

DAVID!! LOOK OUT!!!

THE TOP OF THE HILL - DAVID'S POV - no Stephen, no train, only FLAGG, smiling down the barrel, as his EYES LIGHT UP, BLOOMING INTO HEADLIGHTS --

NEW ANGLE - WIDE ON DAVID, ALONE, pointing his FINGER PISTOL feebly down the tracks. From this perspective, FLAGG IS GONE, like he was never there to begin with. After a beat --

-- A FREIGHT TRAIN rushes into frame, CRUSHING DAVID (the train is industrial and relatively small, no passengers.)

IN THE RAVINE - ON STEPHEN, HIS EARS RINGING AS --

DAVID (V.O.)

Stephen!!!

Stephen can hear David SCREAMING IN HIS MIND - a strange, supernatural sound effect that we'll soon come to recognize.

STEPHEN'S POV - BEYOND THE TRAIN, through the gaps in passing cars, Stephen sees FLAGG with that same JAGGED GRIN - but now his teeth are tipped with BLOOD. It dribbles down his chin.

ON STEPHEN, backing away - half-sliding, half-falling down the hill - he finally finds his feet and RUNS --

EXT. OVERGROWN ROAD - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Stephen flies down the road into town as only a panicked kid can, past an old sign that reads, "CASTLE ROCK WELCOMES YOU."

EXT. CASTLE ROCK - VARIOUS STREETS - DAY (MONTAGE)

Stephen tears through the small community - he's a few miles from home, but he covers the distance at a dead run.

-- Cutting across a field behind a dilapidated MILL.

-- Sprinting through the three-block downtown. There's a strong sense of Americana... but it's too quiet. Too empty. Shuttered storefronts add to the sinister vibe.

-- Passing the local high school. The faded sign out front reads, "HAVE A GREAT SUMMER."

-- Jetting down sleepy residential streets lined with cookie-cutter houses, classic cars and picket fences.

EXT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Stephen reaches a modest two-story colonial. He squeezes through the fence, cuts across the yard and bursts in the door. We stay outside as A WOMAN SCREAMS inside the house.

INT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

STEPHEN'S MOTHER sits at in a small table, clutching a tear-stained tissue. This is RUTH KING (35), blue collar good looks, eyes red from crying. She notices her hand starting to SHAKE - grips the tissue until her knuckles turn white.

BEHIND HER - THROUGH THE DOOR INTO THE LIVING ROOM - we see (but do not hear) Stephen talking to the local law enforcement, SHERIFF PANGBORN (55), unkempt hair and kind eyes - a face that inspires trust, if not great confidence.

The Sheriff enters the kitchen - speaks to Ruth in low tones.

SHERIFF PANGBORN

It's a normal reaction. Kids dream up stories to make sense of reality. And with an imagination like Stephen's --

RUTH
 (with restrained emotion)
 Sheriff, I need to know how my son
 died.

SHERIFF PANGBORN
 My guess is they were playing on
 the tracks --

STEPHEN
 That's not what happened!

Both turn to see Stephen in the kitchen doorway, fuming.

STEPHEN
 I told you, the man with the sharp
 teeth ate David, he --

RUTH
 (sharp)
 -- Stephen, stop it. If you can't
 tell me the truth, just... don't
 say anything at all.

Stephen's face crumbles - he runs upstairs. Ruth softens.

RUTH
 Stephen --

But the Sheriff stops her with a gentle hand on her arm.

INT. STEPHEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (MOMENTS LATER)

Stephen slams the door and throws himself onto his mattress,
 sobbing. He stares through bleary eyes across the room at
 DAVID'S EMPTY BED, the sheets tucked in tight like a shroud.

After a long beat, Stephen rises and goes to --

A DESK - he flicks on a light, and takes a brand new NOTEBOOK
 and a fresh pencil out of a drawer. As he writes, we hear --

YOUNG STEPHEN (V.O.)
Once upon a time, a monster came to
the town of Castle Rock, Maine...

PUSH IN ON THE WORDS UNTIL THEY FILL THE SCREEN --

SMASH TO:

INT. STEPHEN'S BEDROOM - DAY (SEVEN YEARS LATER)

STEPHEN IS ASLEEP on his desk, now 15-YEARS-OLD. A SIMILAR
 NOTEBOOK open in front of him is FULL of sloppy scribbling.

RUTH (O.C.)
 Stephen, you're going to be late!

HE SITS UP - puberty has sharpened his features, but he's still slender, with the same glasses and geyser of dark hair.

STEPHEN
 I'll be right down!

Stephen trashes the NUB of pencil and jams the notebook into a backpack stuffed with FOUR MORE just like it.

He exits, passing a BOOKCASE where David's bed used to be, now bursting with novels by Lovecraft and Poe, a few horror comics - scary stories have become Stephen's whole world.

INT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Stephen gulps down eggs as Ruth hovers. She's lost weight since David died. Her hand SHAKES as she re-fills his O.J.

A NEWSPAPER on the table shows a PHOTO of a YOUNG BOY (8), holding a red balloon, captioned as "GEORGIE DENBROUGH." The headline reads, "POLICE EXPAND SEARCH FOR MISSING BOY."

RUTH
 Remember, take the bus to Juniper Hill and we'll walk home together.
 (glancing at the paper)
 I don't want you here alone with everything that's going on.

Stephen nods. Ruth sits with him, fidgety. She takes his hand - sees the side of it stained grey with GRAPHITE.

RUTH
 Stephen, you're a mess! Were you writing all night?

She finds more silver pencil marks smeared across his cheek. Licks her thumb and dabs at them. He pulls away.

STEPHEN
 Don't wipe your spit on me!

RUTH
 Hold still.

STEPHEN
 You're making me late!

RUTH
 You need to sleep... and I don't mean in class.

She gives him a smooch for emphasis - he squirms away, exits.

RUTH
Be good! And no fighting!

MUSIC FADES IN - *Everyday* by Buddy Holly --

EXT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - DAY

Stephen jogs across the lawn, chasing the SCHOOL BUS. He clears the fence with a stumbling leap.

SUPER: 1962

The bus slows just enough to let Stephen on, then pulls away.

INT./EXT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

MUSIC FADES OUT as Stephen makes his way through the bus, passing groups of ROWDY KIDS who don't give him a glance.

HENRY (O.C.)
Bite me, lard ass!

Stephen reaches a rear seat, where pig-nosed bully HENRY BOWERS (16) rains punches on a chubby dork with a military haircut. This is VERN TESSIO (15), Stephen's best friend.

VERN (O.C.)
Get offa me, Bowers!

Vern pushes Henry away. Henry laughs, then mad-dogs Stephen.

HENRY
Welcome back, creep.

Stephen doesn't respond, just slides in next to Vern. Henry drops into the row behind them, occasionally kicking their seat. They ignore him - it's how they've learned to survive.

STEPHEN
Same seat?

VERN
It was lucky for us last year.

STEPHEN
You got bi-weekly wedgies --

VERN
-- And made out with Beverly Marsh!

STEPHEN
What? When?

VERN

After the field trip to the animal shelter, remember? She was sad. I was there. Next time I'm swingin' for a double.

Henry KICKS the seat. Vern pretends not to notice.

VERN

How's Ruth?

STEPHEN

She's okay. This Georgie Denbrough thing has her spooked.

VERN

Too close to home, huh?

Stephen doesn't answer. Vern wishes he hadn't asked.

VERN

You know what I think happened to Georgie?

(off Stephen: what?)

Taken by gypsies.

STEPHEN

You always say gypsies.

VERN

They're hobos with magic, how is that okay?! Think about it...

Vern's rant *FADES* into the background as *STEPHEN'S EARS RING* - that same supernatural sound effect we heard when David died.

STEPHEN'S POV - OUT THE WINDOW - AT THE SIDE OF THE ROAD - a SINGLE RED BALLOON hangs tangled in the branches of a tree.

Stephen leans across Vern for a better look.

VERN

What is it?

STEPHEN

See that in the tree?

VERN

(turning in his seat)

If you're setting me up for a wedgy, this friendship is over...

STEPHEN'S POV - OUT THE WINDOW - the balloon blows free of the branches. It floats up and away into the sky.

VERN
What am I looking for?

STEPHEN
(rattled, but hiding it)
Nothing. Never mind.

ON VERN - used to Stephen shutting him out. Doesn't like it.

HENRY (O.C.)
Hey - you wanna know what *really*
happened to Georgie?

Against their better judgement, both boys turn to look at Henry, who lounges alone in his seat, sneering at them.

HENRY
I heard Vern's Old Man broke out of
Shawshank --

VERN
(a bad stutter)
Sh-sh-sh--

HENRY
-- Plugged Georgie twice in
the gut, just like his wife.

VERN
SH-SHUT - SHUT --

STEPHEN
How'd you get that shiner, Henry?
Your dad fall off the wagon again?

Henry touches a faded BRUISE under one eye, seething - he pulls out a SMALL KNIFE and opens the blade, holding it low.

HENRY
Keep flappin' that tongue, creep.
I'll cut it out.

STEPHEN
Try it, crybaby.

Henry looks sharply away, as if struck - the word means something to him - *something Stephen shouldn't know*. He closes the knife, uneasy. Stephen and Vern turn back around, amazed, whispering --

VERN
That shut him up. Where'd you get
'crybaby?'

STEPHEN
Just popped into my head. Lucky
guess.

VERN
Must be the seat.

As the bus PULLS UP TO CASTLE ROCK HIGH - the sign out front now reads, "WELCOME BACK."

SHERIFF PANGBORN (PRE-LAP)
First off, don't panic...

INT. CASTLE ROCK HIGH - ENGLISH CLASS - DAY

CLOSE ON SHERIFF PANGBORN, now 62, his unruly hair having turned almost entirely white.

SHERIFF PANGBORN
I mean, don't go gettin' in cars with strangers. But odds are, we're dealing with an 8-year-old kid who wandered off and got lost.

REVERSE ON - A CLASS FULL OF STUDENTS - we pan across the faces, finding Stephen, Vern, and Henry among them.

SHERIFF PANGBORN
Georgie Denbrough wasn't eaten by wolves...
(Vern's hand shoots up)
... and he wasn't taken by gypsies.
(Vern's hand goes down)
But when something happens to a child, people go a little crazy.

The Sheriff can't help glancing at Stephen, who looks away.

SHERIFF PANGBORN
We'd like you all to keep an eye out for anything unusual - and Georgie's family is offering a reward for information that helps get him home. Mr. Torrance has my number.

The Sheriff steps aside, revealing JACK TORRANCE (45), charming, handsome, magnetic - Stephen's English Teacher.

JACK
Thank you, Sheriff. I'm sure all our thoughts are with Georgie and his family.

SHERIFF PANGBORN
I appreciate that, Jack. Welcome back to school, kids.

The class GROANS as the Sheriff exits.

JACK

Okay, it's just Sophomore English,
not the rapture. My name is Mr.
Torrance. I see a few familiar
faces from Freshman Lit...

(wink at Stephen)

... And some new ones. In fact, we
have a student joining us in public
school for the first time. Carrie?

A GIRL (15) stands in the back of the room, plainly dressed,
eyes down, face hidden behind her long red hair. This is
CARRIE WHITE - right now, she wishes she was invisible.

As she rises, a pretty blonde cheerleader-type, CHRISTINE
HARGENSEN (15), lets out a COUGH that sounds a lot like --

CHRISTINE

-- *Jesus freak* --

A few kids snicker, Henry loudest.

JACK

Chris, did you say something?

CHRISTINE

(shrugs)

I heard her mom had a melt down in
the Federal Foods, and told all the
bag boys they're going to hell.

JACK

Chris --

CHRISTINE

And they only stopped homeschooling
because the cops *made* them --

JACK

Congratulations Chris, you just
earned this year's first detention.

CHRISTINE

What?! Come on...

JACK

As long as you're in my class, you
will treat each other with respect.

(beat)

Carrie, you can sit down now.

Carrie sits awkwardly, drawing a few more giggles from the students as they turn back to face front - all but one --

-- STEPHEN can't take his eyes off Carrie, abruptly lovesick in that high school way that feels like a punch in the gut.

Off him, PRE-LAP the RINGING SCHOOL BELL --

INT. CASTLE ROCK HIGH - ENGLISH CLASS - DAY (LATER)

Students pack their bags and exit. Stephen watches Carrie hurry out alone, her head down.

Once all the kids are gone, Stephen finally stands and hesitantly approaches Jack's desk, clutching his backpack.

JACK

Steve! You have a good summer?

STEPHEN

Yeah, thanks. I... I was hoping --

JACK

Hand 'em over.

Stephen eagerly pulls the FIVE NOTEBOOKS out of his bag and gives them to Jack.

JACK

More ghost stories?

(Stephen shrugs: yep)

How do you come up with this stuff?

STEPHEN

I have bad dreams sometimes... I guess I write them down so they won't come true.

JACK

When I was your age, all I did was goof off and chase girls.

STEPHEN

But you were *published*. I bet that took a lot of work.

JACK

It did. And a lot of luck.

(beat)

I look forward to reading these.

Stephen beams, heading for the door.

JACK
 Steve? Little advice?
 (Stephen turns back)
 A man's mind can be a lonely place.
 Get outside, run around. Be a kid.

It's the last thing Stephen wants to do. But he nods, exits.

INT. CASTLE ROCK HIGH - CAFETERIA - DAY (LATER)

MASHED POTATOES PLOP onto a tray.

Stephen and Vern carry their food into the cafeteria.

VERN
 Feels good being a sophomore,
 right? Feels like... respect.

Vern nods cockily to OTHER KIDS as they pass, his swagger met with cold stares. Stephen keeps his eyes on his food.

STEPHEN
 Same lucky table?

VERN
 Annie's already there...

They reach a table with "LOSERS" scratched into the top - the only occupant is a short, plump GIRL (15) in a flower-print dress. This is ANNIE WILKES. They slide in on either side.

ANNIE
 Hi fellas!

VERN
 Look, we're an Annie sandwich.
 (like a commercial)
 Scrumdiddlyumtious!

ANNIE
 (ignoring Vern)
 Any new stories, Stephen?

STEPHEN
 I gave a bunch to Mr. Torrance.

ANNIE
 What are they about? Just a hint.

STEPHEN
 Well, there's this cowboy...

VERN
 Like the Duke?
 (a decent John Wayne)
 'Step down off your high horse,
 Mister.'

ANNIE
 Vern, hush! Go ahead, Stephen...

But Stephen's not listening - he's looking across the room at CARRIE, eating alone. Annie follows his eyes.

ANNIE
 Sue Snell said at church, her mom
 won't let her talk to *anyone*...

Annie is shocked as Stephen WAVES to Carrie - she sees him, but looks away. He redirects his hand to adjust his glasses.

ANNIE
 What a sad sally.

VERN
 She's probably traumatized. Chris
 was a bitch to her in English --

ANNIE
 Vern, language!

-- A HAND shoves Vern face-first into his potatoes - it belongs to BILLY TESSIO (17), greased hair, letterman jacket, pretty-boy looks - Vern's older brother. He sits across from them, flanked by Christine Hargensen and Henry Bowers.

BILLY
 You call my girl a bitch again,
 baby bro, I'll shove those taters
 somewhere worse.

Christine snuggles close to Billy as Vern cleans himself up.

VERN
 Don't you have something better to
 do B-Billy? Like grow facial hair?

-- Billy DUNKS Vern in his potatoes again. Henry laughs.

STEPHEN
 Cut it out.

HENRY
 You say somethin', creep?

CLICK! Henry opens his knife, keeping it under the table.

BILLY

What the fuck, Bowers? You wanna
get us in trouble? Put that away.

Henry reluctantly closes the knife. Billy turns to Vern.

BILLY

Cover for me tonight. Tell Uncle
Kurt I have a late practice.

VERN

It's the first day of school.
(off Billy: so?)
Where are you g-going?

HENRY

We're gonna search the woods for
Georgie's corpse and get that
reward money.

BILLY

Jesus, Bowers, shut up!

HENRY

Like these dweebs are competition?

ANNIE

The Sheriff said Georgie just
wandered off... right, Stephen?

STEPHEN

(not optimistic)
Yeah. I mean... I hope so.

CHRISTINE

It's been three days. The kid's
dead. We're gonna find the body.

VERN

Sounds super fun.
(off Billy's glare)
I'll t-t-talk to Kurt, okay?

BILLY

(mocking him)
You b-b-better, fatso.
(to Stephen and Annie)
And you two keep your mouths shut,
or I'll know who squealed.

Billy rises, walks off, Christine and Henry trailing behind.

CHRISTINE

Later, losers.

Once they're safely out of earshot --

ANNIE

They make me so mad I could spit.

STEPHEN

Forget 'em. They're not worth it.

VERN

Yeah, bring it in...

Vern puts his palm on the table, right on top of the word "LOSERS." Annie and Stephen put their hands on top of his.

VERN

Losers for life, right?

ANNIE

Cross my heart.

STEPHEN

Yeah... losers for life.

Off their joined hands --

INT. CASTLE ROCK HIGH - HALLWAY - DAY

Stephen digs through his locker as THE LAST BELL SOUNDS, the hall behind him filled with noisy, departing students.

Suddenly *STEPHEN'S EARS RING* as we hear a *VOICE IN HIS HEAD* --

CARRIE (V.O.)

... Laughing at me...

ON STEPHEN - what the hell? He closes his locker to reveal --

CARRIE a little ways down the hall, trying to wipe PINK LIPSTICK GRAFFITI off her own locker, having little success.

CLOSE ON THE GRAFFITI - "Roses are red, violets are blue, sugar is sweet, but Carrie White eats shit."

STEPHEN (O.C.)

'... Sugar is sweet, but Carrie eats poo.'

Carrie turns to see Stephen standing behind her.

STEPHEN

Fixes the rhyme, but retains the meaning. I mean, it's *right there*.

CARRIE
You think this is funny?

STEPHEN
No. It's a grammatical hate crime.

CARRIE
It's an *actual* hate crime.

STEPHEN
Right. I mean, obviously.
(beat)
I'm Stephen.

He offers her a hand. She stares at it, starts backing away.

CARRIE
I have to get home.

STEPHEN
I can help you clean it off --

CARRIE
-- No thanks.

She turns, walks quickly down the hall. He watches her go.

STEPHEN'S EARS RING AGAIN - he turns to look --

STEPHEN'S POV - OUT THE WINDOW - AT THE ATHLETIC FIELD - a LITTLE BOY runs across the empty field, holding a red balloon - the same little boy from the newspaper, GEORGIE DENBROUGH.

STEPHEN
... Georgie?

Stephen looks around - he's ALONE in the hall. He turns back to Georgie, and starts POUNDING on the glass.

STEPHEN
Georgie! Hey, Georgie!

STEPHEN'S POV - Georgie levels a FINGER PISTOL at Stephen, just like David did on the train tracks - BANG.

Stephen staggers back, stunned - and SMACKS into a BULLETIN BOARD on the opposite wall, knocking his glasses off --

-- He catches them awkwardly, BENDING one hinge in the process. When he slips them back on, he sees --

STEPHEN'S POV - AT THE EMPTY ATHLETIC FIELD. No Georgie.

Stephen turns and hustles off down the hall, rattled.

WE HOLD ON THE BULLETIN BOARD, revealing A FLYER with GEORGIE'S FACE and the words, "HAVE YOU SEEN THIS BOY?"

After a beat WE TURN to look DOWN THE HALL, as a DOOR OPENS --

-- ANNIE PEAKS OUT a classroom, clutching her backpack to her chest, like she's stealing the Hope Diamond. Her eyes dart around - all clear (she doesn't see Stephen, and he doesn't see her). She sneaks out, slinking towards the exit.

EXT. CASTLE ROCK - STREETS - DAY

ANNIE'S BIKE tears through the suburban streets - pink with white streamers on the handlebars, her backpack resting in a basket between them. She's grinning like a kid at Christmas.

EXT. ANNIE'S BACK YARD - DAY

Annie wheels her bike into a yard filled with METAL CAGES full of SAD ANIMALS - a few cats, couple of dogs, some smaller cages for birds and mice. All mangy strays.

She stops at a cage containing a large ST. BERNARD with a dusty muzzle - bends to pet his matted fur.

ANNIE

Feelin' any better, boy?
 (off his pitiable look)
 I'm gonna fix you up, I promise.
 (looking around)
 All of you.

She kisses the dog's head before entering the house. Off the animal's eyes, a festering yellow color --

INT. ANNIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Annie locks the door behind her. The room is spotless, cutesy-poo bric-a-brac covering every possible surface. But there are no family photographs - nothing you couldn't find in a gas station gift shop. Or a doll's house.

Annie trembles with excitement as she opens her bag and takes out one of the NOTEBOOKS Stephen gave Jack. As she stares at the cover in awe, PRE-LAP --

STEPHEN (V.O.)

'You're... not... real,' he choked.

INT. CASTLE ROCK HIGH - ENGLISH CLASS - EVENING

Jack Torrance sits with a similar NOTEBOOK open on his lap and his feet on the desk - he stayed late reading Stephen's stories. He rolls a LARGE BRONZE COIN around in one hand.

STEPHEN (V.O.)

... But he realized faintly that it was real enough, this Creature. It was, after all, killing him.

Jack closes the book with a low whistle, impressed. Sets it on a stack of THREE MORE.

He looks around for the last notebook, but can't find it. He counts them, then opens a DRAWER and digs around. He freezes as his hand finds something that shouldn't be in there --

-- He pulls out a BOTTLE OF BOURBON wrapped in a red ribbon, with a small card - "JACK." He stares at it, mesmerized.

SLOW PUSH IN ON THE BOTTLE - we see the DISTORTED REFLECTION OF JACK'S FACE in its amber curve as --

-- SOUNDS RISE in the background - *clinking glasses, laughter, the ambient hum of a PARTY.* It builds until --

-- THE SOUND STOPS on a dime. Jack shakes off his trance.

He gets up, grabs his bag and heads to the door, still holding the bottle. He flicks off the light and exits.

INT. CASTLE ROCK HIGH - HALLWAY - EVENING (CONTINUOUS)

Jack walks down the empty hall, passing a GARBAGE CAN - he CHUCKS THE BOTTLE into it without breaking stride.

INT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

STEPHEN CHUCKS THE NEWSPAPER with Georgie on it into the trash, on his way to join Ruth at the table set for two.

RUTH

I was still reading that.

STEPHEN

What's the point? He's probably dead anyway.

(playing it off)

I mean... it's been three days.

RUTH

Is that what Sheriff Pangborn said? I heard he was at the high school this morning.

STEPHEN

He thinks Georgie wandered off.

RUTH

Then let's hope that's all it is.
Poor Mrs. Denbrough... the worst
part is wondering.

Ruth's hand SHAKES, ever so slightly - a few peas roll off
her fork. Stephen hates seeing her like this.

STEPHEN

Mom, has anyone in our family ever
had... mental health problems?

RUTH

Why do you ask?
(Stephen squirms)
Is it for a story?

STEPHEN

(saved)
That obvious?

Ruth smiles, used to Stephen's macabre questions.

RUTH

Well... my Aunt Missy thought the
government was out to get her.
Never worked. Never went outside.
When the bank took her house, at
least she felt vindicated.

Stephen's eyes flick to the cracked door of the HALL CLOSET --

STEPHEN'S POV - ON THE TOP SHELF - a smallish ARMY-GREEN BOX.

STEPHEN

What about... on dad's side?

RUTH

Your father never talked about his
family. People said he was crazy,
the way he left all of a sudden
like that. But they're wrong. He
knew exactly what he was doing.

Stephen lowers his eyes - causing his bent glass to slip from
his face. He catches them, but Ruth has already noticed.

RUTH

Stephen, did you break another
pair? What did I say about
fighting?

STEPHEN

I wasn't - I was just cleaning them. The hinge came loose.

RUTH

I'll take a look. Please be more careful, they're expensive.

Off Stephen's nod, go to QUICK CUTS --

EXT. CASTLE ROCK HIGH - ATHLETIC FIELD - THE NEXT DAY

WHAM! - A KICKBALL smacks Stephen's face, glasses and all.

SWISH! - Vern kicks at a ball, misses, almost falls.

SCUFF! - Annie slides for home, comes up ten feet short.

The Losers Club conspicuously sucks at sports. We join them IN REAL TIME as they stumble through a kickball game.

Carrie is on second, Christine guarding her, Henry in the outfield. Vern steps up to the plate with Stephen on deck.

CHRISTINE

Move that beef, lard ass!

The no-nonsense gym teacher, MS. DESJARDIN (35), scolds Christine from the sidelines.

MS. DESJARDIN

Let's be good sports, Christine.
Everyone's doing their best.

Vern seethes, humiliated. As the ball rolls towards him, he channels his frustration into his foot - which miraculously CONNECTS, sending the ball ZOOMING into the outfield. Elated, Vern makes a break for first base.

Carrie heads for third, but STUMBLES, as Christine TRIPS HER. Stephen sees this happen - he hasn't taken his eyes off Carrie the whole game - but Christine's cheating goes unnoticed by Ms. Desjardin, as Henry tags Carrie out.

MS. DESJARDIN

Have a seat, Carrie.

As Carrie slinks back to the dugout, Christine high-fives Henry, and calls after her --

CHRISTINE

Maybe you should ask Jesus to make you faster!

Carrie looks back at Christine, narrowing her eyes in anger --

ON STEPHEN, HIS EARS RINGING, watching Carrie as --

-- A FOOTBALL curves through the air on a wild trajectory --

-- WHAM! It SMACKS CHRISTINE in the face. She doubles-over, clutching her nose as it gushes BLOOD.

CHRISTINE

AAAHHH!!!

Stephen looks from Christine to Carrie, as Carrie SMILES.

MS. DESJARDIN

Christine, are you okay?

Ms. Desjardin jogs out to help Christine, who is livid.

CHRISTINE

Who threw that?!

JOCK (O.C.)

Sorry! It got away from me...

A JOCK jogs over from a FOOTBALL GAME - FAR ACROSS the field - way farther than a high school kid should be able to throw.

JOCK

Must have caught the wind or something. That was crazy!

CHRISTINE

You broke my nose, asshole!

MS. DESJARDIN

Christine... come on.

Ms. Desjardin leads Christine to the bleachers, past Carrie --

CHRISTINE

What are you grinning at, bitch?

Stephen approaches Carrie as Christine moves out of earshot.

STEPHEN

I guess that's what you call karma.
Or divine intervention.

CARRIE

You mean 'cause I'm a Jesus freak?

STEPHEN
You're not a freak. And Jesus is
great. He's... the first zombie.

CARRIE
Would you *please* leave me alone?

STEPHEN
(frustrated)
Fine. Have a nice life.

As Stephen storms off, PRE-LAP --

STEPHEN (V.O.)
Carrie did not know if her gift had
come from the lord of light or of
darkness --

INT. CASTLE ROCK HIGH - BOY'S LOCKER ROOM - DAY

ON STEPHEN, hunched in a toilet stall, writing feverishly.

STEPHEN (V.O.)
-- And now, finally finding that
she did not care which --

BANG-BANG on the stall door. On the other side, find VERN,
knocking impatiently.

VERN
Shake a leg, we're missing algebra.

STEPHEN
I'll catch up.

VERN
It's been twenty minutes --

STEPHEN
Yeah - little privacy?

VERN
Okay, but there's no shame in
admitting defeat. Turds can run,
but they can't hide forever. Trust
me.

Vern exits. As Stephen resumes writing, *HIS EARS RING* --

CARRIE (V.O.)
-- father who art in heaven --

STEPHEN
Hello? Is someone in here?

CARRIE (V.O.)
 -- kingdom come thy will be done --

-- The sound of *HUSHED PRAYER* continues in Stephen's head. He shoves his notebook in his bag, hurries out of the stall --

-- Into the empty bathroom. He looks around, then exits to --

INT. CASTLE ROCK HIGH - HALLWAY - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Stephen looks out the window ONTO THE ATHLETIC FIELD - half-expecting to see Georgie again... but there's no one.

He follows the sound of *WHISPERED SCRIPTURE* to where it's loudest - down the hall, outside the GIRL'S LOCKER ROOM.

Stephen looks around - all clear - he opens the door --

INT. CASTLE ROCK HIGH - GIRL'S LOCKER ROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Stephen enters the forbidden space, EMPTY except for --

A trail of UNUSED TAMPONS and WRAPPERS littering the floor. He follows them to the last STALL in a long row, where the *WHISPERS* in his mind are almost deafening. He can't see her, but he knows she's in there.

STEPHEN
 ... Carrie?

THE SOUND CUTS OFF - ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STALL DOOR, we find CARRIE crouched on the toilet, hair wet, wrapped in a towel, the crotch of which is soaked with BLOOD. She stares down at her red-stained hands, helpless, in tears --

CARRIE
 Go away.

STEPHEN
 Should I get the nurse?

CARRIE
 You can't be in here.

STEPHEN
 It was Chris, wasn't it? She's
 such a --

CARRIE
 -- I SAID GO AWAY!!!

-- AN UNSEEN FORCE PUSHES STEPHEN AWAY FROM THE DOOR - he slides across the room into a bank of SINKS, grabbing at them to stay standing, accidentally flicking on a FAUCET.

STEPHEN REELS, *HIS EARS RINGING LIKE CRAZY* --

MS. DESJARDIN (O.C.)

Hello?

Stephen ducks around a corner, barely avoiding MS. DESJARDIN as she enters O.C., moves to the faucet and turns it off.

MS. DESJARDIN

Who's in here?

The color drains from her face, as --

MS. DESJARDIN'S POV - UNDER CARRIE'S STALL DOOR - DRIP... DRIP... drops of BLOOD pooling on the white tile.

INT. CASTLE ROCK HIGH - HALLWAY - DAY (MOMENTS LATER)

Stephen BURSTS into the hall as THE FINAL BELL SOUNDS and --

-- STUDENTS pour out of their classrooms. Stephen is swallowed in the crowd, *his EARS RINGING* as --

-- *MANY VOICES FLOOD HIS MIND*. He looks around, realizes - HE'S HEARING ALL THEIR THOUGHTS AT ONCE, *catching BITS AND PIECES OF VARIOUS INTERNAL MONOLOGUES* --

NERD (V.O.)

Never finish this report...

CHEERLEADER (V.O.)

Such a slut, I don't even...

PREPPY (V.O.)

What if she doesn't...

GREASER (V.O.)

He won't know it's gone...

Stephen spins, overwhelmed, the floodgates of his mind ripped open - and now *ONE VOICE RISES* above the rest --

CHRISTINE (V.O.)

*Stupid Jesus Freak doesn't know
what her damn period is...*

Stephen pushes through the crowd like a man possessed, following the voice to where CHRISTINE AND BILLY stand gossiping at a locker.

CHRISTINE

*... So there's blood everywhere,
and I say, 'Plug it up, bitch.'*

Billy laughs. Stephen marches up to them, acting on impulse, the rush of awareness filling him with kamikaze confidence --

STEPHEN

You shouldn't have done that.

CHRISTINE

Excuse me?

STEPHEN

Carrie was scared - she thought she was dying. Just leave her alone!

CHRISTINE

Perv! Were you spying on us?

BILLY

Get bent, nosebleed!

Billy **SHOVES** Stephen - he stumbles, but doesn't back down.

STEPHEN

Hey Chris... why don't you tell Billy what you and Henry did at the lake this summer?

Christine flushes bright red. We can tell Stephen's hit a nerve - *something he shouldn't know*.

CHRISTINE

How - what the hell --

BILLY

Is that true?

CHRISTINE

Of course not!
(to Stephen)
You lying little shit!

BILLY **SHOVES** STEPHEN across the hall into some lockers, **HARD**.

BILLY

What the fuck is your problem?!

STEPHEN

Leave Carrie alone!

-- BILLY **CHARGES** STEPHEN - Stephen ducks, as Billy's fist **SMASHES** into a locker right next to his head, denting it.

-- Stephen's knee comes up, catching Billy in the gut.

-- Billy doubles over - then **SLAMS** Stephen into the lockers, once again warping the hinge on his glasses.

-- Billy looms over Stephen, who holds his bent glasses onto his face, in real danger of getting his ass kicked, when --

-- JACK **TORRANCE** steps between them.

JACK
You two. My classroom. Go.

Jack leads the chastised boys through the hall, passing --
THE NURSE'S OFFICE - THROUGH THE WINDOW - as Ms. Desjardin
talks to a NURSE, we see CARRIE watching them go.

INT. CASTLE ROCK HIGH - ENGLISH CLASS - DAY

Jack stares at Stephen and Billy across his desk. Stephen
adjusts his damaged glasses.

JACK
I said be a kid, not be an idiot.

BILLY
He was tellin' lies about my girl,
you expect me to just take that?

JACK
This is exactly what I expect from
you Billy. I was talking to Steve.

Billy sees Jack absently rolling the BRONZE COIN in his hand.

BILLY
My dad... had one of those. From
A.A., right?

Shame flickers across Jack's face - he opts to lean into it.

JACK
I used to get in fights. Hurt
people. Didn't care what happened
to me. Since the day I dried out,
I've been *crawling* my way back to a
decent life.

BILLY
Don't worry about me --

JACK
But I do - I worry a lot. You kids
have so much going for you it's
stupid. Don't waste it like I did.

BILLY
Hey, all work and no play, right?

Billy smirks cockily. Jack just smiles - then turns to --

JACK
Steve, are we boring you?

ON STEPHEN, staring out the window.

STEPHEN
No, it's just - that's my bus...

THROUGH THE WINDOW - Jack sees the SCHOOL BUS driving away.

STEPHEN
I'm supposed to meet my mom at work.

Jack sees how much this worries Stephen.

JACK
Billy, you still have that Plymouth?
(off Billy's wary nod)
Since you two are going to treat each other with respect, you won't mind giving Stephen a lift...

Off Billy, not happy, but also not having a choice...

INT./EXT. BILLY'S CAR - DAY

A pair of DOG TAGS swing from the mirror of a PLYMOUTH FURY - cherry red panels with a white stripe - sex on silver wheels.

Stephen sits alone in the back seat, Billy driving, Vern shotgun. They ride a beat in awkward silence.

STEPHEN
Nice car.

Billy says nothing, but lets a smile slip. She's his baby.

STEPHEN
Are those your Dad's tags?

Billy half-turns in his seat, angry at the assumption.

VERN
(jumping in)
They're Uncle Kurt's.

BILLY
Just 'til I get my own. I'm going far away from here, soon as I'm 18.

VERN
Me too. I'm gonna move to Hollywood and marry a super model.

BILLY

Yeah, Vern's gonna be the next Jackie Gleason. Only fatter.

VERN

S-S-Shut up!

(beat)

Where you gonna go, Steve?

BILLY

Oh, Steve's stayin' right here.

Billy pulls off the road, in the middle of nowhere.

STEPHEN

Juniper Hill's still a mile away.

BILLY

And the school's a mile back, so ain't no one gonna hear you whinin'. Now get out.

Billy holds the door open for Stephen. Vern shrugs helplessly. Stephen climbs out of the car.

BILLY

And don't even think about telling Torrance.

-- As Billy SLAMS the door shut behind Stephen, almost taking his fingers off. He grins.

BILLY

Careful. She bites.

He PEELS OUT, leaving Stephen to heft his bag and head up the road, past a sign that reads "JUNIPER HILL ASYLUM: ONE MILE."

INT. JUNIPER HILL - RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Stephen sits alone in a cavernous waiting room - we hear faint SHRIEKS and LAUGHTER from patients in the background.

He looks towards a small RECEPTION WINDOW, where a CHUBBY NURSE fills out paperwork. She smiles at him.

CHUBBY NURSE

Ruth'll just be a minute. Some of the patients have a hard time sayin' goodnight.

Stephen nods. As she resumes her work, *HIS EARS RING* --

CHUBBY NURSE (V.O.)
 Poor kid, takin' care of Ruth since
 David died. 'Fraid Mrs.
 Denbrough'll end up the same --

Stephen doesn't want to hear any more. He stands --

STEPHEN
 Excuse me, I have to, um...

CHUBBY NURSE
 Third door on the right.

She smiles, points down a hall. Stephen follows her finger --

INT. JUNIPER HILL - HALLWAY - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

As Stephen walks towards the MEN'S ROOM SIGN, we become aware that the hallway is CREEPY AS FUCK - empty and silent but for his footsteps, and the occasional cackle of far-off patients.

Across from the Men's Room we see a row of METAL DOORS with SMALL WINDOWS. Stephen walks up to one, peers inside --

STEPHEN'S POV - INTO THE ROOM - A FEMALE PATIENT (60) sits facing away from him, wrapped in a straight jacket, her hair knotted and frayed. She takes DEEP, SLOW, WHEEZING BREATHS.

PUSH IN ON HER - hearing the wet rattle in her throat until --

-- HER BREATH STOPS on a dime. She turns her head slightly, and we glimpse the side of her face, covered in TINY SCARS. Her voice is dry and ancient, but underneath... *charming*.

FEMALE PATIENT
 Hiya, Doc.

ON STEPHEN - EYES WIDE - He staggers away from the window, backing across the hall, he doesn't see --

-- TWO GRIZZLED HANDS reaching out from a closet behind him --

-- GRABBING STEPHEN by the shoulders - pulling him into --

INT. JUNIPER HILL - JANITOR'S CLOSET - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

The hands SLAM the door, and spin Stephen around to face an OLD MAN (75), his craggy face lit by one bare light bulb, hemmed in by mop handles. This is DICK HALLORANN.

DICK
 You the one making all that racket?

STEPHEN
I didn't say anything --

DICK
(pointing to his head)
No, up here! I could hear you
comin' a mile off, now look at you -
shinin' like a damn lighthouse.

STEPHEN
... Shining?

DICK
That's what my granny called it,
when you see things that ain't
really there...

Dick speaks the next words directly into Stephen's mind --

DICK (V.O.)
... Or hear things folks ain't
exactly sayin'...

Stephen backs up - WHUMP - into the door.

DICK
Bet you thought you were goin'
nuts, huh?

DICK LAUGHS CRAZILY - Stephen is not comforted. The laughter quickly stops as Dick looks at Stephen with a new intensity.

DICK
People shine for a reason. There's
a war going on, and you just got
drafted. Like all the others!

Dick forces his way past Stephen, out of the closet --

INT. JUNIPER HILL - HALLWAY - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Dick hustles down the hall, paranoid. Stephen follows him.

STEPHEN
What do you mean? What others?

DICK
If you haven't felt 'em, you will.
Like standin' next to a hot stove.

STEPHEN
Wait - I don't understand --

RUTH (O.C.)
There you are, Mr. Hallorann...

-- RUTH rounds the corner, taking Dick's arm.

RUTH
You sent us on quite a chase
tonight. Come on, time for bed.
(a sharp whisper)
Don't wander, Stephen. Wait in
reception, I'll be right there.

Ruth leads Dick away, taking Stephen's answers with him.

EXT. RURAL ROAD - DUSK

Stephen fidgets with his busted glasses he walks with Ruth.

RUTH
I'll tape the hinges, but...
honestly I don't know why I bother.

STEPHEN
What's wrong with him?
(off her look)
The man in the hallway... why is he
in there?

RUTH
Mr. Hallorann was voluntarily
committed, many years ago. Some
people can't handle the real world.

-- WE HEAR A HORN BLAST - *as STEPHEN'S EARS RING* --

-- THE SCHOOL BUS DRIVES BY, now empty of students. Ruth
waves amiably to the DRIVER as it passes, but doesn't see --

-- *STEPHEN'S POV - IN THE BACK WINDOW OF THE BUS - GEORGIE
DENBROUGH waves to him, holding the balloon. As he watches --*

-- *THE BALLOON POPS - spattering the young boy's face with
BLOOD. He giggles like it's a game.*

Stephen turns away, horrified --

RUTH
-- Did you hear what I said?
(off his blank look)
I asked what you wanted for dinner.
Am I talking to myself?

STEPHEN
No.

RUTH
 (a little hurt)
 You're dreaming up a story again,
 aren't you?

STEPHEN
 No.

RUTH
 Liar. I know that look. You're a
 million miles away.

She brushes back her hair - her hand SHAKES a little as she
 does - he takes it, squeezes.

STEPHEN
 I'm right here.

Off their joined hands...

EXT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - ROOF - NIGHT

Stephen CHUCKS A ROCK at an old TIRE SWING hanging from a
 tree - it bounces off the rubber rim. He's sitting with Vern
 on the roof of his house, accessible from his bedroom window.

VERN
 Is that a strike, or a ball?

STEPHEN
 Either way I'm kicking your butt.

Vern chucks his own rock - it bounces off the tree trunk.

VERN
 My rocks are shaped funny.

As Stephen takes aim --

VERN
 How about that shot in gym? BAM in
 that bitch's face, from a mile off.

Stephen says nothing, just throws his rock - it misses the
 tire, sailing even wider than Vern's.

VERN
 'Course we can't all be as gifted.
 (a long beat)
 You gonna tell me what's on your
 mind, or you gonna make me guess?

STEPHEN
 You promise not to think I'm crazy?

VERN

Nope. But I promise not to be a jerk about it.

Stephen smiles. After another beat --

STEPHEN

Do you ever feel like... like you're the only one seeing things how they really are? I mean... maybe the world looks different to each of us. We're all alone.

He waits for Vern to crack a joke - but he's dead serious.

VERN

Like how everyb-body thinks my dad killed my mom... even Billy and Uncle Kurt. B-but I *know* he didn't. Does that make me crazy?

Vern's reaching out - but now it's Stephen who deflects --

STEPHEN

I mean... I'm not gonna be a jerk about it.

Vern slugs Stephen's arm. They sit in silence a beat. Then it comes out in a rush --

STEPHEN

I know where Georgie is.

VERN

What? How?

STEPHEN

You wouldn't believe me if I told you. But I'll show you, if you want. Tomorrow at lunch.

VERN

Yeah, of course - I mean, someone has to find him, right?

STEPHEN

Right --

STEPHEN

-- For Mrs. Denbrough.

VERN

-- For the reward --

VERN

-- Mrs. Denbrough, that's what I meant. I was testing you.

The boys trade nervous smiles. Vern slides to the drainpipe.

VERN

Okay, tomorrow at lunch. See you
on the bus, creep.

STEPHEN

Save that lucky seat, lard ass.

Stephen chucks a rock THROUGH THE TIRE - as we hear the unmistakable sound of a fat kid falling into the bushes.

INT. STEPHEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (MOMENTS LATER)

Stephen takes off his glasses and gets into bed - both hinges have been taped so that they match - they almost look cool.

KNOCK-KNOCK on Stephen's window. He smiles, slipping his glasses back on as he goes to OPEN IT --

STEPHEN

What'd you forget, Vern?

Stephen's smile fades as HIS BROTHER DAVID climbs through the window, looking as he did when he died, except *dripping wet*.

DAVID

Finally. Freezin' my butt off out
there.

STEPHEN

... David?

DAVID

You were expecting space aliens?
(alien voice)
'Take me to your nerdy children.'

Stephen's speechless, as David drops casually into a chair.

DAVID

How about that redhead at school?
You gonna ask her out or what?

STEPHEN

(freaking out)
This isn't real. You're not here.

DAVID

You're so full of shit your eyes
are brown.

STEPHEN

I saw you die!

Suddenly David's face pales, his voice now a rapid whisper --

DAVID

It's-eatting-me-oh-god-it's-eatting-
my-guts-Steve-please-help-it-hurts--

STEPHEN

David --

-- But David stands and RUNS OUT of the room --

STEPHEN

-- Wait!

-- As Stephen chases after him --

INT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The hall is EMPTY. Stephen feels a SQUISH, looks down --

A trail of WET FOOTPRINTS on the carpet lead to THE CLOSED BATHROOM DOOR. Stephen follows them, dreading what's on the other side, as he eases the door open --

INT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Stephen peers into the dark.

STEPHEN

David?

HE FLICKS ON THE LIGHT - the bathroom is EMPTY, but the SHOWER CURTAIN is pulled tight around the CLAW-FOOT TUB. Stephen can feel it - whatever it is - waiting on the other side of that curtain. He takes a cautious step forward.

STEPHEN

David... come on out...

Stephen slowly approaches the tub, each step agony. He reaches for the curtain, WHIPS IT OPEN TO SEE --

-- NOTHING. Only the white porcelain of the empty basin. But looking down, Stephen sees something at the bottom --

-- A SMALL TRICKLE OF BLOOD near the DRAIN (no grate, just a narrow, open pipe). Stephen bends for a closer look --

-- SOMETHING IS DOWN THERE, moving in the dark. Stephen watches in horror as --

-- A SINGLE FINGER emerges from the drain, long and callused. It curves back, beckoning to Stephen --

-- Stephen turns quickly away, coming face to face with --

-- FLAGG - HIS GAPING SHARK'S MOUTH HANGING WIDE OPEN,
POINTED TEETH DRIPPING BLOOD AS HE LUNGES AT STEPHEN!

INT. STEPHEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

STEPHEN WAKES UP, drenched in sweat, alone in his room. It takes a minute for him to stop shaking.

Far from sleep now, He gets up and goes to sit at his desk. He flicks on a lamp, and takes out a fresh notebook.

He starts to write, then erases. Starts again, erases again. Stephen is suffering from his first case of writer's block.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. STEPHEN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

CRUMPLED PAGES litter the floor, bathed in a pale dawn glow.

Find Stephen at his desk, bleary-eyed, still trying/failing to write. He crumples another page, then rises and exits.

INT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - MORNING (MOMENTS LATER)

Stephen splashes water on his face. His eyes dart to --

THE TUB - the shower curtain bunched harmlessly to one side. He goes to it, stares down the OPEN DRAIN - INTO THE SEWER.

INT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - MORNING

Stephen slowly cracks the closet door, silently eases it open - he keeps an eye out for Ruth, but she's not awake yet.

He stares up at the ARMY-GREEN BOX on the top shelf.

INT./EXT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Vern sits in the lucky seat - Henry kicks the back of it.

VERN'S POV - ON STEPHEN'S HOUSE - Expecting his friend to come running out the front door as the bus drives by, but --

-- HE DOESN'T. Vern sits up in the seat, worried. Then --

-- HE SQUEALS, on the receiving end of Henry's BRUTAL WEDGY.

VERN

Goddamn it, Henry!

Henry laughs as he drops back into his seat.

HENRY

No one's watching your fat ass now.

WE STAY WITH HENRY as he spots a TORN SCRAP OF PAPER on the floor. He picks it up. Reads. Smiles.

EXT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - DAY

As the bus recedes into the distance, Stephen peeks out from behind his house, wearing a backpack bulging with supplies.

He glances around - all clear - then heads off down the road.

INT. CASTLE ROCK HIGH - HALLWAY - DAY (LATER)

CLOSE ON THE PINK GRAFFITI on Carrie's locker - "Roses are red, violets are blue, sugar is sweet, and Carrie is too." This last part has been written in black marker (by Stephen).

REVERSE on Carrie, staring at it, not sure what to think.

VERN (O.C.)

He's not sick...

Carrie clocks VERN AND ANNIE whispering a few lockers down. She eavesdrops as WE JOIN THEIR CONVERSATION --

VERN

... I checked with the nurse. Ruth didn't call it in.

ANNIE

Ruth *always* calls it in.

VERN

And we had plans today - he was going to show me something at lunch. Something important.

ANNIE

Maybe he changed his mind.

VERN

Maybe... or maybe he's trying to protect me. Wherever he's going, he thinks it's too dangerous, so he's shutting me out... that's what he does.

ANNIE

But Stephen's not afraid of anything. He reads Lovecraft to relax.

(beat)

(MORE)

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Unless...

(off Vern: what?)

There's one place he's afraid of.

He writes about it sometimes...

Off Vern, a little creeped out that Annie knows this...

EXT. THE BARRENS - DAY

SLOW PUSH IN on the gaping mouth of the mossy sewer tunnel.

REVERSE ON Stephen, standing at the entrance, his face grim and determined. He reaches into his bag and pulls out --

-- A GUN - an old Colt .45, taken from his father's Army-Green box in the closet. He feels the weight of it. Then he clicks on a flashlight. Holding both, he enters the tunnel.

EXT. CASTLE ROCK - STREETS - DAY

Annie's pink bicycle tears downhill en route to the Barrens. She dings the horn frantically. Vern clings to the back.

VERN

You're going too fast!

ANNIE

You're too fat!

VERN

It's mostly muscle!

As the severely overloaded bike swerves all over the road --

INT. CASTLE ROCK HIGH - ENGLISH CLASS - DAY

On Jack Torrance, irritated --

JACK

Guys, it's the first week. Where is everyone?

REVERSE ON the classroom, full of EMPTY SEATS. In addition to Stephen, Vern, Annie, Christine and Henry are missing. Carrie is one of the few remaining. She ducks Jack's eyes.

JACK

Without a doctor's note, each absence earns an F for the day.

Jack makes a series of red marks on an ATTENDANCE SHEET.

JACK

In here, as in life, your actions
have consequences.

Jack pauses at STEPHEN'S NAME, disappointed - wishing he could reach this kid.

INT. THE SEWER TUNNEL - DAY

Stephen moves through the dark, the flashlight beam vanishing a few feet ahead of him. The only sound is the drip-drip of sewer water on concrete... and then, far away --

-- LAUGHTER - a young boy's high-pitched giggle, deep underground. Stephen hurries around a corner --

INT. THE SEWER TUNNEL - LARGE CHAMBER - DAY

Here the passage widens into an cavernous space with several tunnels branching off - thin shafts of DAYLIGHT from open drains pierce the dark at odd intervals. Stephen looks up --

-- THE CEILING IS COVERED IN BALLOONS of all colors, bobbing above him, their STRINGS dangling inches from his face.

The distant GIGGLE echoes off the concrete - but from which tunnel? Stephen creeps into the space, straining to hear.

A STRING brushes his cheek. He looks up, sees --

-- THE BALLOONS DRIFTING LOWER, as if the ceiling is closing in on him. He walks faster, pushing aside strings --

-- But now the strings begin TO WRAP AROUND his head and arms, grabbing at him, like tentacles --

-- And now THEY ARE TENTACLES, thin ribbons of clammy flesh, pulling at him - LIFTING HIM UP OFF THE GROUND --

-- Stephen struggles, terrified as the tentacles wrench the GUN from his hand. It clatters to the ground. He looks up --

-- The balloons part to reveal - a GLINT OF TEETH and SLIMY SKIN - something MASSIVE AND GROTESQUE, pulsing on the other side of that balloon wall, its hundred arms pulling him in --

STEPHEN

You're... not... real...

But it's real enough, as the arms scratch him, drawing BLOOD.

Stephen looks down at the GUN of the ground, far out of reach. But he still has the FLASHLIGHT - a desperate idea takes hold, as he angles the light towards the creature --

STEPHEN

Suck laser beam, slime ball!

The thing beyond the balloons HISSES as the light hits it - as if it really were a laser beam. It's tentacles writhe and retract in pain, DROPPING Stephen --

-- He's on his feet in a flash, scrambling down the tunnel back the way he came. We linger in the chamber for a beat, hearing the thing's unearthly shrieking, as we land on --

THE GUN - abandoned in the dark.

EXT. THE BARRENS - DAY

Stephen BURSTS out of the tunnel, collapsing on the grass.

HENRY (O.C.)

Where's the fire, creep?

Stephen rolls over - BILLY, CHRISTINE, AND HENRY stare down at him.

STEPHEN

What are you doing here?

Henry reads the SCRAP OF PAPER he found on the bus --

HENRY

'I know where Georgie is. Meet me in the Barrens. Stephen.'

Henry tosses the paper at Stephen - it drifts to the ground.

ANGLE ON THE PAPER - the handwriting is big and blocky, the lines rough and jagged. Nothing like the writing we've glimpsed in Stephen's notebooks - it barely looks human.

STEPHEN

I didn't write that --

BILLY

Bull. You're after our reward, asshole.

CHRISTINE

That kid's body is gonna be ours.

HENRY (O.C.)

Holy shit!

Henry reaches for something lying in the grass, and picks up STEPHEN'S GUN. Stephen reels - how did that get out here?

HENRY
This your pocket rocket, creep?

STEPHEN
It's my dad's. Give it back.

Henry sights down the barrel, pointing the gun all around.

BILLY
Careful with that shit, Bowers.
(back to Stephen)
Where's the body?

STEPHEN
I don't know, but we can't stay
here --

-- SOUND FADES OUT as Henry points the gun INTO THE SEWER
TUNNEL - WE PUSH IN on the inky abyss - after a beat --

-- We reverse ON HENRY, a strange look coming over his face,
as SOUND RUSHES BACK IN --

CHRISTINE (O.C.)
Stop lying and spill.

BILLY (O.C.)
We got big plans for that money.

ON STEPHEN --

STEPHEN
You don't understand --

HENRY (O.C.)
No, you don't understand...

Henry turns to them - but now his EYES AREN'T RIGHT - the
pupils are HUGE AND DILATED, with a wild look, like something
else is staring out of them. He levels the gun at Stephen.

HENRY
Tell us where the body is, or on
three I paint these bushes with
your brains.

STEPHEN
Please, Henry, I told you, I don't
know --

HENRY
One...

BILLY
 (nervous)
 Bowers, stop fucking around.

HENRY
 Two...

CHRISTINE
 Quit it, Henry.

ON STEPHEN - *HIS EARS RINGING* - as the thing that isn't quite Henry whispers the same words David said seven years ago --

HENRY
 Three - you're dead Steve.

Henry's finger tightens on the trigger --

VERN (O.C.)
 Hi-ho, Silver!

-- VERN AND ANNIE come tearing down the side of the ravine on Annie's bike, bouncing over rocks --

-- ANNIE RAMS HER BIKE INTO HENRY - BANG! - the gun FIRES into the air, FLYING from Henry's hand, DEEP into the woods.

BILLY
 Jesus, Bowers, what the fuck is wrong with you?!

Vern rolls clear of the crash, storming over to Billy.

BILLY
 What do you want, lard ass?

VERN
 D-damn it Billy, w-why can't you just leave us alone?!

BILLY
 Because you're a fat p-p-piece of --

-- VERN TACKLES BILLY, both brothers cursing as they wrestle.

This leaves Stephen facing off with Christine.

STEPHEN
 Listen - we need to get out of here. I don't want to fight y--

-- WUNK! Christine KICKS Stephen in the balls, HARD. He groans, doubling over, his glasses sliding off his face as he sinks to his knees.

CHRISTINE

You like spying on girls in the
locker room? I should neuter you.

Stephen whimpers on the ground, blind, feeling around for --

-- HIS GLASSES, a few feet from his groping hands. Christine smirks as she walks over, lifts her foot to crush them.

CHRISTINE

Or maybe I'll just take your eyes.

But before she can bring her foot down - something YANKS HER HEAD back - she CRIES OUT in pain --

-- REVEAL ANNIE behind Christine, one hand wrapped around her blonde hair, dragging her backwards as she growls --

ANNIE

Get away from him!

Christine turns and grabs Annie, grappling with her as the girls go tumbling into some bushes.

ON STEPHEN - as his hand finally closes around his GLASSES - MIRACULOUSLY INTACT. He slips them on, looks up to see --

HENRY LOOMING OVER HIM, that same demonic gleam in his eye, his DILATED PUPILS large and black like the mouth of the tunnel. He SNAPS open the blade on his small KNIFE.

HENRY

Stick out that tongue, creep...

-- Stephen lunges back as Henry SLASHES the air inches from his face. Henry swings it again - aiming to do real damage.

-- Stephen clambers backwards up the hill leading to the top of the ravine, never taking his eyes off Henry.

-- Henry scrambles after Stephen, murder in his eyes as he struggles to get a grip on the steep slope.

-- Stephen's flailing feet dislodge a ROCK - it rolls down the hill, SMACKING Henry in the face. He CRIES OUT.

-- Inspired, Stephen KICKS at the loose earth, causing more rocks to rain down on Henry, pelting his head and arms.

HENRY

I'll kill you, you little shit --

-- But he loses his footing and TUMBLES head over heels down the embankment - the soft, pink center of a small landslide --

-- THUD - Henry lands hard on his back at the bottom of the ravine. He groans, looks around - we see that his pupils have returned to their normal size.

Henry spots HIS KNIFE on the ground a few feet away. As he reaches for it --

CRUNCH! - A SMALL PATENT LEATHER SHOE stomps on the blade.

Henry looks up to see ANNIE - a manic intensity in her eyes.

ANNIE

Aren't you an oogie mess...

Off her twisted grin...

EXT. THE BARRENS - THE TOP OF THE HILL - DAY

Stephen emerges into an OPEN AREA, near the TRAIN TRACKS that run along the edge of the ravine. He looks around, sees --

A 10-YEAR-OLD BOY a little ways down the tracks, arms out as he balances on a rail. Stephen runs towards him, shouting --

STEPHEN

David!

David looks up, smiles at Stephen --

DAVID

Hey, Steve.

-- A TRAIN WHISTLES, as smoke appears around the bend. Stephen runs towards the train, reaching David.

STEPHEN

Come on, I'm getting you out of here...

Stephen tries to PULL David off the tracks - he won't budge.

DAVID

I can't, Steve. I have to stay.

Stephen sees the TRAIN appear up ahead - he pleads with David, tears in his eyes.

STEPHEN

No you don't, you can come with me.

Stephen turns away, pulling David's arm again - no luck - and when he turns back to David, it isn't David anymore --

-- IT'S FLAGG, his open mouth full of JAGGED, BLOODY TEETH. His long fingers GRAB Stephen, gripping his arm like a vice.

FLAGG

David's with us now, Doc. He floats down there. I'll take you to him...

Off Stephen, horrified...

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. THE BARRENS - IN THE RAVINE - DAY

Vern limps out of the bushes, covered in cuts and bruises. THE TRAIN WHISTLE draws his eyes up the hill --

VERN'S POV - STEPHEN ON THE TRACKS, STRUGGLING TO ESCAPE! But in Vern's eyes (as in the wide shot from the opening), FLAGG ISN'T THERE - it looks as if Stephen's foot is caught between the rails, as the TRAIN RACES CLOSER --

VERN

Hang on Stephen, I'm coming!

Vern scrambles up the ravine - he'll never make it in time.

THE TOP OF THE HILL - STEPHEN'S POV - he can't hear Vern - the world around him is BLURRY AND MUTED, as it was for David before he died. Stephen YANKS his arm in blind panic - but Flagg's nails dig in, drawing blood.

THE TRAIN BEARS DOWN - sparks flying off the metal wheels. Stephen is seconds away from being sucked underneath them.

FLAGG

Don't worry, Doc... when you're down there with us...
(a demonic growl)
... You'll float too.

Stephen looks away, as Flagg's eyes BLOOM INTO HEADLIGHTS --

-- WHAM! THE TRAIN HITS AN INVISIBLE WALL --

-- THE ENGINE CRUMPLES UP like an aluminum can. FREIGHT CARS (no passengers) go SPINNING AND FLIPPING off the tracks.

IN THE RAVINE - Vern's eyes go wide as fucking dinner plates - but he has no time to react as --

-- HUNKS OF STEEL rain into the woods. Vern dives for cover.

THE TOP OF THE HILL - Stephen looks up in astonishment -
Flagg is GONE. He turns to see --

-- CARRIE ON THE TRACKS behind him, arms out in front of her,
eyes narrowed in concentration, using her mind to blast the
train off the tracks like it's made of dead leaves.

*ON STEPHEN, WINCING AS HIS EARS RING - an UNEARTHLY SCREAM
fills his mind, the DEMONIC SHRIEK of FLAGG in defeat.*

STEPHEN
(to Carrie)
Run!

Carrie doesn't ask questions, just turns and RUNS off the
tracks, into the woods. Stephen staggers after her, as
chunks of twisted metal crash into the trees all around them.

EXT. THE BARRENS - WOODS - DAY (MOMENTS LATER)

Carrie stops to catch her breath. Stephen jogs up to her.

STEPHEN
I don't think it's following us.

CARRIE
'It?' What was that?

STEPHEN
(hopeful)
You saw it?

CARRIE
No. But I could feel... something.
I tried to move you away from the
train, but it wouldn't let you go.
So I... moved the train instead.

Stephen looks at Carrie, then down at the DEEP RED WELTS
Flagg left in his arm. Carrie starts to panic.

CARRIE
What about the conductor? Do you
think he's dead because of me?

STEPHEN
I know I'm alive because of you.
(beat)
How long have you been able to...
do what you did?

CARRIE
All my life. Momma says it's my
curse, because I was born in sin.

Stephen stares at her, speechless. Carrie looks away.

CARRIE
I know I'm a freak --

STEPHEN
-- No you're not --

CARRIE
-- And don't you dare pity me --

STEPHEN
-- That's not what this is --

ANNIE (O.C.)
What is it?

They turn to see ANNIE standing nearby, very still. Her hair and clothes are spotted with BLOOD - but it's not her blood.

STEPHEN
Annie!

As Stephen goes to her, we REVEAL Annie holding Henry's KNIFE behind her back, the blade stained RED - she quietly clicks it closed, pockets it, before EMBRACING Stephen.

ANNIE
Stephen, thank goodness. When I saw the train, I was so worried...

Stephen pulls away as he realizes --

STEPHEN
Where's Vern?

ANNIE
I lost him back in the ravine.

Stephen walks away from her, cranes his neck as if to listen.

ANNIE
Stephen...?

STEPHEN
I just - need to think a minute...

ON STEPHEN, focusing intently as *HIS EARS RING* --

ANNIE
Stephen, what if he's - if he's --

STEPHEN

He's alive. I... I can hear him.
 (then)
 He's hurt. Come on.

Stephen walks into the woods. Annie and Carrie follow him.

CARRIE

I don't hear anything.

ANNIE

Stephen knows what he's doing.
 (then, extending a hand)
 I'm Annie Wilkes. Welcome to the
 Losers Club.

Carrie cautiously takes her hand as they head into the trees.

EXT. THE BARRENS - WOODS (ELSEWHERE) - DAY (MOMENTS LATER)

IN BLACK, we hear Vern GROAN --

-- And now LIGHT FLOODS IN as Stephen lifts up the PIECE OF METAL SIDING covering his friend. Vern blinks at them.

VERN

Why does heaven smell like farts?

STEPHEN

That's the sewer. You're still
 alive, you lucky bastard.

VERN

Must be the seat.

Stephen helps Vern up - his leg is bleeding, but not broken.

STEPHEN

The sun will be down soon. We need
 to get you home --

VERN

No. I'm not going anywhere until
 you tell us what's going on.
 Starting with what the hell
 happened to that train - I saw you
 up there...

On Carrie, terrified that Stephen might tell her secret --

STEPHEN

I - I don't know what that was...

VERN

Don't lie to me. You haven't so much as mentioned this place since David died, now you charge in like Eastwood, *with your dad's gun* --

STEPHEN

(groaning as he remembers)
The gun... I'll never find it in the dark...

VERN

-- And why? 'Cause you know where Georgie is? Then where is he?

STEPHEN

-- You'll think I'm crazy --

VERN

-- Fucking *try me*. You can't live in your head forever, Steve.

ON STEPHEN, unable to meet Vern's eyes. After a beat --

STEPHEN

I'm sorry...

VERN

Fine. I'll wait for the paperback.

Vern limps away from them. Stephen turns to Annie, pleading.

STEPHEN

You have to stay with him. Make sure he gets home okay.

ANNIE

I want to stay with you.

STEPHEN

Annie, *please*.

Annie shoots Carrie a distrustful glance - but she follows Vern, shouting back to Stephen --

ANNIE

You owe me, Mr. Man.

Once they're safely out of earshot, Carrie turns to Stephen.

CARRIE

Thanks.

STEPHEN

Don't mention it. You saved my
life, it's the least I could do.

The moment holds a beat - then Carrie breaks it, heading off.

CARRIE

My bike's by the road. Momma will
kill me if I'm late.

STEPHEN

Oh no...

CARRIE

What?

STEPHEN

I forgot to meet my mom at work.
(beat, then super awkward)
I, uh... I don't suppose you could
do me one more favor...?

Off Carrie, not liking the sound of this...

EXT. THE BARRENS - THE RAVINE - DUSK

CRICKETS as night falls in the ravine, where the smoldering
husks of train cars jut from the ivy like strange monuments.
Vern limps between them, fuming. Annie jogs up to him.

ANNIE

Don't you wanna see me home, like a
gentleman?

VERN

I saw you take out Henry. If
anyone needs protection, it's me.

She grabs his arm with some force.

ANNIE

You're still gonna be a
gentleman... aren't you, Vern?

VERN

(cowed)
Where's your bike? I'll d-d-drive.

Both turn as SOMEONE stumbles out of a nearby thicket -
bloody and bruised, breathing hard - Vern reflexively ducks
behind Annie... but it's only --

VERN

Billy?

BILLY

Did you guys see that fucking train? What the hell happened?

VERN

It's a mystery.

BILLY

(re: Vern's leg)

Are you cut or something?

VERN

I'm f-f-fine.

ANNIE (O.C.)

Oh, bastard... Christ-ing heck!

Annie struggles to drag her bike out from under a smokestack. It's crushed and warped - hopeless.

ANNIE

It'll take forever to get home now!

CHRISTINE (O.C.)

Billy!

All look towards the MOUTH OF THE SEWER TUNNEL, as Christine emerges from the sheltering concrete, hurrying over to Billy.

CHRISTINE

I heard the train, and then the explosion, and there was metal falling out of the sky, and... I was so *worried* about you.

She throws her arms around Billy, overcompensating.

BILLY

You smell like shit.
(to Vern and Annie)
Come on - the cops will be here soon, and I ain't sticking around. My car's this way.

CHRISTINE

I am *not* getting in the car with them after this bitch *attacked* me --

BILLY

My fuckin' brother's leg is hurt. You wanna walk home, go nuts.
(heading towards the road)
Let's go, this place gives me the creeps.

CHRISTINE
What about Henry?

BILLY
That trigger-happy psycho can get
himself home. You coming, or not?

Christine hurries after Billy. Vern and Annie trail behind -
as we CRANE UP over the trees to the ROAD, where --

EXT. OVERGROWN ROAD/VARIOUS STREETS - NIGHT (MONTAGE)

Stephen and Carrie bike home together. Stephen sits behind
Carrie, as respectfully as possible, giddy off the smell of
her hair, feeling the wind in his own - that rare sense that
every moment is perfect and real and gone too soon.

-- Passing the "CASTLE ROCK WELCOMES YOU" sign.

-- Cutting across the field behind the dilapidated mill.

-- Coasting through downtown as the street lights wink on.

-- Cruising by the high school. The sign out front now
proclaims, "IF YOU CAN READ AND WRITE YOU CAN OWN THE WORLD."

-- Pedaling down residential streets, until they arrive at --

EXT. CARRIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Somewhat shabbier than Stephen's. Carrie stops.

CARRIE
This is me.

STEPHEN
I'm just a few more blocks. Thanks
for the ride.

CARRIE
Don't mention it.

They hop off. Carrie walks her bike up a path to the house.

STEPHEN
Carrie --

CARRIE
You'd better go before Momma sees
you --

STEPHEN
-- You're not alone.

She stops, turns to him.

CARRIE

What?

STEPHEN

I can't do... what you can do. But sometimes, I can hear what other people are thinking.

CARRIE

Bullshit.

(quickly crosses herself)

I told you, I'm not into pity.

As she starts up the path again --

STEPHEN

I know you're scared. And I know you think everyone at school is laughing at you. And I know...

(beat)

I know you like jazz records, even though your mom says they're sinful, and I know you listen to them in your room with the volume real low while she's asleep...

ON CARRIE as he continues - every word of it is true.

STEPHEN

I know sometimes you stare at the nail polish in the drugstore window when your mom's not looking. I know you learned to dance from watching old movies. I know you like the way my hair falls into my eyes, and I know you've never kissed a boy in your life but you thought about it three times on the ride home.

Stephen's almost as shocked as Carrie by what just happened. She walks back to him, in awe.

CARRIE

You know all that... from reading my mind?

(off his shy nod)

I thought I was the only one.

STEPHEN

Me too.

CARRIE
... What does this mean?

STEPHEN
I don't know yet. But it's really
nice to meet you, Carrie White.

CARRIE
Nice to meet you too, Stephen King.

He loves the sound of his name on her lips.

CARRIE
And if you *ever* use your mind on me
again without asking, I'll use my
mind to throw a brick at you.

STEPHEN
That's fair.

As she heads back up the walk --

STEPHEN
For what it's worth, I thought
about kissing you too. *A lot.*

CARRIE
You're making it worse.

STEPHEN
I'll stop.

Stephen gives her a last lovesick look, then jogs off. When she's sure he's not looking, Carrie turns to watch him go.

MOVEMENT in a window draws Carrie's eye back to the house --

CARRIE
Momma...

CARRIE'S POV - we glimpse a wisp of RED HAIR, and the wild eyes of CARRIE'S MOTHER (45) as she whips the curtain closed.

Carrie walks faster, eyes down like she's off to the gallows.

EXT. OVERGROWN ROAD - NIGHT

The sky is full of stars by the time Henry limps back to town, alone, muttering --

HENRY
Little shits... I'll kill 'em all.
Cut 'em up, feed 'em to the dogs...

His hand goes to a CUT in his cheek - from a small knife.

HENRY
Psycho bitch...

AHEAD Henry sees a MAN leaning on a streetlight, hands folded behind him, face hidden beneath the brim of his cowboy hat. As Henry shuffles closer, FLAGG gives him a friendly nod.

FLAGG
Nice night for it.

HENRY
Get bent.

Flagg chuckles. Henry doesn't slow or spare him a glance.

FLAGG
You seem like a man who's been wronged.

HENRY
So what?

FLAGG
So... you gonna cry about it?

Henry stops. He turns to Flagg, who smiles warmly.

FLAGG
You ain't a crybaby, are ya?
Anyone steps on my boots, I cut their feet off.

HENRY
I ain't gettin' stepped on!
They'll get theirs, wait and see.

FLAGG
I like your style, kid. Tell you what - come on over here...

We move behind Flagg to reveal him holding - STEPHEN'S GUN.

FLAGG
... I wanna show you something.

Off Henry, his interest piqued, PRE-LAP --

STEPHEN (V.O.)
... Hardly anybody ever finds out that their actions really, actually, hurt other people...

INT. ANNIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Annie lies in bed in a dowdy flowered nightgown, Stephen's notebook open on her lap as she reads his words greedily.

STEPHEN (V.O.)
... People don't get better, they
just get smarter.

MOVE DOWN, revealing A STACK of stolen notebooks by her bed.

EXT. VERN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Billy's car sits outside a large house, as Vern limps out to the MAILBOX. His face lights up as he removes a LETTER --

ANGLE ON THE RETURN ADDRESS - "SHAWSHANK PENITENTIARY."

STEPHEN (V.O.)
When you get smarter you don't stop
pulling the wings off flies...

We hear Billy's voice from the house --

BILLY (O.C.)
 Any mail, lard ass?

VERN
 Nope!

Vern POCKETS the letter and limps back inside.

EXT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - DAY

Stephen cuts through the front yard.

STEPHEN (V.O.)
... You just think of better
reasons for doing it.

He bursts in the front door --

INT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Stephen enters to find the room dark and deserted. He feels panic rising in his gut - did something happen to Ruth? But then he hears VOICES, and sees a sliver of LIGHT coming from underneath the kitchen door. He moves towards it --

INT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Ruth sits at the table with a mug of tea. She looks up as Stephen enters, and rushes to embrace him.

RUTH
Stephen! Where have you been?

Now Stephen sees the other person sitting at the table - JACK TORRANCE, cradling his own mug. He nods to Stephen.

STEPHEN
... Mr. Torrance?

But the words are smothered in Ruth's arms. She pulls away, holding him by his shoulders, almost shaking him.

RUTH
Did you know there was a train accident today, right outside town? I didn't know where you were!

STEPHEN
I was playing with Vern and Annie, and I lost track of time --

RUTH
Don't ever do that again. I was a wreck. Good thing Jack was here.

JACK
(walking over)
I was worried after you ditched school today, Steve... so I went out looking for you. Instead, I found this young lady walking home alone, and I gave her a lift.

Ruth moves to the stove for the kettle.

RUTH
We called the police. Jack said he'd stay until they found you.

Her hand SHAKES as she refills their tea - Jack gently takes the kettle, pours. She smiles, embarrassed, but grateful.

Stephen looks from Jack to Ruth - happy to see her smile, but not thrilled to bring his English teacher into his home life.

STEPHEN
I'm really sorry, Mom.

RUTH
Just don't do it again.

She gives him a smooch for emphasis.

JACK

I'll let Sheriff Pangborn know he
can call off the dogs.

(as he heads for the door)

You really had us worried, Doc.

The color drains from Stephen's face. Ruth doesn't notice.

RUTH

Did you just call Stephen 'Doc?'
That's cute. What brought that on?

JACK

I dunno. Just popped into my head.

Jack smiles - no malice in it. Off this odd little family...

EXT. THE BARRENS - DAY

The dim light of the next morning finds Sheriff Pangborn and
a half-dozen OFFICERS digging through the wreckage of the
freak train crash, searching for survivors, finding none.

OFFICER

Sheriff, over here...

The Sheriff walks over, as the Officer upends a piece of
corrugated metal to REVEAL --

SHERIFF PANGBORN

Aw, hell...

GEORGIE DENBROUGH - DEAD - dripping WET, his small body pale
from lack of light, his young face frozen in fear.

OFFICER

See those marks? Think that's from
an animal or somethin'?

The Sheriff bends down for a closer look --

SHERIFF PANGBORN

It's somethin' all right...

THE BODY IS COVERED IN BITE MARKS from MANY POINTED TEETH -
like a shark's mouth... or little knives.

Buddy Holly takes us out - *Everyday, it's a-gettin' closer...*

SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF PILOT