

BLACK HOLE

a screenplay for a motion picture by

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adapted from the graphic novel "Black Hole" by
Charles Burns

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Registered WGA/w
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BLACKNESS...

And now we're looking at a HIGH SCHOOL YEARBOOK page. Black and white photos of kids. All the kids look very clean, very well-scrubbed in a 1970s sort of a way. We close in on one of them, A GIRL: pretty, clean, like all the others...

And then the black and white photo starts to talk to us:

YEARBOOK GIRL

Some of my best friends have the Bug. I mean, what's the big deal? They may look a little different but they're still people, right? I care about them, I really do. It's just... I think they feel more comfortable being with their own kind. I really don't think there's anything wrong with them being, well, quarantined. I think they're much happier that way.

There's a beat. And then HER PHOTO CHANGES, becomes scary, weird. She looks like SHE'S BEGUN TO TRANSFORM into something scary.

We PULL BACK. All of the photos on the page, all the nice clean kids, are now PHOTOS OF MONSTERS.

And we keep pulling back -- there are hundreds of these pictures on the screen, kids who are now monsters, thousands even.

They spell out BLACK HOLE.

We go through the TITLES into...

An inky pitch dark void of all light, until -- dimly -- a crack opens up. Familiar in shape, the slit slowly opens. For a moment we might think it's a vagina, and that we're being birthed, but when we PULL OUT OF THE DARKNESS we emerge into...

INT. BIOLOGY 101 - DAY

KEITH PIERSON, a good kid with neck-length hair and a mono-brow has been slicing open a frog in a metal tray.

KEITH PIERSON (V.O.)

It was so weird. It happened in my third period biology class.

(more)

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KEITH PIERSON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

We got divided into groups of two because we were all going to be dissecting frogs.

Next to Keith is CHRIS RHODES, the nice girl. Slightly conservative, truly beautiful but unconscious of how beautiful she is, she hangs with the cool kids but is nice to everyone. She's well groomed, and the tiny mole to the left of her upper lip is the only thing that unbalances her -- it's also her most alluring trait.

Keith may seem focused on the frog, but he's constantly stealing glances at Chris.

KEITH (V.O.)

For once, I lucked out and got Chris Rhodes as my lab partner. She was a total fox.

Chris drops her pen. It rolls back...

At the table behind, DAVE BARNES, a slightly nerdy geek, his face starting to develop a faint peach-fuzz all over, reaches down and picks it up. He passes it to Chris, who smiles in thanks.

Dave blushes. LINDA his lab partner is unimpressed, and looks behind her...

A jock, BRETT, in the seat behind Linda, shakes a dead frog at her - wagging its frog-like hands. She turns away, grossed out.

KEITH (V.O.)

The other girls were grossing out while the guys were putting on the whole tough guy act. I guess I was trying to do the same thing...

Keith looks from Dave to the frog, briefly glancing at the outline of Chris' nipples through her sweater.

KEITH (V.O.)

I went ahead and pinned the arms and legs down like you were supposed to and was just starting to cut it open when it happened...

CLOSE ON: The frog, its legs spread wide. The slit in its belly opens wider, revealing the wet, pink fleshy interior.

(CONTINUED)

KEITH (V.O.)

As the frog opened up, a bunch of formaldehyde spilled out...and I was overwhelmed by the smell of preserved death.

Keith is starting to look wheezy...

KEITH (V.O.)

I can't explain what happened. I felt flushed with heat -- suddenly sweating. It was like a deja vu -- like tripping. A premonition. I felt like I was looking into the future ... and the future looked really twisted...

EXTREME CLOSE ON: Keith's eyes are dilating.

KEITH (V.O.)

I was looking at a hole ... a black hole -- and as I looked, the hole opened up...

STUDENT'S VOICE

Keith?

Keith's vision blurs into a HALLUCINATION -- the frog starts TWITCHING and the background SQUIGGLES with squirming tadpoles. IMAGES STROBE past in brief FLASHES:

A FOOT with a slice down its center -- not too unlike the slice in the frog...

THE BACK OF A GIRL -- its skin ripped open in a larger gash. Pink, fresh skin underneath -- like flaking and peeling after a sunburn.

A MATCH flaring in the darkness.

EVERYTHING MELDS TOGETHER in concentric swirls of IMAGERY until all is one...handguns, marijuana joints, frogs, snakes, bones, doll heads, vaginas, broken glass, tadpoles -- all of it SUCKING DOWN into an ABYSS.

KEITH (V.O.)

...and I could feel myself falling forward, tumbling down into nothingness.

Keith's eyes are rolled up into his head--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

STUDENT'S VOICE (O.S.)

What's the matter? Are you OK?

KEITH (V.O.)

I was ... floating ... floating in
this totally black place. And for
once in my life ... I felt ...
safe.

Keith's eyes suddenly come out of his trance -- and in an
instant EVERYTHING IS NORMAL.

Keith is on the ground, looking up at his teacher, MR.
FULLNER, and all of the other STUDENTS, crowded around
him to take a look.

MR. FULLNER

Back up! Give him some air!
Keith! What happened? Are you
alright?

DAVE BARNES

He just keeled over Mr. Fullner!
Ka-Boom!

LINDA

Did'ya see the look on his face!?

STUDENT #1

What's wrong, Pierson? Can't
handle frog guts!

STUDENT #2

What a pussy!

But none of the other students matter -- because Chris is
there, and she's concerned.

KEITH (V.O.)

Everyone was laughing their
fucking heads off ... everybody
except Chris ... she wasn't even
smiling. *She wasn't even smiling.*

Keith closes his eyes and we...

FADE TO BLACK:

TITLE CARD: "PLANET XENO"

Over the BLACKNESS we hear Keith:

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

KEITH (V.O.)

A couple of months later, we went
to Planet Xeno...

EXT. THE WOODS (PLANET XENO) - DUSK

The leaves of the trees RUSTLE as a gentle breeze brings
in the coming night. The setting sun through the trees
has created a tangle of long shadows.

KEITH (V.O.)

(continuing)

I don't remember who came up with
the name, but that's what we all
called it. To get there you had
to climb a steep ravine and then
make your way through a maze of
thin trails. Once you got there
it was beautiful. Huge trees
hanging overhead, white light
filtering through the branches.
It was like being in a cocoon ...
the perfect place to get stoned.
At least, until all the weird shit
began happening...

Keith is getting stoned with TODD, who has shoulder
length brown hair and thick-rimmed glasses. He sucks on
the joint, and the embers of the tip glow orange.

KEITH

It's, uh ... this thing's a
sidewinder...

The joint is loosening. He licks his finger and fixes
it.

KEITH

...needs a little doctoring.

He takes another drag on the joint.

KEITH

This is, heh ... this is ... um--

TODD

What are you talking about?

KEITH

(snapping out of it)

Mmm ...

(more)

(CONTINUED)

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KEITH (CONT'D)

sorry, I'm getting totally fucked
up ... this is pretty good dope.

TODD

Good?! Kicks the shit out of that
rag weed you buy!

Todd pulls a rolled plastic bag of pot out of his pocket.

TODD

Check it out ... fifteen a lid,
but worth every cent! All flower
tops ... totally sticky. Purple
veins running through it.

KEITH

Gimme a whiff.

Todd unrolls the bag and holds it up to Keith.

KEITH

Nice...I wouldn't mind scoring
some...where'd you get it?

TODD

These dudes I know ... college
guys, they live up on Fortieth.

KEITH

Could you introduce me? I've got
the bread. The McCroskies are
paying me forty bucks a month to
watch their house.

DEE, their overweight friend, comes walking up with some
beers. Keith starts to drain his...

TODD

(to Dee)

It's about time ... I've got some
serious cotton mouth. What took
you so long?!

DEE

Hah! You're not gonna believe
this! I was...

(smelling the pot)

Hey! You guys lit up without me!

TODD

Get over it ... I'll roll another.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED: (2)

DEE

Make it a fat one. God, you guys
are such Bogarts!

Keith throws his empty beer-bottle as far as he can. We
see it arc off toward the lake. From far away we hear the
sound of the bottle smashing on a rock.

KEITH

Score!

Dee takes the joint and inhales deeply, and with the
smoke still in his lungs:

DEE

Okay -- I'm at the keg and
checkin' everything out and ...
ahhhh, Keith ... you're gonna love
this!

KEITH

What?

He blows out a cloud of smoke.

DEE

That girl -- the one you're always
goin' on and on about from your
biology class ... Chris something--

KEITH

(annoyed)

Chris Rhodes -- and I'm not always
going on about her. I just...

TODD

Let him finish. I wanna hear
this.

DEE

Okay, so Rick Ames was going
swimming, *naked*, and all of a
sudden Chris wants to go too!

TODD

What?

KEITH

Shut the hell up.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED: (3)

DEE

Seriously. We're all watching,
and there she is, taking her
clothes off! Stripping down to
her underwear and -- oh, man!

He takes another deep drag.

DEE

She's got it. The bug. Her back
was all fucked up! The skin on
her backbone was like ... peeled
open. It was disgusting!

Todd takes the joint.

KEITH

Maybe it's ... you know, something
else.

DEE

There's no way! She's got it!
Everyone saw!

KEITH

Bullshit. Why would she let
everyone see? Why would she--

DEE

How should I know? But she's got
it -- the girl you have a crush on
has got it, and everyone knows.

He starts GIGGLING -- stoned. Keith starts walking away,
pissed.

TODD

Uh-oh ... he's pissed!

KEITH

I'm not pissed!

DEE

Come on, Keith ... I'm not trying
to be a jerk. I just thought you
should know.

Keith heads into the woods without even looking back.

DEE

I was just telling you what I saw,
OK?

(CONTINUED)

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We follow Keith into the woods. Soon, the light of the setting sun has gone, and under the canopy of the forest it seems a lot darker.

KEITH (V.O.)

I wasn't pissed, my head was ready to explode, but I wasn't pissed. How could she do it? I'd seen her around school with lots of different guys hitting on her... I figured she might even have a boyfriend, but... The only way you could get the bug was by having sex with a sick kid. I just couldn't see her doing something like that. I felt so stupid. I didn't have any claim on her... I mean, I hardly even knew her. She was just some girl from one of my classes, but God she was so perfect. She was all I wanted. Man... why did I ever tell those guys about her? Shit.

Emotional, high -- Keith is ready to cry. He slumps down next to a tree, holding his head in his hands.

Then, he hears SOMEONE APPROACHING. A CRUNCHING of leaves.

He wipes his eyes and stands up, and then sees her...

Chris is just ahead in a clearing -- in her underwear. Her hair is still wet from swimming in the lake. He inhales, as if he's going to alert her of his presence -- but then he holds it.

She reaches back and undoes her bra.

Keith's heart is racing. He doesn't know what to do...

And then her bra comes off, revealing her beautiful, young breasts -- pert, full. Brimming with life.

Keith is in the darkness, and she's not able to see him. His breathing quickens. She's drying her bra, wringing it out.

Chris puts her shirt back on and begins to button it.

Keith watches, says nothing.

She slips into her pants and then suddenly--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

CHRIS

Aaaahh!

She falls over and onto the ground, clutching at her foot.

CHRIS

Shit! Ohh! Shit! Ahhh...

Chris has stepped on some glass or something, and Keith is frozen -- not sure of what to do. Then, without even knowing it, he's rushing to her aid--

KEITH

Chris?!

Keith comes running out of the darkness of the forest and into the clearing. Chris is startled.

CHRIS

Jesus! You scared the Hell out of me! What -- were you watching me from the bushes?

KEITH

No! Um...I was...taking a walk. Then I heard you and came running. What happened?

CHRIS

My foot ... I stepped on some broken glass or something -- I think it's is still in there.

KEITH

Here. Let me take a look.

He kneels at her side, takes her foot into his hand, cradling it.

CHRIS

God, it really hurts ... it's throbbing.

(then, noticing)

Hey. You're my lab partner from my Biology class.

KEITH

Keith. Keith Pierson. Here, lift your foot.

He caresses her foot as he lifts it up so that he can see the soft underside.

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The cut, dark and open, hits Keith hard. He SWALLOWS -- it's the same shape as the incision into the frog. Keith starts to waver -- dizzy.

CHRIS

Are -- are you okay?

KEITH

Hold still ... I think I can get it.

He takes his index finger and slowly, gently, probes it into the wound.

KEITH

There -- God -- that's a big chunk of glass.

He slowly pulls a shard of green glass from the bottom of a beer bottle out of the wound.

KEITH

Okay, keep holding your foot up for just another second...

He starts taking off his shirt.

CHRIS

What are you doing?

KEITH

You need a bandage, or else you'll get...infected. This'll work fine, it's white and it's cotton.

He rips a length off of it.

CHRIS

But your shirt ... it'll get ruined.

He starts bandaging the foot.

KEITH

It's no big deal. This should work at least until you get home. And, uh ... *it's clean.*

An uncomfortable moment as he looks her in the eyes. She's beautiful in the moonlight.

KEITH

Here, let me help you up.

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He helps her up, holds her against him as support.

CHRIS

Thanks.

She suddenly lifts her hand from his chest.

CHRIS

You should put your sweat shirt on
... you don't want to get sick.

He puts his sweat shirt on...

KEITH

I guess you're right, but God,
it's been so nice lately ...
almost like Summer.

CHRIS

I know, maybe that's why I got
kind of carried away ... I
actually went in swimming.

KEITH

Yeah? Really? I, uh ... that's
pretty ... wild.

CHRIS

That's why I came back here ... I
was trying to get my dry clothes
back on and I--

KEITH

You gotta be careful out here...
(clarifying the thought)
Guys get drunk and then they start
busting bottles ... there's broken
glass all over the place and ...
you know.
(beat)
Does it hurt?

CHRIS

I'll be fine. I'm, uh, going this
way. I've got friends that'll
give me a ride home.

He helps her up and starts walking with her. She notices
how attentive he's being, and how he's holding her, and
it makes her a little uncomfortable.

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CHRIS

I'm okay. Really. Marci's going to be waiting for me.

KEITH

You sure you're okay?

CHRIS

I'm sure ... thanks for everything. You've been sweet.

She starts walking off.

CHRIS

See you in Biology.

Keith smiles as she walks away. He looks up at the rising moon, and suddenly, the forest seems much more beautiful. Then, he looks at his hands and sees the dark stains of her blood on his fingers.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. TODD'S CAR - TOWN STREETS - MOVING - NIGHT

Keith is sitting in the passenger seat, a million miles away in thought -- looking out the window at the suburban houses, all identical, passing by. Next to him, driving the car, is Todd. He's talking, but Keith is listening to the SOUNDTRACK IN HIS MIND -- a melancholic romantic theme of remembrance.

TODD

(oddly distant)

...so when we go in, just let me do the talking. I'll introduce you and everything but let me take care of the business end of it, all right?

(beat)

All right?!

KEITH

(snapping out of it)

What? Fine. Okay. Whatever.

TODD

What's with you? Still thinking about that girl? Dude, she's *sick*. She's got the bug. She's not the nice girl she pretends to be. A wolf in sheep's clothing...

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KEITH

No -- it's not her. I'm just
stoned is all.

He looks out the window again ... *all the similar houses.*

TODD

OK... we're here. It's the gray
one. The last house on the left.

EXT. THE DRUG HOUSE - NIGHT

A slightly run-down tract home from the late 50s. It's
lawn is patchy and overgrown. Todd's car pulls into the
driveway. Todd and Keith climb out.

TODD

Just relax. These guys are cool,
but let me do the talking.

They walk up to the porch and KNOCK on the door.
Immediately a DOG STARTS BARKING and SCRATCHING AT THE
DOOR.

BRUCE (O.S.)

Yeah? Who is it?!

TODD

Um ... I talked with Burt on the
phone. I told him I was--

BRUCE

Faust! Shut the fuck up!

The door opens up, revealing BRUCE, a college-age kid
with shabby hair and a thick moustache.

BRUCE

Fuckin' dog's a royal pain in the
ass.

(checks them out)

You're friends with Burt? Well,
you better come on in.

He looks around after they enter, *stoner paranoia.*

INT. THE DRUG HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

They walk in, revealing a messy house littered with drug
paraphernalia and walls covered with psychedelic Jimmy
Hendrix and Alice Cooper BLACK LIGHT posters.

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BRUCE

You're in luck ... we were just
gettin' ready to head out.

Three or four STONERS are sitting around on the ratty
furniture. They all turn to see who's entering. When
they see it's a couple of high school kids looking to
score they go back to their bongos and pipes. At one end
of the coffee table, in a large easy chair, sits BURT, a
long-hair with yellow aviator glasses on.

BURT

What do we have here?

TODD

Burt! How's it going? You
remember me ... I'm Todd and this
is my buddy Keith. I called up
earlier about--

BURT

Oh, yeah -- right, right! Have a
seat. Sit down -- relax.

He reaches underneath the easy chair he's sitting in and
pulls out a well worn cigar box.

BURT

So, I guess you're in the market
for a little bag action ... well,
you came to the right place!

He opens the box revealing about eight rolls of pot in
sandwich bags.

BURT

Best shit in town ... but you've
been over before, right? So you
know what I'm talking about.
"Bomb-berry" straight from
Humbolt. It'll knock you on your
ass six ways to Sunday.

He takes a bag out and unrolls it.

BURT

Check it out. Look at the size of
these stinky buds ... beautiful.
Take your pick, they're all
weighed out.

He offers the box.

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CONTINUED: (2)

TODD

They all look good to me... I'll take this one.

He takes a bag.

BURT

Go ahead, roll a fat one ... try it before you buy it.

TODD

Uh, okay. Why not? It's fifteen, right?

BURT

And worth every penny. We've got other shit, too. We've got Windowpane, White Crosses, Black Beauties...

TODD

This should take us where we want to go...but maybe some Windowpane for later...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE DRUG HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: Keith is completely loaded. He lifts the joint and takes a hit.

BURT (O.S.)

...so he's sitting out in the middle of the intersection, tripping his brains out. It was funnier than shit! He's so whacked out he doesn't even notice that a cop car has pulled up!

Keith shuts his eyes and for a brief moment we see CHRIS SUPERIMPOSED -- until he opens his eyes.

BURT

They're askin' him for I.D. And he's just sittin' there staring up at 'em with this big goofy grin on his face...

Keith looks around at all the other loser stoners around him. A FEW MORE have shown up.

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BURT (CONT'D)

...and finally he say: "I'll take a double cheeseburger and a large Coke."

DUMB LAUGHTER all around. *Stoners.*

Keith gets up and starts walking away toward the hallway.

TODD

Keith -- where're you goin'? You okay?

KEITH

Yeah, yeah ... I'm fine. I'm just ... I'm really thirsty. I gotta get something to drink.

BURT

Heard that ... there's a sixer in the fridge. Grab us a couple.

BRUCE

But bring a few more ... so we don't have to keep getting up, OK?

TODD

Right! Good idea ... that's thinking ahead...

Keith nods, counts everyone, and continues down the dark, tunnel-like hallway toward the brightly lit kitchen.

INT. THE DRUG HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Keith walks in and lets his eyes adjust to the bright lights. What he sees shocks him.

A tall, beautiful girl wearing nothing but a loose tank top is standing at the counter making a sandwich. Her name is ELIZA and though she's got an incredible body, a long, elegant face with flowing black hair, and isn't wearing any panties -- her most arresting quality is the fact that SHE HAS A LIZARD-LIKE TAIL.

Keith shakes his head slightly, stunned at what he's seeing.

ELIZA

Oh, hi! You scared me! Do I ... do I know you?

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CONTINUED:

It takes a moment for Keith to take his eyes from her rear end, where the tail is slinking slightly...erotically.

KEITH

God, I'm sorry! I didn't know...
I was just coming back for beer
and...

She turns to face him -- suddenly the tail seems like it might be a hallucination. And besides, there's other things to look at. Her breasts are weighty and incredible -- the nipples erect. But it's her eyes that are transfixing -- so dark -- a deep blue with huge dilated pupils. And her white skin -- it's almost translucent.

Keith is speechless.

She suddenly covers her pubic hair with her hand, cupping her genitalia.

ELIZA

Relax -- it's no big deal. We're
pretty loose around here ...
sometimes I get a little too loose
for my own good. You know what I
mean?

Keith simply nods.

ELIZA

I should cover up ... I just
forget sometimes.

She takes a towel and wraps herself with it, although it's barely big enough to wrap all the way around her.

ELIZA

There, how's that? Like it? Kind
of like a hula skirt, huh?

She starts doing a little dance. It's sweet, something a little kid would do. Keith smiles a stoned smile.

ELIZA

You're handsome when you smile.
It makes you look...innocent.
Here, let me grab you a beer ...
want a sandwich?

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CONTINUED: (2)

She opens the fridge and takes out a can of Olympia beer, pulls the tab, and hands it to him. He drinks it, gulping. She turns back to her sandwich.

ELIZA

Here. Let me show you how to make the world's best sandwich.

She starts assembling a sandwich.

ELIZA

Two slices of bologna, a little iceberg lettuce to give it crunch and last but not least, Miracle Whip! You gotta use Miracle Whip or it's just no good.

She takes it and bites into it with a CRUNCH of lettuce.

ELIZA

Mmm... perfect! Here, have a bite.

KEITH

Ah... no thanks.

She pushes it closer, and for a moment Keith seems almost scared -- the marks of her teeth in the white bread -- the shiny pink meat inside.

ELIZA

Come on, try it! You're not gonna catch coodies. If you don't like it -- no big deal!

Then, with the sandwich being pushed into his face, he takes a timid bite. She waits for him to begin chewing.

ELIZA

So. What do you think?

Keith nods, chewing.

KEITH

Good.

ELIZA

Told you so. Best sandwich in the world. You can finish up that one ... I'll make another.

(more)

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CONTINUED: (3)

ELIZA (CONT'D)

We can take 'em downstairs with us, to my room.

CUT TO:

INT. THE DRUG HOUSE - DARK HALLWAY - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: Eliza's backside as she walks. The swishing of the tail can be seen underneath the towel. TILT UP to her glancing back at Keith, smiling.

She starts fixing another.

ELIZA

I don't eat very often, but when I do look out! I totally get into it. Sometimes it's almost *orgasmic*.

She turns and starts walking down some steps into the darkness of the basement.

ELIZA

Watch your step, it's kinda dark.

He stands at the top of the stairs for a moment, adjusting the bulge in his crotch -- nervous. And then, with resolve, he descends. For a moment, we're in TOTAL DARKNESS.

ELIZA'S VOICE (O.S.)

So ... are you ready? I'm gonna blow your mind.

A door OPENS UP and we're in...

INT. THE DRUG HOUSE - ELIZA'S BASEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Keith walks into the basement bedroom--

KEITH

Wow...

The room is filled with Eliza's art -- all manner of twisted, drug-influenced artwork. Charcoals, sculptures of found materials, watercolors, and pencil sketches -- all of alien world insects, demons & devils, twisted figures and forms -- *things we've seen before and will soon see*. Upsetting and alluring all at once, like Hieronymus Bosch on acid.

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KEITH

What -- what is all this stuff?

ELIZA

It's my artwork! It's what I do!
Like it?

KEITH

You're kidding! This is all
yours? All of it?

ELIZA

Every bit of it ... you like?

KEITH

Yeah, they're really ... wild.
How do you come up with all this?

She shoots a sly glance and smile at Keith and then puts on the Tangerine Dream album "Phaedra." Dark, ambient electronic music. Keith can't take his eyes off of her -- and especially her tail, which seems to be twitching under the towel.

ELIZA

This is the best when you're
tripping.

Keith nods, "ahhh." She's frying.

ELIZA

Let's break in my new pipe. I
made it myself.

She lifts a freaky looking pipe that looks like a little alien insect skeleton. She stuffs something into it...something Keith can't see.

ELIZA

Isn't it beautiful? I carved it
out of soapstone.

(beat)

Here.

He takes it and takes a drag. Blue smoke comes out...

And then, IN A SERIES OF INTERLACED DISSOLVES, Keith TRIPS out on the FREAKY IMAGERY in Eliza's art. She keeps passing him the pipe, until he fixates on A PARTICULAR CHARCOAL DRAWING: A boy, who looks much like Keith, gagged and tied naked to a tree in the woods. It looks like someone has beaten and whipped him -- and he looks like he might be dead.

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It's enough to really trip Keith out...

KEITH

God, these ... these are so good... they say so much... they're right there. I mean, I kind of play the guitar and... you know, try to write songs sometimes, but it's not the same... I could never do anything this...this...*intense*.

He wavers a bit, and puts his hand on his head.

KEITH

I'm kind of...spinning.

She lowers him down slowly onto the bed.

ELIZA

You need to relax. It's okay, you can trust me. I won't hurt you... I promise.

Keith feels like he's sinking into the mattress. The room seems to have transformed into the forest. Chris is there, naked, laying on the glass littered grass. She glances toward Keith -- distant.

ELIZA

Just relax. Don't think about that. Just let it all go...

Keith shuts his eyes. Eliza is sitting on his back, rubbing and massaging him.

ELIZA

You saw it, didn't you? You saw my tail, and you liked it. Didn't you?

KEITH

I... uh... y-yeah.

The towel is off and the tail is squirming its way into his crotch, between his legs.

KEITH

Uh -- uh?

ELIZA

Let me in -- you'll see things in a totally new way.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

KEITH

But...there's this girl...

She lowers her lips down to the back of his neck and takes a little nibble.

ELIZA

That doesn't matter. Mmmm. You smell so fresh -- so pure -- so clean--

Suddenly the door opens up and Burt pops in.

BURT

Whoops! Sorry! Hey, hope I'm not bustin' anything up, but your buddy's been lookin' for you! He thought maybe you'd split or something. But I had a pretty good idea where I'd find you.

Keith starts getting up, pulling himself out from under Eliza.

KEITH

God, I... sorry! I was just... she...

BURT

Relax, it's no big deal... your buddy just wants to get going.

Keith gets up, orients himself.

KEITH

Yeah, right... I'd better get going too.

He looks at Eliza, laying on the bed, giving Burt a tart look. She looks to Keith and smiles -- sweet.

KEITH

So... it was real nice meeting you... thanks for showing me your artwork and everything...

BURT

Hah! I guess I did walk in on something! I'll see you upstairs.

Burt leaves, smiling slyly. Keith looks back at Eliza.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED: (4)

ELIZA

You don't have to go if you don't want to... you can stay.

KEITH

I uh... I really can't. I don't mean to rush out or anything, but...you know... my friend's gonna be pissed. I gotta go.

She takes her sandwich from the bedside table and starts eating it.

KEITH

So... I'll see you around, okay?

She nods.

ELIZA

Right. I'll see you around.

Keith walks out, leaving Eliza alone. She turns off the light, plunging the room into DARKNESS.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - TRACK/FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Keith is running around the track for gym class. He's not on the track team, and it shows in his running style. He's lapped by a PACK OF OTHER KIDS. His mind is faraway -- distant. Around and around.

On the field the football team is practicing and doing drills. The COACH BARKS instructions at them from the sidelines.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - BOYS LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Sweaty, Keith opens his gym locker and takes out a towel. He self-consciously strips and wraps the towel around himself, looking to make sure no one sees him naked.

He walks through the locker room, past the OTHER BOYS, many of whom aren't showering at all and just dressing their sweaty bodies. He approaches the

SHOWERS

which are running, creating a CLOUD OF STEAM. But there's *another sound* besides the RUNNING OF WATER. Something like a SLAPPING--

BRETT (O.C.)

Fuckin' freak! You gave my girlfriend the bug -- didn't you, Franklin? You couldn't stick to your own kind, could you?! Well, *fuck you!*

SMACK!

FRANKLIN (O.C.)

(weakly)

Please...it wasn't me...I didn't do it...

BRETT (O.C.)

One of you monsters did!

Keith, nervous, peers into the steamy showers...

On the far side of the showers THREE NAKED JOCKS are beating up ONE OF THE POPULAR KIDS, who's laying on the wet tile floor, also naked. Blood from his nose streams in with the water and down the drain.

FRANKLIN

Please...

BRETT

I don't wanna see you around school anymore, freak -- or your ass is grass!

He kicks him in the side, and for the first time we notice that the popular kid has LARGE BREATHING GILLS on the side of his ribcage.

MATT

Dude, look at his gills. They're bleeding...

BRETT

Go back to Planet Xeno, where you belong -- *freak!*

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

There's no way that Keith is going to take a shower now...he backs away.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY

Keith is sitting with Todd and Dee, eating sloppy joes. Keith can't eat his...he's too disturbed.

DEE

You gonna eat that?

KEITH

Not hungry.

Dee takes it.

ROB

What's up?

KEITH

You know Franklin?

ROB

Brauner?

KEITH

Yeah. He's got the plague. Brett and Matt were beating him up in the showers.

DEE

"Another one bites the dust."

KEITH

I'm just totally tweaking. I've got three classes to go. I don't know if I can handle the rest of the day.

Rob slides something across the table to Keith, a small slip of paper in between some tape.

ROB

Try this...

Keith looks at it, the slip of paper has a small window drawn onto it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROB

Things are pretty twisted lately,
 may as well roll with it. Dee and
 I dropped last period. Pretty
 smooth stuff.

Keith tears it open and discreetly puts it on his tongue
 just as the BELL RINGS.

ROB

TGIF.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - SEX ED CLASS - DAY

CLOSE ON: A 16mm movie is playing in a classroom where
 the curtains have been drawn. ON SCREEN a SEX ED FILM on
 Venereal Diseases is playing. A cartoon Gonorrhea virus
 is furiously swimming through a cartoon blood stream. It
 stabs it's curly arrow tail into an unsuspecting cell...

SEX ED NARRATION (V.O.)

"Gonorrhea is spread through
 sexual contact. This includes
 penis to vagina, penis to mouth,
 or mouth to vagina contact."

CLOSE ON: Keith is sitting at his tiny desk, among the
 other kids, watching the film, mouth agape. He's
 tripping hard.

SEX ED NARRATION (V.O.)

"Men infected with Gonorrhea will
 experience burning sensations
 during urination and a continuous
 yellowish white discharge from the
 penis. It can get...UGLY."

ON SCREEN we see a SERIES OF SHOTS of various nether
 regions in the body that have odd tentacled growths and
 fleshy open sores.

The CLASS lets out a CHORUS OF GROANS. SEVERAL STUDENTS
 simply look uncomfortable -- self-conscious.

Then, suddenly, the credits begin to roll to music. IN A
 SERIES OF ON-SCREEN SHOTS we see NORMAL PEOPLE IN DAILY
 LIFE, turning and smiling toward the camera, all set to a
 SONG:

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

SEX ED SONG (V.O.)

"V.D., is for every-body,
not just for the few...
Any-one can share V.D.,
with someone nice as you...
V.D., is for every-body,
now you have *no doubt*...
That any-one can get V.D.,
that's what... it's all... *about!*"

The MUSIC TRAILS OFF and then the film leader runs out
and the SCREEN GOES BRIGHT WHITE...the SLAPPING OF LEADER
and the HUM OF THE PROJECTOR

Keith's face is brightly lit, and his pupils are like
large black holes -- totally dilated -- frying.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY/LOCKERS - DAY

Keith is walking through the halls of the school. He's
still tripping -- and starting to sweat profusely. He
sees the STUDENTS around him, all suspicious in one way
or another -- all innocent as well. He's TRIPPING hard.

He passes SOME JOCKS teasing a SPECIAL ED KID who has
Downs Syndrome.

TEASING JOCK

Tard! Tardy tard!

SPECIAL ED KID

Shaaah-dup! Shaaah-dup, you!

The special ed kid lashes out at the jock, who easily
steps away from the punch. The kid starts chasing the
jock who's LAUGHING.

Keith can't take it. He ducks into a bathroom.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - BOYS RESTROOM - STALL - DAY

Keith is sitting on the toilet, not actually using it --
just sitting in privacy and breathing deeply. Trying to
come down.

Then, SOMEONE comes in. He lifts his feet.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

The person walks over to the sinks and turns the water on. Some hand WASHING -- then the PAPER TOWELS. Suddenly, there's a VOICE...tiny sounding, scratchy...

TINY VOICE (O.S.)

Cl-clk -- klu --

Then, ANOTHER VOICE, normal...

NORMAL VOICE (O.S.)

Shut up!

TINY VOICE (O.S.)

Th -- th -- thirrrrrst.

NORMAL VOICE (O.S.)

I said *shut up*.

TINY VOICE (O.S.)

Waaaa -- ttr.

NORMAL VOICE (O.S.)

Jesus! Here.

He turns on the faucet and we hear the WATER RUNNING...slight SPLASHING SOUNDS.

Keith can't not look. He slowly and quietly stands up to take a peek.

Standing at the sinks is ROB FACINCANI, one of the popular kids. He's wearing a turtleneck sweater and it pulling it up. He's taking palmfuls of water and lifting it to his upper chest. A slight SLURPING SOUND.

ROB

There. That's enough.

Suddenly he JERKS--

ROB

OW! Fucker!

He looks at his fingertip, it's bleeding.

Suddenly, Rob sees Keith in the mirror, peering over the stall door behind him. Startled, as if he had been caught masturbating, he rushes out of the bathroom.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. THE WOODS - NIGHT

Keith, Todd, and Dee are sharing a joint of their newly purchased pot.

DEE
Facincani? Shut up.

TODD
You sure it wasn't the Windowpane?

KEITH
C'mon. I know *Drug Real* from *Real Real*. He's got it...the bug.

DEE
It's like...everyone's got it.

TODD
You got it?

DEE
No.

TODD
Then "everyone" doesn't have it.

DEE
How do you know? I mean, how do I know you don't have it?

TODD
Dude, if I did have it I wouldn't be here hangin' with you. I'd be getting it on with some freakshow pussy right now.

DEE
(beat)
So... who wants a charge?

KEITH
Right here.

Just as Keith is taking a hit from the joint he sees some shadows moving in the forest.

KEITH
Uhn?

DEE
What?!

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

KEITH

Uh... I saw something...Right through that clearing! It was some guy... he... he was like creeping around...

TODD

Yeah? Well let's check it out...

They walk into the forest, and down a little trail. Eventually, they come across all sorts of stuff -- little dolls tied to trees with twine, bits of wood sculpture, crosses made out of garbage. Weird stuff.

TODD

And what's all this shit?

They come to a little campsite...

EXT. THE WOODS - RICK'S CAMPSITE - NIGHT

The clearing in the woods has been converted into a camp of sorts -- a really messy camp. Bags of trash. A smoldering fire pit. A makeshift pup tent.

KEITH

That's weird... What's a tent doin' up here?

TODD

Probably belongs to that guy you saw. I bet all the Buggers are comin' up here and hiding out.

DEE

Why don't they do us all a favor and just leave town?

Todd looks into the tent.

TODD

Look, he's got all his stuff stashed in here... clothes, books, comics...

DEE

Let me see... Alright! Candy bars!

Dee starts taking candy bars from a bag.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

TODD

Gimme one of those! Let me have that Snickers.

DEE

Va-va voom! We scored! He's got a whole stack of Playboys!

TODD

Cool...

Keith, disturbed by the whole scene starts walking off.

DEE

Hey! Where you goin', Pierson?

KEITH

Aw, I'm just gonna take a look around... see what else is going on up here...

TODD

Why don't you hold on? We'll fire up this joint and look at some of this stuff...

KEITH

That's alright, you go ahead... I'll be right back.

He wanders off and starts walking through the woods.

EXT. THE WOODS - TRAIL - NIGHT

Keith then comes across something rather upsetting -- it looks like someone had shed their skin. It's draped across some branches. He takes it into his hands and holds it up -- the shedding is ripped right down the center of the chest and on either side are breasts -- it looks like it was a girl's skin. Moles, childhood scars...

KEITH

(whispering to himself)

Jesus...

Suddenly he hears a CRACKLING OF TWIGS and turns around just in time to see SOMEONE coming out of the shadows between two trees.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

At first we think it might be someone wearing a Halloween mask -- but then it becomes evident that it's not. It's too real, too lifelike -- a TWISTED and CONTORTED and MELTED ABOMINATION of a human face. Eyes are twisted sideways and large flaps of skin hang down from the patchy hairline. Hideous warts cover the open sore that is its face. Then, its "mouth" opens up...

MELTED ABOMINATION

Gowah ohhhwah...

It's mouth is all busted up -- broken teeth sticking out of pink gristle. It's lips are moving and the sounds it's making are wet and sloppy...

MELTED ABOMINATION

Gowah ohhwah...

Keith is scared shitless. He's seen a lot of freaky shit lately, but this takes the cake. This is an actual monster.

MELTED ABOMINATION

Gowah ohhwah...gowah ohhwah...

Suddenly, it starts waving its hands in a brushing motion -- "Go away, go away."

MELTED ABOMINATION

Gowah ohhwah...gowah ohhwah...

Keith stumbles back and falls, then quickly gets up and scrambles off into the darkness of the woods -- dropping the skin behind him.

Keith is running through the forest, back in the general direction from where he came -- looking back the whole time to see if the freak is chasing him. When he looks forward--

A GHOST WHITE WITCH THING is standing in front of him. She's as scared of Keith as Keith is of her.

Now the woods are full of SHAPES, twisted and mutated, all slinking around in the darkness. He runs past a number of CAMPSITES and TENTS.

Keith runs away from the mutants and out into the light of the moon and onto another trail that leads him back to

Todd and Dee

at the first tent they discovered.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DEE

Pierson! What took you so long?

TODD

Look! Can you believe this shit?
We found his yearbook?

Todd holds up the open yearbook.

TODD

Check it out! It's Holstrom.
Rick "The Dick" Holstrom!

KEITH

How do you know it's his?

EXTREME CLOSE ON: The yearbook is open to the student photos. Richard Holstrom looks like an amiable fellow. Rick and Dave Barnes are looking up and grinning from a chess board.

TODD

The guy wrote his name in the
front! What a dweeb!

Keith takes the yearbook from him.

KEITH

Let's get out of here.

DEE

Yeah, let's go to Herfy's and grab
a burger.

Keith tosses the yearbook onto what's left of the tent,
which has been totally ransacked and destroyed.

KEITH

Why'd you have to trash all his
stuff?

TODD

'Cause he's a fucking geek! He
deserves to live out here! They
all do.

Keith shakes his head, upset and disgusted.

TODD

What's with you? What's your
problem?

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED: (3)

KEITH

Nothing... let's just get out of here.

Keith looks at his two "friends" like they're the monsters. Shakes his head and then follows them.

We realize, as they leave, that we are watching them from the POV of someone hiding near the tent.

And we hear RICK THE DICK start to WAIL as we...

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. TOWN STREETS - DAY

Keith is riding his bike down the town street, feeling the wind in his hair. He's going somewhere...

EXT. THE DRUG HOUSE - DAY

Keith rolls up into the empty driveway of the drug house, and sitting in the front is Eliza, drawing with some charcoal in her sketchbook. She looks up, sees Keith, and smiles.

ELIZA

Hey.

Something is different -- she has a swollen and slightly black bruise under her right eye. She's definitely stoned -- dull and out of focus.

ELIZA

(she smiles)

I'm happy to see you. I was hoping you'd come back.

KEITH

Yeah, um...I...I was also--

ELIZA

Relax, I'm just giving' you shit. You're here for drugs, right?

Keith shrugs. "Yeah."

ELIZA

Thing is, Burt and his buddies moved out.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELIZA (CONT'D)

They had a big party and a bunch of jocks crashed it and trashed the place. Didn't take me with 'em. They even left Faust behind, *and he's their dog*. Now I'm stuck with three months of back rent. I'll probably be evicted.

(beat)

What a bunch of assholes.

KEITH

Wow. Sorry.

ELIZA

Doesn't matter. I'm so sick and tired of the rain... I want to go south where it's hot and dry... the desert.

KEITH

The desert's cool.

ELIZA

It's better than squatting in Planet Xeno.

They share a silent moment, and then...

KEITH

Are you okay?

She softly touches her bruise.

ELIZA

You mean this? Yeah. I'm fine.

KEITH

What happened?

FLASH CUT TO:

INT. THE DRUG HOUSE - ELIZA'S BASEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Eliza is being held down by BOYS we can't see. Someone has written "MAKE DEPOSIT HERE" with a large arrow drawn down her back toward her bottom. She's being raped. In tears, she looks back and is PUNCHED IN THE FACE.

FLASH CUT TO:

EXT. THE DRUG HOUSE - DAY

She turns away. Starts to tear up.

ELIZA

I don't want to talk about it.

KEITH

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to...um,
I'd better get going. I'll stop
by some other time.

ELIZA

Wait...wait! Don't go It's okay,
I'm sorry... I'm just... I'm kind
of out of it.

(beat)

I still have some of the Bomb-
berry. We can smoke a joint.
I'll give you some.

She stands up and starts walking into the house. Keith
looks around to see if anyone is watching, and then walks
into the house.

INT. THE DRUG HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The place looks like it was trashed. Broken glass.
Painted on the walls are slurs like: "FREAKS" and "BUG
FUCKERS"

ELIZA

God, it stinks in here. This
place has become a total dump.

She turns to the dog, Faust.

ELIZA

Faust, you stay up here... stay!

They walk down the hall to the door to the basement.
Someone has written "LIZARD QUEEN" on the door, along
with some insulting drawings.

KEITH

Lizard Queen? What's that all
about?

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

ELIZA

It's nothing...It's kind of a take
off on my name... Eliza, Liz,
Lizard...

She unlocks the door and opens it.

ELIZA

It's a brand new lock...I
installed it myself.

They walk down the stairs and into her room...

INT. THE DRUG HOUSE - ELIZA'S BASEMENT ROOM - DAY

The room is empty of all her art. It looks like a mess,
a pigsty.

KEITH

Wow, what happened to all your
stuff?

ELIZA

Like I said, I'm getting out of
here and I...I couldn't take it
all with me. I was sick of
looking at it anyway.

FLASH CUT TO:

INT. THE DRUG HOUSE - ELIZA'S BASEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

The guys who were raping her are ripping up her artwork,
breaking things, drawing marker moustaches on delicate
faces.

FLASH CUT TO:

INT. THE DRUG HOUSE - ELIZA'S BASEMENT ROOM - DAY

She reaches under the bed and takes out Burt's cigar box.
There's a little bit of shake left in it along with some
matches and some rolling papers.

ELIZA

Here, why don't you roll us a
couple of joints...

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

She starts lighting candles while Keith sits at the end of the bed and rolls a joint. He rolls a joint. Trembling...he lights up and hands her the joint.

ELIZA

Thanks.

They smoke in silence for a moment, and then, while Keith has the joint, she reaches out and touches his stomach, then runs her fingers down to his belt -- takes grip.

ELIZA

You don't have to go through with this, you know.

(beat)

You can grab a couple of joints and head off and I promise I'll understand.

KEITH

No... I'd... I'd like to stay.

She smiles and leans toward him.

ELIZA

You know what you're asking for, right?

He nods "yes" and she gently kisses him...starts undoing his belt.

ELIZA

You have to say it if you want it...the gift.

KEITH

(almost a whisper)

I want it...

She kisses him fully, her tongue darting into his mouth. She pulls his shirt off and then lays him down on the bed. Then, she stands and totally undresses, her tail is WAGGING excitedly. Keith takes his pants off.

ELIZA

I've wanted this for so long...

She climbs on top of him -- kissing his neck, ears, mouth, and eyes while they make love. Keith closes his eyes...

DISSOLVE TO A MEMORY:

EXT. KEITH'S MEMORY - DAY

We only hear the SOUNDS OF LOVEMAKING while IN A SERIES OF SHOTS:

It's a hazy Summer's day and a 10 YEAR OLD KEITH is catching tadpoles in a stream. He puts them into a bucket with some water in it.

Keith walks home with the bucket of tadpoles and net.

He tries to take care of them, feeding them algae, but it doesn't work...

The bucket of tadpoles are stagnating -- dying.

His FATHER, angry, yells at him.

Keith, in a field just near his childhood home, dumps the bucket of tadpoles onto the ground.

The tadpoles, grey and their skin flaking off, squirm wildly as they slowly die.

Young Keith is crying...

HARD CUT TO:

INT. THE DRUG HOUSE - ELIZA'S BASEMENT ROOM - DAY

Suddenly, and violently, ELIZA MOANS A DEEP WAIL OF ECSTASY. She drops forward, and then suddenly climbs off.

ELIZA

I'm almost there...do me from behind.

Sweaty, she gets onto her hands and knees.

KEITH

F-From behind? I...

ELIZA

I'll show you...you'll like it.

He gets behind her and and slowly, carefully, enters...

ELIZA

There... that's it... see? Isn't that nice?

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

They start moving in quick rhythm.

ELIZA
It's nice... it's right there...
don't stop.

The tail is up against Keith's belly, swishing back and forth wildly.

ELIZA
Keep going... don't stop...

KEITH
Eliza?

She's kind of HISSING with pleasure...

KEITH
Eliza? Y-Your tail... it keeps
getting in the way... it's like...
poking me.

ELIZA
Grab it! Just grab it... but
don't stop!

He takes it in his hand and holds it like a handle. It writhes with a life of its own.

She gets LOUDER, almost SCREAMING.

The tail is twisting, occasionally slipping away -- but he grabs it again and pulls it up -- like lifting the tail of a cat. Then, suddenly, just as they climax in orgasm--

SNAP!

With the sound of a twig breaking half of the tail snaps off!

KEITH
Aw, God! Ah, shit!

The broken off tail is wriggling violently in his hand...

KEITH
God, your tail. It came right
off! It... it's still moving!

She looks back, panting with ecstasy -- sweaty and flushed with warmth.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED: (2)

ELIZA

Mmm... don't worry, it's okay...
it's happened before... it'll grow
back.

He collapses onto her, holding her tight. She rolls to her side and they lay for a minute next to each other, just breathing. Savoring the passion of the moment.

ELIZA

It doesn't hurt... It just kind of
tingles, like when your foot falls
asleep.

(beat)

I forgot how nice it is to be with
somebody you like...

(she inhales close to
him)

...you smell so alive.

Her breathing slows and becomes more regular, her voice more sleepy, drifting away...

ELIZA

Mmm... I knew you liked me... I
knew you'd come back...

And then, almost instantly, she has drifted off to sleep.

Keith lays there with her in his arms, the FLICKER OF CANDLE LIGHT making SHADOW PATTERNS on the ceiling of the basement.

He looks at the tail. The life has gone out of it and it's no longer moving.

Eliza's asleep, and Keith is feeling very weird about everything.

He slowly gets out of bed and puts his pants on. Taking his shirt and shoes he slowly sneaks out of the room and quietly walks out of the room...

INT. THE DRUG HOUSE - STAIRWAY - DAY

Keith is walking up the dark stairway from Eliza's basement to the upstairs of the house. The door at the top of the stairs is cracked open a bit, letting in a long slit of filtered light -- but with every step Keith makes the door seems just as far away.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

The darkness seems to grow darker, and the slit suddenly sharpens on both ends -- until it seems EERILY REMINISCENT of something we've seen before...

Keith begins to get dizzy, as if he's going to black out. He places his hand on the wall for support, but in the darkness it feels as though he's touching tree bark.

Keith falls backwards, and instead of tumbling down the stairs, he falls through a SWIRL OF IMAGERY.

The world goes black.

Title Card white out of the black:

"RACING TOWARD SOMETHING"

INT. BIOLOGY 101 - DAY

The opening scene. We're looking at Chris Rhodes -- beautiful, self-possessed. She sighs and looks bored. We pull back from her to see someone fanning a young Keith. He's recovered from a faint.

We should not feel that this is Keith's dream -- just that we're restarting from a new perspective.

DAVE BARNES

His eyes just rolled up in his head. Man, I thought he was dead.

MR. FULLNER

Everybody back! Give him some air. Are you alright, Keith?

Keith nods, he's helped up to a seated position.

The lovely Chris turns and looks back at the frog she and Keith were dissecting.

CHRIS (V.O.)

I thought I was going to be the one to faint, but instead it was my lab partner, this guy Keith. To be honest, I wasn't feeling anything. The whole time I kept waiting for myself to get sick, to pass out, to throw up... but it just made me feel... sad.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Two months later. Chris, carrying schoolbooks, is walking down the hallway, watching all of the STUDENTS. By now we're as keen as the audience to catch a few of the HIDING INFECTED KIDS here and there. We can see Rob and Linda (she's now wearing gloves) smooching in the hall.

CHRIS (V.O.)

That was pretty much the only time
I ever thought about Keith. That
was like a month or so before
Marci's party...

Chris catches sight of Rob and Linda and turns away, irritated. She likes him.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. MARCI'S HOUSE - DAY

Chris, now carrying a brown-paper bag instead of books, walking up the path to her friend Marci's house. She rings the doorbell.

MARCI, Chris's best friend, opens the door.

MARCI

Chris! What have you got?

CHRIS

Only two bottles of Red Wine --
but they're French! My mom'll
never notice. And I got candles.

INT. MARCI'S HOUSE - DAY

She leads Chris inside. Marci has already started turning her family home into a party house, using posters, bowls of snacks...

MARCI

I thought my parents were never
going to leave! They didn't take
off until after four...

CHRIS

Jeezamabeeza, it looks so great
around here!

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

She starts to pull out the candles, and put them down.

MARCI

(listing)

There's the two bottles of wine
you brought, my brother's picking
up a couple of cases of Miller,
and Ray and Steve said they'd
bring over vodka for
screwdrivers...

CHRIS

Is Rob Fac-Fac--

MARCI

Facincani? Yeah. He's coming. But
you know he's just started going
out with Linda?

CHRIS

Oh shoot. Off-limits. I don't
steal boyfriends.

Chris lights the candle...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MARCI'S HOUSE - TWO HOURS LATER

The candle is half-burned down, the MUSIC IS LOUD. The
room is filled with SIXTEEN TO EIGHTEEN YEAR OLD BODIES
with 1974 haircuts.

Chris walks through the party, carrying a beer. As she
passes, we realise that the eyes of every guy in the room
are on her, and some of the guys even smile and step
towards her, but she's already moved past them... and
reached Rob Facancini. Chin-beard, check shirt, with a
high-neck tee shirt underneath, best-looking guy in the
room.

She holds up a can...

CHRIS

Marci said you wanted a Rainer.

ROB FACINCANI

Cool!

CHRIS

You're Rob, Right? Rob Facincani?

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

ROB
Yeah. You're, uh. You're a junior...

CHRIS (V.O.)
Chris Rhodes.

He opens the can...

ROB
I don't know, Miller's OK, but if I had a choice, I'd always drink Rainer... those commercials they do just totally crack me up...

CHRIS
What was that one? Beer crossing? With the giant bottle and can running across the road... that was great!

He nods, enthusiastically. He's at a party without his girlfriend, and he likes the look of Chris...

ROB
What do you say we step out for a moment? I could use a smoke...

CHRIS
We hid the good wine. I know where it is...

CUT TO:

EXT. MARCI'S HOUSE AND STREET - NIGHT

The noise of the party increases as the door opens and closes... Chris and Rob come out. She's carrying a bottle of wine...

CHRIS
Oh my god. It's a full moon!

ROB
It's beautiful. So, are we going to crack open that wine, or what?

CHRIS
Yeah, but let's not drink it here... want to go for a walk?

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

ROB
Where do you want to go?

CHRIS
Up to the graveyard.

ROB
That's kind of a long ways off...
why don't we just head up to the
playfield? It's a lot closer.

CHRIS
Too many jocks hanging out
there...

ROB
Yeah. But.

CHRIS
What's the matter? Too creepy or
something?

ROB
No, not at all... it sounds great!

EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

They clamber over a wall, giggling. Chris knocks back a
slug of wine. Passes the bottle to Rob.

CHRIS
There's a... there's a bench over
here...

Rob seems a little distracted. Chris sits down on the
bench. She's kittenish...

CHRIS
It's got a great view, in the
moonlight.

Rob hesitates...

ROB
Chris? I uh... there's something
I should tell you before we, uh...
I mean...

CHRIS
Your little secret? It's okay. I
know.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

ROB

You know? But... but how? Did someone...

CHRIS

Don't worry. It doesn't matter. It's just you and me...

A tentative kiss between them. Then she pulls him in for a real kiss -- she's the sexual aggressor here, he's holding back...

CHRIS

(slightly drunk)

It's like we're surrounded by a million dead bodies...And we're all that's alive...

They tumble against each other, a little drunkenly, and then they're rolling in the long grass, pulling at each other's clothes...

They fumble off their pants...

They are having sex in the long grass, in the moonlight, and we move in to Chris's POV. Rob, on top, thrusts against her, Chris arches back looking up at him, kisses his neck then pulls back...

CHRIS

Oh yes, oh yes, oh god, oh yes, oh yes...

ROB

Baby...so good... oh baby... I'm going to... I'm nearly, oh don't stop...

And we can suddenly hear something else. Chris stops making any noise, but there's something else, echoing Rob's grunts, a CHILD-LIKE NOISE...

Chris reaches up and pulls at Rob's tee-shirt top and reveals ANOTHER MOUTH with tiny milk-teeth in it at the base of his neck... and it, and Rob, are starting to come...

ROB'S NECK MOUTH

Hurrrr... Kkkuhhh... Kaaaa...

Chris screams...

CHRIS

OH, SHIT!

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED: (2)

ROB

What? What's the matter? Did I hurt you?

CHRIS

What's on your neck?

And the moment is gone, the romance is over and everything is fucked up forevermore--

ROB

But. You said you knew.

CHRIS

Great. Just great. All the guys at the party, and I have to make it with the monster.

Rob's rolled off her. Chris, trying not to cry, sees the bottle of wine, and slugs down the last of it. Then she starts to HEAVE...

We pull back and up on the two of them in the graveyard, the distance between them increasing.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL LUNCH ROOM - DAY

Chris puts her tray down at the table next to Marci. It's a girl's table. Chris has almost nothing on her tray. Marci looks at the almost-empty tray, pointedly, then spoons some mac and cheese into her mouth.

CHRIS

I'm not hungry, okay?

MARCI

So what happened?

CHRIS

I told you. Nothing happened.

MARCI

What's the big deal? I told you everything about me and Don making out and stuff!

Chris gets up -- she's caught sight of Rob across the room, and she walks over to him. Linda, Rob's girlfriend, really cute but with bandaged hands, spots them and looks daggers...

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

CHRIS

We have to talk.

ROB

We'll talk. Just not now. Okay?

CHRIS

...when?

And Linda's coming over. Rob needs to move...

ROB

Just don't bug me, okay?

CUT TO:

INT. CHRIS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Her bedroom is decorated with posters -- John Lennon, Dylan, Jesus Christ Superstar. A bed, a desk, a teddy bear on the bed. It's pretty and tidy and girly. Chris's Mom comes through the door, carrying a mug of cocoa and a small bowl of potato chips. Chris is on the bed, writing something in a notebook. She closes it as her mother comes in...

CHRIS'S MOM

I brought you cocoa. How's homework?

CHRIS

Fine. Thanks.

CHRIS'S MOM

What's wrong, honey? You've been so quiet lately... you know it's getting kind of late.

CHRIS

What? Oh... Sometimes I don't feel like talking, that's all.

Her mother ruffles her hair, goes out. Chris picks up her notebook and carries on writing. We spiral in on her notebook to read...

CHRIS HANDWRITING

*He won't TALK to me. So stupid.
Why didn't we use a rubber?!? I've
never been so late before. I'm
never late. Oh god, I don't want
to be pregnant.*

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

Her brother DOUG, aged 7, comes in holding his book.

DOUG
Mom said you'd read me my story.
Please, Chris?

CHRIS
Well... Okay.

She slides her diary under her pillow. Picks up Doug's book...

CHRIS
*Chapter Four. "This is a pirate
ship," said Captain Coals. "So
what we need are lots of pies."
And with that he--*
(in pain)
Ohhh...

She quickly sits up and folds over, holding her stomach.

DOUG
Chris! What's wrong?

CHRIS
I... I feel kind of sick... I'll
have to finish the story
tomorrow...

DOUG
Can't you just finish the page?
Please?

CUT TO:

INT. CHRIS'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

We see Chris in the bathroom, opening a Tampax box. She's having a bad period and heavy cramps, and is right now the happiest girl in the Northwest.

CHRIS
Oh god, oh thank you god, thank
you so much.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. THE LAKE - DAY

We're at the remnants of a kegger -- several kids by the lake. Chris is wandering towards them, off in a world of her own -- still happy she's not pregnant though. An argument is going on...

DEE

Come on, Ames... don't be a pussy!
You said you'd do it!

RICK AMES

For five bucks? That ain't shit!
I'm gonna be taking off all my
clothes... and that water is
fuckin' freezing!

DEE

Yeah yeah. Put up or shut up,
asshole. You going in?

TIM

I'll throw in a couple of bucks.

CHRIS

I'll go swimming. I'll do it for
nothing.

And, as if she's in a dream, she just starts taking her clothes off.

DEE

(Singing "The
Stripper" music)

Da-da-da-daaa-da-da-daaaaa, etc...

TIM

Take it off! Take it all off!

CHRIS

Hey, you guys... settle down.
It's no big deal.

And now she's down to her underwear. We're in front of her, and all of her friends are behind her. And suddenly, they have nothing to say. Silent.

DEE (O.S.)

Oh, man...

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

CHRIS

Oh come on...grow up. It's just like wearing a bikini or something... I mean, it's only underwear...

The other kids are biting their lips, not saying anything, scared and weirded out. She ignores them...

She walks away from us down to the lake-front, and she wades in to the water, and now she's walking away from us and we see--

-- HER BACK. It looks as if it's ripping down the spine, and the bones of the spine are showing through.

INTERDISSOLVE WITH:

INT. LINDA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS/MONTAGE

Linda -- Rob's girlfriend's -- bedroom is a teenage girl's room -- more outrageous rock posters, goofy toys... And in her bed Linda's having sex with Rob. Good sex. Her hands are uncovered -- if we catch a glimpse of them here they're webbed and scaled and more like a frog's hands than a person's.

Her hand waves like the frog's we saw in the opening scene.

The two teenagers are in bed, surrounded by stuffed animals. Rob's naked, although they're both covered by the sheets, we move in on the little mouth in his neck.

EXTREME CLOSE ON: The mouth. It's smiling.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE LAKE - CHRIS - CONTINUOUS/MONTAGE

Chris is floating in the lake, at peace. FROM UNDERWATER we can see the rip in her spine, now frayed open and revealing the soft pink skin underneath. Like a mouth...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MARCI'S CAR - ROAD - MOVING - NIGHT

POV: Driving down the road outside of town -- RAIN spatters up against the windshield.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

Marci's driving Chris home, wipers swishing against the rain. Chris is talking. Marci isn't. Chris's foot is now bandaged with Keith's shirt.

CHRIS

So where did they all go? Jesus, it wasn't even as if I even got naked. I just like swimming, that's all. What's the big deal?

MARCI

God, Chris. You really don't know?

CHRIS

What?

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Marci slews the car around, pulls into the gas station.

INT. GAS STATION BATHROOM - NIGHT

Marci and Chris are in the bathroom...

CHRIS

You got to be kidding.

MARCI

Feel it.

Chris reaches back, pushes up her blouse, and feels her spine. Her hand slips beneath the skin.

CHRIS

Jesus.

MARCI

(noticing)

What happened to your foot?

CHRIS

I cut it. After swimming. That guy from biology, with the monobrow, Keith Pearce. He was really sweet. Wrapped it up for me.

MARCI

Pierson.

CHRIS

What?

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

MARCI

Keith Pierson. I think the
monobrow's kinda cute.

Chris snorts. She doesn't think so.

CUT TO:

INT. HERFY'S BURGERS - NIGHT

Chris is toying with her fries. Marcy is talking to her,
while eating her burger with an appetite...

MARCI

Sally, you know Sally in
basketball, she heard from this
guy she knows in Seattle that the
Bug only affects teenagers. You
should look on the good side, what
you've got, it's not like you're
growing a face-hand, or like that
kid in Home Ec. with the eyes all
down his chest. Still. Tag. You
know? You're it.

CHRIS

I'm it.

MARCI

If you aren't going to finish
those fries -- Eew, check them
out...

And we're looking out the window with her seeing that --

EXT. HERFY'S PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Out by the dumpster, we can see CARLA and ROY, dumpster-
diving for food. CARLA is moon-faced. They're gathering
stuff for tonight -- they pull out a pack of expired hot-
dogs -- but ROY, who looks like a huge Zombie monster is
hungry all the time, and he starts eating...

INT. HERFY'S BURGERS - NIGHT

Marci is very unimpressed.

MARCI

Why do they have to come here and
do that?

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

CHRIS

They're hungry.

MARCI

Yeah. You would say that. Now.

CUT TO:

INT. LINDA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A bedroom, with two people sleeping in the moonlight, a gentle snoring... We can hear a little child-like voice.

ROB'S OTHER MOUTH

I'm sorry. Chris. I'm sorry. So sorry. Chris. Sorry...

We look down at the pillow, and Rob is asleep. Next to him is Linda, wide awake, fuming...

She hits him. Hard, in the arm.

LINDA

Who's Chris?

ROB

Unnnn... wha... huh?

LINDA

Who the fuck is Chris?

ROB

Oh, man... what are you talking about?

LINDA

Yeah, go ahead... hide it! Just like you do at school! Aw, God... I'm so stupid... you told me you weren't the one who picked up Chris Rhodes at that party! I wanted to believe you so bad!

ROB

Baby, I wasn't lying...

Linda holds up her hands -- and now we can really see that her hands are inhuman things, with webbed fingers...

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

LINDA

Now that I'm starting to show you're getting grossed out. Is that it? Looking for a clean girl?

ROB

I thought everything was fine.

LINDA

Everything was fine. And then that mouth... that fuckin' mouth started talking!

ROB

I was asleep! It was a dream!

LINDA

Yeah, dreaming of Chris! Well, you know what? I think you'd better go.

ROB

I thought you said your folks weren't getting back until Sunday. It's three in the morning! Where am I going to sleep?

LINDA

I don't care... just go.

CUT TO:

INT. MARCI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Marci and Chris are asleep, in their pyjamas, in Marci's clean bedroom. It's a sleepover. Marci's teddy bear is beside her bed. Chris rolls over in her bed, awake. Uncomfortable. The wind is blowing hard around the house, rattling the windows...

She gets up.

She pulls off the cloth from her foot. Beneath it, the cut has healed, but the skin seems to be coming away from around it...

Chris starts to pull at it. To tug at it. A girl who isn't comfortable in her own skin, and wants out...

She pulls the skin of her leg off, as if she's pulling her leg out of a ripped stocking. And then in a series of CLOSE UPS, we see...

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

She drops the pyjamas to the floor.

She's pulling at the skin-rip on her spine--

-- her finger pushing at the eye cavity, pulling the skin away -

Fragmentary images of her body wriggling and shrugging --

-- and it comes off --

And she slips OUT OF HER SKIN.

She stands there, naked and glistening, like a newborn, holding her skin.

CUT TO:

INT. MARCI'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Chris tears up the skin into pieces, drops it into the toilet, flushes it away... but the toilet clogs and starts to back up until the water is right up to the brim.

CHRIS

Damnit!

She takes the plunger, now SOBBING and starts to plunge until the toilet begins to make a GASPING SOUND and then a GURGLE -- and the skin vanishes down the bowl.

Crying, Chris kneels onto the tile floor, and leans onto the closed toilet.

She looks up and realises that Marci has been watching this... Marci looks blank and horrified.

CHRIS

What am I going to do...?

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. THE WOODS - NIGHT

We're following Rob through the woods, carrying his backpack, looking pissed off and sleepy.

He passes a WEIRD CONSTRUCTION hanging from a tree, made of parts of a doll, some bones and a ripped-out page of a porn magazine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He heads towards a camp-fire... We can hear voices...

DAVE

Wish we had buns or something...
even a loaf of bread.

DOUG

Hey. You want buns? Go on and get
'em yourself!

JACKIE

You know what I'd love right now?
Eggs, just plain old scrambled
eggs... with some toast.

ROY

Ahh... you're gonna drive me
nuts...

DOUG

Shhh! There's someone out there!

Doug picks up a baseball bat. And by now we can see the group assembled around the campfire, roasting hotdogs on sticks -- DAVE, who seems to have a cat-face, JACKIE who seems normal but has a big, high, hippie hat on, DOUG, covered with teenage-frankenstein-style mega-zits, Carla and Roy, the monstrous one we already saw at the dumpster. They are toasting hot dogs around the fire.

Rob enters the circle, sits down wordlessly beside them. The conversation dies, for a moment.

DOUG

You're out late.

ROB

Linda.

(a beat)

Just... Not good.

CARLA

Is she still trying to pass?

ROB

Yeah. She's saying she burned her
hands. Bandages them.

JACKIE

Yeah. I did something like that
when the baby came in.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED: (2)

Something moves under her hat, she makes a shushing, maternal noise.

DAVE

How's your little mouth doing?

ROB

Leave it.

DAVE

Hey. At least you got something you can hide.

He passes Rob a hot-dog on a stick.

ROB

Where's Lana?

POV: Around this point we CUT OUT OF the camp-fire circle, and begin CIRCLING AROUND them, in the woods. The POV is that of someone watching them, but we may not realize it immediately...

JACKIE

Don't know.

DAVE

She's moved on.

ROY

I think she's dead. I think somebody killed her.

ROB

("Laugh-In" style)

Verry interesting -- but schtupid!
She's not dead.

CARLA

But it is weird. There's no way she'd leave without telling one of us.

DOUG

Roy, tell him about the arm.

And now our POV stops moving. We're watching them from the bushes.

ROY

Okay. So, I found an arm in the deep woods. Last week.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED: (3)

ROY (CONT'D)

Cut off at the elbow... it was
just lying there.

ROB

Guy's arm or a girl's?

ROY

I don't know. I just left it
there. Gross.

CUT TO:

INT. GIRL'S BATHROOM - DAY

Chris is smoking in a toilet stall. A TOILET FLUSHES.
She hears two girls talking.

GIRL 1

So what, you think Charlene's got
the bug?

GIRL 2

Yeah, you saw her in French. Where
did the feathers come from?
Frickin' monster.

GIRL 1

I heard that Franklin Brauner got
to third base with her. But she
told Jessica she definitely was
still a virgin.

GIRL 2

Yeah, but do you have to go all
the way? I mean, what if you just,
like, suck off a guy who has it?

And Chris comes out of the stall. Killing the
conversation stone dead. The girls' faces go stone.

GIRL 1

Oh...hi, Chris.

GIRL 2

We knew someone was smoking in
there.

GIRL 1

See you around.

They go out.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

Chris stares at her reflection. She pushes at the skin of her face...

CHRIS
(to reflection)
Monster.

INT. SCHOOL HALL - DAY

Chris pushes out of the bathroom. Rob is waiting for her. She gives him a scornful look, makes to push past. He stands in front of her, so she can't get by.

ROB
You don't have to say anything. I know I've been an asshole. I just want a chance to say sorry.

CHRIS
Excuse me. I've got class now.

ROB
Dammit, talk to me. This is important.

CHRIS
I'm not the kind of girl who skips class.

ROB
So what kind of girl are you?

The Bell goes -- kids start streaming past them. Rob and Chris stand in the hall, not moving.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE PARK - DAY

Chris and Rob walk through the park, not saying anything. They reach a pond, look down and see their reflections. Rob picks up a handful of gravel, and starts throwing gravel at his reflection, one tiny stone at a time, distorting it.

CHRIS
You wanted to talk. If you aren't going to say anything, I can say "thank you" for making me a monster and go back to school.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROB

If... I... had... I mean...
shit...

(then, in a rush)

I thought you knew! You said you
knew! I asked you, you said "I
know", what the hell were you
saying "I know" to, if you didn't
know?

CHRIS

Linda?

ROB

(realizing the
mistake, ashamed)

Oh.

CHRIS

So, you thought I knew. Great. Did
you hear I've got the bug?

ROB

Yeah. They were talking about it
in the showers.

CHRIS

Great. Fantastic. I'm a fucking
laughing stock.

She starts to cry.

Rob doesn't know quite how to cope with this. He hasn't
touched her yet.

ROB

Hey. Um. Are you okay? Look. Um.

He throws the last of the gravel into the pond,
scattering their reflections.

And then, not knowing what else to do, he puts his arms
around her, and he starts to kiss her...

A beat. A frozen moment as she stands, scared and rigid
and frozen. Then she starts to kiss him back.

Chris thinks everything's changed now. Maybe it has.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE WOODS ON THE EDGE OF THE PARK - DAY

Chris and Rob, walking...

CHRIS

You want to sit down for a minute?

ROB

Sure.

CHRIS

You know. I told you about my back and stuff. You didn't tell me who you got the bug from?

ROB

It could have been any one of five girls.

CHRIS

You've been with five girls?

Rob doesn't tell her he's been with a lot more girls than that.

ROB

Um. Yeah.

They sit on the ground.

CHRIS

Can I see it again?

ROB

You screamed last time.

CHRIS

I wasn't ready. C'mon. Show me your mouth.

ROB

(opening his shirt)

It's kind of gross.

His little mouth is revealed at the base of his neck. Chris stares... And to our surprise, she kisses the mouth. And then she giggles...

CHRIS

Oh my god. I felt a little tongue in there. Kissing me back.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

ROB

You can't do that. You'll make me
crazy.

CHRIS

Is that bad?

ROB

Nobody. Nobody's ever done it
before.

She kisses the mouth again. A tiny tongue protrudes and
licks her lips.

CHRIS

So does this mean we're going out?

CUT TO:

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE, KITCHEN -- MORNING

Chris's mother is sitting at the table with her little
brother. Chris runs down. She looks carefree. She's
carrying her schoolbooks.

CHRIS

Hey mom. I'm sleeping over at
Marci's tonight.

CHRIS'S MOM

Again? Chris...

CHRIS

Mom. These are strategy meetings.
We're planning on running for
Student Council.

CHRIS'S MOM

You'd let Marci be your vice
president?

CHRIS

No mom, I'd be hers. I told you.
See you tomorrow...

And she runs out to the bus, a big smile on her face.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY.

Chris gets off the school bus. Walks over to Rob's car, in the parking lot, the motor idling. She throws her books into the back seat. Huge smile -- she looks the freest we've seen her.

ROB

Where do you want to go today?

CHRIS

The beach.

ROB

Cool.

And as the kids stream in to the school, Rob's car heads out.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BEACH - DAY

The sun is streaming down and there's no-one else on the beach. Chris starts taking her clothes off...

CHRIS

I feel so amazing. Like I'm racing towards something. Come on.

She drops her clothes on the sand, and starts to run towards the sea..

Rob hesitates then joins her, grumbling about how cold the water is...

MONTAGE:

The two of them, diving, swimming, chasing, kissing, running, having the best day ever...

Then they're sitting on the beach as the sun sets, eating fruit and cheese, drinking wine...

ROB

This was the best day I've ever had.

Chris nods. Her too.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

ROB
I love you, Chris.

Chris looks hurt.

CHRIS
Don't say that.

ROB
But I--

CHRIS
Don't say it unless you mean it.
Because you know what? I love you.
I'll love you forever. And that's
the truth. Whatever happens.

ROB
I. I like you more than I've ever
liked any other girl.

She puts up a finger to his lips: enough talking.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BEACH - NIGHT

They're asleep together on a blanket on the beach. Rob is snoring gently.

Then a voice, high says,

ROB'S OTHER MOUTH
K- kr- krisssss. Krissss?

Chris opens her eyes.

CHRIS
Rob?

ROB'S OTHER MOUTH
It won't work. Chris. I'm sorry.

CHRIS
Shush. Rob. It's okay.

ROB'S OTHER MOUTH
Nnn....Never make it out alive.

CUT TO:

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - DAY

Chris's mom's head in CLOSE UP, filling the screen, staring at us. She's almost majestic. She's rehearsed this speech.

CHRIS'S MOM

The school called yesterday... They told me all about the classes you've been skipping. When I tried to reach you at Marci's, her mother told me she didn't know anything about any sleepovers... Marci couldn't tell me where you were either. You know we've always trusted you. You've never given us any reason to doubt you... and now this. So. I'd like you to tell me, honestly, where you've been.

Now we see Chris wearing the same clothes she wore to school the day before. Sand in her hair. Slightly hungover... The back door is still open. She was on her way back in. She's busted.

CHRIS

Mom... I... It's... Look, nothing happened, OK?

CHRIS'S MOM

Is it a boy?

CHRIS

Look, mom, it's not like that.

CHRIS'S MOM

Chris, you're too young to throw your life away like this... you may think you're in love, but you aren't in not love --

CHRIS

I know what I am, okay?

She turns on her heel...

CHRIS'S MOM

You come back here, young lady. You're grounded. You understand that?

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

Chris just looks at her.

CHRIS'S MOM
(shouting)
Do you understand me?

Chris nods.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY.

Monday morning. Chris's mom pulls up in the parking lot, dropping Chris off. She looks as if she's been crying. The atmosphere is icy.

CHRIS'S MOM
I'll be here in the parking lot at
three thirty exactly... is that
understood?

Chris nods.

CUT TO:

INT. LOCKERS - DAY

Kids are gathering their books for the day. Linda, with her hands bandaged, is talking to A CUTE JOCK.

LINDA
These? I burned myself on this,
like, superhot coffee. Duh. For a
cheerleader I can be like, a
complete spaz.

CUTE JOCK
That must have hurt.

LINDA
It's fine now. So you want to come
over tonight and listen to
records?

CUTE JOCK
Sure.

Chris is getting her books out of her locker. Keith comes and hangs out near her.

KEITH
Hi Chris.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

CHRIS

Oh. Hi.

KEITH

You weren't in lab this week. I got you a set of notes. If you need them.

CHRIS

That's really kind of you. Um, Keith.

KEITH

Were you sick?

CHRIS

What?

KEITH

Were you...?

CHRIS

I heard what you said.

Next to Chris, Marci opens her locker. (There's a David Bowie *Ziggy Stardust* poster on the inside.) Chris looks at Marci, warily. Marci pushes a crumpled piece of cigarette paper into her hand. Marci nods. Chris looks delighted.

Keith has missed all of this.

KEITH

How's your foot?

CHRIS

Oh. You know it's almost healed. Thanks so much for your help the other day. That was sweet of you.

And she gives him a huge smile. He's thrilled.

The Bell rings.

As Chris hurries down the corridor she opens the note. It says *BEHIND THE GYM LUNCH TIME R.*

Chris smiles in delight...

CUT TO:

EXT. BEHIND THE GYM - DAY

Rob is waiting, smoking a cigarette. The ground is covered with them -- this must be where the kids come to smoke. Chris walks over -- trying to make it look as if she's just there for a cigarette.

ROB

Hey.

CHRIS

Hey. I'm not allowed to see you.

ROB

That's what I figured.

CHRIS

Mom's made a doctor's appointment for me, on Thursday. She's scared I might be pregnant, or have crabs or something.

ROB

Shit. Do you think she suspects...?

CHRIS

I don't know. I don't think so. Do they even know about the bug.

ROB

Scott thinks that everybody gets it. Our parents had it. Their parents. But if you ask them, they forget it ever happened.

CHRIS

Sounds like bullshit to me.

Rob shrugs.

ROB

What do we do.

CHRIS

Well. Whatever we do we're doing it on Wednesday.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - DAY

Chris is sitting at the kitchen table. She looks penitent. She's got a slide rule and protractors, and is carefully drawing a circle, marking it up, while her mother puts some food into Tupperware containers. We can hear -- perhaps even see -- her little brother and his friend playing noisily in the back yard.

CHRIS'S MOM

Chris, I'm leaving now, I...
honey? Are you all right? You
don't look very well.

CHRIS

It's just this stupid geometry
final.

CHRIS'S MOM

You look so pale. I'm getting
worried about you.

CHRIS

I'm a little tired.

CHRIS'S MOM

You. Poor thing. It's not easy
growing up, is it? All the
changes. Hon, I want you to go to
bed early tonight... I'll be back
by dinner time.

Chris's mum heads out. Chris walks away from her homework, opens a kitchen cupboard. Takes a bottle of gin. Then she reaches into her pocket, puts a letter on the table.

At the back door, Chris picks up a full trash-bag. She puts the bottle of gin into the bag. Then she walks out into --

EXT. CHRIS'S BACK YARD - DAY

Her brother and his friend are throwing a frisbee.

CHRIS

Douggie, I just have to run out
for a few minutes... you'll be OK
while I'm gone, right?

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

DOUG

Mom said you were grounded.

CHRIS

I have to go. You be good, OK?

She gives him an impulsive goodbye hug. He squirms.

DOUG

You're so weird.

EXT. THE STREET CORNER

Chris is on a street corner. With a screech of brakes, Rob's car jolts up in front of her.

She pulls open the back seat, throws in her garbage bag, lies down in the back seat.

Rob drives off...

INT. ROB'S CAR - DAY

Rob is driving, Chris is flat in the back seat.

ROB

I thought you were never coming --
Get your head down! -- I set the
tent up in Ravenna Park.

CHRIS

Yeah. But it's not like I'll be in
woods. I mean, I won't be one of
them.

ROB

We're both freaks, Chris. We've
got the bug.

CHRIS

We can pass. And it's not forever.
Somebody'll, I dunno, discover a
vaccine or something.

ROB

(a beat, then)

I'll be out whenever I can. I've
got a friend who's going to check
on you. Bit freaky-looking. But a
good guy.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

CHRIS

I don't care about him. I care about you. I want us to be together.

ROB

We won't be together in the woods, Chris.

CHRIS

But you'll come and see me all the time, won't you?

ROB

All the time.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE WOODS - DAY.

Rob parks. He HONKS his horn, and Dave comes out of the woods.

ROB

This is Dave, the guy I told you about. Chris.

DAVE

I know you.

CHRIS

You do?

DAVE

We were in Biology 101 together. Remember?

CHRIS

(she doesn't remember)

Um. Yeah. Sure. Dave. Hi.

Dave looks down, a little hurt...

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. BIOLOGY 101 - DAY

Chris is pinning the hands of the frog down into the tray. Behind her, the boy with the peach-fuzz face, who we now recognize was Dave, is staring at her intently.

FLASH TO:

EXT. THE WOODS - DAY

Dave and Rob and Chris walking through the woods towards us. They've hauling sleeping bags, cooking stuff. Chris has her garbage bag. She's looking around her, excited to have attained her independence...

CHRIS

Oh yeah. So you're out here.

DAVE

Um. We have, over there's our campfire. We meet up about ten, eleven every night. Have a cookout, talk. It can get pretty lonely out here.

CHRIS

Thanks. I'll be fine. I've got books in here.

DAVE

We've got books. We play chess. It's cool.

And now they pass a mutilated doll, with limbs made from sticks and twine, its body replaced with a centerfold from Playboy, tied to a tree.

Chris looks at it, and our POV ducks behind some leaves, then moves back to watch them leave...

They move away from us and we realise that we are looking from the point of view of someone hiding in the woods and watching them.

EXT. CHRIS'S TENT - DAY

The tent's in a lovely location -- a little clearing with a beautiful view. Dave and Rob start putting the stuff they brought into it. Chris is thrilled.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

CHRIS

Oh my god. You put this up? It's wonderful.

ROB

Dave helped.

CHRIS

It's just so cool.

DAVE

Well, it was nice seeing you again. Hope things work out for you guys.

Chris would hug him, but the cat-face thing intimidates her, and she just thinks better of it. Rob gives Dave a manly handshake, and Dave heads off into the woods, as Rob puts his arm around Chris and holds her tightly, and they look at her new home with pride.

CHRIS

I'm never going to hang around the campfire with the freaks.

ROB

They're okay. So.
(flirtatious)
You want to investigate the inside of the tent?

CHRIS

Try and stop me.

ROB

Hey. I've got something for you.

He reaches into his bag, and pulls out --

A HANDGUN, a 9mm Luger, -- it has red tape around the grip. And a box of ammunition.

ROB

Something to keep you safe. My dad said he pulled it off a dead Nazi in World War Two.

He puts it in her hand -- heavy. She looks at him, tender.

CHRIS

Thanks...

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED: (2)

She leans in and kisses him. It's the sort of kiss that's prelude to making love.

He pulls off her jacket and sweater in one movement, revealing her back, and the exposed spine.

They start to make love...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SCHOOL - LOCKERS - DAY

Rob is getting his books. Linda wanders over. She's wearing gloves.

LINDA

I hear your girlfriend ran off to California.

ROB

She wasn't really ever my girlfriend, Lin.

LINDA

Well, there goes your nice clean one night stand, anyway.

ROB

Your hands...?

LINDA

I told my parents. They gave me a note, says I got eczema. I have to keep my gloves on for medical reasons. So if you aren't doing anything, you want to come over, listen to some records?

ROB

We're done. Remember?

LINDA

Yeah. But the bitch has gone to San Francisco or wherever.

And the conversation is interrupted by the Cute Jock we last saw talking to Linda. He's wearing dark glasses.

CUTE JOCK

Uh, Linda. Can we talk?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINDA
Can't it wait, Terry?

ROB
Don't mind me. I've got to get to
Soc Ed.

As he goes, the Cute Jock moves in close...

CUTE JOCK
(sotto voce)
Uh. I've got this...it's a kind
of...shit.

And he lowers his dark glasses. His eyelashes are
spiders.

CUTE JOCK
It's the bug.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHRIS'S TENT - NIGHT

We hear the sounds of lovemaking. Then SILENCE. Then

CHRIS (O.S.)
Where are you going?

ROB (O.S.)
It's better if I get back now.
I've got class in the morning.

CHRIS (O.S.)
I don't. So, what do I do out
here?

Rob pushes his way out of the tent, and says,

ROB
Anything you want to.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREAM - DAY

Chris, down by a stream, wearing only underwear, is
washing her clothes in the water. We can see that her
spine is starting to show again.

A stick CRACKS. She turns around.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHRIS
Hello? Hello?

CUT TO:

EXT. CHRIS'S TENT - DAY

Chris is sitting outside her tent, her clothes drying in the sun, writing in her journal.

CHRIS'S HANDWRITING
*I'm starting to get used to the
routine of staying up all night,
sleeping through most of the day.
Waiting For Rob.*

Then she stops, and draws a heart, with CHRIS above and ROB beneath. She hears something. She's reaches down for the gun, and, holding it for comfort but not pointing it, she calls --

CHRIS
Hello? Is somebody there? Hello?

ROB
BOO--!

Chris freaks--

CHRIS
Ahhhhh!

CHRIS
God! You scared the shit out of me. What're you doing here so early?

ROB
I skipped my last two classes and... you okay?

CHRIS
I thought I heard someone out there creeping around...

ROB
It's just the woods. I brought you a bunch of great stuff.

CHRIS
Rob? I don't know if I can keep this up.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I didn't know it was going to be like this. Just tell me everything's going to be OK.

ROB

It... yeah, everything will work out fine... I promise.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE WOODS - NIGHT

Deformed, mutant hands putting up one of the little doll-sculptures on a tree.

CUT TO:

INT. THE TENT - DAWN

Looking down at them from above. The inside of the tent is a mess -- she's been in there for weeks now, and there are Tampaxes, tissues, clothes, cigarette packets, food, scattered around. And the red-tape-handled gun. They were sleeping on top of the sleeping bag, not in it. Chris is pouty...

CHRIS

Do you really have to go? Stay a bit longer? Please?

ROB

My mom's really been on my case lately. I gotta. I'll be back after dinner tonight. I'll try to bring you something good -- maybe some wine or something.

CHRIS

You're so sweet. I'm not trying to act like a bitch, I just, it's hard to let you go.

ROB

I won't be able to get back here until after eight. You'll be OK, right?

CHRIS

I'm always okay. I've got my book... I got my gun. I'll be fine.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

CHRIS
I love you, Rob.

ROB
I'll see you tonight.

And he leaves the tent.

Chris, in the tent, wriggles a little. She seems itchy and uncomfortable. Like there's something wrong with her skin...

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIL - DAWN

Rob is walking down the trail, through the woods, making his way back to town. The sun is just now rising, and there's a light mist throughout the forest. He passes the doll-sculpture, a little creeped out by it, and then suddenly turns at the SOUND OF A RUSTLE--

ROB
Oh, man! You scared me! I didn't see you!

And now we see what Rob's seeing: RICK THE DICK, the scariest face-eaten little monster around.

ROB
Uh... do I know you? Look, I gotta get going...

Rick raises a crowbar.

ROB
What? What's the problem? Hey, man...look--

And he pulls down his shirt neck to reveal his other mouth...

ROB
I'm one of you--

Rick hits Rob's right arm with the Crowbar. Hard -- hard enough to immobilize him.

ROB
Wait! Wait! What're you doing? I don't even know you!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rick proceeds to beat Rob to death, smashing in his face with the crowbar. And as Rob collapses, he says,

RICK THE DICK
I have to do it... he told me I
had to do it.

Rob's face is wrecked, and he's almost dead, but the little mouth on his neck that says true things has the last words, as Rob's body is dragged off into the woodland...

ROB'S OTHER MOUTH
K-Kuh... Chris...I... I'm....
sorry....

CUT TO:

INT. CHRIS'S TENT - MOMENTS LATER

Chris is wriggling around inside her skin, which she's peeling off herself, like a snake shedding its skin. She's bending and twisting, almost bonelessly.

And then the skin is off--

EXT. CHRIS'S TENT - DAWN

She stands, glistening, in the dawn, holding her skin, like a ghost of her. There's a cry from the woods. She dismisses it, just a night animal.

Then she balls up her skin and lets her skin go. The wind takes it and carries it away, and WE FOLLOW IT, UP and AWAY as it opens up into a girl-shape and is carried off into the woods...

BACK AT CHRIS'S TENT...

We see Chris sitting at the entrance to her tent. She slowly retreats into the tent, crawling backwards into it, and as she does the two flaps to the door form a familiar slit image -- and then we --

FADE TO BLACK:

We hang in the blackness for a moment, then we read:

"THE PIT"

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

SWIRLS OF TADPOLES and bits of glass and blood and twigs and twine and bone and trash form a kaleidoscope of IMAGERY.

Then we PULL OUT OF THE SLIT IN THE FROG...

INT. BIOLOGY 101 - DAY

This goes rapidly. There's something odd about it, as if it was filmed backwards and played forwards. Dave Barnes is watching Chris from his lab station. She's sitting next to Keith, but his focus is all on her. She glances at him briefly, but then turns away...

Suddenly, silently, Keith FALLS onto the floor, pulling the tray with him.

Keith and Chris's frog bounces out of the tray and slides across the floor, right up against Dave's foot. Dave looks down at it, and suddenly the frog bends its neck and looks up at Dave SQUEALING A FREAKISH WAIL, and flailing its arms and legs about -- its slit opening up and guts spilling out--

CLOSE ON: Dave, freaking out--

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. DAVE'S FORT - MORNING

CLOSE ON: Dave, now a cat face, suddenly wakes up from his dream of Biology 101--

DAVE BARNES

Ahhh!

Slowly, he remembers where, and who, he is.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHRIS'S TENT - MORNING

Chris is still outside her tent. She's thinner, her clothes are more worn. No make up, straggly hair, and there's the garbage of occupation in and around the tent.

A sound of someone approaching. She reaches into the tent, comes back out with the gun.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

Then she sees who it is and lowers it...

CHRIS

Oh, God... Dave! It's you!
Sorry, I... I heard someone out
here and I...

DAVE

I just wanted to check and see how
you're doing.

CHRIS

Not doing so good...
(beat; then)
Rob's gone... he... I... I'm out
here all alone... my food's all
gone and I don't even know where I
am.

DAVE

Let me help. We can get you some
food and I'll show you an easy way
down to Ravenna Park. There's a
little grocery store that sells to
us, if you go in after dark.

CHRIS

That... that's really nice of you.

DAVE

You need money? I can lend you--

CHRIS

I cleaned out my savings before I
came out. I'm good. So you didn't
hear anything about Rob?

DAVE

Not really. Someone down at the
pit said they thought he'd gone to
Spokane.

CUT TO:

INT. ALL NIGHT GROCERY - NIGHT

Chris is in the all night grocery. She's got a basket,
not a trolley, and she's picking out things that don't
take much cooking. She picks up a can of hot dogs -- the
guy in his uniform restacking the shelf looks up at her,
then does a double-take.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KEITH

Chris?

Chris looks blank.

KEITH

I'm Keith. Keith Pierson. We were in biology. We were--

CHRIS

Lab partners. Right. You fainted. When the frog got cut.

KEITH

And your foot. When you cut it.

CHRIS

Wow. Keith. Um. Well, well. Hi.

KEITH

I thought you'd gone to California.

CHRIS

Long story. Promise you won't tell anybody that you saw me?

Keith checks his watch.

KEITH

Can you wait five minutes?

Chris nods.

CUT TO:

INT. ALL NIGHT GROCERY - LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Keith has taken off his uniform. He opens his locker and he puts the shirt inside, takes out his own sweater. He moves his shirt, and we see that he still has the girl-skin he found in the woods, a fetish object.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALL NIGHT GROCERY - NIGHT

Chris and Keith are walking.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHRIS
 (blurting it out)
 I'm living in the woods.

KEITH
 On Planet Xeno?

CHRIS
 Huh?

KEITH
 That's what we call it.

Across the street a couple of kids with the bug are walking in the shadows. She has a shock of green and red hair. He has shapes like abstract tattoos all over his skin.

A car pulls up, and a jock leans out of the window.

JOCK
 (shouts)
 I hate buggers.

They ignore him.

JOCK
 (shouts)
 I said I goddamn hate buggers!

Chris is scared...

CHRIS
 Can we get out of here?

They head off down a side-road... behind them THE NOISES GET NASTY. A beating up? A fight? We can only imagine...

KEITH
 (beat)
 Can I ask you a question?

CHRIS
 I guess.

KEITH
 I mean. Living up there. How do you, you know...wash?

CHRIS
 There's a stream. But I'd kill for a shower.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED: (2)

KEITH
 (coming to a decision)
 Okay. Follow me.

CUT TO:

EXT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - NIGHT

A small house out on the edges of suburbia -- nothing behind or around but woods and water and nothing.

KEITH
 The McCroskys are in Europe until October. They're paying me ten bucks a week to watch their house.

Chris doesn't get it... Keith pulls out some keys.

KEITH
 They've got a tub. And you could wash your clothes. Sleep in a real bed.

She gives him a huge smile, squeezes his hand.

CUT TO:

INT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Chris stands under the shower. She closes her eyes, and breathes out.

Close up: the drain. The soap-foam is black with dirt.

CUT TO:

INT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

It's not a big house. Single Story, a couple of bedrooms, a cellar, an open-plan kitchen and family room. Chris comes out of the bathroom, wearing Mrs McCrosky's bathrobe. Keith has food on the table -- potato chips, sandwiches, and Chris is eating, and drinking a gin and tonic...

CHRIS
 It's so weird being inside a house again. It's all so clean and shiny.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHRIS (CONT'D)

It's weird drinking out of a glass, sitting at a table. Good weird.

KEITH

I figured you might need a break from the woods.

CHRIS

Do you ever hear anything about Rob Facincani?

KEITH

Nobody's seen him at school for, what, a month now?

CHRIS

Yeah. That's when he went. I was so scared, when he didn't come back. The nights were the worst. Sometimes I'd hear, like, screaming out there. And he didn't come back, and if he wasn't there I didn't want to keep going.

FLASHBACK:

EXT. CHRIS'S TENT - DAY

Chris has the gun against her head. Trying to pluck up the courage to pull the trigger...

She lowers the gun.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM

Chris gets up. The food and booze were just too much...

CHRIS

But, y'know, you do. Somehow. Just keep going.

She sways a little.

CHRIS

I think I... I don't feel...good.

And she faints. Rob catches her and while holding her up walks her toward the back of the house...overwhelmed with a mix of excitement and concern.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KEITH
Let's get you to bed.

INT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Keith puts Chris down on the bed. She's out cold...

He takes off her shoes, and then straightens her, pausing to look at her laying there -- he knows what he'd like to do. He leans down to put a pillow under her head and she sleepily reaches out and hugs him, pulling him down to snuggle. For Keith it's too good to be true...

She rolls over, holds him tight, and he's happy. He's ready to start feeling under her robe...

KEITH
God, Chris....

CHRIS
I love you...

Her hand creeps up him. She starts feeling around the base of Keith's neck, the place where Rob's second mouth was.

Keith is happy and horny and he goes in for a kiss as she says...

CHRIS
(still asleep)
Rob... I love you, Rob...

KEITH
It's Keith.

Chris wakes up. Just a little...

CHRIS
(slightly drunk, frantic)
Keith Pierce. I've got the bug,
Keith Pierce. You mustn't touch.

KEITH
I've got the bug too. It's okay.
I'm just like you, now. See?

He lifts his shirt, revealing the tadpole tails on his ribs, wiggling frantically. Chris shakes her head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHRIS

No -- I like you -- you're a nice
guy. But no...I'm waiting for
Rob. I'm... waiting...

Then she starts to go to sleep, and she says.

CHRIS

G'night, Rob.

HOLD on Keith's face. He shuts his eyes, disappointed.

CUT TO:

EXT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - NIGHT

Keith comes out the front door. Looks back at the house,
obviously feeling dejected.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Chris wakes up on the bed.

CUT TO:

INT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM

Chris picks up a note that Keith has left for her.

KEITH'S NOTE

*Chris, If you need another shower
(or even a bath) be my guest!!
Keith (Pierson).*

And below that, on the table, he's left a spare key for
her.

She picks up the key, weighs it... then pockets it.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE WAY TO THE TENT - DAY - RAIN

It's starting to rain. Chris is heading up to the tent,
with the shopping bag from last night. She's fed and
rested. She's happier than she has been since Rob
vanished, and then she turns the corner and sees...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Her TENT has been trashed. Completely vandalised...

Her face crumples in shock and sorrow. The rain starts coming down in earnest.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHRIS'S TENT - MOMENTS LATER

She's rummaging through the wreckage -- all her food has gone, so has her gun... Her books have been torn up. From a tree nearby hangs a doll, sliced and hacked, with a face torn from PLAYBOY.

She hears Dave before she sees him...

DAVE
Hello? Chris? Hello?
(sees the damage)
Sweet Jesus. What happened?

Chris is just standing there. Dave takes her hand.

DAVE
You know, there are some real evil people out there, Chris.. Let's get you out of the rain.

He tugs on her hand...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE WOODS - RAIN

Dave is walking Chris through the woods. She sees another mutilated girl-doll-sculpture hanging from a tree.

DAVE
I got stew back at my place. With meat. Cooked it myself. Everybody loves my stew. You'll love it too.

CUT TO:

EXT. DAVE'S FORT - DAY - RAIN

Dave has a sort of an encampment in the woods. He leads Chris inside.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVE

Mind your head going in.

INT. DAVE'S FORT - DAY - RAIN

Inside Dave's place -- a makeshift chess set on the makeshift table. The rain patters down on the canvas. Dave tosses Chris a rather grimy towel.

DAVE

All the comforts of home! What do you want? Coffee? Tea? Hot Chocolate? I got it all here. Lots of room, huh... You want to stay? Crash as long as you need to...

And he keeps on talking, but Chris tunes him out. She can SMELL something unpleasant.

CHRIS

I've... got somewhere to go.

DAVE

You're leaving the woods?

CHRIS

No. This place down on Highland Drive. I've got a key.

DAVE

I got plenty of room. It wouldn't bother me. Having you around. I'd like it. Place needs a woman's touch.

CHRIS

Can you smell something? It's like something died.

DAVE

I think it's a raccoon. Out back. Things die in the woods, you know.

CHRIS

I'll be fine.

CUT TO:

EXT. DAVE'S FORT - EVENING - LATER

It's still lightly raining. As it starts to get dark, Chris is walking away from the fort. We follow her as she slips and stumbles down a muddy path, and on the way we see several of the other bug kids watching her, each from his or her own vantage point behind a tree --longing and loneliness in their eyes, monsters, but LONELY TEENAGERS in the woods in the rain. Jackie (something is twitching and kicking under her hippie hat), Doug, Carla and Roy.

And we finish on the monstrosity of Rick the Dick staring after her hungrily from the woods.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. STREETS - MOVING - DAY

Keith is on his bike, riding down the street toward the McCrosky house.

EXT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - MORNING - RAIN

Keith leans his bike against the side of the house...

INT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - DAY

Keith walks inside. Something's wrong. He sniffs the air.

KEITH
Hello? Anybody here?

He pushes his way into the bathroom...

INT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

We see the bottle of the McCrosky's gin empty on the bathroom floor, then track in to see that Chris is in the bath. She's unconscious, naked, but the muddy bathwater stops us seeing too much.

Keith reaches down to her...

KEITH
Hey. We got to get you out of there. Come on...

She mutters something drunkenly.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

Keith pulls at her. Where he holds her, the SKIN COMES OFF in his hand...

CHRIS
Go away, Keith Pierce.

KEITH
Pierson.

CHRIS
Whatever.

He walks away, leaving her lying in the bath.

SLOW DISSOLVE

EXT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - DAY/NIGHT - TIME LAPSE

We see it go from day to night. The rain doesn't stop.

INT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - NIGHT

The doorbell goes. It plays YANKEE DOODLE DANDY

Chris gets out of the bath. She leaves the rest of her skin in the bath. She looks, now, younger, and cleaner and prettier than she has in a long time...

She pulls on a robe from the back of the bathroom door.

YANKEE DOODLE doorbell continues through this.

INT. MCCROSKY HOUSE

Chris opens the front door. Standing in the rain are Jackie, Roy, and Doug and Carla. And standing way behind them, Dave.

They don't say anything. Just look at her, envious and sad.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - MONTAGE

IN A SERIES OF SHOTS WE SEE:

Chris feeding the mutant kids in the kitchen from whatever she can.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The kids are watching TV for the first time in a long time.

There's a short line of kids waiting to use the bathroom.

End on Chris in the McCrosky's bedroom. She bolts the door then puts a chair-handle up against the door. She's reading in bed. In the background, the sounds of TV in a nearby room, loud and blaring.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - MORNING - RAIN

A week later, maybe more. Keith rides up and leans his bike against the porch.

He unlocks the house. Keith walks in...

INT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - DAY - RAIN

The curtains are all drawn. It's dark and unpleasant. There are some flies buzzing somewhere.

Keith follows the NOISE. Some of the bug kids are watching the TV -- a Saturday morning movie. A couple of them are new ones we don't know.

DOUG

Hey Keith. What's up?

KEITH

Nothing. Is Chris around?

JACKIE

In her room.

Keith walks through the house -- outside Chris's room, he sees Dave, curled up and sleeping on the floor.

KEITH

Jesus.

He reaches out and rattles the door.

KEITH

Hey Chris? You awake? It's Keith.
Keith Pierson. We got to talk.
This place.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KEITH (CONT'D)

The McCroskies won't be in Europe forever. Can you come out? Just to talk?

No response.

He looks ready to cry.

He walks through the kitchen -- nobody's cleaned in days. A plate of half-eaten food is crawling with maggots, and, as Keith looks, one of the maggots squirms off the plate and falls onto the carpet.

He looks at the sink -- it's really filthy. Hanging on a hook by the sink is a car key. He picks it up.

CUT TO:

INT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY - RAIN

Keith sits in the McCrosky's car. He turns the key. The car hesitates, turns over, then it runs.

CUT TO:

INT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY - RAIN

Keith hangs up the car key.

INT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - HALL OUTSIDE BEDROOM - DAY - RAIN

Keith goes past Dave, asleep on the floor outside the bedroom.

KEITH

Chris! I'm leaving now! See you.
See you tomorrow.

And as he turns to go, we can see that Dave's eyes are open, watching him sadly -- he's only pretending to be asleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - NIGHT

The rain has stopped. It's night.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

Rick the Dick steps from the shadows at the edge of the garden. He's watching the place.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Keith is stocking the shelves. Cutting open a tray of plastic-wrapped cans, and stacking them. Mundane work. One of the fluorescent bulbs above him starts blinking ERRATICALLY. He looks up at it, and then--

ELIZA

Hey, you.

He accidentally slices the skin between his thumb and index with the box cutter.

KEITH

Ahhh!

ELIZA

Oh -- your hand.

It's not too bad, but it's bad enough. Eliza takes a box of Kleenex from the shelf and opens it up. Takes some out and starts dabbing it -- tending to him.

ELIZA

Here. Let me clean that for you...there. How's that?

KEITH

Fine...good. Fine and good. I mean...I'm fine. Good.

She laughs a little and Keith sees for the first time how incredible she looks. Radiant and beautiful. Transformed.

KEITH

You look beautiful.

She smiles, coyly.

ELIZA

This is such a surprise. You told me you had a job at a supermarket, but I couldn't remember which one.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

KEITH

I tried to call you...I really did. But--

ELIZA

Don't worry, you don't need to explain anything to me. What we have...

She touches his side, where the bumps have formed on his ribs, they suddenly start WIGGLING from underneath his shirt.

ELIZA (CONT'D)

...goes deeper than that.

Keith is starting to breathe faster. They look deep into each others eyes...there's a connection.

ELIZA

Are you still seeing that girl?

KEITH

Chris? No. No. We weren't really ever seeing each other.

ELIZA

No?

KEITH

No. It got kind of weird.

ELIZA

I'm sorry to hear that.

KEITH

It's okay.

ELIZA

Hmmm. I'd better get going. Do you have a pen?

KEITH

Oh, sure...I have a couple.

He takes a pen out and hands it to her. She takes his wrist and turns his hand so that she can write on it.

ELIZA

Here's my new number...why don't you give me a call sometime. We could hang out. Maybe listen to some music.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ELIZA (CONT'D)

(beat)

I'd like to see how you're showing.

She writes the number down on the inside of his forearm, hands back the pen, and with a smile starts walking off.

ELIZA

Take care of that cut.

KEITH

I will...and I'll call you for sure.

Keith looks up and notices that the florescent bulb is no longer blinking. He looks down at the number.

CUT TO:

EXT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - NIGHT

We're out in the garden of the house, looking at the house from behind a tree. We look up to see Chris staring out of the bedroom window.

CUT TO:

INT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - NIGHT

A click, and Chris's door opens. She comes out -- on her way to raid the kitchen. She's scratching - her skin is about to start coming loose again. Dave, on the floor, says,

DAVE

Hi.

CHRIS

Hi.

DAVE

Just making sure that nobody bothered you. You get enough sleep?

CHRIS

Yeah. You don't have to do that.

Dave gets to his feet, gracefully.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

DAVE

It's fine. Hey. You want some Fritos? I got some Fritos back there the others don't know about.

CHRIS

Sure. Fritos would be good.

DAVE

It's stopped raining. You feeling okay?

CHRIS

No.

Dave rummages in a cupboard and finds some Fritos. He tosses them to her.

DAVE

Stupid question.

CHRIS

Yeah. Stupid. You know. If I could just make all of this not happen, I would. Go back to being a straight A student. Momma's little girl. I'd go back.

DAVE

Fuck that. I wouldn't go back. Getting beat up every day at school? Every single girl laughing at me? -- Ah, I mean, not you. You were one of the cool kids, but you treated me like a real human being.

CHRIS

Well, I just...

DAVE

No! You were special! And I care about you. So much. Can you... can you hold me, for a moment? I don't have anybody. Lonely.

Chris hesitates. Then she puts her arms around him -- a gesture a friend makes. And then it goes wrong -- he begins to try to kiss her, holding her tightly.

CHRIS

Dave, knock it off.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED: (2)

He's pushing against her.

CHRIS

Stop it! Please! Get off me!

He lets go of her.

CHRIS

I don't feel like that about you.
We're still friends. But I can't
go there...

Dave looks furious. Says nothing at all. Stalks out.

A moment later the front door SLAMS.

EXT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - NIGHT

Dave is striding down the shadowy path.... Scary and
murderous Rick the Dick, holding the crowbar he killed
Rob with, steps out behind him.

For one heart-stopping second we think Rick is going to
attack Dave. Dave turns around...

DAVE

Hey Ricky. I'm going to get some
food. You want something?

RICK

Anything man. I'm starving.
(beat)
How is she?

DAVE

Nearly, man. Nearly there.

RICK

Knight takes queen. Mate in two
moves.

(He laughs at this,
as if it's a really
cool dirty joke,
which in his head it
is.)

CUT TO:

EXT. FAST FOOD OUTLET - NIGHT

The greenish-purple florescent lights of the Fast Food Outlet gleam in the night. It's like a glass box. Inside there are A FEW JOCKS and THEIR GIRLS eating... Dave, hood covering his head, is standing in line.

INT. FAST FOOD OUTLET - NIGHT

Dave gets to the front. Behind him are a couple of jocks, BRETT and MICHAEL, and THEIR GIRLS.

DAVE

Bucket of chicken.

The girl behind the counter doesn't look up. Just punches it in.

COUNTER-GIRL

Original recipe or extra crispy?

DAVE

Original recipe.

But now she's looked up. She stops, freezes. Afraid. Disgusted.

DAVE

I asked for a bucket of chicken.
Original recipe.

Brett, bigger and cooler than Dave is or was when he was human, leans over.

BRETT

Hey man. You're scaring her with your creepy animal face. Why don't you take a hike, huh?

DAVE

I just want my chicken.

BRETT

Yeah? Well nobody wants you here, bugger.

BRETT'S GIRL

Brett, let him be...

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

BRETT

Listen, asshole. You leave real quiet, now, or I drag your ass out, and teach you a goddamn lesson.

Dave puts his hands in his pockets, lowers his head, looks broken. Brett pushes him between the shoulders roughly.

BRETT

Step aside, freak -- there's *real* people in line waiting to order. You want some chicken? Go dumpster diving with your freak friends.

Then, as if finding something he'd forgotten, Dave pulls out a gun. It's a 9mm luger, with red tape on the handle. We've seen it before. He turns, pushing the gun into Brett's stomach.

DAVE

I'm not a freak!

BRETT

Whoa! Calm down, man.

DAVE

It's Brett, isn't it? You were an asshole in school -- and you're an asshole now.

(turning to the counter girl)

Now. The bitch is going to give me my bucket of chicken, isn't it?

The counter girl nods, terrified. She turns to the chicken, starts to fill a big bucket. Dave turns his attention to Brett...

DAVE

On your knees. Quickly.

BRETT

You gotta be--

Dave hits him with the gun, across the face. A thin spatter of blood flies across the gleaming white tiles of the floor.

The people in the fast-food outlet are all of them frozen with shock and fear.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED: (2)

DAVE

Knees.

Brett drops to his knees.

DAVE

Is this your girl?

She nods.

DAVE

And you think I'm not human, too, right? Think I'm some kind of geek? That right? Open your mouth, Brett.

BRETT

Hey. Look. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry...

DAVE

Mouth. Open.

He pushes down Brett's lower lip with the gun barrel.

Then we pull back for a medium shot. Dave purses his lips, gets a good mouthful of saliva and --

PTUIE!

He spits it into Brett's mouth.

DAVE

Swallow.

He jabs the gun into Brett's neck, and Brett swallows involuntarily.

DAVE

There. That's all it takes. A little spit. Or blood. Or jiz. Say, I could get your girl to give me a blowjob: Gobble gobble. One of us.

Brett's girlfriend starts to cry.

DAVE

Don't cry. I'll pass on the blowjob. Hey. How's the chicken coming?

The girl passes the chicken bucket across the counter.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED: (3)

Brett, on his knees. Has his mouth still open. He's pissed his pants and is kneeling in a puddle of yellow urine.

Dave picks his bucket of chicken off the counter.

DAVE

Have a nice life.

CUT TO:

INT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

Keith is stocking the shelves at his job. The MUZAK is getting to him. His manager, MR. LAWSON approaches him.

MR. LAWSON

Pierson. You're not stacking the cans "labels out." How do you expect our customers to know what's in those cans if the labels aren't facing out? Hmmm?

KEITH

Sorry, Mr. Lawson. Sorry.

He starts turning the cans on the front so that their labels are facing outward.

MR. LAWSON

All of them. Start over.

Keith complies, total drag. Mr. Lawson looks at him discriminately.

MR. LAWSON

And we need to talk about your hair. It's getting a little shabby. Time for a haircut.

Keith nods, totally miserable, until Mr. Lawson leaves him alone and continues on to another part of the store. Keith continues with his stocking, but he's boiling inside.

Suddenly, Dee and Todd come running up from behind him.

TODD

Pierson!

Keith looks around.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

KEITH
Hey, guys. Whassup?

DEE
You haven't heard?!

KEITH
What?

TODD
Some Buggers like held up the
Chicken Shack. Like, with guns.
(holding his fingers
like six-shooters)
"This is a stick up."

DEE
(to Todd)
He's doomed. Frickin' doomed.

KEITH
Who?

DEE
Brett. Captain of the Wrestling
Team. One of the Buggers pissed
in his mouth -- infected him.

KEITH
Jesus.

TODD
So, c'mon! Let's go!

KEITH
Where?

DEE
You remember the lizard girl? The
jocks are gonna run her out of
town, along with all the other
fuckin' buggers --

TODD
Run 'em all out. Each and every
last freak one of 'em!

Keith can't take it any longer. He pulls his shirt open,
revealing little squirming tails, like tadpoles, wiggling
under his skin...frantic.

Dee and Todd are horrified.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED: (2)

Keith covers himself with his shirt, steps away from them.

KEITH

Haven't you ever felt that you were rushing toward something...something scary and empty...and that you just had to do something to make it all real?

No answer from the two guys. Jaws are dropping. Mr. Lawson and some other CUSTOMERS have witnessed the whole event and are equally aghast.

Keith drops his apron onto the floor. Heads outside...

Mr. Lawson, Keith's boss, notices him leaving.

MR. LAWSON

Pearson? Where do you think you're going, young man?! Don't expect your job to be here when you get back!

Keith turns briefly, before walking out the door.

KEITH

I won't be back.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS - MOVING - NIGHT

Keith is riding his bike as fast as he can. Trying desperately to get there before the guys. He can see their car on the road -- but he's able to ride cross country, and cuts down the hillside to where the road continues.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE DRUG HOUSE - NIGHT

Keith comes racing up to the house and jumps off his bike.

KEITH

Eliza!

He runs up to the house and checks the door -- locked.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

KEITH

Eliza!

SCREECH! Here come the cars at the end of the block -- about five of them, filled with HOOTING JOCKS.

Keith knows what he has to do. He grabs a chair from the porch and throws it through the window. Glass is everywhere. Keith climbs into the house.

INT. THE DRUG HOUSE - VARIOUS - NIGHT

Keith runs through the mostly empty house.

KEITH

Eliza!

He gets to the stairs and runs down then, into the basement.

INT. THE DRUG HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Keith bursts in through the door and finds Eliza stoned on the bed, listening to music with headphones on.

ELIZA

Keith?

No time to waste. Keith grabs her by the hand and pulls her away.

ELIZA

What?! What is it?!

INT. THE DRUG HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Keith comes up from the stairs with Eliza in tow. Just as they arrive they see the lights of cars, now parked on the front lawn. JOCKS are on the porch and climbing in through the window.

ELIZA

What's happening?!

KEITH

We've got to get out of here -- I know where we can get a car!

ELIZA

To go where?

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

KEITH

Anywhere but here. Someplace
warm. California? The Sonora
Desert?

Eliza looks deep into his eyes -- he's serious.

ELIZA

We've got to get my stash!

KEITH

Forget it!

He tugs her down the hall as Jocks enter in through the
window and start trashing the place.

EXT. THE DRUG HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

Eliza and Keith come running out of the kitchen door.

They run through the back yard and into the neighbors
backyard and away into the night.

The house is being lit on fire...

CUT TO:

EXT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - NIGHT

Dave walks into the garden chewing a chicken leg. Rick
the Dick steps out.

RICK

A whole bucket? Hey. I'm starving.
I finished off the stew last week.
It was getting pretty rancid.

DAVE

Here. Take it all.

Rick starts chewing the chicken, demolishing it.

RICK

So Chris doesn't want to be
friends?

DAVE

She will.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

RICK

We could play chess. How about that, eh Dave? I mean, the stuff we do with the girls is good, but chess is the best. Remember chess club? Remember?

DAVE

This *is* chess, Rick. We need to go through the board and take all the pawns off. Then we take the queen.

RICK

You and me.

DAVE

Me first.

RICK

Did you have any trouble getting the chicken?

DAVE

No trouble.

He walks over to the front door of the house, presses the doorbell. YANKEE DOODLE plays. Dave holds the gun behind the bucket of chicken.

Doug opens the door. As soon as the door opens we can hear a TV show blaring out much too loud -- *I Was a Teenage Frankenstein*, for preference.

DOUG

Dave. Thought you'd gone, man.

DAVE

I came back. You want some chicken?

A FLASH--

INT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - NIGHT

Dave and Rick walking through the house. They walk into the living room where the TV is playing, and a bunch of kids with the bug are sitting around zoning out. Dave stands behind one of the kids, puts his gun to the back of the kid's head.

A FLASH--

INT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Jackie is in the bathtub. She's crooning a nursery rhyme, and we can hear a baby cooing...

Then we swing around.

The baby is growing out of her head -- it's been covered by her hippie hat until now.

There's a thump on the door. Then another, harder, thump and the bathroom door flies inward.

Dave is standing in the door. He's holding the gun in the chicken bucket.

DAVE

(politely)

Jackie. Evening. Chicken?

JACKIE

What are you doing in here? Get out.

And we can hear her baby-head crying... Rick pushes in.

RICK

Can't we keep her? She's pretty.

DAVE

Gotta take the pawns off the board, old pal.

And he raises the gun from the bucket and points.

FLASH--

INT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

And now Dave's knocking on Chris's door.

DAVE

Chris! Quick. It's me!

The door opens a crack.

DAVE

Let me in. Emergency.

Chris opens the door. She's sleepy. She was sleeping in underwear and has pulled a robe over it.

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CHRIS

Dave?

He pushes in, then closes the door behind him.

INT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dave is in front of the bedroom door.

CHRIS

What's going on?

DAVE

There's been some big trouble. There's a guy -- Rick, we used to call him Rick the Dick. He's been doing some really bad shit out in the woods. I mean, real bad shit. And he wants you. So I came back. To help you.

CHRIS

Where is he?

DAVE

Back in the house. We could barricade ourselves in...?

CHRIS

Why don't we run for it?

Dave pulls out his gun.

DAVE

We're good.

CLOSE UP ON --

THE RED TAPE ON THE GUN'S HANDLE. THEN--

--CHRIS'S FACE.

She knows just whose gun this is. And knowing that, she knows a whole load of other things, too. Like what happened to Rob. She just says,

CHRIS

Check the windows. I'll stay here.

And as Dave heads over to the window, gun held high, she pulls open the door and charges through it. Slams it behind her.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

She runs into the hallway....

She's running, on the way to the front door, passing rooms that have become chambers of horrors. In front of the front door, Doug lies dead.

And then Rick the Dick steps out, holding his little crowbar.

RICK
(really friendly)
Hi Chris. It is Chris, isn't it?
Hi.

CUT TO:

THE BEDROOM DOOR

As Dave bursts it open. He charges out into the hall, gun at the ready, only to see that Rick now has tight hold of Chris.

DAVE
I told you. Beware of Rick the Dick.

RICK
Don't you call me that, too, Dave. It hurts.

DAVE
Sorry, Ricky-boy. Just kidding.

CHRIS
You took my gun. You trashed my tent.

DAVE
You should have taken up my offer of alternative accommodation.

CHRIS
And Rob...

DAVE
Oh, I had nothing to do with his death.

CHRIS
Rob's dead.

(CONTINUED)
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CONTINUED:

DAVE

Maybe a little. But Rick the D...angerous guy holding you tight, he did the dirty work.

RICK

Dave and me, we don't usually do men. But that was different because Dave truly loves you.

Dave smiles beatifically. If we were in any doubt up till now of his sanity, he's passed beyond that place.

DAVE

I do. You were the only one. The popular one. The pretty one. You were special.

CHRIS

So you're going to rape me?

Rick nods enthusiastically behind her back. Dave surveys her with an impassive cat-like face.

DAVE

With all the others, I pretended it was you. I just... I guess I'm scared that the reality won't live up to the fantasy.

CHRIS

You don't have to do this.

DAVE

I uh. Obviously I wish I could see things from your point of view.

And then the FRONT DOOR-LOCK TURNS. Someone on the other side of the door is letting himself in...

And the door opens to reveal...

MR and MRS MCCROSKY. A nice couple, fat, sweet, and looking just like a pair of US tourists in 1974. He has a suitcase in each hand and a camera around his middle. She's got a serious tan, and a smaller bag she's hauling. They're glad to be home.

Then they look down, and see Doug's corpse.

They take in the drama in the hall.

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CONTINUED: (2)

MR MCCROSKY

I hope you've got a good
explanation for this, young man.

MRS MCCROSKY

Is Keith Pierson here?
(then, hysterical)
What have you monsters done with
my cat?

MR MCCROSKY

I'm calling the police.

And Chris sees her chance, and *pulls*.

Rick is holding her tightly... but it's Chris's change of
skin time, and HER ARM SKIN COMES OFF IN HIS HANDS. But
the McCroskies are blocking the doorway.

So Chris runs back into the house...

McCrosky is advancing angrily ("See here, young man..."
ad lib) and Dave isn't sure what to do. He doesn't think
that Chris can get far.

Dave shoots McCrosky. Mrs McCrosky starts SCREAMING.
Another bang, and the screaming stops...

CUT TO:

EXT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - NIGHT

Keith and Eliza come running (or possibly, if it's not
too goofy, sharing Keith's bike) up the street. The taxi
that brought the McCroskies is pulling away.

KEITH

The McCroskies are back. Oh god.
I'm in such shit.

Eliza shakes her head and points...

In the open front door, we can see the fallen Mrs
McCrosky being hauled inside by Rick the Dick, and then
the door being closed.

KEITH

Christ.

INT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - NIGHT

Chris is hiding in a kitchen closet. The door is slatted, the slats pointing downward. She's trembling. She's holding a kitchen knife in front of her.

EXT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - GARAGE - NIGHT

The side door of the garage opens. Keith has his key. He and Eliza enter...

INT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - GARAGE - NIGHT

They enter, apprehensively. Keith picks up a wrench from the table at the back of the garage...

His side spasms. He clutches his side, in pain...

KEITH

Okay. The car key's in the kitchen. It's hanging by the sink.

ELIZA

I'll get it.

KEITH

I'll. I'll get it. We don't know what kind of shit's going down in there.... And I'm... the guy.

ELIZA

I'm the lizard queen. Get the garage door open. I'll get the car key.

INT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAWN

Eliza walks into the kitchen area. She scans the room, then heads for the sink...

INT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - GARAGE - DAWN

Keith is on the floor, writhing in pain. He's clutching his side, and as we look, tadpole tails are thrashing under his shirt.

He's in agony and in ecstasy. Unable to function.

INT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - DAWN

Dave is looking for Chris. He's walking through the house, with his red-tape-handled gun held up warily. Rick is following him. They hear a NOISE from the kitchen...

INT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAWN

Dave enters the kitchen. He sees Eliza.

DAVE

Who the fuck are you? Put your hands up! In the air!

Eliza raises her hands. The car-key is still on its hook.

ELIZA

("nothing to see here")
I'm just getting something and I'm out of here.

Rick comes in behind Dave...

DAVE

You don't know how much trouble you're in.

Eliza starts walking closer to him.

ELIZA

You're having a B.T. Why don't you just put the gun down before someone gets hurt and...we could spark up a joint?

DAVE

I don't know you, bitch. Keep your hands where I can see them.

ELIZA

I'm not a threat to you. I'm like you...just different.

RICK

She's pretty, Dave.

DAVE

Shut up. Rick.

Eliza's edging closer.

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A SHOT OF--

CHRIS IN THE KITCHEN CLOSET...

She can see Rick just in front of her through the slats. She's trying not to breathe... She's raised her knife...

BACK IN THE KITCHEN

Eliza and Dave are standing close. Eliza is staring into Dave's eyes, and he's becoming transfixed by her stare and soothing voice.

ELIZA

Look into my eyes. You don't want to hurt us.

DAVE

I...I can shoot you. Just like...I shot the...the rest of them...

But Dave has become sort of hypnotised by Eliza -- the way a cobra hypnotizes its prey. She gets really close to him, until her hand is on the gun, caressing it as if she's holding a penis. Then, suddenly, she HISSES and pulls the gun out of his hand throwing it to the floor.

Dave SLAPS her hard across the face, and she turns to run. He grabs her little prehensile lizard tail and it--

COMES OFF COMPLETELY in his hands, wiggling and spasming...

And from inside the closet, Chris STABS DOWN through the slats with her kitchen knife, getting Rick in the arm...

He howls and jerks away, pulling the closet door open. And Chris tumbles out onto the floor.

RICK

Ow. What did you do that for? That hurt? Meanie.

Rick is almost in tears. He may be a monstrous murdering thing, but he's also an emotionally retarded teenager.

Chris darts so that she's over with Eliza...

CUT TO:

INT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - GARAGE - DAWN

Keith is on the garage floor, exhausted. Around him are large pink tadpoles that he ejected from his side, slithering and wiggling away under the car or into the drain. Awkwardly, he gets to his feet.

INT. MCCROSKY HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAWN

Back in the kitchen, Eliza's pulled over the kitchen table. She and Chris are on one side of it. Chris is holding her knife.

On the other side of the table, on the other side of the kitchen, we see Dave and Rick.

Dave picks up the gun from the floor. Turns it over... looks at it. Rick is holding his arm. Blood seeping from his arm onto the ground...

RICK

(an angry kid)

I'm bleeding. Dumbass girl!
Stupid Chris!

CHRIS

(gently)

Riiiiick? Why did you kill Rob?

RICK

He told me to.

CHRIS

Dave did?

RICK

He's so bad. The stuff we do.
Nobody knows but us. Nobody cares
what we do in the woods. I could
have had you a hundred times.

Chris reacts.

ELIZA

You sick little creep. It's over
for you. Killing kids who have
the bug is one thing. No one's
gonna burn the midnight oil to put
a stop to that. But killing the
McCrosky's.

(more)

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ELIZA (CONT'D)

They'll be napalming the woods to get you two...and everyone else up there is gonna have to pay for your crimes.

RICK

We're not scared, are we, Dave?

DAVE

No. Fuck 'em all.

RICK

See. Dave's got a plan. We're chessplayers. We're in good shape.

DAVE

Yeah.

RICK

So what's the plan?

There's a LOUD BANG and Rick falls forward. Dave just shot him in the back of the head.

Keith stumbles into the kitchen a little unsteadily. Not quite tracking with things...

Dave looks up at him.

DAVE

(good-naturedly)

Hey, Keith. Thanks for letting us crash here, man. Sorry about the mess...

Then Dave puts the gun barrel into his mouth. He squeezes the trigger.

A FLASH...

CUT TO WHITE.

EXT. THE OPEN ROAD - DAY

The white becomes car headlights, as the McCroskies' car drives down the road that leads out of town.

INT. MCCROSKY'S CAR - OPEN ROAD - MOVING - DAY

Eliza and Keith are in the front of the McCroskies' car. Chris is riding in the back.

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KEITH

You sure you don't want to come with us? Come see the desert?

CHRIS

No. I want to be on my own. There's a place I went with Rob. I want to go there.

ELIZA

Are you going to be okay?

CHRIS

Everything's just fine. Everything's perfect.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE BEACH - DAY

The car pulls up on the beach, the one where Chris and Rob had their perfect day. Chris gets out. She's got her backpack.

CHRIS

Thanks, you guys. Have a great time in California.

KEITH

We will.

His hand squeezes Eliza's. They really are a couple.

CHRIS

Well, good meeting you, Eliza. Thanks Keith. Keith Pierson.

And she walks down the beach toward the water.

Keith and Eliza drive off.

Chris doesn't look back. She starts running towards the water, dropping her backpack and shedding her clothes as she goes.

She dives into the water...swims out far from the shore.

Chris is lying in the water, looking up at the sky.

The moon is still out, even though it's day, and it's right above her -- large and full.

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Finally, perhaps for the first time, Chris looks at peace. With the world. With everything.

She even smiles.

Then, she shuts her eyes, exhales, and slips out of her skin -- sinking into the water -- leaving her skin floating on the surface... empty.

Beneath the water, Chris -- or something that is no longer Chris -- wriggles and swims, ecstatically, more like some kind of eel than anything human.

And she's free of her own skin at last.

FADE TO:

THE OPEN ROAD - DAWN

It's a new day. Or it will be soon.

KEITH

You mind if I turn on the radio?

ELIZA

It's a free country.

He looks at her, worried he's offended her. Then she laughs, and it's okay, and he understands that he was just being teased.

Keith turns on the radio.

Keith and Eliza drive, with their windows wide open, and radio music blaring -- Bachman Turner Overdrive playing "YOU AINT SEEN NOTHING YET." We watch them driving. Talking and laughing.

Keith leans over and kisses Eliza. They're going to be fine.

It's sunrise... And we pull up from windscreen level to above them, and then up, and up, and up, as they drive away, and we see the car, tiny, triumphant, heading South...

Something is thrown out of the car. It skids and bumps and lands in front of us. The pages flick and turn...

It's a high-school yearbook. We zoom in on it...

We stop on the photo of the monstrous Yearbook girl from the opening. *As she talks*, she starts changing back...

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not into the clean-cut black and white 1974 girl of the opening, but into a cooler, hipper, more human, more adult version of herself...

YEARBOOK GIRL

You'd never understand it if you hadn't lived it. Half of my friends died out there. Man, I never dreamed I'd ever get out of there alive. But one day I notice the stuff is starting to heal. And a couple of months later I'm totally clean. You'd never know I was sick. Out walking around with all the normal assholes.

And the girl freezes back into a photograph. We zoom in on the dots of the photo until they become meaningless, just another black hole, and we...

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END