

THE KINGS OF MAINE

Written by

Kathy Charles

Jewel Keats Ross
SILENT R MANAGEMENT
8060 Melrose Avenue
Suite 205
Los Angeles, CA 90046
323-852-6830 Office
310-415-1380 Cell
jross@silentrllit.com

"Monsters are real, and ghosts are real too.
They live inside us, and sometimes they win."

-- STEPHEN KING

INT. ATTIC - LATE AFTERNOON

Dust. Old furniture. Sunlight from a cobwebbed window penetrates the shadows, but not enough.

The creaking of feet on stairs. A boy steps into the darkness, STEPHEN (11). He looks around, apprehensive. An attic is a scary place for a boy.

He takes the plunge, enters the musty space. Dust mites dance in a single shaft of sunshine.

Stephen drags over an old chest, opens it. He fishes out a moth filled BLOUSE, digs deeper. Just his mother's OLD CLOTHES. Nothing interesting.

He pushes the chest aside, spies a wooden crate. The side reads: **DRINK MOXIE SODA. MAINE IN A BOTTLE.** The lettering is red and faded.

Stephen drags the crate over, peers inside. **Bingo.**

The crate is full of PILES of old PAPERBACKS. He scoops one out, holds it up. A MONSTER with DEVIL EARS emerges from between two GRAVESTONES. The title is **THE LURKING FEAR AND OTHER STORIES.** The author is **H.P.LOVECRAFT.**

He puts the book back, pulls out another one. A scantily clad woman is being devoured by rats, her skin scratched and bloody. The cover warns: AFTER THE H-BOMB, BEWARE OF... **THE COMING OF THE RATS.**

Jackpot.

Stephen replaces the books and weaves his hands through the handles of the crate. He's about to lift it, when--

A voice from behind him, a man in shadows.

THE DARK MAN.

THE DARK MAN
(stern)
Stephen.

Stephen drops the crate, whips around.

STEPHEN
Hello?

No one's there. His heart beats loudly in his chest. Must have been his imagination.

He leans over, drags the crate a few more feet, then...

THE DARK MAN

What do you think you're doing,
Stephen? That don't belong to you.

Stephen peers into the corner of the attic, terrified.

He sees a **dark figure**, walks towards it.

STEPHEN

Dad? Is that you?

THE DARK MAN

I told you not to touch my things.
Damn kids, always touching
everything, acting like it's yours.

STEPHEN

I'm sorry.

THE DARK MAN

It's enough to drive a man to
drink.

Stephen stops suddenly. The Dark Man is in front of him.

He has long hair, wears a DENIM JACKET, JEANS and COWBOY
BOOTS.

His face is in shadow.

THE DARK MAN (CONT'D)

You think you're so special,
Stephen? You think you've got what
it takes?

Stephen is almost there, so close he can touch him.

The Dark Man steps out of the shadows. His eyes are BRIGHT
RED.

THE DARK MAN (CONT'D)

You're not the only one with
dreams.

The Dark Man bares **VAMPIRE FANGS** and LAUGHS.

Stephen SCREAMS.

CUT TO:

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - MORNING

STEPHEN (26) jolts awake from a nightmare. He's all grown up, a husky, hulking figure with shaggy hair and a thick mountain man beard.

His wife, TABITHA (24), a cute little country girl with a bob of curly hair, sleeps soundly beside him.

Stephen shakes himself awake, thrown by the nightmare. A baby begins to cry. Stephen throws back the covers.

Tabitha stirs as he leaves the bed.

TABITHA
(sleepy)
I'll get him.

STEPHEN
No. I'll do it.

TABITHA
'Kay.

Stephen rubs his eyes, hoists himself up and walks over to a CRIB.

GRAPHIC: Hampden, Maine - 1973

Stephen lifts out JOE, his baby son, and comforts him. His eyes wander to another crib. NAOMI, his toddler daughter, watches him curiously with wide eyes.

Stephen looks around at the tiny space his family lives in.

As if sensing his father's despair, Joe cried harder.

STEPHEN
(softly)
It's okay, buddy.

INT. KITCHENETTE, DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - LATER

Tabitha tosses bacon in a frying pan. She's wearing a HOUSEDRESS with a FLORAL BLOUSE underneath, her cupid face framed by oversized PRESCRIPTION GLASSES. The kids sit in a tiny BOOTH, throwing CEREAL at each other.

TABITHA
Naomi, you throw Cheerios at your brother once more, you're really gonna get it.

Naomi giggles.

Stephen comes in dressed for work. He's wearing dirty jeans and a tee shirt that says **MAINERS DO IT BETTER**. His THICK BLACK GLASSES match Tabitha's own.

Stephen steals a piece of BACON from the frying pan, rams it in his mouth.

TABITHA (CONT'D)
That all you're havin'?

STEPHEN
I'm runnin' late. Where's my jacket?

TABITHA
Check the laundry room.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - MINUTES LATER

More a closet than a room. PILES OF DIRTY CLOTHES take up every inch of space.

Stephen rummages through the piles until he finds what he's looking for: a FADED DENIM JACKET. He pulls it on.

Something in the corner of the tiny space catches his attention, a CARD TABLE with a PLASTIC CHAIR pushed under it, slotted between the WASHER and DRYER. On the table sits an **OLIVETTI TYPEWRITER**, a sheet of paper protruding teasingly from the roll.

Stephen looks longingly at the OLIVETTI, itching to get at it.

Tabitha appears beside him.

TABITHA
(sympathetic)
You'll have tonight, hon.

Stephen gives her a grateful smile. They kiss. He ruffles her hair and she buries her head in his shoulder.

Stephen stares at the OLIVETTI wistfully.

EXT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER

Stephen steps out into a Maine summer morning. We see the DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER in all its dilapidated glory.

Majestic PINES tower over his home. The front yard is DRY and DEAD, littered with broken CHILDREN'S TOYS.

A **RUSTED BUICK** sits in the driveway. The body of the car is being held together by BALING WIRE and DUCT TAPE. Stephen gets behind the wheel and says a Hail Mary.

STEPHEN

Please God.

He steels himself, turns the KEY in the ignition.

The car starts. MUSIC blares from the radio.

Stephen sighs with relief, looks up to the heavens.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Thank you.

He drives out and hits the highway.

INT. INDUSTRIAL LAUNDRY, HAMPDEN, MAINE - LATER

A factory sized laundry for RESTAURANT TABLE CLOTHS and PRISON BED SHEETS.

Stephen pushes a GIANT CART down a line of INDUSTRIAL SIZED WASHERS. The sound of the machines is DEAFENING.

He finds an EMPTY WASHER, opens the enormous door and TIPS the contents of the cart inside. He CLOSES THE DOOR, turns the machine ON.

The sheets spin ROUND, dancing with each.

Stephen stares into the washer as if HYPNOTIZED, his mind a million miles away.

INT. INDUSTRIAL LAUNDRY - LATER

A row of **INDUSTRIAL SIZE HAND PRESSES** and **SHIRT-FOLDING UNITS**. Workers operate the machines with barely concealed boredom. Stephen stands in front of an IRONER AND FOLDER. On the other side of the machine stands TONY, his co-worker.

They each take an end of a sheet and FEED IT into the machine.

Tony shouts above the WHIRR of the ENGINE.

TONY

(to Stephen)

You ask me, people need to give Nixon a break. So what if he's a crook? They're all crooks! That man's done a lotta good for this country...

Stephen spaces out. He stares into the JAWS of the machine, feeds in another sheet. BIG METAL TEETH grab the linens, DEVOURING them.

Tony's voice BUZZES in his ear. Stephen grabs another sheet, pushes it towards the FEEDER, when...

Stephen's hand CATCHES in the linen. METAL TEETH come down, WRENCHING THE SHEET towards the mouth of the machine.

Stephen's HAND is TORN OFF.

He CRIES OUT, shocked. Blood pours from the wound. Tony SLAMS on the EMERGENCY BUTTON.

Stephen stares at his BLOODY STUMP where his hand was, suddenly curious. Blood POOLS around his FEET. The LINENS turn SCARLET RED.

Tony speaks.

TONY (CONT'D)

Yo, Steve? What's up, man?

Stephen looks at Tony, confused.

He looks at his hand. There's no stump, no blood.

It was just his imagination, an idea taking shape in the mind of a writer.

Tony frowns.

TONY (CONT'D)

You fallin' asleep or something?

STEPHEN

(embarrassed)

No, no...

TONY

You can't doze around these machines, Steve. It's dangerous.

Stephen nods, still rattled by the vision.

Tony shakes his head.

They get back to work.

INT. BREAK ROOM, INDUSTRIAL LAUNDRY - LATER

A bleak wood-panelled room with a few PLASTIC TABLES and CHAIRS and a COFFEE MACHINE. A poster of a forest reads **MAINE. THE WAY LIFE SHOULD BE.**

Stephen sits eating a TUNA SANDWICH, an ever-present PAPERBACK in his hands. TONY strolls in. He makes his way to the fridge, takes out a can of COKE.

TONY
Whatcha readin'?

Stephen holds up the cover. A GHOSTLY FIGURE ascends a STAIRCASE as a LEERING SKULL watches.

Tony leans forward and reads.

TONY (CONT'D)
"The Haunting of Hill House".
(makes mocking ghost
noise)
Wooooooooo!! Spooky! You really
believe that shit?

STEPHEN
I wouldn't say I 'believe' it,
Tony, but I sure do enjoy it.

TONY
I'll say. Every time I come in here
you're readin' somethin' or other.

STEPHEN
Well, tryin' to...

Tony continues on, not taking the hint.

TONY
You know, readin' books all your
life ain't gonna get you nowhere.
Just give you a lot of fancy ideas
about stuff that ain't ever gonna
happen.

STEPHEN
It's better than livin' in the real
world.

Tony downs his COKE and throws the can in the trash.

TONY

You sure are a weird guy, Steve.

Tony leaves.

Stephen goes back to his book, enthralled.

CUT TO:

INT. DURHAM GRAMMAR SCHOOL - 1957

A TEN-YEAR-OLD Stephen sits at a SCHOOL DESK, head seemingly buried in a SCIENCE BOOK. Hidden inside the cover is a **SCI FI COMIC**. An ASTRONAUT fights a KILLER ROBOT from OUTER SPACE. Stephen turns the pages excitedly as the teacher rambles on.

TEACHER

And if the Ruskies don't drop the A-Bomb on us, they might do something even worse! They could invade America and round us all up! Know what a Rusky would do to you if they got their Red hands on you? They'd make you deny God and America, and if you didn't do it, they'd kill your family right before your eyes! That's why it's important--

The teacher notes the concentration in Stephen's features.

The jig is up.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Stephen, care to join the class?

Stephen looks up.

STEPHEN

Huh?

TEACHER

Put the book down and pay attention.

STEPHEN

Sorry.

The class dissolves into giggles.

Two boys in back of the class, JAMES and BRADLEY, snicker to each other.

Stephen sheepishly puts his book down, embarrassed.

The lesson continues.

TEACHER

So where was I? Oh yes. The Ruskies
would slit the throats of your
family...

EXT. MAIN STREET, LISBON FALLS - AFTER SCHOOL

Stephen walks home along Main Street with his older brother, DAVID (12). They pass the **KENNEBEC FRUIT CO**, a corner grocery store. A sign in the window proudly announces **THE HOME OF MOXIE SODA, MAINE'S OWN**.

STEPHEN

Dave, you think the Ruskies are
gonna come get us here and kill
Mom?

DAVID

Hell, no. You think they're gonna
come all the way from Russia to
Maine? That's like thousands of
miles.

STEPHEN

But they've got supersonic jets!

DAVID

They'd hit Washington D.C. or New
York City first. We'd have a heads
up.

STEPHEN

You sure?

DAVID

(uncertain)
Yeah, I'm sure.

They stop at the corner, quietening. In front of them looms the **MARSTEN HOUSE**, a frightening old Victorian home with STAINED GLASS windows.

DAVID (CONT'D)

This place sure gives me the
creeps.

STEPHEN

You really think that guy hung himself in there?

DAVID

Probably. It looks like the type of place a fella would hang himself in.

JAMES

What are you goobers lookin' at?

The boys turn. James and Bradley from Stephen's class are standing beside them, menacing.

DAVID

The Marsten House! Don'tcha got eyes, bozo!?

BRADLEY

You're the bozo, bozo.

DAVID

Go to hell. The both of ya.

JAMES

My Dad says your Dad went for cigarettes and never came back. Is that true? Are you King boys bastards?

James and Bradley laugh.

STEPHEN

It's not true! Our Dad's in the Navy!

JAMES

Yeah right. "The Navy."

(to Bradley)

That's just the thing a bastard would say.

They laugh again.

Stephen is incensed. He picks up a ROCK from the ground, throws it.

He hits James square in the forehead.

James reels back, shocked. He turns to his buddy.

JAMES (CONT'D)
(to Bradley)
Get 'em! We're make 'em bastards
eat shit!

The boys give chase.

David RUNS DOWN THE STREET, Bradley taking off after him.

Stephen runs into the front yard of the **Marsten House**,
crouches down behind a THORNY BUSH.

James follows, then stops. Hesitates.

BRADLEY
(from down the block)
James!! I got 'im!!

James takes off down the street, relieved. He's not going on
the grounds of the Marsten House, even if that crazy King kid
is.

James leaves. Stephen peeks out from behind the bush,
panting.

He hears a sound behind him, turns around.

The enormous old house is silent.

Stephen can't resist. He creeps over to the window, stands on
tiptoes and peers in.

The front room is empty. HARD WOOD FLOORS are covered in dust
and dirt. PAINT peels from the walls.

Stephen sees a SHADOW pass over the room. GASPS.

The shadow steps into view. **COWBOY BOOTS.**

Stephen's eyes take in the figure of **THE DARK MAN**, leering at
him from the doorway.

Stephen runs away as The Dark Man laughs.

EXT. THE KING HOUSE, DURHAM - LATER THAT DAY

An old single-story wooden home in the middle of rolling
fields. The house is RUN DOWN, the old wooden boards ROTTED
THROUGH.

David and Stephen SPRINT up to the front door.

INT. KITCHEN, THE KING HOUSE

RUTH KING, a stoic, no-nonsense Mainer with a stern continence, stands at an old WOOD FIRE STOVE making dinner. David and Stephen BURST IN, trying desperately trying to catch their breath.

RUTH
Where on earth you boys been?

DAVID
Those stupid kids were chasin' us!

Ruth turns to see a thin trickle of blood on Stephen's forehead from where he scratched himself on the bush.

She rushes over to the boy.

RUTH
In the Lord's name, Stevie, what have you done? You're bleedin' all over the place.

STEPHEN
Sorry, Mom.

Ruth takes him by the hand, softens.

RUTH
Come with me.

INT. BATHROOM - MINUTES LATER

Stephen sits up on an old SINK while his mother dabs his cut with **MERCUROCHROME**.

Stephen winces.

RUTH
Don't me a big baby. It ain't nothin' but a scratch.

Stephen tries to be brave.

STEPHEN
Mom?

RUTH
Yes, Stevie?

STEPHEN
Did our Daddy leave us? Are we bastards?

Ruth hesitates. She keeps dabbing at her son's forehead.

RUTH
Your Daddy's in the Navy.
(beat)
And don't cuss.

STEPHEN
Why don't we see him? Like, ever?

RUTH
'Cause he ain't worth seein'.

Ruth examines her handiwork.

RUTH (CONT'D)
There. Much better.

Stephen frowns. His mother kisses him on the cheek.

RUTH (CONT'D)
Don't you listen to those boys no
more, 'kay? They ain't nothin' but
gossips and small minded fools.

STEPHEN
Okay, Mom.

Ruth smiles.

The boy's gotta toughen up.

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - EVENING

1973. Stephen walks in, sweaty and grimy from his work at the INDUSTRIAL LAUNDRY. Naomi and Joe peer at him from their CRIBS.

Tabitha stands in front of a mirror wearing a bright pink pinstripe **DUNKIN' DONUTS** dress. She pins a matching pink hat to her head.

Stephen gazes at her longingly.

STEPHEN
Hey you.

TABITHA
Hey.

STEPHEN
You know, I hate seeing you like
this. On the other hand, I love
seeing you like this.

Tabitha smiles.

Stephen takes his wife by the waist and pulls her in.

TABITHA
You only married me for my donuts.

STEPHEN
Your donuts and your typewriter.

TABITHA
Ah, yes.

They kiss. Stephen's face darkens.

Tabitha immediately senses his despair, takes his face in her
hands.

TABITHA (CONT'D)
It won't always be like this.

STEPHEN
Really?

TABITHA
Uh-huh.

STEPHEN
What makes you so sure?

TABITHA
This.

Tabitha pulls something out of the POCKET of her dress. It's
an **ENVELOPE**.

Stephen immediately brightens.

He takes it from her.

STEPHEN
(excited)
When did this arrive?

TABITHA
This morning.

STEPHEN
Why didn't you open it?

TABITHA
Because it's yours.

STEPHEN
Come on, Tab. It's ours.

TABITHA
Open it.

Stephen examines the return address.

STEPHEN
It's from Penthouse.

He tears open the envelope, pulls out a CHECK.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
(excited)
Twenty bucks!

TABITHA
Not bad.

Stephen regards the check, a bright spot in a tough day.

STEPHEN
I won't always be writing for nudie
mags, you know.

Tabitha wraps her arms around his neck.

TABITHA
I don't know - I think it's kind of
sexy.

Stephen smiles. They kiss again.

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - LATE THAT NIGHT

The trailer is DARK. Naomi and Joe sleep in their adjourning cribs. From the tiny laundry room we hear the sound of a TYPEWRITER.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM

Stephen sits at his makeshift desk between the washer and dryer, typing away furiously.

Stephen pounds the keys like his life depends on it. Writing time is scarce, and he must make the most of it.

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER

Joe wakes in his crib, begins to CRY.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM

Stephen is so engrossed in the story, he fails to hear the baby's screams.

He presses on, typing faster as the story pours from him.

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER

Joe's cries have woken Naomi. She too begins to cry, if only to alert her father to their plight.

The screams of the children fill the trailer, until, finally--

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM

Stephen stops. He looks around, as if awakening from a dream. Hears the cries of his children.

STEPHEN

Goddamn it.

INT. BATHROOM, DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - MOMENTS LATER

Stephen stands in front of the mirror, red faced, furious.

His anger rises. The cries of his children ring in his ears.

He opens the cabinet, takes out a bottle of **EXCEDRIN**. Swallows two. Closes the cabinet.

He turns around. Something is written on the back of the bathroom door in CRAYON. A word.

REDRUM.

He spins around, looks in the mirror. Sees the word reflected. **MURDER.**

Stephen CRIES OUT, claps a hand to his mouth.

He closes his eyes. Opens them. Looks in the bathroom mirror.

The word is gone.

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - MOMENTS LATER

Stephen races out of the bathroom, scoops up Joe from his crib.

STEPHEN

Oh, Joe. I'm sorry, buddy...

He picks up Naomi, cradles her in his other arm.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

It's okay, kids. Shhhh, don't cry.

The kids become quiet, finally comforted.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - MINUTES LATER

The sound of TYPING. Stephen is back at his desk, a child on each KNEE.

The babies watch, wide eyed and fascinated, as their Dad pounds away at the typewriter, the sound as soothing as a lullaby.

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - LATER

Silence. The trailer is dark. There is movement at the front door.

Tabitha enters as quietly as possible. She's still wearing her Dunkin' Donuts uniform, but it's crumpled now, her hat askew. In her arms are TWO BOXES of DONUTS, tomorrow's BREAKFAST.

She puts them down on the table, looks over at the bed.

Stephen lies in the middle, a CHILD under each arm, SNORING.

Tabitha regards her husband and children tenderly, then turns her attention to the tiny room next door.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Tabitha enters, heading straight for the typewriter.

She picks up the pages beside it, reads a few lines.

She nods approvingly.

Not bad. Not bad at all.

INT. KITCHEN, DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - MOMENTS LATER

Tabitha sits at the kitchen booth. A SMALL LAMP illuminates the table.

In front of her is a **NOTEBOOK**.

Tabitha picks up a pen and begins to compose a POEM.

As she writes we hear the sound of her voice, echoing from a time that seems long ago, when life was simpler...

TABITHA (V.O)
*The thinnest bear is awakened in
 the winter,
 by the sleep-laughter of locusts...*

CUT TO:

INT. POETRY CLASS, THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE

Tabitha stands at the front of the room, reading a poem to the class. Her features are younger, filled with sun and optimism, not yet hardened by the trials that are to follow.

She reads aloud.

TABITHA
*The bear has heard a sure promise.
 Certain words are edible; they
 nourish...*

Stephen sits at the back of the class, staring at Tabitha with rapt attention.

He beams, entranced. This girl's got it.

She's damn cute too.

EXT. FOLGER LIBRARY, THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE - DAY

An imposing two-storey brick building with long, rounded windows. Students mill about on the lawn out front.

GRAPHIC: The University of Maine - 1969

INT. FOLGER LIBRARY

Tabitha pushes a cart between the rows of books. She stops, picks up a handful of hardcovers and begins to reshelve.

On the other side of the aisle, Stephen also makes his way down with a cart full of books.

He stops directly across from Tabitha and reshelves as she does.

STEPHEN

I really liked your poem.

Tabitha turns around, recognizes Stephen from class.

TABITHA

Is that a fact?

STEPHEN

Yes, ma'am.

TABITHA

What'd you like about it?

STEPHEN

I liked what you said about words being edible and nourishing. I feel the same way.

TABITHA

Huh.

Tabitha goes back to shelving.

Stephen continues to pursue, undeterred by her lack of interest.

STEPHEN

I'm a writer too.

TABITHA

Of course you are.

(smirks)

You any good?

STEPHEN

I am.

TABITHA

Well, you sure are confident!

STEPHEN

I still value other people's opinions... especially if they're writers themselves. Here.

Stephen produces a stack of papers.

TABITHA
What's this?

STEPHEN
A novel.

TABITHA
You wrote a novel? Already??

STEPHEN
I've written four.

Tabitha takes the bundle, looks it over.

TABITHA
What's it about?

STEPHEN
Why don't you read it and tell me?

TABITHA
All right, but I'm warnin' ya. I
ain't no wilting violet. I don't
like it, you're gonna know about
it.

STEPHEN
That's what I was hoping for.

Stephen rolls his cart of books away.

As he leaves Tabitha looks down, notes the shabby state of
his shoes.

They are being held together with TAPE.

INT. BEDROOM, THE KING HOUSE, LISBON FALLS - MORNING

THE PAST. Young Stephen sits on his bed in a TEE SHIRT and
SHORTS. In his hands is a roll of DUCT TAPE.

He holds his LEG in the air. One shabby looking SANDAL is
balanced on his FOOT.

He attempts to TAPE the shoe, keeps losing his balance and
falling to the side.

RUTH (O.S.)
Boys! It's time for your showers!

Stephen kicks off the sandal, takes a TOWEL from beside him
and runs from the room, BAREFOOT.

INT. LIVING ROOM, THE KING HOUSE

Stephen runs into the living room. David is waiting with his own towel.

The two boys run outside.

RUTH
(yelling after them)
Stephen King! Where are your
shoes??

EXT. THE KING HOUSE

Stephen and David run across the road to **ANOTHER HOUSE**, larger and nicer than their own.

INT. AUNT ETHELYN'S HOUSE

They run in. A woman with a passing resemblance to Ruth is at the sink WASHING DISHES.

DAVID Hey Aunt Ethelyn!

STEPHEN Hey!

AUNT ETHELYN
You boys here for your showers?

DAVID
Yes, ma'am!

AUNT ETHELYN
Well, go on then! Upstairs with ya!

David and Stephen disappear upstairs.

INT. BATHROOM, THE ETHELYN HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

David is in the SHOWER, whistling to himself.

Stephen sits on the CLOSED TOILET SEAT, waiting his turn.

STEPHEN

Dave?

Yeah? DAVID

STEPHEN
When are we gonna get our own
shower?

DAVID
When money grows on pine trees.

STEPHEN
(sighs)
If Aunt Ethelyn weren't here we'd
stink worse than a sack of shit.

DAVID
You already do.

STEPHEN
Ha ha. Very funny.

David goes back to washing and whistling.

Stephen looks around, bored.

He sees a folded up **NEWSPAPER** beside the toilet, picks it up.

Stephen STARES at the Headline:

RUSSIAN SATELLITE SIGHTED OVER U.S.

His eyes WIDEN with fear.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE, MAIN CAMPUS - DAY

An **ANTI-WAR DEMONSTRATION.**

Thousands of students flood the campus lawn.

Tabitha is among the crowd.

She watches as Stephen takes the podium, cheered on by the other students.

STEPHEN
I gotta tell ya. There's some scary
shit going down, my friends. We all
saw what happened at Kent State. We
all see what's happening in
congress. A university shouldn't be
a scary place. It should be a
bedrock of knowledge and progress.

Cheers from the crowd.

Tabitha smiles, impressed.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Now, I'm not anybody special. I'm just a poor boy from Maine whose Momma had to work two jobs so me and my brother had food in our mouths, and I'll be damned if she went through all that just to have us shipped off to Vietnam and killed in some damn war that doesn't make any sense!

More cheers from the crowd. Applause.

Tabitha claps, beaming.

INT. OFFICE, UMO MAGAZINE - DAY

A bustling student newspaper. The magazine editor, DAN, an amiable fellow fond of plaid shirts, sits at his desk reading the latest issue. His deputy editor, JEFF, sits on the corner of the desk.

DAN

We need something else.

JEFF

Like what?

DAN

I dunno. We're just playing it too safe. We need to shake things up.

JEFF

Things are shaken up enough as it is, Dan.

DAN

Christ, Jeff. You're such a reactionary.

Dan's eyes are drawn to the door. Stephen has strolled in, all six feet of him. He's wearing a large OVERCOAT and together with his mountain man beard looks like a crazed hillbilly.

Dan yells over.

DAN (CONT'D)

Can we help you?

STEPHEN

You the editor?

Dan nods.

Stephen walks over, extends his hand.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
I'm Steve King. I wanna write a
column.

DAN
I've seen you around campus. You
were at the Dow sit-in, right?

STEPHEN
Ayuh.

DAN
What do you wanna write about,
Steve?

STEPHEN
Oh, I don't know. Whatever takes my
fancy.

Dan and Jeff exchange a bemused glance.

JEFF
You got a name for this column?

STEPHEN
I was thinkin' of callin' it "Steve
King's Garbage Truck", 'cause you
never know what you're gonna find
in there.

Jeff and Dan laugh. Jeff shrugs.

JEFF
(to Dan)
You wanted to shake things up.

DAN
Okay, Steve. We'll try you out, but
there's two rules.

STEPHEN
Name 'em.

DAN
It's gotta be here by noon Tuesday,
and it's gotta fit this space.

Dan holds up a PROOF of the mag, points to an empty space in
the corner.

STEPHEN
You got it.

DAN
(sceptical)
You ever written a column before?

CUT TO:

INT. LISBON FALLS HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

David (15) walks the crowded halls. In his hand is a stack of bright yellow newsletters. The headline: **DAVE'S RAG**.

DAVID
(yelling)
Check it out! Dave's Rag! All the local news that's fit to print! A nickel a copy!

In another hallway, Stephen (13) is doing the same.

STEPHEN
Dave's Rag! Find out all the secrets of Lisbon Falls! Stories by Dave and Steve King!

"DAVE'S RAG" MONTAGE:

-- **DAVID'S BEDROOM:** David and Stephen sit around, throwing out story ideas.

DAVID
Meatloaf on the menu again. Has the cafeteria run out of ideas?

STEPHEN
How is Charley Harrington's broken leg mending?

DAVID
What about Moxie? Can it really compete with the bigger sodas?

STEPHEN
The Marsten House. Find out about Lisbon Falls most haunted home.

-- **LISBON FALLS HIGH SCHOOL:** David walks the hallways, handing out copies of 'Dave's Rag.' Students eagerly fork over their nickel. It's a big hit.

-- **LIVING ROOM:** Stephen sits in front of a small black and white TV, watching "Invasion of the Body Snatchers". He transcribes the events of the movie onto a note pad.

-- **DAVID'S BEDROOM:** Copies of "Dave's Rag" crank out of a old mimeograph machine. We see the headline: INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS. READ THE AMAZING STORY HERE.

-- **BEDROOM AT NIGHT:** A boy sits in bed, reading his copy of "Dave's Rag". He takes in the story of the Body Snatchers, shivers with fright.

EXT. THE KING HOUSE - AFTERNOON

A well-dressed, stern looking woman, MISS HISLER, walks up to the front door. In her hands is a copy of Dave's Rag.

She surveys the ramshackle state of the house, wrinkles her nose in disapproval. She knocks.

INT. THE KING HOUSE

Ruth answers the door, takes in the official looking woman in front of her.

Behind her David and Stephen cower behind the sofa, hiding.

RUTH
(on guard)
Can I help you?

MISS HISLER
Are you Mrs. King?

RUTH
Ayuh.

MISS HISLER
My name is Miss Hisler. I'm the
Vice Principal at Lisbon Falls.

RUTH
(unimpressed)
How do you do.

MISS HISLER
Mrs. King, are you aware of this?

She holds up "Dave's Rag" as if it were Satan's Bible.

RUTH
I am.

MISS HISLER

And you approve?

RUTH

What exactly are you gettin' at
Miss Hisler?

MISS MISLER

Mrs. King, this newsletter that
your boys have been selling to our
students is filled with
inappropriate material. Monsters
from outer space. Conspiracy
theories. Ghost stories. I've had
complaints from parents that these
stories are scaring their children
half to death. Your boys are to
return the money they made from
peddling this filth.

RUTH

They will do no such thing. My boys
earned that money through hard work
and determination. It surprises me
that you deem such entrepreneurship
as worthy of punishment.

MISS HISLER

There is nothing "entrepreneurial"
about writing things purely to
frighten people. I never want to
see this "Rag" at my school ever
again. Good day to you, Mrs. King.

Miss Hisler departs.

Ruth closes the door.

RUTH

Stupid old busy body got nothin'
better to do with her time...

Ruth looks over at her sons, peering out from behind the
sofa.

RUTH (CONT'D)

...and as for you two!

Stephen and David make a dash for the front door.

They makes it outside, successfully evading the wrath of
their mother.

INT. OFFICE, UMO MAGAZINE - DEADLINE DAY

Tuesday. The office is in chaos.

Students rush from desk to desk, passing pieces of paper, circling mistakes, wiping the sweat from their brows.

Dan sits at his desk, watches the clock. Fifteen minutes to twelve.

Where the hell is Stephen?

Jeff rushes over to his desk.

JEFF

We need that column from King.

DAN

Well, it's not here.

JEFF

Then we have to run something else.

DAN

I don't have anything else.

JEFF

(frustrated)

I thought you said this guy was good.

Ten minutes to twelve.

As if on cue, Stephen walks casually into the office. He has nothing in his hands, no satchel, no note book, no column.

Jeff frowns. Dan watches, curious.

Stephen looks around the chaos for an empty desk, finds one and sits down. He picks up a blank piece of paper and threads it through the typewriter.

He starts to type.

Dan and Jeff watch as Stephen pounds out a page of copy. When he's done he stands, pulls the paper triumphantly from the roll.

He gives it a quick once over. All looks good.

He walks over and hands it to Dan.

STEPHEN

There you go. See you next week.

He leaves. Dan hands the paper to Jeff, looks at the clock.

It's five minutes to twelve.

DAN

Check it.

Jeff grabs a red pen, sits down, reads through the copy.

He goes to make a correction, stops, decides against it.

He finishes reading. Shakes his head.

JEFF

It's perfect.

Dan smiles. Hell yeah it's perfect.

EXT. THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE - LATE AFTERNOON

A warm spring afternoon. Streaks of orange and gold slash the sky. Students wander the campus, enjoying the weather.

Tabitha walks across the grass, books under arm. She hears a voice behind her.

STEPHEN (O.S.)

Hey!

She turns to see Stephen's hulking figure racing to catch up with her. She smiles, keeps walking.

Stephen walks alongside her.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

I was beginning to think I'd never see you again.

TABITHA

We have poetry class together, remember?

STEPHEN

Yeah, but I was worried you hated my novel so much, it would be easier to ditch class than give a critique.

TABITHA

What makes you so sure I've already read your novel?

STEPHEN
(disappointed)
Oh.

TABITHA
(teasing)
I have read it.

Stephen immediately brightens.

STEPHEN
So don't dilly dally 'bout it. Tell
me what you think!

TABITHA
Sure was gruesome.

STEPHEN
Yeah, but was it good?

Tabitha stops walking, gives Stephen an earnest look.

TABITHA
It was better than good. I couldn't
put the damn thing down all night.

STEPHEN
I knew it! I'm the best!

TABITHA
(taken aback)
You sure are full of yourself.

STEPHEN
I'm sorry. It's just, I can't
control myself when I get excited
about somethin'.

TABITHA
(coy)
And what are you so excited about?

Stephen beams. He looks down, suddenly shy.

Tabitha laughs.

INT. DINER, DOWNTOWN ORONO - EVENING

A diner filled with college students on a Friday night.

Stephen and Tabitha sit in a booth by the window. They drink
MALT SHAKES. Creedence Clearwater plays on the JUKEBOX.

TABITHA

Your central premise is really out there. If you're going to shock people, you might as well go for it. Don't pull your punches. Otherwise your readers feel shortchanged.

STEPHEN

You're right.

(beat)

You know, you're real good at this. That's some of the best criticism I ever got.

TABITHA

I've always had a good handle on knowin' shit from Shinola. If I'm talkin', you should be takin' notes.

STEPHEN

(after a chuckle)

So - you wanna be a poet?

TABITHA

I think so. I wanna write a novel too. Look at you - you've already written four! You're like some kind of word factory.

STEPHEN

Amateurs sit and wait for inspiration. The rest of us just get up and go to work.

Tabitha grins, impressed.

TABITHA

What are your plans for after graduation?

STEPHEN

Become rich and famous. Buy myself a big purple Cadillac.

TABITHA

Did anyone ever tell you your taste is in your ass?

STEPHEN

Don't know about that. I think my taste in ladies is pretty spot on.

(beat)

(MORE)

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Anyway, maybe that's what I need.
Someone to save me from my ego.

TABITHA

Poor woman will have her work cut
out.

Stephen's expression changes.

STEPHEN

Joking aside?

TABITHA

Joking aside, you've got it.
Hell, you might even be
publishable.

Stephen picks up his malt shake, raises his glass.

STEPHEN

Then here's to the future.

Tabitha picks up hers.

TABITHA

To the future.

They clink glasses.

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - MORNING

1973. The sun peeks through the makeshift fabric curtains.

A half-eaten box of DUNKIN' DONUTS sits on the bench. Beside
it are a few empty BEER BOTTLES.

It's a depressing scene.

INT. BRUNSWICK HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Summer break. The corridors are deserted.

Stephen pushes a MOP and BUCKET down a long corridor. He's
wearing overalls and sneakers, hunches over the mop like the
Hunchback of Notre Dame. On his overalls is a sewn-on name
tag: **JANITOR**.

INT. GIRLS LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Stephen SCRUBS the rust-stains off the wall in the girls'
locker room.

He looks around, takes in the SHOWERS with PINK PLASTIC CURTAINS.

On the wall he spies something extraordinary. He stops scrubbing and walks over to take a closer look.

It's a **SANITARY NAPKIN MACHINE**.

Stephen has never seen one before. He looks at it curiously, jiggles the little handle.

A SANITARY NAPKIN pops out of the chute.

Stephen picks it up, looks it over and shakes his head.

Remarkable.

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - THAT EVENING

Stephen and Tabitha sit at the kitchen booth. Naomi and Joe play with **TOY BLOCKS** on the floor. In front of Tabitha is a pile of **BILLS**.

She goes through them with a CALCULATOR while Stephen talks excitedly.

STEPHEN

It was amazing. It was like having access to the inner sanctum of a woman's world.

TABITHA

(unimpressed)
Seriously?

STEPHEN

Seriously. I felt like I was on another planet.

TABITHA

You've never been in a girls' locker room before?

STEPHEN

Not when I'm teaching. When I'm teaching my purview is strictly the classroom. But when summer rolls round and I have the illustrious opportunity to be the janitor, I have full access to all the 'dirty' spaces.

TABITHA

So you think lady spaces are dirty, huh? Well, I'd guesstimate the boys' locker room ain't all June Bugs and roses with their sweaty jockstraps and what have you!

STEPHEN

(lost in thought)

It just seemed so primal in there, so... filled with secrets.

TABITHA

You better not be fixin' to fill any of those secrets... or I'll be cuttin' off your pecker and callin' the authorities.

STEPHEN

(rolling his eyes)

Some on. Tell me. What goes on in there?

TABITHA

In the girls' locker room?

Stephen nods. Please.

TABITHA (CONT'D)

You know, you hear a lot of bull about women workin' together and belongin' to the sisterhood and all that kind of stuff, but I gotta tell ya, women are crueller to each other than any man can be. Women know exactly the right buttons to push, the things to say that are gonna hurt you the most, 'cause they feel it too. They know exactly how to stick the knife in so that it hurts real bad. One way to do that is to make a girl feel real bad about how she looks. It's hard to hide your pimply ass when you're in a room full of naked girls just dyin' to take you down a peg.

STEPHEN

I think you're beautiful, baby.

TABITHA

Yeah, well it wasn't always me bein' picked on. Sometimes it was me doin' the bullyin'.

(MORE)

TABITHA (CONT'D)

I ain't proud of it. But sooner or later we all copped a dose. That's just the way it goes.

Tabitha returns to the bills.

Stephen watches, dejected.

STEPHEN

Speaking of coppin' it, how we doin'?

Tabitha looks up, raises an eyebrow.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

That good, huh?

Stephen looks down at his kids on the floor.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

You two got jobs yet? C'mon, Joe, this ain't no free ride.

TABITHA

God forbid he wants to become a writer like his father.

STEPHEN

Joe's smarter than that, aren't you Joe? You're gonna be a doctor, look after your parents in their old age.

Joe sticks a TOY BLOCK in his mouth, sucks on it.

Tabitha keeps calculating.

TABITHA

Well, maybe there's something in this.

STEPHEN

The girls' locker room?

TABITHA

Uh-huh. I'm sure Penthouse would love a story about teenage girls making out in the showers at school.

STEPHEN

I'm trying to keep my output somewhat literary. I don't know. Maybe I should try another genre...

TABITHA

You'll do no such thing. You have to write what you're passionate about. You start writing for a buck, there ain't no point in doing it anymore.

Stephen watches his wife as she methodically sorts their finances, takes a swig of his BEER.

He gazes at Tabitha adoringly. What a woman.

We hear Tabitha's voice floating back from the past...

TABITHA (V.O) (CONT'D)

So why horror?

EXT. THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE - NIGHT

Stephen and Tabitha walk across campus. The moon shines down on them as they talk.

STEPHEN

Why horror?

TABITHA

Yeah. Why not write about romance or fairies or the decline of western civilization?

STEPHEN

That's kind of an unfair question.

TABITHA

Oh yeah? Why's that?

STEPHEN

Because no one ever asked Chandler why he wrote detective stories. No one ever questioned Steinbeck about why he wrote about poverty and California and land ownership--

TABITHA

Gimme a break, Steve. What a bunch of bull.

STEPHEN

What you're really asking is if something weird and twisted happened in my deep dark past that warped me forever.

TABITHA
That's exactly what I'm asking you.

STEPHEN
You want me to tell you?

Tabitha nods. Please.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Okay.
(beat)
Bambi.

TABITHA
(disbelieving)
Bambi...

STEPHEN
The first time I ever got scared
was when I saw Bambi. It was when
the woods caught on fire and Bambi
and his Mom were trying to get out.
Bambi asked his Mom what happened
in the woods, and why they have to
run. She turned to Bambi and I'll
never forget this. She said:
"Man...was in the forest." Goddamn
it, I nearly shit my pants in fear.
It got me thinkin', how bad can man
be? Then Bambi's Mom got shot and I
found out.
(beat)
Those Disney pictures are scary as
shit.

Tabitha laughs.

TABITHA
So it was Bambi that turned you
into the warped, perverted creature
that you are today. Nothing else?

FLASH TO:

EXT. RAILROAD TRACK, DURHAM, MAINE

A railroad cuts through a field. **4 YEAR-OLD** Stephen follows
an OLDER BOY as they run towards the track.

RUTH races after them, frantic.

RUTH
STEPHEN! STOP!!

Stephen isn't listening. He runs along the railway line, swept up in the game.

A TRAIN ENGINE sounds from far way, but not far enough.

RUTH (CONT'D)
COME BACK!!

The Older Boy runs onto the track. Suddenly the TRAIN is upon him.

Ruth SCREAMS.

Stephen stops, stares at the track as the train barrels past. Blood and guts fly from its wheels.

The train speeds away. Stephen stares at the body of the boy, takes in the MANGLED REMAINS.

Ruth sweeps up her son, holds him close as she CRIES.

Stephen's eyes are WIDE. His mind, SCARRED.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE

Stephen snaps back from the memory.

STEPHEN
Nope. Nothin' else. Sorry to disappoint you. What about you? How'd you become such a tough cookie?

TABITHA
Growin' up poor with seven brothers and sisters will do that. My Daddy didn't name me after a war ship for nothin'.

In a sudden burst of romantic fervor, Stephen sweeps Tabitha into his arms.

They kiss.

After a few seconds, Tabitha breaks away, squinting her face.

TABITHA (CONT'D)
What did you have for dinner?

STEPHEN
Pizza.

TABITHA
Well, you went a little heavy on
the oregano.

Stephen smiles. He's smitten.

INT. DORM ROOM, THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE - THE NEXT DAY

Stephen sits at his desk in his dorm room, working away on a story.

He hears a KNOCK at the door, turns around.

His MAIL has been slipped underneath.

He gets up, picks up the LETTERS. Tries to control his anticipation.

There's JUNK MAIL, then-- a letter from **RANDOM HOUSE PUBLISHING**.

Stephen tears it open and reads.

His face drops.

He reads to the bottom. His eyes widen with anger.

The letter **EXPLODES in FLAMES** in his hands.

He drops the letter, holds his head in his hands.

The entire room around him **IGNITES** in a **FIERY INFERNO**.

Suddenly, the flames DISAPPEAR. The room returns to its NATURAL FORM.

Stephen CRUSHES the letter in his hands, filled with DESPAIR.

He needs a DRINK.

INT. BAR - EVENING

Stephen sits at a seedy bar. In front of him are TWO BEERS and a WHISKEY SHOT.

He slams back the WHISKEY, washes it down with BEER.

He motions to the bartender.

STEPHEN
Gimme another one.

The bartender brings over the bottle; pours him another shot.
Stephen slams it back.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
(to bartender)
You ever get the feeling you're not
livin' the life you were meant to?

BARTENDER
Only every day.

The bartender leaves Stephen to his drinking.

Stephen picks up the beer, slams it back as he looks around.

Someone is watching him from the back booth. Stephen notes the familiar DENIM JACKET, looks down and sees a pair of DUSTY COWBOY BOOTS beneath the table.

Stephen grins; raises his bottle to **THE DARK MAN**.

The Dark Man raises his own, then drinks.

INT. FOLGER LIBRARY - THE NEXT DAY

Tabitha is at the front desk, checking books out.

She spies Stephen pushing a cart amongst the shelves. She immediately sees something is wrong.

She leaves the desk, follows him to a secluded part of the library.

TABITHA
Hey...

No response. Stephen mechanically pushes a book onto a shelf.

Tabitha grabs his shirt sleeve.

TABITHA (CONT'D)
Hey.

She swings him around. Stephen's eyes are completely **BLOODSHOT**. His skin is PALE, his hands SHAKE.

TABITHA (CONT'D)
What in Lord's name happened to
you??

STEPHEN
(defiant)
Nothin'.

TABITHA
Sure don't look like nothin'.

STEPHEN
Random House... they rejected my
novel.

TABITHA
Oh. I'm sorry. That really sucks.
From the way you're lookin' I
thought it was goin' to be
somethin' really bad.

Stephen is taken aback.

STEPHEN
(outraged)
It is something really bad.

Tabitha looks deep into Stephen's bloodshot eyes.

TABITHA
Bad enough you had to drink
yourself into a stupor??

Stephen turns away, continues shelving.

Tabitha POKES HIM HARD IN THE BACK.

TABITHA (CONT'D)
HEY!

Stephen whips around, startled.

STEPHEN
What the hell??

TABITHA
You don't turn your back on me,
Stephen King. Didn't your mother
teach you any manners?

STEPHEN
Don't you bring my mom into this.
She brought me up just fine!

TABITHA
You could've fooled me!

Out of nowhere, the sound of SHUSHING.

Stephen and Tabitha lower their voices.

TABITHA (CONT'D)
You can't do this to yourself,
Steve. You can't bury yourself in a
bottle every time things don't go
your way, especially if you're
gonna be a writer. It'll destroy
your craft and your talent and I
just won't tolerate it.

STEPHEN
(sulking)
Why do you care so much?

TABITHA
Because I won't let the father of
my child destroy himself. Not on my
watch.

Stephen stops, isn't sure what he's just heard.

STEPHEN
What--?

BEAT

TABITHA
I'm pregnant.

Something flashes across Stephen's face: Fear. Hope. Terror.
Love.

He picks Tabitha up in his enormous arms, spins her around
wildly, both of them laughing.

More SHUSHING from the library. They don't care.

Their laughter echoes among the shelves, bouncing between the
words of the greats.

EXT. MAINE GENERAL HOSPITAL - DAY

A dreary brick building. Stephen's brother, David, now also
in his 20s, waits in the parking lot.

Stephen's ravaged Buick pulls in and parks beside him.

He gets out.

STEPHEN
Hey, asshole.

DAVID
Hey, shit for brains.

The two brothers embrace.

They talk as they walk towards the hospital entrance.

DAVID (CONT'D)
How are things?

STEPHEN
Things are interesting.

DAVID
Oh yeah? In what way?

STEPHEN
Remember that girl I was telling
you about?

DAVID
Ayuh. She's not knocked up is she?

Stephen doesn't answer.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Jesus Christ, Steve.

STEPHEN
I can't help it. My sperm is very
powerful.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Stephen and David enter.

A frail woman sits in a chair by the window. It's their mother Ruth, now in her 60s. She's wearing a NIGHTGOWN and is hooked up to a VENTILATOR.

When she sees her boys she beams.

STEPHEN
There she is!

DAVID
The lady herself!

RUTH
Don't shout, boys. I'm dying, not
deaf!

STEPHEN

It's good to see you too, Mom.

Stephen pulls up a chair beside her.

David goes to a VASE of DEAD ROSES beside her bed, picks it up.

DAVID

Steve's got some news for you.

Stephen rolls his eyes. Thanks a lot, Dave.

Ruth's face lights up.

RUTH

They accepted your book!

STEPHEN

No, Mom.

David makes the sound of a GAME SHOW BUZZER.

DAVID

Wrong answer, Mrs. King. This is something that's going to cost money, not make money.

David disappears into the bathroom to dispense with the dead roses.

Ruth regards her youngest son, tears coming to her eyes.

RUTH

You're having a baby.

Stephen nods with an uneasy smirk.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Then what's wrong?

STEPHEN

It just didn't seem like the right time, you know?

RUTH

There's never a right time for children. You just make it work with what you have.

STEPHEN

(unconvinced)

You mean like Dad did?

RUTH

You're not your father, Steve.
 Anyway, Donald did work a job for a
 while, before he disappeared into
 thin air, that is. He was the best
 damn vacuum cleaner salesman there
 ever was. He was so good he could
 sell a vacuum cleaner to a widow at
 2 a.m.

Stephen laughs. His mother always was feisty, even now.

RUTH (CONT'D)

You'll be fine, sweetheart. You
 have more persistence than your
 father ever did. He had none at
 all, which is why he left. You'll
 find a way.

Ruth pats his hand comfortingly.

Stephen isn't so sure.

INT. CAVALIER MAGAZINE OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

The home of '**Cavalier**', the nudie mag for discerning readers.

Posters of NAKED WOMEN cover the walls. The staff are dressed
 casually in HAWAIIAN SHIRTS and TAN SHORTS.

Editor NYE WILLDEN strides towards his desk, sorting through
 a handful of NUDE SHOTS. A harassed looking ASSISTANT walks
 beside him.

NYE

Too short. Too thin. Tits aren't
 big enough.

He hands the photos to the assistant.

NYE (CONT'D)

Bring me something good, will ya? I
 know we asked for amateur shots,
 but there's amateur and then
 there's, well, frightening.

The assistant sighs and disappears.

Nye's phone rings. He scoops it up.

NYE (CONT'D)

Nye here.

INT. MAINE GENERAL HOSPITAL, CORRIDOR

Stephen is on a PAY PHONE in the hall.

INTERCUT -- PHONE CONVERSATION

STEPHEN

Nye? Nye, this is Steve King.

NYE

Steve King... oh, the horror guy!
How are ya? You got anything good
for me?

STEPHEN

Yeah. I got something I'm workin'
on, it's just that... I'm gonna
need the money up front.

NYE

Come again?

STEPHEN

If that's possible, I mean, I know
it's unconventional...

NYE

Unconventional? Steve, it's just
not done. I'm not givin' you money
up front for a story I haven't
seen. What are you, crazy?

STEPHEN

It's just that, I'm in a real bad
situation, Nye. My girlfriend,
she's pregnant, and I've found this
trailer where we can live, but I
gotta come up with a hundred bucks
down payment. I was hopin' you
could help me out. I mean, you like
my stuff, right?

NYE

Yeah, Steve. I like your stuff.
It's great. The readers like it
too, but c'mon. What you're asking
me isn't the way we do things.

STEPHEN

I know. I just, I'm really scared.

Nye sits back.

NYE

Shit. If the horror guy is scared, things must be really bad.

STEPHEN

I wouldn't be askin' otherwise...

NYE

Okay. Here's what I'll do. I'll get you an advance on three stories for the year. That's four hundred bucks. Should be enough to get you and your girl set up.

STEPHEN

I don't know what to say. You've saved my ass.

NYE

Just one thing Steve...

STEPHEN

What?

NYE

Make 'em scary.

Stephen grins. That he can do.

EXT. DRIVE IN, MAINE - EVENING

A scary movie. **THE CORPSE GRINDERS**. A crazed cat EATS his buxom owner. She screams as the cat devours her flesh.

INT. STEPHEN'S BUICK

Stephen sits in front, enjoying the movie.

Beside him sits his pal, JIMMY SMITH.

At their feet are EMPTY BEER CANS. They tear open a new one, laughing their asses off as the cat tears at the woman's throat.

Suddenly the movie goes SILENT. A voice rings out over the packed drive-in.

DRIVE-IN MANAGER

**STEVE KING! PLEASE GO HOME! YOUR
WIFE IS IN LABOR! STEVE KING!
PLEASE GO HOME! YOUR WIFE IS GOING
TO HAVE A BABY!**

Stephen looks at Jimmy, panics.

STEPHEN

Oh shit!

He throws the BEER CAN out the WINDOW, starts the car.

The other cars HONK and FLASH THEIR LIGHTS in salute. Some shout out their windows.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #1

CONGRATS MAN!

AUDIENCE MEMBER #2

GO GET HER, PAL!

Jimmy laughs crazily as they peel out of the Drive In.

He's so drunk he slides into the FOOTWELL on the passenger side.

JIMMY

Yee-haw!

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - LATER

Stephen bursts into the trailer.

Tabitha is standing calmly, a PACKED BAG beside her.

STEPHEN

I'm here! I'm here!

TABITHA

Okay, okay! Calm down. We gotta go.

Jimmy bursts in too.

TABITHA (CONT'D)

Oh for God's sake, Steve. I'm about to go give birth and you bring Jimmy Smith!

JIMMY

I'm here to help, Tab. I'm helpin'!

TABITHA

You two ain't helpin', you're drinkin' that's what.

STEPHEN

I'll drive.

TABITHA

No. I'll drive.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MANY HOURS LATER

Tabitha sits in a hospital bed. BABY NAOMI is in her arms.
 Stephen lies in the bed with her, his head on her chest.

STEPHEN

My girls...

Stephen fixes Tabitha with an earnest look.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

I promise I won't let you down.

TABITHA

I know you won't, 'cause I won't
 let you.

They gaze at their baby daughter adoringly, enraptured by her presence.

INT. LAUNDRY, DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - EVENING

Stephen types likes a madman. He's determined to do right by his family, and that means hard work.

MONTAGE TO FATS DOMINOS' "I'M READY":

-- **LAUNDRY:** Stephen types. He's like a heavyweight boxer, fighting it out with the Olivetti. Every slam of the roll is a K.O. BAM!

-- **POST OFFICE:** Downtown. Stephen puts a PILE OF LARGE ENVELOPES into the POST BIN, SLAMS it shut.

-- **POST BOX:** Morning. Stephen opens the POST BOX outside the trailer, pulls out a PILE OF LETTERS, tears them open.
REJECTION. REJECTION. REJECTION. All seems hopeless, until...
YOUR STORY HAS BEEN ACCEPTED. Stephen BEAMS as he pulls out a check for FIFTY DOLLARS.

-- **LAUNDRY:** Stephen at the typewriter again. His eyes are tired but he keeps going, as we...

CUT TO:

INT. STEPHEN'S BEDROOM, THE KING HOUSE - THE PAST

-- A **TEENAGE STEPHEN** sits at his ROYAL TYPEWRITER, pounding out a SHORT STORY. His concentration is intense. He TEARS THE PAGE from the Royal, looks at it with SATISFACTION.

-- The **POST BOX** outside the King House. Stephen places an ENVELOPE in it, marked to the attention of **EDITOR: FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND**.

-- The SAME POST BOX on ANOTHER DAY. Stephen opens it to find a letter. He tears it open. A REJECTION from FAMOUS MONSTERS. Damn it!

-- **STEPHEN'S BEDROOM:** Stephen takes a HAMMER and NAILS the rejection letter to the wall. He sits down at the Royal and starts to WRITE again, undeterred.

-- **The POST BOX:** More REJECTION slips. Stephen puts EVERY SINGLE ONE on the nail in his wall, until there's no room for any more.

FLASH CUTS as he **HAMMERS** all the REJECTION SLIPS he receives over time into the wall, until the ENTIRE WALL IS FULL.

Stephen surveys his handiwork with resignation, sits back down, and gets back to writing.

-- As Stephen types, TEENAGE STEPHEN becomes ADULT STEPHEN. He types with the same ferocity, the same determination.

-- The typewriter pings. It's the end of the RIBBON.

END MONTAGE.

INT. DUNKIN DONUTS - NIGHT

1973. Tabitha stands behind the register, serving a customer. Her supervisor, GREG, sorts donuts behind her.

She hands over a BAG emblazoned with the DUNKIN' DONUTS logo.

TABITHA
(to customer)
Thanks a lot. Come back and see us
real soon.

The customer leaves just as the front door opens. Tabitha immediately brightens. It's Stephen and the kids, all bundled up in winter gear. Stephen carries Joe in a BABY BASKET while Naomi totters beside him, holding his hand.

TABITHA (CONT'D)
(thrilled)
Hi-eeeyyy!

STEPHEN
We heard you got some good eatin'
here.

Stephen lets go of Naomi's hand. She walks slowly towards her mother. Tabitha comes out from behind the counter and scoops her daughter up.

TABITHA
Hi, sweetie.

She kisses her daughter on the nose.

TABITHA (CONT'D)
You want some donuts?

Naomi nods her head. Of course.

INT. DUNKIN DONUTS - LATER

Stephen and Tabitha sit with their kids in a booth, eating donuts. Tabitha lifts her arms and stretches, adjusts her pink hat.

Stephen looks at his wife sadly.

STEPHEN
You okay?

TABITHA
Hm? Yeah, I'm okay. Just tired.

STEPHEN
You remember Mr. Stewart? The head
of the English department?

TABITHA
Ugh. Yeah, I remember him.
Officious little prick.

Stephen laughs. His wife sure does use colorful language.

STEPHEN
He needs a new faculty advisor for
the debate club. Offered me the
job.

TABITHA
You mean on top of your teaching
duties?

STEPHEN
Well, yeah.

TABITHA
Will you still have time to write?

Stephen shrugs nonchalantly, trying to make light of it.

STEPHEN

Not much.

TABITHA

(firm)

Well, then you can't take it.

STEPHEN

Come on, Tab. It's an extra \$300 a year.

TABITHA

I don't care.

STEPHEN

You wouldn't have to work here anymore.

TABITHA

I said no. Besides, if I stop workin' here then we won't get the empty buckets from the donut fillings, and then what would we use for diaper pails?

Stephen takes Tabitha's hand.

STEPHEN

Tabitha, I promise you, it won't always be like this.

TABITHA

The only promise you need to make is that you'll keep writing. Don't stop, Stephen. Don't you ever dare stop. That is one thing I won't ever forgive.

Stephen's eyes well with tears. What did he ever do to deserve this woman?

STEPHEN

Okay, Tab. I won't.

Tabitha rocks baby Joe in her arms, as Stephen holds Naomi close.

EXT. DUNKIN DONUTS - MOMENTS LATER

Stephen exits the store with his kids, steps out into the street.

An enormous SAINT BERNARD is tied to the post outside. The dog regards Stephen listlessly.

Naomi wriggles nervously in her Dad's arms, holds his neck tightly.

She whimpers.

STEPHEN

It's okay, sweetie. It's just a big
doggie. He won't hurt you.

Suddenly the dog LUNGES. FOAM drips from its MOUTH.

Stephen SCREAMS, tries to shield Joe and Naomi but it's too late.

The Saint Bernard TEARS Naomi from his arms, shakes her like a RAG DOLL.

Stephen SCREAMS IN HORROR, watches his daughter TORN TO
PIECES.

Suddenly -- a YOUNG MAN'S VOICE cuts through the chaos.

The dog's OWNER.

OWNER

Hey Bruce! Ready to go?

Stephen looks down. Naomi is still in his arms. Safe. Happy.

She looks at the dog longingly, giggles.

The owner UNTIES the dog, takes him by the LEASH.

OWNER (CONT'D)

(to Naomi)

You wanna pat the doggie?

Naomi nods.

Stephen takes a step back, instinctively holds her tighter.

OWNER (CONT'D)

(to Stephen)

It's okay. He's big, but he's
friendly.

The owner leads the Saint Bernard over.

Naomi wriggles in her father's arms. He reluctantly lets her drop to the ground.

Naomi pats the dog. He is friendly.

Joe STRAINS in his PUSHER, wants to pat the doggie too.

Stephen watches, drenched with sweat, exhausted by the DARKNESS of his visions.

EXT. HAMPDEN ACADEMY, MAINE - DAY

A private highschool. A large brick building at the end of a driveway bears the words **HAMPDEN ACADEMY**.

INT. CLASSROOM, HAMPDEN ACADEMY

Stephens stands in front of a bored looking class. He's wearing a TWEED JACKET and KHAKI PANTS, looks uncomfortably "teacherly".

He writes one word on the CHALKBOARD, underlines it:

DRACULA

He looks out at the class.

STEPHEN

So... what'd you think?

No response. The kids fidget in their seats.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

No? Anyone?

One kid speaks up.

STUDENT #1

It was boring.

Another student chimes in.

STUDENT #2

Yeah.

STEPHEN

(outraged)

What do you mean 'boring'!? It's a horror classic!!

STUDENT #3

Vampires aren't scary.

STEPHEN

Yes they are!

STUDENT #2

No they're not.

STEPHEN

Are you telling me you wouldn't be scared if you came face to face with Count Dracula!?

STUDENT #2

No way. Vampire ever came here, I'd punch him in the face.

The rest of the students roar their approval.

Stephen sighs.

God help him.

INT. TEACHERS LOUNGE - LATER

Teachers sit on cheap sofas, SMOKING, DRINKING COFFEE and CHATTING.

Stephen ambles in, looking shabby. His TWEED COAT is THRIFT STORE and ill-fitting, his eyes THIN SLITS from a night at the TYPEWRITER.

He saunters over to the COFFEE MACHINE, puts in a quarter.

One of the teachers, a well-dressed guy named RANDALL, is sitting on the sofa.

RANDALL

(notices Steve)

Big Steve! What's the haps?

STEPHEN

(unenthused)

Hey, Randall.

RANDALL

You're lookin' pretty rough there.
Burnin' the candle at both ends?
You still writing those little horror things?

(to teacher beside him)

Steve writes horror stories for the titty mags. They're not bad either. What was that one Steve? The one about the laundry press that kills people?

STEPHEN
'The Mangler.'

RANDALL
Right, right.
(to teacher)
It's about this laundry press that
rips people's hands off. Funny
stuff.

STEPHEN
(pissed)
Well, you know, Randall, it's not
meant to be funny. It's meant to be
scary.

RANDALL
Pffft. Maybe if you're, like, ten.

STEPHEN
You read a lot of nudie mags?

RANDALL
Only for the stories, pal. Only for
the stories.

STEPHEN
Yeah right.

Stephen leaves with his coffee.

Randall smirks.

INT. HALLWAY, HAMPDEN ACADEMY

Stephen steps into the hall.

Students mill about the LOCKERS, killing time before their
next class.

Stephen wanders down the hall, DAYDREAMING.

A teenage girl walks past him, head bowed.

Stephen barely notices her, until he hears an exchange
between two girls at the LOCKER.

LOCKER GIRL #1
Oh my God. I can't believe she's
wearing exactly the same outfit
again.

LOCKER GIRL #2

I know she's poor, but God, try to
mix it up at least.

LOCKER GIRL #1

She's such a dodo bird.

Stephen turns around, watches the back of the girl as she
walks quickly down the corridor, as if under siege.

He looks at her clothes; notes her drab PLAID DRESS, BROWN
SOCKS and SANDALS held together with TAPE.

The sound of the STUDENTS turns into the sound of--

CUT TO:

EXT. LISBON FALLS HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

THE PAST. Teens in the yard. A young girl, SONDRA, stands in
the middle of a throng of kids. She's wearing a dress that
looks like a PAPER SACK. Around her neck is a LARGE CROSS.

A teenage Stephen watches from the sidelines as the TEENS
taunt her.

TEEN #1

What's the matter Sondra? Got
nothin' to say for yourself?

TEEN #2

Why don't you say something Sondra?

The girl looks at the ground.

She tries to speak.

SONDRA

Wh-wha... what do you want me to
say?

Sondra's voice is thick with phlegm, sounds guttural and
gross.

The teens laughs.

TEEN #2

Eeeeww... you sound like an
alligator!

Stephen steps forward, thinks about intervening. Doesn't.

It's usually him copping it from the kids. He's relieved it's someone else for a change.

TEEN #1
Come on, Sondra! Say somethin' else!

TEEN #2
Yeah! Say somethin' else, alligator girl!

Sondra doesn't say anything.

Suddenly her EYES roll back in their SOCKETS.

She begins to SHAKE, collapses on the ground in a SEIZURE.

The teens STARE in SHOCK.

TEEN #1
Jesus Christ!

TEEN #2
What the fuck?

Sondra is in a full seizure now. She ROLLS over the CONCRETE GROUND, head SMASHING into the asphalt, SPITTLE and FOAM flying from her mouth.

Stephen watches from a distance, terrified.

A TEACHER appears. He breaks through the crowd as the kids make a run for it.

TEACHER
Get out of the way, all of you!

The teacher kneels down. Sondra's seizure is SLOWING. She BREATHES HEAVILY.

The teacher PICKS HER UP and carries her inside the school.

Stephen watches, stunned.

INT. CORRIDOR, LISBON FALLS HIGH SCHOOL - LATER

The busy time between classes. Students mill about, gossiping.

Young Stephen puts his books away and listens to the conversation at the NEXT LOCKER.

TEEN #4

It was the craziest thing I've ever seen!

TEEN #5

I'll say.

TEEN #4

She looked like she was possessed by the devil.

TEEN #5

Maybe that's why her Mom is such a religious nut. Her child is the spawn of Satan!

The teens laugh.

Stephen looks at them sadly, feels shame for not doing anything.

EXT. TRAILER HOME, DURHAM - THE NEXT DAY

A rundown trailer home in rural Durham. Stephen knocks on the door wearing OVERALLS and a BASEBALL CAP.

It opens. Behind it stands a frightening looking older woman with a MESS OF RED HAIR. This is SONDRAS MOTHER.

SONDRAS MOTHER

You the King boy?

STEPHEN

Yes, ma'am.

SONDRAS MOTHER

You here to help me with my furniture?

STEPHEN

Uh-huh.

SONDRAS MOTHER

Well, come on in then. Don't dilly-dally.

Stephen steps tentatively into the house. To his surprise the trailer is absolutely spotless. CANDLES burn in elaborate CANDLE HOLDERS. A CROCHET RUG lies over a SOFA.

Stephen spots something from the corner of his eye - SONDRAS. She's hiding behind the corner, looking like a timid rabbit.

He gives her a WAVE. She disappears around the corner.

Sondra's Mother motions to two large ARM CHAIRS in the center of the room, the STUFFING coming out.

SONDRA'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

Well, there they are. I'd drag 'em out to the road myself, but my back isn't what it used to be. I believe we said ten cents a chair?

STEPHEN

Yes, ma'am.

SONDRA'S MOTHER

Then let's get to it.

STEPHEN

Yes, ma'am.

Stephen goes over to the chairs, bends down to pick one up.

He looks up. On the wall is a nearly **LIFE-SIZED CRUCIFIED JESUS, BLOOD DRIPPING FROM HIS WOUNDS.**

Stephen gasps.

SONDRA'S MOTHER

What is it, boy?

He quickly shakes his head.

STEPHEN

Nothing.

Sondra's Mother follows Stephens gaze.

SONDRA'S MOTHER

That there's Jesus Christ, My Lord and Saviour. Have you been saved, Stephen?

STEPHEN

(scrambling)

Oh yes, ma'am. I'm as saved as saved can be.

Sondra's Mother doesn't buy it.

SONDRA'S MOTHER

(sneering)

Hurry up.

Stephen picks up the chair as fast as he can, eager to be outside.

As he leaves he looks up at the cross again, as we--

CUT TO:

INT. MAINE GENERAL HOSPITAL - DAY

1973. A cross around Ruth's neck. She lies in bed, a shell of her former self. Her hair is bright white, her hands skeletal and frail.

The door opens. In walks Stephen, Tabitha and the kids, all smiles.

STEPHEN

Hey look, kids! It's Grandma!

Ruth brightens. She reaches out her arms for her grandchildren.

RUTH

My babies.

Tabitha hands Naomi over. Naomi buries her head in Ruth's shoulder.

Stephen sits on a chair in the corner, cradling baby Joe.

Ruth looks at Tabitha sympathetically as she cradles Naomi.

RUTH (CONT'D)

How are you Tabitha?

Tabitha gives nothing away.

TABITHA

Oh, I'm fine, Ruth.

STEPHEN

(interjecting)

I got another story published, Mom.

RUTH

How much you get for it?

STEPHEN

(dodges question)

Enough.

TABITHA

He got twenty five dollars, Ruth.

RUTH
(rolls eyes)
They ain't payin' you what you're
worth, boy.

TABITHA
They will one day.

Naomi begins to cry. At first her cries are muffled, but then they get louder and louder, until she is SCREAMING.

RUTH
Tabitha, I do believe there is
something wrong with this child.

Tabitha takes Naomi from Ruth, tries to soothe her.

TABITHA
What's wrong, Naomi?
(to Stephen)
It's not like her to cry.

STEPHEN
(concerned)
No, it's not.

INT. DOCTORS OFFICE - LATER

Naomi sits on a COLD STEEL TABLE, clinging desperately to her Daddy.

The doctor pokes at her EAR with a SWAB. She cries louder.

DOCTOR
It's an ear infection, all right.
Pretty bad one too. She's gonna
need some antibiotics.

TABITHA
How much will it cost?

DOCTOR
(shrugs)
Not much. A few dollars.

Stephen and Tabitha exchange a skeptical look.

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - LATER THAT EVENING

Stephen and Tabitha walk in, downcast and defeated. Stephen holds Naomi under one arm. In the other hand he carries a BROWN PAPER BAG.

He places Naomi in her crib. Tabitha puts Joe in his.

Tabitha goes into the kitchen, puts a pot of water on the stove to boil.

Stephen follows her. He takes the ANTIBIOTICS out of the bag, holds up the BRIGHT PINK GOO.

STEPHEN

(scary voice)

"The Pink Stuff." Sounds like a nuclear concoction that turns rats into monsters. Sure we should be giving this to our kid?

TABITHA

Well, we paid enough for it.

Stephen frowns, switches gears.

STEPHEN

Tabby, let me take the debate job.

TABITHA

No.

STEPHEN

I'll find a way to make it work. I can write on my lunch breaks.

TABITHA

Stephen, it's not going to happen.

STEPHEN

But Tab--

TABITHA

No, Stephen! You think that if you stop writing and take every little scrap of employment that comes your way that you're gonna get us out of here? It's not gonna happen. You don't get out of a situation like this unless you do somethin' really extraordinary. Your writing is our only ticket out of here. I just know it!

STEPHEN

What makes you so sure?

TABITHA

Because I know good writing when I see it.

STEPHEN

Maybe I'm not the talent you think
I am...

Tabitha reels.

TABITHA

The man I fell in love with was
filled with ego and bravado. He was
'the best'.

STEPHEN

That was before I got my ass handed
to me by reality. It seems like the
harder we work, the deeper we dig
our hole.

TABITHA

What are you gonna do? Walk out on
your writing the way your Daddy
walked out on you?

Stephen winces. That was a low blow.

STEPHEN

I'm not my father, Tab! I'm tryin'
to look after you! I'm tryin' to
look after our children! I mean,
look at this place!

Stephen whirls around, picks up a pile of BILLS from the
table.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Look at all these bills! How the
hell are we gonna pay 'em? I can't
even afford to pay the goddamn
phone bill!

Tabitha doesn't hesitate. She walks over to a **BRIGHT GREEN
ROTARY PHONE** sitting on the kitchen bench.

She grabs the CABLE and yanks the phone out of the wall.

She hands it to Stephen.

TABITHA

Problem solved.

Stephen stares at his wife, momentarily stunned.

Then he begins to laugh.

Tabitha laughs too. She looks down at the phone in her hand, sees how desperate everything has become, and laughter seems to be the only option.

They dissolve into fits of hysteria, months of anxiety draining away.

They fall into each other, united in their despair.

INT. INDUSTRIAL LAUNDRY, HAMPDEN, MAINE

The weekend shift. Stephen pushes a cart of soiled table cloths between the rows of enormous sized INDUSTRIAL WASHERS.

INT. BREAK ROOM, INDUSTRIAL LAUNDRY

Stephen collapses into a chair. He's EXHAUSTED.

He takes a DONUT out of a DUNKIN' DONUTS bag and bites into it. STALE. He makes a face while chewing, gets it down.

He absent-mindedly picks up a magazine from the table. **LIFE.**

He leafs through it.

A story catches his eye. He stops, reads the headline.

TELEKINESIS: FACT OR FICTION?

Beneath the headline is a PHOTO:

A WOMAN stares at a PLATE as it HOVERS IN THE AIR.

Stephen reads, eyes widening with every word.

It's a EUREKA MOMENT.

INT. LAUNDRY, DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - AFTER WORK

Stephen slams his ass in the seat and gets writing.

The words flow as they never have before.

Hours pass. Tabitha arrives home from work, is surprised to find Stephen still up, banging away on the Olivetti while the kids sleep.

She quietly closes the door, leaves him to his work.

Suddenly, the Olivetti STOPS.

Stephen stares at the PAGE before him, then at the SMALL PILE of PAGES beside him.

He shakes his head, disappointed.

It's wrong. All wrong.

He tears the paper from the Olivetti and CRUMPLES IT UP, throws it in the trash.

He looks again at the PILE OF PAGES beside the typewriter. It's no good. All of it.

He picks the entire thing up, takes it out to the KITCHEN, and throws it all in the trash.

Back to the drawing board.

INT. BATHROOM, DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - THE NEXT DAY

Stephen sits in the bathtub, smoking a CIGARETTE and drinking a BEER.

A radio balanced on the side of the sink plays "Free Bird" by Lynyrd Skynyrd.

Stephen sings to himself as he washes up.

INT. KITCHEN, DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER

Tabitha is CLEANING the kitchen.

She opens the TRASH CAN, is about to put something in it when she notices the PAGES.

She pulls them out, dusts off COFFEE GRINDS and CIGARETTE ASH.

Stephen continues to sing in the bath tub, oblivious to her discovery.

Tabitha sits down at the table and reads.

INT. BATHROOM, DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - MINUTES LATER

Tabitha walks into the bathroom with the pages, interrupting Stephen's revelry.

TABITHA
What's this?

STEPHEN

What?

Tabitha shows him the pages.

TABITHA

I pulled these out of the trash.

STEPHEN

That's nothin'. I'm not gonna finish it.

TABITHA

Why not?

STEPHEN

Because it's no good.

TABITHA

Well, I think it's good.

STEPHEN

(surprised)

You read it?

Tabitha goes to the sink and TURNS DOWN the radio.

She puts down the toilet seat and sits.

TABITHA

I want to know what happens to this girl.

STEPHEN

Forget it. I can't write women.

TABITHA

Yes you can. This is proof that you can.

STEPHEN

Come on, Tab. I don't know jack shit about high school girls.

TABITHA

You teach them every day.

STEPHEN

(dismissive)

It's too long for a short story.

TABITHA

Then make it a novel.

STEPHEN

Tabby, we need money now. Playboy aren't interested in two hundred page stories.

TABITHA

Steve, I think you've got something here. I really do, and maybe if you got your ass out of the bathtub and got to work, you could make somethin' of it.

Stephen's mood turns. He's suddenly furious.

STEPHEN

That's just great.

He stands, reaching for the nearest TOWEL. He wraps it around him and STORMS out of the bathroom, Tabitha hot on his tail.

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER

Stephen dries himself quickly, starts getting dressed.

The kids watch from their cribs as their parents argue.

STEPHEN

You don't get it. I can't afford to spend months writing something I don't think is any good. We can't afford it.

TABITHA

But it is good. It's better than good. A teenage girl with powers, the scene in the showers, no haunted castles, no bats... it's like you've brought horror right into the real world.

STEPHEN

There's plenty of horror out there, believe me. I see it everywhere.

TABITHA

Steve, I've never read anything like this before.

STEPHEN

And no one's gonna want it.

TABITHA

You know what? You used to trust my feedback.

STEPHEN

Well, maybe I'm beginning to think all this isn't worth it.

TABITHA

Steve--

Stephen throws on jeans and a tee shirt, makes his way to the front door.

STEPHEN

Sorry, Tab. I know you have a lot of faith in me, and I love you for it. I really do. I just don't have any faith in myself.

(beat)

Not anymore.

Stephen heads out.

TABITHA

Well, shit.

EXT. ROAD, RURAL MAINE - MOMENTS LATER

Stephen struts down the road, hands in pockets. He has one thing on his mind: to get well and truly fucked up.

He kicks down the dirt road, becomes aware of someone next to him.

He turns his head. Walking beside him is **THE DARK MAN**. He's wearing his trademark DENIM JACKET and COWBOY BOATS. His hair is a LONG MULLET.

He grins at Stephen.

THE DARK MAN

Howdy.

Stephen doesn't say anything, surprised by the man's sudden appearance.

He looks around. Nothing but TREES and a NEVER ENDING HORIZON.

Where did this guy come from?

STEPHEN

Hi.

THE DARK MAN

You out for a walk?

STEPHEN

Ayuh.

THE DARK MAN

I could tell. You look like a Walkin' Dude. I'm a Walkin' Dude too. Been all over the place.

STEPHEN

Oh yeah?

THE DARK MAN

Oh yeah. I been everywhere, man.

STEPHEN

You from Maine?

THE DARK MAN

I guess so. Tell you the truth, I don't rightly know. I can't remember being born. I just sort of became. You know what I mean?

STEPHEN

Not really.

The Dark Man laughs.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

What's your name?

THE DARK MAN

I got a few different ones. Most of my friends call me R.F.

STEPHEN

I'm Stephen.

THE DARK MAN

I know.

STEPHEN

You sure do look real familiar.

THE DARK MAN

Like I said, I been around. We've probably run into each other a few times. So... what's your trade?

STEPHEN

(downcast)

I don't know. I'm tryin' to be a writer.

THE DARK MAN

A writer, eh?

STEPHEN

It's not really workin' out for me.

THE DARK MAN

Well, I wouldn't be too bothered with that. A man's trade ain't all he is.

STEPHEN

So what do you do for a crust, R.F?

THE DARK MAN

I've done alotta things.

STEPHEN

Such as?

THE DARK MAN

Well, I was a Marine for a while.

STEPHEN

Vietnam?

THE DARK MAN

I was in Vietnam, but I weren't no Marine there. I was part of the Vietcong.

STEPHEN

(laughs nervously)

How is that even possible?

THE DARK MAN

Like I told you, I been all sorts of things. I been a soldier, a Klansman, a kidnapper... whatever you can imagine, I've done it.

STEPHEN

(bewildered)

But... why?

THE DARK MAN

Why not? Man comes into this world at the bottom of the food chain, waitin' to be picked off.

(MORE)

THE DARK MAN (CONT'D)

Only the strong survive, and to be strong, well... sometimes you gotta do bad things.

STEPHEN

What about love?

THE DARK MAN

You ever hear the sayin' "love is what you have until the money runs out"? There's only so much a woman will put up with.

STEPHEN

But I got a good one.

THE DARK MAN

Yeah. Too good for you.

Stephen goes quiet. The man's right.

Tabitha deserves more than this.

THE DARK MAN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, man, but there just ain't no winnin' in this world. We are born into a cycle of pain and misery and we never escape it. Might as well have some fun while we're here.

Stephen nods. Yep. Might as well.

The two men walk along the road, two halves of the same person, seemingly joined forever.

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - HOURS LATER

Tabitha lies on the bed, arms crossed.

She looks at the clock. **MIDNIGHT.**

She gets up, throws on some clothes and **BUNDLES UP THE KIDS.**

EXT. TRAILER NEXT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

The trailer next to hers. Tabitha strides over, a KID IN EACH ARM. She **BANGS ON THE DOOR.**

A sleepy-eyed woman in curlers, **NANCY**, opens it.

NANCY

Tabby?

TABITHA

I'm sorry, Nancy. Can you look
after the kids for an hour or so?

NANCY

Of course.

Nancy takes the kids, looking concerned.

NANCY (CONT'D)

What'd goin' on?

TABITHA

Nothin' that can't be fixed.

Tabitha walks off into the darkness. Nancy watches as she
gets into the rusted BUICK, turns on the ignition and PEELS
OUT.

Nancy shakes her head. That poor woman.

INT. DIVE BAR - LATER

Stephen sits at a **POKER TABLE**, surrounded by CRONIES. A THICK
HAZE of CIGARETTE SMOKE floats above them. Stephen is THREE
BEERS IN and steadily making his way through his paycheck.
It's a seedy scene.

He studies his CARDS.

STEPHEN

You got anything good, Donaldson?

DONALDSON

If I did, why the hell would I tell
you?

STEPHEN

'Cause we're buddies!

The rest of the table laughs. Stephen is a good-natured
drunk: a lotta fun.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Come on, Donaldson. Show 'em to me.

Stephen leans over, tries to grab Donaldson's cards.

He pulls them away.

DONALDSON

Get the hell outta here, Steve!

Stephen collapses in paroxysms of laughter. A few beers in and everything seems hilarious.

His friends laugh along with him then suddenly go DEAD SILENT.

Stephen looks at them, confused.

STEPHEN

What's wrong, fellas? Somebody die?

He follows their gaze to behind his shoulder. He turns to see TABITHA.

She gives him a look that could kill. He immediately sobers.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Tab, what are you doin' here? Uh, how late is it?

Tabitha leaves.

Stephen's buddies all look at each other: oh boy, is he gonna get it.

Stephen leaps up from his seat, follows her outside.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Tab! Wait!

EXT. DIVE BAR

Tabitha storms away from the bar.

Stephen races to catch up with her.

STEPHEN

Tab, listen... I'm sorry...

Tabitha spins around.

TABITHA

For what, Steve? Sorry for what?

STEPHEN

For everything! For being a shit heel and a bum and nothin' like you wanted me to be!

TABITHA

Oh give it a rest. You sure are
good at feelin' sorry for yourself.

Tabitha turns it walk away.

Stephen tries to take her arm.

STEPHEN

Tab, wait...

She shrugs him off, turns around to face him.

TABITHA

You listen here. I don't care if
you never publish another story
ever again. I don't care if we have
to live in that trailer for the
rest of our goddamn lives, as long
as you're a good husband and a good
father, and you're good to
yourself. That means sittin' your
ass down and doing what you do
best, not pissin' your life away in
a bar with your buddies. You've got
it, Steve. You've really got it.
But you don't have shit if you let
your demons get the best of you. So
we're poor. So what? I would rather
be poor with you and all your
ambition and creativity and
imagination than poor with you and
all your booze. I won't stand for
it.

She takes hold of Stephen's face and forces him to focus on
her.

She's never been more serious.

TABITHA (CONT'D)

I will support your writing and
your dreams, but I won't support
you being a drunk.

She lets go of him, looks off.

Her face is awash in conflict.

Stephen hangs his head, ashamed.

After a HEAVY BEAT...

STEPHEN

You really liked the story that much?

Tabitha smiles despite herself.

TABITHA

Yes, you son of a bitch. Now get your ass home and finish it!

Stephen laughs. He takes Tabitha in his arms and they embrace, once again united in their hopes for the future.

He'll finish that story, all right. He'll finish the shit out of it.

INT. LAUNDRY, DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - EVENING

Stephen's ass is in the seat. He write like a demon. Cue the Ramones' "Today Your Love, Tomorrow The World".

MONTAGE:

-- **CLASSROOM, HAMPDEN ACADEMY:** Stephen teaches class. The kids look bored, as usual, but Stephen doesn't care. He's putting his all into everything now.

-- **DUNKIN' DONUTS:** Tabby sits at a booth on her break, writing poetry in a note pad.

-- **DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER:** Stephen keeps typing as Tabitha sits at the kitchen table writing her own work. It's like a writing factory in there. The kids watch as their parents get to work.

-- **LAUNDRY:** Stephen pounds away on those keys. He's in the zone.

Suddenly, the montage SCREECHES TO A STOP.

STEPHEN (O.C.)

Goddamnit!

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - EVENING

Tabitha is seated at the kitchen booth. Naomi's in her crib. Joe sits on the floor, banging away noisily on a TOY TYPEWRITER.

Stephen walks out of the laundry. In his hands is a STACK OF PAPERS.

TABITHA
What's wrong?

He waves the papers accusingly at her.

STEPHEN
I thought you said you liked this!

TABITHA
I do!

STEPHEN
Then why is every single page
marked up with red pen?

TABITHA
They're only suggestions, Steve.
It's not a big deal. You just need
to work on the dialogue between the
girls and then it'll be great.

STEPHEN
But that's all this manuscript is!
Dialogue between girls!

TABITHA
Steve, calm down. We can fix it.

STEPHEN
Fix it?? I had no idea it was so
broken!

He tosses the papers onto the ground. They scatter about in
disarray.

TABITHA
Real mature. Y'know, you never used
to have a problem with my notes.
Now you're acting like a goddamn
prima donna!

Joe continues to pound on the typewriter.

Stephen looks down at Joe, his anger rising.

He bites his tongue and then refaces Tabitha.

STEPHEN
The only reason I'm writing this
book is because you told me to!
This is going to take me months to
rewrite!

TABITHA

Then be a man and get started!

Joe bangs the typewriter even LOUDER.

That's it.

Stephen SNAPS.

STEPHEN

GODDAMNIT, JOE!!! WILL YOU SHUT UP
ALREADY!?!?

Joe looks at his father, eyes wide with hurt.

He begins to cry.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

That's just great. The baby's
crying AGAIN. It's amazing I get
any work done around here.

Tabitha scoops Joe up in her arms and tries to console him.

She turns to her husband, outraged.

TABITHA

What on earth's gotten into you?

STEPHEN

I'm sick to death of this! All of
it!! Look at how we live!! We ain't
ever getting out of here. You might
think my talent is gonna save us,
but it won't. That's reality. The
sooner we can admit it, the sooner
we can resign ourselves to...

Stephen clenches his fist, grinds his teeth. He's fighting
something.

Something he's been fighting for a long time.

He grabs his COAT and heads to the door.

TABITHA

Where the hell do you think you're
going?

STEPHEN

Out for cigarettes.

TABITHA

We can't afford cigarettes!

STEPHEN
Then I'll hock the fucking
typewriter!!

Stephen leaves, slamming the door behind him.

Tabitha hold baby Joe close, strokes his head as his father disappears into the night.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - MINUTES LATER

The Buick pulls up in front of a seedy liquor store.

Stephen gets out, walks towards the entrance, a man at the end of his rope.

He stops. Standing outside in the darkness is **The Dark Man**. He's leaning against the side of the liquor store, cigarette dangling from his lips. The red spark of the cigarette matches his eyes.

THE DARK MAN
Hey there, Steve. Whatcha up to?

Steve freezes.

STEPHEN
Just gettin' some cigarettes.

THE DARK MAN
Good idea. I enjoy the smooth taste of Marlboros myself. It's a real man's cigarette. Makes me feel like a real cowboy.

The Dark Man chuckles menacingly.

Stephen stands fixed to the spot, a swirl of emotions.

He listens intently as The Dark Man speaks.

THE DARK MAN (CONT'D)
Sure would be nice to be a real cowboy, huh Steve? Ridin' off into the sunset, nothin' keepin' you down, holdin' you back. Nothin' and nobody to worry about. Just you and your sweet talent and all the time in the world. That's the way I like to live. Nobody tellin' me when I can take a drink and have a smoke and do whatever I goddamn please.
(MORE)

THE DARK MAN (CONT'D)
 A man can't get anywhere in life
 with that kinda baggage.

Suddenly -- something dawns on Stephen.

FLASH TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - THE PAST

Stephen is a TODDLER in a crib.

We see the giant figure of **DONALD KING**, Stephen's father,
 from Stephen's point of view.

He gives the child a cursory glance, walks away.

DONALD (O.S.)
 (to Ruth)
 I'm going out for cigarettes.

RUTH (O.S.)
 When will you be back?

DONALD (O.S.)
 Later, Ruth. Later.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. LIQUOR STORE

Stephen rebounds from the memory.

He fixes The Dark Man with a serious glare.

STEPHEN
 I know who you are, and you know
 what? I don't need cigarettes, and
 I don't need to be a cowboy. I just
 need to get back to work.

The Dark Man shrugs and laughs.

Stephen gets back inside the Buick.

THE DARK MAN
 Suit yourself, Stevie. I'll be
 seein' you again. Maybe not now,
 but someday.

The Buick starts up.

The Dark Man watches as Stephen drives off, frowning.

He may always be there in the shadows, pulling at Stephen from every direction, but not today.

Today, Stephen has won.

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - LATER

Stephen comes in, contrite yet determined.

Tabitha is still sitting in the kitchen. She hasn't moved.

Stephen takes off his coat, picks up the scattered pages from the ground.

STEPHEN

You're right. We can make this better. What do you think I should do?

Tabitha immediately gets down to business.

She's a strong woman and isn't wasting any time asking for apologies.

TABITHA

Give it here.

Stephen hands over the paper, sits beside his wife.

TABITHA (CONT'D)

Okay. Here's what you could do...

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - LATER

The Ramones rev up again as Stephen gets back to work.

MONTAGE:

-- **LAUNDRY:** Stephen pounds the keys. He's gonna lick this sucker.

-- **DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER:** Stephen and Tabitha lie in bed. Tabitha is reading pages of the book. Stephen pops two Excedrins, stays calm.

-- **KITCHEN:** Stephen and Tabitha discuss a point in the book. They are both feisty, but it doesn't get ugly. Stephen takes the criticism.

-- **LAUNDRY:** The end run. Stephen types and types, until...

He pulls the last sheet out of the typewriter and throws it down on the manuscript pile.

He takes off his glasses, rubs his eyes.

The novel is done.

'CARRIE' is complete.

INT. TRAIN - NIGHT

An overnight commuter train bound for NEW YORK CITY.

Stephen sits by the window, watches the states roll by as the dawn slowly breaks: **MAINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE, MASSACHUSETTS, CONNECTICUT.**

The ROLLING HILLS and FARMLAND give way to the SUBURBS, then finally--

INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION, NEW YORK CITY - DAY

Stephen steps out into the station, THICK SATCHEL in hand.

Commuters SWARM AROUND HIM like ANGRY BEES. He looks around, uncertain.

Just a small town boy in the big city.

EXT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION - MINUTES LATER

Stephen steps out onto the crowded street, tries to hail a cab.

He misses the first one, which is commandeered by a WILY NEW YORKER.

He holds out his hand again. A YELLOW CAB screeches to a stop in front of him.

He piles in and they DRIVE AWAY.

INT. RECEPTION, DOUBLEDAY BOOKS - LATER

A flashy publishing house. EXECUTIVES in EXPENSIVE SUITS walk the halls carrying CUPS of COFFEE.

A pretty RECEPTIONIST sits beneath an imposing sign that says **DOUBLEDAY.**

The elevator opens.

The receptionist's eyes WIDEN as Stephen walks in. He's wearing a HEAVY OVERCOAT with a FUR TRIM COLLAR. His hair and beard are LONG and SHAGGY.

The girl leans back a little, intimidated, as Stephen approaches the desk.

STEPHEN

Hi. Is Bill Thompson available?

RECEPTIONIST

Do you have an appointment?

STEPHEN

I don't, but you see, the thing is... I don't have a telephone.

RECEPTIONIST

I'm sorry. I can't let you in without an appointment.

STEPHEN

Can you just call him and ask? Tell him Steve King is here. C'mon. I came all the way from Maine.

The receptionist relents.

RECEPTIONIST

Okay. Take a seat. I'll let him know you're here.

STEPHEN

Thanks.

Stephen takes a seat in the waiting room.

A few executives walk past, looking at him curiously. One woman wrinkles her nose in disgust.

Who the hell let the hippy in?

INT. BILL THOMPSON'S OFFICE

BILL THOMPSON, editor for Doubleday, sits at his desk. A portly man with a kind demeanor, Bill is the sort of editor every author dreams of: passionate, smart, and invested in his clients.

The receptionist appears at his door, knocks softly.

Bill looks up.

BILL THOMPSON

Yes?

RECEPTIONIST

There's a gentleman here to see you. He says his name is Steve King.

BILL THOMPSON

Steve King?

RECEPTIONIST

He says he came from Maine to see you. Apparently he doesn't have a telephone.

Bill scours his brain, then finally--

BILL THOMPSON

The horror guy? He's here?

RECEPTIONIST

He sure looks a horror.

INT. RECEPTION, DOUBLEDAY BOOKS - MOMENTS LATER

Stephen waits, nervous. When Bill enters reception he stands, holds his hand out formally.

BILL THOMPSON

Stephen King! My horror guy from Maine!

STEPHEN

Hey, Bill.

They shake hands.

Bill spies the SATCHEL under Stephen's arm.

BILL THOMPSON

Is that what I think it is?

STEPHEN

(shy)
Might be.

Bill turns to the receptionist.

BILL THOMPSON
I'm heading out.
(to Steve)
Let me buy you a coffee.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - LATER

A busy diner. Stephen and Bill sit in front of two PIPING HOT cups of COFFEE.

The SATCHEL sits on the table between them.

BILL THOMPSON
I was beginning to worry about you.
I tried calling, but I couldn't get through.

STEPHEN
Yeah, we, uh, had to disconnect the phone. Couldn't afford it anymore.

BILL THOMPSON
Jesus Christ, Steve.
(beat)
Hey look, I'm really sorry. As you know I've been trying to get your stuff past the sales board for years, but they just don't get it. It's frustrating for me too.

STEPHEN
I know, Bill, and I appreciate it. You're the only editor in town who's even interested in seeing my work.

BILL THOMPSON
That's because you've got talent. It's just gonna take time. I'm sure of it.
(looks at satchel on table)
So what have you got for me? Somethin' good?

STEPHEN
My wife thinks so.

BILL THOMPSON
Well, this is the first time you've hand delivered a manuscript to me, so I'm thinkin' there's something pretty special in there.

STEPHEN

I hope so.

(beat)

Between you and me, Bill, I'm not sure how much longer I can do this. We're just so goddamn broke, you know? It's not even the broke thing so much. It's keepin' hope. Hope's a thing that's harder to come by than money.

Bill smiles sympathetically.

He takes the manuscript.

BILL THOMPSON

Let me look it over, okay?

Stephen nods, thankful.

They drink their coffee in silence, two men in mutual respect.

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - DAY

Joe lies screaming in his crib. Naomi watches as Tabitha races over with a fresh DIAPER.

She hoists Joe out of the crib and lies him on the bed.

TABITHA

It's okay, baby. Don't cry. Don't cry.

She pulls off his DIRTY DIAPER, places it in a **DUNKIN' DONUTS PAIL** by the bed.

She puts on a fresh one. Joe's cries turn to whimpers.

TABITHA (CONT'D)

There you go. Good baby.

Joe smiles a toothy grin. Tabitha sighs.

There is always so much to be done.

EXT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - LATER

Tabitha goes to the POST BOX to collect the mail.

She idly flicks through the letters as she walks back to the trailer. Bills, bills and more bills.

She suddenly stops. There's a TELEGRAM. It's from DOUBLEDAY.
She rushes inside, heart pounding.

EXT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - MOMENTS LATER

Tabitha rushes out of the trailer with the kids. She pushes Naomi in a STROLLER and has Joe under her arm.

She races over to Nancy's house.

EXT. NANCY'S TRAILER

Tabitha POUNDS on the door. Nancy quickly answers.

She sees Tabitha and shakes her head disapprovingly.

NANCY

Oh, sweet Jesus. He's not on the
sauce again, is he?

Tabitha barges in.

TABITHA

I need to use your phone, Nancy.

Nancy points to the kitchen.

NANCY

Right over there, sweetheart.

Nancy takes the kids from Tabitha and ushers them into the living area.

Tabitha picks up the phone and dials, breathless.

INT. TEACHERS LOUNGE, HAMPDEN ACADEMY

Stephen stands at the COFFEE MACHINE, filling his cup. He looks TIRED.

Randall approaches him, full of vim and vigor.

RANDALL

Another late night?

STEPHEN

Nice of you to notice.

Stephen takes a drink of his coffee.

Randall moves in for the kill.

RANDALL

You look tired, Steve. Maybe all these late night writing sessions aren't good for you. Can't imagine it would be easy to stay awake during class.

STEPHEN

I manage.

RANDALL

Hope so. Sure would suck to lose your day job. Then you'd be in a real pickle.

Stephen frowns. Randall's taken it way too far.

He's about to say something withering when--

SCHOOL INTERCOM (O.S.)

STEPHEN KING, ARE YOU THERE?

STEPHEN KING?

Stephen's face goes white.

STEPHEN

(to Randall)

Excuse me.

Stephen rushes to the phone as Randall smirks.

He picks it up.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

This is Stephen King.

SCHOOL INTERCOM (O.S.)

Please come to the office. You have a phone call. It's your wife.

STEPHEN

(panicked)

Is everything all right??

SCHOOL INTERCOM (O.S.)

I don't know. You need to come to the office and take the call.

Stephen rushes from the teacher's lounge.

The other teachers look at each other, curious.

Randall has a satisfied smile on his face. Sounds like bad news.

Pity.

INT. OFFICE, HAMPDEN ACADEMY - SECONDS LATER

Stephen races into the main office, grabs the phone from the SCHOOL RECEPTIONIST.

STEPHEN
Hello?? Tab?? What's wrong? Are the kids okay?

TABITHA (O.S.)
(excited)
Steve, it's happened! Oh God, it's finally happened!

INT. TEACHERS LOUNGE - MINUTES LATER

Stephen returns, a grin on his face.

He proceeds to make himself another coffee, takes his time.

Randall approaches him, curious.

RANDALL
What are you so damn happy about?

STEPHEN
Me? Oh, nothing.
(beat)
Just sold a book to a publishing house.

Randall goes green.

RANDALL
Oh. Which one?

STEPHEN
Doubleday.

RANDALL
(almost a croak)
Doubleday?

Stephen finishes filling his cup, walks past Randall triumphantly.

STEPHEN
I guess they like those 'little
horror things'.

Randall watches Stephen go, crestfallen.

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - THAT EVENING

Stephen and Tabitha lie in bed. The kids are asleep.

Tabitha holds a PLASTIC CUP full of CHEAP CHAMPAGNE.

In Stephen's hand is the TELEGRAM, which he reads over and over.

**"CONGRATULATIONS. CARRIE OFFICIALLY A DOUBLEDAY BOOK. IS
\$2500 ADVANCE OKAY? THE FUTURE LIES AHEAD. LOVE, BILL."**

Tabitha strokes his hair.

TABITHA
You okay?

STEPHEN
Yeah. Just, shocked.

TABITHA
(pleased with herself)
I told you it was good.

They kiss.

Tabitha plucks the telegram from his hands.

TABITHA (CONT'D)
Twenty five hundred bucks.
(beat)
You think there'll be more where
this came from?

STEPHEN
Well, there's the paperback rights.
If they manage to sell those I
should get another payment.

TABITHA
How much do they normally fetch?

STEPHEN
Depends. Mario Puzo sold 'The
Godfather' for four hundred and
fifty grand, but I ain't Mario
Puzo.

(MORE)

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

I figure we might get anywhere
between twenty and forty thousand.

TABITHA

(excited)

Really? You could stop working for
a year or two, concentrate on
writing!

STEPHEN

I guess.

Tabitha gazes at the telegram, head full of dreams.

TABITHA

Forty grand. Wow. Wouldn't that be
somethin'?

Stephen lies back, gazes up at the ceiling. It sure would.

INT. MAINE GENERAL HOSPITAL - MONTHS LATER

Stephen waits in the parking lot for his brother.

David pulls up, gets out and walks over to his brother.

DAVID

Hey, jerkoff.

STEPHEN

Hey, dipshit.

The two brothers walk towards the hospital entrance.

DAVID

When's that book of yours coming
out?

STEPHEN

Next month.

DAVID

Don't expect me to treat you any
different when you're rich and
famous.

STEPHEN

Yeah, right. Fat chance of that
happening.

They enter the building.

INT. RUTH'S ROOM, MAINE GENERAL HOSPITAL - MINUTES LATER

Ruth is in bed, asleep. Her boys enter quietly, not wanting to wake her.

Stephen looks down at his mother. Her body has wasted away, ravaged by cancer.

The boys stand in silence, not knowing what to say to each other.

They are devastated.

David sees the vase of DEAD FLOWERS, sees his chance to break the uncomfortable silence.

DAVID
I'm gonna get her some fresh
flowers from downstairs.

David takes the vase and leaves.

Stephen sits down beside his mother, tears in his eyes.

That's when he notices the PUBLISHERS GALLEYS on the table beside his mother's bed. The front page reads:

CARRIE

A novel by STEPHEN KING

**A DOUBLEDAY BOOK
PUBLICATION DATE: APRIL 5, 1974**

Stephen is tangled in his own thoughts when a NURSE enters.

NURSE
(smiling)
Hello.

STEPHEN
Hi.

The nurse places another PILLOW behind Ruth's head.

NURSE
Are you the son who's a writer?

STEPHEN
Tryin' to be.

NURSE
She loved your book.

STEPHEN

She's read it? But her eyesight...

NURSE

I read it to her. She insisted. We finished it a few days ago.

Stephen is overcome with emotion.

STEPHEN

Wow. I just, wow. Thank you. You have no idea what that means to me.

NURSE

My pleasure. I loved it too.

STEPHEN

(brightening)
You did?

NURSE

Oh yeah. It was damn scary. I used to get picked on at school too. I sure did feel sorry for that girl.

The nurse exits. Stephen smiles to himself, thrilled.

His mother starts to rouse.

RUTH

Stevie...

Stephen leans over.

STEPHEN

Hey, Mom. You're awake. How you feelin'?

RUTH

How do I look?

STEPHEN

You look great.

RUTH

Liar. Hand me my cigarettes.

STEPHEN

Mom--

RUTH

Spare me the lecture. It don't make a lick of difference now, anyhow.

STEPHEN

Okay.

Stephen picks up a pack of **PARLIAMENTS** from beside the BED. He lights one, puts it up to Ruth's mouth.

She takes a DRAG. It's a weak, feeble intake of air, takes all the energy out of her.

RUTH

Thank you.

Stephen puts the cigarette out in the trash can.

STEPHEN

You read my book.

RUTH

You thought I wouldn't?

STEPHEN

I just, I don't know, thought it might be a bit too much for you.

RUTH

Oh please. Just 'cause I'm dyin' doesn't mean I'm fragile.

STEPHEN

(nervous)

Did you like it?

RUTH

It's pretty damn over the top.

STEPHEN

Yeah, I guess it is.

RUTH

I loved it.

(beat)

Actually, it reminded me of the stuff your Dad used to write.

Stephen can't believe what he's just heard.

He tries to compose himself.

STEPHEN

Dad used to write?

Ruth smiles mischievously.

RUTH

There's a hell of a lot you don't know about your old man. Most of it ain't worth knowing.

STEPHEN

But surely that's something you could have mentioned at some point??

RUTH

I didn't want to put you off. You're so worried about becomin' him already. I didn't want you to use it as an excuse to stop.

STEPHEN

Do you remember that time when I was a kid, when I saw that other kid get hit by a train?

RUTH

(surprised)

I didn't think you remembered that.

STEPHEN

It comes to me in flashes. I used to think there was something wrong with me, and the stuff I write...

RUTH

Ain't nothin' wrong with you, my boy. There's horror everywhere in this world. You just see it a little better than most.

Stephen changes the subject.

STEPHEN

So what did Dad write?

RUTH

Short stories, mostly. Sent 'em out all over the place. All he got was a pile of rejections, so he stopped. When things didn't go his way, he just left 'em, like he left us. He thought he couldn't have it all, a family, a job, his writin'. He thought it'd be easier if he let us go.

(beat)

That's why you're not him, Stevie.

(MORE)

RUTH (CONT'D)

'Cause you've done it all, and you
can have it all. I'm so proud of
you, son. I love you.

Stephen embraces his mother, tears stinging his eyes.

STEPHEN

I love you too, Mom.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A rainy, overcast Maine day.

Stephen, David, Tabitha and the kids stand by an OPEN GRAVE
as Ruth King's coffin is lowered inside.

A MINISTER recites the LORD'S PRAYER as the other mourners
stifle their grief with HANDKERCHIEFS.

MINISTER

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall
not want...

Tabitha dissolves into tears.

Stephen stands stoic, holding it all in.

His daughter looks up at him, sensing his despair. She smiles
at him.

He smiles back, tries to hold himself together.

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - THAT NIGHT

Stephen TOSSES and TURNS in bed beside Tabitha.

He's in the fit of a **NIGHTMARE**.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

Stephen walks the DARK and EMPTY streets. The town seems
DESERTED.

He walks the CENTER OF THE ROAD, arms stiff at his sides, as
if like a robot.

He passes the INDUSTRIAL LAUNDRY, HAMPDEN ACADEMY and DUNKIN'
DONUTS, all the places that have tethered he and Tabitha for
so long, all the places that he despises now inexplicably
placed SIDE BY SIDE.

He fixes the DUNKIN' DONUTS with a DEATH STARE, channelling ALL HIS ENERGY into the tiny PINK BUILDING.

The Dunkin' Donuts **EXPLODES**.

Next is the INDUSTRIAL LAUNDRY. He FOCUSES his stare on the PLAIN BRICK BUILDING.

It catches **FIRE**.

He focuses more intently.

IT EXPLODES.

Stephen keeps walking. Soon the ENTIRE TOWN IS ON FIRE, punished by Stephen's wrath just as CARRIE WHITE punishes her hometown in his novel.

Stephen stands amidst the chaos, SMILING.

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER

Stephen bolts awake. He YELLS OUT.

Tabitha wakes.

TABITHA
Sweetheart, what's wrong?

Stephen shakes himself awake.

STEPHEN
Jesus Christ.

Tabitha consoles him.

TABITHA
It was just a nightmare. Go back to sleep, hon.

Stephen lays back down, closes his eyes.

Tabitha rolls over. Stephen opens his eyes again. Terrified.

There's no sleep for him tonight.

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - MORNING

A peaceful WINTER morning. The windows are BLACKED OUT with SNOW. The King family sleep soundly.

There are signs that things are a little different now. In the LAUNDRY Stephen's CARD TABLE and RICKETY CHAIR have been replaced by a new WRITING DESK. It's still nestled between the WASHER and DRYER, but it's NEW.

The kitchen booth. It's now decorated with THROW CUSHIONS that make the place look more colorful, a little less dreary.

But the most important addition is in the kitchen:

A BRAND NEW TELEPHONE.

INT. BATHROOM

Tabitha stands in a ROBE in front of the mirror, dries her hair with a TOWEL.

She picks up her HAIR DRYER, turns it on. SPARKS FLY.

The hair dryer SPLUTTERS to a STOP.

TABITHA

Shit!

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - MOMENTS LATER

Tabitha walks out of the bathroom. Stephen is getting their kids dressed in NEW OUTFITS. He puts a THICK WINTER COAT on Naomi.

Tabitha mutters to herself.

STEPHEN

What's wrong?

TABITHA

Damn hair dryer broke.

STEPHEN

We'll get you another one.

TABITHA

They're just so damn expensive.

Stephen frowns, continues buttoning up Naomi's coat.

Their situation has improved, but not THAT much.

Twenty five hundred dollars only goes so far.

EXT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - LATER

Tabitha walks out of the house with the kids all bundled up. They're off for a trip to visit her Mom. A light drift of SNOW lays over the ground.

Stephen follows after them. Sitting in the driveway is a **BRAND NEW FORD PINTO**. The rusted old Buick is **HISTORY**.

Tabitha straps the kids in the car, turns to her husband.

TABITHA
We won't be long.

Stephen kisses her.

STEPHEN
Tell your Mom I said 'hi'.

Tabitha gets into the car, backs out.

She and the kids wave to Stephen as they drive off.

INT. LAUNDRY, DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - LATER

Stephen is hard at work at the typewriter.

The pages flow from him. We see the words **SMALL TOWN** and **MARSTEN HOUSE** and **VAMPIRES**. Beside him is a title sheet. It reads: **SECOND COMING** by Stephen King.

There is an UNFAMILIAR SOUND, the shrill insistence of a RINGING PHONE.

Stephen stops typing and gets up.

INT. KITCHEN, DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - MOMENTS LATER

Stephen answers the phone.

STEPHEN
King residence.

BILL THOMPSON (O.S.)
Steve! It's Bill!

STEPHEN
Hey, Bill. Good to hear from you.

BILL THOMPSON (O.S.)
Are you sitting down?

TENSE BEAT

STEPHEN

Uh, do I need to?

BILL THOMPSON (O.S.)

You might. The paperback rights for
Carrie just went to Signet Books...
for four hundred thousand dollars.

Stephen's legs buckle.

He slides to the floor, phone still in hand.

STEPHEN

Sorry, Bill. Can you repeat that?
Did you say forty thousand dollars?

BILL THOMPSON (O.S.)

Four hundred thousand, and as per
your contract, half of that goes to
you. Congratulations, Steve.

Stephen is lost for words. It seems unreal, incredible.

STEPHEN

(overwhelmed)

What do I do now?

BILL THOMPSON

(laughing)

What do you do now? You tell your
wife!

STEPHEN

Jesus, Bill... I don't know how to
thank you.

BILL THOMPSON

Just say it's the start of a
beautiful relationship.

EXT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - MOMENTS LATER

Stephen dashes from the trailer, pulling on his WINTER COAT.

He takes off down the road.

A light SNOW begins to fall.

As Stephen makes his way a familiar **dark figure** emerges.

THE DARK MAN
Heard the good news, Stevie! Drinks
are on me!

Stephen struts past the Dark Man.

He's not listening to his spiel today.

The Dark Man calls after him...

THE DARK MAN (CONT'D)
Come on! You've earned it! Let's
celebrate!

Stephen stops. Is he going to give into temptation?

He turns around.

STEPHEN
Why don't you go stick it where the
sun don't shine?

Stephen smiles, keeps walking. The Dark Man stares after him.

THE DARK MAN
That's it, Steve. You keep walkin'.
You've got a long road ahead. I'll
be seein' ya.

Stephen doesn't listen. He's done with The Dark Man.

For now.

EXT. PHARMACY, DOWNTOWN - LATER

Stephen enters a pharmacy.

EXT. PHARMACY, DOWNTOWN - MINUTES LATER

Stephen exits with a BOX under his arm.

INT. DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - THAT EVENING

Stephen sits nervously at the kitchen table, the BOX in front of him.

The HEADLIGHTS of the FORD PINTO swing into the driveway.

Stephen straightens in the chair. He's chomping at the bit.

Seconds later, the front door opens.

Tabitha hurries in with the kids.

TABITHA
Jesus, it's freezing out there.

She hands baby Joe to Stephen, starts taking off Naomi's winter coat.

TABITHA (CONT'D)
That new car is drivin' me mad. I
can't get the hang of the stick.

Stephen stands, nestles Joe under his arm.

He picks up the box, hands it to Tabitha.

She looks at it quizzically.

TABITHA (CONT'D)
What's this?

STEPHEN
A gift.

TABITHA
You didn't have to buy me a gift.

STEPHEN
Open it.

Tabitha takes the gift from Stephen. He watches, delighted, as she opens it.

It's a **HAIR DRYER**.

Tabitha laughs.

TABITHA
You really didn't have to.

STEPHEN
Happy Mother's Day. You're the best
damn mother there ever was, and the
best wife.

Tabitha looks at Stephen. Something is wrong. Tears spring to his eyes.

She puts her hands on his shoulders.

TABITHA
Stephen? What is it? What's wrong?

STEPHEN
We sold the paperback rights to
'Carrie'.

Tabitha is confused by Stephen's tears. She thinks it's all gone bad.

TABITHA
(disappointed)
We didn't get the forty thousand,
huh?

Stephen takes her firmly by the shoulders.

STEPHEN
Tab, they sold for four hundred
thousand dollars.

Tabby drops the hair dryer.

She grabs onto her husband as her knees shake.

TABITHA
WHAT??

STEPHEN
(beaming)
It's actually happening, Tabby. We
did it. You and me. We really did
it.

Tabitha looks around at the tiny trailer, looks down at her kids, looks at her husband.

She bursts into tears.

Stephen takes her in his arms, the two of them CRYING and LAUGHING.

They've been through so much together: poverty, heartache, and failure.

And now they'll be together in success.

EXT. THE TONIGHT SHOW - PRESENT DAY

Stephen exits the back door of The Tonight Show. By his side, as always, is Tabitha. Behind them is a SECURITY GUARD.

A CHEER goes up amidst the waiting crowd. People hold up copies of his many books, desperate for him to sign.

Stephen gets down to business. He never wants to disappoint his fans.

He sees a familiar face in the crowd. **The Dark Man.**

He watches from the edges of the crowd, a smirk on his lips.

Always there, but now at a distance.

CAPTION:

Stephen King is one of the bestselling authors of all time.

His books have sold over 350 million copies worldwide.

Tabitha King is the author of eight novels and two works of non-fiction.

In 1977 the Kings welcomed a second son, Owen.

They still live in Maine.