

INT. SUBURBAN BEDROOM - NIGHT

1A

RICK CARPENTER, an average looking seventeen year old, is lying on his back across a disheveled bed.

He scowls as he wrestles with his sheets, trying to get comfortable. He tosses and turns as we MOVE IN toward his tightly shut eyes.

RICK (V.O.)

Ever since I could remember  
I've had trouble sleeping...

CUT TO:

1B INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - NIGHT

1B

Rick looks like he's dressed for school, a clean-cut all-American teenager. He is motionless as he speaks directly to the CAMERA:

RICK (CONT.)

Something doesn't feel right.  
I'm standing inside an empty  
high school. I'm not sure  
which one, but I know it's not  
mine. I got my backpack with  
me... stuffed with school  
junk... books and things. I'm  
not sure what I'm doing here,  
but what the hell... could be  
worse... right?

Overhead, the florescent lights BUZZ and flicker as if they were slowly shorting out.

Rick freezes and scans the empty hallway.

He readjusts his backpack and makes his way toward a classroom.

RICK (CONT. V.O.)

Like I said... something  
doesn't feel right. So, I  
figure since I'm at school I  
should probably get to class.

He stops in front of a closed door and jiggles the handle unsuccessfully.

RICK (CONT. V.O.)

Locked.

Rick moves to another classroom.

Again he tries to open the door, and again it's locked.

RICK (CONT. V.O.)  
I can't get into any of 'em.  
They're all locked. And for  
some reason I really want to  
get in... so I try to check  
out what's inside.

Within the darkened classroom we can see a strange SHAPE moving about.

RICK (CONT. V.O.)  
There's something there...

Noticing that someone is looking in on it, the SHAPE slowly moves toward the door.

A bit startled, Rick backs away, quickly turns around and continues on down the hallway.

RICK (CONT. V.O.)  
I start to feel sick as I pass  
more and more classrooms, all  
have that same shape inside  
'em.

We now see that every room has some strange PERSON staring out from the small window on the door.

For some reason the hallway seems to stretch into infinity as Rick picks up his pace.

RICK (CONT. V.O.)  
And then... the lights go out.

The darkness wraps around Rick.

Silence.

Suddenly, the emergency lights kick on, filling the corridor with an eerie red glow.

Rick freezes.

RICK (CONT. V.O.)  
I listen...

Silence.

RICK (CONT. V.O.)  
Nothing... until...

The doors behind him slowly CREEK open.

RICK (CONT. V.O.)  
By this time, I've had about  
enough of this dream so I  
figure I should get the hell  
out of it somehow...

Not looking back, Rick starts to run.

RICK (CONT. V.O.)  
I see a lit classroom at the  
end of the hall... so I head  
for it.

Eventually, Rick makes it to the room and tries the door handle.  
The door opens.

Entering the room, he slams the door behind him. He listens for  
a moment. Silence.

RICK (CONT. V.O.)  
And this is where things get  
really weird...

Rick turns around and stops dead in his tracks. He is now on the  
stage of an old-fashioned theater. Spotlights illuminate the  
dusty old stage.

RICK (CONT. V.O.)  
I'm in some theater... some  
old run down theater...

There are people dressed in black cloaks seated in the audience.

RICK (CONT. V.O.)  
And there's these shapes...  
kind of like the shapes I saw  
before. Like people in  
cloaks... monks or something  
like that...

The shapes sit rigid. Motionless.

RICK (CONT.)  
(to the shapes)  
Hi... am I in the right class?

The shapes start to WHISPER to one another as a few point to  
Rick's backpack.

RICK (CONT. V.O.)  
I look to see where they're  
pointing to and notice some  
stuff leaking from my  
backpack.

The pack is dripping a deep reddish liquid onto the floor.

RICK (CONT. V.O.)  
The stuff is gettin'  
everywhere so I try to plug  
up the leaks. But the more  
I try to stop 'em, the more  
they keep coming back.

The shapes CHUCKLE as the bloody liquid pours from Rick's backpack, drenching him in the process.

RICK (CONT. V.O.)  
It's all over me now, so I  
drop the bag on the floor and  
open it up to see what's goin'  
on.

Tentatively, Rick peers into the backpack's bloody interior. He digs his hand inside.

RICK (CONT. V.O.)  
I search for something...  
something to stop the blood...  
and finally grab hold of it.

Rick slowly pulls out a large bloody hammer from inside the bag.

RICK (CONT. V.O.)  
It's mine. I mean I don't go  
around carrying tools in my  
backpack... but for some  
reason I know it's mine... and  
I can't get the thing out.

We see a large hand gripping the hammer's handle from inside the bag.

RICK (CONT. V.O.)  
This damn hand thing won't let  
it go... even though it knows  
the hammer's mine.

Rick struggles to wrench the hammer free.

RICK (CONT.)  
(to the shapes)  
Hey, could you help me with  
this? It's stuck...

The shapes do nothing... say nothing.

Never letting go of the hammer, Rick begins to get pulled down closer and closer to the bag.

5.

The shapes start to LAUGH as Rick is eventually pulled down into the bloody backpack...

... a sea of red fills the frame...

RICK (CONT. V.O.)  
And that's when I wake up...

CUT TO:

2A EXT. RICK'S HOUSE - DAY

2A

Rick exits his middle-class suburban home and steps out into the cold air of September.

He turns and stares at his silent house.

After a beat he slings his backpack over his shoulder and climbs atop his mountain bike.

He rides his bicycle through the sunny streets of Shermer Illinois:

White picket fences, and elaborate yellow tulip gardens stand guard to the expensive houses of his neighborhood.

Smiling crossing guards hold up traffic, allowing happy children to make their way toward school.

Playful puppies race across neatly trimmed lawns.

CUT TO:

2B EXT. BIKE PATH - MINUTES LATER

2B

Rick peddles down a narrow path toward a small clearing near a neighborhood side-street.

He skids to a stop in front of JOHN RUTLICK, an overweight teenager, and DOUG KWAN, a skinny Asian boy.

JOHN  
Hey Carpenter... I thought you  
were gonna take your mom's  
car?

RICK  
I guess she kinda needed it  
today.

DOUG  
Did you bring the camera?

JOHN

Yeah man, come on... we ain't got all day.

RICK

It's in my backpack.

JOHN

Well get it ready...

DOUG

Yeah we got a movie to make.

Rick tentatively digs into his backpack and removes a small video camera. He follows John and Doug as they move toward a group of bushes near the foot of the path.

Knocking away some branches, Rick's eyes widen when he sees a large black squirrel inside a small animal trap.

JOHN

Hey, we finally got one!

RICK

It's black... aren't those rare?

JOHN

Rare, shmare! Who gives a fuck... turn your camera on.

He turns the video camera on and points it at the panicking caged squirrel.

RICK

He looks freaked. He really wants to get out.

DOUG

Well screw him. Dumbshit squirrel. Look at it... goddamn mean, man... serves him right.

JOHN

Probably has rabies.

RICK

(moves closer to cage)  
I mean it really looks pissed guys... maybe we should just let it go.

Rick turns the camera off as John kneels down in front of the cage.

JOHN

Let it go my ass. Fucker'd  
take a chunk outta ya' if it  
got the chance.

DOUG

Fuckin'-a it would.

John begins to dig through his own backpack and removes a large firework.

JOHN

This is gonna be swingin'.

DOUG

Dude, don't blow yer' hand  
off. You'd be forced to find  
a girlfriend.

JOHN

Funny... real fuckin' funny.  
Hey, keep filming Carpenter.  
I don't want ya' to miss  
anything...

RICK

Jesus, come on... let's just  
let it go.

DOUG

God you're a puss Carpenter...

Doug grabs the camera from Rick and holds it up to his own eye. Rick squints and backs away from the cage.

JOHN

How 'bout some fire  
Scarecrow?!

John lights the fuse and forces the firework into the cage.

The friends take a step back as the firework ignites, filling the cage with a shower of multi-colored sparks.

RICK

Screw this...

JOHN

Didn't see you try and stop  
us.

RICK

Right...

Rick turns away and moves to his bicycle as the squirrel catches fire. He squints his eyes as the animal lets out a horrible SQURRREEEK!!! just before the firework explodes with a deafening KABOOM!

JOHN (O.S.)

Excellent!

DOUG (O.S.)

Rick, you gotta check this out!

Rick stares off as the autumn wind blows through the leafy trees of Shermer.

Eventually, John and Doug reappear from behind the bushes, bloody cage in hand.

JOHN

Man you missed it. Fuckin' intense...

DOUG

You gotta check out the tape Carpenter, real hardcore stuff!

Doug hands Rick the video camera.

RICK

I think I'll pass...

He ejects the tape from inside and hands it over to John before stuffing the camera back inside his backpack.

John nudges Rick roughly as he reseals his bag. He spins around in annoyance and stops dead in his tracks.

A red jeep slows to a halt at a nearby intersection.

Its driver, JACKIE BREDEHOFF, is an 18 year old teen-queen. A pretty girl who obviously knows just how attractive she is.

Rick looks like his breath has been stolen from him as he watches her adjust her dark sunglasses.

Her long blonde hair shimmers in the morning as she smirks at the dumbfounded adolescents staring at her.

Slowly, she pulls away.

JOHN

Jackie Bredehoff. Man, I'd love to fuck her. I bet she'd love it too... goddamn whore.

RICK

Jackie's not a whore.

JOHN

She sure is man... all senior chicks are whores.

John grabs his crotch and makes lurid pelvic thrusts.

RICK

Cut it out man...

JOHN

Fuckin' porno-stars. All of 'em. Little Marylin Chambers. In-sa-tia-ble baby.

DOUG

Chambers ain't shit.

JOHN

My ass she ain't... best lookin' babe in porno.

DOUG

I'll take Tracy Lords...

JOHN

Fuck her.

DOUG

That's right...

RICK

Goddamnitt, would you two shut the hell up.

John and Doug stop.

JOHN

You're a spaz Carpenter!

Suddenly a large black Chevy Nova SCREECHES to a halt at the foot of the path.

A red-haired guy in his late twenties, PETE CARPENTER, climbs out of the car and grins at Rick and his friends. The dim-whited driver, JIM, peers out from inside the car with a smile.

RICK

Shit...

Pete HORKS up some phlegm and launches a yellow-green loogie in the general direction of the friends as he approaches.

PETE

Hey, fuck-stick... where the hell were you?! Mom said I had to give you a ride this morning.

RICK

I decided to take my bike.

PETE

You could'a told me! Gonna make me fuckin' late for work. Treat these homo friends better than your own fuckin' family.

Pete looks down to the bloody carcass of the dead squirrel.

PETE (CONT.)

My God! Are you guys nuts?

DOUG

I had nothing to do with that.

PETE

I don't care who did it.

JOHN

I didn't do it either, man.

PETE

Didn't you hear me?! Shut up and get lost! I don't want to see either a' you hangin' around my brother anymore! Got it?

JOHN

Yeah, yeah, yeah...

(to Rick)

Later dude...

John and Doug head for school.

PETE

What's wrong with you Rick... you get off on shit like this?

RICK  
No... I didn't do any...

PETE  
Enough of your bullshit.  
That's all I hear from you.  
Mom may buy into that shit but  
I don't! Got it?!

RICK  
You never fuckin' listen to  
me.

Pete shoves Rick down to the ground.

PETE  
Jesus fuckin' Christ?! Where  
the piss did you learn to talk  
like that?! Got no respect  
for nothin'.

JIM  
Some brother man... beat his  
ass! Dude's askin' for it!

PETE  
Little pussy ain't worth it...

RICK  
Coward...

PETE  
What did you say!

Pete grabs a handful of dirt as Rick struggles beneath him.

PETE (CONT.)  
You gotta learn to shut your  
mouth, you know that Rick?

Pete stuffs the dirt deep into Rick's mouth.

He GAGS as Pete rises and kicks dust into his eyes.

PETE (CONT.)  
You and I are gonna have a  
talk after dinner tonight!  
Got it?!

Rick spits out some dirt and wipes his mouth as Pete's car moves  
away from him down the happy streets of Shermer.

CUT TO:

3 INT. SHERMER HIGH - DAY

3

Rick marches through the empty hallway, nervously rubbing the cover of "Thor's Exit!," a beat up old hard-bound novel. He holds it against his chest as he stops in front of a closed classroom door.

Fixing his hair and tucking in his shirt, he opens the door... slowly revealing his teacher, MICHAEL CHRISTMAN.

MICHAEL

I want you to keep a journal of your daily events, thoughts, whatever. You can sketch, you can write poetry but I definitely want you to write something everyday.

He sits down and notices Rick in the doorway.

MICHAEL (CONT.)

Can I help you?

Rick digs into his pocket and produces a piece of paper.

RICK

I think I'm in this class?

Michael looks down to Rick's schedule and nods.

MICHAEL

I'm Mr. Christman...

RICK

I know. Wanted to get in one of your classes since freshman year.

MICHAEL

Really? I didn't know I was so popular around here.

RICK

You are with me.

MICHAEL

Thank you... I guess. What happened to your nose?

RICK

Oh... I, uh... got in kind of an accident on my way here.

MICHAEL

Looks like it was a serious one.

RICK

It's no big deal... I'm fine.

MICHAEL

Alright. Well then why don't you have a seat.

RICK

I'd rather sit in the front, if it's okay...

Rick turns around and notices Jackie Bredehoff sitting toward the back of the class. She watches him, curiously.

MICHAEL

So, I want you all to write... everyday. Write about everything. Go buy a notepad... notebook.

Michael notices as Rick pulls out a thick writing notebook.

MICHAEL (CONT.)

Like this.

Michael moves to pick up Rick's notebook but is stopped when Rick slams his hand down on top of it.

RICK

Please don't.

MICHAEL

I just want to hold it up...

RICK

Okay... but don't read it.

MICHAEL

What you got in here?

RICK

Nothing important.

MICHAEL

Somehow I doubt that...

Jackie fixes on Rick as he slumps down in his chair.

MICHAEL (CONT.)

Okay... go get one of these things and get to work. Your first big project, which you will complete with a partner, is to write down what you dream every night...

Slowly, Rick raises his hand high above his head.

MICHAEL (CONT.)

Rick?

RICK

What if we don't dream?

MICHAEL

Everybody dreams.

RICK

I... don't.

MICHAEL

Well, then Rick I guess you'll just have to make something up.

RICK

I can do that.

Rick remains fixed on Michael as he begins teaching.

CUT TO:

4 INT. RICK'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

4

The video image of some violent horror movie fills the frame. The sound of a SCREAMING woman pierces the air.

Doug sits staring catatonically at the television set. Next to him is Rick, quietly reading "Thor's Exit!" John sits in a ratty bean-bag chair off to the side. He has a large bong stuck in his mouth. With a GASP, John exhales a small puff of smoke.

JOHN

This thing sucks...

DOUG

You're not doing it right.

JOHN

Yes I am. My brother showed me how last week.

DOUG

Gotta clog the hole on the side dude. All you're doin' is hyperventilating.

JOHN

Ain't that part of the buzz.

Doug picks up the remote sitting on top of the tv and changes the channel.

JOHN (CONT.)

Fuckin' fuck? What the fuck y'er doin?!

The image of a man shooting himself in the head comes on the tv.

DOUG

Fuckin' sa-weet, "Faces of Death."

JOHN

That ain't "Faces of Death."

DOUG

Looks like it to me.

JOHN

That's one of those pussy "extreme video" bullshit. It deffinitely ain't no "Faces of Death."

DOUG

Maybe it's one of the later ones, like part four or something.

JOHN

It ain't fucking "Faces of Death."

DOUG

How the fuck can you tell?

JOHN

Part four has the guy getting eaten by the aligator. Part three has the electrocution. Two sucks... just a couple decent car deaths. The first has the monkey brain thing.

DOUG

Yeah... that one's pretty phat.

On screen a woman is being gored by a raging bull.

JOHN

The bomb dude... the fucking bomb...

John sucks up some more smoke from the bong.

JOHN (CONT.)

Carpenter here turned me on to the stuff. He used to have the whole collection. Remember that Rick?

Rick, head still burried in his book, doesn't appear to be paying attention to his two friends.

JOHN (CONT.)

Those tapes you had? "Faces of Death?" You had all of 'em. They were tits. What you ever do with 'em?

RICK

Do with what?

JOHN

"Faces of Fucking Death" man! What the fuck? Get your head out of that stupid ass book!

Rick looks up.

DOUG

Goddamn man... I'd rather watch anything on tv than read a boring piece of crap book.

RICK

Yeah well, that's you.

JOHN

Goddamn right it's me. I'm part of the human race, ya' know. Fuckin waste of time readin' a book. They all just get made into movies anyway.

RICK  
This book hasn't.

JOHN  
Must really suck.

RICK  
Better than any movie out  
there.

JOHN  
Yeah right.

RICK  
It's over twenty-five years  
old and is still the coolest  
thing I ever read.

JOHN  
Well then tell us why it  
hasn't been made into a  
movie smart-guy.

RICK  
It's too good to be made  
into a movie.

JOHN  
Too good my ass. You name  
one great book that hasn't  
been made into a movie.

RICK  
"Catcher in the Rye."

John inhales a huge amount of smoke from the bong.

JOHN  
Never read it...

He starts COUGHING violently.

Rick shakes his head in frustration and turns back to his  
book. Flipping to the front, he comes to a picture of the  
AUTHOR.

He lightly touches the picture as he stares deeply into the young  
eyes of MICHAEL CHRISTMAN.

CUT TO:

5 INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

5

A large spoon SLOPS a pile of grayish food onto Rick's plate. He turns from the lunch lady with a sneer.

Scanning the room, he spots Jackie sitting with a group of very hip-looking girls.

He eyes her as he moves to an empty table off in the corner of the cafeteria.

Rick watches Jackie as he plays with his food.

**RICK'S POV**

Jackie flexes her perfect jaw as she LAUGHS.

Her full red lips pout as she sips her soda from a straw.

The curve of her neck sways gracefully as she talks.

Her brilliant blue eyes sparkle in the florescent glow of the lunchroom.

**END POV**

Rick takes a bite of the grey food matter on his plate and GAGS with disgust.

He pushes his tray away from him.

He pulls out his copy of "Thor's Exit!" and a beat up notebook. Opening the notebook, Rick begins to write:

RICK (V.O.)

Ever since I could remember  
I've had trouble sleeping.  
It's like I have this kind  
of disease or something.  
I'm seriously thinking about  
seeing somebody about it.  
Like a doctor or something.  
I sometimes wonder if I will  
ever be able to sleep  
through one night without  
waking up. It's as if  
there's this other guy in my  
head that's afraid of sleep.  
I wish he'd go away. I wish  
he'd just die and go away.

Rick turns from his writing and looks toward Jackie's table. She is gone now, nowhere to be seen.

FADE TO BLACK:  
CUT TO:

6 INT. OLD WORKROOM - NIGHT

6

Rick is standing alone in a dimly lit workroom. Cracked yellow stones... dirt and dust... cover everything.

Silence.

Rick narrows his eyes when he sees an old drafting table littered with old writing supplies. Sitting close to the edge is a thick hard cover book.

Rick picks up the book curiously. The book is completely covered in blood. Wiping away some of the blood, Rick can barely make out the book's title, "Thor's Exit: Part II!"

THOR (O.S.)  
Hello my boy. It's about  
time.

Rick spins around to face the VOICE from the shadows.

Slowly, the character THOR emerges from the dark.

He is very tall and dressed in an oversized black hooded cloak. A long scar cuts a swath across Thor's face from his eye to his mouth, creating an unnatural grotesque smile. He carries a huge silver sledge hammer.

RICK  
Thor... my God... this is so  
cool. Thor you're the best.

THOR  
Thank you Rick... but please  
call me Maluch. The weak ones  
gaveme that other "title."  
The ones that didn't  
understand.

RICK  
Right... Maluch. What're ya'  
doin' here?

THOR  
Waiting for you...

RICK  
Really? I've been waiting for  
you too... waiting my whole  
life.

Rick is really excited. He moves closer to the huge man.

RICK (CONT.)

I mean, you really are the coolest. Man, you showed 'em all. Taught them all a lesson.

THOR

Just a means to an end.

RICK

A means to an end? You mean how you became a God, right? The God of Thunder?

THOR

I don't think you fully understand my boy... I'm no God. I became like a God. Not a God. I'm not the God of Thunder, I am Maluch. I am more... much more.

RICK

I'd like to become a God someday.

THOR

In order to become a God, Rick... one must do as God does.

Slowly, he rises and begins to approach Rick.

RICK

I understand...

THOR

Do you really, my boy?

RICK

Yes... I think so.

THOR

Then why didn't you find me sooner?

RICK

I didn't know where to go. Didn't know where to find you.

Thor smiles as he places his hand around Rick's throat. The boy struggles as the enormous man lifts him off his feet and holds him up against a wall.

THOR  
My boy, my boy... you  
should've known I was always  
right here...

Quickly, Thor produces a large silver sledgehammer and plunges it deep into Rick's chest.

With a SPLASH, an unnaturally enormous gush of blood pours out to the floor as Rick crumples like a rag doll.

The hanging light bulb in the room EXPLODES, sending millions of glass shards into the air and plunging the scene into darkness.

CUT TO:

7 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

7

Michael TALKS about the upcoming dream writing project as he collects the students' homework.

MICHAEL  
And it's time to assign  
partners for the project.

A couple students GROAN their disapproval.

MICHAEL (CONT.)  
Awww... gosh it's so hard  
isn't it? Having to talk to  
people you don't know? Well  
too bad, I'm forcing you to  
broaden your horizons a bit.

Michael begins reading off his list of partners.

MICHAEL (CONT.)  
And finally... Rick Carpenter  
and Jackie Bredehoff.

Rick perks up when he hears this news.

MICHAEL (CONT.)  
That okay? Everyone happy?

The students MUMBLE their unenthusiastic approval.

MICHAEL (CONT.)

Good. So get together  
sometime after school and get  
to work.

The RING of the class bell sounds and the students start to gather their stuff.

Rick slowly moves toward Jackie as she rises from her desk. He fidgets with his backpack nervously as he speaks:

RICK

Uh, hey... I guess we're  
partners. Ya' wanna set up a  
time when we can get together?

JACKIE

Yeah, sure... look for me in  
the cafeteria sometime.

RICK

Oh... yeah, in the  
cafeteria...

JACKIE

I'm pretty sure we have the  
same lunch schedule. I know  
you've seen me there before.

Jackie smiles at Rick before exiting the classroom.

RICK

Right... great, I'll see you  
then.

After a beat, Rick turns and notices Michael putting his teaching materials into his briefcase.

RICK (CONT.)

Mr. Christman?

MICHAEL

Rick the non-dreamer... what  
can I do for you?

RICK

I was just wondering if we  
were ever gonna talk about  
your book?

MICHAEL

My book?

RICK  
"Thor's Exit!"

Rick rummages through his backpack and produces his beat-up copy of the novel. He hands it to Michael.

MICHAEL  
Haven't seen one of these in a while.

RICK  
I bet.

MICHAEL  
And you read this book?

RICK  
Read it about fifteen times. It's the reason I took your class. Like I said, been tryin' to get you since freshman year.

MICHAEL  
Yes I remember you said that.

RICK  
I had to take a class taught by the best writer in the world. "Maluch"... boy, he was awesome. With that hammer of his... doing as God does. Pretty cool stuff. Made my mom freak. I loved it, still do.

MICHAEL  
Pretty gruesome stuff.

RICK  
I know, it's great. Best thing I ever read, seriously. When I first read it I thought he was the God of thunder, ya' know? But that wasn't true was it?

MICHAEL  
I don't know Rick... it's been a long time since I even thought about that book.

RICK

I mean, you can understand why I'd think that, right? I mean people called him "Thor" but that was 'cause he killed everyone with a hammer. They should have used his real name. They didn't really understand him, did they?

MICHAEL

I don't think I even understood him back then. The character kind of took on a life of his own.

RICK

You really wrote a great book.

MICHAEL

Thanks.

RICK

You never wrote anything else, did ya'?

MICHAEL

No... I chose to stop writing.

RICK

Yeah, that's too bad.

Rick fidgets a bit in the uncomfortable silence.

RICK (CONT.)

Anyway, I really want to get into this writing thing... and I thought maybe you could steer me in the right direction.

MICHAEL

"Thor's Exit!" isn't a part of the curriculum. To be honest it's kind of a poor novel.

RICK

What do you mean? The book changed my life.

MICHAEL

It has no merit. Totally violent, pointless. Written for shock value. It's trash really.

RICK

Trash? How can you call it trash? You wrote it...

MICHAEL

I wrote it a long time ago Rick... I'm very different now.

RICK

Yeah, but can't we talk about it at least once in class?

Beat.

MICHAEL

I doubt it...

Michael hands the book back to Rick and exits the classroom.

Alone in the empty classroom, Rick rubs his temple in pain. He shuts his eyes and lets out a frustrated BREATH.

CUT TO:

8 INT. RICK'S FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

8

Rick, Pete, and their MOM, eat dinner.

Mom looks as if she used to be a ravishing woman in her prime. Yet too many drinks and too many confrontations have taken their toll. Dark circles have formed under her eyes making her look much older than her forty five years let on.

Mom and Pete are focused on the television as Rick sits in the corner scribbling down some words onto a note pad.

Mom is drinking a tall glass of scotch out of a beautiful crystal glass as she eats.

MOM

So, Ricky-rick... how's school going.

RICK

School's cool... I guess.

MOM  
Grades alright?

RICK  
I dunno...

PETE  
What does that mean, I dunno.

RICK  
Means I don't know... goddamn  
classes just started.

PETE  
Jesus Christ, you gonna let  
him talk that way?!

MOM  
As long as he goes to college  
next year I don't care how he  
talks. It'd be nice if  
someone in this family was a  
success.

Silence.

Pete looks uncomfortable as he plays with his food.

PETE  
Well... hey I got some good  
news. Mr. Erb is really happy  
with me at work, ya' know? He  
even told me so the other day.  
Pulled me aside in front of  
everyone...

MOM  
Mm-hmm...

Mom, half-listening, motions her empty glass to Rick. He picks it up and refills it with more scotch.

PETE  
I think Mr. Erb is gonna give  
me a raise next week.

MOM  
Great... you'll finally cross  
the minimum wage mark.

Rick hands the full glass of Scotch back to his mom.

RICK  
About that college stuff....

MOM

You're going to go to college  
Rick.

RICK

I know... it's just... do I  
have to go right after  
school? I mean... maybe I  
should work a bit... save up  
some money?

PETE

No shit...

MOM

Quiet Pete, like you'd know  
what that means.

RICK

I was thinking I could maybe  
move out to California after  
school. Get a job out  
there...

Silence.

RICK (CONT.)

Maybe live with Dad for a  
while?

More silence as Mom gulps down her new drink.

MOM

I don't think that's such a  
good idea.

RICK

I know it's been a while but  
maybe it'd be okay...  
California is supposed to be  
nice.

MOM

I'm not sure he lives there  
anymore.

PETE

When was the last time you  
even talked to the guy?

RICK

I don't know, it's been a  
while. He sent me a postcard  
a couple years ago.

PETE

Wow... a postcard... woopie-  
do!

MOM

Just because he sent a you  
postcard he's gonna find you  
a job in California?

RICK

He doesn't have to find me  
one... I could find one  
myself.

PETE

Good luck.

RICK

Mom... maybe you could talk  
to him for me? Ask him for  
me?

MOM

I wouldn't know how to even  
get a hold of him.

RICK

Isn't he still in Malibu?

MOM

Enough! Enough of this. I  
don't need it tonight.

RICK

I was just thinking...

MOM

Keep it to yourself. I have  
a date in less than an hour  
and... I don't need this.

Beat.

PETE

Hey, Mom... I'm goin' out  
with Sandy tonight. She  
really likes me. I think  
she might be the one. We  
might get engaged...

MOM

That's nice. Before you go out with "whoever", make sure Rick is doing his homework. You wouldn't want your brother's grades to start slipping, now would you?

Pete frowns.

PETE

No... of course not.

DISSOLVE TO:

9 INT. RICK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

9

Rick is seated at his desk shuffling through his copy of "Thor's Exit!" Rick is underlining passages in the book. He mumbles as he works:

RICK

(reading to himself)  
 "The weight of the hammer felt like an extension of his body as it passed through Mary's skull like a knife through butter..."

Rick smiles.

RICK (CONT.)

(reading to himself)  
 "The final family member, dead. All ties to the mortal world severed. Maluch, the one they call Thor snickered to himself, a bloody splotch across his twisted face.  
 'Call me what you will mortals... now I am more than God.'"

Rick smiles and looks up to a framed photograph on his desk.

It is an old picture of his family: Mom, Pete, Rick and an extremely good-looking MAN that must be Rick's father.

Looking down to his copy of "Thor's Exit!" he frowns.

CUT TO:

10 INT. CLASSROOM - MORNING

10

Michael walks through the aisles of students, handing out their graded papers.

Various SOUNDS of disappointment come from the pupils.

MICHAEL

Don't think your work isn't appreciated. It's just that most of your writing doesn't seem to come from your heart.

Michael stops when he comes to Rick's empty desk.

MICHAEL (CONT.)

Uh... has anyone seen Mr. Carpenter this morning?

A few students WHISPER to Jackie but stop when they see Rick standing in the doorway.

MICHAEL (CONT.)

There you are. I was just gonna hand back your paper. You did a great job...

RICK

Thanks, I guess...

Slightly embarrassed, Rick takes his seat.

MICHAEL

It's to the point, believable. I'd like to read a little bit of it out loud... if it's alright with you.

RICK

I'd rather you didn't.

MICHAEL

It's really outstanding stuff.

RICK

It's boring. Unimportant.

MICHAEL

Writing doesn't always have to be important. As long as it demonstrates the author's own voice, then it's effective. Being effective is sometimes better than being important.

RICK

Really... no. I'd feel stupid.

Beat.

MICHAEL

Fine. I'll spare you this time, but next time you won't be so lucky. And that goes for everyone. When you write good stuff you need to share it with everyone. That's why writers write. To be read.

Michael hands Rick his paper and moves back to the front of the class. He returns to his LECTURING.

Rick darts a few glances at Jackie.

He folds his paper and inserts it into his notebook.

CUT TO:

11 INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

11

Rick is seated at an empty table in the corner of the busy cafeteria. He fools around with his food as he scribbles in his notebook.

Eventually he looks up to see Jackie standing above him.

JACKIE

Hey there?

RICK

Oh, hi.

JACKIE

Jackie... from class.

RICK

Yeah, of course.

JACKIE

I saw you at this table and I thought I should come over and... talk. Ya' know... about our project thing... for class?

RICK

Sure...

JACKIE

Is that what you're working on now?

RICK

Uh... no, no. This isn't really for school.

JACKIE

What's it for?

RICK

I dunno. I just write sometimes. For the hell of it.

JACKIE

Can I read it?

RICK

It's really stupid stuff.

Rick closes his notebook and forces it into his backpack.

JACKIE

Mr. Christman seems to think your work in class is great. Like you're some writing God.

RICK

Yeah, well the stuff I've done for class is pretty boring so far. Not really what I'm into.

JACKIE

And what are you into?

RICK

Darker things.

JACKIE

Like witches, and stuff?

RICK

Not really that kind of dark.

JACKIE

Mmm. I bet Mr. Christman is into that stuff. The way he talks... you know, 'bout all that weird stuff... dreams... whatever.

RICK

I think he's just trying to get us to write. Be creative. I don't think that's being dark.

JACKIE

Well whatever you wanna call it. I still think he's a freak.

Rick starts to get a little more animated as he speaks:

RICK

Yeah, well you have no idea who the guy is. Mr. Christman is a great man. If you had the slightest clue as to how much of a genius the guy was...

JACKIE

Slow down. I didn't mean anything by it. Hell, I think all my teachers are freaks... don't you.

RICK

Not Mr. Christman. He isn't like any other teacher I've had.

JACKIE

I bet...

Beat.

JACKIE (CONT.)

So, what should we write about?

RICK

What do you want to write about?

JACKIE  
Dreams, I guess. Isn't that  
the assignment?

RICK  
Yeah, but I don't do much  
dreaming.

JACKIE  
I remember you said that. I  
dream all the time. We should  
write about the one I had the  
other night.

RICK  
Alright.

JACKIE  
I was at our lake house in  
Wisconsin. In the summer. I  
was playing catch with my dog  
Joe near the road in front of  
the house. I tossed him the  
ball and...

RICK  
He got hit by a car.

JACKIE  
No. My God. He kept missing  
the ball. So I climbed a tree  
to drop it down to him, ya'  
know kind of directly above  
him.

RICK  
And you fell from the tree...

JACKIE  
Christ. It wasn't like that  
at all. I found a bird's nest  
with some baby birds in it.  
My God, this is gonna be more  
work than I thought.

RING!!!

JACKIE (CONT.)  
Shit. I gotta get to class.

RICK  
When do you wanna get together  
again... I mean... to keep  
working on the project.

JACKIE  
 How about after school  
 sometime. I'm usually at  
 "Nemos."

RICK  
 Where's that?

JACKIE  
 You sure you go to this  
 school?

Rick does not respond.

JACKIE (CONT.)  
 "Capt'n Nemos"... in the  
 city. Where almost everyone  
 hangs out.

RICK  
 Oh, yeah... sure. I know it.

JACKIE  
 I'd hope so. And maybe  
 you'll let me read some of  
 your stuff?

RICK  
 Yeah... maybe...

Rick watches Jackie leave the cafeteria. He pulls out his  
 notebook and continues to scribble in it.

MOVING IN to the dark ink forming over Rick's pages, we:

CUT TO:

12 INT. MICHAEL'S OFFICE - DAY

12

Michael sits hunched over a pile of papers on his cluttered desk.  
 His office is tiny. Very normal-looking. Walls devoid of any  
 pictures, plaques, or personality.

TAP, TAP, TAP!

Michael looks up from his papers.

MICHAEL  
 Yes?

Rick lightly pushes open the door and smiles.

RICK

Hey... Mr. Christman. I was wondering if I could ask you a couple questions?

MICHAEL

Sure Rick. Come on in.

Rick enters and scans the room.

RICK

I passed this office a bunch of times... always wondered what it looked like inside. Ain't exactly what I had in mind.

MICHAEL

Oh? What did you have in mind.

RICK

Something darker. Ya' know, statues, weapons...

MICHAEL

A "bat-cave"?

RICK

You know what I mean. Something more like your book.

Rick moves about Michael's office, examining everything.

RICK (CONT.)

I mean, where's all your writin' stuff. Your awards. I know your book won a bunch of awards.

MICHAEL

Threw them away a long time ago.

RICK

Why would you go and do that?!

MICHAEL

Didn't have any use for them. I stopped writing, remember Rick?

Rick takes a seat in front of Michael's desk

RICK

Yeah... yeah. You stopped.  
How come? I mean, how come  
you just stopped? Kind of a  
waste.

MICHAEL

I never looked at it that  
way.

Rick picks up a photo of Michael in front of Shermer High.

RICK

But what do you do with your  
thoughts... ya' know? Where  
do you put 'em?

MICHAEL

What do you mean?

RICK

You have to have some pretty  
intense thoughts to write a  
book like "Thor's Exit!" What  
do you do with 'em now?

MICHAEL

I don't know... guess they're  
not there anymore. Gone.

RICK

I have lot's of thoughts.  
Don't know what to do with all  
of 'em.

MICHAEL

I'm sure your writing helps.

RICK

Sometimes... sometimes.

MICHAEL

It's very good. I mean for  
somebody that doesn't dream...  
you sure create a very vivid  
picture of what a dream is  
like.

RICK

That stuff's nothing. It's  
not what I really want to say.

MICHAEL

It's honest. And very readable. Shows a lot of promise.

RICK

It's also boring as hell.

MICHAEL

Is that all your concerned about? Not being boring?

RICK

Your stuff was never boring.

MICHAEL

Rick, you should worry about your writing. Don't compare it to anyone else's.

Beat.

RICK

Hey, you ever gonna write a sequel to "Thor's Exit?"

MICHAEL

(chuckles)

I doubt it Rick.

RICK

Why not? I'd read it.

MICHAEL

I don't think we need another Thor roaming the earth, do you?

RICK

You should use his real name Mr. Christman. Have some respect.

MICHAEL

Respect? He's not flesh and blood, he's just words on paper.

RICK

He's more than that.

A light goes on in Michael's head.

MICHAEL

Yes, you're right. He was more. He was a character to be afraid of, not look up to. A man to despise not accept.

RICK

How can you say that?! He's not like that. You shouldn't be allowed to say that.

MICHAEL

I think I should be allowed to say whatever I want about him. I created that character out of nothing.

RICK

And then let him die away.

MICHAEL

That's a writer's job Rick. You play God.

RICK

But you only really played once.

Michael's face falls.

MICHAEL

True...

(beat)

Rick, there comes a time when you realize you're responsible for your actions. Ya' know? You change. You grow up.

RICK

More like give up.

Silence.

MICHAEL

Sorry to dissappoint you.

RICK

Yeah... well, it's no big deal. Thanks for talking with me. Guess I'll see you in class.

Rick rises and heads for the door.

MICHAEL  
Rick?

RICK  
Yeah?

MICHAEL  
You okay?

RICK  
Sure. I'm fine.

Michael narrows his eyes as he watches Rick march out of his office.

The door slowly CHUNKS shut behind him.

CUT TO:

13 INT. LITTLE LOUIE'S DINER - DAY

13

BING-BONG!!!

Rick pokes his head through the entrance of "Capt'n Nemos."

He scans the busy fast-food diner and stops when he sees Jackie seated in the back.

She is seated along with a large group of JOCKS.

She LAUGHS at one of the Jock's jokes, and puts her arm around the guy playfully.

Rick looks down, disappointed. He turns around and reaches for the door.

JACKIE  
Rick! Over here!

Rick turns and sees Jackie waving to him.

The group of Jackie's friends eye Rick with suspicion as he moves toward their table.

RICK  
Hey there.

JACKIE  
Trouble finding the place?

RICK  
No... no, I've been here  
before.

JOCK 1  
I've never seen him here.

A couple of the Jocks SNICKER.

JACKIE  
Yeah, well Rick has better  
things to do than hang around  
places like this.

JOCK 2  
Is that so?

RICK  
Jackie, maybe we should get  
together some other time. You  
look kind of busy.

JACKIE  
Oh no, this is fine. These  
guys won't bother us.

Rick removes his notebook from his backpack and begins shuffling  
through it.

JOCK 1  
What are you two doin'?

JACKIE  
We're working on a project  
together. For Mr.  
Christman's class.

JOCK 2  
That guy's a fuckin' loser.

JOCK 1  
Totally.

JACKIE  
Careful what you say about the  
guy... Rick really likes him.

JOCK 2  
Asshole flunked me last year  
for missing the final. How  
the fuck could you like that  
psycho?

Rick is silent.

JACKIE

Mr. Christman thinks Rick is a  
great writer.

JOCK 2

Writer? Like what? Poems?  
You a poet?

The table LAUGHS, except for Rick.

RICK

More like short stories...

JOCK 2

Read us one.

JACKIE

Rick is a little shy about his  
stuff...

JOCK 1

I read a good short story  
once. Penthouse Forum.  
'Bout two cheerleaders and a  
coke bottle.

The table LAUGHS, except for Rick.

RICK

(confrontational)

Yeah, well wmine aren't like  
that.

Beat.

JACKIE

Rick's a little ahead of me  
on the project. He's always  
writin' something down in  
that notebook thing.

Rick begins to slide his notebook back into his backpack.

JOCK 3

Really? So that like your own  
little diary?

The table CHUCKLES, including Jackie.

RICK

Call it whatever you like...

JOCK 2

I call it fag-stuff...

Jock 2 grabs Rick's notebook.

RICK  
Can I have that back.

JOCK 2  
"Ever since I could  
remember... I've had trouble  
sleeping..." I bet you  
have!

The table LAUGHS as Rick turns beet-red.

JOCK 2 (CONT.)  
"I'm walking down an empty  
hallway... and the lights go  
out..." Oooh pretty scary  
stuff.

JACKIE  
Come on guys, give it back to  
him.

JOCK 2  
Hey, I was just getting  
turned on!

The table LAUGHS. Rick grabs his notebook and clenches his fist tightly.

JOCK 3  
Oh look man, he's all upset.

Rick looks as though he might explode as he stares at the LAUGHING Jock.

JOCK 4  
I think he's gonna cry.

Everyone at the table starts LAUGHING, including Jackie. Rick breathes heavily as he holds in his rage.

After a beat, he turns from the table and storms out of the diner leaving the LAUGHING table of people behind.

He marches angrily down the street toward his bicycle and proceeds to violently kick at it.

BAM! BAM!! BAM!!! The bike frame begins to bend with every angry blow as we:

FADE TO BLACK:  
CUT TO:

14 INT. RICK'S HOUSE - DAY

14

Rick opens the front door of his home and enters, his black backpack slung over his shoulder.

RICK  
Mom? Mom, I'm back from  
school.

Silence. Rick cautiously ascends the stairs toward his bedroom.

He opens the door, revealing a MAN sitting on Rick's bed. Sitting next to him is Thor dressed in full cloak and hood.

Thor waves Rick in with a smile.

THOR  
Rick, come on in...

MAN  
It's about time... we've been  
waiting forever.

THOR  
Relax now Mr. Carpenter.

RICK  
What's going on?

THOR  
I have a surprise for you my  
boy.

Thor pats the man on the shoulder who slowly turns to Rick with a smile.

MAN  
Hello son.

RICK  
Dad? What are you doin' here?

DAD  
I just thought it was time to  
stop by and see you.

THOR  
Aren't you pleased Rick?

RICK  
Yeah... I guess so.

DAD  
Keeping up with the writing?

RICK

Sure.

DAD

I don't doubt it. What're you working on these days?

THOR

Nothing you'd really be into Mr. Carpenter.

DAD

He was always a great writer... uh, sorry I didn't write back that often Son. Been kinda busy in California and all.

RICK

It's no big deal. I understand.

THOR

Do you Rick? Do you really understand? Do you want him to leave now?

RICK

No I don't... don't leave. I... well, I haven't seen you for a while. I'm glad you're here.

DAD

I'm glad too.

RICK

You look different.

DAD

So do you.

THOR

He got older Mr. Carpenter. He's going to college next year.

DAD

Rick always was a good student.

THOR

No thanks to you.

DAD

I did the best I could.

THOR

Did you? What do you think  
Rick... did he do his best  
when he left you all alone?

DAD

I never left.

RICK

What do you mean? You left a  
long time ago.

DAD

I'm sorry son, but I didn't.  
I've always been here. I'm  
your father and wherever you  
are, I am. I'll always be  
here.

THOR

You don't really buy into  
that... do you my boy?

Silence.

RICK

No... I'm don't.

Thor smiles as he stands.

THOR

I didn't think so...

He raises the hammer above his head and swings the tool down  
toward Dad's head... THUDGRSH!!!

15A INT. RICK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

15A

Rick stares at the ceiling above his bed. Rising, he moves to the  
dresser mirror.

He stares into his eyes as though he were searching for something.  
Softly, he runs his finger across his reflection.

CLICK-CLACK!!!

Rick turns to the sound coming from downstairs.

CUT TO:

15B INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

15B

Rick creeps down the steps and notices his mother moving about the living room. She seems a little upset as she jerks about abruptly.

RICK  
Mom? You okay?

She stops and turns.

MOM  
Yes. I'm fine. What the hell  
are you doing up?

RICK  
I couldn't sleep.

MOM  
Well try.

Rick continues down the stairs and moves into the living room.

RICK  
What happened tonight? How  
was your date?

MOM  
Lousy! Alright?

She tosses her coat onto the couch, revealing her rather skimpy outfit. Tight red dress and mini-skirt. Too young for her body. She stops and turns to her son angrily.

MOM (CONT.)  
I was supposed to be going out  
to somewhere nice tonight...  
ended up at Pizza Hut. All  
night listening to kids your  
age complain about their  
double-crust whatever's!  
Goddamn cheapskate!

RICK  
That sucks.

MOM  
Goddamn right it sucks.  
After all I've done for the  
jerk! I mean look at me. Do  
I look like I'm dressed for  
Pizza Hut?

RICK

Nope.

MOM

I look hotter than I ever  
have. What a waste.

Adjusting her breasts, she admires herself in the mirror.

MOM (CONT.)

Screw it. His loss.

Turning to the liquor cabinet, she begins digging through its contents.

Rick turns away from his mother and moves to the window. He peeks through the curtains and watches the wind whip through the spindly trees in front their house.

RICK

Mom... you ever have  
nightmares?

MOM

Not since your father left.

She produces a large bottle of scotch and smirks.

Rick is not amused.

RICK

Well... I've been having some  
pretty bad dreams lately.

MOM

Maybe you shouldn't snack so  
much before bedtime.

RICK

I don't. Haven't slept a full  
night in weeks.

MOM

Just ignore them. They'll  
go away. If they don't,  
then take a couple aspirin  
before bed.

RICK

Aspirin? How is that gonna  
help?

MOM

I don't know Rick. What do you want me to say? They're just dreams. Forget about them.

She turns back to the cabinet and continues to rummage through it.

RICK

It's not like that. These dreams are different. Like they aren't even dreams.

MOM

Uh-huh...

RICK

I try everything to stop them... but I keep having 'em. Every night. I even had one once during the day.

MOM

Adolescent stress. I saw that on some talk show. You're just working too hard.

RICK

Maybe... but lately I've been thinking some bad thoughts Mom. I can't get them out of my head... and I don't know what to do with them?

Silence.

Rick looks up. His mother is ascending the stairs, bottle of scotch in hand.

MOM

(mumbling)

Goddamn Pizza-Hut....

Rick seems very small in the now-empty living room.

After a beat, he moves to the light switch and CLICKS it off... plunging the room into night.

Rick remains motionless in the silence. Only the sound of his pained BREATHING can be heard in the darkness.

CUT TO:

16 INT. SHERMER HIGH HALLWAY - DAY

16

Rick is busy reading his copy of "Thor's Exit!" He is highlighting gruesome passages with a yellow marker.

Eventually he looks up and catches sight of Jackie down the hall. She is slowly moving toward him.

JACKIE

Hey...

RICK

What do you want?

JACKIE

I dunno... how are you?

RICK

I'm fine.

JACKIE

You sure?

RICK

Yeah, why? Why wouldn't I be?

JACKIE

I don't know... you just seemed kind of upset yesterday.

RICK

Oh, no... I didn't care.

JACKIE

You sure?

RICK

Yeah. Don't worry about me.

Rick gets up and moves away from Jackie. She pursues him.

JACKIE

Hey wait a minute...

RICK

I gotta get to class Jackie. It's not a big deal... I'm fine.

JACKIE

Come on Rick... I really feel stupid.

RICK

Don't.

JACKIE

Well I do. Those guys were  
actin' like jerks, ya' know?

RICK

Oh well.

JACKIE

Can you hold on a second?!

Jackie forces Rick to stop.

JACKIE (CONT.)

I was a jerk too. I shouldn't  
have laughed. I was just...  
nervous... embarrassed. Ya'  
know?

Beat.

RICK

You were?

JACKIE

Yes!

RICK

Well, you shouldn't have been.  
I just get a little over  
sensitive, ya' know?

JACKIE

So do I...

(pause)

So... we still partners?

RICK

Yeah, of course.

JACKIE

Good... well, I guess I'll  
see ya' in class? We can  
talk more then.

RICK

Right, in class.

Beat.

RICK (CONT.)

Hey... would you like to maybe go out sometime? There's a party on Friday night... maybe we could go to it?

JACKIE

What kind of party?

RICK

Not sure. My friend John told me about it.

JACKIE

I don't know...

RICK

Well we don't have to go there... I really don't go to a lot of parties anyway. We could do something else...

JACKIE

Who's having it?

RICK

Guy named Billy...

JACKIE

Well... I did promise my friends I'd go out with them on Friday.

RICK

Your "friends" at that "Little Louie's?"

JACKIE

Yeah. They're really not that bad, ya' know.

RICK

I bet.

JACKIE

Well let me think about it...

RICK

Think about it?

Jackie smiles seductively.

JACKIE

Yeah. I'll think about it.

RICK  
Guess that's better than "no."

JACKIE  
See ya' in class.

Rick watches Jackie disappear into the crowd of students.

CUT TO:

17A INT. RICK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

17A

Rick is sitting in the living room reading "Thor's Exit!" He is scribbling into his notebook as he reads.

The house seems unnaturally quiet as Rick works.

Suddenly, from outside the house comes a loud CRASH!!! Rick leaps to his feet and peeks out the window.

Pete's car has smashed into one of the garbage cans on the sidewalk of the house. He stumbles out of the car, obviously drunk.

Rick returns to his scribbling as Pete enters the house.

PETE  
Fuckin' garbage cans! Always something...

RICK  
Sure is.

PETE  
No shit, wudda just say?  
Shit. Mom home?

RICK  
No.

PETE  
She on a date?

RICK  
Wouldn't surprise me...

Pete picks up the copy of "Thor's Exit!"

PETE  
Doin' yer' little homo-homework?

RICK

Why don't you go take a shower  
or something?

PETE

Oh, do I "offend" you?

RICK

Where've you been tonight?

PETE

Fuckin' difference it make to  
you?

RICK

Just thought I'd ask.

PETE

No, what do you mean by it?  
Why do you wanna know?

RICK

Just a question Pete.

PETE

Yeah, but you mean something  
by it... don't you?

RICK

Whatever...

Pete picks up a large marble ashtray from the table and shakes it  
at Rick.

PETE

You think I'm drunk?! Huh?  
You think this is drunk?!

RICK

I don't care if you're drunk.

PETE

Fuckin' always judgin' me.  
Think you're such hot shit.

RICK

That's right Pete I think I'm  
really hot shit.

PETE

You know Mom doesn't care if  
you go to California, or  
college... or anywhere. She  
just wants you out.

RICK

Great.

PETE

Wouldn't give a shit if you went to Dad's or not.

RICK

Right Pete, whatever you say.

PETE

Think you're so goddamn smart!

Pete swings the huge ashtray wildly.

RICK

Watch it with that thing...

PETE

Fuckin' move to California... go to college. Who gives a shit?

RICK

Doesn't matter to me either way.

PETE

You think that makes you better than me? Huh?! Tough guy...

Pete roughly pokes Rick's head with the ashtray.

RICK

Screw you Pete...

PETE

Goddamnitt! Who the fuck do you think you are?

Rick knocks Pete's hand away from him.

As if it were a reflex action, Pete smashes the ashtray into Rick's face, splitting his nose open.

Rick falls to the ground, WINCING in pain.

PETE (CONT.)

Look what the fuck you made me do asshole! Nice fuckin' job.

Rick pulls himself from the floor and struggles toward the bathroom.

PETE (CONT.)  
 Dickhole better not fuckin'  
 blame me for that...

CUT TO:

17B INT. BATHROOM - SAME TIME

17B

GRUSHHHHH!!!

Rick runs his hands through the now bloody water of the sink. He holds a wet rag to his face trying to stem the flow of blood.

He looks pretty bad, a deep cut across the bridge of his nose. He stares at himself in the mirror.

Looking down, he spots a pair of scissors.

He grips the scissors tightly.

CUT TO:

17C INT. LIVING ROOM - MINUTES LATER

17C

Pete is passed out on the couch... SNORING loudly.

Rick stands above him, a large bandage across his nose.

He stares down at his drunken brother.

Holding the scissors up to his face, Rick studies them carefully. Light shines off their clean metallic surface.

Again, he looks down at his sleeping brother.

With a sneer, he raises the scissors just above Pete's chest. His grip tightens as he tries to steady his hands.

Silence.

Rick trembles. Pete doesn't move.

Silence.

Jaw clenched tightly. Eyes wild with hate.

Suddenly, he brings the scissors down... hard!

THUNK!!!

Silence.

Calmly, Rick moves to his copy of "Thor's Exit!" He holds the novel close to his chest as he marches up the stairs.

Pete continues to SNORE, oblivious to the world.

The scissors are stuck into the coffee table next to his sleeping face. The force of Rick's strike burying them deep into the wood.

CUT TO:

18A INT. RICK'S CAR - NIGHT

18A

Rick, nose still bandaged, steers the Camero along the shady streets of Shermer, his notebook in his lap. Jackie sits quietly in the passenger seat.

JACKIE

Did you get a look at the 'em or what?

RICK

No... it was kind of dark. Probably was those guys you were with at "Little Louie's".

JACKIE

Come on.

RICK

You never know.

JACKIE

There's no way... those guys wouldn't hurt a fly.

There is an awkward silence. To break it, Jackie motions toward Rick's notebook.

JACKIE (CONT.)

You take that everywhere?

RICK

Yeah... I guess.

JACKIE

When can I read your stuff?

RICK

I don't know...

JACKIE

Come on... don't be such a baby. I'm sure I'll love it.

Rick smiles.

RICK

Maybe sometime later.

JACKIE

Promise?

RICK

We'll see...

Jackie glances at the bandage across Rick's nose.

JACKIE

Does it hurt?

RICK

Not really...

She touches his bandage tenderly.

RICK (CONT.)

A little... I guess.

Rick pulls the car to a stop in front of a dimly lit house.

JACKIE

So we're here?

RICK

Yeah.

(pause)

Hey... thanks again for going out with me tonight. I know you think I'm kinda goofy... especially the other day, but I'm glad you decided to come.

There is an awkward silence as Rick moves closer to Jackie.

The two look like they might kiss when... BOOM-BOOM-BOOM!

A thunderous POUNDING on the hood of the car startles both Rick and Jackie.

Doug pokes his head around the front windshield, he is holding a beer.

DOUG  
 What the fuck is goin' on in  
 there?! Let's get a move on!

Rick shoots Doug an angry look as he stuffs his notebook under  
 his seat. The two exit the car.

RICK  
 This is Doug.

DOUG  
 Hey there.

Doug flips Jackie the "peace sign".

JACKIE  
 I'm Jackie.

DOUG  
 I know...

Doug sidles up to Rick as the three head toward the house.

DOUG (CONT.)  
 You're bringing Jackie  
 Bredehoff to this party?

Rick shrugs as they open the front door.

CUT TO:

19A INT. BILLY'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

19A

The house is filled with high school kids, all drinking and  
 generally having a good time.

A guy, BILLY, wearing a tacky suit from the 1970's, moves toward  
 them.

BILLY  
 Hey dude. What's the haps.

DOUG  
 Fuck-in nadda my friend.  
 Like the outfit. You know  
 Rick?

BILLY  
 No, not really... how's it  
 hangin' dude?

RICK  
 Good... I guess.

BILLY

You ready to chill or what?

RICK

Sure... why not. Oh, this is Jackie.

BILLY

What's up...

Billy obviously isn't thrilled that Jackie's at his party.

JACKIE

This your home?

BILLY

My brother's. He's down in Mexico... on, uh a little business. Left me in charge of the place.

DOUG

And you're doing a fuckin' awesome job. Where's the theater tonight?

BILLY

Basement. John's down there... if you need anything.

RICK

What's playin'?

BILLY

Something Doug'll be into.

Doug disappears as Rick and Jackie make their way through the crowd of fucked up people.

JACKIE

Hey is your car unlocked? I left my cell phone in the car.

RICK

Yeah... it's open.... who you gonna call?

JACKIE

Nobody special... just some friends.

RICK

You gonna ditch me for those jerks?

JACKIE  
 Actually, I'm gonna tell 'em  
 not to wait up for me.

RICK  
 Oh...

JACKIE  
 Seriously. You don't believe  
 me?

RICK  
 (not convinced)  
 I don't know... sure. I  
 guess.

JACKIE  
 Hold this 'till I get back.

Jackie hands Rick her hip-looking purse.

JACKIE (CONT.)  
 You're cute when you're  
 jealous.

Jackie gives Rick a tiny kiss on the cheek before she turns  
 around and exits the house.

Rick stands silently for a few moments, a Cheshire-smile across  
 his lips.

CUT TO:

19B INT./EXT. RICK'S CAR - SECONDS LATER 19B

Jackie opens the door and climbs inside. She searches for her  
 phone and finds it under the passenger seat.

She gets ready to dial but stops.

After a beat, she reaches under the seat and produces Rick's  
 notebook.

CUT TO:

19C INT. BILLY'S BASEMENT - SAME TIME 19C

-The blurry VIDEO IMAGE of a young naked GIRL chained to a wall  
 fills the frame. She struggles against her bonds as a huge  
 masked MAN enters.

-He is carrying various torture devices.

KID 1 (O.S.)  
 Man... she looks like Pamela  
 Lee Anderson.

MOVING OUT from the image we see the big screen tv situated in the center of the basement.

KID 2 (O.S.)  
 Bullshit... she looks more  
 like Sharon Stone.

There are about twenty teenage KIDS all staring at the tv. The glowing light of the set flickers in their eyes.

Doug is seated directly in front of the tv, a sick grin on his face.

KID 2  
 What if she is Sharon Stone?

DOUG  
 Would you shut up?!

-The man uncoils a whip and taunts the young girl with it.

Rick watches silently in the back of the room.

DOUG (O.S.)  
 Dude... come over here. Rick?  
 Come over here...

From across the room John waves to Rick; he moves toward him.

RICK  
 Hey... quite a little freak  
 show you got goin' there.

-On the tv, the whip SMACKS across the woman's naked flesh, causing her to SCREAM in pain.

CUT TO:

19B INT. RICK'S CAR - SAME TIME

19B

Jackie has her head buried in Rick's notebook. She is reading a story titled, "The Wind in Malibu." The story was obviously well thought out. Clean. Very neat and tidy.

She appears to like the story very much until she comes to the end. She re-reads the last sentence outloud... "to sharpen my sense of self I sever the ties from all mortals."

This sentence doesn't sit well with her, and she quickly turns to the next page titled, "Shermer's Folly."

This story seems to be written a little more hastily: smudges, crossed out words, etc. Along the side of the story are little drawings of knives, crosses, and hammers.

CUT TO:

19C INT. BILLY'S BASEMENT - SAME TIME 19C

-The large man on tv CRACKS the whip across the woman's flesh over and over again.

RICK

My God... I didn't think you could get this kind of stuff anymore.

JOHN

Billy knows some guys. I think they owe him money or something.

RICK

Jeez... how much?

DOUG

Shut the fuck up? Please? We're gonna miss the best part.

Doug moves closer as the woman on the tv continues to SCREAM.

CUT TO:

19B INT. RICK'S CAR - SAME TIME 19B

Jackie stares at the strange scribblings that fill this page in the notebook. It is covered with sketches of tiny men being tortured in what looks like hell.

She flips to the next page... more of the same. Flips to the next... more of the same, only now the sketches are getting darker and darker.

CUT TO:

19C INT. BILLY'S BASEMENT - SAME TIME 19C

-The man on tv jabs the prod into the woman's body, sending bolts of electricity through her. She CRIES out in pain.

The teenagers watch silently.

-ZAPP!!! The woman tries to get away, but to no avail.

CUT TO:

19B INT. RICK'S CAR - SAME TIME

19B

Jackie continues to flip through the dark sketches which eventually swallow up all the white on the pages.

Suddenly she stops. A look of fear in her eyes.

She stares at the page before her containing the grotesque image of "Thor." Blood drips from his teeth... a maniacal look in his eyes. Beneath his face is a naked woman. She is being ripped in half by demons below her.

The page is titled, "Jackie."

CUT TO:

19C INT. BILLY'S BASEMENT - SAME TIME

19C

Jackie sways a bit as she enters the basement and finds Rick. She crosses in front of the tv and stops.

-The large man on tv continues to torture the bound woman with the cattle prod. ZAP!!!

DOUG

Down in front!!!

Rick notices Jackie and moves to her. She seems dazed as he pulls her away from the tv.

RICK

You okay?

JACKIE

Why are you all watching this?

RICK

It's not real or anything.

JACKIE

So what? It looks real...

RICK

There's a difference.

Jackie turns back to the tv to see the large man hold up a huge butcher's knife. He raises it above his head as Jackie turns away... a loud OOOH!!! erupts from the crowd of teens.

RICK (CONT.)

Come on let's go upstairs.

Jackie violently yanks her purse away from Rick.

JACKIE  
Just stay away from me. I'm  
going home.

RICK  
Hold on a second...

Jackie pushes past the group of people, making her way to the stairs. Rick follows her, concerned.

RICK (CONT.)  
Jackie, wait up!

JACKIE  
I've got to get home now.

RICK  
Come on... it's not real...

JACKIE  
I can't believe I came here.

RICK  
We could go somewhere else.

JACKIE  
And where would that be?

They exit the house and step into the night air of Shermer.

RICK  
Hold on a second...

JACKIE  
I have to go Rick... Jesus,  
stop touching me.

RICK  
What's the matter? That film  
wasn't that big a deal.

JACKIE  
I'm sure you loved it.

A car pulls up and slams on its brakes. The driver is one of Jackie's friends.

RICK  
Wait... what the hell is this?

JACKIE  
No... I have to go... now.

RICK  
I won't let you...

She turns to him, a confused and disgusted look on her face.

JACKIE  
Won't let me? Fucking creep.

She climbs into the car. Rick watches as she speeds off into the night.

CUT TO:

20A INT. CLASSROOM - RAINY MORNING 20A

Michael is standing in front of a blackboard teaching class. Most of the students seem uninterested in what Michael is talking about. A few are even asleep.

Rick sits staring at Jackie's empty chair.

After a beat he turns to the window. He gazes out into the rain as it crashes against the glass.

DISSOLVE TO:

20B INT. SHERMER CAFETERIA - DAY 20B

Various students walk past Rick as he sits alone at his cafeteria table.

He isn't touching his food. Instead, he is staring off toward Jackie's regular table. The table is empty and Jackie is nowhere to be seen in the entire cafeteria.

Rick lightly rubs his beat up copy of "Thor's Exit!"

DISSOLVE TO:

20C INT. SHERMER HIGH HALLWAY - DAY 20C

"Thor's Exit!" clutched tightly to his chest, Rick sits alone on a bench in the school hall.

He quietly watches various students walk by.

They all seem to float past him as they move...

... all smiling...

RICK (V.O.)  
Hey... I've been lookin' for  
you at school... where've  
you been?

... happy...

RICK (CONT. V.O.)  
Yeah. I think a lot of people  
are gettin' sick these days.  
Did you get my messages?

... in love.

DISSOLVE TO:

21 INT. RICK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

21

Static from Rick's television fills the screen. Its glow is the only light in Rick's darkened room.

Rick sits underneath a large blanket on his bed, phone receiver pressed against his ear.

RICK (CONT.)  
You didn't huh? Well, I've  
called a few times to see how  
you were doin'? Ya' know?  
Just to make sure you were  
okay...

Silence.

RICK (CONT.)  
Yeah... sure. I wanna  
apologize again for the party.  
It was a mess. I know, I know  
it's just...  
(pause)  
Yeah. Well maybe we could try  
again?  
(pause)  
No... yeah. Okay. Are you  
gonna be in class at all this  
week... I could get your  
homework together for you...

Rick removes the blanket.

RICK (CONT.)  
I see. Jackie, you don't have  
to drop the class 'cause of  
me.  
(pause)  
Yeah... I understand, but...

(pause)  
 Right... I guess. Whatever  
 you wanna do, I guess. Well I  
 hope I see ya' in school  
 sometime... yeah, sure.  
 Bye...

Rick hangs up the receiver and lets out a tired BREATH.  
 Mechanically, he turns to the static-filled tv screen.

He stares into the screen as if in a trance.

The SHHHHHHHH of the static seems to almost swallow him as he  
 stares deeper and deeper into the tv...

FADE TO BLACK:  
 CUT TO:

22 INT. BOOKSTORE - DAY

22

BING-BONG! Rick enters the bustling bookstore, wearing nothing  
 but a ripped pair of jeans and army boots.

He seems a little confused as he surveys the scene.

There are a bunch of people TALKING excitedly, gathered around a  
 book display.

They turn to look at Rick and make a mad dash for him. All the  
 people are waving books in the air as they mob him.

WOMAN 1  
 Oh, my god! It's you! Oh, I  
 love your stuff... I love you!

MAN 1  
 Yeah, good show, old boy!  
 You're the tops, my fine  
 friend!

WOMAN 2  
 Oh, would you please sign  
 this?! I really need you to  
 sign it! Please!

The book she hands to Rick is completely blank. There are no  
 words inside, and nothing on the cover or back.

RICK  
 Of course I'll sign it.

Rick smiles widely as he examines the blank book. He seems proud  
 as he places a pen to the blank cover of the novel and signs his  
 name.

With a confused expression he notices that he has signed, "Michael Christman".

MAN 2

My god, that'll be worth millions someday! Can you sign mine too?!

WOMAN 1

Hey, I was in front of you!

MAN 2

Yeah lady, well bite me!

The two stuff their blank books into Rick's face. He bats them away, angrily.

RICK

That's it. I can't sign anymore. Now leave me alone.

WOMAN 1

Oh, booo!!! You stink!

WOMAN 2

Yeah, why are you such a little baby?! What's the matter with you... little poopie-doopie.

The woman pinches Rick's cheeks as if he were a baby.

MAN 1

Daddy's little super dooper... foo-foo faffy... giddy-ba?

WOMAN 1

Oh, look how cutie-wootie he is. Such a wooba-dooba. Dee-dee doe-dee doe?

RICK

Cut it out! Leave me alone!

He bats their hands away, but the people keep trying to grab at him, forcing toward the back of the bookstore.

WOMAN 2

Lilly-boobie babba-booda?

The group pinches and pokes at Rick, messing up his hair.

RICK (CONT.)

I said leave me alone  
goddamnit!

Rick ducks into an open storeroom and slams the door shut.

The florescent light from above, flickers on and off as Rick surveys, what appears to be a dingy basement of sorts.

Rick takes a breath and moves toward the back of the room. He passes by a coat rack that contains just one article of clothing, a surgeon's lab coat.

He removes the coat from its hangar and slips it on.

Passing through a curtain, Rick enters a small operating room. Odd-looking surgical tools hang from the ceiling.

In the center of the room is Thor. He is dressed in full surgical clothing, and is bent over Jackie who lies motionless on the operating table.

She has a bloody surgical patch on her left eye and black lines drawn around her other. (Forming a sort of target)

Thor appears to be examining Jackie.

THOR

Ahh, everything looks perfect.

Rick approaches Thor and pats him on the shoulder.

RICK

Maluch... what happened?

THOR

She tried to leave again.  
Lucky I was around to stop  
her.

RICK

Jeez Jackie, you know you  
can't just leave. God, I  
thought you knew better than  
that.

JACKIE

I'm sorry Rick... it won't  
happen again.

RICK

You know this is what has to  
happen... just to be on the  
safe side.

THOR

I've finished with one... you  
can do the other if you want.

Thor hands him a clunky steel-worker's blowtorch. He smiles as he puts on a pair of protective goggles.

Rick fires the blowtorch to life. He focuses the flame until it turns into a brilliant hot point.

RICK

Now just hold still... this  
will be over in a second.

He lowers the blue-white star of fire to Jackie's eye and she CRIES out in pain.

The brilliant light from the torch flickers off of Rick's goggles as he works.

CUT TO:

23 INT. SHERMER CAFETERIA - RAINY DAY

23

A pile of grey food is SLOPPED onto Rick's tray as he makes his way through the cafeteria line.

He turns to move to a table and freezes in his tracks.

His expression darkens as he marches toward Jackie and her friends seated at their normal table.

Rick looms above the friends, waiting for them to notice him. After a few moments... they do.

RICK

You made it back. You're  
alive.

Jackie looks down, embarrassed, and a little angry.

RICK (CONT.)

You don't look so sick now...

JACKIE

Would you please leave.

RICK

You're perfect... fucking  
perfect. How could you ever  
get sick?!

FRIEND 1

Get lost you psycho.

RICK  
 Why won't you talk to me?!  
 Why won't you answer your  
 phone?!

Rick SLAMS his tray to the table causing the friends to jump back in fear.

FRIEND 2  
 Goddamnit, jerk!

RICK  
 Who do you think you are?!  
 You think you're better?!

A random TEACHER moves in and grabs Rick by the arm.

TEACHER  
 Alright son... that's  
 enough...

He tries to calm him down as Rick rants on.

RICK  
 What?! You think you can just  
 blow me off?! Huh?!

TEACHER  
 Come on... let's calm down.

The teacher pulls Rick away from the table.

RICK  
 Fuck this! I'm fine! She's  
 the one with the problem,  
 goddamnit!

The teacher marches Rick out of the cafeteria.

RICK (CONT.)  
 It's her! Fucking perfect!  
 Look in the mirror sometime!  
 It's not me... it's you!!!

CUT TO:

24 INT. MICHAEL'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

24

Jackie sits quietly in Michael's disheveled office. She examines a couple stacks of folders when the door suddenly swings open, startling the teenager.

MICHAEL  
Sorry 'bout that Miss  
Bredehoff... force of habit.

JACKIE  
No big deal. I'm just a  
little jumpy.

MICHAEL  
From today?

JACKIE  
No. I don't care about that.  
Little creep.

Michael smiles and closes the door. He moves to his desk and takes a seat.

MICHAEL  
Well I asked you here to speak  
about that... uhm, "little  
creep".

JACKIE  
Fine. I don't care...  
whatever.

MICHAEL  
Why was Rick so angry today?

JACKIE  
I don't know. Guy has a crush  
on me, I guess. Mad that I  
won't go out with him.

MICHAEL  
Did he ever ask you out?

JACKIE  
Not really. Well, sort of.  
We kind of ended up going to  
some jerk's party the other  
week. Why do you care?

MICHAEL  
I care about all my students.

JACKIE  
Especially those that can  
write?

MICHAEL  
You think I play favorites?

JACKIE

I don't know... do you?

MICHAEL

I try not to. But I point out talent when I see it.

JACKIE

You call that talent? I call it sick... psycho-stuff.

MICHAEL

You've read his work?

Jackie's face whitens.

JACKIE

Sort of... I don't wanna talk about it... who cares? The guy's a freaky little shit...

(beat)

Sorry. Little creep...

MICHAEL

Then why agree to work with him in class? Why go to the party with the guy?

JACKIE

What difference does it make?. Maybe I felt sorry for him... I don't know. All I do know is that I wish he went to a different school.

Jackie looks down and fidgets with her nails.

MICHAEL

Hmm... I see.

A class bell RINGS out.

JACKIE

I gotta get to class.

Jackie rises and moves to the door.

MICHAEL

Well, listen if he bothers you again, tell him to see me. I think I kind of understand the kid.

JACKIE

Really... you understand him? Then I feel sorry for you.

MICHAEL

Why is that?

Jackie stops and turns to Michael. She stares him straight in the eyes.

JACKIE

Mr. Christman... just 'cause you think he's a good writer doesn't mean he's a good person.

She exits the room and lets the door close slowly behind her. Michael watches it intensely until it shuts with a CLATCH!

CUT TO:

25 EXT. SHERMER STREET - RAINY AFTERNOON

25

A long river of water rushes into a sewer drain.

Rick trudges through the water as the rain pounds his already soaked head.

A car pulls up alongside Rick and the driver rolls down his window... it is Michael. He waves to Rick.

Rick continues walking, not acknowledging Michael.

MICHAEL

Looks like you could use a ride.

Rick keeps walking, ignoring Michael.

MICHAEL (CONT.)

Don't ya' wanna get outta the rain? You're soaked.

RICK

Really?

MICHAEL

Come on...

RICK

No thanks.

MICHAEL

If I was Thor you'd get in...

Rick stops and turns to Michael, an angry look on his face.

RICK

Don't call him that!

MICHAEL

Relax, it was just a joke.  
Come on Rick... seriously.  
Get in.

Reluctantly, he climbs into the car.

Michael hands Rick a small towel which he ignores.

MICHAEL (CONT.)

You're gonna catch cold.

RICK

Already got one.

MICHAEL

You'll make it worse.

RICK

I don't care.

Silence.

MICHAEL

So what's the deal?

RICK

There's no deal.

MICHAEL

I heard about your little  
incident in the cafeteria  
today.

RICK

Did you...

MICHAEL

So what is it? What's  
wrong?

RICK

I'm fine.

MICHAEL

You don't look fine.

RICK  
I'm just tired.

Beat.

RICK (CONT.)  
Sick and tired...

MICHAEL  
Of what?

RICK  
Everything.

MICHAEL  
Everything?

RICK  
And everyone...

Michael smiles.

MICHAEL  
Well I got something that  
might cheer you up... if ya'  
got a few minutes?

Rick turns to Michael, an even look on his face.

RICK  
Whatever.

CUT TO:

26 INT. MICHAEL'S STUDY - LATE AFTERNOON

26

Rick is seated in front of an old mahogany writing desk. He is rummaging through a large box of stuff.

RICK  
There's a lot of junk in  
here.

MICHAEL  
There sure is. I save a lot  
of things... I actually have  
some other stuff up in the  
attic.

Rick digs out an old red-leather notebook.

RICK  
What's this?

MICHAEL

This? This is my first writing notebook. My father gave it to me when I went away to school.

RICK

Your dad must'a been pretty cool.

MICHAEL

Yes... he was.

Rick flips through the pages.

RICK

Did this help you write "Thor's Exit?"

MICHAEL

Not really... it helped me learn to write though. A little like your stuff for our class. More basic style development.

RICK

Very "readable?"

MICHAEL

I guess you could say that. You can keep it. I don't need it anymore.

RICK

You sure?

MICHAEL

Yeah. Put it to good use.

RICK

Maybe It'll help me write a story almost as good as "Thor's Exit!" huh?

MICHAEL

I hope you'll write more than just a horror story...

RICK

Horror story?! That all it is?

MICHAEL

Yes, nothing more, nothing less.

Rick rises and begins to move about the room, examining everything. He picks up an old photograph of Michael as a young man and studies it.

RICK

Man, you really don't understand what that book is all about.

MICHAEL

I think I understand more than you give me credit for.

RICK

Then how can you say that?

MICHAEL

Rick... you may not believe this but I was a lot like you when I was young.

RICK

I doubt it.

MICHAEL

Seriously. Had a million things going on in my life. Most weren't good things, mind you. And I let these things... let them consume me. I lost all focus of who I was and where I wanted to go to. That sound familiar?

Silence fills the room as Rick continues to mill about.

RICK

Sort of...

MICHAEL

I eventually found myself alone. Empty. All the writing in the world couldn't fill that space I created. So, I had to make a choice. Continue down the path I was heading... or create a new one.

RICK

But you let Maluch die away.  
Just forgot about him.

MICHAEL

It was either him or me.

RICK

And your choice was you?

MICHAEL

Yes. My choice was me.

RICK

Isn't that a little selfish?

MICHAEL

It would've been selfish to  
continue writing... not  
caring what impact my work  
had on people. So, in a way  
I made a pretty selfless  
sacrifice.

Rick moves over to a corner of the room where a group of various  
trophies and plaques sit.

MICHAEL (CONT.)

I know right now that's a  
bit hard to understand...

RICK

What're these?

MICHAEL

Uh... nothing really. Just  
some old junk. Couple  
meaningless awards. Nothing  
interesting.

Rick notices that one of the objects is covered with a large drop  
cloth.

MICHAEL (CONT.)

Seriously Rick, listen to me.  
I'm trying to tell you that if  
you really want to be a good  
writer, you have to start  
thinking about how your  
message is interpreted...

Rick's eyes widen.

RICK

Jesus...

Rick removes the cloth, revealing a large silver sledge-hammer encased in glass.

MICHAEL

Great. That again. It's just a stupid trophy Rick.

RICK

Wow, you could really do some damage with a thing like that.

Rick moves close to the hammer studying its every detail.

RICK (CONT.)

Is it real silver?

MICHAEL

I don't know... I think so...  
I don't know.

RICK

Now that's cool.

MICHAEL

You think so? Well actually, that thing helped me make my decision to quit.

RICK

How?

MICHAEL

Showed me how others saw my work... how there was nothing truly inspiring about it. Just a big hammer to the head I guess.

RICK

Jesus this would've inspired me to never stop writing.

Michael flops the cloth back over the glass case. He turns Rick to face him.

MICHAEL

Forget about that Rick.  
Listen to me, you need to  
find your focus. Block out  
all the junk and zero in on  
your voice... not mine.  
See? Listen to yourself.  
Trust yourself. Your own  
voice... your own story.  
You know what I mean?

RICK

Yeah... I guess.

MICHAEL

Good man.

Michael pats Rick on the shoulder and turns away.

MICHAEL (CONT.)

So let's get you back home  
so you can start working.  
You still have a big  
assignment to complete for  
my class...

Michael exits the room.

Rick lifts up the cloth and peers into the case. He runs his  
hands sensuously along the smooth glass surface.

CUT TO:

27A INT. MOM'S CAR - NIGHT

27A

Rick steers the car like a lion on the prowl through the prozac  
streets of Shermer Illinois.

-Past the endless miles of strip malls.

-Past the rows of houses where happy families are just getting  
down to another dysfunctional meal.

DISSOLVE TO:

27B EXT. JACKIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

27B

The bright headlights to Mom's car slowly dim as he shuts the car  
off. He sits, silently staring off in the direction of Jackie's  
house.

After a beat, he gets out of the car and slowly moves to the  
house.

Passing by the kitchen, Rick peers in through a window.

A WOMAN is sitting in front of an empty table, eating a small tv dinner. She looks sad and tired.

Continuing on toward the back, Rick moves to a bedroom window.

Inside the room, Rick sees Jackie.

She is seated on her bed reading a school textbook, wearing an extra long tee-shirt and shorts.

Seated across from her at a small desk is one of the Jocks from "Little Louie's." He too is reading a textbook.

The two appear to be studying.

Rick moves closer as he stares at Jackie.

She looks beautiful as she reads outloud. The Jock makes a COMMENT and Jackie LAUGHS.

Rick watches as her hand brushes the Jock's hair playfully.

#### **RICK'S POV**

\*\*Suddenly the entire scene becomes unrealistic and distorted. The entire bedroom is now bathed in a strange kind of illumination... we are inside Rick's mind.

The Jock rises from the desk and moves over to Jackie.

He slowly pulls off her shirt and shorts, leaving her naked on the bed. Her full breasts heave as she takes in deep breaths.

The two begin to kiss.

The Jock runs his hands along Jackie's naked flesh.

They proceed to make love passionately.

#### **END RICK'S POV**

We see that Jackie and the Jock are seated exactly as they had been seated before, both studying for school.

Yet, Rick still sees something else...

... something that shoots through him like a howl.

Rick's expression darkens as he reaches for a nearby rock.

He clutches the rock tightly as he stares into the window.

Cringing, Rick hurls the rock forward. Jackie's window SHATTERS, sending shards of glass into the bedroom. Jackie and the Jock jump up in fear.

Rick runs off toward his car.

The Jock grabs his arm in pain, a couple shards of glass have lodged into his now bleeding shoulder.

JOCK

Oh, my God! Look at me?!  
Look at my arm?! What the  
fuck?!

Jackie stares at the shattered window, peering into the darkness, a knowing look on her face.

FADE TO BLACK:

28 EXT. WASTE DUMP - NIGHT

28

Rick is walking through the dump, dressed in a black hooded coat, like Thor.

He trudges through the filth, making his way toward a huge methane torch, burning in the distance.

Along the way, he passes a few decaying corpses. Their lifeless eyes watch Rick as he passes.

Getting closer to the torch, Rick spots a large cross-like structure propped up underneath the methane flame.

Rick freezes when he reaches the cross.

There, hanging in a crucified pose, is Michael. The red-orange glow from the methane torch illuminates his scantily-clad body.

MICHAEL

It sure took you long enough.  
I was getting tired.

RICK

You look like an idiot up  
there.

MICHAEL

That's gratitude for ya'.  
I've been here for hours.  
Where the hell were you?

RICK

I was busy, alright?! Had to  
tie up some loose ends.

MICHAEL

Well, now that you're here  
you can get me down off this  
thing.

RICK

Not so fast. I need to do  
something first.

Rick pulls out his notebook and begins scribbling in it.

MICHAEL

Thief. Nothing more than a  
common thief. That's what you  
are. Can't write something  
that's even remotely original.

RICK

I'm using what was mine to  
begin with....

MICHAEL

Yours... ha! You forget who I  
am Rick...

RICK

Who you were Mr. Christman.  
Who you were. You're not  
needed anymore.

MICHAEL

Come on Rick, quit acting  
like a spoiled child and get  
me down.

RICK

No. I've got to finish  
something you started years  
ago.

MICHAEL

Don't you think you have more  
pressing matters at hand?

RICK

Nothing is more important than  
this... ya' know?

MICHAEL

No Rick, I don't know. Put  
that damn thing away. I'm  
warning you...

RICK  
 You're warning me? That's a  
 laugh. I'm the one with the  
 power here!

MICHAEL  
 No... you're not Rick.

Rick's feet begin to sink deep into the filth.

RICK  
 We'll see about that...

Rick scribbles out the words "Thor's Exit, Part II!"

MICHAEL  
 So stupid... so goddamn  
 stupid.

Suddenly, a pair of hands reach up and yank Rick down into the  
 garbage. He flails helplessly as Michael watches.

Within the blink of an eye, Rick is pulled completely underneath  
 the waste dump.

CUT TO:

29A EXT. SHERMER ROCK BEACH - NIGHT

29A

Rick stares off into the dark waters of Lake Michigan.

He sits atop a large rock that juts out into the greasy waters,  
 his mother's Camero, parked nearby.

The lake shore is quiet as a cool breeze runs its fingers through  
 Rick's hair.

He looks out at all the shit and junk floating on the Great  
 Lake's surface. He stares into his face, reflected in the oil  
 slick mirrors of the water.

RICK  
 I wonder if it would catch  
 fire if you threw in a match?

Doug's face appears next to Rick's as the two stare at the small  
 dark waves.

DOUG  
 So... what do ya' wanna do  
 tonight?

Rick turns from the water and looks at Doug.

Rick smiles.

CUT TO:

29B EXT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

29B

The Camero sits idling in front of a convenience store.

The parking lot is empty as Rick and Doug exit the car and move toward the store's entrance.

DOUG

What town are we in?

RICK

I'm not sure.

BING-BONG! The two enter the store.

A small Greek man stands behind the counter, watching "Baywatch" on a portable tv. The man wears a blue polyester bowling shirt with the name KOSTADINO stitched into the breast pocket. An open copy of "Jugs" magazine in front of him.

RICK (CONT.)

What town is this?

KOSTADINO

Quiet. It's Evanston. Now buy something and go...

Kostadino is mesmerized by the tv.

DOUG

Hey, how much for the beef jerky?

KOSTADINO

Two dollars

RICK

Jesus, two dollars? For a stick of beef jerky?

KOSTADINO

If ya' can't afford then don't buy. Just shut the hell up.

RICK

I was just wondering why...

KOSTADINO

Hey you little shit! I'm  
trying to watch tv here! Shut  
the hell up or I'll kick your  
ass outta here!

RICK

Alright, alright...

Doug immediately moves to the magazine section as Rick casually approaches a small hardware display.

Rick searches the display for something.

RICK

Damnitt.

DOUG

What's the problem?

RICK

No problem.

DOUG

What are you looking for?

RICK

Nothing...

Rick grabs hold of a small claw-hammer on the rack, he quickly stuffs it in his pants.

DOUG

Fuck man. Why the fuck are  
you stealin' that piece of  
crap...gonna build a tree  
house?

RICK

Shut the hell up.

Rick moves to the counter where Kostadino remains fixed on the tv.

He picks up a beef jerky stick and SLAPS it onto the counter, causing Kostadino to turn away from his program.

RICK

How much for the beef jerky  
again? It was two dollars  
wasn't it?

Rick seems extremely nervous as he stands rigidly, sweat forms on his brow.

Kostadino looks impatient, and annoyed.

KOSTADINO  
You kids still here? Jesus  
get the hell outta my store  
before I give ya' a beatin'.

RICK  
Oh, you're gonna give us a  
beating?

Kostadino rolls up his "Jugs" magazine and slaps it into the palm  
of his hand with a SMACK.

KOSTADINO  
Yes... I'm gonna smash your  
head little punk...

He moves toward Rick, who quickly digs into his pants.

Rick fumbles with the small hammer as he pulls it out and  
brandishes it in the air.

RICK  
What about now tough guy!?  
Mine's bigger than yours!

DOUG  
Fuckin'-A!!!

RICK  
Shut up John!

Rick has the hammer raised directly above Kostadino's head. The  
frightened man tosses the magazine to the ground.

KOSTADINO  
Okay, okay, no trouble. I  
don't want no trouble.

DOUG  
Ask if they got "Ding-  
Dongs"...

RICK  
Well?! Where are the fucking  
"Ding-Dongs"?!

KOSTADINO  
Aisle two...

Doug moves to aisle two and begins stuffing his shirt full of  
"Ding-Dongs."

RICK

You all think you can just  
beat on me and I won't fight  
back, right?

KOSTADINO

I don't know what you mean...

RICK

Like I mean nothing to you...

Rick moves closer to Kostadino.

RICK (CONT.)

Like I don't even exist?  
Huh?!

Suddenly, Kostadino lunges and grabs Rick's hand.

He tries to wrench the hammer away from the boy.

Rick swings the hammer wildly.

BOOOMPH!!!

Kostadino reels back, dazed by the blow.

Rick is impressed with his weapon.

He swings again...

THUD!

And again...

THUD!!!

DOUG

Jesus Christ Rick...

Blood pouring from his head, Kostadino is out cold.

JOHN (CONT.)

Are you nuts man?! We gotta  
get outta here!!!

He smiles at Doug as the two quickly dash out the exit.

Rick starts the Camero's engine, and pulls out of the parking lot  
with a SCREECH!!!

He begins to put distance between them and the store. After a  
while he starts to smile widely.

Doug seems dazed, a bewildered look on his face.

30 EXT. SHERMER HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING

30

Rick sits in his car, watching as the various students head into the school's entrance.

Every now and then, he looks down into the old leather notebook Michael gave to him earlier, and jots down some words:

RICK (V.O.)

Ever since I could remember  
I've had trouble sleeping.  
Ever since I could remember  
I've had the same problems.

He looks up to the school.

**RICK'S POV**

Rick watches the throngs of boys and girls wander into the school as if in slow-motion.

RICK (CONT. V.O.)

Ever since I could remember  
I've felt out of place. Ever  
since I could remember I've  
been alone.

**BACK TO SCENE**

Rick makes a couple broad strokes in the book and closes it. After a beat, he shuts his eyes and mutters:

RICK (CONT.)

Ever since I could remember...

CUT TO:

31A INT. SHERMER HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

31A

A class bell RINGS loudly.

Rick's claw-hammer, sits propped up inside his locker. He SLAMS the door shut and marches down the hallway.

He watches all the students move by him with a strange fascination:

-Beautiful young girls happily pass by, books held tightly against their blossoming chests... etc.

He comes out of this state when he notices Michael standing outside his classroom. Rick slings his backpack around one shoulder and turns the other direction.

MICHAEL

Hey Rick. Wait a minute. I  
wanna talk to you...

RICK

Yeah? About what?

Rick continues on his way, down the hall.

MICHAEL

Well... how's the writing  
going?

Rick seems calm, almost distant as he turns to Michael.

RICK

What do you care?

MICHAEL

You still are enrolled in my  
class...

RICK

I know what you really think  
about my stuff.

MICHAEL

Do you? Well, tell me what I  
think of your stuff.

RICK

That it's boring, ordinary.  
When I try to be interesting  
I'm just ripping off your  
book.

MICHAEL

That's not true at all. I  
think your work is great. It  
has so much potential. As do  
you. I just don't want to see  
it wasted.

RICK

It doesn't matter. I don't  
need to write anymore. Can  
get on fine without you. You  
don't have to worry about me.

MICHAEL

Why don't I have to worry?

Rick slightly shakes his head and pushes his way into the Men's room. Michael follows him.

CUT TO:

31B INT. MEN'S ROOM - SAME TIME

31B

MICHAEL (CONT.)

What's going on?

RICK

What does he say to you?

MICHAEL

What?

RICK

You still talk to him... I know you still talk to him. What does he say?

Beat.

MICHAEL

Nothing Rick. "He" says nothing to me. "He" never did. "He" doesn't exist. I made him up.

RICK

Well he talks to me...

Michael's face falls.

MICHAEL

Does he?

RICK

Well sort of. I've been kind of dreaming about him lately...

MICHAEL

I thought you said...

RICK

I lied... I do dream. All the time.

MICHAEL

And what do you dream about?

RICK

Your book sometimes.  
Sometimes other stuff.  
They've been gettin' pretty  
intense lately.

MICHAEL

Why didn't you tell me? Why  
didn't you write about them?

RICK

I was afraid.

MICHAEL

Afraid of what?

RICK

That you'd think I was ripping  
you off. Dreaming about your  
character and stuff.

Beat.

MICHAEL

Don't worry about that. I  
don't care if you're dreaming  
about Thor... Maluch,  
whatever. Just write it down  
and bring it to class.

RICK

You won't read it outloud...

MICHAEL

I promise. It's for me Rick,  
not the class. We can work  
this out. I think I can help  
you... if you're honest.

Beat.

RICK

You know you're on the list,  
don't you?

MICHAEL

The list...

RICK

Maluch's list. The ones who  
betrayed him are on it. He's  
really pissed at you.

MICHAEL  
That one of your dreams?

RICK  
Yeah... sort of...

MICHAEL  
You have to remember that it's just a dream. A dream about a character in a book. And that book... well, it's just a book, Rick. You are part of the real world and "Thor's Exit" has no place in that world. Can't touch that world if don't let it. You know what I mean?

RICK  
I think so.

MICHAEL  
I'm just tryin' to help you my boy...

Beat.

RICK  
My boy?

Suddenly, the class bell RINGS out! Michael checks his watch.

MICHAEL  
Shoot... gotta get to class.  
But I wanna continue this conversation later.

RICK  
Yeah sure... whatever.

Michael smiles sadly as he exits the bathroom, leaving Rick alone to stare at his reflection in the mirror.

FADE TO BLACK:  
CUT TO:

32A INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

32A

Rick is seated at a lunch table dressed in a long black hooded coat... like Thor... he is clearly out of place.

As if in a trance, Rick watches the other people in the cafeteria pass him by:

-A beautiful teenage girl and her boyfriend share a slushy. Cheerleaders practice a CHEER in the corner. Groups of guys LAUGH and give "high-fives" as they joke around amongst themselves.

Suddenly, Thor appears from the crowd.

RICK  
Hi Maluch.

THOR  
Hi Rick. How are you?

RICK  
Good.

Thor sits.

THOR  
It's getting late my boy.

RICK  
What time is it?

THOR  
I think you know the time.  
You've known the time your  
whole life, haven't you

RICK  
Yes I guess I have known. I  
just didn't think it would get  
so late... so fast.

THOR  
It's always later than you  
think. So are you ready?

RICK  
Ready for what?

THOR  
It's time to move forward.  
Claim what's yours. Become  
what you've dreamt of.  
Isn't that what you want?

Beat.

RICK  
Yes. It is. But...

THOR  
Then you need to make a  
choice.

RICK  
A choice?

CUT TO:

32B INT. STRANGE LOCATION - SAME TIME

32B

Rick is standing in the center of a some surreal room.

THOR  
A choice my boy. You need  
to choose your path.

RICK  
What path?

THOR  
One with me, or without me.  
Either we live together or I  
die away.

RICK  
You're going to leave me?

THOR  
Not if you make the right  
choice.

RICK  
What if I choose you? What  
happens then?

THOR  
You become what you've always  
dreamt of.

RICK  
What if I can't handle that?

THOR  
I understand your fear. The  
responsibility this path holds  
is great... but we'll be  
together.

RICK  
And my family...

THOR  
They won't be coming with us.

Beat.

RICK  
What about college...  
California.

THOR  
If those are more important  
than I am...

RICK  
I'm not saying that... it's  
just... what if I'm not ready  
to chose?

THOR  
To be a God... one must do as  
God does, Rick. And God sure  
makes a lot of tough  
choices... doesn't he?

Thor holds out his hammer to Rick.

THOR (CONT.)  
Do you want it, or not?

RICK  
You mean to keep? For good?

THOR  
Of course...

Rick takes the hammer from Thor and studies it.

RICK  
You're not going to leave me  
Maluch... are you? I don't  
want to be alone.

Thor leans in close to the boy.

THOR  
(whispering)  
You never will be.

Silence.

Rick is now alone in the strange space. Thor's hammer, hanging  
in his hands.

CUT TO:

34A INT. PHILLIP'S BAKERY - SAME TIME

34A

Pete is standing behind the counter talking on the phone and smoking.

PETE

Just pick me up, dumb-ass!  
Fuckin' Irv's makin' me close  
the store tonight. Come pick  
me up in a half hour.

Smiling, he locks the front door and spins around like a dancer. He dances his way to the donut section and turns off the neon sign above it.

RICK

Hey Pete.

Pete spins around, frightened.

He scowls at Rick, who is standing inside the doorway.

PETE

How the fuck'd you get in  
here?

RICK

Door was open.

PETE

Then close it on your way out.

RICK

I just stopped by to talk,  
Pete.

PETE

Oh, isn't that sweet. Well, I  
got nothin' to say.

RICK

I do. I got lots to say.

CRACK!!!

A bolt of lightning lights up Rick's deathly serious face.

CUT TO:

34B INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - RAINY NIGHT

34B

CRACK!!!

A flash of lightning illuminates the hallway as Michael steps in from the rain. He closes the door and stops.

A look of confusion on his face, he bends down to the door handle and examines it carefully.

The handle has been smashed and bent. A large chunk of wood is missing from the door frame.

Michael rises.

MICHAEL

Hello? Anybody here?

Silence.

MICHAEL (CONT.)

Hello? Rick? Is that you?  
Are you here?

Silence.

CRACK!!! Another flash of lighting.

CUT TO:

34A INT. PHILLIP'S BAKERY - SAME TIME

34A

PETE

You wanna talk, eh? Well  
woopie-fuckin'-do for you.  
Like I got time to talk. This  
job ain't for slackers... got  
shit to do. So why don't you  
go fuck off before I stomp  
you.

RICK

I didn't come here to fight...  
I just wanted to talk. I'm  
sick of fighting with you.

PETE

Yeah well, somebody's gotta  
straighten you out.

RICK

Why can't we just call it a  
truce? Stop tryin' to rip  
into each other. Ya' know?  
Maybe be friends again?

PETE

We were never friends. You're my brother... not my friend.

RICK

And I can't be both...

PETE

Fuck no.

CUT TO:

34B INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

34B

The hallway is quiet. Dark. Empty.

MICHAEL

Goddamnitt Rick, are you in here? Let's talk my boy.

Passing the living room, he stops and CLICKS on the lights. The room looks untouched. Michael scowls.

He turns to the study and notices something not right about the door. It is slightly open.

MICHAEL (CONT.)

Rick. You in there?

CRACK!!! More lightning.

CUT TO:

34A INT. PHILLIP'S BAKERY - SAME TIME

34A

RICK

Ya' know, I remember once when I was about eight or nine... right after Dad left. You took me to that theater. Remember? We saw some stupid play... but it was really cool just to go. Just you and me. And you bought me anything I wanted at that goofy concession stand? I remember getting sick on all the candy I ate and falling asleep during the play... but I didn't mind. That was one of the coolest days I can remember...

PETE

Well I sure don't remember that.

RICK

Doesn't surprise me. And ya' know... despite everything... I still think of you as that tall red-headed guy taking his little brother to some place to forget about everything for a while. To feel good... safe. Not alone.

PETE

That's pretty sad man. You should let that go Rick. Things ain't like that no more.

RICK

Yeah, I know... but still I love you Pete... even if you can't say it back.

CUT TO:

32B INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

32B

Michael stands in front of the door to his study.

Slowly, he pushes it open and peers inside the darkened room.

CRACK!!! A bolt of lightning illuminates the ransacked interior. Boxes, books, trophies are strewn everywhere.

Michael frowns. The place is a wreck.

MICHAEL

Rick... Rick...

He moves through the mess to his desk which looks like it sustained the brunt of the violence.

All the drawers have been pulled out and smashed to pieces. Michael sadly brushes through all his writing materials.

He finds a picture frame on the floor and picks it up. It is the old photograph of himself. The frame has been smashed and the picture ripped in half.

CUT TO:

32A INT. PHILLIP'S BAKERY - SAME TIME

32A

PETE

Shut the fuck up man! I don't need to deal with this weepy shit right now... I gotta close up. Just get the hell outta here, I got work to do.

Pete returns to his cleaning.

RICK

That's cool. I understand. I just wanted you to know how I felt... wanted you to know I loved you...

CUT TO:

32B INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

32B

Michael stands silently.

He is staring at a large mirror on the wall. The mirror is cracked and has the words, "Thor Lives!" written on it.

Beneath the mirror sits the glass case covered with the drop cloth. Michael removes the cloth.

CRACK!!! A flash of lightning illuminates the room.

The case has been smashed open and the hammer is now gone.

CUT TO:

34A INT. PHILLIP'S BAKERY - SAME TIME

34A

Rick calmly lifts up his shirt, revealing Michael's large silver sledgehammer stuffed into his pants.

He pulls it out and grips its handle tightly.

Pete is putting away a tub of ice cream when he slowly turns around to face Rick. Suddenly, Rick swings the hammer with all his might.

A look of shock crosses Pete's face as the hammer flies through the air, and strikes him in the chest. He WINCES and falls to his knees.

PETE

Rick... wait...

Again the hammer comes down, this time striking Pete in the head. A CRACKING sound fills the store.

CUT TO:

35 INT. RICK'S HOME - RAINY NIGHT

35

CRACK!!!

Lightning illuminates the house.

Rick enters his home in a panic. He is soaking wet and covered with blood. The bloody hammer still in his hand.

He examines the empty foyer before running up the stairs. He passes by his mother's closed door and heads for the bathroom.

MOM (V.O.)

Rick, is that you?

RICK

Yeah, Mom.

MOM (V.O.)

I left your dinner in the microwave...

RICK

Thanks, I'll probably eat later. I got a lot of homework to do...

He closes the door and locks it behind him.

Kicking off his bloody shoes, he takes in a deep BREATH and tries to clear his head.

After a beat, he rips his bloody shirt and jeans off, as if they were contaminated, and stuffs them into the sink.

He turns the water on.

Pacing around the bathroom wildly, he shakes his head and gesticulates in the air.

There is a KNOCK on the door.

MOM (O.S.)

Rick... are you okay in there?

Rick grabs a towel and starts trying to wipe the blood off of his face and hands. He isn't doing a very good job. The blood is everywhere.

RICK  
Yeah, I'm fine, Mom. I just  
wanna be alone right now.

MOM  
Are you sure?

RICK  
I'm okay. Don't worry about  
it Mom...

He notices the bloody floor, caused by his shoes. Quickly, he kneels down and tries to soak up all the blood. But the more he soaks up, the more there seems to be, as if it were re-generating spontaneously.

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK!

MOM (O.S.)  
Rick, I want you to come out  
of there so we can talk. Did  
you hear me?

RICK  
Gimme a break, Mom! I'll be  
out in a minute...

He rises and squeezes out the bloody towel, turning the sink water a deep scarlet red. The blood is everywhere.

Rick slightly LAUGHS helplessly at his predicament and notices his image in the mirror. He stops and moves closer to it.

MOM (O.S.)  
If you don't open this door in  
ten seconds, I'm gonna break  
it down.

RICK  
Go ahead... break it down...

BAM, BAM, BAM, BAM, BAM!!!

As if in a trance, Rick picks up a razor and studies the blade.

It's clean stainless steel edge glints in the florescent light of the bathroom.

He looks down to his wrists.

Rick turns back to his reflection and smiles, an odd look of revelation on his face.

MOM (O.S.)

Oh, Lord!!! Rick, look what  
you've done to the carpet  
out here, and the stairs?!  
My God Ricky-rick! Rick...  
Rick!!!

CUT TO:

36A EXT. RICK'S HOUSE - RAINY NIGHT

36A

Michael stares at the house through the windshield wipers of his car. He studies the silent home.

Seated next to him is a stocky man dressed in a sports jacket and jeans. He is fumbling with a Police badge.

COP

You want me to display this?

MICHAEL

I don't think it'll be  
necessary. This could all be  
for nothing.

Cop puts the badge away. He places his SQUAWKING walkie-talkie on the dashboard.

MICHAEL (CONT.)

Thanks for doing this for me  
Patrick.

COP

No problem Mr. Christman.

The Cop holds up his gun and COCKS it.

MICHAEL

Do you think that's necessary?

COP

I know how these punks are.  
Ya' never know what they're  
gonna do next. Listening to  
that fucking heavy metal shit  
all day long, kills off all  
their brain cells.

MICHAEL

I might just be acting  
paranoid.

COP

Better safe than sorry.

MICHAEL

Right.

CUT TO:

36B INT. RICK'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

36B

DING-DONG!

Silence.

DING-DONG! DING-DONG!

Nothing.

CLICK, Michael and the Cop open the door slowly.

COP

Hello? Is anybody home?

No response.

COP (CONT.)

What's this kid's name?

MICHAEL

Rick. Rick Carpenter.

COP

(calling)

Rick... Rick Carpenter. This is Officer Kelly and your teacher Mr. Christman. We just want to talk...

Silence.

COP (CONT.)

(turning to Michael)

Listen, Mr. Christman. You should go check to see if there are any cars in the garage.

Michael nods and hurries off.

The Cop enters the quiet house. He examines the empty foyer.

Suddenly he stops when he notices the bloody shoe prints on the floor. He squats down and touches the blood, still fairly fresh.

COP (CONT.)

Rick? Mrs. Carpenter?

Rising to his feet, he follows the footsteps with his eyes. They trail up the stairs.

COP (CONT.)  
Is anybody home?

The Cop begins to ascend the stairs cautiously.

COP (CONT.)  
Rick...

Suddenly, he stops. His eyes widen.

There, lying at the top of the stairs is Mom. She is covered in blood, her badly beaten body sits motionless, surrounded by a pool of scarlet red.

MICHAEL (O.S.)  
There's a car in the garage...

Michael re-enters the house.

COP  
Mr. Christman, go to my car and get on my radio, ask for Officer Robert Scott. Tell him to...

Before the Cop can say another word, Rick appears behind him, dressed as Thor. Like lightning, he leaps toward the Cop, hammer raised high.

WHOOOMPH!!!

He lands the mallet directly on the back of the Cop's head, crushing his skull. The Cop's revolver flies out of his hand as he crashes down the stairs to the floor below.

The Cop is motionless, a heap on the floor. Michael quickly moves to him and checks his pulse.

RICK  
Michael, are you okay?

Michael turns to Rick who is at the top of the stairs.

We see that the teenager has cut a deep gash into the side of his face. The dark red swath runs from his eye to his mouth, creating a grotesque smile... the large silver hammer hangs at his side.

MICHAEL  
Rick... my God...

Rick smiles.

RICK

You like it? This what you had  
in mind when you wrote your  
book?

Silence.

RICK (CONT.)

Of course it was. You knew  
what you were doing all along.

Rick picks up the revolver and tosses it away.

RICK (CONT.)

A coward's weapon of choice.

MICHAEL

We need to call an ambulance.

RICK

For who? Him? What do you  
care? "Just a means to an  
end."

Beat.

RICK (CONT.)

Remember those words Michael?

Silence.

RICK (CONT.)

How about... I'm just doing as  
God does. Those are your  
words too, right?

MICHAEL

So what?! They are just  
words!

RICK

Not to me they aren't. I'm  
doing what you suggested years  
ago.

MICHAEL

I didn't suggest this! I was  
just a writer... trying to be  
creative, different. I never  
wanted to hurt anyone... never  
would hurt anyone.

RICK

You'd leave that to your readers.

MICHAEL

It wasn't like that...

Casually, Rick begins to pursue his teacher.

RICK

Sure it was. It still is. You should be proud of your work. Not ashamed. You should care more.

MICHAEL

I do care... that's why...

RICK

(mocking)

I stopped writing... we've already heard that one Michael. Who cares if you stopped writing. I see clearly now on that one. It doesn't matter. You made "Thor's Exit." That was enough.

MICHAEL

It was just a book!

RICK

Not to me it wasn't! I'm sure it wasn't just a book to others. You were cursed Michael. The stuff was in your head and the minute you wrote it down you were cursed. Did you really think you could just run away from what you created? Just forget about it all.

Michael backs his way to the front door.

MICHAEL

If I didn't write it I may have done something worse!

RICK

Then you should be thanking me. I'm doing what you only thought of doing. I'm the purest author. One who doesn't need ink and paper.

Rick's expression darkens, he turns to Michael with a sneer.

RICK (CONT.)

And what are you? Pathetic. You're a traitor to me... to Maluch.

Rick calmly raises the hammer above his head.

MICHAEL

I'm no traitor, I'm your friend. I want to help you...

RICK

Help me?! Maluch helps me! Maluch's my friend! You give me nothing...

CRACK!!!

The hammer crashes down onto Michael's shoulder, knocking him against the front door.

His dead arm hangs low as he struggles to his feet.

MICHAEL

Jesus...

Rick remains silent, studying his injured teacher.

Beat.

A look of fear in his eyes, Michael turns and fumbles for the door handle. He quickly exits the house.

Tenderly polishing the hammer, Rick pursues him.

MICHAEL (CONT.)

Rick?!

CRACK!!!

This blow strikes Michael in the leg as he lurches for his car. With a SHOUT of pain, he crumples to the ground.

Blood pouring from a protruding bone, Michael struggles to his feet and grabs at his car's door handle.

CRACK!!!

This time the hammer hits Michael right in the chest.

He coughs a mist of blood and spit onto the car's driver's side door and window before falling to the ground like a rag doll. Blood seeps onto the driveway.

Rick calmly pushes the hammer down into his teacher's face.

MICHAEL  
Sorry... I'm sorry...

Beat.

RICK  
It's too late for sorry.

CRACK!!!

Michael's head explodes with a cloud of blood and bone.

Silence.

The rain falls lightly on the lifeless form of Michael Christman.

Rick takes a BREATH and raises his head to the dark sky.

PITTER-PATTER... the rain covers his peaceful face.

The quiet of the neighborhood adds to Rick's state. He blinks and SIGHS, content with his deed.

Turning back to the house, he polishes off the blood from his silver hammer, muttering to himself as he cradles it to his chest.

He is the picture of tranquillity as he climbs inside Michael's car.

He sits motionless for a few moments, gently stroking the silver hammer now in his lap.

RICK (V.O.)  
Ever since I could remember  
I've had trouble sleeping...  
and now...

Rick takes hold of the silver hammer.

RICK (CONT. V.O.)  
... and now... I can't wake  
up.

Rick looks at himself in the rearview mirror.

He looks awful: blood starting to slowly seep from the deep gash on his face. He lets it drip into his mouth.

After a beat, he repositions the mirror to reveal "Thor" seated in the backseat of the car.

"Thor" smiles at the boy.

Smiling back, Rick wedges the Malibu postcard into the mirror's frame and moves it back to its original position.

He takes a deep BREATH of suburban air, slowly pulls out of the driveway and ambles down the sunny streets of Shermer Illinois...

... heading for the freeway...