

The Defender
by
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DEFENDER

FADE IN:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL YARD - DAY

Outskirts of the yard, a diminutive boy, TOBIAS TOBY FRIEDMAN, eighteen, attractive but understated, looks younger, dressed as if he jumped out of a GoodWill box, sits at a table, feverishly sketching, his half-eaten lunch in front of him.

On the page, the somewhat amorphous form of a man, living in a shadow-like world, explodes from the tip of his pen. Toby speaks in VOICE OVER.

TOBY (V.O.)

The Defender is a creature of myth,
of shadows, who lives in a world
between life and death, that place
that all of us fear, but do not know.
He is the Defender of the weak and
innocent, those who cannot defend
themselves.

Toby holds up, and admires his sketch.

TOBY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He would defend me if he were real.
But he's not. He lives only in my
imagination.

Swaggering by Toby, a hateful sneer on his Neanderthal face, is HART LANE, eighteen, athletic with model good looks. Toby cowers as he passes.

HART

Have a nice day, bitch.

Hart leaves Toby swimming in a pool of fear and saunters off to his minions who sit across the yard.

As soon as Hart is out of sight, a comely girl, ANDREA PUCK MARTIN, same age, dressed goth, guitar in hand, plops down next to him, scaring the life out of him.

PUCK

Hi, Toby!

TOBY

Could you please *not* come up from
behind me like that, Puck?

PUCK

Sorry, baby. What's up?

TOBY

That would be wonderful. What about kids?

PUCK

I'd love kids. But not right away. I have a music career to build, and we have to get your paintings and comics out there.

For a moment, all they can do is stare at each other. But then, Toby turns his eyes to the jocks across the yard.

TOBY

Why do they hate me so much?

PUCK

Because they're Neanderthal assholes.

TOBY

Do you remember when we were all friends?

PUCK

Them? The jocks? The pretty people? Us? We were in grade school. Puberty changes things. Hormones and things.

Toby's eyes drift back to the cool clique. Puck pulls his chin back to face her.

PUCK (CONT'D)

This is the science according to Puck. Some people get size, strength, confidence, athletic ability; other's get brains and talent. I'll take brains and talent. Fair trade. But before you get any inferiority complex issues, I think you're a hottie.

She kisses him tenderly.

TOBY

I think you're the most beautiful girl in the world.

Toby kisses her.

PUCK

You better, mister.

They kiss more passionately, then get up and move off, arm-in-arm.

ACROSS THE YARD

Hart laughs as he returns to his table where his friends sit.

HART
Did you see that? Practically pissed
himself.

His girlfriend, KIMBER KLARKSON, totally hot, snickers as she looks across the yard.

KIMBER
Is that so?

Hart looks back, nearly chokes on his laughter, as the rest of them chuckle. SCOTT MAC MACKENZIE, sighs and laughs.

MAC
Well, you're just a scary guy, Hart.

HART
Stow it, asshole.

The others: Mac's girlfriend, ALLISON SUNNY LUCAS, a comely girl, who has her nose buried in a book; RORY MITCHELL, kind of a dork, and his girlfriend, IVY BLANCARD, also attractive, begin laughing a little.

HART (CONT'D)
Gotta do something about that.

Sunny does not look up.

SUNNY
You'll score so many points with
that, Hart. Might even win the title.

HART
Excuse me?

AMBER
Ah, little Sunny. Always first with
the sarcasm. Leave her to her books,
Hart.

Sunny flashes a scrunchy face.

AMBER (CONT'D)
What a comeback.

IVY
Bitch.

AMBER

Thank you.

The early bell RINGS.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CORRIDOR

Toby and Puck walk arm-in-arm.

TOBY

Okay, I have class now.

PUCK

Duh.

TOBY

I'll come to see you right after.

PUCK

You want to hang out at rehearsal?

They both wear dreamy smiles. She kisses him. They end up in front of a classroom. Continue kissing. She finally pushes him away.

PUCK (CONT'D)

You're going to be late.

TOBY

Who cares?

He kisses her again.

TOBY (CONT'D)

Listen, my mom and dad are going out of town tonight. Won't be back till Sunday night.

Puck grins salaciously.

PUCK

Yeah?

TOBY

Yeah.

The late bell RINGS. She kisses him.

PUCK

Go.

ART CLASS

Toby paints a fanciful painting of him and Puck together. His teacher, MS. ROWE, Comes up from behind.

MS. ROWE

That's wonderful, Toby?

Toby nods and smiles.

MS. ROWE (CONT'D)

You should enter that in the art contest.

TOBY

I think I'll keep this one for just me and Puck, Ms. Rowe.

MS. ROWE

You'd probably win first place again no matter what you entered. I believe that if you lived back in the Fifteenth Century, you'd have been painted frescos and ceilings and carving marble statues for popes.

INT. TOBY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Toby sits with the phone receiver tucked under his chin, Defender sketches strewn all over his bed.

TOBY

Where are you?

PUCK (V.O.)

Down the street, Angel. Coming now.

INT. FOOT BALL STADIUM

As the stands fill with spectators, the players warm up on the field.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the State foot ball championship.

Applause erupts from the near capacity crowd. The coach calls the team to the sideline.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Introducing your home team Captain. Hart Lane.

Hart flies onto field like a bull freed from his pen.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Next up are the co-team captains, Scott MacKenzie. And Rory Mitchell.

The other two join Hart, high-fiving.

INT. TOBY'S BEDROOM

Toby sketches feverishly as he hears Puck enter down stairs. Rapidly, he puts the Defender sketches away. Moments later, Puck enters, a glowing smile on her face.

They seem to float together, as if gravity vanished.

PUCK

I've waited for this moment for a lifetime, my angel.

Passionately, they kiss.

INT. FOOT BALL FIELD

Hard scrambles behind the line, searching down field. He launches the ball and it...

Hits Mac's hand and bounces into the air. A few defenders bounce the ball around, but it falls into Rory's hand and he scrambles to score.

INT. TOBY'S BEDROOM

Lovingly, Toby lowers his now-naked Puck to the bed. Instinctually, their hands roam. Lips kiss.

INT. FOOT BALL FIELD

With the game still undecided, the unholy three retake the field. All gaze angrily at the tie score on the scoreboard.

INT. TOBY'S BEDROOM

Toby and Puck vibrate as they climax.

INT. FOOT BALL FIELD

The players get into position. The referee blows the whistle. Hart, the Q.B., stands over center as Rory sets up as a wide receiver and Mac lines up as a tight end.

Center snaps to Hart, who fakes the hand-off and fades back.

Mac blasts through the line and gets free, as...

Rory blazes a trail down the sideline.

Hart airs the ball out...

Rory looks up...

Mac looks up, with Rory ahead of him.

The ball goes over Mac's head and into Rory's arms as Mac changes his role to blocker and takes out several of the defensive players, allowing Rory to score...

The rest of the team follows down to the End Zone to celebrate.

INT. TOBY'S BEDROOM

Lying together, love in their eyes, Toby and Puck cuddle.

TOBY
People say that the first time is
disappointing.

Questioning look from Puck.

TOBY (CONT'D)
They're wrong.

Puck giggles and kisses him passionately.

PUCK
Well, sire, now that we've taken the
next step in our relationship, are
you going to show me the sketches
you keep hiding?

A hint of panic spreads across his face.

PUCK (CONT'D)
Unless you don't want to.

TOBY
No, I want you to see them.

Toby slips from the bed and retrieves the sketches.

TOBY (CONT'D)
These are pretty graphic, so...

PUCK
Let me see them.

Shock covers Puck's face as she views each sketch. Puck flashes a devilish smile.

PUCK (CONT'D)
Gruesome. Not only the Unholy Three,
but the Three Witches too. I mean,
who could mistake the surgically
enhances face of Kimber Klarkson and
little Miss Ivy Blancard.
Ivy Blancard.

(MORE)

PUCK (CONT'D)

The only idiot left for Rory Mitchell. And there's poor little Miss Allison *Sunny* Lucas, who used to have a soul, but sold it to the devil. You better not let them see these.

TOBY

I don't intend to. I've altered them. I have another set to go into the comic.

PUCK

Do you have a story? I mean, words?

TOBY

Sort of. But I'm not good with words. The publisher in Vancouver loves the story. But I just do the art.

PUCK

Want me to try?

TOBY

Write the story?

PUCK

Why not?

TOBY

We'd be collaborators.

PUCK

Collaborated pretty well tonight.

Both laugh in an almost embarrassed way.

PUCK (CONT'D)

I wasn't kidding about, you know, getting married.

TOBY

Me either. We've been friends since birth.

PUCK

Listen to me, Toby. No matter what happens, I'll never leave you. I promise.

After a moment, Puck retrieves a gold pen from Toby's collection and draws a ring around Toby's ring finger. As soon as she'd done, Toby does the same to her. Passionately, the kiss and fall back to the bed.

EXT. HART'S BACK YARD

Bathed in beer, the Unholy Three and the Three Witches celebrate. Bottle in hand, Hart stands.

HART
All right. To us. First college.
Then the pros.

ALL
To us!

HART
And since things are going so good,
I'm going to, in front of this
gathering of friends: Rory, the
idiot...

All bust on Rory. He waves them off dismissively.

HART (CONT'D)
His girlfriend, Ivy. Why she goes
out with him, I'll never know; Mac,
and his fine little lady, the ever
patient Sunny. Before you all...

Hart gets down on one knee.

HART (CONT'D)
I ask you, Kimber Marie Klarkson...

He pulls out the ring box, opens it and presents it to Kimber.
Her mouth goes agape.

HART (CONT'D)
Will you marry me?

She looks at each of her female friends, then jumps into his
arms.

KIMBER
Shit, yeah!

She makes him place the ring on her finger. Just as quickly
as the ring goes on her finger, the boys take off, leaving
the girls to admire the ring.

IVY
God, you're so lucky, Kimber. You
get the King of the Jocks. I get
Rory Mitchell.

KIMBER
Oh, please, Ivy.
(MORE)

KIMBER (CONT'D)

It's not your fault you got Rory.
He was the only one left.

SUNNY

I bet Mac gets me a bigger one than
that.

KIMBER

Poor little jealous Sunny. One day
Mac'll spend some money on you.
Maybe a box of Cracker Jack. They
still have rings in them. Don't
they?

IVY

I better get more than Cracker Jack.

OTHER SIDE OF YARD

Rory taps the keg, as the other two gather around.

RORY

I can't believe you did that. How're
you gonna get extras in college with
that ring on her finger?

HART

Moron, that guarantees it. I have
the girl I want to marry. And because
she knows how much money I'll make
in the pros, she'll let me do what I
want.

MAC

Make sure you get a good pre-nup.

HART

You idiots don't understand. She'll
never divorce me. Have to know how
to pick your gold diggers. Take
Ivy. She's cute. Great body. But
she breaks up with you every other
weekend.

RORY

She comes back!

MAC

Major problems there, brother.

RORY

After this game, I'll get whatever I
want from her. I will walk the halls
like a king.

HART
More like a prince.

Mac and Hart laugh. After a moment, Rory joins them.

RORY
We're gonna make it.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD - DAY

Standing together just inside the gate, crestfallen at the jock's display, Puck and Toby watch as the jocks and the pretty people celebrate the foot ball team's victory.

TOBY
They won last night.

PUCK
Wonderful.

TOBY
The halls will be filled with
testosterone.

PUCK
And sycophants. Plan for today:
avoid jocks and pretty people.

Locking hands, they head for the school.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CORRIDOR

Leaning against the wall next to a classroom, Toby and Puck gaze in disbelief as the high fives, knuckle smacking and gorilla yelling jocks celebrate.

TOBY
This is truly amazing.

PUCK
More like sickening. Toby, please
be careful today. Don't give them
any reason to give you shit.

TOBY
Damn, I was hoping to get my head
handed to me today. You just ruined
everything.

PUCK
Please don't be sarcastic. I'm
serious. I don't want anything to
happen to you.

TOBY

I promise. I have every route planed out. I'll vanish like the Defender.

PUCK

You're cuter than Defender.

Puck gazes toward the gathering of the mindless clique.

PUCK (CONT'D)

Just remember one thing. We're the ones they'll want to be later on.

TOBY

Like that makes *now* easier.

Puck kisses him hard and shoves him off.

PUCK

Together forever. Promise.

Toby walks backwards.

TOBY

I don't know what you see in me.

PUCK

Everything.

He blows a kiss to her and rounds the corner.

OTHER CORRIDOR

A love-dazed look on his face, Toby saunters down the hall, oblivious to the other students, who also are oblivious to him. Accidentally, he caroms into Kimber.

The knock is barely hard enough to muss Kimber's hair, but it sends Hart into a barely controlled rage. He grabs Toby.

HART

You fucker! Keep your hands off my fiancée.

Other jocks and pretty people gather around them.

HART (CONT'D)

Now you get down on your knees and beg her forgiveness.

Toby drips in fear and appears to be ready to comply when a TEACHER happens by and wades into the commotion.

TEACHER

What's going on here?

HART

Nothing, sir. This young man tripped and I was just helping him to his feet.

Teacher is not convinced.

TEACHER

Is that so?

Nervously, Toby nods.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

All right. Show's over. Get to class.

The teacher leaves as the assembly disperses. Hart lets go of Toby, but before he can escape, Hart glares at him.

HART

This ain't over, punk.

Toby, palpitating, melts against the wall as Hart and the others fade away.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL YARD

Eating lunch together, off by themselves, even Puck can see the increased attention the cool clique is paying to them.

PUCK

I wish they would just go away.

Toby nods and picks at his lunch. She glares at him questioningly.

TOBY

What?

PUCK

I've known you too long. Spill it.

OTHER SIDE OF YARD

Hart holds court with his cronies.

HART

Little fucker's probably pissing his pants trying to figure out what I'm going to do to him.

RORY

Did you see the look on his face? Classic.

MAC

I don't know why you waste your time on him, Hart. He's harmless.

KIMBER

You know, he barely touched me. I don't know why you made such a big deal out of it.

HART

It's fun. That's why.

SUNNY

Picking on kids half your size is fun? Where'd you read that, in the bully manual?

HART

You don't know what you're talking about, Sunny.

SUNNY

I know it's bullshit.

RORY

It's like that guy Carwin said. Power of the fittest.

IVY

It's Darwin, stupid.

RORY

Shut up, Ivy.

IVY

Hey, don't tell me to shut up, asshole. I'll show you the *survival* of the fittest.

HART

Like I was saying before I was so rudely interrupted, *Darwin* said -- like I care what his name was -- the big guys win over the little guys. Surviving the fittest.

SUNNY

That's a perversion of the theory of natural selection. The big guys don't get to beat up on the little guys. Besides, some of the little guys grow up to be quite big.

HART

Well, you see it your way, and I'll see it mine.

HIGH SCHOOL YARD

Puck, exasperated with Toby.

PUCK

How could you be so stupid, Toby?

TOBY

It's not like I planned it.

PUCK

You know he's looking for any reason to...

TOBY

I know, Puck. He never goes down that hallway. It was like they were waiting for me.

PUCK

Okay. This is what we do. After school, we'll avoid the Jock Hallway. Head out the back door.

TOBY

This is only Monday. What about tomorrow. And the rest of the week?

PUCK

One day at a time, Angel. I will dance on their graves if they hurt you. I love you. I won't let anyone do anything to you.

Somehow, Hart slithers up behind them.

HART

Don't duck me, punk.

Hart continues on his way, striking terror in Toby and Puck.

PUCK

We have to transfer.

INT. ART CLASS

Away from most of the other students, Toby shows some of the Defender sketches to Ms. Rowe.

TOBY

This publisher says he likes my art. I finished the sketches last weekend. Puck and I are going to work on the story for a graphic novel.

MS. ROWE

Well, I can't say much for the subject matter, but like all your work, it's amazing.

TOBY

I was afraid to show them to you. I mean, with all the shootings in the schools, I was worried you might report me.

MS. ROWE

I know your heart, Toby. It's a good and kind heart. Of course, I don't think Hart Lane and his friends would be so magnanimous. Your work is quite... Graphic. I can tell who's who.

TOBY

I kind of went overboard on making it too realistic. I made a set with different faces. I might send them.

MS. ROWE

I like the ones with you and Puck. They're sweet.

BACK DOOR OF SCHOOL

Toby and Puck stands, nervous looks on their faces scan the crowd.

TOBY

They're not here.

PUCK

This is a good idea. We pick a different door until they forget.

TOBY

They're not going to forget. Three things make these assholes happy: Beer, sex and torturing me.

PUCK

We'll do what we have to until school's out.

TOBY

I can't wait till this is over.

PUCK

When you're a famous artist, and I'm a famous singer, we'll show them all.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD

Stepping outside the doorway, Puck misses the step and screams as she falls to the ground and grabs her ankle, screaming and crying in agony. Instantly, Toby falls to her side.

Toby looks down at her ankle and sees the bone protruding through the skin. Panic fills his face.

TOBY

Somebody help! Help!

NEAR SCHOOL YARD GATE

Nearly in shock from the pain, lying on a gurney in back of an ambulance, Puck holds onto Toby for dear life. Puck turns to the EMT.

PUCK

Can he come with me?

EMT

Sorry, miss. He'll have to find another way.

TOBY

I'll run down there, Puck. I promise. You will see me there. You will see me there.

PUCK

Hurry, Toby. Hurry.

Puck and Toby never take their eyes off of each other until the EMT closes the door.

ON THE STREET

Toby rounds the corner at a full run, chasing after the ambulance as it pulls away and runs smack into Hart, who smashes him to the ground. Toby's back pack goes flying, and his Defender sketches spread out over the ground.

HART

That was for making me have to look for you.

MRS. MARTIN

I'm sure he'll come soon, Andrea.

PUCK

He said he'd come right away.

The entrance doors blast open as other EMT's rush a gurney in. The victim's face is beaten to a bloody mass, and the wheel the gurney into the slot next to her bed.

The nurse pulls the curtain around to shield her, but she pulls it off the rails.

Puck struggles through the pain to watch as the doctors and nurses slide him off the gurney and onto the exam bed. Rapidly the doctors cut the boy's clothes off.

Without warning, the poor creature's left hand falls to the side of the exam table. Puck's eyes go wide in shock as she sees the painted on wedding ring.

At the same time, police officers bring in a back pack, and Toby's Defender sketches fall out.

PUCK (CONT'D)

Toby! Oh, my God! Toby! God damn them!

She reaches off the bed to get to Toby, becomes maniacal and has to be restrained.

DOCTOR

Get her out of here!

Puck cries on as a nurse plunges a syringe into her arm. Just before the sedative takes effect, Puck's eyes set in a deranged glower.

EXT. HART'S PARENT'S BACK YARD - NIGHT

Hart paces around, rubbing his knuckles as the others sit in silence.

HART

What do we do now?

IVY

You all go to jail.

RORY

Not if we keep our fucking mouths shut.

SUNNY

We didn't hit him.

MAC

It doesn't matter. You didn't try to stop us.

KIMBER

I'm not saying a word.

Hart and Kimber exchange looks of solidarity.

SUNNY

He might be dead!

KIMBER

Keep your voice down, Sunny.

HART

Look, this is what it is. No one saw us do it. Right? So, we were all together outside the gym. We heard an ambulance, and we came to see what was going on.

He scans each face for unity.

HART (CONT'D)

That's the story, then. Simple one. Easy to remember. Don't add to it. Don't change it at all.

KIMBER

We all get away with it together. Or we all go down together.

She holds her beer bottle up in the air, and one by one, Sunny the last, clinks.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

Lying alone in the darkened room, Puck, her eyes cried out, her leg set in a cast, stares out the window into the night.

HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

MR. and MRS. FRIEDMAN, Toby's mother, stands with the emergency room doctor.

DOCTOR

I'm not going to sugar coat this, Mr. and Mrs. Friedman. Toby's injuries are severe. His brain has swollen. He's in a coma.

MR. FRIEDMAN

Is he... Is he going to recover?

DOCTOR

It's too early to say. We're doing everything we can for him. The first twenty-four hours are the toughest. With injuries this critical, prognosis for a full recovery is limited. He may never come out of the coma.

Mrs. Friedman fights to hold back the tears, and cleaves to her husband.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

He'll be in I.C.U. until he stabilizes. I must warn you, he looks bad. So try not to be shocked.

MRS. FRIEDMAN

What about Andrea?

DOCTOR

She's in a room down the hall. Her mother just went home to get some clothes. She'll only be here overnight.

MR. FRIEDMAN

How is she, Doctor?

DOCTOR

Compound fracture. The leg will heal. She saw Toby brought in.

MRS. FRIEDMAN

They are very close.

PUCK'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Quietly, Mrs. Friedman slips into the room and moves to Puck.

MRS. FRIEDMAN

Andrea?

No response from Puck.

MRS. FRIEDMAN (CONT'D)

Puck?

Slowly, Puck turns and locks eyes with Toby's mother.

PUCK

He's dead, isn't he?

MRS. FRIEDMAN

The doctors say he's going to pull through, but...

Puck flashes a disapproving glare her way.

MRS. FRIEDMAN (CONT'D)
He's in a coma, Puck.

Puck turns away as tears well up in her eyes.

MRS. FRIEDMAN (CONT'D)
He's going to pull through. They expect he'll live. But they don't know the extent of the damage to his brain. They won't know until the swelling goes down.

Mrs. Friedman takes Puck's hand.

MRS. FRIEDMAN (CONT'D)
What's this? I saw the same thing on Toby's hand.

PUCK
We did it Friday night. We promised we'd always be together.

Mrs. Friedman smiles broadly, but tentatively.

PUCK (CONT'D)
I don't know what I'm going to do if he dies.

MRS. FRIEDMAN
He's alive now, Puck.

Puck cries and folds into an embrace with Mrs. Friedman.

HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

Two men in suits, CONRAD WEBSTER and VICTOR BRESSE, flash their badges at the nurse's station. The nurse points down the corridor.

PUCK'S HOSPITAL ROOM

A KNOCK on the door. Webster and Victor enter and present their badges.

WEBSTER
Andrea Martin?

PUCK
Puck. Nobody calls me that name.

WEBSTER
All right. Puck.
(MORE)

WEBSTER (CONT'D)

I'm inspector Webster. This is
detective Bresse. We're investigating
the beating of Tobias Friedman.

PUCK

Toby.

Webster smiles and moves forward.

WEBSTER

Toby. We understand that you were
the last person to see Toby before...

PUCK

I broke my ankle. He was going to
run to the hospital to be with me.

WEBSTER

Do you have any idea ...

PUCK

I know exactly who did it.

INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Webster and Victor interrogate Rory.

RORY

I can't tell you more than that,
Sir. We were all in the ...

VICTOR

We know where you were. You've said
that a dozen times.

Webster pulls out a pack of cigarettes. Victor gets the
hint and follows him.

WEBSTER

We'll be right back.

VICTOR

Don't go anywhere.

INTERROGATION ANTE ROOM

Peering through the two-way window, Webster puts the cigarette
back in the pack.

VICTOR

He's lying.

WEBSTER

Worst law they ever made, forbidding smoking inside.

VICTOR

In the old days we could've beat it out of him. And you should quit smoking and lose twenty pounds.

WEBSTER

You sound like my wife. She keeps trying to get me to quit.

VICTOR

You should listen to her. Add years to your life.

WEBSTER

Who says I want to live that long? They're all lying, Vic. Perfect alibis. Stories all the same.

VICTOR

Almost perfect crime. No physical evidence.

WEBSTER

They even cleaned under their finger nails.

VICTOR

They watch too much TV.

WEBSTER

No witnesses.

VICTOR

No one breaks the code.

EXT. POLICE PARKING LOT

Webster, puffing on a cigarette, and Victor walk to their cars.

WEBSTER

Let's get this straight. The six assholes go free. And Toby Friedman ends up a gork in some convalescent home.

VICTOR

We can't save the world.

WEBSTER

That's supposed to make me sleep
well at night?

VICTOR

I don't know what to tell you, buddy.
Sometimes it just works out that
way. We can't beat it out of them.

As they reach their cars, they see that six suspects exiting
the building.

WEBSTER

Makes me sick to my stomach.

VICTOR

Go home, Web. Hug your kids and
your wife.

Victor gets into his car. Webster locks his eyes on the
suspects.

INT. TOBY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Puck finishes putting Toby's sketches up on the walls all
around the room. At the bottom of the Defender sketch are
the words: *I WILL BE AVENGED*.

She looks back to Toby's empty bed. She then touches his
photograph. She places it on the pillow.

PUCK

I hope you like this, sweetie.

Mrs. Friedman enters the room and surveys the surroundings.

MRS. FRIEDMAN

I hope Toby doesn't have a heart
attack from fright when wakes.

PUCK

He loves these sketches. When they
let him come home, I think the first
thing he'll want to see are these.

MRS. FRIEDMAN

I think the first thing he'd want to
see is you.

Suddenly, Puck begins to heave.

MRS. FRIEDMAN (CONT'D)

Are you all right, Puck?

She finally hobbles on her crutches to the bathroom. Mrs. Friedman follows Puck. Moments later, they return to the bedroom. Mrs. Friedman seems suspicious, but says nothing.

PUCK

It's nothing, Mrs. Friedman. I've just be under a lot of pressure. Finals were a pain.

MRS. FRIEDMAN

Now you just have to get through graduation. Are you ready?

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - DAY

The PRINCIPAL stands at the rostrum and quiets the crowd.

PRINCIPAL

I am now proud to introduce your valedictorian, Andrea Martin.

Slowly, Puck rises as applause builds and limps to the podium. On her graduation robes is a picture of Toby.

The Unholy Three and the Wicked Witches leave their hands on their laps as the rest applaud. Finally, Puck reaches the rostrum and puts her speech on it.

PUCK

Over the last four years, we've all worked hard to prepare for the rest of our lives. I wish us all much good fortune.

Webster and Victor stand at the back of the assembly.

Tears well up in Puck's eyes.

PUCK (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I had an uplifting speech prepared. Platitudes about the wonderful lives we can all have. The families we'll raise.

Puck chokes back tears.

PUCK (CONT'D)

Most of you are aware of the loss I've suffered. In my hands, I have two diplomas. One is mine. The other is my best friend's. My boyfriend. It's Toby's.

She holds up a picture of Toby and glares hard at Hart and his friends.

PUCK (CONT'D)

Toby came home the other day. In a coma. He may never recover. The hateful people who did this, they know who they are. They know what they did.

Hart turns away.

PUCK (CONT'D)

That's right. Turn away, coward!

Hart flashes back to her.

PUCK (CONT'D)

They're going to go onto great careers. They'll have families. And their children might even go to this school. Terrorize others. Walk the halls that we now bid farewell. These people who did this call themselves brave. But they didn't have the courage to admit to what they did and take their punishment.

Tears pour from her eyes.

PUCK (CONT'D)

I love Toby. He's the love of my life. I will devote myself to his recovery. And pray that, since the cowards will not come forward, that fate avenges him.

Leaving the picture of Toby, she gathers up the diplomas and bolts off, tears cascading from her eyes, storming right past Webster and Victor as the applause rises.

INT. MAGICK SHOP - DAY

Puck stands at the counter. A somewhat eccentric-looking woman, LYSANDRA, stands behind the counter.

PUCK

And that's all I have to do? I mean, I've tried everything.

LYSANDRA

That's it.

PUCK

And this will work?

LYSANDRA

It'll work. But only if Toby wants it. And it may take some time. It'll depend on how strong his spirit is. And I can't guarantee how far the spell will go.

PUCK

But it'll do what I want?

LYSANDRA

These are powerful incantations, Puck. They might just move beyond your control. Are you sure that's what you want, Puck?

PUCK

I want Toby back. I want those fucking assholes to pay for what they did, Lysandra.

LYSANDRA

Just remember I warned you.

INT. TOBY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Puck, holding her graduation gown, breezes into the room, and goes right to Toby. Brushes his hair aside. Kisses his forehead.

PUCK

I'm here with you, Toby. So much is going on. So much.

Puck rubs her belly.

PUCK (CONT'D)

I won't forget our promise.

She pulls a box out of her purse. Inside are two wedding bands. She takes his hand and places one ring on his finger; the other on her own. She kisses his forehead, his lips. Tears fall from his eyes.

PUCK (CONT'D)

I love you. And that's why I'm doing this.

She goes over to a corner of the room and puts up a magick symbol. She lights a candle and illuminates the symbol with it. She takes three deep breaths.

PUCK (CONT'D)

Zi kia kanpa. Zi Anna kanpa.
(MORE)

PUCK (CONT'D)

Zi dingir kia Kanpa. Zidingir Anna
kanpa. Hear me, O Thou Marduk.
Come to me by all the powers of the
word Dugga and answer my urgent
prayer! Zi kia kanpa! Zi Anna kanpa!

As soon as she finishes, a breeze wafts around the room.

In the background, Toby breathes harder and a glow appears
above him. The same glow appears above TJ who moans and
turns over, a smile on his face.

TOBY'S PURGATORY

Little light covers the amorphous landscape, a land that
undulates as if it were alive. A rock BALLAD fills the air.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - NIGHT

In the vocal booth, Puck belts out a rock ballad. She has
dropped the goth look.

CONTROL BOOTH

The engineer, BOBBIE, and the producer, NORA, listen intently
to the session. As Puck closes the song, Bobbie and Nora
smile broadly. Nora presses a button on the board.

NORA

That's great, Puck. Come to the
booth.

Puck takes her earphones off and enters into the booth.

PUCK

Was that good?

NORA

It was great. The label's going to
love it.

PUCK

That is so cool, Nora.

NORA

I see a bright future for you.
Listen, Bobbie and I were going to
get something to eat. Want to come?

PUCK

I really shouldn't. I have to get
back and take the baby off Mrs.
Friedman's hands.

(MORE)

PUCK (CONT'D)

I have finals coming. College graduation. I have two commercials to do this week and an audition for a commercial tomorrow.

NORA

And you need to eat.

Puck contemplates.

PUCK

Just let me call home.

BOBBIE

Hey, Puck. I saw Toby's comic book. Damn good. Hope he gets to do another.

PUCK

Me too.

Puck takes out her cell phone and goes out of the booth.

BOBBIE

Kid has guts.

NORA

Takes a lot to raise a kid by yourself, go to college and cut a record all at the same time.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

A pile of paperwork stacked up in front of him, Webster seems near exhaustion. A copy of Defender sits on his desk. Victor saunters in.

VICTOR

I think I've had enough for one day.

WEBSTER

Where you off to?

VICTOR

I have a date.

WEBSTER

Wonderful. Look at this.

He tosses the copy of Defender to him.

VICTOR

Another comic for CJ?

WEBSTER

Graphic novel. Picked up a few this week. At first, it didn't jump out at me. Take a look at it.

VICTOR

It's a comic. So what?

WEBSTER

Take a look at the artist and the author.

VICTOR

Is that supposed to mean something?

WEBSTER

Don't you remember anything? About four years ago. The beating case at the high school?

VICTOR

Oh, yeah. Kid died.

WEBSTER

He's in a coma. I did some checking when I saw that. Seems that his girlfriend got pregnant before the beating. Andrea Martin. Calls herself Puck.

VICTOR

The actress singer chick? I saw her in a TV show. I hear she has a CD coming out soon.

WEBSTER

She's pretty devoted too. She moved in with the kid's family. Changed her last name to his. Wears a wedding ring. Claims they had a private wedding before the beating.

VICTOR

Pretty weird.

Victor flips through the comic.

WEBSTER

True love. She graduates from college this week. Worked. Went to school. Raised a kid. And took care of a gork.

VICTOR

This is strange. It shows the suspects we questioned beating the kid. Girlfriends are there too.

WEBSTER

I know. He even has two cops investigating the incident.

The images are the spitting image of Webster and Victor.

VICTOR

Puck did this?

WEBSTER

Toby did that. Before the beating.

VICTOR

That's impossible. How could he know?

WEBSTER

That's the question. It pisses me off, Vic.

VICTOR

Why?

WEBSTER

We both know who did this. Hart Lane and his cronies got away with murder.

Webster lights a cigarette.

VICTOR

What can we do about it? Case is over. It's so cold it gives me chills.

WEBSTER

Dammit, Victor! Don't you have any feelings?

VICTOR

Buddy, we had no physical evidence. No witnesses. And no one would talk. What else could we have done?

WEBSTER

We could have tried harder. We could have made them talk.

Webster lights one cigarette off the other.

VICTOR

You mean handcuff them to a chair
and beat a confession out of them?
What do you want to do about it?

WEBSTER

If only it were that easy. We're
supposed to protect the innocent,
not be the guilty.

VICTOR

So, let's take the weekend off.
Come in Monday and go through it
again. See if we can come up with
something?

EXT. POLICE PARKING LOT

Walking to their cars, Webster still has a cigarette hanging
from his lips.

WEBSTER

What really gives me the red ass is
that Hart Lane, Rory Mitchell and
Scott Mackenzie all got into the
pros. Lane signed with the Texans.
Big signing bonus. They're going to
be rich and famous. Get lots of
girls.

Toby Friedman is all but dead. He'll
never know his son. Never know how
devoted Puck has been all these years.

They stop at their cars.

WEBSTER (CONT'D)

We're supposed to protect people
like him. The ones who can't protect
themselves. We failed him, Vic. We
failed everybody.

VICTOR

Look, boss. We're good detectives.
We'll find something.

INT. HART'S PARENT'S KITCHEN

Breezing into the kitchen, Hart goes right to the refrigerator
and gets something to eat. His brother, CASEY, about
thirteen, more like Toby than Hart, enters and drops his
back pack on the table.

CASEY

Hey, you don't live here anymore.

HART

Beat it, twerp.

CASEY

Screw you. You're so intelligent.
I thought you were having a party at
the condo.

HART

I am.

Casey turns to leave.

HART (CONT'D)

Casey! Get your shit off the table!

CASEY

You're not my dad.

HART

Your dad won't beat the shit out of
you when you don't do what he says.

Reluctantly, Casey picks up his back pack.

CASEY

You may be big man on campus. But
this place is a lot nicer when you're
not here.

HART

Don't worry. I won't be around that
much.

CASEY

Good. Wish you had been picked up
from an out of town team.

As Casey takes his back pack, a copy of a comic book drops
out.

It is Defender. Slowly, Hart picks it up and stares hard at
it. He begins to palpitate. Frantically, he begins to flip
through the pages.

His eyes go wide. In vivid color, he sees the sketches that
Toby drew, the very graphic sketches.

HART

Get a grip, asshole. It's only a
fucking comic.

He heads toward the garbage can, but stops short of throwing
it away. Then, he rolls it up and shoves it in his back
pocket.

HART (CONT'D)

Ma, I'm going back to the condo!

INT. TOBY'S BEDROOM

Puck, exhausted, enters the bedroom, dumps her back pack on the floor. She goes to Toby. Tends to him.

PUCK

Still asleep, Toby? Still dreaming?

Puck begins to sing softly to Toby, caresses his head. At the door, a little boy, TJ, her son, enters, rubbing his eyes.

TJ

Mommy?

She holds out her arms. TJ goes to her and she picks him and puts him on her lap.

PUCK

What are you doing up, TJ?

TJ

Came to check on daddy.

PUCK

Is that so? I missed you so much.
How's my little boy?

TJ

Good. Mom mom and I watching daddy
for you. Just like you said.

PUCK

I'm so proud of you.

TJ

I'm proud of you too, mommy. How's
your CD?

PUCK

We're done. Almost. We'll check
the tracks tomorrow. Make sure it's
good.

TJ gives his mom a thumbs up.

PUCK (CONT'D)

Then we're off to promote the CD.

TJ begins to yawn and fall asleep.

TJ

You're going to be famous.

PUCK

Ya think?

He nods.

PUCK (CONT'D)

So, how was daddy?

TJ

Same. But I know he'll wake up one day.

PUCK

You do?

TJ

I had a dream. Daddy was there.

PUCK

Really?

He nods, yawns again and falls asleep. She stands up and puts TJ in his bed.

Rapidly, she gets ready for bed without waking him. She crawls in next to Toby. She caresses Toby again.

PUCK (CONT'D)

Do you realize how hard I'm working for us, Toby? Do you? Are you still there? You have to fight hard to come back, Toby. I know it hurts. I know your brain hurts.

I know the doctors say that you'll never wake up. But I know they're wrong. I know you're alive in there. You're a father. You have a boy. You know that. TJ and I need you. Besides, your publisher wants Defender II. But I won't let him get another artist.

Tears begin to fall.

PUCK (CONT'D)

Only you. I love you.

Some unseen force flashes past her. She bolts up and searches the room.

The force comes again. She seems to almost preen as if someone were running their hand gently down her back.

PUCK (CONT'D)

Are you trying to tell me something?

EXT. TOBY'S PURGATORY

Floating through an amorphous world of color--blues, blacks, grays--Toby's spirit--as the DEFENDER--not fully formed, hovers, not fully cognizant of his surroundings. When he speaks, his lips do not move.

DEFENDER (V.O.)

Who am I? Where am I? This is so strange. Where is here?

With great effort, he turns around. Searches the firmament. The ground seems to undulate under him as if it had no substance. Toby brings his hand to his mouth.

DEFENDER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

My lips don't move. Can I speak at all? Is this all in my head? Is anyone here to talk to me?

In the distance, strange buildings seem to grow from the ground like trees. A curious voice, familiar but faint, sings out in the void. It is Puck in VOICE OVER.

PUCK (V.O.)

Toby? I love you. I love you, Toby.

Defender searches frantically for the source of the voice.

DEFENDER (V.O.)

Where are you? Who are you?

PUCK (V.O.)

Come back to me, Toby.

Defender, now a little more formed, Toby's face seemingly superimposed on Defender's face, seems to cry.

INT. HART'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

With animalistic fury, Hart pounds into Kimber. Sweat cascades from his brow, dripping onto Kimber.

FLASHBACK TO THE SCHOOLYARD

Hart, Rory and Mac take turns pummeling Toby. Every blow is punctuate by Toby's cries.

HART'S BEDROOM - END FLASHBACK

Hart cries in emotional pain. The veins in his face bulge out, nearly popping out of his face as he grits his teeth. Finally, he explodes with torment as he HEARS Toby's cries.

HART

Stop thinking about it!

Rolling off Kimber, bolting right up straight in bed, Hart slams his face into his hands. Kimber rolls behind him and wraps her arms around him.

KIMBER

What's wrong?

Hart's lips move but nothing comes out.

KIMBER (CONT'D)

Hart?

Slowly, he gets himself under control.

HART

I'm okay. I'm fine.

Thoughtlessly, he gets up and walks out of the room.

HART'S LIVING ROOM

Slamming down another beer, Rory stands to the side of the room as deafening music fills the air. Ivy screams at him over the din.

IVY

I don't give a shit! I'm tired of this! Who was she? Huh, Rory? Oh, let me get this. It was only sex, right? It didn't mean anything. It means something to me, asshole! We're supposed to be engaged, you fucking prick!

RORY

What do you want me to say? I'm sorry! It won't happen again!

IVY

That's right!

She rips the engagement ring off her finger and throws it at him.

OTHER SIDE OF ROOM

Sitting close together on the sofa, Mac and Sunny cuddle.

SUNNY

There they go again.

MAC

She'll be back. Spent too much time waiting for the payoff to dump him now. Shit, he just signed a contract to play with the Eagles.

SUNNY

That is so shallow.

MAC

Why else would anyone put up with Rory? I can barely put up with him, and he's my friend.

SUNNY

I'm glad I got the nice one in the bunch.

MAC

Well, I save my testosterone for the field and the bedroom.

BACK WITH RORY

Retrieving another beer, Rory goes on the prowl. He spies a cute little blonde standing near the stairs, a beer in her hands, talking to her friends.

RORY

Ivy's gone? Next!

Swooping in on the blonde, JULIE, pushing one of her friends aside, Rory tries to act suave.

RORY (CONT'D)

My name's Rory.

JULIE

I know. I'm Julie.

RORY

Cool. Hey, it's too loud in here. Want to take a ride.

JULIE

I don't know.

RORY

Come on. It's nice out. We can go
down to the beach. Look at the stars.

Nervously, she nods and heads out with him.

INT. RORY'S BMW - LATER

Blasting down the highway, the top down, Rory can barely
keep it on the road. Julie is obviously not impressed by
him.

RORY

I signed with the Eagles. They're
in Philadelphia.

JULIE

That's great.

RORY

I could've stayed here. But this is
a good change. And I get to beat up
on Hart and Mac when we play them.

Julie pulls the top off a beer and pounds it down.

RORY (CONT'D)

That's it, girl. Pound it down.

EXT. GALVESTON BEACH

Playing an obscene seduction game, Rory gets Julie into the
back seat. Doing her best to fend him off, she tries to
stop him from pulling her clothes off as he tries to kiss
her.

JULIE

Don't you have a girlfriend?

RORY

What kind of a fucking question is
that?

JULIE

I thought you were engaged.

RORY

Ivy and I have been breaking up for
years. Tonight, I had enough of her
shit.

Despite her protestations, Rory presses on, jamming his hand
between her legs.

JULIE

Please stop.

RORY

I'm a professional foot ball player.
I deserve respect. She wouldn't
give it to me. She's done. Next!

JULIE

Rory, I don't want to do this. Please
stop!

RORY

You like this, don't you?

JULIE

Please, Rory, please stop!

INT. HART'S CONDO LIVING ROOM

Somewhat more together, Hart goes to Mac, who draws another
beer from the tap and hands it to Hart.

HART

Where's Rory?

MAC

The love birds broke up again. Rory
scored some freshman chick. You
okay?

HART

Just got done taking care of Kimber.

MAC

You're shitting me and you know it.
What's wrong?

HART

Drop it, Mac.

INT. RORY'S CAR

Sitting next to the disheveled Julie, who struggles to get
her clothes back on, tears rolling down her face, Rory seems
satisfied with himself.

RORY

That was great, huh?

JULIE

Lovely. Can't wait to do it again.

Full of shame, Julie slips out of the car and vanishes into
the night.

Too drunk to notice at first, Rory turns to where she sat.

RORY
I'll take you home.

Sees she's gone.

RORY (CONT'D)
Fucking bitch.

INT. TOBY'S PURGATORY

Whipping his head around as a breeze turns into a gale, Defender sees another person out in the distance. It is Rory.

Fearfully, Rory turns and sees DEFENDER, who MORPHS into a monstrously huge creature with energy rings encircling him.

DEFENDER (V.O.)
Come back! Please come back!

Strange colors fill the sky: reds, oranges, greens, now accompany by the azure that was there before.

DEFENDER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Why do you fear me? Why do you run?

RORY
Go away!!!

DEFENDER (V.O.)
Why? Please stay!

Rory continues to run until he outdistances Defender.

DEFENDER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
What have I done to you? Did I wrong you? Please stay!

The winds die down as Rory leaves.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE HART'S CONDO - NIGHT

Rory does his best to get his car parked and somehow manages to get out. He turns around a couple of times, trying to orient himself. Finally, he sees the condo and heads toward it.

INT. HART'S CONDO LIVING ROOM

Staggering into the room, Rory is too blitzed. He draws a beer and heads to Hart, cornering him, spitting beer all over.

RORY

Yo, Hart, you see the score I made?

HART

I heard.

RORY

Done! Next!

HART

You are a scum bag. But speaking of "next", Ivy's been looking for you.

RORY

Oh, shit. Do I smell like that chick?

HART

You smell like piss and beer.

Swooping in, slightly drunk herself, Ivy takes Rory's hand and pulls him away.

IVY

Can we talk?

He nods and they head out of the condo as Kimber moves up to Hart.

KIMBER

Are you okay?

HART

I'm fine.

KIMBER

You sure?

HART

Kimber, it's nothing I can explain. I know you want to help, but there's nothing you can do about it.

KIMBER

Can we talk about? Whatever it is?

Exasperated, he moves away.

HART

Jesus! I told you I can't talk about it.

Kimber's chin begins to quiver. Instantly, Hart goes to her.

HART (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Kimber. I don't know what's going on. Give me some time to sort this out. Okay?

Nodding, she puts her head on his shoulder and holds him.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE HART'S CONDO

Rory and Ivy standing near Ivy's car.

IVY

I know you get a little flirtatious when you get drunk. But you have to understand that I love you. We're going to get married. Have a life together. I just have to be able to trust you.

RORY

You want the ring back?

Nodding meekly, she puts out her hand. Fishing the ring from his pocket, he places it back on her finger. Leaping into his arms, she hugs him hard.

IVY

I love you, Rory.

RORY

I love you, Ivy.

Instantly, they hook up.

IVY

Let's go back to my place.

INT. TOBY'S BEDROOM

Puck sleeps next to Toby. Slowly, TJ enters, whimpering. Then he looks to the altar that Puck built. He goes to it and touches it. It sparks and sends him staggering back a bit.

EXT. TOBY'S PURGATORY

Defender MORPHS back and forth to Toby. He looks down and sees TJ wandering around in the haze. He reaches down and touches TJ's outstretched hand.

INT. TOBY'S BEDROOM

Puck wakes and sees an angelic glow surrounding TJ, who reaches his hand up toward the altar. She gets up and goes to Toby.

PUCK
Hey, little man. What's wrong?

TJ
I saw daddy's man.

PUCK
Daddy's man?

His little fingers extend up and point to the sketch of Defender.

PUCK (CONT'D)
That's a picture, TJ. It can't hurt you.

TJ
He won't hurt me. He's helping daddy.

PUCK
You want to sleep with me and daddy?

TJ nods and hugs her.

TJ
I love you, mommy.

PUCK
I love you too.

Under the covers, she finds a copy of Defender. Flipping through it, she comes to the sketches of Rory's end. TJ points to the picture, then to the occult symbol in the corner. Then to the painting of Defender.

TJ
Daddy's man.

EXT. TOBY'S PURGATORY

Hart runs from Defender, fear carved into his face.

HART
Stay away!

DEFENDER (V.O.)
Don't run! Why are you running?
Why do I frighten you? Where are we?

HART
Leave me alone?

Hart runs past Rory, who has appears out of the shadows.

HART (CONT'D)
Run, Rory! Get away!

In a mad dash, Hart springs off into the shadows.

RORY
Why?

Defender appears, looms over Rory, who freezes in fear.

DEFENDER (V.O.)
Tell me who I am!

Defender's eyes fix on Rory. A sinister growl slips from Defender's lips.

DEFENDER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I know you!

Defender moves in closer and closer, but Rory freezes in his shoes.

DEFENDER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I will be avenged!

INT. HART'S BEDROOM

His eyes gushing terror, Hart blasts out of his alcohol-induced sleep.

HART
Rory!!!

KIMBER
Hart, what's wrong?

Anxiety writes itself across his face as sweat pours from his brow. He stands and goes to the bureau. He picks up the Defender comic.

KIMBER (CONT'D)
What is that?

Hart holds the comic up and moves back to the bed.

HART
He's coming for us!

KIMBER
Hart, it's a comic. You just had a nightmare.

HART
I need a drink.

He heads for the door.

EXT. STREET

Staggering down the street, Rory smokes a joint, a stupid look spreads across his face.

RORY

I am a professional foot ball player!

A voice comes from the ether.

DEFENDER (V.O.)

You're a rapist.

Snapped back to sobriety, he searches the night for the source of the voice.

RORY

Hart? Mac? This ain't funny!

DEFENDER (V.O.)

You shall be judged.

RORY

I know it's you, Hart! You can't fool old Rory.

Fear increases in him with every passing moment. He shuffles back toward Hart's condo.

DEFENDER (V.O.)

I will be avenged.

Moving more quickly, Rory's terror pushes him. But no matter what he does, he can go no faster. The house seems further and further away, even though he runs for it.

Like an angry bat, strafing his prey, some semi-visible force swoops down on Rory, stabbing at him, knocking him to the ground.

RORY

What the fuck!

DEFENDER (V.O.)

You idiotic beast!

Scrapping his shoes against the street, clawing at the ground with his hands, Rory begs his body to get him to sanctuary.

RORY

You fucking bastard! Go away!

DEFENDER (V.O.)
You are living carrion.

RORY
Hart! Mac! Help me! Please!

Reaching one hand onto the front lawn of the condo, Rory screams louder for help.

RORY (CONT'D)
Help me!

EXT. TOBY'S PURGATORY

Standing over the a lifeless body, Defender gloats.

DEFENDER (V.O.)
You have been judged.

Slowly, Defender turns and leaves the body where it lies.

DEFENDER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Why did I torment this creature?
What told me to do it? What sins
had he committed to deserve this
fate?

EXT. STREET

Puck pushes TJ down the neighborhood street.

PUCK
When you can't sleep, take a walk.
Right, TJ?

TJ
Yeah, mommy.

Puck almost seems lost in thought and TJ seems more mature than his years now.

PUCK
It would be nice to take a walk with
daddy.

TJ
Don't worry, mommy. Daddy will wake
up soon.

PUCK
Of course, he will.

TJ
I'm serious, mommy. It's already
started. He's coming back.

Puck stops the carriage and kneels in front of him.

PUCK
What's started, TJ?

TJ
Daddy's coming back. It's Daddy's
Man.

PUCK
What?

TJ points down the street.

TJ
He's down there. Daddy's Man. He's
helping make things right.

Down the street, Puck sees emergency lights from police cars and an ambulance. Slowly, not taking her eyes from the scene, she pushes the carriage down the street.

Gaining speed as she goes, TJ's face molds into a smile, then he begins to laugh with glee.

TJ (CONT'D)
Faster, mommy! Faster!

Finally, she stops just short of the police tape barricade. Officials photograph Rory's body.

TJ (CONT'D)
Daddy's Man's helping, Mommy.

Amazement fills Puck's face as she gazes at the crime scene. She sees Hart, Kimber, Mac and Sunny, standing on the front steps.

INT. WEBSTER'S BEDROOM

In the darkness, Webster's cell BEEPS. He searches for it, and checks the number.

INT. WEBSTER'S CAR

Rubbing the sleep from his eyes, Webster arrives on the murder scene.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF HART'S CONDO

Putting another cigarette to his lips, Webster gets out of his car and greets Victor, who has a near-vacant look on his face.

WEBSTER

Am I supposed to guess for myself?

VICTOR

Oh, yeah.

Crossing the police tape, Webster instantly recognizes the face. He can also see that the back of Rory's head is missing.

WEBSTER

Oh, shit. You call the coroner?

VICTOR

Unger's on her way. She's going to have a blast with this one.

Flashing her credentials, a middle-aged woman, DR. UNGER, enters the crime scene.

UNGER

What am I going to have fun with?

Immediately, she assesses the crime scene. Her eye brows close together as she kneels down.

UNGER (CONT'D)

Oh, my.

WEBSTER

What do you mean, Oh my? It's a gunshot, right?

UNGER

Hardly. Don't you see it?

WEBSTER

See what?

UNGER

That defect is not from a gunshot. Unless it went through his mouth.

Webster kneels next to her. Inside the wound, it appears as if the entire brain has been blasted out.

WEBSTER

What then?

UNGER

The skull's empty. It's as if someone reached in and scraped the entire brain completely out.

WEBSTER

No entrance wound?

UNGER

That is the entrance wound. The back of his head was ripped off like a can opener. Webster, look at this scene. Do you see any blood splatter? Do you see any part of the brain or skull?

WEBSTER

Perhaps he was killed somewhere else and the body dumped here.

UNGER

The tracks on the ground indicate that he ran to this point and crawled here. He wasn't dragged or dumped.

WEBSTER

Vic, you talk to the friends?

VICTOR

A little. They didn't see a thing. De ja fucking vu.

WEBSTER

Any preliminary ideas on who the prep might be?

UNGER

Jack the Ripper's cousin?

WEBSTER

Doctor Unger, get me something I can hang a conclusion on?

Webster locks eyes on Hart as he walks back to his car with Victor. When they reach the car, both seem to slump over the top. Victor walks back to Webster.

WEBSTER (CONT'D)

What do think the chances are that this murder will go unsolved?

Webster sees Puck standing across the street. TJ is asleep in the baby carriage.

VICTOR

I'd hate to think that our nearly unblemished record will be blemished again. You want me to haul them all in for questioning?

WEBSTER

You think that will help?

VICTOR

No more than you do.

WEBSTER

Well, that's that.

VICTOR

I'm going home. I'll file in the morning.

WEBSTER

Yup.

Victor gets into his car and drives away. Webster walks across the street to Puck.

WEBSTER (CONT'D)

Puck.

PUCK

Detective Webster. What brings you here on this lovely evening?

WEBSTER

Please tell me you had nothing to do with this.

PUCK

I did cast a spell once. But that was a long time ago.

WEBSTER

Go home.

She smiles enigmatically as Webster gets into his car and drives off.

Almost as fast as Webster leaves, seemingly out of nowhere, Hart approaches Puck, the others in tow.

HART

What are you doing here?

PUCK

Enjoying myself.

Hart launches at her, but Mac stops her.

MAC

Don't let her bait you, man.

Mac motions down the street.

INT. WEBSTER'S CAR

Webster notices the commotion and stops in the street.

EXT. STREET

Hart sees the brake lights go on.

PUCK

Are you going to beat me into a coma
like you did Toby? Maybe you'd like
to kill our son too.

TJ murmurs in his sleep.

TJ

Daddy's man.

Hart become terrified.

PUCK

Good night, Hart.

After Puck is far enough down the street, Webster's car moves off, and then Hart finds the strength to move back to the condo.

When Hart gets back to the condo, he glares back at Puck. Puck moves on, and Webster's car heads on down the street, and out of sight.

INT. TOBY'S BEDROOM

Puck sits in front of the occult symbol.

PUCK

Zi kia kanpa. Zi Anna kanpa. Zi
dingir kia Kanpa. Zidingir Anna
kanpa. Hear me, O Thou Marduk.
Come to me by all the powers of the
word Dugga and answer my urgent
prayer! Zi kia kanpa! Zi Anna kanpa!

On the bed next to his father, TJ giggles softly in his sleep.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Ivy, whose tears flow like waterfall, sits with Rory's family next to the coffin. As the priest ends his prayer, Hart stands next to the coffin.

HART

I don't have a lot of words to say.
(MORE)

HART (CONT'D)

I've known Rory since we were in kindergarten. He had a lot of good qualities. He was a good foot ball player. He was always there for me. It was great to play on the team with him. And it would have been great to beat the crap out of him when we played Philadelphia.

Hart smiles a bit at his own faux humor and gains a few smatterings of laughter from the gathering.

HART (CONT'D)

His parents have lost a wonderful son. And his girlfriend, Ivy, has lost a wonderful boyfriend and future husband.

Hart pauses for a moment to choke back tears.

HART (CONT'D)

We're going to miss him.

Pulling a white carnation from his jacket lapel, he tosses it onto the coffin as it lowers into the grave. One by one, mourners file past the coffin, dropping flowers into the grave.

The last of the mourners, her face marred by her encounter with Rory, Julie stands over the grave with a flower in her hand. Slowly, she crushes it and tosses the petals into the grave. Incensed, Ivy storms up to her.

IVY

What the hell is that?

JULIE

Just count yourself lucky.

Furious, Ivy slaps her in the face. At first, Julie raises her hand to return the favor, but then stops.

JULIE (CONT'D)

I just want to forget you people even exist.

As she leaves, Hart turns his attention to the lone figure standing off in the distance: Puck's enigmatic gaze disconcerts them all.

HART

What the fuck's she doing here?

Hart moves in Puck's direction, but Kimber stops him.

KIMBER

Now's not the time.

INT. HART'S CONDO LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The funeral reception is both somber and cheerful at the same time. People laugh and cry at different times. Hart stands with Kimber, Sunny and Mac.

KIMBER

Who's that?

HART

Who's who?

KIMBER

That guy with Ivy?

Across the room, Ivy stands with a stunning man, BILLY FISHER, about six foot, chiseled good Nordic looks.

HART

Billy Fisher. Eagles Wide Receiver. He and Rory hit it off pretty fast.

SUNNY

Seems to be hitting it off pretty fast with Ivy.

MAC

Fisher's not like that. He's just being a friend.

SUNNY

His body language says otherwise.

OTHER SIDE OF ROOM - IVY AND BILL

Bill hands her a card.

FISHER

Take my number, Ivy. If you need anything, don't hesitate to call.

IVY

Thanks, Bill. You're such a friend.

FISHER

I liked Rory. He was a bit of a goof. But I liked him. Listen, I have to go, but if you ever want to visit, just call me and I'll send you a ticket to come to Philadelphia.

She nods, smiles and touches his arm lightly.

INT. TOBY'S BEDROOM

Puck again sits in front of the occult symbol.

PUCK

Zi kia kanpa. Zi Anna kanpa. Zi dingir kia Kanpa. Zidingir Anna kanpa. Hear me, O Thou Marduk. Come to me by all the powers of the word Dugga and answer my urgent prayer! Zi kia kanpa! Zi Anna kanpa!

She turns back to Toby, lying dormant in the bed, his chest rising and falling rhythmically. TJ breathes with the same rhythm.

PUCK (CONT'D)

Angel, can you hear me?

TOBY'S PURGATORY

Defender moves through space, through a large open field, gazing skyward.

DEFENDER (V.O.)

Who am I?

PUCK (V.O.)

Angel, can you hear me?

DEFENDER (V.O.)

Who are you? Who are you? Please speak to me.

PUCK (V.O.)

Zi kia kanpa. Zi Anna kanpa. Zi dingir kia Kanpa. Zidingir Anna kanpa. Hear me, O Thou Marduk. Come to me by all the powers of the word Dugga and answer my urgent prayer! Zi kia kanpa! Zi Anna kanpa!

As she speaks the words, Defender seems to grow larger and larger. Muscles seem to grow. Power exudes from him.

PUCK (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Angel, please come back to me.

EXT. HART'S CONDO FRONT STEPS

Hart, beer in hand, stands on the front steps, staring at the spot where Rory fell. Mac comes out and stands silently behind him.

MAC

You gonna stare at that spot forever?

HART

Trying to figure out how I'm going to kill that fucking bitch.

MAC

Hart. Moron. You just signed a fairly lucrative deal with the Texans. Now, you can do one of two things: kill her and spend the rest of your life in prison.

HART

I'd only do about seven to ten years.

MAC

Some consolation for losing your career. Or you can play foot ball. Make tons of money. Bag lots of babes. Make kids with Kimber.

Mac reaches into pocket and produces a Quarter.

MAC (CONT'D)

Want to flip? See which you should do?

HART

Shut up.

MAC

She couldn't have done that to Rory. Hell, he's pissed off enough people in the world. They'd probably line up around the block to kill him.

HART

Shut up.

MAC

Maybe Bill Fisher did it to get his girl.

HART

You are an asshole.

MAC

Calmed down yet?

Hart nods reluctantly.

MAC (CONT'D)

Nothing can touch us.

A freak wind blows past them. The night is calm. No wind. Both of them look strangely, disconcertingly at each other.

MAC (CONT'D)
Let's get inside.

HART
I need a beer.

INT. TOBY'S BEDROOM

TJ sits in a small chair near Toby's bed. Puck sits in a chair between them.

PUCK
I have a new song, TJ. Want to hear it? If you like it, I'll record it.

She turns down the TV volume with the remote.

TJ
I love when you sing, Mommy.

Puck begins singing the song. TJ smiles broadly.

TOBY'S PURGATORY

The sounds of PUCK SINGING echo through the ether. Defender searches for the source of the music.

DEFENDER (V.O.)
Are you here? Hello? Please show yourself.

Suddenly, the music comes to a close.

DEFENDER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Please come back.

TOBY'S BEDROOM

Puck finishes her song with a look of uncertainty.

PUCK
What do you think?

TJ
It's awesome. I love it. Daddy does too. We love when you sing, Mommy.

PUCK
Where did you come from? You just don't seem like a normal five year old.

TJ
Daddy's coming home soon, Mommy.

Puck hugs him.

PUCK
I believe you, TJ.

Rory's face appears on the TV in a news report. TJ Glares at the screen. He points to the image.

TJ
That man's in Hell.

Rapidly, Puck turns to see who it is. She turns the sound up as the report of his murder concludes.

PUCK
Do you know him?

TJ
Daddy's Man does. He knows he's one of the bad men who hurt daddy. He got him and took him to Hell. Daddy's Man told me.

Puck palpitates as she looks at the screen, then at TJ, then back to the screen.

PUCK
What do you mean?

TJ
You said a prayer that Daddy's Man could help.

TJ he points to the Defender.

TJ (CONT'D)
And he did.

PUCK
TJ?

TJ
You believe. Don't you, Mommy? You have to believe, Mommy, or it won't work. Daddy's Man won't come if you don't believe.

Puck chokes back tears.

PUCK
I believe, TJ. I really do. I believe.

TJ

It's okay to cry, Mommy. It shows you care.

Puck bursts into tears and hugs TJ.

PUCK

How'd you get so smart?

TJ

Don't you know?

PUCK

No, sweetie. I don't.

TJ

It comes from you and daddy. I got good parts from both of you. It's like when you mix chocolate and vanilla. They're good alone. But they're better when you mix them.

PUCK

I like it that way.

TJ

It's not chocolate and vanilla anymore. But you taste the best of both of them. Isn't that neat, Mommy?

PUCK

Very much so, my choco-vanilla boy.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Webster stares at Rory's murder file. After a moment, he closes it. Victor stares at him.

VICTOR

So, that's it?

WEBSTER

I wish. Unger wasn't any help. Complete exsanguination. Not a drop of liquid blood in the body, and it was all sucked out of his head.

VICTOR

Maybe a bird flew in a sucked it out.

Webster flashes a disapproving glance.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

No physical evidence at the scene.
Unger said that he died where he was
found.

Webster lights a cigarette.

WEBSTER

I know. I know. The Chief's crawling
up my ass for closure on this thing.
The kid's parents are screaming for
results. And I noticed that you're
curiously absent when I'm getting my
ass chewed out.

VICTOR

Well, you're the senior. It's your
job to take shit.

Webster shakes his head and opens the file again to scan the
crime scene photos. In one of the photos, Puck appears.

WEBSTER

Look at that.

VICTOR

The girl?

WEBSTER

Look closer.

VICTOR

Cute chick.

WEBSTER

How did you ever become a detective?

VICTOR

Charm, personality and good looks.

WEBSTER

That's that singer girl. Puck.

VICTOR

The girlfriend of the gork.

Webster nods.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Maybe this is a weird sort of
retribution. Fate got back at him
for what he did to the... What's his
name?

WEBSTER

Toby.

VICTOR

You think this Puck girl sucked that
guy's brains out?

WEBSTER

Way this is shaping up, it wouldn't
surprise me. This stinks Vic.

INT. MAKEUP TRAILER

Puck sits in a makeup chair, sipping on a soft drink as the
makeup artist applies the makeup. Webster and Victor stand
off to one side.

WEBSTER

We just wanted to know why you were
there, Puck.

PUCK

I spend long hours working. When I
get home, I like to spend time with
my son. When the weather's nice,
like it was that night, I like to
walk at night with him. It helps
keep my girlish figure.

VICTOR

So, it was an accident?

PUCK

Rory's death? How should I know?

VICTOR

You being there.

PUCK

I live nearby. My son pointed down
the street. He wanted to see what
all the lights were about. I didn't
even know Hart lived there until
then.

WEBSTER

Why'd you stay so long?

PUCK

Why don't you ask the other spectators
who were there?

WEBSTER

You knew Rory. You had reason not
to like him.

PUCK

He wasn't the biggest asshole in my school, but he was in the top six.

WEBSTER

And you did have reason to harm him.

PUCK

Want a list? How about almost killing my husband?

Webster and Victor stop for a moment.

PUCK (CONT'D)

You know, if you two had taken enough time before, you might have put the assholes who ruined my husband's life in jail. And we wouldn't be talking now. But you just didn't take the time. Or maybe it was because they were high school foot ball stars? Maybe that's it. Someone higher up told you to lay off the investigation?

WEBSTER

Puck, we did everything...

PUCK

Oh, please. Don't lie.

VICTOR

Sincerely, there were no clues. No evidence. Everyone had an alibi. We exhausted every avenue.

PUCK

Not every avenue, detective. If you had, the scum bags who ruined Toby's life would have paid for their crimes.

Webster and Victor go silent. Moments later, the door opens and Nora enters.

NORA

Ready, Puck? Oh, I didn't know you had guests.

PUCK

Be right there, Nora.

Nora closes the door.

PUCK (CONT'D)

Do you have any more questions?

WEBSTER

I think we're done for now.

PUCK

For now? Detective Webster, I have nothing more to say on this issue. If you have any other questions regarding the deceased, contact my attorney.

Puck stands.

PUCK (CONT'D)

If you have questions about Toby, feel free.

Puck walks to the door.

VICTOR

Good luck with the video.

Puck slams the door behind her. Webster and Victor sigh in relief. Suddenly, Puck sticks her head back inside.

PUCK

Oh, detectives, remember this. While I'm working and taking care of Toby and our son by myself, those assholes are enjoying their lives.

She slams the door harder.

INT. IVY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kimber, Sunny and Ivy sit on the bed watching music videos when Puck's video come on.

KIMBER

Is that?

The others take notice.

IVY

Oh, my God. It's Puck.

SUNNY

Shit. She has a video? Not bad.

KIMBER

Shut up. She's a bitch! Anyway, back to the situation at hand, my dear Ivy. What are you waiting for?

IVY

I don't know.

KIMBER

It's been two months.

SUNNY

Almost three.

KIMBER

He gave you the number.

IVY

At the funeral. For emotional support. He was just being nice.

KIMBER

He's sexy. Rich. He just signed a new contract. Major bucks.

SUNNY

Not an asshole.

KIMBER

Probably doesn't even know how to cheat on a girl.

SUNNY

You still have that apartment in Philadelphia that you and Rory rented. What could it hurt?

After a moment, Ivy take the number and dials.

EXT. CRUISE SHIP - DAY

Swooping onto the deck from the chapel, Hart and Kimber, rice falling around them, head out into the sunshine, and head to the rail. The newlyweds, stars in their eyes, look out over the ocean.

HART

Well, you got your wedding. But I thought you wanted a big wedding. Family. Friends, etc.

KIMBER

What's more romantic than a wedding aboard a cruise ship?

HART

We should have invited Mac and Sunny.

KIMBER

Mac and Sunny are getting married in the Bahamas as we speak.

(MORE)

KIMBER (CONT'D)

When the ship docks there, we'll have a little reception. And Ivy hooked up with Bill Fisher in Philadelphia.

HART

Doesn't waste any time, does she?

KIMBER

Can't wait forever. Besides, after the season starts, it's going to be almost impossible. This is the best time. We're going to have a wonderful life together.

Hart smiles and puts his arm around her. After a moment, they hook up.

INT. TOBY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Drying her hair as she returns from the shower, Puck turns the TV on and sits on the edge of the bed. The news is on the TV. Puck turns and straddles Toby.

PUCK

My love, you must try harder. Do you have any idea how much we miss you? Me? TJ? Your mom and dad?

The sports begins on the TV.

SPORTSCASTER (V.O.)

Two high school foot ball stars, once friends, now rivals, take to the field for the first time tonight as opponents.

Mac's and Hart's pictures appear on the screen. Puck throws the remote at the set.

PUCK

Mother fuckers!

TJ comes into the room with an ice cream in his hands.

TJ

Mommy! You shouldn't use bad language!

She climbs off Toby and goes to TJ.

PUCK

I'm sorry, sweetie. And you're right. I won't do it again.

Lovingly, she picks TJ up and hugs him.

PUCK (CONT'D)

Hey, want to give daddy some of your
ice cream?

He nods excitedly. They get up on the bed next to Toby and TJ touches the tip of the ice cream to Toby's lips.

TOBY'S PURGATORY

Defender is in the middle of a maelstrom of color and sound. He stands transfixed next to what appears to be a statue of Puck.

DEFENDER (V.O.)

Where is everyone? Who are you?
Beautiful. I wish you could talk. I
know I should know you. I know your
face. Puck. That's your name.
Puck.

Slowly, he circles the almost life-like statue.

DEFENDER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

How do I know you?

He touches the foot of the statue.

DEFENDER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

How long have I been here? Can you
tell me? Strange. I don't feel
lonely when this Puck is here. You're
the only one who stays. Not like
the frightened ones.

A movement off to the side distracts him.

DEFENDER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

They're back! Tell me who they are,
Puck. Can they see me?

Rage begins to appear on his face as he moves toward the creature.

DEFENDER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Come here! Tell me who I am!

Defender can barely see who it is.

DEFENDER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I demand that you come back! How
dare you come to my world and not
show yourself!

Defender, in a rage, moves faster and faster toward the creature in the distance.

DEFENDER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Come back! Please come back.

Turning, the statue of Puck is still near him.

DEFENDER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Puck! My beautiful, quiet Puck.
Why don't you move? Who are you?
Please tell me who they are. Are
the others the key? Do they hold
the answers?

Rain begins to fall around him. At the horizon, rain-filled clouds begin to roll in.

DEFENDER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Are they there? I can feel them.
Why do they fear me? They won't
come close. If they did come, I
would break them! Just like I did
the other. I would tear into their
flesh! Bleed them! Snap their bones!

PUCK (V.O.)
You can do it, my love.

Defender, shocked into silence. Eyes snap to Puck.

DEFENDER (V.O.)
Is that you, Puck? Is that your
voice?

PUCK (V.O.)
You must do it!

Again, something in the distance catches his eye. Moving away from the statue, he scans the distance to find what he saw.

DEFENDER (V.O.)
Who are you?

On the horizon, he sees the writhing, dancing amorphous form of a seductive girl, dripping lasciviousness. As he watches her, moves toward her, his face turns dark, sinister.

DEFENDER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I see you. I have something for
you.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Illuminated by the lights from outside, Bill Fisher thrusts into Ivy, sweat pouring from his brow. She wraps her legs around him, pulls him closer, kisses him deeply, hugs him, looking up to the ceiling.

A giant smile appears on her face as an enigmatic shadow shoots across the room and catches Ivy's eyes.

IVY
What was that?

BILL
What?

IVY
Something's in the room.

Bill rolls off her and searches the darkness.

BILL
What are you talking about?

IVY
I thought I saw someone in the room.

Bill turns on the lamp and gets out of bed, standing naked in the glow.

BILL
I don't see anything.

IVY
I do.

Slowly, she slinks out of bed and wraps her arms around his muscular body. Out of the ether, a VOICE CALLS.

DEFENDER (V.O.)
You're time will come.

Terror writes itself across her face.

BILL
What is it?

IVY
Hold me.

INT. FOOT BALL FIELD - NIGHT

Bill and Ivy take their seats in the stands as the game goes on. Next to them, Kimber and Sunny take their seats, flashing their new wedding rings.

IVY

I can't believe you guys got married like that. My parents would kill me.

SUNNY

Mac's parents were so angry that we didn't get married at home.

KIMBER

That's bullshit. They were pissed they could get a pre-nup before you got married.

Suddenly, to Ivy, Kimber's face MORPHS into the image of Defender.

KIMBER (CONT'D)

Hart's parents were the same way.

She sees the same look in Ivy's face. But at the same time, Kimber's face turns back to her own. They're both unnerved.

KIMBER (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

IVY

Yeah, yeah, I'm fine.

They do not look fine.

EXT. FOOT BALL FIELD PARKING LOT

Waiting for their husbands with Bill and Ivy, Kimber and Sunny, kibitz. In one of the passersby, Ivy again sees the amorphous face of Defender. She seems uneasy and startled.

IVY

I have to go back to Philly tomorrow. But Bill has to go tonight. Maybe we can hang out after I take him to the airport.

KIMBER

Sure. Meet us at my place and we'll go from there.

IVY

Great. I just don't want to be alone tonight.

SUNNY

Girl's night out. Shit. We haven't hung out in months.

EXT. AIRPORT DROP-OFF

Bill drops his bag off at the baggage check and turns back to Ivy. They head inside the airport.

INT. AIRPORT CONCOURSE

Ivy's eyes dart nervously to and fro.

BILL

I'm going to be late. I'll see you
in Philadelphia in two days.

IVY

Okay.

AT THE SECURITY GATE

Bill gets ready to get in line.

IVY

I'm not ticketed. I have to stay
here.

BILL

What's wrong? You seem nervous.

IVY

I'm fine. Really. You go back to
Philadelphia. I'll be fine.

BILL

I love you.

IVY

I love you.

Bill kisses her forehead and heads toward the x-ray machines. Ivy waits for a moment, waving to Bill until he disappears.

INT. IVY'S CAR

Ivy's stuck in bumper to bumper to traffic. Worry etched on her face. Every face She looks into, for a moment, turns to Defender.

IVY

You're not real. Go away.

DEFENDER (V.O.)

Justice must be done.

Tears flow from her eyes and smear her makeup. With her fists, she wipes the tears away, further smearing her makeup. Finally, traffic eases and she hits the gas.

IVY
Leave me alone!

DEFENDER (V.O.)
You must be judged.

Ivy floors it, weaving in and out of the traffic.

IVY
Who are you? What do you want with me?

DEFENDER (V.O.)
Wrong must be made right.

IVY
Go away!

Her eyes cloud with tears. She can hardly see the road ahead. In a blind rage, she bullets down the highway.

Ivy shrieks.

INT. TOBY'S BEDROOM — DAY

Waking to the morning news, Puck clears her eyes as she sees the report of a massive accident on the Queen Elizabeth Way.

REPORTER (V.O.)
Late last night, a tragic accident took the life of the girlfriend of Eagle's Wide Receiver, Bill Fisher.

Ivy's picture appears on the screen.

Though the window is closed, a cool breeze wafts through the room. Instantly, Puck spins around, looks at Toby. From behind her, TJ's voice intones.

TJ (O.S.)
He's coming, Mommy. Don't worry.

Puck spins around.

TJ (CONT'D)
Don't worry, Mommy. Daddy's Man said everything's going to be okay.

EXT. CEMETERY GRAVE SIDE — DAY

A cool mist rains slowly, soaking the gathering. Tears fill Bill's eyes as he stands with Ivy's family.

EDGE OF THE CEMETERY

Webster crushes out a cigarette and prepares to light another. He stops short when he sees Puck.

The light from the match burns his fingers, and he turns away.

Instantly, he turns back, but Puck is gone.

CEMETERY GRAVE SIDE

Mourners begin to disperse and head back to their cars. Hart talks privately to Kimber.

HART
This is too weird.

KIMBER
What?

HART
It's just like in the comic.

KIMBER
Jesus Christ, Hart. Don't bring that up.

HART
You think it was just a coincidence?

KIMBER
I don't know. How do I know? I just don't think...

HART
All I know is...

Mac comes up from behind.

MAC
We're all going to get something to eat. You coming?

Hart starts to say something.

KIMBER
Yes, we are. We'll follow you.

INT. RESTAURANT

Sitting in the booth, having just handed their menus to the waitress, Hart and Kimber, Mac and Sunny, sit with Bill. Bill finishes his drink, drops some money on the table and stands.

BILL

I can't eat. Not today.

Slowly, he turns and leaves.

SUNNY

That is so sad.

KIMBER

I miss her already.

SUNNY

Me too.

MAC

It was an accident. Nothing you can do about that.

The others turn to him with shocked looks on their faces.

MAC (CONT'D)

She was probably putting on her makeup.

HART

Ya think?

MAC

What are you talking about?

KIMBER

Just drop it, Hart.

MAC

Well?

HART

No one questions that Rory's death was murder.

MAC

Well, his brain was missing. Can't get much more obvious.

HART

No one question this?

MAC

It was a car accident, Hart. It's obvious.

HART

Because she was in a car on the highway?

SUNNY

Because the police said it was an accident. Why would they say that it was an accident if it wasn't?

MAC

What's bothering you, bro?

The words take time to form.

HART

Toby Friedman.

Non-comprehension fills Mac's and Sunny's faces.

MAC

What about him? The little puke's gone. Dead.

HART

No, he's not.

MAC

What are you talking about?

HART

He's still alive!

SUNNY

Hart, he's been dead for five years.

HART

That little shit, Puck, his girlfriend? Freak. She published his comic.

Hart throws the comic on table.

HART (CONT'D)

It says on the back that he's been in a coma. He's still alive.

MAC

I fail to see what him being alive, or his bitch publishing a comic book, has to do with Ivy. Or us.

SUNNY

So they published a comic. He can't say a thing if he's in a coma.

HART

She did! She wrote the story. Read it!

(MORE)

HART (CONT'D)

Everything that's happened is in there. Like that fag knew in advance and drew it.

Mac thumbs through the comic.

MAC

If this thing meant something to anyone, someone would have said something.

HART

I saw the fucking cop. What was his name, Kimber?

KIMBER

Webster.

HART

Webster. He was at Rory's funeral. He was at Ivy's funeral. He's the same one that investigated us.

MAC

Webster was just curious. Nothing more. How do you know he even knows about the comic?

SUNNY

Cops are naturally curious people. We have nothing to worry about.

Hart points to the comic.

HART

What about this?

MAC

We did what we did. And it was a shitty thing to do. But we were kids, doing what kids do. He couldn't defend himself. That's his problem.

HART

The three of us were twice his size and we beat him into a coma!

MAC

Right! He's in a coma. So what? It was a raw deal. But he's where he is. And we're where we are. That's it! Survival of the fittest.

Fear grips Hart. He turns away.

MAC (CONT'D)

Look, bro, I'm not giving up what I worked for my entire life because of some half dead dweeb. Now, all of you keep your mouths shut. Don't say anything to anybody. That's the way it is.

Finally, the waitress brings their food.

INT. TOBY'S BEDROOM

One last slice of pizza remains in the box that lies next to the sleeping TJ. Puck takes a big breath, and stuffs the last slice into her mouth.

A knock at the door brings Puck to her feet. Opening it, she finds Webster standing on the other side.

WEBSTER

I hope I'm not bothering you. Mrs. Friedman let me in.

PUCK

To what do I owe the pleasure?

WEBSTER

May I come in?

With flourish, she motions for him to enter.

PUCK

Sorry, but I ate all the pizza.

WEBSTER

I already had dinner, thanks.

Puck motions for him to take a seat. Webster stares at Toby for a moment then sits.

PUCK

First time you've seen him since the hospital?

Webster nods solemnly.

PUCK (CONT'D)

Is this an official visit?

WEBSTER

A curiosity visit.

PUCK

I just wanted to see her off.

Webster says nothing, but his eyes question.

PUCK (CONT'D)

I didn't have anything to do with Ivy's death. If that's what you think. Or Rory's.

WEBSTER

That's not what I was thinking.

Webster pulls out a cigarette.

WEBSTER (CONT'D)

Ivy was an accident, and there's no way you could have done Rory.

PUCK

No smoking.

WEBSTER

Sorry.

PUCK

I know you couldn't prove it, but they did this to Toby. Every time one of them gets hurt, I get pleasure. I know that sound pretty vindictive, but I want them to feel the pain I feel every day when I look at my Toby. Look at our son. He might never know his father.

Puck moves to a chair next to the bed and takes a seat.

PUCK (CONT'D)

Would I do anything to directly hurt them? No. That's not me. But I will enjoy their pain. Their fear. No matter where it comes from.

Webster's eyes travel to all the sketches around the room.

WEBSTER

I can't help noticing these. I know Toby did them before the... It seems as though he knew it was going to happen. How do you explain that?

PUCK

You tell me.

WEBSTER

I can't.

PUCK

Maybe it was a crazed fan of Defender taking revenge.

Webster nods and raises his eyebrows.

PUCK (CONT'D)

You know who did this to Toby, Detective Webster. Everyone does. But fate has a way of working things out. Don't be surprised if very bad things happen to very bad people.

Puck's words sober him instantly.

EXT. TOBY'S DRIVEWAY

Webster walks toward his car, lighting a cigarette. He stares back at the only backlit window. Defender's voice rings out.

DEFENDER (V.O.)

I will be avenged.

He breathes a bit harder and takes a long draw off the cigarette.

EXT. RESTAURANT PARKING LOT

Hart and Kimber, Mac and Sunny exit the restaurant and walk into the parking lot.

HART

You don't understand.

MAC

What don't I understand?

Hart tries to say something, but cannot get the words out.

KIMBER

Hart thinks that...

SUNNY

What is it?

MAC

For Christ's sake, say it.

HART

I know it sounds weird -- fucked up -- but I think something's coming for us.

MAC

What are you talking about?

SUNNY

I beg clarification.

HART

Ever since that comic came out,
strange shit's been happening.

MAC

You think a comic book killed Rory
and drove Ivy into on-coming traffic?
Take his temperature. Up the lithium
dose. Put a fork in him. He's done.

HART

I'm not kidding.

MAC

I completely believe you, Hart. But
don't let the team doctor hear you
say shit like that. You'll spend
the rest of your rookie season on a
psychiatrist's sofa.

KIMBER

Guys, I don't know if I believe all
this Outer Limits shit, but when you
look at the comic. I mean. It's
really odd the way it happened.

SUNNY

Oh, please, Kimber.

MAC

I'm going to say this one last time.
Rory was murdered. Ivy had an
accident. We're all under a lot of
pressure here. Maybe your conscience
is getting to you. I'm fine.

HART

What we did was wrong.

MAC

He had to pay!

HART

For what? Being little? Being
different? Fuck! We were all goddamn
friends in grade school. Why the
fuck did we do that?

Mac cannot answer. Sunny seems a bit freaked.

SUNNY

Mac's right. What's done is done.
We can't do anything to change it.
We can't panic. We have lives to
protect.

Mac opens the car door for Sunny.

MAC

I don't want to hear another word
about this. Nothing's going to
happen. Now I have to get back to
Phoenix. I have a game to practice
for.

Sunny gets in the car and Mac heads for the driver's side.

MAC (CONT'D)

If you need help, get it. Both of
you.

Mac slams the door shut and peels the car out of the parking
lot.

INT. POLICE STATION

Webster, frantic, paces the office, while Victor stands
nearby.

WEBSTER

I'm not a psycho. You know that. I
heard it, Victor.

VICTOR

You're emotionally involved. Maybe
it's some kind of emotional
transference.

WEBSTER

You a psychiatrist?

VICTOR

I read about it in Psychology Today.

WEBSTER

This is something different. It
wasn't in my head. It was real.

VICTOR

I don't know what to tell you.

INT. HART'S AND KIMBER'S CONDO LIVING ROOM

Hart sits in front of the fireplace, fingers of fire swirling
up chimney. Kimber stands behind him.

He looks back at her, then takes the comic and tosses it into the fire.

INT. PHOENIX FOOT BALL FIELD - NIGHT

On the field, Hart sets up over center and looks out at the defense. On the other side of the line...

Mac waits for him at middle linebacker.

Hart takes the snap, fakes the hand-off and fades back.

Mac slams his way through the line and flushes Hart from the pocket. Hart frantically searches for open receivers.

He finds a receiver and fires the ball down field as Mac slams into him, driving him hard to the ground.

Mac gets up instantly, but Hart moans on the field a bit. Mac helps him up.

HART

That hurt.

MAC

You still got the first down.

HART

Still hurts.

The two of them laugh as they run down the field.

IN THE STANDS

Kimber and Sunny sit in the stands, cheering and laughing at their husbands. Kimber and Sunny sit down.

SUNNY

Do you think they'll ever grow up?

KIMBER

Why should they? They make way more money acting like little boys.

They both laugh.

SUNNY

It's been way too long, Kimber.
Three months is too long.

KIMBER

The guy's schedules are difficult.
Plus, last time, I mean, it was a little tense.

SUNNY
All that bullshit about that comic.

KIMBER
Comic's gone.

SUNNY
Good. Good.

INT. LIMOUSINE

Puck sits, nervously in the back of the limousine. Nora sits next to her.

NORA
Nervous?

She nods, biting her nails.

NORA (CONT'D)
It's just the MTV awards.

PUCK
Just? Shit. I've dreamed of things like this. I just wish Toby could be here.

NORA
The TV's on in his room. He'll be able to hear it. If he can.

PUCK
He can. TJ told me.

From inside the limousine, we can see that they are coming close to the theater.

NORA
All right. It's show time. You'll be fine.

EXT. MAC'S AND SUNNY'S PATIO

Hart hods and ice pack to his ribs. The girls bring beer bottles to them.

HART
It really felt weird being in that condo.

KIMBER
Hell, Rory died right in front. We saw the spot every day. We had to move.

SUNNY

You were really freaking me out with that comic shit.

KIMBER

It was a strange time.

MAC

Nothing's happened for over four months. I think we can put the Toby Friedman issue to bed.

They all clink their bottles together.

SUNNY

Hey, MTV Music Awards are on.

Sunny turns on the set, and they sit back.

ON THE TELEVISION

A star holds the envelope up in front of them, and tears it open.

STAR (V.O.)

The winner of the best new artist award is... Puck!

As the image on the screen turns to Puck, the four friends' jaws drop.

MAC

Do you believe that? We can't get away from that little shit. Why couldn't she be anonymous?

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

This is the fourth award for Puck.

Puck drags herself to the stage and accepts the award.

PUCK (V.O.)

Uh, damn. This is amazing. I don't know what to say. I've thanked everyone I know. Um, I love you, Toby and TJ.

INT. TOBY'S BEDROOM

TJ sits next to his father, who lies in bed, eyes closed. Puck's image is on the screen. TJ claps.

TJ

Mommy won again, daddy! Mommy won again!

EXT. MAC'S AND SUNNY'S PATIO

Scowls replace the happy faces.

MAC

I've lost my appetite.

Hart stares at the screen, apprehension spreads across his face.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT - DREAM SEQUENCE

Sitting next to Kimber in first class, Hart tosses and turns in his seat. Suddenly, he wakes. Scans the near-empty cabin nervously, palpitating, sweating.

Down the isle, he sees a man sitting with his back to him. Slowly, the man turns, stands and heads down the isle past the fearful Hart.

DEFENDER (V.O.)

I will be avenged.

Frantically, Hart sits up and pivots his head rapidly, searching for the source of the voice. Nothing is there. Suddenly, from the corner of his eye, he catches a glimpse of something. A human figure. Not well formed.

DEFENDER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I will be avenged.

Whipping around to the source of the voice, he sees nothing more than a wisp of a shadow. With murderous intent, screaming, Defender blasts out of the shadows toward Hart.

AIRPLANE - END DREAM SEQUENCE

Hart explodes from his nightmare, screaming and flailing. Kimber does her best to calm him.

HART

Where is he?!

KIMBER

Hart! Calm down!

HART

Get him away!

Passengers, startled by his outburst, scream and shriek. A STEWARDESS rushes to them.

STEWARDESS

What's going on here?

KIMBER

Nothing! He just had a nightmare!

Finally, Hart calms and realizes where he is.

STEWARDESS

Do you need a drink, sir?

HART

Big one.

EXT. HART'S CONDO (OLD ONE)

Hart rolls up and pulls to the curb, gets out and goes to the place where Rory died. Kimber calls for him out the window.

KIMBER

Hart, what are you doing? Why are we here?

She waits for an answer then gets out of the car.

KIMBER (CONT'D)

This is crazy, Hart. You can't keep torturing yourself.

Hart rubs his foot on the spot where Rory died.

KIMBER (CONT'D)

Maybe we need to, you know, see someone.

HART

A Priest? A witch doctor?

KIMBER

Maybe you're just feeling guilty. You don't believe in God or anything like that. How could you believe in this?

HART

I'm going to take you home.

EXT. OUTSIDE TOBY'S HOUSE

Hart parks down the street from the house and walks the last few paces to the front lawn. He stares up at the only illuminated window. A ghostly blue light drifts down and shines on Hart's face.

HART

Freak!

Wind begins to swirl around, whipping up the trees, blowing Hart's hair around.

HART (CONT'D)

Go away!

The Defender takes near corporeal form behind him.

DEFENDER

I will be avenged.

The winds increase to near tropical storm force.

HART

Who are you?

Defender slowly beings to vanish as the winds die down.

DEFENDER

What is wrong must be made right.

TOBY'S PURGATORY

Furious winds beat at Defender and the statue of Puck. Off in the distance, Hart, nearly apoplectic with fear, completely out of breath, stares at the duo.

DEFENDER (V.O.)

Come back you coward! Face me!

As Defender steps forward, Hart turns and runs.

HART

Get the fuck away from me, you freak!

INT. FOOT BALL FIELD, PHILADELPHIA - NIGHT

Mac takes his position on the line. He looks to his QB, then looks across the line at Bill Fisher, who smiles at him and points toward him.

QB

Blue twenty-two. Blue twenty-two.
Set! Hut!

Furiously, Mac blasts down the field toward the goal, with Bill Fisher fast on his heals.

The QB launches the ball into the air.

As Mac gets near the goal line and the ball touches his fingers, Bill lunges for him and slams him to the ground. They roll to a stop and bounce up to their feet.

MAC

Good hit!

BILL

Not good enough. You got up.

Mac's teammates regroup and they head back to the line.

IN THE STANDS

Sunny looks on with intense interest, biting her lip.

BACK ON THE FIELD

The huddle breaks and Mac gets into position, setting up closer to the line. It looks like a running play.

The QB comes to the line and surveys the defense, locking eyes on the middle linebacker, then to Mac.

QB

Red fifteen! Red fifteen!

The defense shifts, and the QB stands up a bit.

QB (CONT'D)

Check! Check! Flash! Flash!

The offense immediately shifts position and Mac returns to the position he was on in the original setup, but the QB takes a shotgun.

QB (CONT'D)

Set!

The center snaps and the QB fades back as...

Mac launches off the line and heads down the line with Bill hot on his heels.

The QB searches down the field, evading defenders.

Mac cuts to the center as...

The QB launches the ball.

IN THE STANDS

Sunny folds her hands tightly in front of her face.

ON THE FIELD

Mac goes airborne to receive the ball. As the ball hits his hands...

Bill takes his legs out from under him, spinning him in the air.

A blood curdling crack fills the air as Mac comes down head-first on the field. The ball falls away as Mac flops down on the field.

IN THE STANDS

Sunny screams.

ON THE FIELD

Bill turns back and sees Mac on the field. He scrambles back and looks into his face.

BILL
Trainers!!!

IN THE STANDS

Sunny turns frantic.

SUNNY
Mac!!!

ON THE FIELD

Trainers gather round him. They peer into his near lifeless eyes, then at each other...

Mac's eyes dilate.

INT. WEBSTER'S DEN

Webster glues his eyes to the screen as the image of Mac, dead on the field, fills the screen.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
We don't know how serious it is, but
the trainers are out on the field.

Trainers gently put him on a backboard.

As the Announcer drones on, filling time, Webster turns down the volume and brings out his copy of Defender. He opens it, and gazes at a sketch that shows Mac dead in the same way as on the television.

DEFENDER (V.O.)
He has been judged.

ON THE FIELD - SIDELINE

Sunny breaks through the players as the trainers bring Mac's lifeless body off the field.

DEFENDER (V.O.)
I have been avenged!

She looks at him and faints.

TOBY'S PURGATORY

Defender stretches out his arms in a Christ-like effigy, floating above the ground. Slowly, he spins bathed in a swirling wind. He floats around the statue of Puck.

DEFENDER (V.O.)
Have you moved since last I came?
Can you move? It's like you did.

PUCK (V.O.)
Come back to me Toby. Please.

He rushes to the statue.

DEFENDER (V.O.)
Is Toby who I am?

PUCK (V.O.)
I love you.

DEFENDER (V.O.)
Make my mind clear! I love you! My
wife? My son. I know these things.
Puck. TJ. I will be avenged!

INT. FUNERAL HOME - NIGHT

Sitting with Sunny, Hart and Kimber do their best to console her. She is almost more angry than sad.

SUNNY
This is impossible, Hart.

In her hands, she holds a copy of Defender.

SUNNY (CONT'D)
How could that fuck know? It was
over five years ago. He's been in a
fucking coma for five years.

HART
I play foot ball. I don't know about
shit like this.

KIMBER

The little shit told us what's going to happen. All we have to do is read the thing and avoid fate.

SUNNY

How can we do that? Fate is fate.

KIMBER

We can't just let him kill us. We have to fight back.

EXT. CEMETERY NEAR GRAVE - DAY

Mourners file away. Kimber walks with Sunny.

SUNNY

We should have stopped them.

KIMBER

Stopped who?

SUNNY

You know what I'm talking about.

KIMBER

No I don't.

SUNNY

What they did to him. To them. All the kids they tortured. Just because they were bigger than them. Meaner. We should have stopped them, Kimber, but we didn't.

Kimber grabs her arm.

KIMBER

Shut up, Sunny. Right now.

SUNNY

You know it was wrong.

Sunny is on the verge of tears.

SUNNY (CONT'D)

That poor kid. He never did anything to us. He was half their size. And they nearly beat him to death.

Kimber grabs her harder.

KIMBER

Sunny, shut up!

Like an eagle swooping in, Hart interjects.

HART
Shut the fuck up, Sunny!

Violently, Hart drags her aside.

HART (CONT'D)
You get hold of yourself.

SUNNY
Let go of me!

CEMETERY DRIVE

Hart drags Sunny behind one of the limousines. Kimber follows.

HART
You listen to me now! You don't say
a word to anyone about this.

KIMBER
You're in this just like we are.
And if you say anything to anyone,
you won't have to worry about a
fucking comic.

DEFENDER (V.O.)
You must make things right.

Frantically, Sunny searches around for the source of the voice.

SUNNY
Oh, my God. He's coming to get us.

KIMBER
What the fuck are you talking about?

SUNNY
Who are you people? Haven't you
learned anything?

KIMBER
I learned one thing. You work your
ass off to get what you want. What
you deserve. And no one takes it
away from you. Not even your friends.

The skies grow dark and ominous. Winds begin to whip around them. Defender's voice hisses in the wind.

DEFENDER (V.O.)
I will be avenged!

Dread fills Sunny's face as she sees Webster walking nearby. Standing next to him, Puck glares at her and the other two.

Hart becomes enraged when he sees Webster and Puck. He blasts off toward them.

HART
Fucking bitch!

CEMETERY NEAR THE TREES

Hart heads for Puck, but Webster slams him back before he can reach her.

WEBSTER
Haven't you done enough damage for one lifetime?

HART
This is a private funeral. You have no right to be here!

WEBSTER
This is a public cemetery! She has every right to be here!

The storm intensifies. Lightning and thunder rattle Hart. Rain begins to fall. Backing down, fearfully, he searches the area. Then he turns and backs away.

As he turns back, he sees Sunny heading toward Webster.

Sunny shifts her eyes from Webster to Puck to Hart. But she does not stare at Hart that much.

Hart stops short.

HART
Don't do it, Sunny.

SUNNY
Gonna knock me into a coma, Hart?

She walks up to Webster and Puck and stands in front of them.

WEBSTER
May I help you?

The conflict going on inside Sunny reads on her face like a book. She turns from Webster and looks back at Hart and Kimber, then back to Webster.

The weather ebbs and flows, building with every moment she hesitates. She looks back to Hart and Kimber. Then back to Webster. She begins to retreat from Webster.

SUNNY

I'm sorry.

Instantly, the storm exacerbates. The furious winds batter Sunny relentlessly. She screams in terror. She begins to run back to Hart and Kimber, but is buffeted back by the preternatural weather.

DEFENDER (V.O.)

I will be avenged.

None of the others can move. They seem to be frozen in place.

A near tornado strength wind rips a huge tree from its roots, hurls it into the air. Sunny looks up as the tree begins to fall, and seems almost calm, accepting.

Sunny turns to Puck.

SUNNY

I'm sorry.

The tree falls from the sky, instantly killing Sunny.

INT. DINER

A waitress places a cup of coffee in front of Webster and a cup of tea in front of Puck, then leaves.

WEBSTER

Do you understand this?

PUCK

Do you?

WEBSTER

I've spent most of my life figuring things out. I can build a murder case from a single fiber of hair or a single finger print. A drop of blood. I've solved over eighty percent of the cases I've investigated -- damn good ratio -- but this is completely beyond me.

PUCK

From the time I was a little girl, I've believed in the supernatural. Conjured spirits in my bedroom. Performed the Black Mass. Cast spells. This is the first time I've seen it for real.

From his pocket, he pulls a pack of cigarettes.

WEBSTER

Mind?

PUCK

Can I have one?

WEBSTER

You smoke?

PUCK

Not really. In a movie I did two years ago, I had to smoke.

Puck takes a cigarette and lights it.

PUCK (CONT'D)

I went out and bought a pack and started. I didn't realize I could use lettuce cigarettes. I quit right after.

WEBSTER

Nasty habit. My wife won't let me smoke in the house.

PUCK

Maybe you should quit.

Webster smiles as he puffs on his cigarette. Silence for a moment.

WEBSTER

I have no leads on Rory's murder. The rest were all *accidents*. I don't know what to do. My partner thinks I'm crazy.

PUCK

If I didn't believe in this, I'd think you were crazy too.

WEBSTER

I wish I could have done more for you and Toby.

PUCK

It wasn't your fault.

WEBSTER

Still. Sunny was going to confess.

Puck nods. Crushes out her cigarette.

PUCK

I actually feel sorry for her. In a way.

WEBSTER

She made her choice. Not like Toby.

PUCK

You would like him. Toby is one of the sweetest and kindest persons I've ever met in my life. No matter what was going on in his life, if I needed him, he was there. Even when those assholes were tormenting him, he never spoke a word of hatred against them. All he ever wanted to do was know why they hated him.

WEBSTER

What about Defender?

PUCK

What about him?

WEBSTER

Curious. You anthropomorphized him. Spoke about the character as if he were alive.

PUCK

The comic was Toby's way of dealing with his own pain. Can you imagine what it was like for him? For us?

WEBSTER

I think I can.

PUCK

No, you can't. We lived it.

WEBSTER

So did I.

A quizzical look on Puck's face.

WEBSTER (CONT'D)

Up until high school -- Sophomore year actually -- I was a runt. Wore thick glasses. Stuttered. Life sucked for me. I was a smart kid. But I had no athletic skills. Good grades. Few friends. Jocks hated me.

PUCK

What happened?

WEBSTER

Over the summer, I sprouted. Grew over five inches. Dad put me into Aikido classes. I started lifting weights. It was quite a shock for the bullies in school when Junior year began.

PUCK

I'll bet.

WEBSTER

I don't think I ever went through what Toby did. But I do know what you're feeling.

Puck smiles, reaches out and takes Webster's hand.

WEBSTER (CONT'D)

Do you think Defender really has anything to do with this?

PUCK

Do you?

WEBSTER

I don't know what I believe. But that storm wasn't natural.

PUCK

I believe in Toby.

INT. HART'S AND KIMBER'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Storming around the room in a rage, Hart's eyes bulge.

HART

I'm going to finish him! I'm going to do it tonight!

KIMBER

Stop it, Hart! We have to fucking stop now! You have to stop!

HART

Fuck that! I'm going to go to his house and beat him to death! Finish this the way we should have before!

KIMBER

Are you so fucking stupid you can't see?

HART

See what?

Preternatural winds begin to swirl in the condo. Hart continues his tirade, not seeing what is happening. But Kimber sees it and grows fearful.

DEFENDER (V.O.)

I will be avenged.

KIMBER

He's going to kill us. And there's nothing we can do about it.

Hart stands and heads for the exit.

HART

I'll kill him first!

Hart does not realize what is happening, does not see the tornado in the living room.

A sudden gust knocks a book off a shelf and slams it into Kimber's face, breaking her nose.

KIMBER

Oh, my God!

Just as Hart exits the living room, the doors slowly begin to close.

KIMBER (CONT'D)

Hart! Help me!

HART'S AND KIMBER'S FOYER

Shock covers Hart's face as he turns back to Kimber.

KIMBER

Make it stop!

In the living room, at the center of a vortex of flying books, CD's and knickknacks, stabbing at her flesh, Kimber does her best to fend off the attack.

HART

Kimber!

As Hart lunges for the living room, the double doors slam shut.

HART'S AND KIMBER'S LIVING ROOM

Pure rage surrounds Kimber, who is frozen in fear.

DEFENDER (V.O.)

I will be avenged.

Angry forms of Defender fill the wind as more and more objects stab and beat at Kimber.

KIMBER

I'm sorry!!!

HART'S AND KIMBER'S FOYER

Pounding at the doors with all his will, Hart cannot gain entry. Kimber's SCREAMS of agony, and the sound of the wind inside the living room, fill his ears.

HART

Kimber! I'm coming!

HART'S AND KIMBER'S LIVING ROOM

A cyclone of CD's slice at her flesh like razors. Blood pours from the wounds, but she remains frozen with fear.

KIMBER

I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I'm sorry!

DEFENDER (V.O.)

You have been judged.

Suddenly, a CD slashes her throat, splashing blood all over the room. As her life flows out of the gaping wound, a blank look covers her face and she falls to the floor dead.

The doors magically open and Hart falls to the floor, coming almost face to face with Kimber's lifeless body. He scoops her into his arms.

DEFENDER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I will be avenged.

HART

I will be avenged!!!

INT. WEBSTER'S CAR - NIGHT - MOVING

Slowly, Webster eases the car to the side of the curb. Pulling his cigarettes from his pocket, he motions to them.

WEBSTER

One for the road?

PUCK

I don't think I want to pick that habit up again. Thanks.

WEBSTER
I'm a bit concerned.

PUCK
About?

WEBSTER
Hart. It doesn't take a cop to figure out that he thinks you're responsible.

PUCK
I don't really worry about it anymore.

WEBSTER
I don't know why not.

PUCK
TJ knows things. He knows his dad's coming back. He knows that we'll be safe. Happy. I trust him. I can't wait to see him. He's with Mr. And Mrs. Friedman. They took him to Vancouver for the week.

WEBSTER
That notwithstanding, watch your back. Night, Puck.

She opens the car door, gets out and smiles.

EXT. TOBY'S FRONT YARD

As Puck closes the door...

She sees a shadowy figure sneaking across the yard.

Instantly, she turns back to Webster before he can take off.

PUCK
It's Hart!

Webster jumps out of the car, pulling his pistol, and heads for the house.

WEBSTER
Stay back, Puck!

INT. TOBY'S BEDROOM

A tempest blasts the room, destroys nothing, but pushes Hart back, defending Toby.

TOBY'S STAIRWAY

Webster bounds up the stairs, followed by Puck.

PUCK

Toby!!!

Webster turns to Puck.

WEBSTER

Stay back!

TOBY'S BEDROOM

Like little picadors, as he fights to get to Toby, the preternatural winds slice open Hart's flesh. Defender's image appears above Toby's bed.

DEFENDER

I will be avenged.

Toby begins to stir, moving as if he was beginning to wake.

Breaking the door down, Webster and Puck stop short, shocked by the maelstrom.

Defender hovers in the air. Slowly, Toby rises, becoming part of Defender.

WEBSTER

Shit!

PUCK

Toby!

DEFENDER

I will be avenged!

Screaming wildly, willing the final reserves of his strength, fueled by hate, Hart raises a knife, and struggles to get to Toby.

WEBSTER

Stop or I'll shoot!

Spun by the winds, Hart holds the knife over his head, and aims it at Webster. The wind forces Hart forward, screaming incomprehensibly. Finally, he moves toward Webster and Puck.

WEBSTER (CONT'D)

Stop!!!

DEFENDER

You have been judged.

WEBSTER

Don't do it!

Hart lunges. Webster snap-fires, slamming a volley of shots into Hart's chest.

As soon as Hart hits the ground, the winds instantly stop and Toby falls to the bed as Defender vanishes.

Puck leaps forward, snapping Toby up in her arms, just as TJ enters the room.

TJ

Daddy!

TJ jumps up onto the bed and hugs his father.

TOBY

TJ! Puck!

MRS. FRIEDMAN

Oh, my Lord. Are you okay, Puck?

Mr. and Mrs. Friedman move closer and join the hugging.

PUCK

Yeah. I thought you weren't coming back until next week.

MRS. FRIEDMAN

TJ insisted that we come home early. He said his daddy was coming home tonight.

Webster walks up, shocked by what he has seen and heard. He covers Hart's body with a towel. He then turns to Toby.

WEBSTER

You have been avenged.

EXT. BEAUTIFUL MEADOW - DAY

Under a lace canopy, helicopters flying overhead. Cameras flashing all over as Papparazzi jockey for position to get the best photographs.

The PRIEST closes the book.

PRIEST

You may place the ring on each other's fingers.

TJ steps forward with a pillow on which the wedding rings sit. Rapidly, nervously, Puck and Toby exchange rings.

PUCK

With this ring, I thee wed.

TOBY

With this ring I thee wed.

PRIEST

With the power invested in me, I now
pronounce you husband and wife. You
may kiss your bride.

Slowly, smiling, Puck and Toby kiss.

Instantly, a riotous cheer goes up from the multitudinous
crowd.

Webster and Victor, standing off to the side, applaud.

Puck smiles back at Webster.

Toby picks TJ up, and the trio walk back down the aisle.

In the gathering, dressed in pure white, topped with a white
fedora, is Defender. He smiles sardonically and vanishes.

FADE OUT.