

them a night-light to calm their fears. “The closet door leered open,” King writes, and Margaret traps her daughter inside to face the monster on her own.

After this point, the two drafts significantly diverge in their portrayals of Carrie’s relatability and the development of her mental powers. In the earlier one, King zeroes in on how her cognitive changes are turning her body into an alien being. Carrie has been allowed to stay home for the week, but her mother is making her go back to school the next day. Carrie is practicing her newly discovered telekinetic abilities in her bedroom. She lifts a hairbrush with her mind and puts it down: “Carrie’s face was red, her eyes slitted with strain. A clockspring of veins, blue and translucent, pulsed beneath the skin of each temple. These veins had not been prominent a week before.” She tries picking up her bed, and is able to lift it a bit before it comes crashing back to the floor. Her head hurts, “as it always did after these exercise sessions. She didn’t mind the ache. It was like the ache of a very weak, atrophied muscle coming alive and awake, growing strong.”

Carrie’s emotional world is fairly limited here. She’s entirely focused on building her power and feels no ambivalence about what’s happening to her body and mind. But why would she? In this early draft, she’s becoming a monster:

Her fingers traced the shape of her skull. It was changing:
there could no longer be any doubt about it. The hard shell
of her forehead was softening at the temples, softening and
beginning to bulge

(am I growing horns shall I be the devil momma)

outward. There was no mirror, so she could not see the way her eyes had begun to glow softly, eerily, in the dark. But she knew; she could see the soft reflection on the skin of her hands when she held them up to her face.

(soon mamma i'll be free)

This horn-sprouting, eye-glowing teenager seems to relish in the horrifying changes her body and mind are undergoing, and she thinks only of the freedom they will give her. She's nothing like the sad, angry, relatable Carrie that I, along with generations of readers, have come to know and connect with.

Nine pages after she starts to feel her temples making way for horns, Carrie's transformation takes a dramatic leap forward in this draft. She's been practicing her power for a few weeks and can now lift her bureau and bed with ease. While the speed with which her abilities have developed is described as "almost terrifying," Carrie doesn't actually arrive at a feeling of fear. Instead, she explores her rapidly changing body:

She got up and went to the small mirror inside the closet door. She bent close to it and held her hair up and away from her temples with one hand.

The knobs (which she thought of as horns) were much bigger, but her hair still covered them completely. They were quite soft, almost gelid, to the touch. She let her hand slide further back, seining through her soft hair like a comb. Her palm traced the changes in her skull. It seemed to be elongating, as if a large and burrowing inward force was driving upward toward the back of her skull. The only part of the skull-case that still felt hard and bony was her forehead. Above the hairline, the hardness began to taper away

to that strange yieldingness, as if her head had been filled with some fantastic conducting fluid and then surrounded by an incredibly tough membrane.

The narrative continues here with a memory Carrie has from two weeks earlier of experimenting with tapping on her skull. She had felt nothing, but had seen “a brief and lurid flash of light in front of the eyes.” But when she had tried rap-ping on the knobs, the effect had been much more dramatic:

The results had frightened her enough to keep her from doing it again. The flash of light had been frightening in its brilliance, shot with sinuous colors—and when it had cleared away, her bed had been completely overturned and all of the pictures had fallen from the wall.

Carrie’s experiments with touching her horn-buds—and the out-of-control, frightening brilliance that makes her fear “doing it again”—evoke pubescent experiments with masturbation and the shame that (for someone of Carrie’s religious upbringing) they can bring. Such feelings might make Carrie relatable if it weren’t for the devilish horns she’s sprouting, and her complete lack of fear about it now. When her mother calls up to her to tell her that supper’s ready, she replies (and thinks):

“Thank you
(i am not afraid)
Momma.”

When King reworks these scenes in his next draft, he takes out all of the visibly monstrous transformations that Carrie's changing brain is forcing her body to undergo, and he keeps her squarely in the realm of the human. He replaces her emerging clock-spring of veins and horn-buds with changes to her heart rate, blood pressure, and body temperature that, although scientifically anomalous, are still possible: "Her body was burning energy that seemed to be going nowhere. An electroencephalogram would have shown alpha waves that were no longer waves at all, but great, jagged spikes."

He no longer portrays Carrie as someone who relishes the feeling of her atrophied muscles growing stronger, and who gleefully imagines hurting her enemies. He takes out the part about her not minding the headache that comes with her mental exercises, and leaves us instead with a girl who, while feeling giddy as she explores her new mental powers, also feels her heart "pound in a fierce, scary way."

Carrie's embodied response to the thoughts, feelings, and powers that are circulating through her mind is an important signal that she hasn't lost touch with her humanity. Her pounding heart registers her fear. In this way, she resembles Macbeth at the start of Shakespeare's play. Remember how his heart knocks at his ribs and his hair stands on end when he thinks about killing King Duncan? He's scared of what his "horrible imaginings" are doing to his body—and *that's a good thing*, because it keeps him from proceeding (if only temporarily) with his monstrous plan. Like Macbeth, Carrie's mind and body work together here to recognize the difference between good and evil.

In his new draft of the next bedroom scene that takes place two weeks later, King continues to place positive value on