

## Harbinger

The scene is the hallway of a suburban high school, crowded with mostly upper-middle class students. Among them, maneuvering through the chaos toward his next class, we see Peter Stanchek, an intense, bright-looking young man. He looks a little less well-off than the rest, but not outstandingly so. At a glance, he seems pretty average.

In the hall just outside the classroom Pete's headed for, a big jock-type guy called Nuke and two cronies are baiting a guy named Chuck, who is the pocket-full-of-pens type often found running the projector at assemblies. A few other students have stopped nearby to watch the fun. Pete stops too, but is not amused. He tries to intervene diplomatically, but Nuke shoves him away and tells him to mind his own business. As Pete wrestles with what to do next, Nuke pulls out a page from the classified ad section of last night's paper. He reads aloud to Chuck an ad that starts, "Are you DIFFERENT? Do strange things seem to happen around you? Do you feel abnormal...?" The idea that Chuck is the very freak for whom this ad was intended is a source of great mirth to Nuke and company. Pete, however, seems *very interested*.

The bell rings. Nuke shoves the ad into Chuck's already overstuffed shirt pocket and, laughing, enters the classroom. Everyone follows. On the way in, Chuck disgustedly, defiantly slam-dunks the crumpled up classified ad page into the wastebasket by the teacher's desk. He misses, of course, and has to scramble around on the floor to pick it up so he can slam it again.

Class goes fairly normally. Suddenly, through, Pete starts to get one of his strange *feelings*. He's been getting them more and more lately. He feels dizzy, light-headed. We pull in closer and closer until we are "inside" Pete, seeing through his eyes. A noise starts to rise. We begin to realize that it is many voices speaking at once—but they are speaking confused fragments, gibberish. The din rises till it drowns out everything else. We can see, still through Pete's eyes, the teacher talking to "us", but her words can't quite be heard. Pete shouts back that he can't hear her because of all the noise. If only everyone would be quiet, he could hear. In the middle of this speech we cut outside Pete to a P.O.V. that shows the entire classroom. Everyone is dead silent, except Pete, who is shouting. In mid-shout he snaps out of whatever it was and realizes that there is no noise except quiet giggling. Everyone assumes that he was clowning, or on drugs maybe.

Later still, outside the cafeteria, where students hang around, waiting for the first period after lunch to begin, Pete finds a quiet corner, makes sure no one is looking, and starts to uncrumple the ad page. He quickly re-stashes it as several other students, friends of his, spot him and stroll toward him.

Idle conversation centering on girls ensues, and even though Pete is preoccupied, it is a subject no seventeen year old male can ever really put out of his mind. Suddenly,

the class cock-tease sashays into view, as if on cue. She stops to chat with a friend, very obviously aware of the attention she is getting from Pete and company, and loving it. Pete's friends whisper typical crude things to each other about her. Once again we move inside Pete, seeing through his eyes as he, like the others, stares at the girl. This time there is no noise. He can still hear—but he sees strange patterns of... light, or energy flowing around her. Suddenly the girl's dress flies up. Pulled by some force, it peels off over her head. We cut to outside Pete again, to see his friends staring at this spectacle in wide-eyed disbelief, and he himself in horror. The girl screams, which brings other students running. As throngs arrive, Pete slips away, shame, guilt and fear etched on his face. As he leaves, the dress flutters to the ground.

Later, Pete walks home. He passes the nice homes near the school, eventually comes to a railroad crossing, and begins walking along the tracks. He comes to a huge *slag dump*—a literal mountain of the wastes from making steel, which look like volcanic rock and ash. Pete walks a short way up the mountain and sits on a huge lump of “red dog” slag. There, in this bizarre, hellish landscape, he finally pulls out the classified ad and finishes reading it. It is an offer from “The Harbinger Foundation,” to help “outstanding” people. It gives an address and urges outstanding people to write. Pete rips a page out of his notebook and writes.

Soon, Pete starts for home. Home is a small, old, pre-fab house in a development of pre-fabs built after World War II. It is the other side of the tracks, literally, in this otherwise upper-middle-class borough. Pete's house is run-down, sparsely and cheaply furnished, with throw rugs over bare linoleum floors. Not a pretty place. There are Pentecostal religious items in every room. Pete enters to find his father drunk and asleep on the couch, his usual situation when he isn't at work. His mother is in the bedroom, praying. There are bills spread out all over the bed in front of her. Pete enters the room where his mother kneels and takes an envelope from a box on her dresser. Standing at the dresser he addresses the envelope, puts his letter to the Harbinger Foundation inside, and puts a stamp from on the dresser on it. As he puts the letter in his pocket, Mom finishes praying and gets up. It is clear here, that her praying is so routine that Pete hardly notices anymore. This time she has been praying about the bills. They're desperate for money. Speaking of which, Pete is late for work.

While Pete wolfs down a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, his dinner, Dad wakes up and begins the latest in, obviously, a long series of screaming arguments with Mom about money. Pete leaves while they're still at it.

Later, Pete is strapping on his apron at the Baskin-Robbins store where he works. The manager is lecturing him about being late. One more time, he says, and that's it. He gives Pete his paycheck, and leaves for the night.

Later, business is slow, and Pete is alone in the store. He feels lousy. He should read his American History assignment while he's got the chance, but he just doesn't feel like it.

Mr. Gilbert enters. He is the Pastor of the church Pete's mother attends. He is not a holy roller or Bible thumper, a fact that leaves Pete's mother rather dissatisfied with him. He's a regular guy. He lives what others yammer about.

Mr. Gilbert and Pete chat as Mr. Gilbert eats a sundae (of course). They don't discuss any of Pete's problems, but something about Mr. Gilbert's manner is helpful and reassuring. He's the kind of guy who can talk about how the local sports teams are doing and walk away leaving you feeling like you're okay, you're going to be just fine, and people care about you.

Eventually, it's time to close. Pete locks up and Mr. Gilbert drives him home. On the way they stop so Pete can drop his letter in a mailbox.

As they arrive, Pete's father is leaving for work. He's on the graveyard shift at the mill. He's obviously not quite sober. Pete lets slip a somewhat bitter remark about his father being a no-good drunk. Mr. Gilbert's reply is something nice about Pete's father. He thinks he's a better man than Pete knows.

Next morning, Pete's mother wakes him up. As he's eating cereal, she asks for his paycheck. He gives it over, willingly, and yet he knows it won't do any good. Mom has got to rush it to the bank to cover checks she's been kiting all week. God tells Mom how to spend money, and He tells her to spend it on the damndest things. Though they barely have enough to eat and are deep in debt, she gives money to all sorts of charities, many of questionable legitimacy. God also occasionally tells her to buy all new towels, or a religious knickknack. Pete is still naive enough to think that more money is the answer to the family's financial troubles. Mostly. He is starting to resent his mother a little, though—but he feels guilty about doing so.

Later, in gym class, Nuke is hazing Chuck again. Chuck is humiliated. Pete can't stand it. Once again, though he's tentative about intervening, Pete stands up for Chuck.

Nuke isn't tentative about being a bully, though. At the first sign of resistance from Pete, he quickly changes targets from the easy mark, Chuck, to the much more satisfying target, the low-life Pollack, Pete. An experienced bully, Nuke quickly escalates the confrontation into a see-you-after-school-in-the-parking-lot date.

Pete feels sick. He doesn't need this. He has enough trouble. But he's trapped.

After school, Pete walks quickly through the parking lot hoping that Nuke forgot, or got detention. But, no, Nuke is there, with an entourage.

Nuke strides up to face off. Pete tries to talk his way out of this without losing too much face. He says he doesn't want to fight, he's got to go to work, etc. Nuke isn't buying it. He jumps on Pete and the uneven fight begins, Nuke's entourage cheering for blood. After only a few painful (for Pete) seconds, the fight is interrupted. Nuke's girlfriend, a beautiful head-cheerleader type named Elaine arrives, screaming at Nuke to stop it. She doesn't like this thuggish stuff. Nuke argues that Pete asked for it. Elaine calls Nuke a jerk and storms away. Nuke forgets Pete and runs after her. As Pete is getting up, he sees Nuke grabbing Elaine from behind, trying to stop her. Elaine elbows Nuke sharply in the ribs, breaking away, and leaving him gasping. Pete restrains a chuckle and wastes no time getting out of there.

Soon, Pete has reached the railroad crossing and has started down the tracks. Suddenly, Nuke's sports car roars up, followed by another car. They pull over, and Nuke and five cronies begin pursuing Pete down the tracks on foot. Nuke is shrieking that it's Pete's fault that Elaine is dumping him.

Pete runs as far as the slag dump. Realizing that they'll catch him before he can make it home, he runs into the convoluted foothills of the slag mountain, hoping to lose them.

Unsure of which way Pete went, Nuke and company split up. Three go one way, two go another, and Nuke goes by himself.

Pete evades the two groups, but comes around a massive slag cliff base to find himself face to face with Nuke. He backs off as Nuke stalks towards him. We go inside Pete again and see Nuke and the cliff. Energy patterns flow around them, as before with the class flirt.

Nuke charges toward Pete. Suddenly, the lines of force seem to be tearing at the cliff! And suddenly a huge wall of slag tumbles down on Nuke.

Pete can't believe his eyes. Nuke is buried under tons of rock. Pete panics. He's got to get him out. He'll die. Pete sure doesn't like him much, but he doesn't want to murder him. Pete starts frantically digging by hand. It is useless—but then, the slag boulders begin to rise and roll off seemingly on their own. Pete realizes, really for the first time, that it is *he* who is doing these things—not ghosts, or God, or some genie. Him. And for the first time, he is *making* it happen. Willing it.

It frightens him.

When Nuke is mostly uncovered, Pete hears Nuke's cronies approaching and stops digging.

Pete can see that Nuke is alive, though injured. He splits just before Nuke's thug friends arrive. They assume that Pete waited in ambush on top of the cliff and manually started an avalanche on top of Nuke. They finish digging him out and go for help.

At home Pete finds his mother crying. The Baskin-Robbins store manager just called to tell her Pete's fired for being late again. Without that money, she says, she doesn't know what she'll do.

Pete's father, drunk again, adds to Pete's guilt and pain with a few comments about Pete's mother spoiling him. He's been babied. He's a wimp. It's *her* fault he's irresponsible. Her and her goddamned "God will provide" nonsense—it's no wonder Pete won't work.

Pete goes to his room, depressed and upset. Lying on his bed he agonizes. Cries.

And then he starts to get angry.

He sits up and looks around the room.

In one corner there is an old baseball bat. Pete concentrates and manages to levitate it. It wobbles unsteadily in the air—Pete is new at this, after all—but he controls it. He makes it float toward him. Then, as it hovers in front of him, he makes the field of energy holding it *contract*, crushing the bat into splinters. We get the idea that he's through being pushed around. The scene has a Scarlet O'Hara I'll-never-be-hungry-again feel about it.

The next day, at school, word has gotten around about Pete's altercation with Nuke—and the word is that Pete, in cowardly fashion, pushed some boulders down on top of Nuke from ambush. Nuke's legs and one arm are broken. He'll miss months of school, and of course the whole football season. His absence may cost the school the conference championship. Pete is suddenly the most hated student in school. All day he gets the cold shoulder from everyone. Even his friends avoid him. Pete doesn't care. He's got a chip the size of Gibraltar on his shoulder.

A "committee" of four teammates of Nuke's confront Pete in a lonely stairwell between classes. One takes a swing at Pete—but using his power, Pete makes the punch miss badly. Then he swings, augmenting the force of the blow with his power, sending the jock flying. Another attacker tries to grab Pete, but using what the "committee" can only assume is judo, but what we know is the power, Pete sends him crashing into the others. Pete strides away, on a triumphant high, leaving his attackers wondering how a little guy can be so tough.

After school, Pete runs into Elaine. He thanks her for trying to stop the fight yesterday. She glares at him hatefully, saying she wishes she hadn't. She thinks he's a

cowardly little worm for what he did to Nuke. As she's verbally savaging Pete, we go inside him again, seeing her through his eyes. As in the classroom yesterday, Pete—and we, too—begin to “hear” her thoughts more than her spoken words. Because thoughts by nature are chaotic—a hopeless jumble of verbal fragments, images and Babelchatter, Pete doesn't understand most of what he perceives—but one general drift is clear: She hates Pete beyond description. The injustice of all this makes Pete angry.

Elaine turns and storms off, leaving Pete frustrated and fuming.

Suddenly, Elaine stops in her tracks. She turns slowly to face Pete again, her expression softened. She *apologizes*. She says she was wrong about him, and realizes that it was all Nuke's fault. As she slowly walks away, looking a bit disoriented, Pete realizes that he was *thinking* those very words. Somehow he forced her to think that, too. A disturbingly pleased grin spreads across his face. He calls to Elaine to wait a minute. He catches up to her, asks her to go to a dance next week, and using this new trick he's found, forces her to say yes.

Pete finds that he can “influence” people to do, say, or think pretty much whatever he wants. People tend to assume that the thoughts or impulses he plants in their minds are their own thoughts or impulses, of course. Pete starts to get very good at this.

During the days that follow, Pete surreptitiously uses and abuses his newfound abilities. He cheats in school. He “eavesdrops” on people's minds, and even though he can only get general impressions of what they think, he exploits the information gleaned to his advantage. He forces the Baskin-Robbins manager to rehire him at a much higher rate, and to give him a bonus. He finds other questionable ways of acquiring money. He plans to gather quite a bit and pay off all his family's bills.

During this time, his parents notice that something has changed with Pete. He seems... colder. From what they say to him and each other, we start to realize that they aren't quite the terrible, wretched excuses for human beings they, at first, seemed to be. Despite her naive, childlike, childish religious fixation, Pete's mother is really a good person. She really means well, and honestly thinks she is doing the right thing. Pete's father drinks heavily, but has never missed a day of work. He takes his responsibility to his wife and child very seriously. He isn't the kind of man who can easily show his emotions, but he cares deeply for them. Doing his best to support his family is the only way he can express that. Both parents are fundamentally very strong, very honorable people. They are very worried that Pete is going bad somehow.

Reverend Gilbert is worried about Pete, too, during this time. There's a new... *arrogance* in Pete's manner that scares him.

Also, during this time, we see that someone—a figure who sticks to shadows and corners, staying out of sight—is *watching* Pete. He also asks a lot of questions around

the school, and listens eagerly to tales of “ghosts” ripping of girls’ dresses, and other weird occurrences.

Pete’s family financial situation steadily worsens. The car, an old junker, breaks down, and there no money to fix it. Pete’s father has to take a streetcar and walk several miles to get to work. It seems unavoidable that they will lose the house.

Pete’s mother is crying and praying as he leaves for school, and Pete resolves to give his mother the money he has accumulated so far. He plans to present her with it that evening. Though it’s not enough to sweep away all their debts, it’ll help, and the need is immediate and desperate.

At lunch, Elaine sits with Pete. She’s very affectionate. She notices that he’s preoccupied, and asks why. He explains a little about his family’s money problems, and tells her that he’s accumulated some cash which he plans to give his mother after school. Seeing her crying, though, that morning, he wonders if he should have waited until now. He feels guilty knowing she’ll be crying all day. Elaine comforts him, tells Pete she loves him. That makes Pete feel guilty, too, since she didn’t have a lot of choice in the matter.

After school, Pete hurries home. His mother greets him at the door, but instead of being upset, she is overjoyed. A man came by today, she explains, and said the Pete had been chosen as an “outstanding” youth. Pete is invited to take part in a special research program—and they’ll *pay* him to do so! The man left a check for \$1000, the first month’s payment!

Dumbfounded Pete examines the check. It is from the *Harbinger Foundation*. A letter with the check implies that the Foundation is government-affiliated. That, of course, to blue-collar people connotes *good* things—legitimacy, importance, trustworthiness.

Pete feels sick. The way he’s been exploiting his power, the *last* thing he wants is for anyone to know about it. He tells his mother that they can’t accept this check. That he wrote to these people as a joke. It’s all a misunderstanding.

His mother is appalled. This money is a miracle from God. Pete *can’t* refuse it. Besides, *she* believes her son is truly outstanding (having no idea what Pete or the Foundation *really* mean by that).

Pete *tears the check up* angrily. If it’s money she wants—well, he can handle that. He rushes to his room, retrieves the sixteen hundred dollars he’s saved from its hiding place, and shoves it into his mother’s hands. There, he says.

Mom is stunned. She asks where it came from. In the heat of the moment Pete says sarcastically, “it was a miracle from God.” Mom wants to believe that Pete came by

this money honestly, or even miraculously, but here, at last, is something that strains even her credulity.

Pete's father has been sitting quietly through most of this. He isn't as drunk as usual. He also isn't gullible enough to believe that a seventeen year-old came by sixteen hundred dollars legitimately. He demands a real explanation—angrily, yes, but we can see that real, deep concern for his son underlies his rage.

The confrontation gets ugly. Pete's father raises his hand to hit Pete. Pete, acting almost on instinct, stops him with a mental command. He puts Dad to sleep. Mother doesn't understand what's going on, but is horrified. He puts her out too.

Full of rage and pent up frustration from years of the pressure of his family's ills, Pete pushes into his parents' minds—to *fix* them.

First, he probes into his father's mind. He intends to straighten him out, cure his alcoholism, make him into the father Pete always wanted.

But to his surprise, his father's mind is not the twisted, dark morass he expected.

He sees, in swirling images, that his father is a brave man, a strong man—a war hero in fact. Yes, life has beaten him down, but he is a far better man than Pete would have believed. Stunned, Pete pulls out. He is almost afraid to look into his mother's mind, afraid to find out that it is true that God does talk to her. He cautiously looks into her mind, he sees a simple, beautiful landscape of thoughts. She is a beautiful person, and her thoughts are suffused by a gentle light. God? Pete doesn't know. But suddenly he understands why his father loves her.

Pete withdraws. One overwhelming thing stood out with both parents. They love him very much. He feels very unworthy. In fact, he feels terrible. He feels lower than the lowest—violating his parents' minds! How dare he presume to “fix” them. He could find nothing wrong or dark or evil in them. In *himself* however... he feels like he is the vilest thing on Earth.

Pete leaves. His parents will wake up in a while, unharmed. And probably won't remember much of the argument—nor anything of his intrusion. He will, though.

Much later, Pete turns up at Elaine's home, a posh, rich-people house. Her parents are out for the evening.

Pete and Elaine sit in the basement game room. Pete is miserable, but of course, can't really explain the whole thing to Elaine. He tells her only that he had a blowout with his parents. She tries to comfort him, but he's inconsolable. And he's starting to feel bitter.

Elaine is being puppy-dog affectionate, trying even harder to make him feel better the darker his mood becomes. Her attentions only make Pete more upset. He knows that this is only the by-product of his tampering with her mind, and nothing genuine. His bitterness crescendoes. If he's a monster, then, so be it. He'll *be* a monster. Nothing is too low or selfish for *him*. He starts to undress Elaine, kissing her and fondling her—an expression not of love or even desire, but rather a venting of his frustration with himself. He is wallowing in his “sin”—it is a hideous expression of self contempt. At first, Elaine docilely submits—but as boundaries are passed, her fundamental, deeply imprinted inhibitions surface. She begins to resist. Pete batters down her resistance with a powerful, nasty, commanding thought. Elaine becomes perfectly cooperative. She undresses, inviting Pete—and yet she is wooden and mannequin-like.

Things Pete's mother and father taught him, and even things Mr. Gilbert said come back to Pete. Though right now he doesn't feel like a good person—in fact he feels like a rat, and is wallowing in it—he knows he has a choice. He doesn't have to dig himself in deeper—no matter how irredeemable he feels. He can't go through with this. He pulls away from Elaine—physically and mentally.

Elaine feels as though she's awakening, or emerging from a fog. She is stunned to find herself mostly naked. She has a strange feeling of being *violated*—not physically—but somehow, mentally.

For the first time, one of Pete's victims suspects something. Drowning in guilt, Pete confesses—partially, anyway. Elaine doesn't really understand. She gathers that he hypnotized her, or something like that. She is furious. Suddenly, free of his influence, she hates him beyond words. Pete leaves, feeling deservedly terrible.

Very late that night, Pete turns up at Mr. Gilbert's house. Pete's been walking and agonizing for hours.

Mr. Gilbert lets him in, makes coffee and listens. Pete tells him everything, and even demonstrates. Mr. Gilbert finds it hard to believe, even faced with evidence—but he is eventually convinced. Pete asks what he should do. Mr. Gilbert says he thinks Pete knows what to do already. His parents taught him well and he knows what is right.

Pete calls home from Mr. Gilbert's. He tells his mother where he is, that he's all right, and that Mr. Gilbert is going to let him sleep there. He'll be home in the morning—and then he'll call the Harbinger people and sign up for their program.

The next day Pete reports as instructed to the Harbinger Foundation offices in downtown Pittsburgh. The place is a large plush suite of offices in a modern office tower. There seem to be a number of people working there—secretaries, clerks and scholarly-looking researcher types. Everything seems well-worn, as if this place had been there forever. Some evidence betrays to us, but not to Pete, that the office has just opened. It

has merely been made to appear long-established. Pete is given to believe that there are scores of “outstanding” people who come here to participate in the research.

One of the Harbinger people, we notice, is the person who had been spying on Pete before.

Pete’s sessions—twice weekly—are simple, low-key affairs. He is given standard ESP tests sometimes, but mostly, a researcher just talks with him—often about baseball, or school, or anything but his outstanding talent. He wonders if they are just trying to put him at ease, like Mr. Gilbert does.

One of the things Pete is asked is who else is aware of what he can do. He admits that he told Mr. Gilbert, but he is so ashamed of the whole mess with Elaine, he doesn’t mention her. The researcher tells him he ought not talk to anyone else about his talents. These areas of research are best not publicized. He doesn’t want to see himself on the front page of the *National Enquirer*, does he?

Pete is a little shy about showing the full extent of what he can do—not that he is suspicious of these nice people. On the contrary, in a perfectly understandable human way, he is reluctant to admit just how different he is *because* he likes them and doesn’t want them to be afraid of him. And he still feels very bad about how he’s used his power so far.

At school, Pete has really cleaned up his act. He’s back to acting like a normal kid. No more exploiting his advantage.

After school one day, Pete runs into Elaine. He thanks her for not telling anyone about why they broke up—and just how much of a creep he was to her. She tells him, her voice trembling with rage, that she would have told the whole story if she thought anyone would have believed her. Even she still can’t quite believe that he did something to her mind. She tells him he’s a disgusting sleaze and storms off. Pete is deeply hurt because the truth is he really cares about Elaine. He does nothing though. He knows he’s earned her hatred.

Suddenly, Elaine stops in her tracks. She turns slowly to face Pete again, her expression softened. Haltingly, she apologizes to Pete. He’s stunned. She says she wants to hate him, but she can’t. She cares about him—even without being forced to. She looks suspicious for a moment, then asks if Pete is making her do this. Pete searches his own mind, a little suspicious of himself, wondering if he might be pushing her subconsciously. He isn’t. He sputters out a no. But somehow she knows he’s sincere. If he’s projecting that, he says, he can’t help it. It’s true.

Elaine starts to leave again. Pete asks if he can see her again. She says not yet—but maybe sometime. And so their relationship tentatively begins anew.

Later, a large corporate jet arrives at the Greater Pittsburgh International Airport. A small, thin, serious-looking Japanese man in a business suit emerges. His name is Mr. Kuramoto. With him is his wife Noriko. They are met by several people who escort them to a limo.

Soon, the limo pulls up to the building where the Harbinger Foundation offices are.

Minutes later, Mr. Kuramoto, his wife, and his entourage stride down the HF hall.

Finally Kuramoto, Noriko and the former spy quietly enter a dark room behind a one-way glass. On the other side of the glass, clearly visible are Pete and an interviewer. Pete is showing the interviewer, in some small way, his telekinetic power—say, by floating a book in the air.

Kuramoto looks on with interest. The spy shows him various charts and reports on Pete. Kuramoto is impressed—and perhaps also *worried*. Noriko says she suspects Pete is hiding the full extent of his power. They must determine how strong he is. Kuramoto nods, and they leave.

The next day, Pete is at home, sitting at the kitchen table, about to have dinner with Mom and Dad. As she says grace, Mom thanks God for Pete's outstanding abilities and the generosity of those wonderful Harbinger people. We can see that the Stancheks' lot has improved somewhat just from the relative bounty of this meal.

As they eat, Mom asks Pete just what he *does* at the Harbinger place. She still isn't sure exactly what his outstanding talent is. Pete's been very evasive about it—something the Harbinger researchers have encouraged. He sputters out something about non-verbal I.Q. and some total double-talk about subconscious mental potential. His mother is appropriately mystified, but content with this answer.

Suddenly, Pete's eyes get wide. He looks pained. He leaps up, knocking dishes off the table and knocking his chair over backward. He staggers against the wall. His mother screams as pots and dishes seem to spill over or fall down on their own. Pete's father reacts quickly and grabs Pete just before he stumbles face-first onto the stove where the kettle is boiling and there are hot pots.

Outside, a familiar limo is parked down the block. Inside it, Kuramoto and Noriko sit in the isolated back compartment. Kuramoto is obviously invading Pete's mind with a power not unlike Pete's own. He is sweating. He says he is *trying* to seize control...

Inside, Pete grimaces in pain. We go inside Pete. His vision is distorted, there is a pounding in his head. Crackling flashes of pain hammer through his skull, which cause

the little “spasms” of telekenesis, which make the pots and things fly around. Nonetheless, he gathers himself... and suddenly throws off the attack.

Outside, in the limo, it is Kuramoto’s turn to feel pain as his probing into Pete’s mind is suddenly, powerfully rebuffed. He spasms in agony, then slumps, nearly unconscious. Noriko asks what happened. Kuramoto says that this child is very powerful. He is quite possibly the key to their plans. If he can be controlled. If not, he is a great danger to them. A danger that must be eliminated. Noriko signals the driver to move along.

Inside his house, Pete recovers. His mother wants to take him to the emergency room. He insists he is all right, however. He helps her clean up. His father wonders as they clean up the mess—how did dishes and pots fly all the way across the room?

Later, Elaine picks up Pete in her car. She notices that something’s troubling him. He tells her only that he thinks something is wrong with him. He was eating dinner, and suddenly he felt like someone were driving a railroad spike into his head. He wonders if he has a brain tumor. Elaine says *she* felt something like that when he did “that thing” to her—when he roughly zapped her brain in her gameroom that time. Pete wonders... could somebody *else* have been doing it to *him*? He looks very worried. After they park at a Dairy Queen, Elaine takes him in her arms, comforting him. We can see that they are in love.

That night, Kuramoto relaxes in a bath in his absolutely palatial hotel suite. Noriko is sitting nearby, reading aloud various reports and briefings. A few are matters of business. Kuramoto is obviously an extremely wealthy man. Many of the subjects raised are international political matters, though. Noriko says, for instance, that the Russians are massing troops along the Chinese border. She is afraid they are planning a preemptive strike against the growing Chinese strength in the area. Kuramoto asks her where Gorbechov is. Paris, she says. Kuramoto says he will go there next and “change his mind.” Their plans along these lines sound sensible, altruistic, even *noble*.

Finally Noriko comes to Pete’s file. She thinks they must become personally involved. Kuramoto agrees. It is the only way to harness him. Suddenly, Noriko notices in the file that Pete has confided in a Mr. Gilbert. Kuramoto looks concerned. Noriko adds that Pete is known to often go to Mr. Gilbert for advice and guidance. Kuramoto is clearly upset by this. He tells her to summon the *Eggbreakers*. Noriko says she already has. They arrive tonight.

The next day, at school, Pete is summoned to the office. His parents are there. His mother tells him that Mr. Gilbert has had a terrible car accident. He’s been rushed to the hospital, but... he isn’t expected to live.

Pete demands to go to him. They leave.

Soon at the hospital, Pete is ushered into Mr. Gilbert room. He is in a coma, on the edge of death. Pete asks to be left alone with him, and is.

As Pete cries at Mr. Gilbert's bedside, he suddenly notices Mr. Gilbert's lips move—as if he were trying to talk. Pete can't hear or understand the words. In desperation, he probes into Mr. Gilbert's thoughts, and we with him. What we see and hear is the haunting, jumbled, chaotic maelstrom of a dying mind. Images tumble past and slip away—it is gruesome, horrifying. Pete feels like he is dying with Mr. Gilbert. There is no way to find Mr. Gilbert's words in this confusion—but a few strong images stand out. Pete sees a twisted, shadowy replay of the “accident,” and a glimpse of four strange, powerful figures—Mr. Gilbert's murderers. He sees hints of how, using weird abilities, they caused the “accident.” The images fade to blackness.

Pete is suddenly aware of chaos around him. Elaine is shaking him and shouting at him, asking him what's wrong with him. Pete sees that a team of doctors and nurses are frantically working on Mr. Gilbert, trying to save him. Pete says it's too late. “He's gone. He almost took me with him.” We don't know for sure, but he says that almost wistfully.

Outside, Elaine says it's too bad about the accident. She came as soon as she could. Pete says it was no accident. He was murdered. By whom, Elaine asks. By people like me, Pete replies.

The next day, at the HF in the plush corner office, the researcher and the spy receive orders over the phone from Kuramoto. Kuramoto will be monitoring the session today. If Pete does not respond as desired, at Kuramoto's signal, they are to kill him. The spy unpacks a high power rifle from a briefcase and starts assembling it. He'll be ready.

Later, Pete arrives at HF looking like he's got a lot on his mind. He's still very upset about Mr. Gilbert's death. In the interview room, which we notice is heavily soundproofed by the way, the interviewer begins by telling Pete that the time has come for more advanced training. As he talks, we see a hidden camera observing the scene. In their hotel room, Kuramoto and Noriko watch on a portable TV hookup built into a briefcase. There is a *red button* in evidence.

Back at HF, in the dark room behind the one-way glass, the spy has set up his rifle on a stand aimed at Pete's head. He'll fire through the glass, if a red light signal in the room is activated by Kuramoto's pushing the red button.

The researcher tells Pete that the Harbinger Foundation is more than a research group. They train the best of their outstanding subjects to be a force for good in the world. They'd like Pete to go to Japan and work with their top people to become a partner in their efforts for peace and prosperity.

Pete is awed by this proposition. He is thrilled by the idea of using this power to help people. He's used it so badly so far...

The researcher tells him it means a real commitment. A lifetime commitment. This isn't something he can back out of later.

Pete desperately wants to do it. The thought of leaving his family and Elaine, though, troubles him.

The researcher presses him. He says he thinks Pete knows what is right.

Pete wishes Mr. Gilbert were still alive too advise him. (Note: It will become clear that this is one of the main reasons that Mr. Gilbert was killed; to keep Pete from having anyone else to consult.)

The researcher says that Mr. Gilbert would probably have wanted Pete to use his gifts for the good of the world, wouldn't he?

Pete says yes. Yes, he will do it.

The researcher says Pete will leave immediately. Pete agrees.

In their room, Kuramoto and Noriko smile. The spy relaxes and leans back, no longer poised at his weapon.

First, though, Pete says he has one little question. He wants to know how many other "outstanding" people come here, who they are and what they look like. The interviewer stammers that there are many research subjects. Well, Pete wants to meet them. The researcher says that's not permitted. Pete says he *has* to. He thinks some "outstanding" people murdered Mr. Gilbert. He intends to find them if they are here. The way the researcher is flustered by Pete's questions makes Pete suspicious. He looks into the guy's mind and catches a few glimmers—images of the Eggbreakers—that make him even more suspicious. Suddenly, the researcher's mind is *sealed* to Pete. Something (Kuramoto) is blocking his probing. Puzzled and beginning to get angry, Pete gets up and says that he intends to look around. The researcher tries to stop him, but Pete shoves him away using the power. In the observation room, the red light goes on, but Pete is out the door before the spy can draw a bead.

Pete stalks through the place, blowing open doors using his power, finding no one except secretaries and miscellaneous employees. Reaching into their minds, he finds that none of them know anything about the Harbinger Foundation or research with outstanding people. All of the people here are working for a Japanese investment company. Finally he grills a secretary about what is going *on* here. He learns from her that there are only two people here who do *not* work for the investment company. She's

not sure what they do. They are in fact, the researcher by whom Pete has been interviewed, and the man who once spied on him. (By now it will be clear to the audience, if not entirely clear to Pete, that bona fide “outstanding” people are extremely rare. Once the HF discovers one, they go through very elaborate steps to “process” them, including setting up an ad hoc office for each one.)

Pete crashes into the inner offices. The spy blocks his way to the corner office. He does not have the rifle. Pete hurls him aside and crashes in. The researcher is inside on the phone frantically discussing the situation with Kuramoto. He panics when Pete breaks in. He drops the receiver and moves around the desk, putting it between himself and Pete. Pete grabs the receiver. He demands to know who is there.

A woman’s voice, Noriko’s answers him. She speaks calmly, rationally. She tells Pete that things are not what they seem. She says he should calm down. The work of the Harbinger Foundation is very important. It is good work, for the betterment of the world. He *could* be an important part of their effort—but he must cooperate. If he doesn’t ...well, nothing can be allowed to interfere...

Go to hell, Pete says. He hangs up.

Suddenly, the researcher’s eyes move from Pete to the door.

Pete whirls just in time to see the spy fire a .357 Magnum, pulled from a shoulder holster, at him. Thanks to Pete’s sudden move the bullet just creases his side.

The spy fires again, and again. But this time Pete is ready and using his power is safely deflecting the slugs.

Pete levitates two heavy tables and claps them together on the spy, silencing his gun, and him for quite a while. He mentally rips out wires, cables and even a long stemmed floor lamp and wraps all of the above around the researcher, firmly imprisoning him. Then he races out.

Shortly, Pete breathlessly arrives at home. By now it is late evening.

Pete tells Mom and Dad he is leaving—going away forever, as he packs a few clothes. He can’t tell them why. In fact, the less they know, the better. they are upset, to say the least.

Suddenly, Pete senses something. There is someone... *several* someones outside.

There is a knock at the back door. Pete says ignore it, but Mom goes to answer it anyway. Pete shrieks, “No, don’t,” and then levitates his mother aside as the door explodes inward. The flying debris would have killed her.

A hulking, muscular figure fills the doorway. Pete hurls the refrigerator at it, slamming the figure out onto the lawn.

Pete's parents are amazed and afraid.

A second attacker, a quick-moving, weasely young girl slithers in through an open window. Pete hurls a barrage of stuff at her, but she easily evades it all, and lunges toward him. Finally, in desperation, Pete enters her mind and gives her a jolt of pain. She retreats in agony.

Pete tells his Mom and Dad good-bye. They don't understand what's happening. He won't explain, but he tells them that now that they know about what he can do, they're not safe. They should move away...run...leave no trace. That's what he's going to do, if he makes it.

Pete blows out the living room window and leaps out into the yard—the window-shrapnel covering his escape. He runs down the street, mentally shattering every window of every house. People come pouring out to see what happened.

Unwilling to be seen by so many, the shadowy figures besieging the Stanček household slink away in the dark, to take up the chase of their primary target, Pete. They can always come back for the parents later.

Pete makes his way to the slag dump. He climbs to the highest peak. His grazed side is now really hurting. Nonetheless, here he'll make his stand. In the distance he sees a stretch limo pull on the road that leads to the dump. He sees four figures emerge. Strange, he thought there were five at the house. They approach.

Back at Pete's house, neighbors are gathering around, having figured out that the Stanček's house was the epicenter of the chaos. Pete's Mom, not sure of what she saw, much less what to say, will only tell them that some terrorist-type people were after her son, that he ran away. Where's her husband, someone asks. She doesn't know...

Cut to Dad, carrying his shotgun, headed for the dump. He knows where Pete would run, if chased. He's not sure what's going on, but he knows somebody's after his kid. That's enough.

At the dump, Kuramoto leads three of the four “Eggbreakers” up the slag mountain. Halfway up, with Pete in sight, he motions for the others to stop.

Kuramoto advances another few steps and then mentally communicates with Pete—sort of the way, visually, that Obi-wan Kenobi communicates with Luke Skywalker.

Kuramoto explains to Pete that he is a force for good in the world. He saves lives. He prevents wars. He uses his power subtly to avert crises and help people.

Pete says he didn't help Mr. Gilbert much. And he's trying to kill Pete.

Kuramoto says that secrecy must be absolute. If the world leaders even suspected that people like Kuramoto—and Pete—existed, they would mobilize against them, hunt them down and exterminate them. They are too dangerous to be allowed to live. Pete observes that unless he is *with* Kuramoto, then *he* is too dangerous to live. Kuramoto says precisely. He asks Pete to come with him to Japan to be trained. To learn to help him. He talks about the thousands of starving people he saved in Ethiopia by forcing food to be delivered, about the wars he's prevented, the treaties he's arranged. He sells hard, using powerful mental imagery. He cleverly evokes every tragic memory of Pete's own childhood. It actually sounds convincing, attractive.

Pete wavers...but he remembers his trying to “fix” his parents. He knows that tampering, even for someone's “own good” is bad. Who are we to make decisions for the world, Pete asks.

We are harbingers of a new age, Kuramoto says. Now...I need your help.

Pete says he's got helpers, looking at the three beside Kuramoto.

Kuramoto says these are just “Physicals”...useful, but not like Pete.

Useful for killing Mr. Gilbert, says Pete.

Kuramoto tells Pete there is a Western saying, “If you want to make an omelette...”

Pete tells him to go to hell.

Kuramoto sadly shakes his head. He orders the attack.

The huge strong one, an Australian-looking guy the others call Lump, charges up the slag pile hurling boulders, which Pete deflects back, holding him at bay.

A black girl wearing a wetsuit (for insulation) clammers up the hill also. Her bare hands spark electrically whenever they touch the ground. The others call her Eel. When she gets close to Pete she generates a huge spark—a bolt of lightning, really—from her hand toward Pete. It goes to ground in the slag before it reaches him though, attracted by traces of iron. Pete sends a burst of pain into her mind sending her tumbling back.

An Indian girl the others call Flare blinds Pete with a flashbulb type burst of light. But, Pete can rely on his mental “sight” now. With him we see a landscape of thoughts. He homes in on Flare and blows her off the mountain.

All through this he is in a mental struggle with Kuramoto, dramatized using many sound and visual effects established earlier, e.g. lines of force, thunderous din, etc.

Suddenly, Kuramoto mentally flies Eel *over* Pete. She releases a bolt of lightning *down* at him. Pete blocks part of it with a hastily levitated boulder, but is hit by powerful tendrils of electricity. He falls.

Lump scrambles up and raises a boulder to smash Pete.

Suddenly, a shot rings out. Lump clutches his side, drops the boulder harmlessly, and falls. Pete's Dad stands nearby holding a smoking shotgun.

Pete struggling to his feet, tries to warn his dad to take cover, but too late. Eel swoops in and with her vicious touch electrocutes him. He falls.

Pete is enraged beyond words. He attacks Kuramoto, Flare and Eel with a vengeance. After a brief, furious battle they are virtually defeated.

Then the gravelly voice of the quick, wiry one the others call Weasel tells Pete to stop. She has Elaine in a strangle hold. Apparently, she was sent to kidnap Elaine and bring her here, in case an ace-in-the-hole was needed. Indeed it is.

Pete stops. Kuramoto, Flare and Eel pull themselves together. Kuramoto demands that Pete surrender himself.

Pete knows it will do no good. They'll kill Elaine too, even if he lets them kill him.

As tension builds, he plants a thought in Elaine's mind. She nods. Pete pretends to surrender.

Then at Pete's mental signal, Elaine elbows Weasel in the ribs just as she did Nuke earlier, and, astonishingly, breaks free. Pete, too, pulls away and lashes out at Kuramoto and company.

Eel dives for Elaine. But Elaine grabs the shotgun lying near Pete's father and comes up firing. She blasts Eel twice, point blank, killing her.

Pete drives back Kuramoto, Weasel and Flare. Sensing defeat, Kuramoto levitates them all away including the wounded Lump and the body of Eel. They soar over one of the massive buttes of slag.

Pete bears down...concentrates...and blows up the mountain of slag under them. It is like a volcanic eruption. They are swept up in the monstrous hail of boulders, brought crashing down with it, and buried.

Standing beside the limo, Noriko sees this. She gets in and orders the driver to flee.

Pete and Elaine see to his father. Amazingly, he's still alive!

Attracted by the explosion, police are coming.

Using a trick he just learned from Kuramoto, Pete levitates himself, Elaine, and his father away.

After using the power to “convince” reporters, neighbors and police to leave his family's house, Pete sneaks in, bringing Elaine and Dad with him. Mom is overjoyed to see them alive. A miracle, she calls it. Pete, for once, agrees.

Dad will be all right, though he has burns and bruises.

Pete says he still has to leave. He knows there are still HF people out there. He intends to find them before they find him. He says good-bye.

Elaine says she wants to go with him. Pete realizes that she is safer with him. And that he loves her totally. At this point, they can't help but “feel” their love for each other, even without trying.

Pete also worries about his parents—but they say they aren't going anywhere. First, as long as they don't know where Pete is, they're of no use to the HF. Second, Mom has faith that God will protect them, and Dad is, after all, a tough old bird.

After loving good-byes—it is the first time Dad and Pete have ever hugged—Pete and Elaine leave. They take her car.

Some months later, Pete and Elaine are living in a small, cheap apartment somewhere down south. They are a struggling young couple, poor, both working relatively menial jobs, but wonderfully happy. In the evenings, Pete and Elaine pore over books about ESP, etc., hoping to learn more about his power. Also, using his powers they try to track down leads on the Harbinger Foundation. Pete is now the hunter, instead of the hunted.

In Japan, Noriko is at home, still taking care of business, living well. We see her running the operations her husband used to run, though HF is a closed file.

Temporarily.

As she finishes her work for the day, her thirteen-year old son enters, bringing her tea—by levitation.

She intends to see to it that he grows up just like his father.

FIN