

FEAR

by

SCOTT MATHIAS AND CHRISTOPHER BUNN

EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK

A car chase ensues, and zigzags through the streets. A rig cuts off Genexis' cars. Thomas is free for now.

INT. THOMAS' CAR

Thomas drives like the desperate man he is. He starts to pass out (the fear dosage and the night's exertion are wearing him down). He cuts a corner too fast.

EXT. THOMAS' NEIGHBORHOOD

Thomas' car skids, hitting a light pole. Thomas staggers from the car, his forehead streaming blood.

INT. THOMAS' BUILDING

Thomas staggers through the front door and falls. He lurches back to his feet.

INT. HALLWAY IN FRONT OF THOMAS' APARTMENT

Thomas stumbles up the stairs, dazed and fishing for his keys. Right before he gets to his door, a hand clamps down on his shoulder. Thomas spins, terrified. It's Maude. She's wearing a long, sloppy dressing gown.

MAUDE
(whispering)

Shh. You've got guests waiting in there. Bad ones, Maude thinks. They were being all sneaky like. Course, they don't know 'bout Maude. C'mon.

Wordless, he obeys. They take the stairs down. Blood drips from his forehead onto the railing.

EXT. THOMAS' BUILDING

Griffin and OPERATIVE #1 finish inspecting Thomas' crashed car and then hurry toward the building.

INT. STAIRWAY THOMAS' BUILDING - MEANWHILE

Thomas leans heavily on Maude. They stagger down the steps toward the first floor.

EXT. THOMAS' BUILDING

Griffin and Operative #1 mount the steps.

INT. AT MAUDE'S DOOR - MEANWHILE

Maude fumbles trying to open her door. The RATTLE of the front door being jimmed breaks the silence.

EXT. THOMAS' BUILDING

Griffin finishes jimmying the latch and turns the knob.

INT. FRONT HALLWAY THOMAS' BUILDING - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Maude's door closes as the Genexis men enter. They notice but continue on, intent on their target.

INT. MAUDE'S APARTMENT - MEANWHILE

Maude's apartment is cozy, stuffed with mementoes of times past. Maude sits Thomas down and cleans his wound.

MAUDE

Maude can clean this up, but you're gonna need a doctor.

(beat)

Might as well spill it. Nothing goes on in this place that don't eventually find Maude's ears.

THOMAS

I g-g-gotta r-run! It isn't s-safe here!

He half rises, but Maude shoves him back down easily with one hand. She finishes bandaging his wound.

MAUDE

You're not running anywhere. If your friends show up, Maude'll know what to do.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE THOMAS' APARTMENT

Griffin and Operative #1 have guns poised, ready to break into the apartment. Griffin tenses, brings down his gun and drives his foot into the door. Simultaneously, the door swings inward causing Griffin to almost lose his footing. OPERATIVE #2 is already in the apartment, gun rock steady on Griffin's face.

GRIFFIN
(through gritted teeth)

Damn it! Put your gun down.

Operative #3 lowers his gun. Operative #4 is behind him.

OPERATIVE #3
God, Griffin. We were dispatched in case Banich turned up. No one told us you were joining the party.

GRIFFIN
He hasn't shown?

OPERATIVE #4
Not a chance.

GRIFFIN
Crashed his car out front. I was sure he came in... I know he did.

Op #1 puts his hand on the stair rail in Thomas' blood. Feeling wetness, he looks down. Wordlessly, he raises his bloodstained hand for the others to see. A knowing look dawns on Griffin's face. He motions downstairs.

INT. MAUDE'S APARTMENT - RIGHT THEN

Thomas' head is bandaged. Maude uses a child's cardboard periscope to look through the transom above her door.

THOMAS
What's th-th-that?

MAUDE
99 cents and a coupon from the back of a *Daredevil* comic. How you think Maude keeps an eye on things?

(beat)

They're coming!

INT. HALLWAY

The hallway and stairs are viewed from the POV of the periscope. Hyde' men are headed for Maude's apartment.

INT. MAUDE'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

THOMAS

I could g-go out the window!

MAUDE

Maude would like to see you do that!

Maude looks at the window and eyes the window seat. She hustles over, raises the top and pulls out an armful of junk.

MAUDE

Won't be too comfortable, but hopefully, they won't look here.

Thomas starts to panic.

THOMAS

I can't... I can't br-breathe... N-n-no air!

Maude grabs Thomas and looks him straight in the eye.

MAUDE

(forcefully)

If those men catch you, then you might have to worry about breathing. Get in... It's our only chance!

She stuffs Thomas into the window seat. He barely fits. Maude closes the lid and quickly arranges pillows on top. There is an insistent KNOCK at the door. Maude races over, scooping the first aid supplies into the pockets of her housecoat. A bandage roll falls onto the floor.

MAUDE

Who is it?

GRIFFIN (O.C.)

The police! Open the door!

MAUDE

Maude didn't call any police.

GRIFFIN (O.C.)

Ma'am, there's been a car crash; a dangerous fugitive is loose.

MAUDE

Maude hasn't seen any fugitives.

GRIFFIN (O.C.)

(forcefully, irritation beginning to show)

Ma'am we need to talk with you. Open
the door!

Maude, knowing she can't push this too much further, opens the door slowly. Griffin and his men burst through, nearly knocking her over.

GRIFFIN

(to his men)

Search the place!

The ops spread out.

MAUDE

Who said you could look around? Maude
thought you wanted to chat?!

GRIFFIN

It'll only take a moment, ma'am. For
your own safety.

INT. WINDOW SEAT

Thomas sweats, his mouth moves, shaping formulas. He can see what's happening through the old, warped boards. His body tenses, muscles twitching. Something's happening..

INT. MAUDE'S APARTMENT - CONCURRENTLY

GRIFFIN

We're just doing our jobs. You should
be more cooperative.

MAUDE

This ain't the best neighborhood. Could
be anybody at night.

(beat)

Where's your uniforms? Maude just loves
men in uniform.

GRIFFIN

We're undercover.

MAUDE
(flirting grotesquely)

Ooh, not yet.

Griffin's men come back into the room.

OPERATIVE #1
Nothing.

GRIFFIN
(to Operative #2)

Check the window.

Operative #2 heads to the window. As Maude watches, she notices the stray bandage. She scoots over and stands over it, her dressing gown hiding the evidence.

INT. WINDOW SEAT

Operative #2 approaches. Thomas' panic rises. The op stops in front of the window seat. His booted foot comes down on it with a THUD.

INT. MAUDE'S APARTMENT

Op #2 throws back the curtains. The window looks like it hasn't been opened in years.

OPERATIVE #2
This thing won't even budge.

GRIFFIN
(to his men)

Let's go.

(to Maude)

Thank you for your cooperation.

MAUDE
Sure you don't want to stay longer? You haven't even searched Maude.

Griffin and his men leave. Maude waits before opening the window seat. Thomas pops out, gasping for breath.

THOMAS
I g-gotta g-g-get out-out of h-here.

MAUDE

Where you gonna go?

EXT. IAN'S CHURCH - LATER THAT NIGHT

It's an old gothic church: shabby and comfortable with the weight of years. Stained glass windows gleam. Thomas is a shadow creeping furtively up the steps.

INT. IAN'S CHURCH

Evening mass. Candles flicker. Thomas slips in the door and slides into a back pew. He's grimacing in pain—mental and physical—his body is modifying internally. The stained glass windows tell the story of the Fall (a re-creation of Michelangelo's *Temptation and Fall* from the Sistine Chapel), Redemption and Glory. The sanctuary is a third full. Ian leads a responsive reading.

IAN

They heard the Lord God walking, and
Adam and Eve hid themselves among the
trees of the garden.

CONGREGATION

(in unison)

Where can we go from your Spirit? Or
where can we flee from your presence?

Thomas is motionless—the sound washes over him.

IAN

And the Lord God called to Adam, "Where
are you?"

CONGREGATION

"I heard your voice in the garden, and
I was afraid. I was afraid, and I hid."

IAN

"Who told you that you were naked?"

CONGREGATION

Our shame has been laid bare before the
Lord.

IAN

"Have you eaten from the tree I
commanded you not to eat?"

CONGREGATION

(Men) The woman made me do it.

(Women) No, it was the snake.

IAN

Through one man sin entered the world,
and death through sin, and death spread
to all. As was the man of dust, also
are those made of dust.

CONGREGATION

We are afraid.

IAN

Yet, there is no fear of God before
their eyes.

INT. IAN'S CHURCH

The congregation files out. Ian stands at the back door, shaking hands with parishioners. The last one leaves, and Ian hurries back to the altar to clean up. There's a slight NOISE behind him and he turns. No one there. He extinguishes the candles.

INT. IAN'S CHURCH - MIDNIGHT

Thomas prowls silently like a restless ghost, ending up in the tiny prayer chapel. A font of holy water stands by the altar. He stumbles against a prayer stand. He takes out his matchbook and again wastes several before successfully lighting a prayer candle. Thomas pulls the second news clipping from his pocket and burns it.

Something painful is going on inside Thomas. His body is rebelling. He staggers to the altar and swoons, knocking over the font. As he falls, the holy water pours over him like some sort of strange baptism.

INT. HYDE'S OFFICE, GENEXIS - SAME NIGHT

Hyde is making notes, trying to retain all of Thomas' work that he can remember. Griffin enters.

HYDE

Well?

GRIFFIN

Got away. Don't know how. Must have the
luck of the devil.

Griffin takes a bite from an apple from Hyde's desk.

HYDE

(talking more to himself than Griffin)

Could it be the formula? Dammit! ...if it
even had time to take effect. But, who
knows how long it would take with a
human?

(to Griffin)

We need that journal!

Hyde's phone rings. He answers.

HYDE

Richard here... He got away... And the
journal... We'll get them both... I had to...
They were in my hands! If he hadn't
come back... I'm no schoolboy! You and
the others have seen what I can do!...
Don't remind me of the cause!... We'll be
ready for the summit!

Hyde slams the phone down.

HYDE

(to Griffin)

We'll be ready!

(beat)

Get me Banich!

INT. THOMAS' DREAM

His dream begins as usual except Thomas is no child. The
scientists work, but Thomas' attention is drawn to the
door, tendrils of vegetation snaking from it, as if trying
to escape. Thomas removes his shackles, walks to the door
and opens it. Moss and plants trail along the walls of a
tunnel. As he walks, the vegetation thickens, sunlight
flickering through it. As he wades through the growth, he
can see more of what's ahead: paradise. It is similar to
the mural at Genexis, but different. He breathes deeply and
shudders—the air is so pure.

A MURMUR begins to rise, riding on the wind. It circles him, echoing:

I was afraid... and I hid.

Thomas takes a step through the vegetation, and, as if he has crossed some line of demarcation, a tendril of flame writhes through the air until it whips through him. He SCREAMS. Mingled with his scream, a commanding voice:

It is forbidden!

INT. CHURCH CHAPEL - DAY

Thomas is on his knees SCREAMING. Ian busts through a chapel door. He is in old clothes now, sleeves rolled up and grease on his hands.

IAN

Who's... From O'Malley's... Thomas... Thomas Banich! Are you okay?!

Thomas stops screaming and looks wild-eyed at Ian.

IAN

Are you okay?

THOMAS

You, you...

IAN

Ian, Ian Archer. Remember? A mugger, a couple of beers and stimulating conversation?

THOMAS

I crashed my car... I...

He touches his forehead. Ian glances at the bandage. It's encrusted with dried blood.

IAN

Thought I told you to be careful.

(beat)

Won your red badge of courage...

INT. IAN'S GARAGE

The garage is comfortably cluttered: an old car on blocks, tools and parts are strewn about. Ian, a mechanic in his former life, works on many parishioners' vehicles.

Ian rummages through a tool chest next to an old Harley he is repairing. Thomas sits on a stool. A RADIO MURMURS.

IAN

Hope you don't mind. Many a sermon has come together in here.

THOMAS

Some of my best ideas have come outside the lab.

Thomas' mannerisms are confident now, no stuttering. He looks Ian in the eye; there is no timidity. He's changed.

IAN

All the little old ladies can save a buck using me instead of a real mechanic. I guess they figure if I can't fix their cars, at least I can pray for them.

(long beat)

You seem different... How bad was the accident?

THOMAS

Wrapped it around a light pole.

IAN

Let me take a look at your head.

THOMAS

That's okay. I feel pretty good.

Ian walks over. He begins peeling the bandage carefully from Thomas' head. It is crusted with dried blood, but Thomas' forehead is smooth and healthy.

IAN

Blood, but where's the wound?

Thomas gets up and starts becoming more animated.

THOMAS

I never imagined... It really worked! I feel different. Free!

IAN

What worked?

Thomas looks at Ian and hesitates. Then...

THOMAS

I'm a geneticist, right? I've been trying to isolate the DNA code that controls—for lack of a better explanation—emotions, inherent reflexes. Specifically fear. It's taken years, but last night... I eliminated fear. I think.

Stunned, Ian tries to take it in.

IAN

(sarcastic)

Oh, that's all!

THOMAS

Isn't it amazing? Physical DNA contains shadows. At least, it was a theory of mine. Suggestions of rungs that correspond to each helix rung. Passions and emotions—all the intangible details that compose personality. I isolated the shadow rung that controls fear. And now, waking up in that little chapel, I don't feel it anymore. It's not even that I don't feel it, I don't think it's there at all. And let me tell you... I know fear.

(touches his head)

This, this I didn't expect. Must be some kind of strange side effect.

IAN

(still struggling to take it in)

You can't do this! You can't!

THOMAS

But I did.

Thomas looks closer at Ian. He senses agitation, a troubled state—not physically, but in Ian's spirit. Though it's never been manifested to his senses this way, it is something he is familiar with: fear.

[Note: A side effect of Thomas' work is an ability to sense fear and other intense emotions in others. This "sixth sense" acts like Spider-Man's spider sense. Its intensity depends upon the level of emotion, especially fear, in a person.]

THOMAS

Are you afraid?

IAN

I suppose so. Who isn't?

(beat, getting angrier)

Yes, I am afraid! Shouldn't I be?

THOMAS

I can feel it in you.

IAN

What?

THOMAS

Fear. So familiar, yet so strange to sense in someone else.

IAN

You can sense my fear?

THOMAS

I must be like someone who has quit smoking. I can smell the stench again.

IAN

Who are you?