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The Dark Half

By George A. Romero

(whispers) Miss Bird...

...said...

...brightly.

(birds twittering)

(twittering reverberates)

(doctor)

Does that make you feel funny, son?

You don't feel woozy?

Like you might faint?

- No, sir.

- Good.

I know it's writin', Thad.

This all started just about the same time
you started with your stories.

- Sittin' in the dark, squintin' to see.

- (doctor) Hm.

Couldn't that be it, Doctor? Couldn't
all this come from strainin' his eyes?

Possibly. But these sounds,
these bird sounds he's hearing.

Sometimes a smell or a sound can be
a sign of something more than eyestrain.

I don't think we have an emergency,
but we'll have to watch it, Thad.

- Wanna be a writer, do ya?

- Yes, sir.

If he's so determined,
you oughta buy the man a typewriter.

We have our eye on a used one.

Been savin' up for it.

Maybe we ought to go ahead
and buy it, huh, Thad?

Seven-thirty, Thad. You'll miss your bus.

Let's go, hotshot.

Thaddeus.

My Lord. All this in one mornin'?

(whispers) Thaddeus!

Polly! There's something
wrong with Thad Beaumont.

Stay in your seats. Stay in your seats.

Thad? What's wrong, honey?

Three-by-five-centimetre window in
the upper-left anterior portion of the skull.

- (nurse) BP is steady at 120 over 80.

- I'm opening.
- Oh, my.
- (anaesthetist) Slight fluctuation.
Hilary! Remember where you are, please.
(nurse) Respiration normal at 65.
(screams)
- Get someone in here.
- What in the world is it?
It's nothing. Once it was a twin.
- Now it's nothing.
- A twin?
Unborn, but absorbed into the system.
We'll continue with 18 units of valium,
packed cells.
We have an eye...
...part of a nostril...
...two teeth.
Hm. One of the teeth has a small cavity.
A year ago this was probably
submicroscopic in size.
Somehow it... got itself going again.
The damn thing actually started to grow.
- Incredible.
- Don't ask me why.
All I know is that we've located
a very rare sort of... tumour.
Close call, folks,
but I think we got here just in time.
I'm getting
a slight elevation in blood pressure.
What the hell...?
Beautiful in Atlanta, no delays. Dallas,
Fort Worth, experiencing thunderstorms.
Watch out for serious weather in this
area. Could be some tornado activity.
Strong thunderstorms back through
the central Rockies as well.
Honey, can I... Can Mommy have that?
Thank you very much.
William. Don't... don't do that, buddy.
- Oh, I'm sorry.
- A born editor.
- It's not that bad, is it?
- (William gurgles)

Guess it is. Just a sec.

I got something for you.

I act like a pure klutz.

There. Play with these things.

- What do you think, Mommy?

- Sh. Just a minute. I'm on the last page.

- Not much?

- Not much?

- It's wonderful.

- There's not a lot there.

I stay up all night

and produce nine lousy pages.

- Nine perfect pages. It's great.

- But is it a best seller?

Who cares?

It's gonna be a great book, Thad.

You're doing it.

You are actually really doing it.

Oh...

It's not comin' outta me easy.

(Thad) We are human beings. Plural.

Each one of us is two separate beings.

There's the outer being,

the one we show to the world at large.

Inhibited, timid...

- Often a pathological liar.

- (laughter)

And then there's the inner being.

The truthful one.

Passionate, uninhibited, even lustful.

And most of us keep that inner being

hidden away, locked up.

But the fiction writer doesn't have to hide

it, doesn't have to keep it from anything.

He can let it out,

bring it out in the open, let it live.

Hell, he can give it the car keys, let it ride!

Yes!

In fact, he has to do that.

It's essential. The writer has to let

that inner being out of the lockup.

He has to let it have a voice in his work

otherwise the work itself will be inhibited.

Timid. Without passion.

It'll be a pack of lies.
I think we'll cut it short today.
I was up all night working.
- That inner being kept me awake. I...
- (laughter)
Your stories are due on Wednesday.
Don't forget.
Uh, w...
would you autograph your book for me?
Just make it out to Fred. Fred Clawson.
- That's not my book.
- Isn't it?
No. Look here.
Hm?
The picture's a phoney.
The name too. "George Stark. "
Phoney.
I know all about it.
(Clawson)
It's my turn to be storyteller, OK?
There's this writer, see?
Let's call him "Beaumont".
He writes a coupla highbrow books
about yuppies and faggots.
The critics rave but nobody buys,
so he changes his style.
He starts writing
about tits and tough guys.
- He dreams up this badass character.
- Machine.
- Yeah.
- Alexis Machine.
He calls himself George Stark, so his
mother won't find out he writes this shit.
He slaps a phoney picture on the back,
boom! He sells a million copies.
So he writes three more of these things.
Boom, boom, boom. He gets rich.
- Not that rich.
- Rich enough, I think. Rich enough.
So, what's he gonna write next?
A nice big cheque, if he wants me
to keep my mouth shut about this.
And if he doesn't want?

- What if he doesn't care what you do?
- Oh, he wants. He cares.
And if he doesn't,
the people around him do.
They got a major-league scam goin' here.
There's a million Americans out there just
waiting to lay out their 29 and change...
...for George to give 'em another hard-on.
They believe in George Stark. They
believe he's writin' about shit he knows.
They find out they've been lied to, that 29
and change might go back in the pocket.
And I don't think you or the people
around you wanna take that chance.
- How'd you find out?
- This babe who works for your publisher.
I live in New York. She gave me the whole
story. It's like Machine says in your book.
"At nine o'clock, she came.
At ten o'clock, she came across. "
I've written about slime before, Clawson,
but none of it as low to the ground as you.
- Maybe you'll put me in a book someday.
- Oh, I will.
And I'll make you suffer.
Before you die.
Uh, look,
I got a bus to catch back to New York.
You think about it.
- "To Fred"?
- Huh?
Oh, yeah.
Look, you talk to your people, see what
it's worth to keep this outta the papers.
I'll call you in a few days, and
we can negotiate the, uh, payment plan.
Oh, and thanks for the autograph.
(wife) Don't go crazy over this.
We'll figure out a way to handle it.
Oh, it's just such an invasion.
Who needs this shit?
- (metallic thud)
- (babies cry)
Oh...

OK, come on. You're gonna help me.
They're both up.
Who's the best boy? Who's the best boy?
Who's all wet? Whoo-oo.
OK. OK.
There you go.
OK, just a minute, swirly-whirly.
I know how you could blow this guy off,
really knock him for a loop.
- I'd like to knock him for a loop.
- (baby gurgles)
Little stinker.
That dirty little stinker. That little rat.
I oughta go get him.
That's what Alexis Machine would do.
He'd cut off his pecker
and shove it in his little rat mouth...
...so when they found him,
they'd know he was a squealer.
- How can I knock him for a loop?
- Go to the press yourself.
Tell them "I'm George Stark. "
OK, come on.
Eat hearty. If I do this crazy thing
your mother's talkin' about...
...we'll end up livin' on cat food.
I think Thad Beaumont can sell enough
books to keep his family off the streets.
What do you guys think, huh? Is it
time to say "Bye-bye, Uncle George?"
Yeah. Hm.
Well, I guess it's unanimous.
Bye-bye. Bye-bye.
Oh, no.
- Shit!
- That's all right.
- I think I cooked it a little too long.
- No, it'll... it'll be good.
(she laughs)
So that's the story, Rick. It seems like
going public is the right thing to do.
I just need to know you're all right with it.
Stark earns a lot more for you than I do.
Well, hey, if you don't want me to do

this, I'll give it some more thought.
Yeah.
Yeah... No, absolutely.
Oh, yeah, sure we have.
- Miriam? What, is she there?
- (whispers) Are you kidding?
You guys patching things up?
No such thing. We're committed
to making our divorce work.
But she still is my business partner.
She's picking up the extension.
Thad, your new book is gonna
win awards and sell 200,000 hardback.
Who needs George Stark?
We'll help you get rid of him.
I'll put out a press release, you can
do the talk shows. I say hallelujah.
You heard the lady, Thad.
We're with you 100o/, baby.
Bye, Thad. Kiss the babies for me.
- Bye-bye.
- Talk to you soon.
- Shit.
- He shouldn't be writing trash.
We have a lot of clients
who can make us money with trash.
I like trash. I love trash.
I read George Stark cos it's fun.
I read Thad Beaumont
because it's my job.
That's why we now live
across town from each other.
Let's get back to work.
(Rick) So we kill off George Stark.
OK, that's OK. We kill off Stark.
Hey, maybe Beaumont's books
start to sell. Who knows?
Stranger things have happened.
Stranger things have happened.
- You're not sold on this?
- It's the money, Liz.
We're used to a pretty nice life.
Flushing that away just...
Be honest, Thad. You don't wanna give up

George. You've become attached to him.
Yeah, well, I mean, is that so weird? I've
been working with the guy for a long time.
I'm used to him. I like having him around.
Sure. He lets you do what you want, say
anything you want, be anything you want.
He's your drinking buddy.
Liz, I'm not an alcoholic. Hm?
- George Stark is.
- Oh, come on.
You don't realise what you're like
when you write those books, do you?
- It's like watching Jekyll turn into Hyde.
- That's a little extreme.
I'm not out raping barmaids.
Thad Beaumont gave up drinking.
He gave up smoking. George Stark didn't.
And these god-awful moods you get in...
You say these really
mean things sometimes.
Look, I am who I am, Liz.
It's all me. It's all part of me.
Even the ugliness is a part of me.
"Machine turned the razor down
and slashed the strop in two. "
"A long section fell to the floor
like a severed tongue. "
"'Cut him' Jack Rainsley said eagerly.
'Cut him while I stand and watch. "'
"'I wanna see the blood flow. "'
"Halstead squeezed his eyes shut, but the
razor slid effortlessly through the lid...
...and punctured the eyeball beneath
with a faint popping sound. "
"'I'm back' Machine said.
'I'm back from the dead...
...and you don't seem glad to see me at all,
you ungrateful son of a bitch. "'
Yeah, well. I hope you're not looking for
any social significance, Mr Donaldson...
...because there ain't none to be found.
You're the New Yorker.
I can tell by the hair.
Mike Donaldson, People Magazine.

You're, uh... the photographer?
Yes, sir. Homer Gamache.
I'm gonna do this up brown for you.
And you're Thad Beaumont.
Seen you around town. Whoever'd
have thought you was a celebrity?
- I'm not the celebrity. George Stark is.
- Well, we're here to change that.
Come on, you guys. Let's go.
Thad, will you grab my purse, please?
- Yeah.
- OK. All right.
All right, I got the diaper bag.
- You've got a terrific getaway.
- Thank you.
- (doorbell)
- Oh, excuse me.
We can never get up here. When Thad's
teaching, we have to stay in the city.
Trudy, thanks for coming over.
- Did they take pictures of the little ones?
- No.
Good. Kidnappers around, you know.
They might see a picture,
it might give 'em some ideas.
They're not gonna take
pictures of the kids.
Not while I'm around they won't.
These men make a mess, don't they?
- Well...
- Come on, let's go upstairs.
I'm doin' a series of photographs.
You... you might be interested in this.
Photographs of teddy bears.
Lyin' in coffins!
I wanna make 'em into a book.
The final perfect comment
on the American way of... death.
All this folderol we put ourselves through.
Hate funerals. Hate any kind of folderol.
I'll show it to you when it's done.
Who knows?
Maybe you'd like to... write the text.
Not much of a view.

If I had a window in here I think
I'd just sit and stare at the lake all day.
This is where George Stark
came into being. Right here in this room.

- I noticed the old typewriter.
- Yeah, I've had that since I was a boy.
- I still use it. George doesn't.
- You're kidding.

No. George doesn't hold with typewriters.
George uses one of these.

From day one, he's used these.

You really are serious?

Dead serious. It's the truth.

- Was it hard to get George started?
- No.

One evening I was just sitting here.

I picked up one of these pencils.

Before I knew it, I'd written 16 pages
without a single scratch-out.

It was like George just...

...woke up and started to talk.

You'll, uh... forgive me for noting...

...but these behaviours
could be interpreted...

...as classic symptoms of schizophrenia.

Yes, I'll forgive you for noting that.

I don't think George would, though.

I don't think George would like any of this,
Mr Donaldson.

This isn't George's idea of a fun morning.

In fact, I think it's safe to say that George
would want your balls for breakfast.

- Thaddeus. Elizabeth.

- Hi, Digger.

I hope you don't mind crazy Homer.

- He wants to set up a fake tombstone.

- A fake tombstone?

"You don't want to go
walkin' on the dead" I says.

"Make sure you use an empty plot
where nobody's buried. "

Then I remembered

"Thad Beaumont owns one"...

...that your daddy bought for you over here

near where your ma and pa is buried.
So I said "Why don't you use that?"
So, I hope you don't mind.
This is where Homer is settin' up.
GEORGE STARK 1985-1991
GEEN AARDIGE vEN
This was my idea. I was takin' pictures
of teddy bears when I thought of it.
Ain't it a hoot? I told you
I was gonna do this up brown for ya.
Must be strange for you, Thad.
Kinda like standing over your own grave.
You know, I just... I really think
that this is, you know, a little much.
- Yeah.
- Aw, it's good fun, is all.
- New York's gonna love it. Wait and see.
- The American way of death.
That's it! A little folderol
for old George there.
- Come on in now. We're losin' the light.
- Why not just take a couple of Thad?
All right. OK.
Come in near the stone.
I'll just be a minute now.
Damned if it don't look real.
- What are these?
- (Homer) That's it. That's it.
Now, how about you two, uh...
- (Homer) What? Oh. All right, all right.
- Oh, much better.
- How about you two shakin' hands?
- Shaking hands now?
Yeah, shakin' hands over top of the stone.
Come on! It's all in fun.
That's it. Now, smile.
Act like you're enjoyin'
the hell out of this.
- (Thad) Oh, we are.
- For all the world to see.
- (Liz) Are you sorry you did it?
- (Thad) I'm only sorry about two things.
One, we look like a pair of idiots.
What's number two?

(sighs) I just know we can't
hide from publicity any more.
We've had it pretty easy
in that department.
You'll be flavour of the month, they
forget you, then you win the Pulitzer.
- What else? Come on.
- Nothin'.
Honestly?
Honestly.
You gotta be kiddin', pal.
At one in the damn a. m.?
Hey, that looks like...
What the hell...?
The American way of death, Homer.
Without any folderol!
Digger, calm down. I'll get somebody
over right away. Right away.
(clears throat) Digger Holt.
- Seein' ghosts again?
- Yep.
- Hm.
- Where's Norris?
Out on a call.
You want me to track him down?
- (phone rings)
- No. I'll go myself.
- I'll be over at Homeland.
- All right.
I'll be here. Castle Rock Police.
H... here we are, Sheriff.
Don't it look like what I said?
Don't it look like somebody
dug his way out of there?
Like somebody was buried alive
and dug his way out?
Someone dug a hole in your graveyard.
That's all it is, nothin' more.
But somebody was in there, Sheriff.
Look here.
He set his hands in the dirt here
to boost hisself out.
So whoever dug the hole
got down in it to do the diggin'.

You got yourself a clear case
of vandalism. That's the way I see it.
This is where they set up
for that picture in the magazine.
- Yeah. Picture of the Beaumonts. I saw it.
- Well, this here's the Beaumont plot.
And this hole is a-sittin' right smack
where they set up that fake tombstone.
It's just a hole in the ground.
Forget it, Digger.
Fill the damn thing in and forget it.
- Pangborn here.
- Yeah, Sheriff, it's Marty.
Me and Norris just found old Homer
Gamache, deader than a squashed coon.
(siren)
- Jesus!
- Guy across the street saw Homer...
...stop last night to pick up
a hitchhiker about, uh, lam.
White male.
We figure he popped him for his truck.
We got a description out on it.
He took his leg. He took his damn leg.
No, he didn't take it. It's over there.
That's what he beat him with.
Beat him with his own wooden leg.
He was just an old man,
you son of a bitch.
Why didn't you just clip him one,
take his truck and leave him be?
Why this? I hope I get
a chance to ask you.
I want everybody in the world lookin'
for that truck. I wanna get this fucker.
Ask Mama if she believes this.
He drove it like this? All the way
from Maine, he drove it like this?
Ask Mama if she believes this.
- So, how was it? How was New York?
- Noisy.
God, I'm so sick of the same old
questions, over and over again.
"Tell us about the pencils. "

"Why'd you give him a prison record?"

"Why do you suppose

Machine is so popular?"

- Thanks a lot, Donna.

- You're welcome. They were great.

Listen, I know they're a handful.

Say hi to your mom for me.

- Are you Elizabeth Beaumont?

- Yes.

- Alan?

- Is your husband home, Mrs Beaumont?

Well, yes, he is.

Alan, is there some kind of problem?

It's all right. I know these folks.

We have to talk to Thad, Liz.

Well, sure. Come on in. I'll call him.

Alan. What are you doin' in Ludlow?

Are you Thaddeus Beaumont?

Yeah.

What's goin' on, Alan?

We're here to question you

in connection with a capital crime.

- You have the right to remain silent...

- Jesus, what is this?

You have to right to legal counsel.

If you cannot afford legal counsel...

...such will be provided for you.

I don't know why you're 160 miles
out of your territory...

...lookin' at me like I was birdshit
on a new car, but I'll tell you this:

I won't answer any questions

until you tell me what's goin' on.

It's about Homer Gamache.

Uh...

- Oh, the photographer. What about him?

- He's been murdered.

- Jesus. By who?

- Evidence says you did it.

- This is a... Alan! This is a joke.

- Can you account for your whereabouts...

...during the time period from 11 pm

last Friday until 1am Saturday morning?

Yes. I was in New York.

I just got back today a little while ago.
- (Alan) How long were you there?
- I left Friday, four o'clock out of Bangor.
Anyone meet you there?
Did you do anything that night?
No. I... Let's see. I called my agent, Rick
Cowley, to let him know I was comin' in.
You called him, but you didn't see him.
- You think I'm lying to ya?
- There is that possibility...
...and I've got to consider it.
From what I know about you, you're not
the kind of person to do a thing like this.
None of that counts
when it comes to doin' my job.
Look, call TWA,
or the hotel, Sherry Netherland.
They must have a record
of when I checked in.
(Liz) We haven't been
up to Castle Rock for weeks.
Why are you so determined
to lay this off on Thad?
Because he thinks I did it. He thinks I did...
(twittering)
(Liz) Thad? Are you OK?
Honey, are you all right?
- (twittering subsides)
- Hm?
Are you OK?
Yeah. Yeah, I'm all right.
If this turns out to be a mistake...
...I will personally find the man who
screwed up this ID and pull his skin off.
What ID? What's this evidence you have?
I mean, why? Why me?
First off, there's the connection
between you and Homer.
- (Thad) The pictures.
- One was taken in Homeland Cemetery.
- Yeah. So?
- Someone went there Friday night...
...and dug a hole in your family plot.
A hole big enough to bury a man.

Homer was murdered
less than a mile away.
Look, Thad, this can't be.
Somebody is doing this to...
It's that creep. It's Clawson.
- Who?
- There's this guy, Fred Clawson.
Lives in New York. I don't know where. He
found out I wrote the George Stark books.
He was threatening to blackmail me.
That's why I went public.
We'll ask NYPD to check him out.
What else you got, Alan?
I don't believe you'd track me all the way
here just because of a hole in the ground.
The killer took Homer's pickup truck.
A Connecticut trooper found it in
a used-car lot just north of the state line.
They found fingerprints in the truck,
some of 'em stamped in Homer's blood.
They fed 'em into a graphics computer
and your service record came back.
Your prints match up.
Exactly.
(Elvis Presley)
I wonder if... you're lonesome tonight.
You know, someone said that the world's
a stage, and each of us must play a part.
Fate had me playing in love,
with you as my sweetheart.
Act One was when we met.
I loved you at first glance.
You read your lines so tenderly.
(eerie laughter)
Then came Act Two.
Using the change, you acted strange...
...and why, I'll never know.
(young Thad) Miss Bird said... brightly...
(Stark)
Down here, we call that fool's stuffing.
What do you mean, "down here"?
Endsville, Thad. The place
where all rail service terminates.
(toy squeaks)

You always were the clumsy one,
old Hoss.
Then they can bring the curtain down.
(Stark) I'm not done with you,
cock-knocker.
Remember that.
You don't wanna fuck with me.
Cos when you fuck with me...
...you're fuckin' with the best.
Clawson. There's police here to see you.
Clawson? You owe me two weeks' rent.
If these guys are here to take you away,
I want it now!
Let's check it out.
Jesus! (retches)
(Liz) He's back.
(knocking at door) Thad?
- He's back.
- Who's back?
Alan Pangborn.
I wondered if we could all just
sit down and have a cold one.
No.
Yeah. I'll have one.
I have no business bein' here...
...socialisin' with a man who is now
a suspect in not just one murder...
...but two.
- Two?
- Yeah. Your buddy. Frederick Clawson.
- (Liz) God!
- When?
Night before last.
In New York, while you were still there.
Night, uh... night before last.
Night before last, I was at...
You were at a press reception
till about 11 o'clock.
We think Clawson was killed
around nine or ten...
...but it could have been
as late as midnight.
We got another set of fingerprints
out of Clawson's apartment.

Once again, they match yours exactly.
Christ! What is going on, Thad?
Well, I'm surprised you brought beer,
not handcuffs.
- What's keepin' me outta jail?
- Me, I guess.
New York guys think
you should be brought in.
- Why are you lettin' me off the hook?
- I'm not.
You're still very much on the hook, Thad.
And if you killed these people,
I'm gonna pull you in the boat.
I figure you're not goin' anywhere.
Hard for a man like you to hide.
I'm willin' to let you sleep at home
while I work on this some more.
Meanwhile you build a case
to beat my alibis.
I'm not tryin' to beat your alibis
any more than I'm tryin' to prove 'em.
I was so sure it was Clawson.
Well, suppose he killed himself.
- He could make that look like Thad did it.
- The way he died, that's impossible.
Did anybody else know that
you and Clawson were connected?
Clawson got his information from
someone who works for my publisher.
That's all he told me. I don't have a name.
You mentioned the way he was killed.
Yeah. It looked like a, uh,
classic gangland hit.
- Shot?
- No, no. You don't shoot a blabbermouth.
You make him bleed. Make him suffer.
Clawson's tongue was cut out.
He was castrated
and his penis stuffed into his mouth.
That's exactly what I said
I wanted to do to him. I was joking.
I said if I was Alexis Machine,
that's exactly what I would do.
That's a character in one of his books.

Alexis Machine.

It was a joke.

Come on, Alan. Would I admit
that to you if I killed the guy?

There was somethin'

written on the wall at Clawson's.

Written in the victim's blood.

"The sparrows are flying again. "

Does that mean anything to either of you?

- No.

- Thad?

No.

You're sure?

Doesn't mean a th... thing.

(Liz) You're keepin' secrets, Thad.

That's no good. It never was.

Some psychotic out there

has killed two people that we know...

...and has somehow

made it look like you did it.

This guy's obviously out to get you.

I mean, have you considered

that you might be in danger?

That all of us might be next

on this guy's hit list?

Now, come on, Thad. This is not

a good time to be holdin' things back.

No, it's not a good time.

The sparrows are flying again.

It means something to you. What is it?

Oh, Thad. What is goin' on?

There's more.

I wrote those words

and I don't remember doing it.

I was in some kind of... trance.

The tumour I had when I was a boy.

I told you about the headaches it caused.

- Did I ever tell you about the sounds?

- Sounds? No.

People with brain tumours sometimes

have symptoms, sensory precursors.

They smell things, hear things, that

aren't actually there. I used to hear birds.

I've started hearing them again.

Thad, you have to go and see the doctor.
Maybe you have another tumour.
That would explain the sounds.
But what about the rest of it?
Liz, I blanked out
for an entire period of time.
I wrote those words,
and I have no recollection of doing it.
I mean,
what if there are other things I've done?
What if there are other things I've done...
that I can't remember?
Thad! I'm delighted to see that
they haven't incarcerated you.
Sounds like the police have been in touch.
They wanted me to confirm that
you were a man of good character.
I lied, and told them that you were.
- Are you in trouble, Thad?
- I'm in somethin'.
Just a mix-up, I think, but it's got me goin'.
Any way I can help?
There's some weird shit goin' on. I could
use some help from an old witch doctor.
- Come, let's talk.
- I can't, Reggie. I'm... scrambled. I...
- Call if you need me.
- I will.
Thanks.
(twittering)
(wings fluttering)
(whispers) Endsville...
...for ever.
Oh! Oh! Oh! No! No!
No! No! No!
Shut up, or I'll have to cut you, sis.
- What do you want?
- What'd I just say?
Now, you're gonna make us
a little telephone call, sissy.
(chuckles) No.
I know what you're thinking.
You're thinking you could brain me with
that thing. Not a very happy thought.

You know what happens to people
who lose their happy thoughts? Hm?

No!

Argh!

They fall out of the sky.

Now...

We're gonna call us Thad Beaumont.

- W... what do I say?

- Oh, you'll think of something.

(Thad) Hi.

We can't come to the phone right now...

...but if you leave your name
and number at the beep...

...we'll get back to you as soon as we can.

Sh.

Tell him who you are
and what's happenin' here.

Do it. Don't make me tell you twice.

Do it, or I'll cut
your fuckin' head off with this thing.

Thad! Thad, there's... there's a...

- Say your name.

... man here, there's a bad man here.

- Say your name.

- Miriam.

Please help me! There's a man here.

Please don't let him cut me any more!

(phone rings)

Pangborns... Sure.

Hey, Dad! Phone!

Turn it down a little, son.

- Yeah.

- It's Thad Beaumont.

- A lady in New York needs help fast.

- Go ahead. Shoot.

Miriam Cowley. My agent's ex-wife.

She called here. I wasn't home.

I got a recording on my machine.

And I heard a man's voice.

She said he was threatening to hurt her,
uh, to cut her.

She begged me

not to let him do that again.

I tried to call her back,

but couldn't get through.

- What's the address?

- 109 West 84th.

I was gonna call the New York police.

No, you did the right thing.

I'll call 'em. I can cut through the shit.

Give me a break here, son.

- Problem?

- Yep.

- Bad?

- Well, we can hope.

This is Alan Pangborn...

(phone rings)

Yeah? Yeah, hello?

Oh, God.

Miriam's dead.

Alan, I think there might be
some other people that are in danger.

Rick Cowley. I'm sure he's gonna go
after Rick. Now, he lives at 129 East 68th.

And, uh, the guy that wrote that article.

He'll probably go after him.

Mike Donaldson.

He lives in New York too,
but I'm not sure where.

What do you know

that you're not tellin' me?

I think I know who's doing these things.

- Give him to me.

- Not over the phone.

- Can you get here tomorrow?

- I need to know tonight.

Can't we do it tomorrow, face to face?

Look, I've been tryin' to cut you
every break I can. Don't stretch my limit.

I can give you a description.

I'm not entirely sure it's right...

...but I think it's close.

He's about my size,

blue eyes, same as mine.

Hair slicked back. About my age.

In better shape, though. Strong, muscular.

He lives in Oxford, Mississippi,

and he's got a little bit of a cracker accent.

He might be driving...
...an old black Toronado. It's got
a lot of blasting power under the hood.
It's got letters on the back.
"High Toned Son Of A Bitch".
You can tell me all this,
but not who the guy is?
Knowing his name tonight
isn't gonna help.
He's probably using
the name of George Stark.
Huh? Oh.
Shit!
Goddamn city.
(footsteps)
Oh, no.
(metallic click)
(whistling)
(baby cries)
Ow!
Argh!
Hello, Mike.
Goodbye, Mike.
Ah, Mikey, Mikey, Mikey.
Somebody help!
- What's going on?
- Murder.
D'you want some?
Whoops! Well, I guess I'd better punt.
(clears throat)
(whistles "Are you Lonesome Tonight?")
- What the hell is that down there?
- I don't know. Got your flashlight?
- Oh, look at this. Jesus fucking Christ.
- You think this is the guy?
- Is this the fuckin' guy...
- How the fuck do I know, huh?
- Christ!
- Oh, this is really some shit, man.
- Hey. Hey!
- Forget about it.
- Who the hell is that?
- I don't know. He's gone.
Oh, look at this shit.

(phone ringing)

- Hello.

- (Stark) Good mornin', Rick.

This is the man who cut
your woman's throat.

What?

- Who are you?

- Ask Thad Beaumont who I am.

He knows all about it. Tell him
I said you were walkin' around dead...

...and tell him I'm not done
makin' fool's stuffing yet.

Wait a minute.

Wait a minute. Who are you?

(Stark hangs up)

Oh, God! God!

Have a good one, man.

Jesus Christ! You asshole!

Fuck you!

(Alan) So tell me, Thad.

Who do you think is doin' this?

- Give me a name.

- I gave you a name.

The name is George Stark.

- I don't think I understand you.

- What my husband is trying to say...

...is that he thinks George Stark
has somehow come to life.

Now, look, Alan, I don't expect you to be
the type of guy to believe this, but, um...

...you're all we've got right now.

Thad has some things he's gonna tell you.

You don't have to believe him,
but you have to trust that he believes.

Because if you don't, this man,
or whatever he is, is gonna go on killing...

...and he's gonna keep on killing till
he gets to me and Thad and the babies.

You don't believe it, do you?

Not a single word of it.

If you'd told me these people
were murdered by a ghost...

...I wouldn't believe ya.

But I can come closer

to believin' a ghost story than this.
You're not just talkin' about a ghost,
you're talkin' about a man who never was.
Maybe you'd like to tell me
where this guy came from.
Did you just give birth to him one night?
Did he pop out of a damn sparrow's egg?
Exactly how did it go?
I don't know when
he became a separate person.
It was when we tried to kill him.
Look, I'm willing to consider
all sorts of crazy possibilities here.
But when you tell me
this guy is George Stark...
He might think he's George Stark,
I'll give you that.
But he's not. He can't be.
He's a crazy man, Thad.
A goddamn homicidal
lunatic crazy man is what he is.
And I'm gonna catch him.
Hold it, Mr Cowley. The guys from
communications are supposed to be here.
- Maybe they're inside.
- One should be right out here.
It's standard procedure. Come on.
- Maybe they never showed up.
- Let's try 'em on the radio.
- Where they comin' from? Downtown?
- I don't know. Call the precinct.
Look, I gotta get some sleep. I'm dead.
- We'll be here.
- Maybe we'll send out for Chinese later.
- My treat.
- Thanks.
Jesus Christ!
I've decided to change agents.
I'm sorry, Rick. It's a cutthroat business.
(Thad) God! Oh, Jesus. Rick...
Rick is gone. I don't believe this.
I can't believe this. I mean, so much
for your fucking police protection!
(Thad) Oh, bullshit! Bullshit!

They didn't! No, they didn't!
I don't care what you think.
You wanna think about something?
Think about what I told you.
Think about George Stark.
Think about that!
What does he want?
He wants the same thing you and I would
want if we were in the same position.
He doesn't wanna be dead any more!
Jesus. Rick... Miriam.
Who's next?
I, uh... I think that's everything,
Mr Beaumont.
We'll call from the outside
to make sure the system's working.
OK, fine. Thank you.
(phone rings)
We don't have to make a test call. Pull
your meter. I'll check it out in the cellar.
Somebody gonna answer it?
Mr Beaumont?
- Something the matter?
- It's him.
It's who?
What do you want, you son of a bitch?
(Stark) Cool down, Thad.
No need to get your panties all in a bunch.
- What do you want?
- To tell you it's over.
I got the last one this noontime. Little girl
who used to work for your publisher.
The cops'll find her. Some of her is
on the floor. The rest is on the table.
Jesus Christ!
I'm gonna head down south
and do me some fishin'.
- This city life's tirin' me out.
- He's lying.
- You lying fuck.
- Why, Thad, that's not very nice.
Did you think I was gonna hurt you? Hell,
no. I was gettin' revenge for you, boy.
You knew all along

I was the one that had to do it.
- You got a chicken liver.
- He's lying. He knows you're listening.
I'm not gonna bother you any more, Thad.
I know you're gonna come after us,
George.
I know you're gonna come after me.
And I think I know what you want.
Well, you just come ahead.
I'll know you're comin'.
- I'll know because I'll hear the birds.
- Birds?
That's right.
I'll hear the birds, and I'll be waitin'.
Waitin' to fuckin' take you apart.
- Dear God!
- You're talkin' crazy, Thad. What birds?
Sparrows. Don't you hear the sparrows?
Well, whatever you're talkin' about
doesn't matter, because... this is over.
(hangs up)
- Clear as a bell.
- Let's check the van.
The call was made from
a payphone in Times Square.
They're checkin' to see if the voice
might have been a tape recording.
What, made by me?
Your calling-card number
was used to pay for the call.
Jesus. After all this, I'm still a suspect.
Look, I know they can't hang
last night's work on you. You were here.
- But they think you have an accomplice.
- That is the craziest thing I ever heard!
I wish I could say the same thing, Thad.
You gave me a description, remember?
The witness at Donaldson's says the killer
matches that description perfectly.
You told me
he was driving a black Toronado.
The place where they found Homer's
pick-up says it was stolen off their lot.
That and the fingerprints. And you named

the victims before they were killed.
I mean, Jesus Christ, man.
What do you expect people to think?
- What do you think, Alan?
- I think some psycho's got it in for you.
Somebody clever enough
to go diggin' around...
...to find out things he could use
to make you look guilty.
It's either that or it's you, Thad.
It could be that somehow
you are behind all this.
Don't think I've written that possibility off.
Well, you'd better write it off.
Stop looking at me
and start lookin' over your shoulder.
It could be real unhealthy
for you if you don't.
- How ya doin', Mr Beaumont?
- Uh, I've been better, Rosalie.
Been better.
(phone rings)
(Rosalie) Hello?
It's for you, Mr Beaumont.
- Hello, George.
- (Stark) Thad. How's it hangin'?
- What do you want?
- You know the answer to that.
You figured it out, and figured right.
It's time to start a new book.
Oh, I don't think so. I'm finished with you.
George Stark is dead.
(chuckles) I'm not dead, Hoss. Not hardly.
I'm just gettin' started. You better do
what I say or I'll be comin' for ya.
You will die like no other man
on earth has ever died before.
Start another book, boy.
Go home and sharpen your pencils.
(hangs up)
- Any calls?
- None that matter.
I'll be over home.
(whistles)

(clears throat)
(rewinds answering machine)
(beep)
(man) Hm. Guess I'll have to
call you back, Sheriff.
(beep)
Oh, God.
Oh, Jesus, Annie. I'm sorry.
- Darlin', I'm sorry. I'm sorry.
- It's OK.
God. I didn't realise
how jumpy I've been gettin'.
This Beaumont business.
What's he like? Beaumont.
How do you know?
How do you ever know?
I'm taking him to work. Maybe you should
send another unit out to watch the house.
Come on.
Come on, get over here. That's good.
Here. (squeezes squeaky toy)
Look, if you can't...
Look, this is your favourite toy.
Would you... would you guys please...
Just please be...
Would you guys please shut up?
I'll be a coupla hours.
- You want some coffee?
- I've got my thermos.
Let me in, George.
Come on, George.
Let me come visit for a while.
Let me see what the hell you're up to.
Come on, George. Let me in.
Oh, God.
They're real.
The sparrows are real.
(eerie twittering)
Why... do you want to write again?
Why do you say that?
Falling apart?
Falling... apart.
How?
How must we fall?

Tell me... why, George.

What?

Agh!

(Stark) Smarts, don't it, Thad?

Hurts like a real son of a bitch.

I sure hope you can take it, Hoss.

Now...

Take it like a man.

Oh, yeah.

Like a man.

Agh.

Agh.

Agh.

- Where are you going?

- Bangor.

- What's in Bangor?

- I don't know. Maybe nothing.

- It's where I had surgery as a boy.

- Here. Take these.

A disguise.

A changed man. Car key.

I hope you'll have the decency to stand good for any repairs if it gets wounded.

- How will you get home?

- A cab, I imagine.

I'll get a receipt and present it to you at the proper moment.

- Thanks, old friend.

- Thank you for bringing adventure.

Just for fun, see if you can find anything in your books about sparrows.

Sparrows?

Sparrows...

There is something about sparrows.

(Thad) A twin?

They never told you?

No. No, they said it was a tumour.

Well... in a way, that's all it was.

Foreign matter that happened to wind up in your head.

I don't see anything, Thad,

but if you're hearing things again...

...we'd better shoot some pictures.

A great many of us start out as twins.

At least one in ten, probably more.
The stronger fetus absorbs the weaker
and comes to birth as a single child.
In your case,
the fetus wasn't completely absorbed...
...and it had to be removed surgically.
Your mom and dad were
pretty rattled by the whole thing.
They insisted that the excised tissue
be treated as human remains...
...and signed over to them.
- They wanted to bury it.
- Bury it.
In Homeland Cemetery, in the family plot.
Don't know.
- They ever tell you about the sparrows?
- The sparrows?
It was the damndest thing.
We'd just finished your surgery...
...when this enormous flock of sparrows,
thousands of them...
...came swarming down onto the hospital.
They never figured out
what the hell it was.
Some kind of migration or something.
Made a hell of a mess. Windows broke.
Three or four people got hurt.
You're... bleeding pretty good there.
Let me put a proper dressing on that.
- What did you say it was? A cut?
- Oh, uh...
No, I, uh... poked myself.
It'll stick in my mind for ever.
You complaining about
those bird sounds, and...
...us getting hit by those sparrows.
It was like we took
the sound out of your head...
...and it... came to life.
Howdy, Doc. Remember me?
(car horn)
Jesus!
You bastard.
Jesus.

(phone ringing)

- Hello?

- You gotta get out of there right now.

- Thad? What are you talk...

- He's here. Stark is here in Bangor.

That's 20 minutes away.

Get the hell out of there now.

- What are you doing in Bangor?

- Liz, please! Just listen to me.

Get out of there, all right?

There's no time. He's killed Doc Pritchard.

- He's gonna come after you and the kids.

- All right. All right, we'll go.

- No, promise me. Promise me.

- I promise you we'll go. We'll go now.

Don't pack anything. Just get the hell out.

Wait. How do I get in touch with you?

Through the school. Just, um...

Uh, Reggie. Don't tell her

where you're going or where you are.

Tell her you're safe. Don't tell anyone

who might tell me where you are.

I can't know. Do you understand me?

- I cannot know where you are.

- All right, we'll go.

I love you, Liz.

I love you. I love you more than anything.

- I love you.

- (Thad hangs up)

OK, listen.

Mommy's gonna take you on a little ride...

Shit.

I got a despatch. Code six.

Uh, there's been, uh...

You better call an ambulance. There's...

- Ambulance?

- Call an ambulance.

For God's sakes, we're in danger here,

Alan. My babies are in danger.

I can't let you just go runnin' off.

Even if I wanted to, I couldn't let you.

- But Stark could be out there.

- There is no George Stark, Elizabeth.

- He doesn't exist.

- Somebody exists. Thad said he saw him.
I don't give a damn what Thad said. Your
husband ought to be in the county jail...
...and I'm startin' to feel like a damn idiot
for not puttin' him there a long time ago.
You're just gonna have to
sit tight and ride this out.
Nothing is going to happen.
You're under police protection.
- Am I under protection, or under arrest?
- You call it what you like.
I'm sorry, Liz.
I've been way too soft on this thing.
I've gotta start goin' by the book.
Now let me talk to the officer there.
He wants to talk to you.
- Yes, sir?
- Just hold the fort there, son.
I'll have two units out to replace you
before nightfall. Keep your eyes open.
If Thad Beaumont shows up, you pull
him in on suspicion... Murder one.
Yes, sir. Got it covered, sir.
I think the absorbed fetus was merely
a vessel, a stolen body, if you like.
It just happened to be there,
wholly by accident, and Stark used it.
He took it for his own.
Stark is a conjuration...
...an entity created by
the force of your will.
We all have something
of the beast inside us.
We can either suppress it or encourage it.
In your case, you encouraged it too much.
In your subconscious,
you wanted it to live.
You wanted it so badly,
it actually came to be.
Your characters have always
been vividly written, Thad.
I wanted him to live.
God forgive me, it's true.
A part of me has always

admired George Stark.
Admired his simple, violent nature.
A man who doesn't stumble over things,
who never looks weak or silly.
A man with a straight,
sharp answer for everything.
Yes. But he's a bastard.
Half of me is a bastard.
My dark half.
George Stark is my dark half.
Yeah, but surely you don't
want him to stay alive.
I mean, you can't still admire him
after all that he's done.
- No.
- If you don't want him, he can't remain.
You're the one with life, real life.
He's trying to take it away from you.
But if you're not willing to give it up...
...what can he do?
Kill you?
That would be suicide, wouldn't it?
Why didn't I see that? He can't hurt me,
so he's going after the people around me.
Exactly.
I found something in Barringer's here.
Something about sparrows.
Whippoorwills, loons and sparrows...
...are psychopomps.
- What?
From the Greek.
It means "those who conduct".
In this case,
those who conduct human souls...
...back and forth between the land
of the living and the land of the dead.
(phone rings)
Hello?
Thad! It's for you.
I'm not gonna write your book, George.
You're dead. And dead you're gonna stay!
(Stark) You're wrong, old Hoss.
You wanna get started.
Start by nightfall or you'll be a sorry

son of a bitch. You won't be the only one.
See if you can figure out where
I'm callin' from, Thad. (toy squeaks)
(hangs up)

No!

- That was quick, Hoss.

- What have you done to them?

Not a thing... yet. Not to your people.

I had to do a few things to that
state trooper watchin' your house.

What's left of him is out
in his bubble-mobile drawin' flies.

- Let me talk to Liz.

- No time. Gotta go, buddy-roo.

Me and the family, we gotta ride. I think
you know where we're all be headin'.

Endsville, Thad.

That place where
all rail service terminates.

Oh. In case you're wonderin',
I cut the tracer on your phone here.

I figure this is private business,
just between you and me.

(hangs up)

The trace...

Jesus, the phone trace. They heard
my call, they wouldn't let her go.
He's got Liz, Reggie. He's got my children.

Be careful. Remember, he knows as
much about you as you know about him.

Don't let him seduce you. Don't...

They've come to take one of us away,
haven't they?

- Which one?

- The loser, of course.

I do hope it's not you, Thaddeus.

I'd hate to think of George Stark
taking over your lecture group.

- (Thad) Why isn't he aware of them?

- I don't know.

- Let's take it as a good sign.

- I thought you knew about this shit.

I don't know about any of it.

Nobody does, except the Almighty, and...

...he seems to be on sabbatical.
In the end, it's what you believe.
I wish I had a talisman to give you,
or a silver bullet...
...or a stake to drive
through the monster's heart.
- But it's not that simple.
- You've given me all I need.
Thanks, Reggie.
Good luck. It'll be interesting to see
who's sitting in your office next week.
- I'll be there.
- Wear a red carnation so I know it's you.
I got a dead officer. I call that trouble.
We're pretty sure that Beaumont did it.
- (Alan) Why's that?
- Well, he's outta here.
He apparently took his family with him,
unless he cut them up.
He killed that doctor in Bangor.
We got a positive ID from the receptionist.
If he's heading to his place up there...
...it would be real nice if you
were there to stop his fucking clock.
You got it. Fine.
Come on.
Oh, shit.
(sirens)
Just keep on goin'.
Keep on goin'.
Me and Thad, we're gonna be doin' some
collaboratin', just like we always done.
When it's over,
if you haven't pissed me off too bad...
...I might just decide to let you go.
But you understand,
it all depends on what kinda mood I'm in.
If I'm in a good mood, a peaceful mood...
...who knows what kinda turn
things might take?
When all this is over I might
settle down up this way...
...and I sure would want you
to think kindly of me.

I like it here. I purely do.
Yeah, I could get real comfortable here.
(chuckles)
Dream on, motherfucker.
This is no dream, Beth.
Thad owes me.
Maybe he knew how to write
before I showed up...
...but I taught him to write
stuff people wanna read.
Ain't no good writin' a thing
if people don't wanna read it.
That's why I says Thad owes me.
So you come after me,
you come after my children.
You're a coward.
You would do better
not to say things like that.
Hell, I didn't want any of this trouble.
Believe it or not,
I prefer to steer south of trouble.
This writin' we gotta do,
I tried to do it by myself.
It was comin' along good, too.
Well, then I developed this, uh...
...physical problem.
I guess you noticed.
Well, don't worry. I'll be better soon.
Thad's gonna make me well.
All's he got to do is write this one last
story and I'll be rockin' and rollin' again.
Now, of course,
he might start feelin' poorly...
...and workin' so... close together and all...
...he might just go and catch
whatever this is that I got.
That'd be a shame. I don't wish
the boy any harm, truly I don't.
I hope it turns out different.
But I got the feelin' that one or the other
of us is gonna have to fold his hand.
And when it comes down to that
it's better him than me.
My God.

- Oh, my God, you really are...
- You're disturbin' my peaceful mood.
You are disturbin'
the peaceful frame of mind I'm in.
You are disturbin'
my peaceful frame of mind.
(Elvis Presley)
I wonder if... you're lonesome tonight.
You know, someone said that the world's
a stage, and each of us must play a part.
- Fate had me playing in love...
- Liz.
Oh, God, Liz. Are you all right?
Huh? Are you OK?
The kids. Where are the kids?
Right here, Hoss.
(switches music off)
Hello, Thad. How are you, old buddy?
- You look a little peaky.
- You don't look so hot yourself.
(Stark chuckles)
Lf... I do what you want me to do...
...you promise not to hurt them.
If I do what you want...
...will you leave them alone?
I will. I promise.
You have my word,
the word of a Southern man...
...which is not given lightly.
- Let me have them.
- You can have one.
Liz, I'm sorry. I'm so sorry for all this.
- I'm gonna go upstairs with him.
- No. Thad, you can't.
We don't have a choice.
He can't hurt me. He won't. But he
can hurt you if you give him a reason.
Don't be thinkin' about breakin' loose,
don't be thinkin' about the telephone...
Guess we're on the same wavelength.
Ain't that right, Thad?
Don't you see what's happening?
Just look at him.
He doesn't want help writing a book.

He wants to take over your life.
Can't you see that?
I know what he wants.
What I don't know and what he doesn't
know is whether this'll really save him.
I don't think it will save him.
I think he's finished.
You know why?
Cos I don't want him around any more.
There's only one way to find out
who's finished and who's not.
Ain't that right, Thad?
Are you ready?
Just waitin' on you.
Yeah...
(fluttering)
(Thad) I'll start with Machine
stealing the police car.
Yes, that's right.
(fluttering)
- Give me a cigarette.
- I thought you quit.
I did.
Except for times like this.
Times when me and you
are workin' together.
(fluttering)
Thad.
Why don't you try, George?
You gotta break in.
I'm scared, Hoss.
Oh, you know the only way to do it...
...is to do it.
(mutters)
(fluttering)
(Stark chuckles)
(frenzied twittering)
(glass shatters)
It's comin', Thad.
It's comin' easy, it's comin' good.
I can do it. I can do it.
You shouldn't fuck with me, Hoss.
Don't you know I can tell
what you're thinkin'?

Stop it, Thad.
Stop it, or I'm gonna have to cut ya.
You're not gonna cut me, George.
You can't do shit to me and you know it.
I can do some shit
to the other folks around here.
Yes, sir,
I can do some real ugly shit to them.
Sit down, Thad.
Make it easy on yourself.
Sit down and... shut your eyes.
See if you can't just...
...drift on off.
You go to hell.
(fluttering)
They've come to take you away, George.
Take you back to the devil.
(child gurgles)
(Liz) Thad?
Thad!
OK. You sit here.
I gotta open the door now.
I didn't want it to be like this, Hoss.
I had a different sort of thing in mind.
Yes, I did.
They've come to write the ending, George.
Is it gonna be your ending... or mine?
(thudding)
Kinda clumsy there, George.
I'm gonna... I'm gonna give you...
one last chance here, Thad.
Stop whatever it is that you're doin' here.
I'm not doin' anything, Hoss.
I'm just waitin' around
to see how things turn out.
Stop it, Thad. Stop it.
I'm sorry, George. I can't.
Neither can you.
The ending, huh?
Well, let's see how you like this ending,
Hoss.
No!
(gun fires)
(creaking)

(screams)

Alan!

Hurry up!

- What the hell's goin' on? What is this?

- They're upstairs.

- Who?

- He took them upstairs.

- Where's Thad?

- He's upstairs. He's with Stark.

- Hold still!

- He's got the kids upstairs.

Liz, no! No!

Wait! Wait here!

(Stark screaming)

Liz.