SCAREFEST PRESENTS:

Sanctus Sécrétus

by T. Joseph Fraser

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T. Joseph Fraser 4509 35th Ave. Cir. E Palmetto, FL 34221 (727) 512-5977 blackwolf102@hotmail.com EXT. HELICOPTER SHOT OF BOSTON'S NORTH SHORE - DAY SUPERIMPOSE : BEVERLY, MASSACHUSETTS 1994 Rustic homes. Boats in Salem Harbor.

> DAVE (V.O.) There is nothing better than spring on the North Shore. Warm days, cool nights. The trees and the flowers are in full bloom after the long winter slumber. However, there are some things are better off left asleep.

EXT. BACKYARD OF 24 BARTLETT ST.- AFTERNOON

Behind an old three story house, MARIA,(20's) and RAQUEL, (30's) sit on lawn chairs watching DAVE (20's).

Dave, blue collar man with a no-nonsense crew cut, stands over a small hole in the ground.

Maria, pretty with a tight ponytail, wears an modest engagement ring. Tears flow down her lovely cheek.

Raquel, her hair long with loose curls, sips a Coke.

Dave brushes his hands off and reaches for an open beer.

MARIA Aren't you going to say a few words? After all, He is entitled to a proper burial...

RAQUEL Come on, Dave...Send him off on a wing and a prayer...

A late model Mercedes convertible pulls into the driveway. CHET BINGHAM (40's), yuppie, kisses THERESA (19), princess.

After a kiss, Theresa bounds out of the car.

Chet smiles as he backs up and drives off.

Raquel screams and runs over to hug Theresa.

RAQUEL Hey, new roomie! Excellent timing! Come and meet your new neighbors!

Raquel smiles as they walk over to Dave and Marie.

RAQUEL

This is Theresa Gaudet...She's taking Sheila's old room.

DAVE

Nice to meet you...I'm Dave, and this my fiancée...

MARIA Maria. Pleased to meet you.

THERESA Fiancée How...quaint.

RAQUEL He's on the second floor.

Theresa notices the hole.

THERESA So...what are you doing? Funeral for a gerbil or something?

DAVE Parakeet.

THERESA Well, don't let me stop you. Nice meeting you guys...I'm sure I'll see you around.

Maria motions towards the small grave. Dave stands, clears his throat and lifts his beer to the heavens.

DAVE To the dearly departed, those who have feathers and those who do not. May God rest'em all. Amen.

MARIA

RAQUEL

Amen.

Lighting cracks. Thunder rolls.

A girl, EMILY (16), with twenties style hair and a white linen dress, appears for a moment in the third story window.

Amen.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

The Mercedes is parked behind a beat-up compact car. Dave opens the car door for Maria. Rain beads on the windshield.

INT. FRONT HALLWAY

Dave knocks on the front door of the girls apartment. Chet answers.

DAVE Oh, Hi. You're blocking me in. Mind moving your car for me?

CHET Yeah, I do mind. You mean to tell me you can't back up that little rice burnin' shitbox out your own fuckin' drive way?

Theresa appears, wearing a towel.

THERESA Don't mind him. He's all bark.

Lighting flashes... The lights flicker on and off.

CHET I'll move the car. But this is the last time, got that, sport?

Dave contains his anger as he walks away.

INT. THERESA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Moving boxes line the wall. A large teddy bear sits on a floral comforter. It's draped over a four poster bed.

Theresa is dressed in sexy black lingerie. She twirls her hair as she lies across the bed.

Chet appears out of the bathroom with a loose robe and silk boxers. Theresa smiles and sighs.

Chet turns out the lights. He turns on Barry White on a CD boombox. It's still decorated with unicorn stickers.

They kiss passionately as they lay together. Rain spatters on the windows. Thunder rumbles.

Chet begins to shiver...and turn pale. CHET Just got a chill...Did you feel that? Theresa smiles. By the window, for a split second of a lightning strike, Emily appears. Chet trembles and then... CHET OWW! What'd you do that for? THERESA What? CHET Christ!...You scratched me... Streaks of red slash at opposite diagonals on Chet's back. THERESA (Singing) Cat scratch fever! CHET Just be more...gentle, alright? They resume their kiss. Lightning. Another slash! CHET Jesus, will you stop it? THERESA Stop what? CHET I'm getting torn to shreds here! Chet turns on the light. A new set of parallel lines has been added horizontally across his back ... THERESA I...didn't do that. CHET Whatever. I'm done right now...Damn it, this hurts! Chet storms into the bathroom and shuts the door.

INT. BATHROOM

The mirror shows Chet the extent of the scratches. They are bright red and ooze drops of blood.

CHET

That is one crazy ass bitch ...

Behind him, the water in the toilet begins to boil.

He wets a face cloth in the sink...It begins to steam. He puts his hands under the water and pulls back in pain.

CHET

Jesus!

His hands are red and burned as steam fills the small room.

He tries to turn off the faucet. He can't. The shower turns on...

Chet tries to open the door. It's locked!

CHET Theresa! Get me out of here, you psychotic bitch! I mean it!

THERESA (O.S.) I can't! The door's locked.

CHET

You better unlock it before I...

Emily's face materializes for a second in the steam as he struggles with the door.

The toilet explodes upward with boiling water.

Chet screams as the water splashes his body.

He falls backwards. His head slams hard against the bowl.

Suddenly...It's all gone. The water on the floor. The boiling toilet. The burns on Chet. All gone.

The scratches and bump on his head remain.

The door opens. Theresa stumbles into the bathroom.

INT. THERESA'S ROOM

Chet doesn't say a word. He grabs his pants off the door knob and storms past Theresa.

She glances back into the bathroom. Emily materializes for a split second and hovers above the floor. Theresa screams.

INT. DAVE'S SECOND FLOOR APARTMENT

Red Sox poster. Patriots flag. Used furniture. Folding chairs. A dusty light fixture hangs from the ceiling.

Dave plays Tomb Raider on a big screen TV. He sits on a ratty old couch. A knock on the door.

He puts down his beer and opens the door.

It's Theresa, in worn out sweatpants. She's been crying.

THERESA Uhm...Hi. Look, I know I just met you and all, but something really weird happened downstairs...Can I hang up here til Raquel gets home?

DAVE

Yeah, sure...Have a seat. Can I get you something? I have some tonic, tomato juice..

Theresa sits down as Dave goes to the refrigerator.

THERESA Can I have a beer?

DAVE Are you twenty one?

THERESA

Almost...

Dave hands her a beer and opens it for her.

DAVE Don't tell Marie, alright? I'll never hear the end of it.

THERESA

Deal.

They toast with beer bottles.

DAVE So what happened? Did you see the ghost or something?

Theresa nods, frowns and shivers.

DAVE Ah, don't worry about him. He's harmless. Lights flickering, doors opening and closing by themselves, footsteps in the hall...

THERESA Does she scratch people?

DAVE Oh, no, nothing like that.

THERESA Maybe she didn't like Chet.

DAVE That's understandable.

Thunder is getting closer. Lightning flashes. A huge thunder strike and the lights go out.

DAVE Here we go again.

Dave rummages for a flashlight under the kitchen sink.

A slight, rhythmic bumping is coming from upstairs.

THERESA Did you hear that?

DAVE Hear what?

THERESA I heard a noise upstairs.

DAVE Yeah. But, there's nobody up there. Not since Millie died, and that was a month after I moved in.

THERESA Did you ever meet her? DAVE Few times. Raquel knew her. Said she was real sweet. Grandmotherly. Cookies, brownies...I don't know if you met Rob the landlord yet. She was his mom...

A loud thump sounds right above them. The light swings.

THERESA Uh...That's not normal, is it?

DAVE No. Come on. Let's check it out.

The lights flicker back on.

INT. HALLWAY ON THE THIRD FLOOR

At the third floor landing, there are two doors. One leads to Millie's apartment. The other to an attic staircase. Both are locked with dead bolts.

Dave and Theresa stand on the outside. Dave tries the door.

Locked. He knocks.

DAVE Hey! Hello? Any one in there?... Figured as much...

Thunder cracks. Windows rattle. The lights go out again.

As they walk down the stairs, the door slowly opens.

THERESA So the adventure continues...

Flashlight in hand, they enter the dark apartment.

INT. MILLIES APARTMENT

The apartment is dusty. Spider webs cover an old television with rabbit ears, along with everything else.

In the corner, a rocking chair moves by itself. Occasionally it hits the wall, causing a bump.

DAVE That explains that...sort of. THERESA (Speaking to the ghost) Hello? Do mind telling me why you messed up my boyfriend?

The door slams behind them.

Lighting flashes. Again, Emily can be seen in by the window for a split second. Theresa sees her and screams.

THERESA Did you see her?

DAVE

Who?

THERESA A girl...over by the window!

Dave shakes his head.

Huge rain drops pelt the windows.

More lightning and thunder as the storm intensifies.

In the bedroom, glass shatters.

Dave and Theresa walk towards the sound. Dave's foot brushes a small object on the floor.

He bends down and picks up a yellowed plastic rattle. He examines it and sets it on an end table.

Cautiously, they enter the master bedroom.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

An old bed draped in spider webs. Dresser is coated with dust. A small hand is imprinted in the dust.

Some pictures in frames lay shattered on the floor. Theresa avoids the glass and picks it up. Dave shines the flashlight.

Theresa looks at a graduation picture. Fashions indicate the 1940's, with Millie, her husband and the graduate, Robert.

She studies the picture and points at the father.

THERESA That man..He looks just like Chet!

Dave looks at the picture and nods.

Maybe they're related...

Theresa brushes past cobwebs in the closet and finds a thick Bible, pushed way back on the topmost shelf.

She takes it down, blows off a large plume of dust and sets it on the dresser.

DAVE You shouldn't touch that.

THERESA

Why?

DAVE 'Cause it's holy. I think you need a blessing first...

Theresa sighs and cracks open the leather cover.

On the front plate, the name Emily Ruth can be made out under black scribbles. The name Robert James is clearly written.

Dave looks at the pictures again. There is no girl anywhere in the framed family photos.

> DAVE Interesting. Wonder what happened to Emily Ruth...

Theresa begins to look sick. She trembles. Her hands shake.

THERESA I need to sit down...I'm not feeling good right now...

HALLUCINATION BEGINS.

THERESA'S POV puts her hand on the bed, then pulls it back. It's on fire. She brushes her body as shes covered with flames.

DAVE What's the matter?

THERESA I- I think I'm burning! Oh, God!

DAVE What? Theresa! Wait! Covered with fire, Theresa screams and runs out of the bedroom into the dark apartment.

THERESA'S POV ENDS.

INT. MILLIES APARTMENT

In flames, She runs towards the front door. Still locked.

She pounds the door frantically with the sides of her fists.

THERESA (Weeping) You let me out this minute! Do you hear me! LET ME OUT!

HALLUCINATION ENDS.

She falls to the floor, her back against the door. Dave hugs Theresa as he tries to comfort her.

THERESA Oh, God, I just want to get out!...Oh, please, God...I wanna go home. I just wanna go home!!!

The lights flicker on...and the door slowly opens.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Dave sits quietly on the front step. The storm rages on. He stands to greet Raquel as she walks towards the house.

DAVE We need to talk.

INT. DAVE'S SECOND FLOOR APARTMENT

Raquel wears a nurses uniform. She looks very concerned.

RAQUEL So where is she now?

DAVE At Maria's house...She said she'll pick up her stuff in the morning... RAQUEL Can't say I blame her. I called Rob's pager, but God only knows where he is right now.

DAVE I think he's in New Orleans.

Raquel shrugs.

RAQUEL Either way, we'll deal with it in the morning... I'm beat.

Raquel yawns and pats Dave on the shoulder as she leaves. Dave walks into the bathroom.

INT. DAVE'S BATHROOM

Dave turns on the hot water until it steams slightly.

He lathers up some soap and washes his face.

Dave glances up into the mirror.

He sees Emily behind him for a split second, however, the pretty girl has been replaced with a shriveled corpse.

DAVE

Holy...!

He turns and she is gone.

INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY

Dave and Raquel stand on the landing.

DAVE I'm telling you, I saw her in the mirror not ten minutes ago! It was a dead girl-very dead, as a matter of fact, right in my bathroom!

RAQUEL I believe you...I just want to see things for myself...

The lights flicker, then go out.

The storm intensifies. Lightning. Thunder. Raquel shivers.

RAQUEL Wow...Just felt a chill...Moved right through me...

Dave tries the door to Millie's apartment. Locked.

The attic door creaks open.

Several bats pour out of the attic.

Raquel shrieks and covers her hair as they flutter down the stairway. She stops dead in her tracks.

RAQUEL

I'm sorry Dave...I can't go up there...It feels so...wrong! You don't have to either...We'll get a hold of Rob and let him deal with this...It's not our problem!

DAVE I feel like it is...Like she needs my help, and it it's up to me to do something about it.

RAQUEL Suit yourself. Let me know how it goes.

Raquel heads back down the stairs.

Hailstones ricochet off the windows.

INT. ATTIC

He begins to climb the stairs. The door slams behind him.

Lighting flashes to reveal MILLIE (80's) standing at the top of the stairs. Then nothing.

HALLUCINATION BEGINS

DAVE

Oh crap.

DAVE'S POV His hands and his clothes begin to smoke.

Dave can't take one more step. He falls to his knees as flames begin to erupt on his skin.

END POV

Still on fire, He struggles to the top, then collapses on the dirty wooden floor.

Dave writhes in pain, engulfed in fire.

DAVE (Screams) I'm trying to help you! Please!

Red pressure marks begin to show on Dave's neck.

DAVE (Coughing) Come on, damn it! Do something!

Dave shuts his eyes tightly and fights to breath.

Pretty Emily appears by the window and raises her hand.

The windows explode inward as the storm pours into the attic with hurricane force.

Dave is slammed against the slanted wall. Roofing nails cut into his skin. However, the wind overcomes the flames.

END HALLUCINATION

Dave staggers to his feet. The windows are broken, but the brutal winds are gone.

Lightning flashes. Emily stands next to a stack of boxes that cover an old steamer trunk.

A dark and defeated voice of an elderly woman screams...

MILLIE

Noooo!

Dave knocks the boxes off the top of the trunk with a strong swipe of his right arm.

Miscellaneous contents scatter across the floor.

The trunk is covered with travel stickers from the 1910's.

Dave tears off the rusted lock, pulling out the screws and the surrounding wood.

Dave opens the lid like it was Pandora's box.

Inside, Dave finds two mummified bodies. A girl, locked in a tight fetal position, holds a skeletal infant tightly against her chest.

Both are in tattered white dresses and are covered with cobwebs, dust and various insects.

Dave is overcome with sorrow. He kneels down to pray.

Light fills the attic as the door opens.

Raquel stands behind Dave. She puts her hand on his shoulder.

RAQUEL I'll call the police.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - MORNING

The rains have stopped. The coroner's van and several police cars are parked in front of the house.

Police move the trunk with solemn respect to the van.

Dave, Raquel and Maria watch the procession.

Dave hoists his coffee to the heavens.

DAVE To the dearly departed, may God bless'em all.

EXT. BEVERLY, MA - DAY

Helicopter shot of the town and harbor.

DAVE (V.O.) We came to find out through DNA testing that Emily was murdered after giving birth to her father's child. I am pleased, however, that we were able to help these tragic souls find dignity in death, despite the sanctity of secrets.

FADE TO BLACK