

KNOWING IS THE BATTLE

by

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EXT. MAX FENIG'S HOUSE - DAY

MARTHA FENIG (57 and Max's mom), JONATHON FENIG (61 and Max's dad) and ARTHUR DALES (30s , well manicured and Max's best friend and neighbor) stand in Max's neat and tidy front yard in a middle class neighborhood, face's filled with worry.

One of the front windows is broken, curtains blowing out, and a kitchen chair lies on the grass.

MARTHA

This is terrifying, Arthur. What is going on?

ARTHUR

I wish I knew, Mrs. Fenig. Max and I were supposed to go to a ball game today. I've been trying to call him all week, and got nothing but his voicemail. Then, when I came to pick him up, he wouldn't come to the door, but I could hear him inside.

JONATHON

Doing what?

ARTHUR

(shrugs)

I have no idea. I can only describe it as 'scurrying'.

MARTHA

Like a rat?

ARTHUR

(shrugs even harder)

Yeah, I guess, and breathing heavy. Then, when I tried to go in, that chair came flying out the window and Max started screaming, "I know! I know! I don't want to know, but I can't help it!"

JONATHON

What the hell does THAT mean?"

MARTHA

We've got to call someone.

ARTHUR

I've called the police. I'm just scared he's going to do something stupid, and I don't even know what caused it.

FADE TO BLACK

OVER BLACK: 4 DAYS AGO

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

MAX FENIG (30s and neat in appearance) pushes a cart, picking up a few cans and packages as he goes.

He comes to a section labeled "Asian" and stops. He picks up a bag of fortune cookies.

MAX

Cool. Fortune cookies. I didn't even know you could buy bags of 'em. Sounds good.

He tosses them in the cart and moves on.

INT. MAX FENIG'S HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

Max pushes the door open with his foot and shoves it closed with his butt because his arms are full with two grocery bags.

He goes to the

KITCHEN

and sits the bags on the counter. The one falls on it's side and the fortune cookie bag rolls out.

He chuckles, picks it up and tears the bag open.

MAX

Silly, but they sound good. Let's see if I'm gonna get rich.

He cracks one open, pulls out the slip of paper and reads:

MAX

Hmm. Six die in mass shooting. What the hell?

He looks more closely at the paper and turns it over several times.

MAX

Six die in mass shooting. Not
funny.

He crumples it up and throws it in the trash.

MAX

Not funny at all. Fucking fortune
cookie jokers.

He munches on the cookie and walks into the

LIVING ROOM

where he plops on the sofa, mindlessly grabs the remote, and
turns on the television.

ON SCREEN

A scene of mass panic obviously shot on a cell phone.
People run in all directions, with the obvious crack of gun
shots somewhere off screen.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

This was the scene at the downtown
Santa Monica annual city-wide Shop
Local flea market this morning as a
gunman opened fire on shoppers.
Five people were killed outright
with another dying from their
wounds later at Grace Mercy
Hospital.

Max turns off the television and stares at it.

MAX

(mutters)

Six dead.

FADE TO BLACK

OVER BLACK: PRESENT DAY

EXT. MAX FENIG'S HOUSE - DAY

Arthur, Martha and Jonathon stand next to a police car with
OFFICER GUNTHER TOODY (30s, short and stocky).

OFFICER FRANCIS MULDOON (30s, tall and lanky) gets out of a
second car parked directly behind Officer Toody's.

OFFICER TOODY
...and you have no idea why he's
acting this way?

ARTHUR
I can't even begin to guess.

FADE TO BLACK

OVER BLACK: 2 DAYS AGO

Max is disheveled, hair a mess, sits slumped on his sofa.
He rolls a fortune cookie between two fingers and the
television remote is squeezed tightly in his other hand.

A pile of crumpled fortune slips lie on the cushion next to
him.

MAX
(mutters under his
breath)
Ten dead. Two dead. Massive heart
attack. Tidal wave.

He looks at the fortune cookie in his hand.

MAX
(almost in tears)
I can't. I just can't. I don't
want to know.

His fingers tremble as tears roll down his face.

He breaks the cookie in half.

FADE TO BLACK

OVER BLACK: PRESENT DAY

Officer Muldoon watches the house closely as he approaches
the others.

OFFICER MULDOON
Toody, I think I saw someone moving
in there.

Another chair crashes through a different window and Max's
voice bellows from inside:

MAX (O.S.)
 I don't want to know anymore! I
 just don't want to know anymore but
 I can't stop! I can't stop!

Martha Fenig breaks down in tears as the two officers duck low and rush toward the house.

INT. MAX FENIG'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Max falls away from the window and crawls to his couch. He pulls himself onto it.

An even bigger pile of fortune slips lay on the cushion. A pile of broken cookies and the bag, now empty, lie on the table next to one lone whole cookie.

Max, sweating profusely, his clothes and hair soiled with grime, grabs the remote tightly and stares at the cookie.

EXT. MAX FENIG'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Officers Toody and Muldoon, their guns drawn, stay low and get on either end of the front windows.

INT. MAX FENIG'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Max holds the cookie like a sacred relic and glances from it to the television like an animal trapped in a cage.

His lip quivers as he cracks open the cookie.

EXT. MAX FENIG'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Officer Muldoon, peers in the smashed window at his end and sees Max staring at the slip of paper in his hand.

He is in tears.

OFFICER MULDOON
 (projecting)
 Mr. Fenig, please come out quietly
 and we can help you.

Suddenly, Max flings his upper body out the window screaming:

MAX
 I didn't want to know! I didn't
 want to...

Officer Muldoon panics, falls away from the window and fires one shot, which strikes Max square in the chest.

Martha Fenig screams as Max's body is propelled backwards by the impact and disappears into the house.

INT. MAX FENIG'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Max lies on the floor bleeding from the chest. The last fortune slip lying on the floor beside him.

ON THE FORTUNE SLIP: "YOU WILL DIE TODAY."

Officer Toody, his gun drawn, breaks through the door followed by officer Muldoon and the others.

Martha and Jonathon run to Max and fall to their knees.

MARTHA

Oh Max! My Max!

Officer Toody spots the pile of cookies and slips.

OFFICER TOODY

What the heck is this? Fortune cookies?

ARTHUR

(looking around)

He's been locked in here reading fortune cookies?

Jonathon spots the last slip lying by his son and picks it up.

Through his tears he reads the slip:

JONATHON

Your sunny disposition will bring a smile to the lips of others today.