



## **About Fred**

Xavier Leret

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## About The Author

Xavier is a writer, filmmaker and playwright.

Films include *Unarmed But Dangerous* starring Frank Harper, Mat Fraser, Terry Stone and Faye Tozer. It tells the story of a Kung Fu master who has no arms. *Unarmed But Dangerous* is currently on worldwide release through Anchor Bay Entertainment. His first film, *Mine*, was selected as a breakthrough movie for LUFF 2007.

Plays include *Renaissance* (a Millennium Award Winner), *The Fantastical Adventures of Leonardo Da Vinci* (a commission for the International Festival Of Perth), *Thirst*, *Alice*, *Caligula* and *Swing*.

Xavier's new novel *Heaven Sent* is now available You can purchase an all gadget friendly ebook for the smash down price of \$3.99 from Smashwords. <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/46970>

He lives with his wife and three children in a quiet spot of the UK.

You can find more of his work and work in progress at [www.xavierleret.com](http://www.xavierleret.com)

# Chapter 1

There's something I need to tell you, said Karen, it's about Fred.  
John froze in the doorway.

# Chapter 2

What did he say exactly?

Maddy told him and finished by asking him not to tell anyone.

Is that what he asked you to do? Not to tell anyone?

Yes.

John nodded.

# Chapter 3

The next day he spent the morning avoiding making the call. He dropped Maddy off at school and took the youngest back home. He made all sorts of excuses to himself. He made himself available to his young daughter in a way that he rarely did so ordinarily. Today he played with her dolls making up voices for all of them. He changed their nappies, fed them milk. He pushed her around the house in her plastic car. He took her to the play centre and climbed with her around the facilities there. He went down the black hole slide that made his gut jump. All the time it was playing on his mind.

# Chapter 4

I did it. I called him.

John was on the house phone talking to Karen.

What did you say?

Not much.

And what did he say?

I don't know I didn't really listen. It just... he just...

His cell phone started ringing.

Fuck, it's him.

Answer it, she said.

I don't want to. I can't. I can't.

His phone stopped ringing.

Shit, he's phoning me now.

What are going to do?

I'm going to answer.

OK, pull over, you'll crash the car otherwise. I'll talk to you later.

# Chapter 5

I've spoken to him.  
Yeah, said John, he's just tried to phone me back .  
Karen was distraught on the other end of the line and he was worried about her because she was driving.  
How fucking stupid of him.  
I know, he said.  
You shouldn't feel bad.  
I don't, he said. It had to be done, I know that.  
Well don't feel bad. He's been doing this his whole fucking life.  
He nodded into the phone.  
He's terrified that Roz is going to find out, she said.  
She'll leave him.  
No, she won't, they've been through too much together.  
She will. She'll have to.

# Chapter 6

When Karen had got back from work, the kids wanted a family cuddle. They all cuddled together. John looked at Maddy and thought, shit, she's changed. He couldn't put his finger on it, but there was a definite change. She was more knowing.

It was cold outside and there was a mist haunting him as he walked to Tesco's. He was walking quickly his breath in sharp fast gusts. He was listening to some electronic music which was abrasive at the top end and quite aggressive on the bass. It just kept going round and round. He thought about when Fred was rushed to the hospital. He thought that it would have been better all round if... The music dipped as a call came in. He didn't recognise the number. If it was Fred he was ready.

Hello.

John Morgan?

Yes.

My name is Pete, I was given your number by Dave Little. You're an editor, yeah?

That's right.

I've got a job. I'm quite desperate, everyone else has fallen through.

Sure. What is it?

It's a bit of adult.

Oh... um...

Listen, I'll understand if it's not your thing but have a look at mi site, it's nothing twisted, just ya usual.

# Chapter 8

He was standing alone under a streetlight.  
Dave, I've just had this call. Who's Pete?  
Yeah, sorry, but I thought you could do with the work.  
That's OK, but who is he?  
He's a friend of a friend.

# Chapter 9

When he got back from Tesco's Karen was on the phone to Fred. Her face was red. The kids were in bed, though they were not asleep, he could hear them. When he walked into the front room she motioned with her hands. He did not know whether she meant to just shut the door or to get out. He shut the door behind him and went into the kitchen. He put the shopping down onto the kitchen table, took out a bottle of wine and opened it. He could hear her voice.

... You have done the same to her as you did to me. You just can't stop yourself. You just can't fucking stop yourself. You just don't know where the boundaries are. You just don't know. It's black and white. After all you've done throughout your entire fucking life and you still cross the boundaries...

... I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU WANT TO FUCKING LABEL IT...

... I don't know. I just don't know...

... You're just so stupid. I just can't - it's unbelievable - with your history. What were you thinking of?..

... I have to tell mum. I just couldn't not. I wouldn't be at ease with myself. I'm not not going to say something to her...

... Yes, she might tell Roz. She is her sister...

... I haven't thought out the repercussions, I don't know how it will spiral out - but this isn't about protecting you...

... If she hadn't said anything, my mind boggles where it would have gone...

... I do, I do...

... I think she would have gone to you with all her questions - fuck she's ten - ten and you're already starting...

... It's not just that, it's how far will she go. It's about that...

... She hasn't developed yet...

... I know what it's like at that age - it's thrilling. And you're getting ready to take advantage of it. You're beginning now. She's only ten. You total fucking bastard...

# Chapter 10

He drank the wine slowly in the darkness of the kitchen and thought about his wife at the age of thirteen and Fred. He had known about it but he hadn't considered it properly. She had told him when they first started going out together. She was in her twenties, grown up, mature, beautiful and in touch with herself. But now sat in the dark of his kitchen he saw not his wife but his child. And then he saw his child into his wife, grown up, vivacious, full of bravado and out to impress.

# Chapter 1

You know what he said?

They were drinking wine together and smoking, their cigarettes in a glow in the dark. John shook his head. No, what?

He said that if he was going to touch her he would have done it ages ago.

He said that?

Yes, he said that he remembered two times.

The smoke strained between them. John's eyes narrowed.

He said that once when Mad was six he was tickling her and she looked at him and said tickle me down there. And he said that he said no.

Fuck.

And then another time he was here with you and you were putting the girls to bed. He was with you saying good night to Becky and he came out and Maddy was waiting in the shadows and she jumped out on him naked.

Yeah, I remember that. I got quite angry with her. Why the fuck would he remember... what the... why's he telling you that?

She shook her head and blew out a cloud and put the cigarette butt into the ashtray.

John, was pale. I don't believe it... he's kept hold of those memories... why did he say that? Does he really think that that suddenly means he's not...

John stood up and then sat back down again.

I know, she said, I know.

# Chapter 12

I'm going to bed, said Karen.  
He nodded, I'll finish this bottle.  
Are you OK?  
I'm fine. A little drunk. What about you?  
The same. She looked at him and smiled. Thank you.  
For what?  
For phoning him. Getting it out. I was dithering.  
It took me all day to make the call.  
I bet. Her shoulder racked and her body strained. Oh my God, she said  
as she put her hand over her mouth. Oh my fucking God.

# Chapter 13

He received an email from Fred.

Dear John and Karen

I'm sorry if this email is unwelcome, but I have to write it and ask if you want me to meet you so that you can try to deal with the aftermath in a way that you choose. I don't know what else to say, except that I recognise you may want to cut me out of your lives immediately and totally. But you may also want a time to express your shock and anger directly.

Karen, you know the damage of a relationship that has been a lie. So I want at least to say one thing to limit the fear that I'm sure you'll both now have. I have never touched Maddy in a sexual way, I have never tried to or wanted to, and I have not seen her in that way. That is not to try and modify what I did on Sunday. I crossed a boundary to a degree which has caused devastating damage, I think less to Maddy than to you both, to Dawn and, worst of all for me, Roz.

I won't give an account now of what was said and why. I recognise that this is likely to be an ugly end to long, close and loving relationships, and I can't even write what that feels like. I'm sorry for me, and I'm more sorry than I can say for what I've done to you.

Fred.

# Chapter 14

He remembered staying at Roz and Fred's place and that Fred had come downstairs in the morning, thinking that he was out, wearing only a white vest. For a man in his sixties who still smoked he wasn't in bad shape. And he had a big cock. His cock was coming down from a fuck, the foreskin was pulled back and the helmet was red and still swollen, the shaft was big but not hard.

The night before he had gone out for a drink with Fred and Fred had complained that Roz's hip was so bad these days that he could only take her from behind. At the time he thought that Fred was joking – not about the hip because Roz was limping everywhere, that was obvious, but about the fucking from behind – the statement, not the doing - the way he said it. It had shocked him.

# Chapter 15

He sat alone in front of his computer with a bottle of wine. The family were asleep. He was drunk. An email arrived from Pete with a link, a user name and password. He opened up Pete's porn site. His mouse floated over the small video windows and watched the stills flick through the contents. He didn't want to see any cocks so he watched the lesbians. The girls were young and thin and shaved. In close up it looked like someone had taken a meat cleaver to a carcass to gash it open. Because it was a carcass there was no blood. There were girls with thick eye makeup feeding.

Even though his head was spinning he drank more wine and even though he couldn't focus he watched more porn and even though it wasn't doing anything for him he kept on clicking.

He had flashes of Fred in his vest with his half erect cock into which flashed Karen into which flashed Maddy.

# Chapter 16

Maddy was at school and he had just got back from dropping off Becky. Karen had taken the day off work and was sitting alone in the kitchen. He made himself a coffee.

You've got to phone your mum, he said. You have to.

Karen was shaking. I know. She'll be devastated. She took Maddy round there. She was in charge. She was only out of her sight for ten minutes. She'll blame herself.

Karen put her hand through her hair.

But you have to tell her.

I know, I know. But what about Roz?

What about her?

She'll tell her.

So?

She's sixty-five.

Yeah?

She won't leave him.

She will.

She won't want to be alone. She's known about him all through their relationship.

But she 'll be outcast. From you. From your mum.

But she's old now. A tear welled up in Karen's eye and fell and rolled down her face. She's a part of me.

John put his hand to her cheek and said I know. I know.

... and Mum won't tell her.

Why?

Because ever since Dad died she's been alone. She has been alone since I was ten.

He watched her face as she looked away.

If Dad had been around then Fred wouldn't have... . but he wasn't... there's so much shit in my family... She won't do it to her... She's her sister... She loves her... I know her... I don't think I could do it...

He watched her as her voice trailed off and her breath took over, reigning in the tears. What do you want, he asked?

Her body became tense, pent up, tight and angry.

It would be better if he died, she said.

His phone rang. It was Pete. He looked at it.

# Chapter 17

Dawn was on the sofa with Karen, they were quiet and sitting at opposing ends. He had gone out because Karen had wanted to tell her mum and she wanted to do it alone. He understood. She suggested that he go to the cinema.

When he got back he could see that they had been crying. Their eyes were red. It felt to him that Karen had timed their conversation perfectly so that they would reach an epiphany of emotion with enough time for the both of them to recover before John got back. She was organised like that.

# Chapter 18

They got another email from Fred.

Dear John and Karen,

I want to meet with all of you as a group to talk about this business.

I want to do it because you are actually my family. I've had more connection with all of you, done more things, shared more than I have with my blood family. I don't want to lose that.

I also don't want this to create an impossible situation between Roz and me or between her and you. I've talked about it with her and though of course she has nothing to do with it, she's obviously concerned to find a resolution.

If you agree, I'll come up. I'll come alone because this is for me to deal with first.

Please give me an answer and let's meet and talk. If Dawn's email is out of date, could you forward it to her.

Fred.

# Chapter 19

Pete?

John.

John was on his phone sitting on a park bench under an old oak tree. There were clouds in the sky, the November weather turned mizzled for winter.

# Chapter 20

Dawn came straight round when she had received Fred's email.

What do you want to do, asked Dawn?

About what, he asked?

Fred's email.

Nothing.

You don't want to meet him?

No.

I'm so sorry, said Dawn.

Yeah.

But I'm worried about Roz.

Has she phoned you, he asked?

No.

And do you believe him when he says that he told her?

Yes.

His brow frowned. She should have phoned one of you by now, he said. Even if Fred left a lot out, you would have thought that she would ring, even if it was to say, lets not blow this thing out of the water. I think it's rather telling that she hasn't called.

He looked at Dawn. Her face was leathery and fisher

# Chapter 21

Sitting in the garden smoking he remembered how Fred helped him build the kid's playhouse. He could not have done it without him. He was not good with his hands, Fred was. And there he was, putting up the walls, the roof, the balcony inside and the children laughing and helping. There he was.

# Chapter 22

What are you doing here?

Fred looked like a lame horse.

I need to talk to Karen.

John looked to the left and right, down the street and then back at Fred. He felt tiny tremors all over his body.

# Chapter 23

It was raining and he was alone in the car at ninety down the M1, not caring how close he drifted to the cars, in front or to the side, knuckles in a strain on the wheel and his sat nav in straight arrows, straight ahead, straight ahead...

# Chapter 24

The house was secluded.

I've come to see Pete, he said, when the door opened.

You'll have to be quiet the girl said, they're in the middle of a scene.

She led him quietly through to the back of the house. She was in a pair of jeans and a t-shirt, her long blonde hair in a hairspray straggle down her back.

It was lunar in there, under the lights. He could see the camera right up her, her labia in wet flaps taking the full shaft of a cock.

He stood at the back, behind the crowd of the crew and waited for Pete to shout cut.

# Chapter 25

I'm trying to get out of it, Pete said.

John nodded. They were sitting out in the cold on a bench at the back of the house at the end of an enormous garden.

There's no money in it any more. All these fucking free view sites... and I fucking hate the lifestyle, if I'm honest.

So why are you doing it?

It's all I know John. And once you're in, it's fucking impossible to get out. Anyway, mi old mucker, what's this problem you have?

John looked like his stomach hurt. ... Dave said you might know people.

What kind of people would that be?

The kind that might be able to help me with a problem.

Pete looked at him. He had thick black hair and a chiselled face.

John smoked his cigarette and stared ahead.

# Chapter 26

The kids were in bed.

Where have you been, she asked, it's late? She was looking older, tired. She was still standing upright but he could see that it took her some effort.

I just went for a drive and a walk.

Are you OK?

He shrugged his shoulders.

Roz called.

Yeah?

She tried to make out that it was nothing serious. That he never actually touched her.

Fucking hell.

Are you OK?

I told her about him and me. She didn't know.

I thought you said she did.

She said she didn't.

He nodded.

It was so... He watched her eyes narrow as she drew into herself, her voice becoming softer. I didn't know what was real back then, we both hid it well, Fred and Me. That was the game I suppose. I was complicit in it. It was a thrill. I thought I was grown up. I thought that. You do, don't you, at that age? I led him on. Teased it out of him. I'm sure that's how he saw it. It seemed like such an obvious game that we were playing that I couldn't believe that no one else saw it. In my mind it made it all right, their silence gave the whole thing permission to carry on. So much of life is about what you imagine things to be. So much.

You were thirteen, love.

I know. But you are so knowing at that age. I felt in possession of myself. I felt that. Anyway, Roz said that she needed time to think and that she would call back.

Right.

He took a glass from the cabinet and stopped with his back to her and breathed out. He came round earlier, he said.

What?

He came round.

He turned to her. Her body was clenched and her jaw was tight.

He wanted to see you.

She breathed out heavily and her eyes closed.

# Chapter 27

John?  
Yeah?  
Hold me. Hold me.  
I love you, he said.  
I know. I know.

# Chapter 28

He never made tea in the morning, he was a coffee drinker but he found a box of Lapsang Souchong.

Tea, asked Karen?

Yeah, I found this box of ... You never buy it.

I didn't, she said. Fred did when he and Roz stayed.

Fred?

Yes.

He put his mug down.

# Chapter 29

It was Dawn. I need to talk to you both, she said. Roz called.

They were sitting in the lounge and the kids were in bed.

She's distraught.

So, said John?

She's my sister.

John looked at Karen.

She's desperate because she thinks she's going to lose Karen. She loves the both of you. She loves the kids.

John didn't know what to say.

She's terrified that she will never be able to see you all again. That she'll be outcast with him.

Then she must leave him, he said.

It's not that simple.

It is.

She's nearly seventy. You can't ask her to do that.

I'm not asking her to do that, but it's inevitable.

You don't know them, John. They've been through hell together. What those two haven't done to each other.

I know.

Not all of it you don't.

John felt his heartbeat rise. Every time he walks into a room, she's going to think he slept with my niece, when she was little more than a kid. She's going to think that. And then she's going to think, and now he's grooming Maddy. And he's going to know that's what she's thinking every time she looks at him and every time she opens her mouth. Till the day he fucking dies. And then it might be, that we feel sorry for them and let them share a Christmas with us and all the time we're going to sit there thinking don't let him out of our sight. And he's going to know it. You don't think that's a much worse hell than they've ever been through before, cause that's not something that I could fucking live with.

John, said Karen, keep your voice down, love, the kids will hear.

Dawn looked down sadly. I'm not asking you to... I would never do that... but she's my sis... she's my sis...

John and Karen sat quietly watching Dawn as she slowly took control of herself.

Mum, said Karen, he can never see Maddy again. Never. You see, the problem is this. Maddy is in touch with herself. She has been in touch with her sexuality... well right from the start. For her this is really exciting. She will now seek Fred out and tease the questions out of him because he has creaked the door open. He has now made himself available to her to answer those questions. Those questions she might feel uncomfortable asking us. And the problem is all he will do is gently lead her on and make believe that it is Maddy leading him on. He has no boundaries. We can't allow that.

I know, said Dawn.

I love Roz, said Karen,

Dawn looked at her daughter.

If only that heart attack had taken him, said Dawn. If only.

John's phone rang. It was on the coffee table in the centre of the room. They all looked at it.

I'd better take this, he said and picked it up. Hello... yeah hi... oh right... um... I don't know if I can come now... can I pick it up in the morning... oh right, OK... where are you? Yeah I know. I'll be over in a bit - uh? Oh OK, an hour then.

He hung up. I've got to go, I have to pick up some media.

What, now?

I know. He fumbled his phone awkwardly and it fell.

Are you OK, John?

He looked at her and said yeah, sure... I'm fine.

# Chapter 30

He started his car and drove to the end of the street, parked again, turned the engine off and lit a cigarette. He was shaking. He was thinking about Fred. He remembered how they had all gone out to the country and had a picnic. Fred had brought a Frisbee and they had all played together spinning it from one end of a field to the other. It had been a lovely summers day and the sun was shining. They were all there, Roz, Dawn, Karen and the kids. He was sitting there and trying to understand how Karen could allow him near her. He couldn't make sense of it. He couldn't make sense of it at all.

# Chapter 31

Pete was waiting for him in his car.

John, he said.

Do you want me to follow you.

No. Leave your car here, I'll bring you back.

He got in. Listen Pete... I don't think... I want to call the whole thing off.

Take it easy, mate.

Um...

Relax.

John shuffled in his seat.

Pete pulled the car away. Let me tell you about what I need. I've got a few scenes in the back, bit of girl on girl and those scenes you saw us shoot the other day. That was fucking filthy, ha ha. Listen, I was thinking bout giving you a bit o mature, but thought a bit of corpse fucking might fuck you right up. He turned to look at him and he stuck his tongue out - I'm fucking you mate. Relax. Have a fag, and he offered him a real lung bleeder.

# Chapter 32

He knew that they were in Essex but that was as much as he knew. He had lost track of the direction when they had turned off the motorway and began to wind the country lanes. Beyond the beam of the car it was pitch black. Pete pulled the car up at the end of a track outside a small dis-used isolated farm house.

OK, asked Pete?

Err, yeah.

He's in there. I'll wait here.

John got out of the car. As he did so the front door opened and a man in black with a superman body came out.

You John?

Yeah.

He's through ere.

John walked up the garden path to the door and followed Superman into the house. There was no plaster on the walls and no carpets on the wooden boards. The place stank of damp and shit. Sitting on a chair was another man in black who stood up as John entered. His bald scalp was tattooed bright red, like a demon.

Alright, mate? He held out his hand. The back of his hand was coloured with the flames of a Thai dragon. John shook his hand and his hand flared up.

Superman said, he's in there, pointing to a closed door. Listen, it smells a bit alright, you know? He – and he shrugged his shoulders and then he grinned, he fucking shat everywhere, the cunt. It's what happens.

All the fucking time said The Demon.

John just nodded.

Go on, take a look. We'll be in a minute.

John walked slowly towards the door and stood before it.

Go on, said Superman, he won't bite.

Ain't got any fucking teeth.

Ha ha.

Ha ha.

It's alright, mate, I left one. It's like a fucking tombstone in his mouth.

Ha ha.

Ha ha.

And they did a little Michael Jackson dance with zombie scowls and dainty turns.

Ha ha.

Ha ha.

Go on, mate, it's alright. We're fucking with ya. Don't worry. He's fine. Don't worry. Don't worry. Go on.

He felt like he was breathing with amplified breath inside a space suit as he approached the door. He reached slowly with his hand, turned the handle and pushed the door away from him. He stood there in the doorway, his shadow cast out behind him and when he saw him, his hand moved to his mouth.

# Chapter 33

They've nailed him to the floor, he said.

Pete was smoking a cigarette on the front seat of his car.

Why have they nailed him to the floor?

Pete shrugged his shoulders.

John turned back to Superman who was standing in front of the house.

Why have you nailed him to the floor?

Ain't ever done it before. Seemed like a good idea.

Oh my God.

You wanted him dealt with, said Superman. Did you think we was going to suck his cock?

What?

Did you think we was going to suck his cock?

Listen, John, I've got to get back said Pete, its late.

We've got to get him to a hospital.

You what?

We've got to get him to a hospital.

No, mate, said Superman. He ain't going nowhere.

Oi, came The Demon's voice, he wants to talk to him.

He wants to talk to you, said Superman.

What?

He wants to talk to you.

# Chapter 34

John was standing over Fred who was lying naked on the floor. He wasn't crucified; he was pinned like a crooked manikin to a board with hands by his side. They had nailed him with long thin shiny steel pins through the wrist of his right arm, the hand and elbow of his left, both shoulders, a knee and both his ankles. They had enjoyed themselves. There was a lot less blood than John had originally thought he'd seen but there was still enough to avoid slipping in. Fred was moaning and gurgling. John couldn't make out what he was saying. He knelt clumsily to the floor, careful not to get any blood on his clothes. His hand was over his mouth and nose.

I can't understand you, he said.

He knelt further. Blood was bubbling from Fred's mouth, his lips moved, his eyes rolled.

I can't understand...

Fred gasped.

I, said, John... I... Fred? Fred? Fred?

Superman walked in, looked at Fred, knelt, reached and felt his neck.

He's dead mate.

John sat with his back against the wall and his knees tucked up under chin.

Superman was crouched by Fred and clacked Fred's jaw open and shut and John thought fuck, he's right, that tooth is just like a tombstone.

# Chapter 35

The sun was coming up when Pete dropped John at his car.

Hang on, said Pete. He flicked the boot open, got out, walked to the back of the car, reached in and came back with a box.

Here's what I need ya to do. They're all on the drive, in this box.

Eh?

My little box of souls, he said with a twinkle in his eye, that's what mi wife calls it.

John said nothing.

I need it for Friday.

John nodded.

And then I've something else for ya.

John's head was bowed.

This is the way it's going to be, alright? Don't worry, I'll pay ya and I'll pay ya well. Right, fuck off.

John nodded slowly, his face was red and his skin felt hot. He got out of the car and he was about to shut the door when Pete said, give us a call when you've got that done. And don't worry about Fred. He was an old cunt, who wanted to fuck ya daughter. He had it coming.

He shut the door and watched Pete pull away. He crossed the street to his own car and got in. He sat there shivering smoking a cigarette. He looked at the box, that Pete had given him, and he saw Pete's eyes twinkle, which faded to Fred, into which came Karen into which formed Mad. He saw the bodies in the digital patchwork of noughts and ones, the sweat and the cocks and the cunts and the groans and the screams and the forms; all those circuits into cells, into souls, into time, into stars, into the eternal ejaculation of the cosmos. It was all there in that box.

He took his phone out of his pocket and looked at it for a long, long while and then finally, he hit home.

Hello, she answered still half asleep.

Hello love, he said, there's something I need to tell you... it's about Fred.

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