

The End of Fear

by Dan O'Neil

CHARACTERS

Amber, female, a newcomer

Blue, female, governing personality

Chartreuse, female, firecracker

Grey, male, ordered

DAY ONE

AMBER

...And when the last of the lights went out and the smoke cleared and the sun rose, I climbed over the chairs that Troy had piled in a jumble at our door and went outside and everyone was just, you know, absent. No bodies, just, not there anymore. I started walking, the town, totally empty. Kept going, straight down the middle of I-80, it's usually totally packed especially at the turnpike and I would look behind me just expecting to get obliterated by some truck but no truck ever came...

BLUE

I-80 is...?

AMBER

I walked in from Pennsylvania.

BLUE

New York for me. I-87 part of the way. It's empty too.

CHAR

Me by way of Florida!

I didn't walk, I'm not crazy superwoman or nothing, ok,

I was sorta sleeping in my car, it's like a long story -

But then you know I woke up and all the other cars that had been crowded around me in this parking lot that I was basically hiding in were gone and I was like, Okay, more space for me! But then - they didn't come back - I decided finally that I was going to go out for some coffee and when I got to Starbucks and all the doors were wide open but it was totally empty inside and all the power was out? That's when I started freaking out.

AMBER

Wait, you have a car?

CHAR

But no gas left.

You can't fill it up 'cause all the pumps are electric and they won't turn on.

BLUE

In Ohio? Near my mom's house, there's this old fashioned station that has one of those pumps that isn't electric and you have to pay cash inside!

CHAR

Okay so you wanna push my car five hundred miles be my guest but -

AMBER

So it's really just us.

BLUE

Maybe.

CHAR

Seems that way.

BLUE

Super weird, right?

AMBER

Well yeah I mean

How did we even find each other?

I just kinda -

BLUE

Had a feeling?

AMBER

Yeah!

BLUE

I saw Chartreuse's car. That's what happened. It was the first car I had seen.

I waved her down.

CHAR

I stopped. I got out.

BLUE

And then we held each other.

CHAR

Yeah I'm not at all the hugging type but -

BLUE
So let's hold each other
Because now it's the three of us

*They hold each other, kind of tentatively, but then they
relax into the embrace and breath for awhile.*

BLUE
So, we decided to go by new names and we liked the idea of colors,
and so I'm Blue.

CHAR
Chartreuse but you can call me Char if you want.

AMBER
Amber.

CHAR
Oh that's so good -

AMBER
It's my real name though.
I mean is that
Okay?

BLUE
Well my name was Ingrid and so that's why I changed it.

CHAR
We can change everything.

DAY THREE

BLUE
Is someone writing this down?

AMBER
I'm on it.

BLUE

Okay so who wants to start?
C'mom, *guys* -

CHAR

Why do we have to -
Why can't we -
It's like you want to make a *government* out of us

BLUE

My dad was a senator, so -
Yeah I guess but it's important.

CHAR

Yeah fine so you go first.

AMBER

I'll go, okay?

BLUE

Yes.

AMBER

Uh... food.

BLUE

No that's not - how it works.
Food is like - We'd die without food, so it's not something we can choose to keep or get rid of in our future slash now civilization, so you can't say food but you could say like, *frozen* food which would be a stupid thing to keep and actually you can't 'cause it's all melted already -

AMBER

Okay, clothes. Clothing.

BLUE

That's your first thing?

AMBER

Yeah, clothes. I would like to keep wearing them.

CHAR

I'm good with that.

Not that I don't want to run around with you ladies naked or anything but -

BLUE

But, sunburn, and... - I dunno, yeah.

Clothes. Okay. Agreed? Whatever clothes we want, obviously.

No more dress codes. But, we as a society keep clothes in general.

AMBER writes 'clothes' down on her list.

BLUE

Mine is music.

AMBER

Keep music?

BLUE

Exactly.

CHAR

Okay fine music, but how -

Do you play an instrument?

BLUE

Piano, sort of.

AMBER

Guitar. Singing. My - I mean I dated a guy who did and -

CHAR

So wait we have to sing together?

BLUE

No we don't *have* to, it's just something that I think we should hold onto.

Is music. In the world. Okay?

CHAR

And dancing.

AMBER

Yas!

BLUE

Oh my god guys -
There's this song -
There was this song.
I can play it for you.

She pulls out cell phone.

AMBER

Isn't that like the only battery powered thing we have that still has anything left?

BLUE

It's at 42% still.
We have to learn this song.
It can be like our national anthem.

She plays the song, they all listen.

BLUE starts singing along.

Then AMBER.

Finally, CHAR joins in.

They sing, and then, they dance (although not very well or in sync with each other).

The music fades into...

DAY SEVEN

AMBER

Hey remember popsicles?

CHAR

The blue ones were my favorite.

BLUE

Aww.

CHAR

Hey uh
Look I think this is like
What we're doing I mean
all fine and okay and good and all
but -
um -
Is anyone else, you know -
worried?

BLUE

Worried about what?

CHAR

It's just us?

BLUE

We have some food.
We can learn to farm.
Amber already knows how to cook.

CHAR

What happens when the matches run out and we can't start a fire?

BLUE

There's plenty of everything, Char.
And no one to take it away from us.

CHAR

I miss *coffee*.

AMBER

We *have* coffee.

CHAR

No I mean *coffee*.

AMBER

You mean like caramel macchiato which is not actually coffee.

BLUE

I think we should keep working on the list.

AMBER suddenly starts sobbing silently.

CHAR

What's with -
Amber, what the fuck?

BLUE

Hey -

AMBER

I just don't want to talk about...
Things we *miss* okay?
Let's do the list, yeah.

CHAR

This is the bad list, right?
Okay so first I want to put on this list,
discrimination.

AMBER

...okay...

CHAR

What?

AMBER

It's just that, are we likely to discriminate against each other?

CHAR

Like, I have a car, for example.

AMBER

So we'll become like the 'car people' and the 'non car people,' I don't think -

BLUE

Yeah but it's good as a general guideline. Put it down.

AMBER

Discrimination. Okay.

BLUE

Mine is violence. Rape specifically.

CHAR

Oh, yeah.

No more of *that*.

AMBER

But isn't that -

Again, are we very likely to...

Well, um.

Is that even possible?

CHAR

Violence is definitely possible.

You could hit my car with a rock, for example.

Which would be discriminatory *and* violent.

AMBER

What about like against animals?

If we want to, for example, eat meat, we're going to have to use violence.

BLUE

Well it's not violence if it's for food -

AMBER

How is killing something not an act of violence?

BLUE

Okay but rape we can put down -

AMBER

Yes fine rape is out of the question, I'm writing it down.

CHAR

I have to say though, as awesome as it is to, like, walk around and not be afraid of some man coming up and saying something sexual to me or the person that I'm future dating in college slipping something into my drink and then me waking up the next morning in some terrible dorm room and not knowing what he might have done -
Are we at all worried about the, like, lack of...?

BLUE

You mean that it's just us.

CHAR

And that it will always *be* just us.
Until -
Well, until there's nobody.

AMBER

Fear.

BLUE

What?

AMBER

Let's get rid of it.

BLUE

How do you get rid of fear?

AMBER

Part of it is just, fear of other people.
And I'm not afraid of you guys.
So that's already done.
But the other part, I think, *real* fear, is...
What's out there in the dark, at night.
Or, will anyone ever really love me.
Or what if I get sick and die.
So I'm saying, can we just not be afraid anymore?
Of anything?

BLUE

We can try.

AMBER

Okay?

CHAR

Let's sing the song and do the dance now.
I think that helps.

AMBER

Yeah I think it does too.

BLUE (looking at phone)

4% left.

I think this might be the last time we get..
accompaniment.

CHAR

Yeah well we know it now by heart practically anyway.

BLUE hits play.

The song starts.

They sing along to it and do a version of their dance.

The battery dies, the music cuts out,

*and GREY comes out of the darkness, from where he has been
watching them.*

GREY

Hey.

Quick cut to darkness -

DAY EIGHT

GREY is tied up.

AMBER stands with a cup of water.

GREY

Have you ever been to San Francisco?

AMBER shakes her head.

GREY

It's pretty cold there. Rains a lot. Once I figured out that all the people were missing, I decided to head east. Where are you from? Hey. I'm not gonna - I mean you've got me tied up here, you can talk to me.

AMBER

Pennsylvania. Hershey. Where they make the chocolate.

GREY

So what are you going to do to me?

AMBER

I don't know yet, they haven't decided
We. Haven't decided.

GREY

Untie me.

AMBER

I can't.

GREY

Untie me.

AMBER

I can't.

GREY

Why not?

AMBER

I'm afraid of you.

GREY

Why?

AMBER

I don't know.

GREY

Have I done anything?

AMBER

No, it's what you might do.

GREY

But you don't know what I'll do.

AMBER

That's what I'm afraid of.

GREY

I'm gay.

AMBER

Uh - what? I mean, okay, but -

GREY

I've never told a stranger that before. My mom knew - knows - knew - I like other guys - you haven't *seen* any other guys by the way, have you?

AMBER shakes her head

GREY

Well now that is one huge tragedy.

I mean, this whole thing, tragic I guess, if by tragic you mean unbelievably surreal and just like completely and totally fucked up, but - what kind of a cosmic joke *is* this?

Right? I mean what I'm saying is there's three of you and one of me and we all want the same thing?

AMBER

What? What do we all want?

GREY

Well. I guess, to feel safe in the right arms.

Or to hold the someone who fits in those arms and to make them feel safe.

AMBER

You're really gay?

GREY

I'm a *choreographer* even.

AMBER, tentative, approaches, unties him.

CHAR comes in, sees them.

CHAR

What are you *doing*?

Blue! Can you hear me?

She's freeing him.

Quick darkness.

DAY NINE

Both AMBER & GREY are tied up.

BLUE and CHAR watch over them.

AMBER

How is this not discriminatory?

CHAR

Look I'm sorry we don't *know* him

AMBER

We barely know ourselves,
we know nothing Char,
we can't just be afraid just because -

BLUE

We can.

We are.

You're right.

I just don't know what to do about it.

GREY

I promise you.

BLUE

Yeah well I've heard *that* before -

CHAR

So I don't know about the rest of you but in my before life I was really excited about having a normal family and you guys are great but I was thinking more along the lines of a baby, and so now, here we have *this one* and now that can happen so I think maybe if we just keep him tied up for now until we have a plan for action -

GREY starts to laugh.

CHAR

What?!

GREY

You can't. You won't. I'm sorry. It's been attempted. Sad story, but - I can't help you out with that. I'm only attracted to men. I'm sorry.

CHAR

What difference does that make, it still works -
So we just agree to -
To extinguish ourselves?!

BLUE

We agree to be better humans, we don't do this anymore, we're not animals -

CHAR

But we *are* animal -
You guys!
What if he's lying?

GREY

Most of my life I've been lying. I'm not lying now.

AMBER

He's a choreographer even.

Quick darkness, followed by:

DAY TEN

*GREY and AMBER are untied now.
AMBER, BLUE, GREY, and CHARTREUSE stand in line
while GREY choreographs a better dance to the song*

DAY ONE HUNDRED

They dance

DAY FIVE HUNDRED

They dance

DAY TWO THOUSAND.

They are older but keep dancing

DAY TEN THOUSAND

BLUE is gone. The rest keep dancing

DAY EIGHTEEN THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY

*AMBER is also gone. GREY and CHAR keep dancing,
slow now, old age. CHAR looks as GREY as if to say, you
sure about this? And GREY just nods, happy and sad at
the same time, and they keep dancing*

DAY TWENTY THREE THOUSAND AND FOUR

*And now it's just CHAR. She slows to a stop.
She stares up at the sky.
Somewhere, birds flying*

DAY TWENTY THREE THOUSAND AND SEVEN

Empty stage. Birds.

End