

The Fear of What Bites You
Chi Laughlin

PAGE 1 (SIX PANELS)

TITLE: THE FEAR OF WHAT BITES YOU

Page 1, Panel 1.

A wide shot of Grasshopper. Kwai Chang Caine. David Carradine in the 1970s television series, *Kung Fu*. This should be one of those flashback scenes you'd see in *Kung Fu* when Grasshopper was still at the Shaolin monastery, clad in monk's robes, his head clean-shaven. In his hands, he holds a raw piece of meat. As much as is humanly possible, this should look just like David Carradine, even if we have to use photo collage to pull it off.

CAPTION 1:

"He will only bite you if you're afraid."

Page 1, Panel 2.

Essentially from Grasshopper's point of view, past his legs, dirty in the foreground, we see a vicious dog, baring its fangs, barking and lunging at the young monk-in-training.

CAPTION 2:

"He can sense it."

Page 1, Panel 3.

Here we go close on young Grasshopper's face, showing the unmistakable terror in his eyes as he looks down at the dog.

CAPTION 3:

"He can sense your fear."

Page 1, Panel 4.

A random insert close shot of the blind Master Po, as portrayed on the tv show by Keye Luke. On the show, Master Po was always the one spouting wisdom to the young Caine, and anyone reading this should leap to the conclusion that Po is the speaker in the captions. As with the shots of Carradine, this should look just like Keye Luke.

CAPTION 4:

"If you aren't afraid, he won't bite you."

Page 1, Panel 5.

The dog, closer now, alone in the frame, snarling, lurching, ready to kill.

Page 1, Panel 6.

A slightly wider shot of Grasshopper's face. The fear is gone. He's got a look of determination and tranquility.

CAPTION 5:

"I don't know, Dad..."

PAGE 2 (EIGHT PANELS)

Page 2, Panel 1.

We're not in *Kung Fu* anymore. Still in the 1970s, though. In a wide shot on a farm, we see YOUNG CHI, age 5, and his dad, BUDDY, late 20s. Buddy looks a bit like adult Chi. He wears a beard and a mess of curly hair, a flannel shirt, work boots and jeans. Young Chi has a little blonde bowl cut and wears a t-shirt and jeans. Buddy stands just behind Chi, who's holding a bowl of dog food and looking at a vicious doberman chained to a stake near a doghouse in the foreground. The dog is already trying to get to Chi, but the chain holds him back.

YOUNG CHI 1:

I'm pretty sure he's gonna bite me.

Page 2, Panel 2.

A slightly closer reverse of Panel 1. Buddy has knelt down and put his hand on Chi's shoulder. Beyond them, we see the dog in the background, lunging toward us but still a safe distance away.

BUDDY 2:

Just don't be afraid. Don't ever be afraid of anything.

Page 2, Panel 3.

From the original angle, we're close on Buddy's head next to Young Chi's, his hand on Chi's shoulder. Young Chi is clearly scared.

YOUNG CHI 3:

Okay.

BUDDY 4:

Are you gonna be afraid?

YOUNG CHI 5:

No.

Page 2, Panel 4.

Wide, canted angle of Young Chi walking towards the dog.

Page 2, Panel 5.

Close on the dog barking.

Page 2, Panel 6.

Young Chi's trembling hands, holding the dog food dish unsteadily.

CAPTION 6:

I want to tell you that I silenced the fear inside...

Page 2, Panel 7.

The dog's muscled neck being yanked back by the resistance on its collar.

CAPTION 7:

And by conquering that part of myself...

Page 2, Panel 8.

Close on Young Chi's determined look.

CAPTION 8:

Tamed the beast.

PAGE 3 (SIX PANELS)

Page 3, Panel 1.

The dog leaps into Chi, knocking him off balance, sinking its teeth into his one arm, sending the contents of the dog bowl flying into the air. Chi's eyes are wide with terror.

CAPTION 1:

Yeah, that didn't happen.

Page 3, Panel 2.

From Buddy's point of view, a medium shot of Chi, screaming in pain, tears in his eyes, pleading for help the dog latched onto his one arm, the dog food spilled onto the ground.

CAPTION 2:

I got bitten.

Page 3, Panel 3.

Close on the dog, biting Chi on the arm.

CAPTION 3:

Over.

Page 3, Panel 4.

Close on the dog, biting Chi on the leg.

CAPTION 4:

And over.

Page 3, Panel 5.

Close on the dog biting Chi on the head. Chi is reaching up with both hands in an effort to shield himself.

CAPTION 5:

And over.

Page 3, Panel 6.

After the first five smaller panels, this panel should take up most of the page. From a slightly bird's eye view, it's a wide silhouette of the dog on top of Chi, the doghouse on one side, Buddy running to help on the other.

CAPTION 6:

The truth is, that dog and I were locked into a recurring cycle.

CAPTION 7:

Whenever I fed him, he would bite me.

CAPTION 8:

And so I would fear him.

CAPTION 9:

Sensing my fear...

CAPTION 10:

He would bite me.

CAPTION 11:

So I would fear him.

CAPTION 12:

On and on.

PAGE 4 (EIGHT PANELS)

Page 4, Panel 1.

A medium shot, low to the ground, of the doghouse on a cold winter night. With the exception of a small circle cleared by the dog's paw prints, it's surrounded by snow. Just inside the doghouse, we can see the dog curled up to protect itself from the cold.

CAPTION 1:

The dog escaped that cycle. He died of frostbite one cold winter night not long after.

Page 4, Panel 2.

This panel should be the saddest, loneliest bit of artwork that anyone has ever seen. A much wider shot now includes the surrounding farm--dark, barren, and covered in snow. From this angle, we can't see the dog inside the doghouse; just the solid black shadow of its entrance.

CAPTION 2:

Had the frost sensed his fear?

CAPTION 3:

Would it still have bitten him if it hadn't?

CAPTION 4:

I cried when they told me.

Page 4, Panel 3.

Adult CHI now walks down a modern street in Brooklyn. He's dressed in a hoodie and jeans, walking with his hands in his pockets and his head down in contemplation. It's an autumn evening; the leaves are turning and starting to fall. Near a tree on the sidewalk, a small child walks a cute little French Bulldog.

CAPTION 5:

These days, it's not a dog that frightens me.

Page 4, Panel 4.

A close up shot of a few fallen leaves on the sidewalk.

CAPTION 6:

It's being out of work. Being alone. Dying.

Page 4, Panel 5.

Close up on Chi's face as he looks down, presumably at the fallen leaves.

CAPTION 7:

I keep trying to pull off that miracle.

Page 4, Panel 6.

A wide shot from inside Chi's dark apartment as he opens the door. Everything is black, except for the rectangle of light marked by the open door leading out into the hall. We recognize Chi from his shape and from the clothes he wears, but he's in complete shadow as he enters the apartment.

CAPTION 8:

I try not to be afraid.

Page 4, Panel 7.

A view from outside Chi's window, looking past the bars of a fire escape in the foreground. Chi sits, hunched over, at a desk pushed right up against the window. The room is dark except for the warm glow from a desk lamp. The desk is cluttered with papers, pens, reading glasses and a bottle of water. Chi is writing in a cheap composition book.

Page 4, Panel 8.

An overhead shot, looking down at Chi as he lies in bed, staring at the ceiling and clutching the edge of his blanket tightly.

CAPTION 9:

And I hope they can't sense it.