

## Modern Men

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# Modern Men

by [enkelior](#)

## Summary

Foggy's a modern man. Modern men have feelings.  
So you'd think he'd have some, now that Matt's gone.

(Set after the Defenders. Foggy is coping. Or not. It depends on who you ask.)

## Notes

It's been a really long time since I've written anything, and while the Defenders is far from a perfect show, I finally had... feelings. I loved Matt and Jessica and what little of their friends we got to see. A lot of this is probably just projection from my own life, but hopefully everyone's in character.

Just a heads up - some talk of religion (because, you know, Matt), absolutely no intention of offending anyone.

Foggy's never been a fan of churches.

Maybe part of it is the inevitable association with an altar boy he knew when he was a kid, a 5'10 blonde jock of a jerk who kept saying 'Frankly Franklin' as if that was some kind of brilliant dig, and also definitely ruined the name Nathan forever.

He's also not really fond of the church scene in general. The high ceiling, the melancholy statues, how everything's so grim and dankly lit and does its best to make you feel insignificant, and not in a good way. It's basically the architectural embodiment of a frown. Needless to say, not quite his style. Also, church grandmas are terrifying.

Then there's the crucifix thing – maybe it's mostly the crucifix thing - at least in Catholic churches, which, thanks to Matt, have been the only churches Foggy's been to in the past decade and a half. Even now he can't say he'll ever really understand the point of having a depiction of a man undergoing literal torture hanging on the wall like some sort of acceptable decoration. Like sure, it probably helps the whole guilt and shame thing, and now that he thinks about it he figures probably the only reason Matt hadn't put one up in his apartment was because he couldn't see it and so feel properly, perpetually chastised by God, but man. Those things can sure give innocent adult atheists a wallop of nightmares.

But churches were Matt's thing, after all, so it's appropriate to come here. He gets that.

Still. The place gives him goosebumps.

"It's been days, Karen," he tells her, really gently. As strong as Karen is, all the time, whenever her eyes get all big and glittery like right now Foggy can't help but feel some sort of instinct to crouch down, draw back, be less loud and intimidating. He still doesn't know what Karen was running from when she came to them, to Nelson and Murdock, but it almost makes him want to put on a stupid costume and punch a few assholes himself.

Karen isn't really willing to listen, gentle or not. But maybe, she says. Maybe maybe maybe –

"Maybe," he agrees after a moment, mostly because of her eyes.

"Sit with me," she says, and he does. They stay there for a good long while.

Eventually his arm finds itself around her thin back, and she rests her head on his shoulder. That's something Foggy's always appreciated about Karen, while crushing on her and afterwards: once you're in with her, that's it, you're in and there's no going back. Karen holds on as tight as she can and it doesn't really matter that Foggy had liked her like *that*, once upon a time, and that it could easily be weird; she grabs his arm without hesitation and takes comfort and gives it, too, as if they're family, as if they can count on each other for stable ground no matter what.

It's a rare thing, that.

Eventually they stand, make it slowly down the aisle (not like *that*). Something about the oak of the pews makes him think idly of the chocolate Marci stole from him that day at lunch while they'd half flirted, half verbally demolished each other over a case of tax evasion. (It's their thing. He chooses to think it's cute.) He reflects on that for a while because it's funny, isn't it, how some things go on when other things stop.

Foggy thinks he's in the clear when all of a sudden Karen says, "How – how're you doing, Foggy? I mean I, I know it's stupid – but. Still. Are you doing okay?"

He looks at her in surprise. "Well," he says, and smiles a little. "Under the circumstances. New York almost collapsing and all."

"Right, it's just, you know –" she slows, bites her lip, wrings her hands. "I haven't seen you cry about Matt."

And Foggy doesn't really know what to say to that. All right, so he's a crier, and Karen knows that. Karen's seen him through a lot, and besides, he's a modern man. Modern men have feelings.

So you'd think he'd have some, now that Matt's gone.

It's true, though, that he hasn't. Cried. Felt, even. Maybe it doesn't feel real to him either, yet.

Or maybe that's just how it is, with best friends; like a gaping chest wound when you come apart, and that lasts for a few terrible months of feeling like a stupid, gullible, heartbroken idiot before you start trying to remember them fondly somehow, remember the good times instead of the bad, because that'll make you the bigger person, right, that'll prove that you're over it, really, until eventually you only occasionally wonder what they're up to, and then get back to the Sunday crossword as though you never wondered at all.

(At some point you might feel so fine you even call them up once, invite them to try to make things right again, and you're not hurt or even surprised when they end up refusing.)

But then they die, and... and what, exactly? How are you supposed to feel, when your best friend isn't in your life anymore, and then they're dead? It was already over for you. You've already grieved. What difference does it actually make?

After all, you wouldn't have seen them if they were alive, either.

It might be the healthy thing to do, the modern man thing to do, but Foggy hasn't cried yet. And, truth be told, he's not so sure he will.

Because maybe... maybe he's just over Matt, and Daredevil, and the Matt that is Daredevil. Maybe some part of him had known, back when he'd handed over that duffle bag, that it was really goodbye. Maybe that last conversation hadn't been the acceptance Foggy'd thought it was – *go be yourself and save a few million people, you ridiculous Catholic idiot, just come back* – and instead more like *here, go, do what you gotta do*.

*I'm okay with you dying now.*

"I'm sure I will at some point," he offers weakly, after a moment. "Hasn't been that long, you know."

Karen's eyes are stupidly big, stupidly piercing. He shifts uneasily.

"Okay," she finally says, quietly. *I'm here either way*, she doesn't say, but makes clear all the same.

"Speaking of which," Foggy says in an effort to be light, but loud enough that it echoes. He winces and lowers his voice, remembers again how much he dislikes churches. "When do you think we should file a missing persons?"

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"I've seen you here before," someone says. "Never at mass, though."

Foggy starts, turns to see an old man with the face of a more kindly Vladimir Putin standing by him.

"Oh I don't go," he says, apologetically. "I'm pretty much an atheist."

"That doesn't have to be a reason," nice Putin says, sounding almost amused. "But in that case, what brings you here?"

He shrugs. "I don't even know, to be honest," he admits. "I guess... I guess I'm trying to understand someone."

The old man sits by him slowly, as though his joints might creak if he pushes them any further. "Anything I can help with?"

"Nah." Foggy leans back in the pew, looks ahead again and then flinches as he sees the crucifix, redirects his gaze to the stained glass which, uh, maybe slightly less creepy. "Well. Maybe you can explain the whole guilt thing to me."

"Are you feeling guilty about something?"

He stifles a laugh, surprised. "Ah, no, not me. That's not my style." He gestures vaguely. "I meant in general."

The man peers at him for a moment, and then sits back, mimicking his laid back pose. "It is my belief that religion is always there for those who need it. It acts as a moral guide, helps people walk their path in the world, make difficult decisions. And just like any belief, any idea, some may take it to an extreme."

"No kidding," he mutters.

Another pause. “Guilt is a very human concept, I think. And not an entirely useless one, when it can lead to righteous deeds from unexpected places. But I’ve found that often the greatest guilt comes with a very strong moral character, and a deeper humility. It is often when people are righteous, and convinced of their morality, that evil can be inflicted with impunity.”

“That tends to come with religion too,” he points out. He knows Matt had strong moral fiber or whatever. Daredevil ate his Catholic Wheaties religiously. That’s probably what got him killed, in the end.

“No doubt.”

“So why have religion at all?” he pushes.

“To guide the aimless. To instruct morality to those who need it. And, for those who have it, to offer hope.”

He scoffs. “Hope for what? That you’ll go to hell if you step out of line?”

But Catholic Putin only smiles gently.

“Hope that somebody’s watching.”

His mouth tugs into a frown. “I’m not sure how much good that does,” Foggy replies honestly. “This guy I knew –” His throat closes suddenly. He swallows. “... This guy I knew. He was a believer, and he always had to take everything on. Always had to put himself out there.” Foggy stares out at the church. “The guy literally couldn’t sleep at night if he thought there was something he could be doing to help someone.”

The old man – must be a priest, or a reverend, or whatever Catholics have – says, “You sound angry.”

Angry? Foggy shakes his head. “No, it’s just that - you can’t live like that. No one can live like that.” He turns to the old man. “I’m not saying you can’t do good things and change the world. Just that... you need to pick your fight. You do what you can, in an ordinary way, in a smart way, and then go home and think about other things, you know? You go on and make life livable. It’s not ignorance or denial, it’s being realistic. You can’t beat yourself up for not making the world perfect – the world’s never going to *be* perfect.”

“...Is that what you wish you’d told him?”

“I did tell him. I think.” He blows out a sigh. “But I don’t know that it mattered, really. No one could stop him. The guilt ate him up and he died.”

“I’m sorry to hear that.”

He smiles crookedly. “Yeah, me too,” he says, and stands. “Look, uh, Reverend –”

Wryly. “Father Lantom.”

“- Right. Thanks for the talk. And sorry if I was rude.” He stops, makes a face. “No, I was rude. Sorry for that. I guess I was just... looking for answers I already knew.”

A nod. “That’s perfectly all right, you know.”

He nods back and turns to leave. *Well*, he thinks at Matt. *You can’t say I didn’t try.*

“So he’s gone?” Lantom suddenly calls out after him, as though reading his mind. “Matt Murdock?”

Foggy stops.

Right. Of course this guy knows him by name. Matt probably had weekly superhero confessionals in super-secret alcoves in super-secret basements. It shouldn’t surprise him.

It shouldn’t surprise him at all.

“Yeah,” he answers, then thinks of Karen and adds, “probably.” He avoids the priest’s eyes. “Sorry for your loss.”

A long pause, and a long sigh. “Sorry for yours,” Lantom says heavily.

Foggy has barely turned away again when the old priest speaks up.

“Foggy, wasn’t it?” he says, and something about his voice is warm and grave, like his church. “You should know. Your friend was a very admirable man, and a very conflicted one. He wanted very much to be there for you. But you’re right.

“No one could have stopped him.”

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A door slams shut somewhere down the hallway. Foggy and Marci roll their eyes at each other.

“Please tell me I’m getting my office back soon,” he whines, sliding his head down his arm like the immaculate professional he is.

Marci taps his nose. “It’s only until the end of the week, Foggy Bear. Besides.” She tosses her mane of blonde hair, looks down at him with an arched and very manicured eyebrow. “You could always kick the interns out of their room.”

“Thus firmly establishing my dominion over them,” he agrees. “I could also share your office?”

She grins, quick like a fox. “Please. We’ve already shared too many things, don’t you think?”

“Just one bed,” he protests, thinking of some very, very late nights. “And a table,” he remembers, and is rewarded by a bark of laughter. Foggy sighs, then glowers back at the admittedly ritzy but wholly out of place desk. “Have I mentioned how much I hate renovations?”

She smirks and pushes off his desk, adjusting her skirt as she stands. It’s amazing what gray business casual can do, he muses idly. “You want superpower proof walls, don’t you? At least as long Hogarth’s pet project sticks around.”

“Her what?” he asks, confused, and Marci just winks at him as she slinks behind her office door. At least that’s a perk, their proximity to each other - his regular office, currently being torn apart, is on the other side of the building. “Okay you can’t just disappear like that,” he calls after her, and hears her giggle (she only giggles for him, he loves it). “That’s not how we do things here!”

He looks at his paperwork and sighs. Back to work, then. Work, and distracting hallway sounds, and overly loud footsteps, and a shadow over his paper.

“Nelson, right?”

He looks up, reviews the last bit of his conversation with Marci, and thinks he understands.

“Jessica,” he replies. There hadn’t been a formal introduction, exactly, but he’d seen the woman briefly, back at the station. Once when he sent Matt off to die, and once when they waited for Matt and nobody came. “You can just call me Foggy.”

She opens her mouth, but before she can say anything he tells her with a wry smile, “I’ve heard it all, trust me.”

“Right.” Jessica fidgets in her black leather jacket, looking a little cool but mostly terribly awkward. “So listen.” She pauses, shakes her head. “...Foggy. I’m not really good at this kind of thing, but... anyway. Sorry about Matt.”

“Me too,” he says, suddenly tired. “Everyone is.”

She hits his desk with a hand and leans over, meeting his eyes with a glare full of eyeliner. “No, I *am* sorry, okay? I should have come to you first. You should have heard it from me. I’m sorry for that, that was really shitty of me. I was just –” she straightens and then half-sits on his desk (what *is* it with his desk today?), crossing her feet, her hands back in her pockets. “I was just glad I got to come back,” she says harshly at her scarf, sounding almost angry with herself.

Foggy blinks, startled. He has a feeling she doesn’t do apologies very often. “Uh... thanks. That actually... that actually means a lot.”

Jessica nods stiffly, looking vaguely uncomfortable.

“And anyway,” he says with a shrug. “I get it. You making it out of there, it’s a good thing. I’m glad you did. And we’re – Matt – we’re not your responsibility.”



Now she's shrugging, frowning away from him. "I don't know about that."

"Hey," he says, suddenly realizing that this was more than just a 'sorry for your loss' conversation. "I don't know what happened down there, but I really, really doubt it was your fault."

She lifts a shoulder indifferently, but her mouth purses unhappily. "I could have done more, maybe," she mutters, kicking back at his desk. "Carried him over my shoulder or something."

"Why is every woman I know terrifying," he wonders, half in an attempt to make her smile (if she does, it's a very vague, quick thing). "Look, as tough as I'm sure you are, I promise you Matt's skull was thicker than you could ever imagine." (That does get him an amused quirk of her mouth.) "All you can do now is... whatever you were doing before Matt Murdock came into your life. Just maybe, I don't know. Help people more often. Wear red sometimes."

She snorts at that last one. "Ha," she says dryly. "As if."

He smiles at her.

"Well, you seem like you're doing all right," she remarks.

Foggy gestures at his abominable desk. "Got plenty of work to keep me occupied," he replies, and almost laughs at himself when he remembers the last time he'd said something similar.

Fat lot of good that did.

She hesitates. "I thought you'd be... sadder," she says. "Not that I can judge or anything. Just saying."

"I lost Matt long before he died," he admits, because he has the sudden feeling that with her, he can. "Didn't want him out there in the first place," he explains, at her questioning glance. "Had a whole fight about it. The non-violent sort."

"But you gave him the —" she pauses. "His clothes. You gave him his clothes."

He chuckles dryly, aimlessly shuffles a few papers around. "Yeah. I thought..." he shrugs, shakes his head at himself. "I don't know what I thought."

Jessica takes a breath and sighs loudly, puffing her cheeks. "Look," she snaps, gruff. "I didn't know him very well. Or for very long. The guy was ridiculous, and kind of an asshole."

"Sounds like Matt," he says lightly.

"But I liked him. And he bought us time to get away, so I'll always owe him for that." She pushes herself to a stand, brings one hand out of her coat pocket. "My card. If you ever need anything."

“Alias Investigations,” he reads aloud, then looks back up. “Ditto, by the way,” he says, and to his surprise, finds himself meaning it. “If you ever do.”

Jessica Jones smiles a little. “Later then, Foggy,” she says, raising a hand in goodbye and leaving in long, determined strides, the very image of a reluctant hero.

“Bye,” he says softly.

And wonders at himself.

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It was a long day at work. Foggy comes home and kicks off his shoes almost violently, not bothering to see where they land. He pads over to the fridge, stares into it, closes it, then turns around and sighs at his living room in general.

And then everything freezes. “Holy shit,” Foggy says automatically.

“Hi, Foggy,” the specter of his dead once-best friend greets him, looking pale and thin like ghosts probably do, but otherwise looking rather clean, and, more importantly, solid.

“Did you break into my apartment?” he asks distantly.

“You still keep the extra key in the electric closet,” said specter explains, awkward. His usual dirty scruff is almost a beard now, which is very wrong on many different levels, and just the way he's standing makes Foggy strongly suspect that whatever injuries Matt's hiding, he probably doesn't want to know. His glasses must have gotten lost while he'd been busy being, well, not dead, and the off-target stare is somehow both too familiar and too vulnerable for comfort.

Still processing all this, Foggy says, “I should really stop doing that.”

“Yeah,” the other man agrees. His mouth quirks, briefly, as if trying for a smile and failing miserably. “Look, I - I know I’ve no right to be here. I just wanted to tell you – well, I wanted to see you.”

“Uh huh, okay.” He feels for the counter behind him. “So, where have you been, exactly? Because we were all pretty sure you were dead.”

A wince. “A... a convent. It’s a – it’s a long story.”

“Right,” Foggy says slowly. “Nuns. That... almost makes sense.”

Not-Dead-Matt bites his lip, shoulders hunched, then clearly decides to bulldoze on ahead. “I’m sorry, Foggy. You gave me my suit and I went ahead and screwed it up anyway.”

“Well.” He swallows. “I don't know about that. You did save a bunch of people. Your friends. And, you know. New York.”

“I couldn't have done it without you.” Foggy bites back on a laugh. “No, really, Foggy. Thank you.”

“Thank —” this time a bit of laughter does escape him. “Matt, you idiot. I basically sent you out there to die.”

“I would have gone anyway, you know that.” His not dead ex friend comes closer, and Foggy wishes he could melt into the counter even as he nods. “I did try to stay out of it at first,” Matt says, stumbling on the words like he can't quite string them together. “And then I couldn't. But I... I went too deep. Too dark. I can't stop - I don't want to stop being Daredevil, but I know I need to do better. Act smarter. Take better care of myself.”

His heartbeat rushes at his ears, slow and steady. *Maybe this is what it's like for him*, he thinks.

*Kinda sucks.*

“Sounds like that convent was good for you,” he says, and even though Matt can't see it he still tries to smile, show that he's the bigger person, that he's over everything, if only to himself. “Good thing you didn't die, huh.”

“Foggy,” Matt says, sounding broken. “I'm really sorry.”

“Everyone's sorry.” His new catchphrase. “I thought you were dead, Matt. And now you're not, so what now?”

Matt turns his head away, swallows. “What do you mean?”

“I mean what now?” he raises his arms, gestures helplessly. “Do I just get to wait until the next time you're feeling suicidal? How many times do I need to grieve for you?”

His friend's face crumples.

“I was in a good place, you know?” he interrupts before Matt can say anything, not caring if it hurts. “You made your choice, and I got to live with it. I was actually getting pretty good at that. And then - then you went ahead and died, Matt, like some stupid hero, all because I was dumb enough to let you go. And guess what, I got to live with that too.”

Matt closes his eyes. “I know, I'm, I'm sorry —”

“I don't want you to be sorry!” he snaps. “I want you to not be dead! I want you to stay not dead! Did you even tell Karen? Jessica? They mourned, you asshole!”

“I'll call them, I promise, I just - I wanted to see you first —”

He sees red. “Why, Matt?” he shouts. “Why me? Of all people, why me? *We aren't even friends anymore!*”

And then, really quietly, really gently –

“Because, Foggy, it's like you said. We're family.”

Foggy looks at his best friend for a long and terrible moment, and then... Well. He's a modern man.

As it turns out, though, so is Matt.

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