

# Figment

*Episode 10*

Jonathan and Christine worked their way through the line, gathering the items they each yearned to eat. Jonathan's tray was full; a large plate holding a baked potato, some steak, very few vegetables, and a side bowl of vanilla pudding. Christine was the extreme; a plate with a fresh salad topped with the red sweetness of French dressing and a bowl of clean pineapple chunks.

Jonathan picked up a set of utensils and set them on Christine's tray, smiling at her as he did so. She smiled back and gave his elbow a playful nudge. "Thank you," she said turning out of the line and walking to the cashier. Jonathan stood for a moment, watching her walk away from him. He smiled and laughed lightly to himself. He gathered a handful of napkins and some utensils for himself and entered the line to pay.

Christine was already out of the line and walking into the dining area, looking for someplace to sit when Jonathan reached the cashier. He handed the older woman his pre-paid meal card. She swiped it through the card reader and handed back to him. She said something, but Jonathan did not hear her. He was looking at a shadow on the other side of the room. He thought he had just seen it move.

"You still owe 16 cents," the cashier lady said holding out her hand.

"Oh," said Jonathan, snapping back to the conversation. He dug into his pocket and produced a quarter, laying it in the woman's fake-nailed hand. She tendered the remaining amount and handed the young man his change.

Jonathan stepped out of the line and into the dining area. Instead of following Christine, he walked towards the shadow that moved. He had a suspicion of who it was, and he wanted some answers.

Christine found an empty table on the other side of the dining area from where the cashier exit was. She looked around for Jonathan, but did not see him in the line. She could have sworn he was right behind her. Then she spotted him over by the entrance of the building, looking around as if he was looking for her. She stood up and waved in his direction, but he turned his head just as she did so, missing the gesture altogether. She sat back down and waited for him to turn around again. He seemed to stop looking around and was talking to somebody, but she couldn't see anybody standing in front of him. She could, however, make out some of his facial expressions and could see that he was not pleased to see whoever he was talking to.

"What are you doing here?" Jonathan asked the looming shadow next to the brick wall.

"He's here." The figure said in his usual dark tone.

Jonathan took a half step backwards. "I thought you said he wasn't going to following me any longer."

“I thought I was correct with my assumption, but he is fixated on you.” The figure looked around the room, scanning with his dark eyes.

“What does he want with me?” Jonathan asked, almost become irate.

“That I do not know,” said the shadow, “but relax, enjoy your meal with your lady friend. I will find out his purpose soon enough.”

“How can I relax when I have a maniac following me with a sword?” Jonathan said raising his voice a bit.

“Be calm,” said the giant figure, “Do not draw attention to yourself, I do not think he is here for you.” He motioned with his head towards Christine.

“He’s here for Christine?” Jonathan asked.

“No, not for her.”

“I want some answers. Who are you? What does he want with Christine? What does he want with me?”

“I cannot give you those answers, Jonathan.” The figure said, standing up straight. “Go, enjoy your meal.”

Jonathan paused for a moment, looking the dark figure for a moment then started walking towards Christine through the dining area, scanning with only his eyes for the killer that was looming about somewhere in the room.

Jonathan sat down at the table across from Christine. He smiled at her as he adjusted the items on his plate with his fork.

“Who were you talking to?” Christine asked smiling back.

“Oh,” Jonathan answered, “it was nobody.”

Christine smiled weakly. She knew he was talking to somebody, but she could not see who it was. It was possible that whoever it was they were standing on the other side of the wall where she could not see them.

“Just an old friend,” Jonathan said, seeing the expression on Christine’s face as she picked at the salad on her tray.

A girl screamed from across the area behind Jonathan. He quickly turned around, his eyes wide with fear. Laughter erupted from a table near the middle of the room. A girl in a pink shirt stood up. Down the front of her shirt was a black and brown liquid; too dark for blood. On the table sat a still fussing bottle of Dr. Pepper. She had opened it, not knowing the boys at the table shook it while she was getting some napkins earlier. One of the boys in a white and blue collared shirt held up his hand while the one next to him in a gray polo gave him a high-five and proceeded to shake his friend’s hand, a common gesture for most adolescent males of recent times. Jonathan let out a sigh of relief and turned back around to Christine.

“What was that about?” Christine asked him before taking a sip of her drink through the clear straw.

“Sorry, just startled me a bit.”

“I’d say! You turned around and went pale like you saw a ghost.”

“Listen,” Jonathan said leaning into the table a bit. Christine leaned in to hear him better. “I know this is going to sound crazy, but I need you to look for anybody that might look suspicious walking through the room.”

Christine sat back in her seat, folded her arms across her chest and gave Jonathan a glare. “Are you not supposed to be seen with me?” she asked.

“No,” Jonathan said quickly, “that’s not it at all. It’s…” He paused for a second to think of what he was going to say. “It’s just that I’ve had this guy following me around campus the past few days and my friend was telling me that he saw him in here, in this building. I just want to avoid him as much as possible.”

Christine relaxed a bit, resting her arms on the table and leaning forward again. “You’ve had someone following you around this whole week and you haven’t called the police?”

Jonathan looked down at his plate and shrugged. “He wasn’t really that scary until the other night, so I didn’t see any reason to. But now I’m wishing I did call them earlier.”

Christine looked at her plate then at Jonathan. “Would you rather get a box for this stuff and go eat in my room? It will keep you away from this guy following you, and it’s a little more private.” She gave Jonathan a glance with her eyes and bit her lower lip in a teasing fashion. Jonathan smiled and gathered his utensils.

“I’d like that,” he said standing up and going to get a few boxes for their food.

Jonathan came back in a few minutes with three boxes and some extra napkins. He carefully packed their meals in separate boxes then gathered all the utensils into the third box. He stacked them all up then motioned for Christine to follow him. As they neared the front door of the building, Jonathan looked around the corner for the one that seemed to be protecting him. He let out a small sigh when he did not see him. He handed the boxes over to Christine.

“I’m sorry,” he said pointing a thumb over his shoulder at the bathroom door behind him. “I’m just going to hop in here really quick before we take off.” He walked backwards into the bathroom, watching Christine the whole time until the door closed and blocked his view.

Craig sat at his computer, typing on his keyboard that seemed to float over his bent knee. There was a sharp knock on his door. He set dropped his leg and stood up. After stumbling across the messy floor of the room he opened the door and stepped back in shock.

“What are you doing here?” he asked the man standing outside his door. He looked the man up and down then laughed a little to himself. “Come on in.” He walked back to his computer chair and sat down as the man walked into the room and shut the door behind him.