

# Figment

## Episode 3

It was almost 6:30 at night when Jonathan got out of his last class. Normally it was still bright outside but with the more days that passed into the fall months the quicker dark came to Jonathan's part of the world. There was still a slight sliver of orange and red on the low west horizon, remnants of a long, dry fall day. However, the darkening sky was just enough that the street lamps around the sidewalks were alit, casting shadows against the pavement below Jonathan's feet.

He walked slowly, taking his time. It wasn't very late in the day, but the dinner rush at the nearest dining hall would be packed with hungry students. Jonathan was not socially inept, but he was not a fan of large crowds in small areas. This actually made it a bit confusing to himself. He could not stand the crowds while waiting in line to get some dinner after class, but he did not mind a crowded bar with people singing out of tune and others screaming for an encore or the recent travesty to music to remove themselves from the stage. He adjusted his backpack, gripping it a little tighter as he noticed a character standing in the shadows ahead of him.

The campus on which Jonathan lived wasn't a large campus and did not have many problems with students getting mugged on the way to or from class or even just walking around the outskirts of campus grounds. This is not mean that there were the few occasions that it did happen, but it was more likely that some pretty girl walking home from parking her car or visiting some friends would get assaulted by a drunk or disturbed individual looking for a good romp in the bushes. Jonathan didn't have to worry about this cause since he didn't consider himself pretty, or a girl for that matter. But the news story that morning about the killer made him wary about his surroundings and seeing individuals dressed in black hanging out in the shadows cast by the lamps.

As he got closer, Jonathan was able to notice that the individual was wearing a black overcoat. It was not very warm out this evening, but it was in no way cold enough to require a coat. A brimmed black hat covered the person's face, but judging by what Jonathan could see the individual in question was male. There was slight stubble showing on the person's face, but it could have been the typical five o'clock shadow. As Jonathan began to pass the dark individual the shadow cast by the brim of the hat covered the majority of the man's face. The only feature that Jonathan could still see was the stubble-covered chin and lower cheek. The man never raised or turned his head as Jonathan walked past. He just kept staring at the ground, hands thrust deeply into the pockets of the overcoat.

"Nice night isn't it?" a voice asked from behind Jonathan. It could have only been assumed to belong to the darkly dressed man under the lamplight considering the fact that he was the only person behind Jonathan. Jonathan kept walking, not bothering to turn around to face the man. It wasn't that he didn't want to talk to this person hiding in the shadows it was just that he didn't really want to be knifed in the gut for what little change he kept in his pockets and his student ID card. Heaven forbid he loses his ID

card. The thought of somebody else running around campus claiming to Jonathan Geise sounded ridiculous but it was something that was possible. Anything was possible these days.

“I said,” the voice echoed again behind Jonathan, “Ain’t it a nice night?” This time Jonathan stopped and turned around slowly to see who was talking to him. He expected to see the man standing close behind him. From the sound of his voice, the man almost seemed to be standing right behind Jonathan when he spoke, but in fact had not moved from his spot against the light post, hands still in his pockets.

“Look,” Jonathan said holding up a hand in caution, “I don’t want any trouble.”

“Trouble?” the man asked with a slight laugh in his tone. There was a pause as the man thought, then he pushed himself away from the pole, making sure his head stayed down so the shadows continued to hide his face. He took a few steps forward but not approaching Jonathan. “I’m not going to be any trouble to you. No. In fact I’m here to help you.”

“Help me how?” Jonathan asked taking a half step behind him.

“You shall see,” said the dark figure turning away from Jonathan. “I’ll show you in due time.” As the man walked away from Jonathan, the last words sounded as if the man were once again behind him, but Jonathan could clearly see the man’s back as he walked towards the bus stop.

Jonathan shuddered slightly as if touched by a burst of cold wind. He adjusted his backpack and turned back around and continued toward the dining hall in search for some dinner.

The door to room 302 was unlocked when Jonathan finally got back to his dorm room. He knew that Craig was home. He never forgot to lock the door. It was a practice he made sure he learned since his first day on campus and since then he has only forgotten once. Luckily for him another guy on the floor noticed the slightly opened door and promptly closed it and left a note for either Jonathan or Craig about the situation.

Jonathan liked living on the third floor of this particular building. Two wings of the building were sectioned off as being the drug-free dormitories. Student living here had to sign a contract in which they agreed to live in the dorms and not partake in the use of illegal drugs. Of course it was reasonable that the students who were of age could partake in the consumption of alcoholic beverages, just as long as they did not bring the drinks home with them and did not cause much ruckus as they arrived back home in the early hours of the morning. Along with living without the pressure of drugs, all the guys on the floor joined together as one community. They usually would go to either lunch or dinner together and would go as a large group to social events around campus.

Surely as he predicted upon opening the door Jonathan found Craig hunched over the wireless keyboard of his computer. Although the desk was clearly designed to be an ideal height to hold a computer keyboard, Craig still insisted on having his keyboard rest on a book on his knees. From time to time he would lean back in his chair and prop his feet up on the desk so his knees formed a vertical platform. From here he would use the table he and Jonathan made for this certain occasion. It would strap by Velcro around his legs and hold the keyboard at an ideal typing height for Craig as he leaned back in his chair. The only fall-back to this method was it wasn’t quick to set up or tear down. It

was usually only for certain days that Craig was going to spend countless hours in front of the blue glow of his 19 inch LCD monitor.

Jonathan acknowledged Craig and sat down on the yellow couch that stood just below his bed loft and flipped on the television. He wasn't in the mood for news, which is where he had left the TV since he left for class that morning. He changed the channel to Cartoon Network. Although 21 years old, Jonathan still enjoyed a good animated kids show just for something funny or random ambient noise while studying. After his encounter with the strange man in black, Jonathan needed some good old-fashioned comedy and slap-stick humor of the Looney Tunes to clear his head. He also needed a fresh turkey sub, which he pulled from the plastic bag that he had carried into the room. Left inside the bag was a small fruit cup and a Raspberry Lemonade Snapple. The Snapple did not relatively go well with a turkey, cheese, lettuce, jalapeño sub sandwich, but Jonathan liked the nutritional benefits of drinking the pure juice drink. He was much happier a year ago while the dining services still served Jones Soda, but this school year they decided that it was not a worthwhile endeavor to keep the coolers stocked with the deliciously named soft drinks. Bubble Gum had been Jonathan's favorite and Craig had never tried a Jones until Jonathan basically forced him to take a sip of one called Bug Juice. From that day on Craig was hooked. One could say that he *had a jones for Jones*, as the comical advertisement line printed on each bottle's paper wrapper stated.

After a satisfying dinner and a small session of studying for his classes for the next day, Jonathan was ready for bed, but his mind was still uneasy about the previous day. First was the news about the murder then an encounter with a strange man in black clothes. He could not shake the thought that it was all tied together somehow. After brushing his teeth and changing into something a bit more comfortable to sleep in, boxers and a t-shirt, Jonathan figured that his mind was just getting to him from the stress of classes. Murders happen every day and there were plenty of strange people in the world with problems of their own. Jonathan climbed up the ladder to the top of his loft and settled down against the mattress, pulling his blankets up to his shoulders. Though bothered with random thoughts of the day as soon as Jonathan's head hit his pillow he fell into dreamland.