

# Figment

## Episode 7

It was one word that sent Jonathan running in the other direction. One syllable, no inflection, no eye contact, no expression whatsoever.

“Go.”

Metal slid effortlessly against metal. A slight resonating ring fed into the air surrounding the two black objects. There was the ripple of leather, the folding of fine woven cloth then another clang as steel collided with steel. The sounds began to blend as moves became faster. Three more clangs rang out into the night sky. Curiosity crept over Jonathan as he slowed his pace and turned around to watch the exchanges. The newcomer was dressed in similar fashion; all black with a very long leather overcoat and brimmed leather Aussie-style hat. Although the shadows held tightly to both figures as they exchanged parries and ripostes, Jonathan was able to tell a distinct difference in height. The new guy stood above six feet tall and had a better muscular tone.

The killer swung hard to the newcomer's left arm. CLANG! The block came almost as fast as the attack and was followed by another block to the other side. Both figures spun around in opposite directions and met with half blades, letting them slide to the tang as they both stepped into each other. Jonathan was surprised that at the amount of noise they were making in the dark night that nobody else had come to investigate. However, the campus was known for its various film students doing late night productions that included a few unorthodox items such as swords or guns so as to avoid being caught by campus police.

The killer rotated his blade downward, forcing his opponent's to the ground. He followed through with a turn of his waist and an elbow to the newcomer's temple. The opponent staggered away but brought up his blade to block a downward cut from the killer. The sword flew out of the newcomer's hands and clattered on the pavement. As the killer followed through the initial attack with another cut, the newcomer threw his arm in the way to deflect the blow. There was a cry of pain as the blade sliced through the thick leather and into flesh. Just as the killer brought his blade up again a bright light flashed across the yard, the wail of a police car. The killer turned to see what was going on, blocking his eyes and face from the light. The newcomer rolled out of the way and into the shadows. Jonathan moved behind a tree and saw the killer quickly hide the sword behind his back as the police car slowly passed by, keeping the spot light on. Jonathan could hear a conversation going on between the officers in the car and the killer but was not able to make out any what they were saying. The light went out and the car passed. The killer looked around and sheathed his sword and started to walk in the opposite direction of Jonathan.

Jonathan let out a sigh of relief and turned back around to go back to his dorm. He was startled by a dark figure standing a few yards away from him, leaning on a short wall, a sword hanging from his other hand. The figure tried to step forward but slumped down and began to fall over. Jonathan rushed forward with speed he never knew he had

and caught the figure as he fell. Jonathan pushed the figure back up against the wall. He felt wetness against his hand. He pulled his hand away and turned it to the light of the streetlamp. It was red with blood. He wiped his hand clean on his pants and turned back to the figure, which was now started to stand again.

“You’re cut,” Jonathan said pointing to the injury on the newcomer’s left arm.

“I will heal.” The dark giant spoke in the same coldness as before. He sheathed his own blade and steadied himself against the wall before standing straight again. Jonathan could now tell the new individual stood almost six-foot-five. The stranger took another step forward, slowly gathering himself and his strength back. He breathed heavily.

“You don’t have much to say.” Jonathan said standing back.

The dark figure scoffed under his breath in mockery of Jonathan’s comment. It was almost as if this new stranger had more to say in actions than words. He turned to Jonathan, looking down at the young man. Jonathan was able to look into the stranger’s eyes. He saw strength flowing through them, in them, and out of them. Something in these stranger’s eyes was compelling to Jonathan, making him desire to do something extraordinary, something heroic. Jonathan closed his eyes and shook away the feeling.

“I guess I need to thank you for my life.” He said holding out his right hand. The stranger looked at him.

“You owe me no such thing,” the shadow said. Jonathan looked around to see if maybe anybody else was walking the sidewalk and saw the two of them talking. Strangely enough there was nobody around. He had not seen another student ever since the killer appeared. The only interruption of his loneliness with the two black-clad soldiers of darkness was the police car passing by.

“How did you know...”

“I have been tracking this murder for months,” the figure spoke, cutting Jonathan off in the middle of his initial question. “I followed him here but was not sure what he was planning to do. After I saw him talking to you I knew.”

Jonathan backed up a little, stepping more into the light in case the new giant were to turn against him. His hopes were that somebody would see him.

“What is he planning to do?” Jonathan asked, his voice shaking slightly.

The shadowed man faced Jonathan. “The less you know, the safer you will be. I must go.” The man turned and began to walk away from Jonathan.

“Wait,” Jonathan called after the man, “what if I need you again?”

“You won’t.” The man said. “It is I who needs you.”

Before Jonathan could ask anything else, the figure was gone, his body, drenched in black, was swallowed by the shadows of the night, despite his large size.

Jonathan stared in disbelief at the shadow in front of him as the figure drifted out of sight. It was almost like the character from the Dean Koontz novel *Frankenstein, Deucalion*.

Jonathan awoke the next morning from a dreamless sleep. To him, however, the previous night almost seemed too much like a dream. There were no other students around him during the confrontation between the two shadow-men. His talk with the newcomer after the battle seemed to almost be a memory of yesteryear, fading with every passing minute like any other dream produced from the deepest chasms of the mind

during REM sleep. Maybe it was a dream. He could not remember the dark giant's name. It was almost as if this new protector was just a figment of Jonathan's imagination.

Craig was already awake, as usual, but was not in the room. Jonathan could hear his roommate's distinctive gay laughter down the hall. Jonathan mocked it silently with a smile on his face as he climbed out of his loft. As soon as his bare feet touched the laminate flooring of the domicile, the phone rang. Jonathan staggered over to the phone, unaware that his left foot had fallen asleep and he could not walk. He snatched the phone out of the cradle and pushed the talk button.

"Hello?" he said into the receiver.

"Hi," returned a female voice. "Is Jonathan there?"

"Speaking," Jonathan said rubbing his eyes, trying to wake up more.

"Hey, it's Christine, the girl from a few nights ago."

"Yeah, I remember."

"You do? I was just wondering since you haven't called me."

"I'm sorry. I've just been rather busy lately and have had some crazy stuff going on."

"I mean, I don't want to sound like I'm ungrateful for the other night, but I just don't want to be treated like...like another notch on your bedpost...so to speak."

"No." Jonathan said quickly without thinking. "It's not that. I'm being serious."

"What do you mean?"

"I've been having trouble sleeping lately. Let me make it up to you."

"Alright."

"Dinner tonight...at The Retreat."

"Alright...say about six o'clock?"

"Sounds good to me." Jonathan exchanged his goodbyes with Christine and set the phone back down in the cradle gently.

"Dodged a bullet there, buddy." A voice said from behind Jonathan. He turned around to see Craig standing in the door. Jonathan had not heard his roommate enter the room. More than likely it had happened when he was explaining himself to Christine. He was more focused on trying to get her to spend another night with him than what was going on around him. Had the killer, or whoever it was that was following Jonathan around on campus, been in the room, they would have had the perfect opportunity to do to Jonathan what they pleased.

"So..." Craig gave Jonathan an eager stare, begging with his eyes for more information.

"I'm taking Christine out for dinner tonight." Jonathan said after a short sigh.

"Christine...from Monday night?"

"Same one."

Craig smiled and chuckled slightly to himself.

"What?" Jonathan asked moving across the room. "I know that chuckle. You think I'm not up to any good."

"I think you're up to *no* good." Craig said, correcting Jonathan's grammatical mistake. "You just enjoyed the last time she was here and wouldn't mind going another round with that fine piece of ass."

Jonathan reared back slightly with a shocked expression on his face.

“Did you just say ‘fine piece of ass’ in reference to a girl?”

“Yes, but I only meant it in terms that you would understand.”

“Come on Craig,” Jonathan began badgering, “don’t tell me you wouldn’t want to get up in that.”

“Stop it.”

“Give her a bit of how’s-yer-father.”

“Enough.”

“You know, grab yourself some fruit that made man wise.”

“Seriously, you’re asking for it.”

“Wham, bam, thank you ma’am!”

“Jon, you know that I’m all about the happyjacking.”

Jonathan stuck his fingers in his ears before Craig could finish. He turned and faced the window and started to repeat in a loud voice, “La la la la, I can’t hear you!”

Craig recited a few more terms regarding homosexual intercourse before giving up and sitting down at his computer. He took his usual stance, leaning back in his chair.

Jonathan began to close the blinds so he could change when he looked down to the sidewalk outside his dorm. He saw something familiar, but only for a second before it was gone again. He shook it off and looked back out the window. Nothing was there. It was only a bag blowing in the wind. He shut the blinds to the room and got dressed for the day.

The great thing about taking a shower the night before is that Jonathan would not have to waste his morning taking one. He could sleep in late then get dressed and leave. The only thing he would have to worry about what his hair looked like. However, with the wind that was blowing today, there was no need to be perfect. He could blame his bed-head on a nice south-easterly gust. He walked out of the front doors of the building and was met by a wall of rushing wind. His eyes watered from the amount of oxygen they were receiving. His vision blurred for a few seconds then focused again. As he looked back up into the onslaught of the weather he once again saw a shape, this time just out of the corner of his eye. There was no mistaking it this time. He turned his head sharply to see the man from the night before, standing calmly atop one of the three cement squares that sat outside the front of his dorm, serving as a podium for several events and move-in/out days. The movement Jonathan had seen was the flapping of a black leather coat. Jonathan lowered his head into the wind and began to walk over to the man in black. As he approached the figure, he raised his head to speak, but upon seeing the person leaning against the wall, Jonathan saw that it was only another student, dressed in a black trench coat, standing outside using the wall as a shield so he could smoke. Jonathan began to look back down at the ground, noticing that there was no tear on the left sleeve of the jacket. Maybe the fight last night was only a dream.