

# Figment

## Episode 9

The room was nearly empty. The low lighting made the floors, walls, and ceiling appear a dark mix of blue and white. A long table sat near the middle of the room, set close to one of the longest walls. Behind it sat a young police officer with a pad of paper and a pencil. In the very center of the room was a standing dummy of a man. Next to the dummy sat a surgical tray. Gleaming in the low lights was the distinct stainless steel of several knives and blades. Butcher cleavers, cooking knives, daggers, and switch blades of all types and sizes filled the tray. A hand reached over and carefully selected one of the daggers from the table. The blade was slightly curved upwards, almost twelve inches in length and the grip made of fake ivory. Detective Krum held the dagger in his right hand and studied the dummy for a bit then switched the weapon to his left side, studied the lifeless body a few more seconds, then changed hands again. He stepped forward, holding the blade down by his left hip with the back of his hand facing the ceiling of the room then stepped slowly towards the dummy, slowly raising his hand in a cutting motion. He stopped halfway through the motion and retracted his steps. He flipped the blade in his hand so his palm was facing up but the blade was still facing towards his back side then stepped in again, this time cutting at the dummy with full force. A splash of red erupted out of the ballistics gel and splattered on a sheet of white paper that was suspended from a boom hanging from the ceiling.

Dean Krum had been a detective ever since he finished the academy. He was first drafted by the force due to his knowledge of crime scene reconstruction and his innate ability to think like a killer. When investigating a crime scene, working with Krum was as if you were standing in the room while the murder was taking place. Dean would outline every step, every motion, and every motive without ever interviewing any witnesses or suspects. Typically he was correct about motives and the way the murder happened when a suspect was later arrested and questioned. It made him a legend in the police force. Everybody knew about Detective Dean Krum. It was no wonder that they assigned him to a case that was as high profile as this one. The unfortunate thing was that Dean still had yet to crack the killer's motive for killing and oddly enough, the weapon used in the recent string of murders. The only clue so far has been that all the murders have slowly been progressing eastward. They were not in any particular pattern, however, such as following a major road or even establishing a graphical pattern. It was as if the serial killer performing these gruesome tasks were doing so randomly, but with some purpose. Whoever it was, they obviously had a car else the murders would happen in a relative straight line. Most murders that have a thirst for killing such as this one typically would not go out of their way if walking from site to site.

Dean lowered the boom and took the sheet of paper off and set it gently on the floor and set the dagger on the corner of the paper near the splatter of red dye used to imitate blood. Behind the sheet Dean had just removed was a fresh sheet, ready to be used in the next experiment. The officer at the table got up and pulled the dummy aside

and fit the front side with a new ballistics gel mold. He took the used mold and set it on the paper next to the dagger Dean had used. As Dean raised the boom back to the height of the ceiling from the last murder scene, a door on the far side of the room opened. Dean's partner walked in, carrying a folder in his left hand. Dean selected the cleaver from the table of weapons and held it in the same fashion as the dagger just a few moments before. He stepped forward, cutting the dummy again. Another spray of dye flew onto the paper suspended from the ceiling. He studied it for a moment then turned to his partner.

"What do you have?" Dean said holding out his hand to take the folder. His partner handed it to him, opening it as he did so.

"Results on the wife," he said. "Just as Willard suggested; a fatal stab through the back side of the body, just below the heart, but well enough into the lung to suffocate her in her own blood."

"And the husband?" Dean asked lowering the boom.

"Not finished yet, but you were right about the cut along the neck line. It appears to be one solid motion from front to back."

Dean thumbed through the paperwork then handed it back to his partner. He walked around the dummy a few times, looking up at the paper hanging above him.

"So we know that the wife was killed almost instantly." Dean began, thinking out loud as he typically did when trying to figure out a tough question. "Her body suggested that she was dead before she fell to the floor. Her husband, cut several times across the chest, was beheaded while running towards his fallen wife. The direction he was running combined with the force of the cut to his neckline forced the body to stagger backwards, even though it continued to move forward a few steps."

Dean picked up one the larger daggers off of the tray; a fourteen inch doubled-sided smooth blade with wooden grip. He held it in his hand then twirled it around, switched hands, spun it in his left, and then switched hands again. His partner could tell that he was trying to figure everything out. This case was bothering him. He could not find a motive, pattern, or a weapon. He had not slept in days and the insomnia was starting to sink into his posture and eyes.

"The cuts to the chest would have happened before his wife was killed." Dean continued. "The killer thought the husband was finished, or was maybe toying with him, letting him watch his wife die before he was killed. An upward slash made from a sharp, flat blade, no serrated edges and not too deep. It was almost as if the killer was keeping the husband back, warding him off while he finished the wife."

"He would have to have a longer blade than a cleaver or a knife in order to do something like that." Dean's partner chimed in looking down at the twelve inch blade on the floor.

"Correct," Dean agreed. "So any short weapons are out of the question. Something longer, but still lethal and easy to control."

"So we are looking for something maybe fourteen to sixteen inches in length."

"But no longer than forty-two. Anything longer would be too hard to maneuver inside a house without hitting something else, and since nothing else in the house was disturbed besides the residents, it would have had to be shorter than that."

Dean studied what he had on the tray then looked at the officer sitting at the table.

“I need you to head down the hall and get some information on weapons with blades twenty to thirty-six inches in length. Something like a wakizashi or katana.”

The officer stood for a moment, giving Dean a bedazzled look.

“A wak-a-whatie?” he asked scratching his head.

“A wakizashi,” Dean corrected him. “It is a small Japanese blade, usually found in a bushido, or samurai, set.”

The officer still stood there for a while longer giving the detective a blank stare then gathered his stuff and stepped out of the room.

Dean’s partner set the folder down on the table and sat on the corner, folding his arms across his chest.

“I do have to say,” he said looking down at the floor then back up to Dean, “that this is the strangest case we’ve worked yet.”

“It’s only about to get stranger,” Dean said. “I will admit that the weapon of choice is quite exotic.”

“Any lead on the motive yet?”

“None yet,” Dean said leaning against the table next to his partner. “I’m still trying to determine the exact weapon. It’s possible that once I have that bit of the puzzle done more will fall into place.”

“So what do we do in the meantime?”

“We keep working,” Dean said standing up. He walked over to the tray holding the weapons and picked one up. “And we wait.”