

CONJURING GEORGE

By Bradley Walton

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CHARACTERS: *SMITH and JONES, a pair of high school students. Either can be male or female.*

AT RISE: *SMITH and JONES on a bare stage.*

JONES: Are you sure this is a good idea?

SMITH: It's a great idea.

JONES: We're talking about using magic here. Real, spell-conjuring magic. It just seems to me like there ought to be an easier way.

SMITH: Easy?

JONES: I mean, we have the test. I saw it sitting on the printer in the library, so I grabbed it. It's not like we've put out a ton of effort to get this far. We just need the answers.

SMITH: So look them up.

JONES: If I was going to do that, then I might as well study.

SMITH: Then quit complaining.

JONES: I'm not complaining. I just think we could find a more practical way.

SMITH: Like what?

JONES: Like breaking into the social studies office and stealing the answer key.

SMITH: You want to be a petty thief? Is that all you aspire to be?

JONES: I aspire to pass our U.S. History exam.

SMITH: So do I. But my way is more glorious.

JONES: All right. Look. You know what? I think we need to stop and have a talk here.

SMITH: Talk? You won't shut up. I'd have had this done five minutes ago if you'd let me concentrate.

JONES: Did you hear what you just said?

SMITH: That you won't shut up.

JONES: Before that.

SMITH: My way is better.

JONES: No. Uh-uh. "Glorious." You used the word "glorious."

SMITH: Do you have something against the word "glorious?"

JONES: People who use it tend to be up to something.

SMITH: We are up to something!

JONES: Look, conjuring up George Washington is a cool idea. But—to give us answers on a history test? Doesn't that seem a little much to you?

SMITH: You said you didn't want to study!

JONES: I don't. But there's this thing called overkill.

SMITH: You think this is overkill?

JONES: Maybe a little.

SMITH: But you want to pass without studying?

JONES: Ideally, but ...

SMITH: The only way to guarantee any kind of result in anything is complete and utter overkill. You haul out the biggest gun you've got, point it at the target in front of the barn, and you blow up the target and the barn.

JONES: Explain the spell to me. How does it work? I'm hazy on the details.

SMITH: It's not like I've ever done this before.

JONES: Maybe you should research it some more.

SMITH: It'll be fine. Stop worrying.

JONES: You're meddling with forces beyond our understanding.

SMITH: And once we've meddled with them, we'll understand them better. It's a win-win situation.

JONES: Are you going to bring George Washington here?

SMITH: Yes.

JONES: Is he going to materialize out of thin air?

SMITH: Sort of.

JONES: What is "sort of"?

SMITH: He'll sort of be in you.

JONES: You're going to stick the father of our country in between the tater tots and cheese fries I ate for lunch?

SMITH: You ate tater tots *and* cheese fries for lunch? Isn't that redundant or something?

JONES: Is redundancy a concept you can even apply to food?

SMITH: Sure.

JONES: No. It's not redundancy. It was overkill, which I'm sure you can appreciate. I had a craving for potato-based junk food. Either the tater tots or the cheese fries might have done the job alone, but I wanted to be sure. So I ate both. I'm good now. And stop trying to change the subject.

SMITH: He'll be in you, but not in you.

JONES: You're not exactly selling your point.

SMITH: No physically. Just his essence. You know, his spirit.

JONES: What, he's going to possess me?

SMITH: Kind of, yeah.

JONES: No!

SMITH: Yes!

JONES: Is that even technically "conjuring"?

SMITH: You're the one using the word, not me.

JONES: You're out of your mind!

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SMITH: Listen, he'll just be in you for a few minutes. I'll ask him the questions and send him on his way.

JONES: And while he's here, what happens to the me that's already in me?

SMITH: That's one of those things we're going to understand better once we've meddled with the forces beyond our understanding.

JONES: I don't like it.

SMITH: I don't know how to make this work without a vessel.

JONES: Find another spell.

SMITH: The exam is tomorrow. We don't have time.

JONES: Do I get a vote here?

SMITH: You get something better than a vote.

JONES: What's that?

SMITH: You get to have George Washington inside of you.

JONES: Can I trade down?

SMITH: Do you want to pass this exam or not?

JONES: Yes.

SMITH: Then shut up for 30 seconds.

JONES: Tell me one thing.

SMITH: Just one more?

JONES: Probably.

SMITH: Oh, for—what?

JONES: Why do you think you can do this? How are you qualified to attempt magic like this?

SMITH: I watched all seven seasons of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* reruns. Willow, the witch character, she got into some really heavy stuff near the end of the series.

JONES: And this qualifies you how?

SMITH: I paid real close attention.

JONES: You have no idea how much I wish I could tell you I find that to be reassuring.

SMITH: Now stand in the circle we drew.

JONES: All right. Do you really think we should have drawn it with a permanent marker? Shouldn't we have used sand or ashes or something?

SMITH: Don't move.

JONES: Will I die if I move?

SMITH: Yes. Because I'll kill you. Now shut up. Here goes. Oh spirits of the nether world, bring forth the one we summon and alight him here in this worthy vessel. Hear me, O early father, I summon you now. George, come forth!

JONES: Um. Is that it?

SMITH: Yeah.

JONES: Shouldn't I—y'know—feel different?

SMITH: That's one of those things—

JONES: —that we'll have figured out after we've meddled. Right.
(abruptly drops into a hunched position and looks around as if suspicious and disoriented)

SMITH: Um. What are you doing?

(JONES begins sniffing SMITH)

Hey! Stop it! Cut it out!

(SMITH shoves JONES away. JONES shoves back, harder.)

Stop it! What's the matter with you?

JONES: *(abruptly returning to normal)* Nothing's the matter with me.
Why are you yelling?

SMITH: You were acting like a—an animal or a cave man or something.

JONES: No, I wasn't.

SMITH: Yes, you were!

(JONES hunches.)

(pointing) There—like that!

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