

# FIGMENT

## By Dave Tucker

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## CHARACTERS

WAITRESS	Age 30 - 50, think Flo from the television show "Alice," efficient but lacking in tact and courtesy.
LIZA	Age early 20s, college student, described as having dark curly hair, but the description should be changed to match the costume or hair color of the actress playing the part.
JILL	Age early 20s, college student.
RECEPTIONIST	Age 20 – 50, could be male or female, by-the-book with a flair for sarcasm.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

A simple, representational set is recommended. The stage should be divided in half, with one half being the diner and the other the Mendelson Building reception desk. The Diner needs to be no more than a table with chairs; a table cloth and restaurant-style napkin holder would be nice touches. The Mendelson Building reception should consist of a desk with a chair and one or two other chairs representing a waiting area. A telephone and in-box on the desk can add to the overall appearance. Jill and Liza wear casual attire appropriate for an academic environment. The movements of the Waitress in clearing the table at the end of each scene is designed to allow a quick costume change (blouse or sweater when appropriate). It is important that the Waitress never acknowledge Liza's presence. When blocking the Diner scenes, the director should place Jill in the seat facing the Waitress' entrance. It is important, because of the story-line, that Liza never appear onstage without Jill.

## PRODUCTION HISTORY

Greenside High School, Johannesburg, South Africa, 2004  
Minnechaug Regional High School, Wilbraham, MA 2003 and 2004  
Eldorado High School, Albuquerque, NM 2003  
South Sound Playwrights Festival, 2003 (Semi-finalist)

## PROP LIST

Text books	Clipboard
Backpacks/book bags	Sponge/rag to wipe table
Beverage glasses	Money
Psychology book	

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**SCENE 1**

***AT RISE: Lights up to reveal the local campus diner. LIZA and JILL enter and sit at a table.***

JILL: I'm glad that's over.

LIZA: Dr. Franzen is so boring. If I have to sit through one more of those lectures, I'm gonna drop out and join a cult.

JILL: Dr. Franzen IS in a cult. I've never had a professor as weird as that guy.

LIZA: Then watch out for Matthews – political science. They should revoke his license to the human race.

JILL: I've heard that. Here comes the waitress – want anything?

LIZA: No thanks.

***(Enter WAITRESS.)***

JILL: Just a diet Pepsi for me, thanks.

WAITRESS: Just a diet Pepsi?

JILL: Yes. A small diet Pepsi.

***(Exit WAITRESS.)***

LIZA: I need to get going soon. I've got to catch the bus.

JILL: You are so lucky. I wish I could afford my own apartment.

LIZA: It helps when my folks pay the rent.

JILL: Your folks are great.

LIZA: They're just looking out for their investment. They know I'll study harder if I'm on my own. Less chance to party that way.

***(WAITRESS returns with diet Pepsi, places it in front of JILL and exits.)***

JILL: ***(to WAITRESS)*** Thank you. My folks would never trust me off campus.

LIZA: Sometimes parents have a hard time dealing with that. The first time I went to summer camp I cried nonstop until my dad picked me up.

JILL: So when do you want to go over these study questions?

LIZA: I really need to go. Why don't we meet tomorrow?

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JILL: What about two o'clock? I've got a break between calculus and philosophy.

LIZA: Umm... no, that won't work for me.

JILL: What's up? You don't have any classes tomorrow afternoon.

LIZA: No, it's just... I have an appointment over at the Mendelson Building.

JILL: Really? I didn't know you were taking psychology.

LIZA: I'm not. It's just that I...

JILL: What?

LIZA: It's – well... I asked to speak with one of the psychology instructors to see if maybe I could use some... therapy. Look, I haven't told anybody about this before, but... I know it sounds weird, but... I think I'm... losing my grip on reality.

JILL: You're probably just studying too hard.

LIZA: No, I think this is serious. Sometimes I'll remember things and then I'm not sure if they were real or that I just made them up.

JILL: Like what?

LIZA: Everyday events... even people. I'm not sure. Sometimes it seems like things can change or disappear in just a matter of minutes, and I don't know if they really exist at all. Does this make sense?

JILL: I guess. It sounds pretty strange. What are you going to do?

LIZA: Well, Dr. Ellis – he's the professor there - he used to be a therapist before he started teaching. He's agreed to meet with me to discuss it.

JILL: That's good. It sounds pretty crazy.

LIZA: **(rises to leave)** Yeah. Look I've got to go.

JILL: Maybe I can catch you after your appointment. We could do it then.

LIZA: Sure.

JILL: **(rises)** Okay. I'll see you tomorrow.

LIZA: Sure. See ya.

***(LIZA exits and JILL carefully counts out exact change to pay for the Pepsi and leaves it on the table. JILL exits. WAITRESS enters, counts the change and wipes down the table as the lights go down.)***

**SCENE 2**

***AT RISE: Lights up on the reception area at the Mendelson Building. The area is empty except for JILL, seated in one of the chairs. LIZA enters from her appointment.***

JILL: *(rises)* Liza.

LIZA: *(stops to see JILL)* Oh. Hi. I didn't expect to see you here.

JILL: I figured I'd see how your appointment went.

LIZA: Oh, my god. This whole thing is incredible.

JILL: What happened? Are you okay?

LIZA: Yeah, I'm fine. Here, let's sit down. *(LIZA and JILL sit.)* I had given Dr. Ellis my diaries from when I was a kid and he went through everything my family background, my childhood. He said everything was pretty normal, except one thing.

JILL: Which is?

LIZA: Apparently I had some imaginary friends when I was little.

JILL: So? Isn't that normal?

LIZA: Yeah, well, to a point. Dr. Ellis said that children often have imaginary friends. Kids can use them to help deal with negative feelings. Or when they're scared or afraid of change, you know, like moving to a new neighborhood, the parents getting divorced - stuff like that.

JILL: Like some kind of defense mechanism.

LIZA: Yeah. The child may be feeling stress about changes in his life, but that imaginary friend is always there – always the same.

JILL: So what? You had an imaginary friend....

LIZA: Actually I had a lot of imaginary friends. My sisters were much older - they weren't around to play, so I made up my own friends. Mostly boys or large animals like Gary the Grizzly Bear.

JILL: Gary the Bear?

LIZA: Grizzly Bear. You know, he was something big and strong, so he could protect me.

JILL: Okay, so is that a problem?

LIZA: Not normally. Most kids have a fantasy life. It's healthy. When they begin to understand what's real and what isn't, the fantasy fades naturally, but it looks like my fantasies may not have completely faded.

JILL: Wow.

LIZA: Dr. Ellis said this is a psychotic disorder – not being able to tell the difference between reality and fantasy. It's possible the brain can create it's own reality and then believe it. Sometimes people confuse their dreams or even TV shows with real life.

JILL: Oh, like that movie where the girl fell in love with the doctor on a soap opera and thought he was a real doctor.

LIZA: Yeah. Dr. Ellis said he knew of one patient who would see these rolling, disembodied heads that gave him orders.

JILL: Scary!

LIZA: Very scary.

JILL: So does he think this is what's going on with you?

LIZA: He's not sure, but it's not as bad as all that.

JILL: No rolling, talking heads?

LIZA: No! He's going to look into a couple things and he gave me some exercises to try.

JILL: Exercises? What? Like mental jumping jacks?

LIZA: Just a few things to focus on. You know, to see if I notice a difference, to help determine whether something is real... or maybe just a figment of my imagination.

JILL: Are you okay with this?

LIZA: Yeah, I guess. Look, can we wait 'til tomorrow to do those study questions? I'm feeling a little overwhelmed right now.

JILL: Sure. **(rises to leave)** Are you sure you're alright?

LIZA: Yeah, I'm fine.

JILL: Come on, I'll walk with you to the bus stop.

***(JILL and LIZA exit. The lights fade out.)***

### SCENE 3

***AT RISE: Lights up on the diner. WAITRESS wipes down the table. SHE exits as JILL enters. JILL sits and shortly afterwards, LIZA enters and sits.***

JILL: How's it going?

LIZA: Oh, the plot thickens.

JILL: No. Is it getting worse?

LIZA: It's a little creepy. I've been using the exercises Dr. Ellis gave me to see if I could tell what is real versus what is imagined. Last night I tried them out.

JILL: And?

LIZA: This is the weird part. There's an old lady at my bus stop. Her name's Thelma. I talk to her whenever I see her. She's really sweet.

JILL: Yeah?

LIZA: She doesn't exist.

JILL: You're kidding!

LIZA: No, she just vanished. I was talking to her and then I went through the exercises Dr. Ellis gave me and she disappeared.

JILL: Maybe she walked away.

LIZA: No, I looked around for her, but she was gone. I talked to Howard, the guy who runs the laundromat across the street. He had no idea what I was talking about. I described what she looked like and everything, but he's never even seen her.

JILL: Maybe he just didn't notice her.

LIZA: No, he notices everything. He can even tell me what I was wearing the day before.

JILL: That's probably because you're a lot cuter than Thelma.

LIZA: Jill, I'm serious.

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