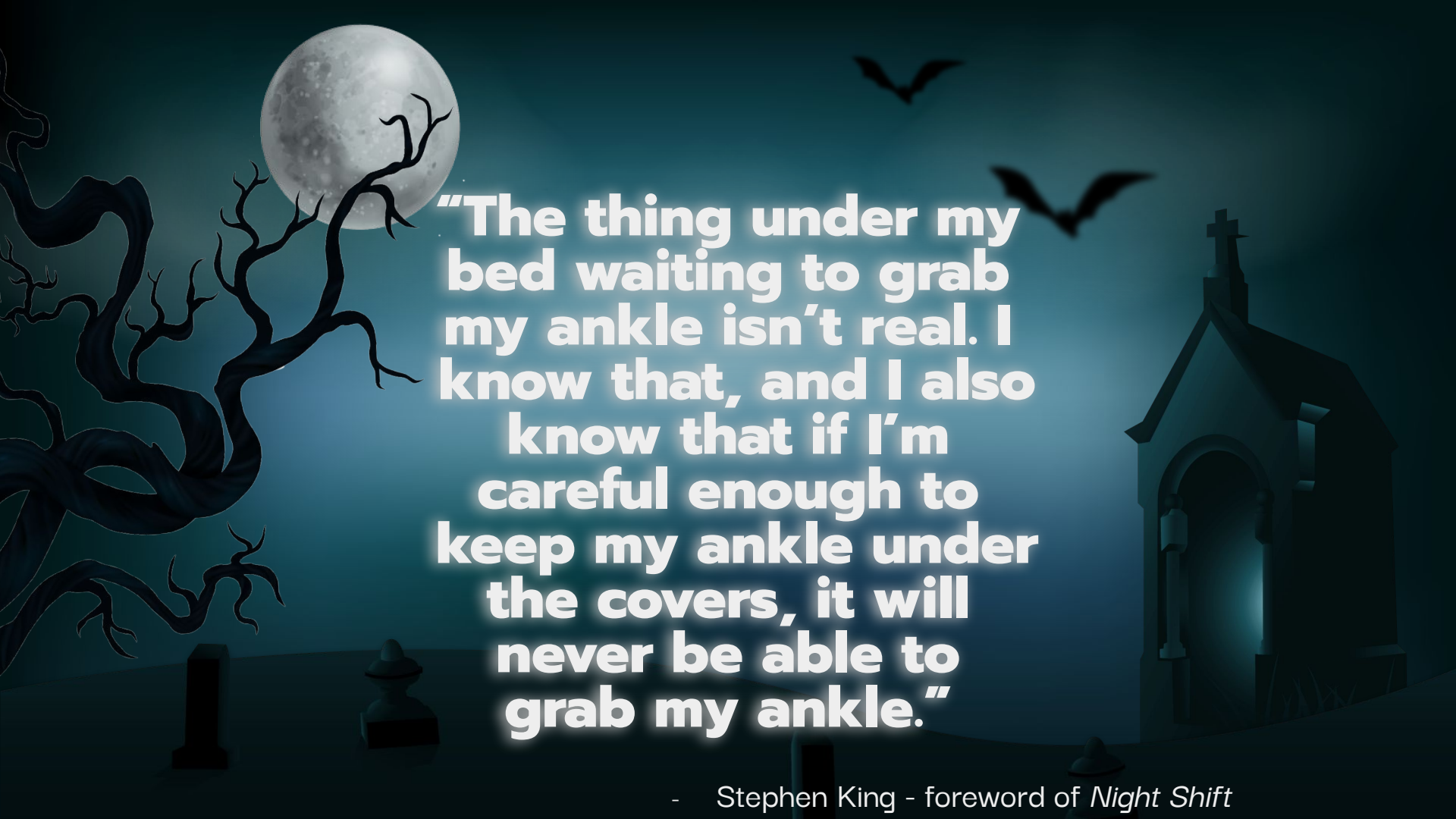




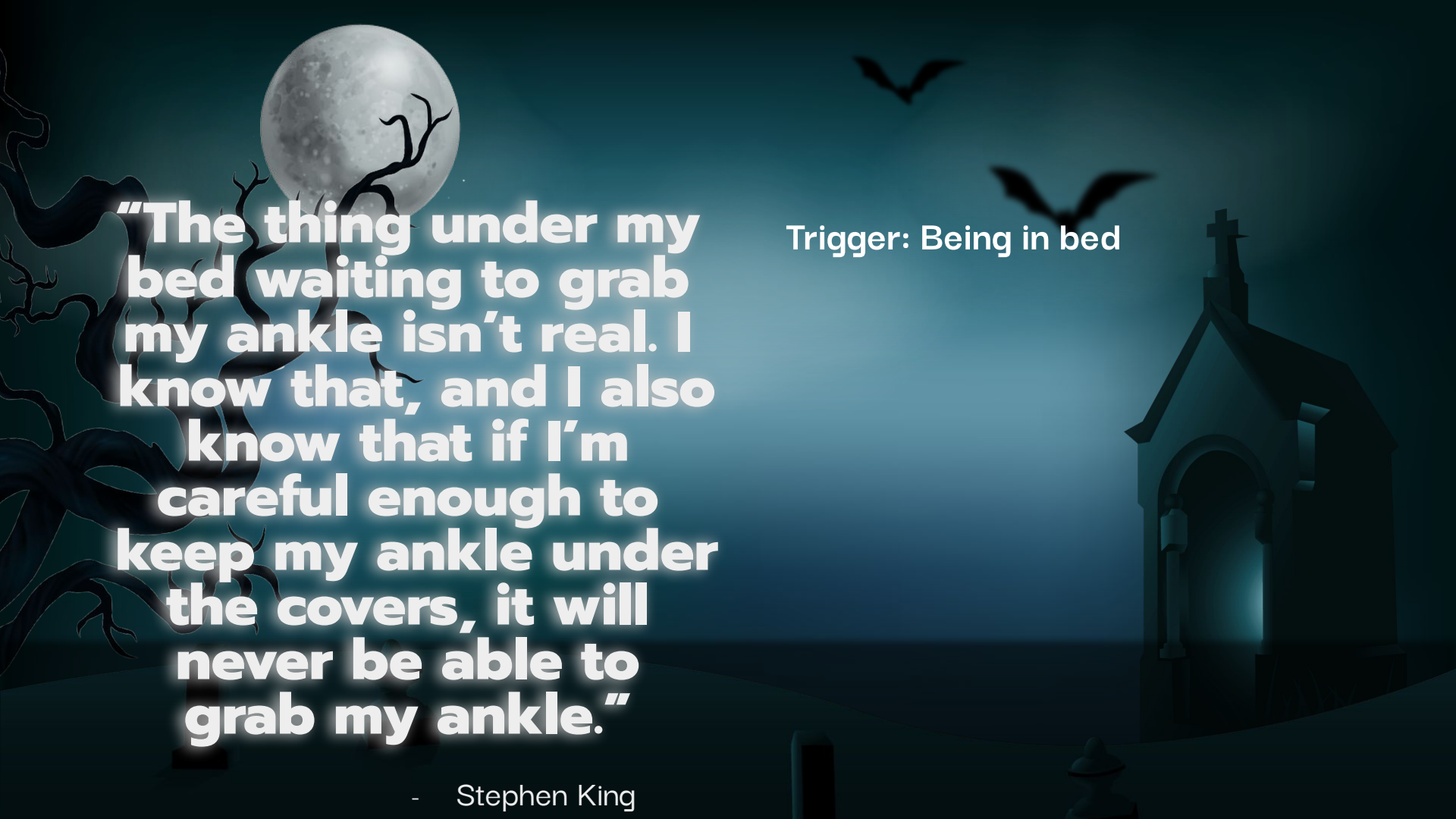
I-CBT Module 3 The Obsessional Story

Adapted by Bronwyn Shroyer from: O'Connor, K., & Aardema, F.
(2012). *Clinician's handbook for obsessive compulsive disorder:
Inference-based therapy*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.



“The thing under my bed waiting to grab my ankle isn’t real. I know that, and I also know that if I’m careful enough to keep my ankle under the covers, it will never be able to grab my ankle.”

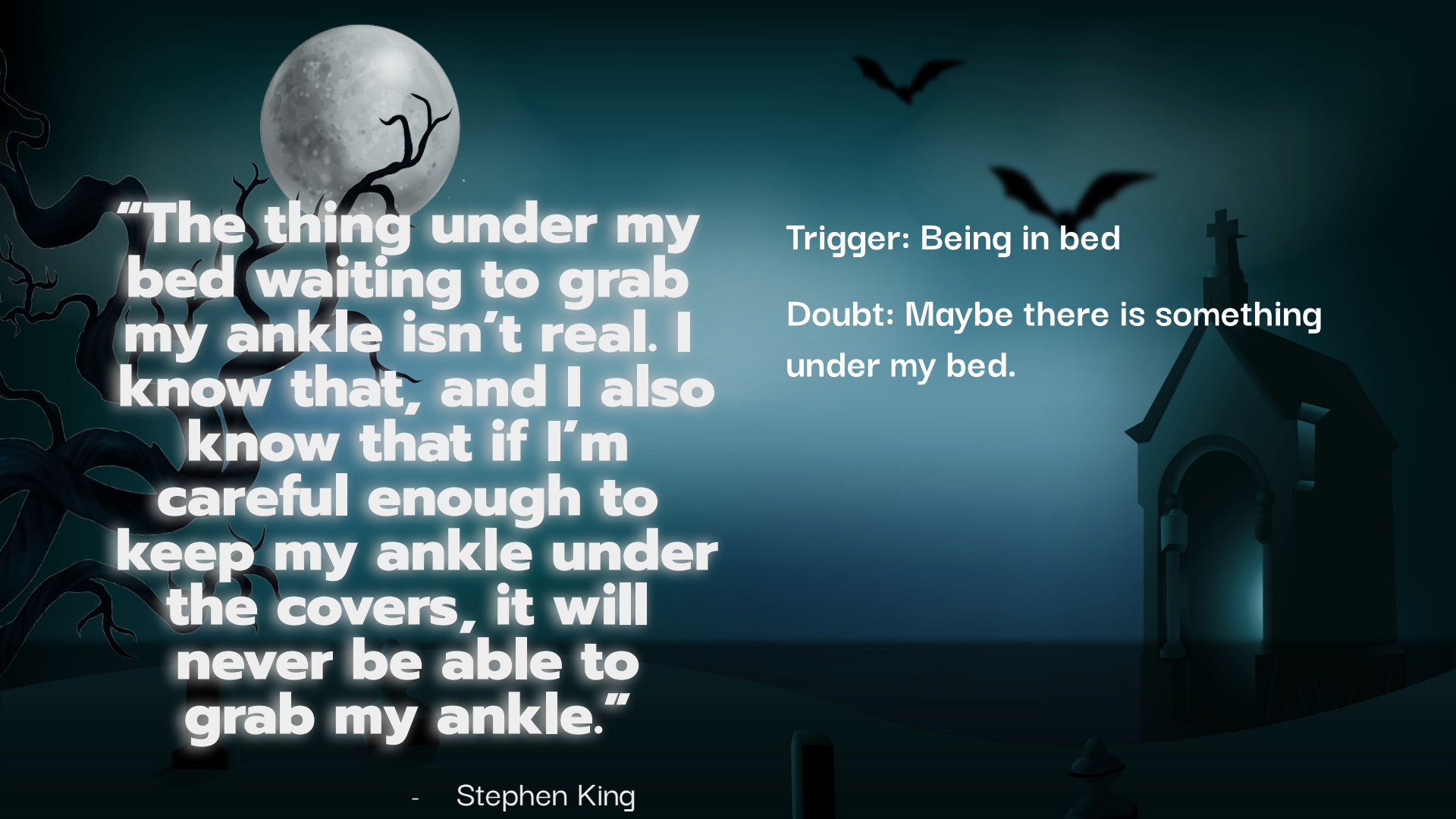
- Stephen King - foreword of *Night Shift*



“The thing under my bed waiting to grab my ankle isn’t real. I know that, and I also know that if I’m careful enough to keep my ankle under the covers, it will never be able to grab my ankle.”

Trigger: Being in bed

- Stephen King

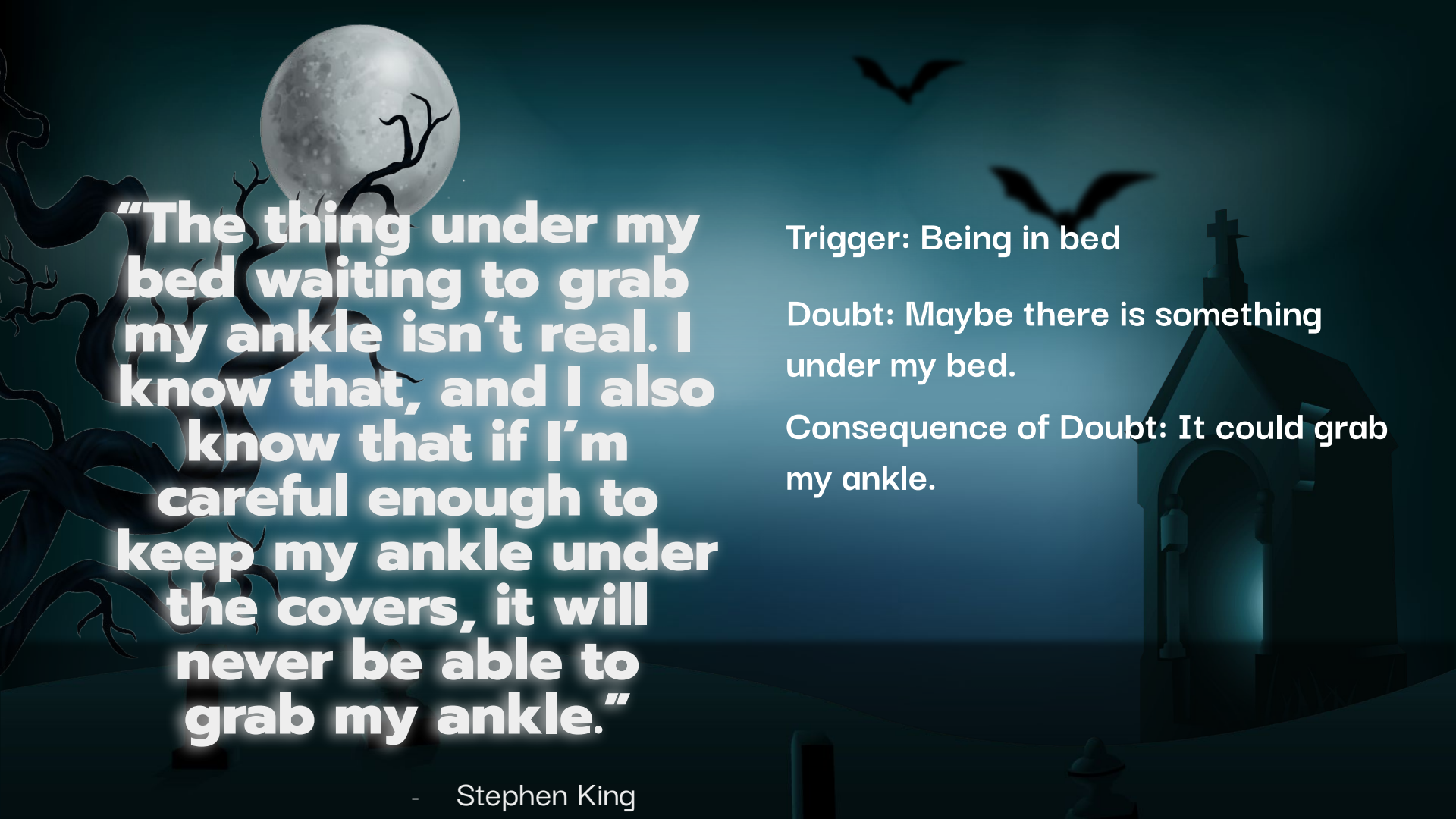


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Trigger: Being in bed

Doubt: Maybe there is something under my bed.

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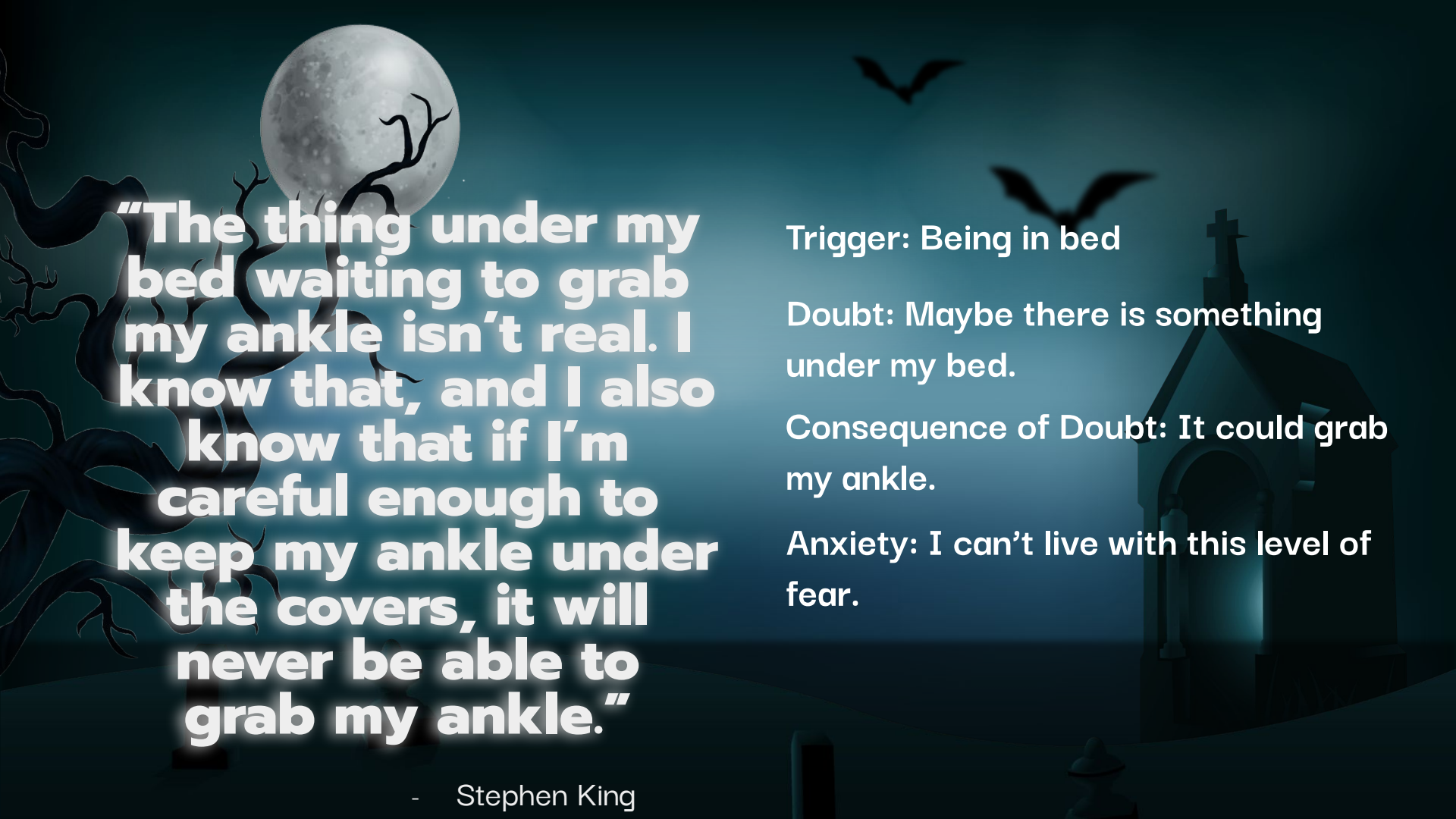
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Trigger: Being in bed

Doubt: Maybe there is something under my bed.

Consequence of Doubt: It could grab my ankle.



“The thing under my bed waiting to grab my ankle isn’t real. I know that, and I also know that if I’m careful enough to keep my ankle under the covers, it will never be able to grab my ankle.”

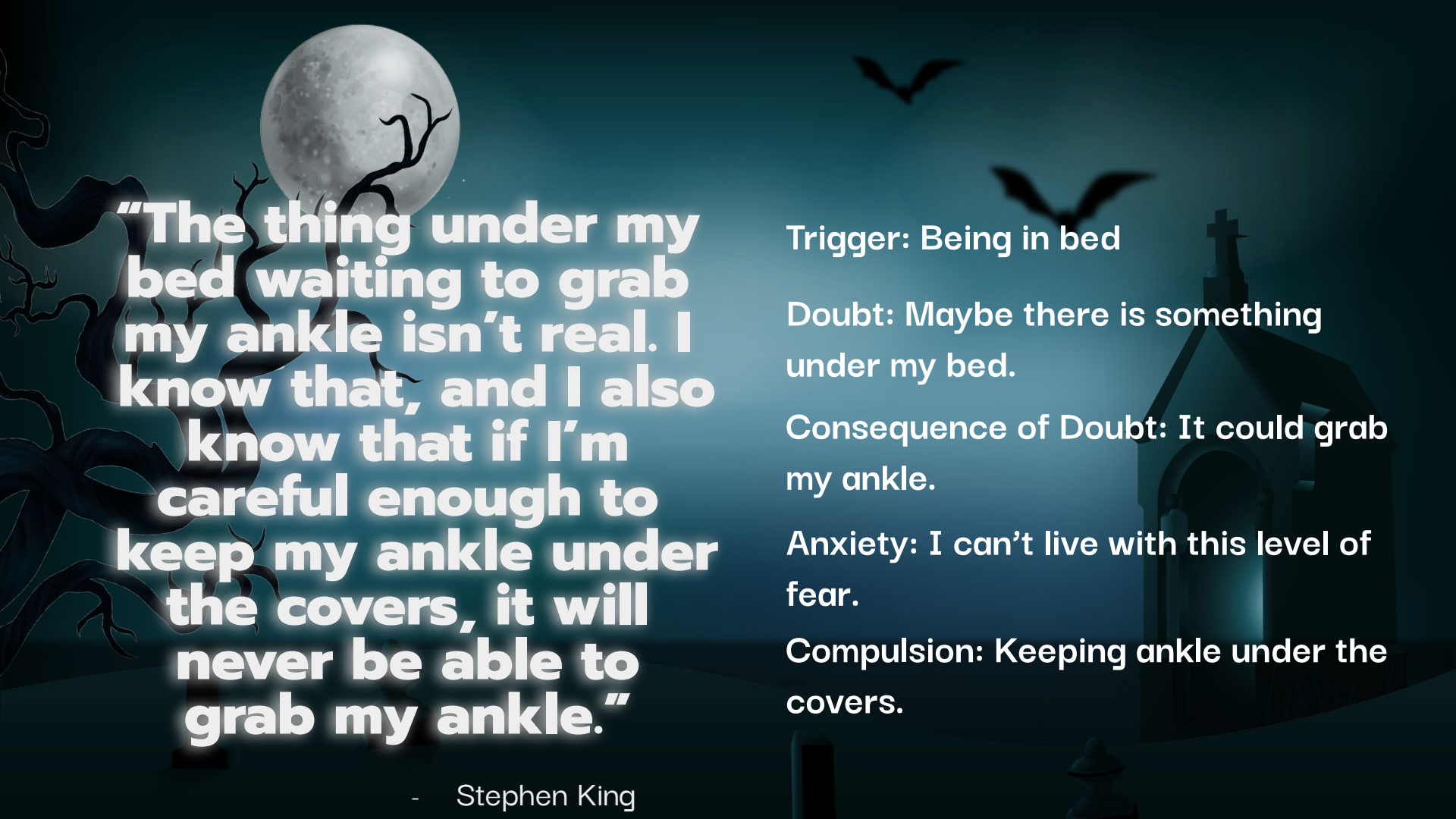
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Trigger: Being in bed

Doubt: Maybe there is something under my bed.

Consequence of Doubt: It could grab my ankle.

Anxiety: I can’t live with this level of fear.



“The thing under my bed waiting to grab my ankle isn’t real. I know that, and I also know that if I’m careful enough to keep my ankle under the covers, it will never be able to grab my ankle.”

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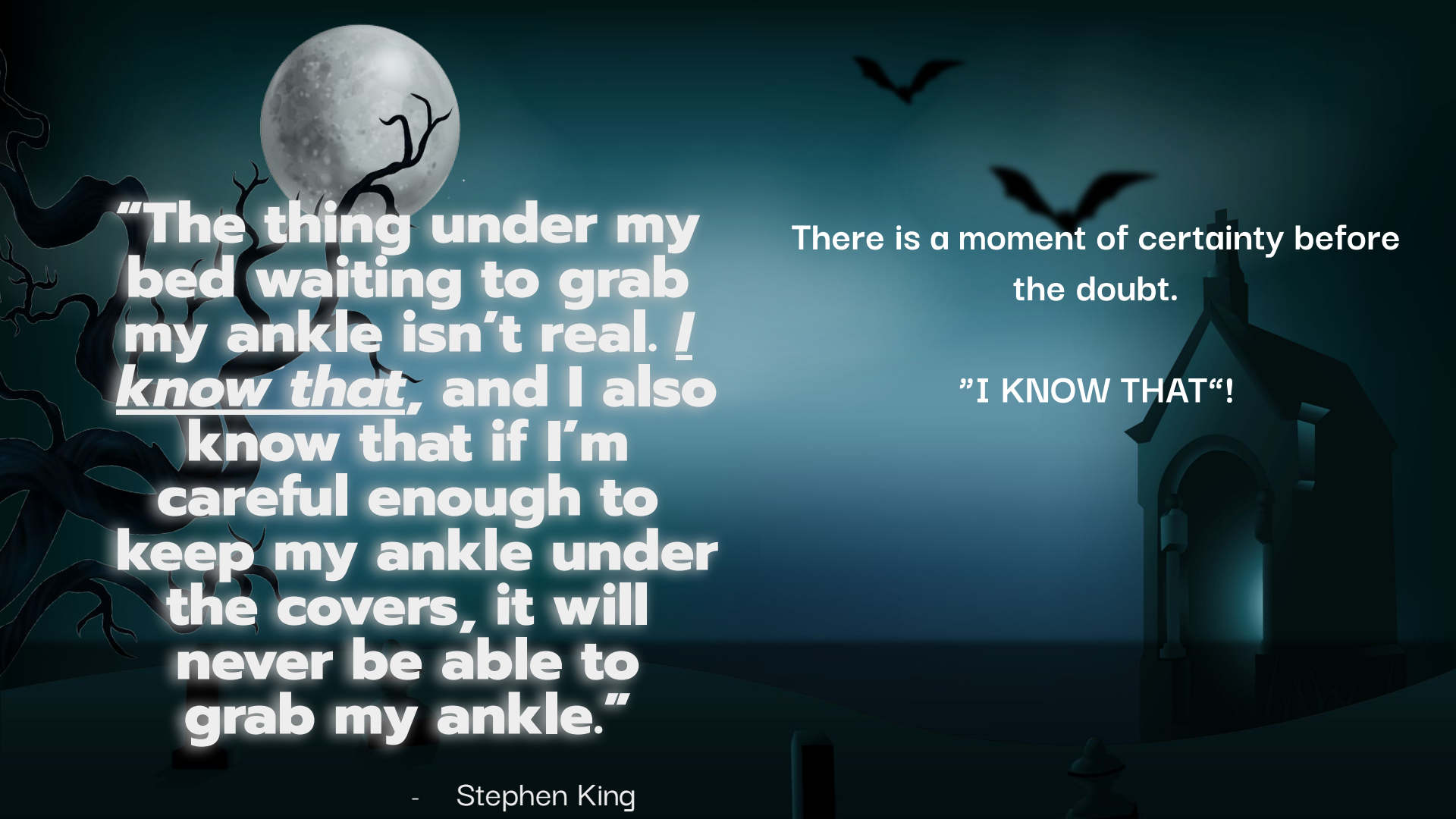
Trigger: Being in bed

Doubt: Maybe there is something under my bed.

Consequence of Doubt: It could grab my ankle.

Anxiety: I can’t live with this level of fear.

Compulsion: Keeping ankle under the covers.



“The thing under my bed waiting to grab my ankle isn’t real. I know that, and I also know that if I’m careful enough to keep my ankle under the covers, it will never be able to grab my ankle.”

There is a moment of certainty before the doubt.

“I KNOW THAT“!

- Stephen King

Anyone Remember This?



1986

Original Cover

I still think about this book when I see a grate in the street!

How About a Little Sci-Fi Adventure?



1982

Fantasy From My Nightmares

I know this is a much beloved story.

Can you guess which scene destroyed this movie for me?

1984



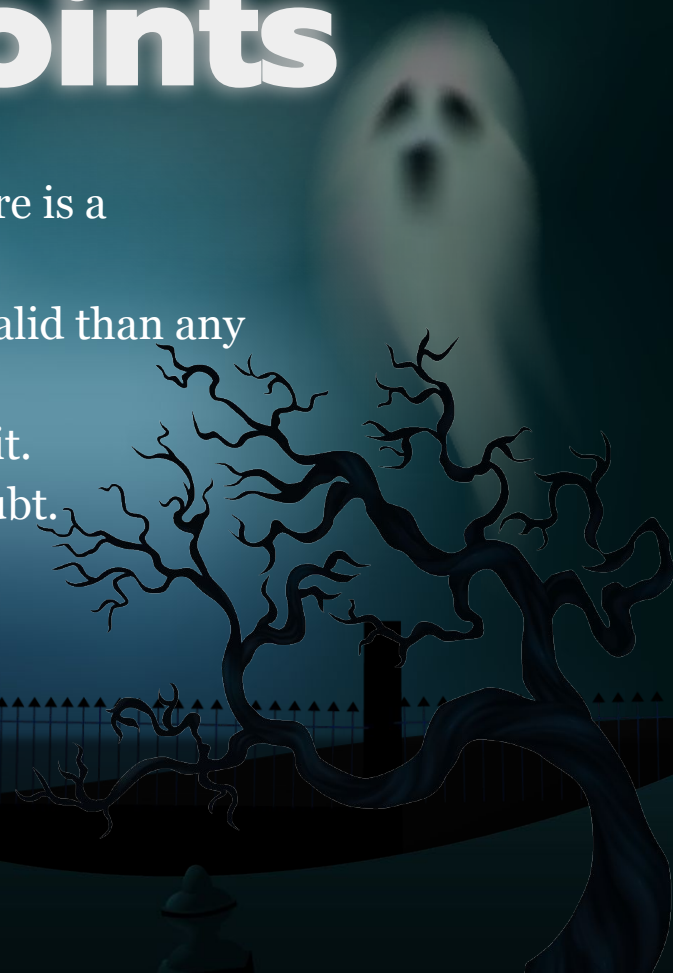
**Stories are
Powerful!**





Teaching Points

- Doubt is experienced as real because there is a credible story behind it.
- Your own OCD story is no more or less valid than any other OCD story.
- The story becomes real when you act on it.
- Change the story and you change the doubt.




Stories Give Credibility to the Doubt

Information gathered in Modules 1 and 2 set up Module 3.

The therapist helps the client understand that the reason the obsessional doubt is so compelling is due to the **story** around it.

This story is built from the reasons behind the doubt that were identified in Module 2. These reasons, combined with persuasive aspects of storytelling, form the narrative unit. The narrative unit makes OCD so successful. This narrative is our target for therapy.



Reasons + Rhetoric

The Obsessional Story's Weapons



FACTS

Reasons + Rhetoric

The Obsessional Story's Weapons



FACTS

Reasons + Rhetoric

RULES

The Obsessional Story's Weapons



FACTS

HEARSAY

Reasons + Rhetoric

RULES

The Obsessional Story's Weapons





FACTS

HEARSAY

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Reasons + Rhetoric

RULES

The Obsessional Story's Weapons





FACTS

HEARSAY

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Reasons + Rhetoric

RULES

The Obsessional Story's Weapons

POSSIBILITY





FACTS

HEARSAY

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Reasons + Rhetoric

RULES

The Obsessional Story's Weapons

STORYTELLING

POSSIBILITY





FACTS

HEARSAY

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Reasons +

Reality -> Imagination

Rhetoric

RULES

The Obsessional Story's Weapons

POSSIBILITY

STORYTELLING





A Place to Start

01

Collaborative Effort

Therapist and client work together

02

Modules 1 & 2

Use information gathered in these modules to help you prompt the story from the client.

03

“What Makes You Doubt...”

Ask questions like “What makes you doubt the counter is clean?”
“What makes you doubt that you you might hit someone?”



**How can we help our client discover
the obsessional story around the
Stephen King quote?**





**How can we help our client discover
the obsessional story around the
Stephen King quote?**

“So - you have to make sure your feet
are under the covers when you go to
sleep. Why?”



Building the Story



Personal Experience

My cat grabbed my ankle one
time

“Well, one time I had this cute orange kitten, and he liked to hide under my bed and attack my ankles. I didn’t know he was there. It scared me.”

Building the Story



Hearsay

Stories on the news of a criminal hiding under a bed and the owners didn't realize.

“And I’ve also heard stories on the news about homeowners getting robbed after not noticing that someone was hiding under their beds.”

Building the Story



HEARSAY

Even Stephen King has written
about this fear.

“Oh, and I saw a
quote from Stephen
King - even he is
scared of something
grabbing him. I
doubt much scares
him. But that does!”

Putting the Logic Together

“Well, one time I had this cute orange kitten, and he liked to hide under my bed and attack my ankles. I didn’t know he was there. It scared me.

And I’ve also heard stories on the news about homeowners getting robbed after not noticing that someone was hiding under their beds.

Oh, and I saw a quote from Stephen King - even he is scared of something grabbing him. I doubt much scares him. But that does!”

Increasing the Rhetorical Devices



Rich in Detail

Details matter



Smooth Transport

Beginning, Middle, End
Detail linked to detail



1st Person

Client needs to be in the
story. 1st Person.

Let's Look at a Story...

And then
she went in
the house.



The girl ran.



Let's use some rhetorical devices...

Then I heard my mom yell my name. I looked up and saw her holding my baby brother by the gate, waving her free arm, trying to get me to hurry.

I raced through the gate. My mom slammed it shut just in time. She hugged me tight. My breathing slowed. I was safe. The cows stared at me from the other side of the gate while my mom held my hand and took me back to the safety of our home.



When I was 5, I was out in our cow pasture with my mom. It was a sunny day with a bright blue sky. I got caught up in looking at the green grass and was in my own little world, enjoying the warm weather.



When I looked around me, both of our big male cows (steers) were coming up behind me. I took off running. My heart beat in my chest. I pumped my legs and arms as fast as I could. I knew any second, I was going to get trampled on.



**Now, let's do an obsessional doubt
story...**



Now, let's do an obsessional doubt story...



I put my
contact
lenses in
their case.




Now, let's do an obsessional doubt story...

I have to tap
four times.





I put my
contact
lenses in
their case.





**“The power of
the POSSIBLE
over
the ACTUAL.”**



Bronwyn's Obsessional Story

I take my contact lenses out at the end of the day. I worry that if I don't do it just right and not let them touch the sides of the container, then maybe my mom will die. Kids lose their parents sometimes. The doctors thought my mom might die. Maybe there is some magic force that could keep her safe. I prayed a lot when we thought she was going to die, so maybe God saved her because of that, and maybe now it is my job to do any of these thoughts that pop into my head. Maybe I will let the universe down if I don't do these rituals. Maybe that will put my mom in danger again. So, I have to tap four times.



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If I mess up the tapping, then I have to tap 4 times, 4 times in a row. If I don't do it, then my mom really could die and it will all be my fault because I screwed up what I'm supposed to do. I'm supposed to be a good family member. I need to keep my mom safe.



Let's Look at One More...

I pump gas at the gas station.

I have to wash my hands.



Let's Look at One More...

When I have to get gas in my car, I do not like touching the gas pump. So many people have touched the buttons by the screen and the credit card reader. They've also touched the gas pump. I see them grab the squeegee to get bird poop and dead bugs off their windshields. Maybe the dirty water could get on their hands and then they touch the gas pump. Birds can carry lots of diseases. Maybe someone was sick and then touched the gas pump. What if I get the flu? Or a stomach bug? Or something else? Maybe someone had a cut on their hand and they touched the gas pump and then I touch it and could get their blood on me, or maybe staph is on the gas pump and I could get MRSA. People throw trash away at the pumps too and then they pump their gas. I have no way of knowing what was on the trash they touched before touching the pump. I need to wash my hands or keep my hands in my sleeves and use my keys to touch the buttons on the credit card reader.



Storytelling Exercises



Believable

Have clients practice how stories can affect their moods and make them feel real.



Doubt Creation

Have clients practice with stories that make them doubt something that they didn't doubt before.



The Pen Story

From the Manual



Tell Me a Scary Story...



Now Tell Me a Hopeful Story..



Counter Story

Once clients understand how to create obsessional stories, we make an attempt to help them temporarily resolve it so they can see their doubt is unjustified.

This is done through a counter story.

The point is to show:

The OCD and counter story both equal stories


The OCD story is less realistic than the counter story

A rapid, if very temporary, resolution of the doubt by changing the story



Contact Lenses Counter Story

Putting my contacts away has nothing to do with keeping my mom safe. I used to be able to put my contacts in their case without ever linking it to my mom's safety. Why would God need me to do this? God does not want me to suffer and would rather I spend my time in other ways than getting caught up in thinking I can magically control the world. My mom's doctors say she is fine now. There is nothing wrong with her.





Gas Station Counter Story

Germs are on surfaces, but that doesn't mean that there are dangerous germs on surfaces. There also has to be enough bacteria or viruses on the surface to overwhelm my immune system in order for me to get sick. The germs would also have to still be viable. And I'd also have to lick my hands in order to get the germs into my body. I do not have any open wounds on my hands and so germs can't get into my body that way.





Counter Story

Remember...the goal here is to show that there is more than one story that a client could be paying attention to and that the OCD story is more far-fetched than the counter story.

A client may get temporary, brief relief, even if it is just for a moment. Even if they believe it just for a second, or you hear, "Well, I guess that could be true." then you are doing your job right.

We are casting REASONABLE doubt on the OBSESSIONAL doubt.

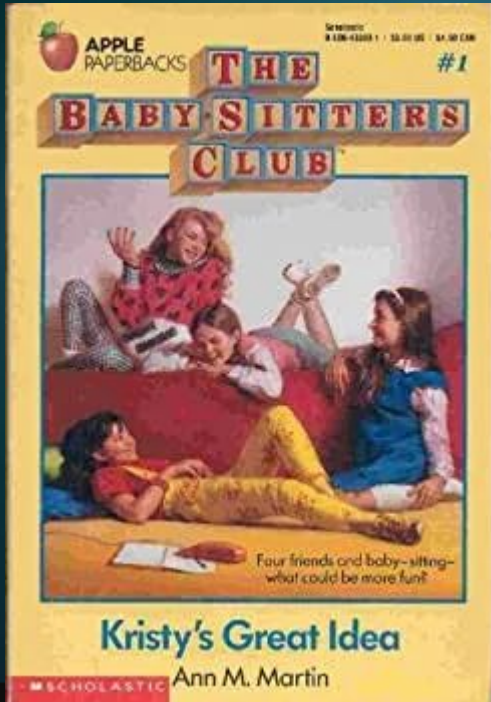


A Halloween-themed background with a dark blue gradient. In the top left is a large, detailed full moon. In the top right is a faint, white ghost. In the bottom right is a large, dark, gnarled tree silhouette. In the bottom left and center are silhouettes of tombstones and crosses on a dark hill. Two black bird silhouettes are flying in the sky. The text is centered in white, bold, sans-serif font.

**Have fun with
this module!
No arguing
with the client's
reasoning!**

And not everything in the 80s was scary...

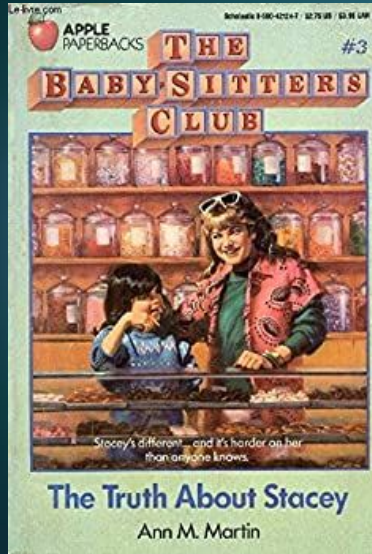
1986



This book series
made me feel okay.

Until Book 3...

1986



When we found out
about diabetes...

Questions?



For Training and Consultation Information:

<https://ocdlivedexperiencecollective.org/icbtconsultation>

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