

The God of Jesters

Chapter 11: 1.06.2 Burned to death.

"Do you want to eat something good?"

She asked me this with an almost innocent face. But I can feel that she was serious.

And living on the refuse the villagers have thrown, I wished for a hot meal, at least once. So I took her offer and was gladly rewarded for it.

With her help, it won't be hard for me to survive in this place.

No more power fantasies of stalking people at night hunting for food. I even obtained some lanterns from her, just so that I could study the books at night.

The books will become the foundation for my future.

During this time, she even came to my makeshift hidden home. A small space between two giant rocks hidden by shrubs, which I insulated using the dead leaves and sticks to give it an almost natural feel.

And it's also where I hid those books, away from her eyes.

Because no matter what happened, I didn't wish for her to know the truth. I didn't wish to see her look at me with incriminating eyes.

The life that I currently live was a lot better than I had expected.

There was no need for me to work in the village anymore and Meena would always bring me food from her home.

When have I ever experienced life as easy as this?

Yes, I suffered for it. But I was able to win this peace on my own through this.

Though, it would seem for some reason that Grifter was not as happy with this as I had assumed him to be. He just stood silently on the side, looking at me and living my peaceful life with some anger on its face.

I guess, the little guy wished for me to leave, as he had spelled the run part with sticks it had collected.

I can even understand its worry. And I even wished to collect enough resources and leave this place.

But the fog outside of the Village area still persisted and stopped me from moving out of it. It was a shackle for me.

And the only way I can escape from that shackle is if the merchants come here.

Maybe, if I go with them, the fog won't follow me.

But it was still a maybe.

Maybe.

"How is everything in the village?" I asked Meena who was slowly writing a poem I had taught her.

It was a simple poem that the children in the nursery used to sing. Which made it perfect to act as a test for someone that hasn't studied for long and just got aware of the letters.

"They are good, some still think you did it though." She said, completely engrossed in her writings.

"Well I can't blame them, I would have thought the same in their situation," I said, somewhat understanding the anger the villagers might be feeling.

They gave me refuge and all I gave them was pain. Even if a part of me did it, it doesn't absolve me of my crimes.

This was the reason why I felt some guilt for her and those good men.

"I still think you are hiding something from me," Meena said while pointing her coal pencil to my burnt hand. "You did something to stop that... right?" She pointed out. And she was on point.

But I just shook my head.

If I told her the details, then eventually, the truth of the matter would come out. So I just said.

"I did nothing, but I can say for sure that none of the craziness will happen anymore," I assured her with my name on it.

A big mistake on my part if I think about it now.

"Jiri, where are you?"

"Kilbert, stop hiding and come out!!"

"You runt, where are you hiding? If you don't come out of your hiding hole at once. Your mother will spank you till your ass is like a baboon's."

In the village. While Jester and Meena were making promises that none can't stand up to, something terrible happened.

"Where are all the kids, search. They won't go far from the village."

The worry-filled elders were screaming with worry as they started to turn the whole village upside down for their children.

This happened in the morning when the children suddenly disappeared from the village. But this was common in the village.

The children often had a playful nature and they usually went to the forest to climb trees and play around away from their parents' eyes.

Even the adults of the villagers have done the same.

Though the problem started when midday arrived and the sun was shining at its peak, making stepping out of their homes a bit hard.

And for children that hated the summer sun, this was more of a hell. It was common for the kids to come home for food and resting by that time.

But this didn't happen. The kids have disappeared or gotten lost somewhere.

They might even be playing a game with them, or so thought the most optimistic of the group.

As for the most cynical in the group, they were already beating their heads to throw away those thoughts from their minds.

In recent years, they have seen things and the idea of those things happening to their family has appeared in their mind a lot.

But this was the first time when that thought might turn into reality. Increasing their worry, causing them to go on a mad rampage as they searched everywhere in anger.

"It's that demon, he still lives."

"Where is he hiding?"

The people knew that the demon was back. And in most villagers' minds, the demon was none other than Jester.

"Let's burn his house, he might be hiding in there." All of them screamed, before burning their torches and going toward Jester's old adobe.

"How is it? I did good right?" Meena asked, ignorant of the disaster that had just struck her community.

"Good, taking away 2 marks for your intelligible writing and 3 for marks, I would rate it 5/10."

"Why writing? I memorized that poem perfectly, I should at least get a 7."

Looking at her fight me for more marks, I didn't know what to say.

This was not an academic test and it was just something to test her current skills. And there are also no parents who would chastise her for low marks.

So why would she act like a spoiled child wanting more?

But guess that's how it is. No one wishes to be rated low in anything.

"I won't, increase your skills and I might just give you more points." I was not someone who would back down on my decisions.

And seeing that I won't budge, she left my small adobe with a small pout on her face.

It was already evening and night was soon arriving. If she didn't leave now, people might get suspicious.

"Good night," I said, sending her away, noticing a bright light coming from the direction of the village.

A light that gets bigger and bigger.

"What is happen... aahh." The pain at the start was simple but it flared up fast.

A pain I was very familiar with.

"What is happening?" I suppressed my scream as I lifted my hand and saw with my own eyes as it caught fire bit by bit with my flesh sizzling.

"Ahhh." My body was in shock from the pain. And before I even had the time to think, the fire spread further all over my body.

If this went on I would die.

I would surely die.

So with a blurry consciousness, I ran for my life, I ran toward the pond.

But the more I ran, the further the fire spreads. And the moment the fire reached my shoulder, my left leg also caught fire. Causing me to fall to the ground under duress and torture I felt.

'Why was this happening.' I wondered as I tried to get up as the fire sizzled my face spreading further and further.

I somewhat understood how it was for those witches that were burnt under the cross for blasphemy.

More than pain, the suffocation, and breathing in the fire in your lungs were more torturous.

But I understood that if I thought more instead of acting, I might just die today.

So with all the willpower I had, I walked toward the pond as my flesh melted bit by bit, leaving a trail of burning flesh in my wake.

I can even feel that one of my eyes had melted out of my eye socket.

And the pain that had tortured me for so long also started to subside bit by bit.

Which was a sign that even my nerves were starting to burn. It won't be long before I turn into coal.

But it seems that I would not die too early.

As I don't recall when. But my body plopped into the pond.

Guess a blind run worked.

And I guess, I survived somewhat.

As for how much of me survives, I didn't know, nor do I wish to know.

Because the pain was already causing me to lose consciousness.

Meena rushed to the village when she saw a large fire from afar.

Fearing that her village was on fire, Meena rushed in to help.

Though the only scene she saw was a single house burning with many in her village shouting different things.

Among which the most audible were two.

A group rejoiced in the burning of the demon and another group prayed for their children to come back.

"Meena you are safe. I thought that demon also got you." Meena's mother came to her with worry on her face.

Meena had been deemed one of the disappeared children. So thinking she was safe, others started to ask her.

"Where is my child?"

"Meena, did you see Jiri with you?"

She was flooded with questions, confusing her even further.

She wondered what had happened while she was away.

Though, the questions from these women force her to come to a horrible realization.

"I don't know where the kids are," She said as tears started to stream from her face.

Guilt had taken hold of her.

She was not stupid, Mirage had lied and hid many things from her. But she kept ignoring the itching feeling on her back. She wished to hear his stories and learn how to read from him.

Maybe, just maybe. He truly was the demon.

And she started to like this demon as well.

"But I know where the demon is." She cried while pointing toward a particular location out of the village.

A location where now a wall of fire stood.

Which made her suspicion of Jester increase.

"He is there." And she won't hide it anymore.

The children of the village have disappeared and she needs to do something before something bad happens.

Even if it means killing an innocent and kind man like Jester.