

## **The God of Jesters**

### Chapter 2: 1.02.1 Dried Corpse

I was curious about how much these rats would eat. I truly was.

Hence, I didn't wish to leave this place. But safety was my current priority. And the next target of these rats might be me. Not to mention the family of these two that lurk in these woods.

Oh, yes. I forgot to tell you folks about these dreaded woods.

While leaving the city after cremating my mother. I sold the property or whatever was left after her death and planned to walk to Christen city. A holy place in name only.

But I never forgot how much crime there was in that place.

In the newspaper I read, a total of four pages were just taken over by the crimes that were committed in that city alone. Which made it perfect for the kind of business I wished to do.

Though going there turned out to be a hassle. No carriages like the smell of rats on my body and as for train coaches. They didn't even let me enter the station. To them, I was not a human. But a gutter rat.

Well, they are not wrong.

But I digress.

Let's focus on how I got here.

The forest I was in at the moment was called Khaelid forest, named after the great conqueror Khaelid that died here thousands of years ago.

Which was odd. Usually, the places are named after conquerors or winners. Not losers like Khaelid who lost to explore this giant forest even with an army of hundreds.

People like that truly don't deserve to be remembered like that.

And if possible, I also didn't wish to walk through this forest as well.

But in the end, I was forced as no other caravan accepted me among their group due to my smell.

Forced me to rent a mule, that now lies dead not far from the two bodies devoured by the rat.

Sigh, these ignorant lowlifes, why kill such important luggage-carrying animals, like a mule. But guess what? I have no choice.

Going over to the dead mule, I dragged out the satchel containing some of the dry rations and my water bottle.

With the mule dead, reaching the city would take a long time and I won't be able to carry much of my luggage anyways.

Making it so that the ration I have at hand won't be enough for me to survive the whole journey. Leaving me with only one choice.

"Guess, a mule's flesh will have to do."

Even though I haven't tasted it before. The moment I cut open the stomach of the mule, I can taste the smell on my tongue. It was disgusting, to say the least.

But beggars can't be choosers.

Cutting as much as I could carry on my back. I left the place instantly.

I have already taken a lot of time and there was a chance that someone might stumble on me, and a high chance that someone was not at a friendly party.

"But, I am liking it." There was a smile on my lips, because to me. This was truly a joyous moment.

I haven't had this much fun in ages.

The thrill of your life being in danger, the danger that was lurking in the woods eyeing my body.

Everything felt just too enthralling to me. And I think it would be the same for you all.

But I digress.

I have seen the way these savages walked out of the woods. And after looking hard enough, I can see some marks left on the trees as well.

So if I wish to leave this place, I need to go opposite from these marks, away from their family. Only then would I survive this meeting with them.

But as I walked away from those trees, the sun started to drop down and the beats that hunt at night are leaving their cave for the hunt.

Without a fire, I would probably be marked for a hunt by these predators.

But with light, I might attract the attention of those savages. Which put me in a hard place.

So I did what anyone sane in my place would have done.

Climbing one of the trees that seemed pretty easy to mount. I dragged my tired body away from the danger of predators.

Though the higher I climbed, bizarre dizziness took over my body.

Which was odd. I recall cleaning my face after that savage rubbed his disgusting thing on me. Making it hard for any chance of contamination, hence preventing any illness.

"Something's not right," I said in a sleepy tone, Everything was getting so blurry in my vision, that in front of me. I saw someone sitting on the branch just like me.

"Huh?... Was I too tired?"

It seems I am seeing things that shouldn't exist.

"Hah, what a wonderful and unique experience," I said while moving forward. Trying to confirm if what I was seeing was real or not.

And the moment I placed my hand on what I thought was a bizarre branch. I knew.

This was no illusion.

"Ha...?" I was left speechless as the rotten corpse of whoever this person was rattled and one of his hands fell to the ground, a hand which still had some dried flesh sticking to it.

"Oh, there are no ants in this place?" This was the first thought that came to my mind.

For some reason, this body had dried up without any sign of rot. Even its flesh was left alone.

"What is this?" I said after noticing that the naked body had a hole in its stomach.

And in that naked stomach, there was a small glass jar with something leaking out of it.

"..."

I understand now that what I have stumbled upon was not a case caused by an accident.

Someone has put this body here and placed that bottle in the hole of the stomach.

Not to mention, this bottle looked bizarre, with some occultic markings on it.

Markings that attracted me.

"It's leaking, it's probably what's making me dizzy," I said while taking out the jar from the dried-up corpse's stomach and tightening its cap so that no more of this dizzying liquid leaks out anymore.

And as the effect of this drug left my body. I was able to see the detailed carvings on this bottle clearly under the moonlight.

"So beautiful." I thought to myself. The carvings on the glass were beautiful, if this kind of talent was used in glass work in his home city, the creator of this bottle might have earned lots of money.

And who knows, he might be earning it before being killed by these savages and his creations used like this.

\*Shushuk

Though, it seemed my moment of peace was broken by something as I heard some movement around me.

The howls of animals and the creaking of rickets were already spread through the whole forest. But this specific noise produced by the bushes felt out of place.

"A predator?" I wondered. And when I saw the being that silently walked out of the bushes, I knew I was right.

Though a bit wrong as well. As this predator was not an animal, but something much more familiar.

"Another savage, it seemed to be angered." The anger in the eyes of the savage was all too apparent. I can even notice some bite marks from my precious rats on their feet as they bled and followed a smell.

I guess the beast has followed my smell. The same smell that had forced me to walk on this path alone and now the same smell might just turn into the reason for my death.

In case I survive this ordeal. I would invest in some expensive soaps.

Which might just be the case. As the savage that looked more of a beast than a human started to back off from the tree as if fearing something.

And what it feared was already in my hand.

The smell.

Does this thing scare these beasts?

Meaning it was not these savages that kept it here. But someone else?

And as if to confirm my suspicions, I saw the savage turn around and leave this place.

"Curious." I thought, stripping some flesh off the dead and dried person and then taking out Grifter from my pocket.

"Now, now, I will be opening your mouth, don't try to bite me. I am going to need you now."

It was my time to rest, as it would seem that this was the perfect place to rest. Next to a dead body no less.

"Taste it, your little friends already enjoyed a human. Why don't you enjoy them as well" As I slowly opened the bind on Grifter's mouth, it seemed to have understood me. As he didn't try to bite me.

And as I placed some of the poisoned flesh in Grifter's mouth. I looked forward to what it was going to feel like now.

Though, much to my surprise. The little beast ate the whole piece of flesh without any struggle. And then it looked to be asking for more.

"Hmm," I thought, finding this a bit interesting.

I thought the poison was what was keeping the insects away from the body including the rot.

But it might seem to be a wrong assumption.

The rat was still as usual energetic, lifting its feet. As if requesting to be released.

But I knew better than to do this.

The more intelligence this small rat shows me, the more I look forward to the future of rat fights. And the army of intelligent rats it would breed for me.

"Sorry for giving you poisoned flesh. So have some water and sleep." I said. Planning to sleep in this place.