

The God of Jesters

Chapter 8: 1.05.1 The path hidden in the basement.

I was angry.

Since coming here, I have tried my hardest to act normal. I have done things that I deem boring just to be accepted by these people. I have even worked in their homes so that they would accept me.

But to these people, none of that matters. To these people, a stranger would remain a stranger no matter how hard he tried.

If this is how they would treat me, why bother?

Why put on an act of a kind man that I wasn't. Why work for these people who would show me a face of acceptance at one moment and then throw me away from the other.

And they even lie straight to my face.

"There is no one in the room, my ass." I was not some foolish bastard. I can know when someone is hiding in the storage and next to the chief even.

I know I was surrounded and if I made a wrong move, I would have died in that room then and there.

With my body disappearing without a sound.

Before one knows it, these villages might have forgotten that a man like me ever existed.

And when another of the cows is killed, only then would they have regretted their choice.

So I didn't let them kill me.

I maintained my act even if I was feeling angry.

The same anger I felt at my mother's death.

"Why did I think I could be accepted? I should have left this place long ago, it's weird anyway."

I truly should have left this place. Staying here was a foolish decision that I have come to understand now.

People like me can never look forward to a normal future, a normal life with a kind companion.

I was foolish to expect more from life than just entertainment.

There is only one meaning in life and its entertainment. Nothing more and nothing less.

"Fuck these people, I will be rich with Grifter. There are no rats like him."

Ignoring the figure of Meena that tried to stop me, wondering why my mood was the way it was. I entered my home and closed the door on the back.

Though, the moment I turned around and looked at my room. It surprised me.

"What the fuck is going on," I said, as I noticed that the arrangement of the room and decorations were a lot different from when I came here before.

Even the smell in the air was different. A lot more medicinal.

"I didn't even leave for an hour, who can do this."

I knew for a fact this was my home, with the same windows, the same door, and the architecture.

Even the broken plaster on the wall remained the same.

But something was different.

This room was mine and not mine all at once.

"A dirty play by these villagers?"

"I won't fall for this... I am already mad with that fog behind me." Ignoring the room that was familiar and alien at once, I reached the cage of Grifter that was still hidden under the blanket.

Though the design of the blanket was a tad bit different.

"So they saw you as well? Wonderful." I said while lifting the cloth from the cage and finding little Grifter once again.

And same as before, the rat I just placed a few minutes ago was dead, its body turned inside out.

But there was something else in the cage as well.

Something at which the little rat was pointing at.

Something which was made up of bones of the rats that Grifter had killed before. Bones that he then used to write some words with.

"Die, live, repeat?"

The small hands of the rat first pointed at the 'live' part, then the 'die' part, and then 'repeat'.

Then it kept tapping at the repeat part.

Though the words were crude and spelled wrong. I understood what the rat wanted to say, but did not understand them too.

"Me dead... I would die?" I asked, recalling the previous messages the rat tried to convey before.

At which, the rat nodded its head, then it moved next to the other side of the cage and then lifted a rat skin. Under which, with rat entrails, there were some crude words written once again.

"Run and basement?"

Things were getting too weird. My little rat cannot only express and understand the human tongue but even spell out words that were impossible for a normal rat.

As no matter how much you train a rat, its small brain would never evolve to such a degree.

But till this point, I have seen too many weird things.

"I understand the run, but what about the basement?" I already intended to run away, things were getting too bizarre and I don't like to say it, but Grifter's action has scared me somewhat.

Leaving this place might hurt me, but at least I can get rid of the madness I was experiencing in this place.

And who knows, Grifter might also turn into the normal killer rat from before.

Well, he is still the same, skinning another rat-like itself in such a small amount of time just shows how much of an expert killer he is.

"No, I don't need to ask, I need to see it for myself. Too many bizarre things have happened recently and I can't ignore them anymore."

Opening the cage, I slowly pushed my hand toward Grifter. I feared that he might bite me and try to kill me.

But, Grifter was a lot calmer than I had imagined him to be.

Well, he was capable of speech. So this was not much of a surprise after I thought it through somewhat.

"Basement, lead me to it," I said to Grifter that had climbed to my shoulder, close to my carotid artery, which gave it an ample chance to attack and kill me. But even then, the little vengeful rat didn't kill me. And instead, it pointed in the direction of the room.

And when I came to, Grifter was pointing at the rat.

"Under this?" Looking at this unfamiliar room, I felt a bit of strangeness in me. As If I didn't belong in this place.

"Yes! I am moving the bed." Under the small slaps of Grifter, I dragged the bed to the side and found what was under it.

"Truly a basement."

Opening the basement door, I found just darkness down below. And from this darkness, I can feel some cool air coming from it.

"Is this really safe?" I asked the little guy on my shoulder, which just nodded at me.

"I might be truly going mad." There was no other way to explain why I would be led by a rat and treating it so normal.

But, I don't wish to say this.

But everything became pretty entertaining to me.

And I think the same is true for all of you folks.

"This is my escape route?"

I said before turning to the bed. I need to hide this gate under the bed somehow.

Which would seem a bit problematic as the door to the basement opened from above. And I can't drag the bed over to hide the gate unless I keep it open.

And I don't wish for others to find out my location so easily.

"If only I had a companion." I wondered, recalling Menna.

Yes, if it's her, she might help me.

But knowing her, she would probably choose to follow me in this whole situation instead.

"Let's leave it all to luck." Dragging the bed closer to me, I descended slowly into the dark cave with a lantern in my hand.

While I covered the entrance to the basement like a cave with my bed.

"Goodbye." I gave one last look at the room that now looked alien to me and then dropped down completely along with Grifter.

"It truly was a cave." I wondered as I illuminated the path with the lantern while slowly crawling forward.

And yes, you heard it right. I was crawling on all my fours as the path forward was a lot smaller than I had anticipated.

Someone dug it, a singular person dug this cave and I can feel the struggle and hard work that person put into this hidden pathway.

"But from whom was this person hiding from? Making someone like this in secrecy?"

I wondered as I gave little Grifter a curious look.

There was a high chance that little Grifter might be possessed by the dead spirit of the man who dug this path.

It would explain Grifter's intelligence and his knowledge perfectly.

This also meant that I need to be cautious toward Grifter, who knows if the stories of ghosts are actually true, and Grifter is just leading me away from people in order to take over my body.

Though, chances of that seemed slim as they came to the end of the path and heard a familiar sound that I have been hearing for a long while now.

"The waterfall." Crawling out of the path, the area expanded till it was spacious enough to act as a room. With lots of things attached to the wall.

A room that was hidden behind the waterfall at an elevation that people might not even notice.

"So this is the place for me to rest until things in the village are over?" I asked the little grifter on my shoulder that just shook its head and pointed at the room.

As if asking me to illuminate it.

And so I did.

"Wha..."

What I found was a scene of carnage. Odd pieces of organs from multiple cows were sewn together to form a simple anatomical structure of a human body and around it, there were different herbs and books kept carefully on the shelf.

"Did you take me to the hideout of the demon?"

I asked with horror as I looked at the little rat on my shoulder.

"Are you the demon?"