

Unspeakable 1891

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Lord Voodoo never thought there'd be someone hiding in the vicinity.

"Give that back!" he roared as soon as the fruit was snatched from under his nose.

He charged forward to get the fruit back. However, yet another person snuck out from the side and started attacking Lord Voodoo. The two of them flew backward in opposite directions due to the impact of the attack.

Lord Voodoo was back at his original spot. He studied the two men carefully and realized it was Macon and Gregory.

It was Macon who took the fruit!

Gregory was the one who came out to stop him just now.

Lord Voodoo's expression stiffened. He never thought the two would have followed him here.

However, he quickly composed himself and smiled. "Ah... It's the two of you. You gave me a such fright! I was wondering who it was. You shouldn't be holding onto that fruit, Master Rathbone. It contains a deadly poison that's very hard to treat if it enters your system."

Macon sneered. "Do you think we're children, Lord Voodoo? You seem like you couldn't wait to swallow it whole just now, so why are you trying to tell me that it's poison?"

Lord Voodoo had an awkward look in his eyes as he quickly explained, "You don't understand, Master Rathbone. This is something extremely beneficial to me, but for you, it's a deadly poison. Do you know what's inside this fruit?"

"It's a special kind of bug from Orleans that I cultivated myself. You have to be careful not to trigger the bugs inside, or things will get very dangerous for you!"

However, Gregory didn't want to listen to any of this. "Are you still trying to lie to us now, Lord Voodoo? I'll be frank with you. I've been suspicious of you right from the start, so you're not going to be tricked by you now!"

"W-What did I do?" Lord Voodoo asked. "Why are you suspicious of me?"

Gregory snorted. "We started suspecting you much earlier on when you tried to talk us out of killing Aurelius. And after killing Falconn, the wisest choice for us would be to run away from Eastcliff as fast as possible, yet you insisted on wanting to rest in the area..."

"That was too strange. Do you think no one noticed anything? I'll tell you right now... Macon and I have been keeping our eyes on you this whole time tonight. We've been tailing you ever since you snuck out and came here. We saw every single thing you did..."

"Here's a word of advice, Lord Voodoo. Tell us the truth about what you're doing, or else, don't blame us for not showing you any mercy!"

Lord Voodoo was dumbstruck. Never in his wildest dreams would he have thought that the other two would catch onto everything he was doing.

Earlier tonight, he snuck out alone because he wanted to avoid the two of them. He never expected that the two of them had been suspicious of him all along. He let out a long sigh. "Gregory, Master Rathbone, since you've seen everything, I won't try to hide it from you anymore..."

"I had no choice but to do what I did today. As you know, I had to consume quite a few of my Immortal Bugs. I don't have that many left. If I want to become strong again, I need to gain more Immortal Bugs. The best way to do that is to find a powerful person's body and use his strength to nourish the Immortal Bugs..."

"You're right. I had an ulterior motive for wanting you to kill Falconn tonight. I wanted to use his body to replenish my Immortal Bugs."

Gregory spat on the ground in contempt. "Hah! A likely story!"

"Replenishing your Immortal Bugs, huh? Do you think we're fools?!"

"The three of us are in this together now. If you merely wanted to regain your power, the two of us would've done everything we could to help you, but you tried to hide all of this from us, which can only mean one thing!"

"This fruit must be something incredibly powerful, and that's why you want to keep it from us!"

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Lord Voodoo's expression stiffened slightly, but he quickly said, "You misunderstood me, Gregory. I'm not trying to do anything like that."

Gregory glared at him and declared icily, "Lord Voodoo, since you refuse to tell us the truth, we won't waste any more time talking to you either! Macon, cut that fruit in half. We'll each take half of it and be done with this."

Macon smirked and nodded. "What an excellent idea!"

Lord Voodoo became a lot more agitated. "You mustn't do that! The most fearsome cursed bug in all of Orleans is inside that fruit. All three of us are doomed to die if you let it out!"

Gregory snorted. "Stop trying to scare us. Go ahead and run off then, if you're so scared. The two of us will stay here and cut the fruit open. How's that?"

Macon nodded once more. "That's right, Lord Voodoo. If you're so afraid of dying, you can just leave! Mr. Huntington and I are willing to risk our lives. If we do die from the fruit and release some kind of terrifying cursed bug, then we asked for it. What do you think?"

"Exactly," Gregory laughed. "Come on, Macon. Use my dagger!"

Gregory tossed a dagger over to Macon. Macon picked it up and raised it to cut the fruit in half.

"No!" Lord Voodoo bellowed when he saw that the other two meant business. "I-I'll tell you. I'll tell the truth, okay? Hurry up and put the dagger away!"

Macon and Gregory exchanged glances and smirked.

"You'd better tell us the truth, Lord Voodoo," Gregory sneered.

"Lie to us again and we'll cut the fruit in half at once!"

Lord Voodoo stared at the fruit and sighed deeply before warning in a quiet voice, "You two better not be too careless with this fruit. It contains at least 80 percent of Falconn Damron's inner energy!"

Both Macon and Gregory froze as their eyes grew wide.

"What did you say?!" Gregory exclaimed.

Macon stared at the fruit in his hand with a hungry look in his eyes.

"This fruit came from the Stargulf plant, but it is also a type of charm," Lord Voodoo explained grimly.

"A longtime ago, the Stargulf plant was readily found all over Orleans, and at the time, it was the Orleanians' worst nightmare. All the Orleanians would immediately destroy all of the Stargulf plants they encountered!"

Gregory frowned. "Are you still trying to trick us, Lord Voodoo? I saw the way you stared at it like it was some kind of treasure just now, yet you're now telling me that it's the Orleanians' worst nightmare. Are you taking us for fools?"

Macon raised the dagger and acted as if he was about to cut the fruit open at any moment.

After all, from the way Lord Voodoo was behaving, they could tell that he greatly valued the fruit from the Stargulf plant. Therefore, it was hard for them to believe what he was telling them now.

Lord Voodoo quickly waved his hand. "Hang on! Just wait a minute! Let me finish. I already said that this happened a long time ago!"

"It was over a thousand years ago. Due to the Orleanians' extermination of the Stargulf plant, it became nearly extinct. That's why it's now a rare treasure to the Orleanians. It'll put it this way. In the last thousand years, less than five of these Stargulf plants were found. Does that not count as rare to you?"

Macon and Gregory exchanged looks.

Gregory frowned and asked, "Why are you contradicting yourself? If it's a rare treasure now, why did the Orleanians want to destroy it back then?"

"Do you know what's the main feature of the Stargulf plant?" Lord Voodoo asked.

The other two men shook their heads.

Lord Voodoo explained solemnly, "The main feature of the Stargulf plant is that it can devour cursed bugs and utilize the nutrients from them for its growth."

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Macon and Gregory stared wide-eyed at Lord Voodoo. They finally understood why the Orleanians feared the Stargulf plant.

Nearly everyone in Orleans practiced the art of charms and curses which relied on cursed bugs. If the Stargulf plant was capable of consuming cursed bugs, then it was the Orleanians' biggest enemy. It was understandable why the Orleanians wanted to exterminate the plant.

"In that case, why is the Stargulf plant so precious to you?" Gregory asked.

"That's because after the plant was exterminated, people began to realize the wondrous way it could be used," Lord Voodoo said quietly.

"What's that?" Macon quickly probed.

Lord Voodoo stared at the fruit in Macon's hands and carried on quietly, "After consuming cursed bugs, the Stargulf plant can use the vitality drawn from the bugs to form a fruit. The fruit will then contain all of the vitality that was sucked out of the cursed bugs."

Gregory glanced at the fruit. "How much vitality can cursed bugs have anyway?"

"You're right," Lord Voodoo said. "Most cursed bugs don't have much vitality in them. Before the Stargulf plant was pushed to the brink of extinction, some Orleanians ate the fruit as well. Not only did they not receive any benefit from it, but they also ended up consuming the poison from the plant..."

"Quite a few of them died because of this. Therefore, the Orleanians thought that the Stargulf plant was just a useless, poisonous plant. That went on until an Orleanian stumbled across an unexpected find that led to him discovering the wondrous way to use the Stargulf plant."

Macon was getting impatient. "Just what on earth is this wondrous way of using it?"

Lord Voodoo hesitated for a moment before explaining quietly, "In Orleans, we have something called the Vitality Devourer Charm, and the Vitality Devourer Bugs used in that charm can devour a person's vitality. It is incredibly useful when used against martial arts practitioners as it can devour the fighter's vitality..."

"The person will also lose all of his inner energy. If the Stargulf plant consumes Vitality Devourer Bugs, it means that it has also absorbed the martial arts practitioner's vitality. This means that the fruit of the Stargulf plant is like an elixir that contains a martial arts practitioner's vitality, and consuming the elixir will give you all of that person's inner energy!"

Macon and Gregory's jaws dropped. They both stared at the fruit with gleaming eyes.

The Stargulf plant had consumed all of Falconn's vitality, which meant that the fruit contained his inner energy.

Falconn was someone who was on the verge of becoming a grandmaster. Therefore, gaining his inner energy was enough to catapult a person into far greater heights of martial arts prowess.

Macon couldn't stop himself from clutching the fruit even tighter as Gregory gazed at him warily as if he might run off with the fruit.

At last, the two of them realized what Lord Voodoo had been up to. He wanted to gain all of Falconn's power!

Noticing the looks on both men's faces, Lord Voodoo got straight to the point. "Don't get so excited. You can't just eat the fruit straight away..."

"Do you think it'll be that easy for you to gain the power of a grandmaster? I'll put it this way. Think about what state your body is in right now. Do you think your meridians can take it if you suddenly absorb all of a grandmaster's power?"

Macon and Gregory, who were indeed getting extremely excited, both froze as soon as they heard what Lord Voodoo said.

It was a harsh reality check for both men.

Considering their respective power levels right now, their bodies would undoubtedly explode if they suddenly absorbed the power of a grandmaster!

Macon relaxed his grip a little. He looked at Lord Voodoo and asked, "How do you think this fruit should be consumed then, Lord Voodoo?"

"Give the fruit back to me and I'll tell you!" Lord Voodoo declared coldly.

"What do you think the chances are of that happening?" Macon retorted just as coldly.

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"I'm the only one in this entire world who knows how to eat this fruit," Lord Voodoo snapped angrily.

"Don't even think about benefiting from it if you don't give back to me!"

Macon frowned as he glanced over at Gregory.

Gregory swiftly started acting as the mediator. "Master Rathbone, Lord Voodoo, I think it's not right for us to mistrust each other so much..."

"Since we've joined forces, we should have faith in our alliance. How are we going to deal with Matthew if we keep our guard up against each other? Don't forget that we're still in a precarious situation right now. Matthew and the Damrons will still come after us, and we'll only be rushing to our deaths if we start infighting!"

Macon took a deep breath and said grimly, "Since we're allies, we can't let him have this fruit all to himself, right? After all, the three of us worked together on the plan. I'm the one who killed Falconn, so why does he get to have the entire fruit?"

Gregory nodded and turned to Lord Voodoo. "I have a suggestion, Lord Voodoo. We've done everything together as a trio, so the fruit belongs to all three of us. Why don't we split it into three so that each one of us gets a piece? What do you think?"

Lord Voodoo was clenching his jaw so hard that his face had gotten a little pale, but in the end, he glanced at the other two men and nodded.

"Fine. Let's split it into three," Lord Voodoo said. "However, I have to be the one who splits it!"

Macon immediately started frowning, and Gregory sounded a little annoyed as well. "Lord Voodoo, I meant that we should split it evenly. No one gets to have more or less than anyone else!"

"I know that!" Lord Voodoo snapped. "What I meant is, I need to cut the fruit up in person. Do you think you can just hack into it with a knife? If the fruit gets smashed, then all of the inner energy inside it will disappear. You need to use a special technique to cut the fruit open!"

Macon and Gregory glanced at one another. Eventually, Macon tossed the fruit over to Lord Voodoo. "Fine. You split it!"

While speaking, Macon moved a little to the side to keep Lord Voodoo in between him and Gregory. They were wary of Lord Voodoo running off with the fruit.

After taking the fruit, Lord Voodoo took out a porcelain bottle. He poured the powder inside the bottle onto the fruit. Once the fruit's glow began a lot dimmer, he took out a dagger and sliced the fruit open.

As soon as he cut it open, he immediately poured the powder onto the surface that was exposed to the air to stop the vitality contained inside the fruit from leaking out. He continued doing this until the fruit had been cut into nine pieces.

"Why did you split it into so many pieces?" Gregory was puzzled. "Won't three be enough? One for each of us."

"Falconn was on the verge of becoming a grandmaster. His inner energy is a lot stronger than ours," Lord Voodoo explained. "Even if I split it into three, eating that one piece is enough to kill you. I split it into nine, so his power has been split into nine as well. You'll only be safe if you consume it in smaller pieces!"

Gregory nodded in realization. "I see..."

Lord Voodoo separated the fruit into three porcelain bottles. He took one before tossing the other two to Macon and Gregory.

"Alright. Just eat one piece at a time. Remember not to eat more than that. You have to wait until you've fully absorbed the energy from the first piece before you eat the next, or else, you'll be courting death!" Lord Voodoo warned grimly.

Macon and Gregory had similar expressions of delight as they clutched their bottles tightly.

"Shall we eat one now?" Gregory suggested.

"Have you gone mad?" Lord Voodoo immediately shot that idea down. "If you've got a death wish, then go ahead and eat it now. I won't stop you, but I'm certainly not going to eat it now!"

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"Why do you say that?" Gregory was confused. "Is it poisonous if we eat it now?"

Lord Voodoo shook his head. "It has nothing to do with poison! When we eat the fruit, the energy contained inside it will clash with our energy. Therefore, after eating the fruit, there will be a period when we'll lose all of our power and won't be able to fight at all."

"Don't forget that we're still in Eastcliff territory. It's already dangerous enough for us to even be here. Things would only become even more perilous for us if we became powerless too."

Gregory and Macon both nodded in realization.

"You're right," Gregory said. "We should leave this place at once and find a safe place to hide before we eat this fruit."

Macon tightened his grip around the bottle in his hand as he commented darkly, "I hope Larson stays alive a little longer. I want to kill him myself!"

The sun was slowly beginning to rise. The three men didn't dare to stick around any longer. They began journeying north under the cover of the forest.

It was morning at Eastcliff.

Matthew was having breakfast in the dining room when Melvin came rushing in through the door.

"Something terrible has happened, Matty!"

Melvin announced gravely. His expression was grim as well.

Matthew was startled. He had never seen Melvin this anxious before.

'What happened?'

"What is it?" Matthew asked.

Melvin took a deep breath and said, "The Damrons put out a statement that they're going to go all out to kill you! Not only that, but they even halted the engagement ceremony with the Nolans and are sending a large number of their people over to Eastcliff."

"They've sworn to kill you! Based on my estimate, the Damrons will be arriving in Eastcliff this afternoon!"

Matthew's eyes widened. "Why is this happening? Didn't Aurelius give us a written guarantee? Why are the Damrons still coming after us? What are they trying to do?"

"Aurelius said that after you released them last night, you hid your face and went after them again," Melvin explained gravely. "You killed his Uncle Falconn, so the Damrons are here to take revenge!"

Matthew was completely stupefied. "W-What on earth are they saying? W-When did I kill Falconn? Why are they avenging him? I came right back to Lakeside Garden after everything that happened last night and I didn't step foot outside at all. When did I go after them?"

"Exactly! That's the thing," Melvin continued. "I suspect that someone disguised themselves as you and attacked them to frame you!"

Matthew felt a chill down his spine. This possibility just occurred to him as well.

"Are you saying that Macon and his gang are behind this?" Matthew asked quietly.

Melvin nodded slowly. "It's possible! Those three are cunning men. Gregory is also an expert Face Changer, while Lord Voodoo has all sorts of peculiar charms and curses. One of them can disguise himself as you and kill Falconn!"

Matthew's face darkened. "The Orleanians have something called a Mimicking Charm that can be used to mimic other people's voices. If they combine that with Gregory's Face Changer ability to disguise one of them as me, then Aurelius wouldn't be able to notice that it's just a disguise..."

"Seems to me that they are indeed the ones behind this! Those three insidious b*stards!"

Melvin sighed helplessly. "It was the same with Jasper Damron, and now it's happening again with Falconn Damron. Matthew, it was easy enough to sort out the incident with Jasper, but it won't be as easy with Falconn! The Damrons even halted the engagement ceremony with the Nolans. They're determined to kill you!"

Matthew's brows were tightly furrowed. He knew very well that he was in a messy situation this time.

Just then, Melvin's phone buzzed.

He checked his phone and frowned. "Falconn's body is missing?"

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Matthew was startled. "W-What went missing?"

"Falconn's body," Melvin replied. "My men found the location where the Damrons had been ambushed last night, but the Damrons are already there. They're looking everywhere for Falconn's body right now."

"The body went missing?" Matthew repeated. "How's that possible? He's dead. Why would anyone take his body away? What do they want to do with his body? Who'd do such a thing?"

Melvin shrugged. He couldn't figure it out either.

After mulling it over in silence, Matthew stood up. "Where were they ambushed?"

"What're you trying to do?" Melvin asked.

"I want to take a look around," Matthew said. "I can get out of this sticky situation if I can find clues to prove that it's not my doing."

The two of them gathered Salazar and a few other men before rushing over to the site where Aurelius and Falconn had been ambushed.

Twenty minutes later, they arrived at the location.

A large crowd surrounded the area. There were twenty to thirty of them searching all around. These were the Damrons.

They exchanged glances when they saw a group of people approaching, and one man came forward to stop Matthew's car.

"This area is blocked off. Scram!" The man barked at them haughtily as if he was ordering his servant around.

Tiger, who was at the wheel, instantly got annoyed.

"Do you think this place belongs to you?" Tiger roared back. "What makes you think you can tell us to scram?!"

The man's expression became stormy. "I'm a member of the Bainbridge Nolans. Is that good enough for you? I'm warning you. The Damrons are here for official business. No one's allowed to come near this place. I'm in a foul mood today, so you'll get lost at once if you know what's good for you. If not, go ahead and see if I don't send all of you b*stards to hell right now!"

Tiger was about to fire back at the man when Matthew got out of the car.

"So what if you're the Damrons? This is Eastcliff. You Damrons don't have the right to order anyone around here!" Matthew declared coldly.

The man was taken aback. He was used to throwing his weight around and getting his way whenever he brought up the Damron name. No one dared to show any disrespect to the Damrons.

He eyed Matthew with a frown. "What's with the bravado, punk? Are you looking down on the Damrons? Who the f*ck are you? Go ahead and tell me your name if you dare!"

Matthew smirked and replied coolly, "The name's Matthew Larson!"

The man's expression stiffened at once as he subconsciously took a step back.

The Damron name was enough to scare off anyone else, but not Matthew. Even Aurelius had failed to threaten Matthew despite coming to Eastcliff in person, let alone this man. Most importantly, Aurelius told the Damrons that Matthew killed Falconn.

'Is Matthew Larson here now because he wants to kill us too?'

The thought was enough to send the man retreating even further.

He had a petrified look in his eyes as he stared at Matthew.

His voice trembled as he spoke. "Y-You're Matthew Larson? What are you trying to do? I-I'm warning you. W-We're not afraid of you... You killed our Uncle Falconn. O-Our family won't let you get away with that. H-Hurry up and hand his body over if you know what's good for you. Maybe we'll consider sparing your life, o-or else... Or else..."

Matthew snorted. He didn't bother looking at the man as he headed straight for the forest.

The man became even more agitated.

He wanted to stop Matthew, but he didn't dare to approach, so he called out in a shaky voice, "W-What are you doing? Don't go over there... Q-Quick! S-Stop him..."

The other Damrons glanced at each other, but no one dared to stop Matthew.

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Tiger also led a group of people over, and they all headed straight for the scene of the attack.

Upon noticing this, none of the Damrons dared to approach them. They retreated backward and stared at Matthew.

After taking a quick look around, Matthew turned to Salazar. "What do you think, Mr. Whitford?"

"There are some medical supplies in the car, including bandages and surgical cotton," Salazar remarked.

"Aurelius must've driven the car here and stopped to dress his wounds and rest for a bit. The killer must've caught up to them here..."

"First, he threw a flying dagger to puncture the car tire so that they couldn't leave in the car. Then, Aurelius must've tried to fight off the killer, but the fight didn't last very long. He was heavily injured and was no match for the killer, so he had no choice but to flee."

Matthew nodded. It was the same as what he had deduced as well.

"What about Falconn?" Melvin asked.

"Falconn's injuries were extremely severe. He couldn't fight back at all. He couldn't even run off by himself," Salazar continued.

"As you can see, Falconn only moved around slightly."

Melvin had been silent for a while, but suddenly he asked, "If Falconn didn't even have the strength to run away, how did Aurelius manage to escape?"

Tiger stared blankly at Melvin. "What kind of logic is that, Mr. Melvin? Falconn couldn't run away, but Aurelius could. Those seem like two mutually exclusive things to me."

However, Matthew and Salazar exchanged glances. They both understood what Melvin meant.

Melvin rolled his eyes at Tiger. "How can you even ask me that? Just use your brain and think. There were two people under attack. One of them didn't have the strength to move while the other was heavily injured, which meant he was unable to put up much of a fight..."

"Under the circumstances, if you were to come and kill them, would you allow one of them to escape with his life?"

Tiger scratched his head. "Why don't you just explain it to me, Mr. Melvin? I don't get it."

Melvin wrung his hand in exasperation before saying, "Let me put it this way. Aurelius was heavily injured and wouldn't have been able to fight off the killer. He wouldn't have been able to escape from the killer either, so why do you think Aurelius managed to run off?"

Tiger thought about it before asking quietly, "Could it be that the killer came over and killed Falconn first, so Aurelius seized the chance to escape?"

Melvin eyed him in frustration. "If you were the killer and Aurelius ran off, would you go after Aurelius and kill him first or come over and kill Falconn, who couldn't even run away?"

Tiger's eyes started bulging. "Oh! I get it! I get it now! Falconn couldn't have run off at all, so you could leave him here and come back to kill him at any time! If I were the killer, I would've gone after Aurelius first!"

"So, that's where the problem lies..." Melvin carried on breaking it down for Tiger, "How did Aurelius manage to escape? He couldn't have if the killer wanted him dead. The only possibility is the killer let him escape on purpose!"

Tiger nodded at once. "Yes. That's right. That must be it."

However, he started scratching his head again. "But why would the killer let him escape?"

"Why don't you read a bit more, Tiger?" Melvin remarked.

"With brains like yours, I don't think you'd survive in the world of martial arts."

Tiger grinned and said, "Well, that's why I work for you, Mr. Melvin! You can take charge when it comes to things that require brain power. I'll save myself the hassle."

Melvin rolled his eyes in exasperation once more before saying, "The killer let Aurelius go on purpose so that Aurelius would go back and report this to the Damrons..."

"This way, Matthew would be framed as the killer. How would the killer be able to frame Matthew if he killed Aurelius as well? There wouldn't be anyone left to tell the Damrons about this."

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Realization struck Tiger, after which he smacked his thigh. "I see what's going on. So, that's how it is..."

He turned to look at the Damrons. "Did you hear that? You got duped, idiots. Someone framed Matthew, and you took the bait. Tell your buddies to find the real culprit. Don't fall for the trap!"

The Damrons' lackeys exchanged a look.

The guy who started this retorted, "That's a lie! Master Damron said he's the killer! He saw Matthew do it! He can't be wrong!"

Melvin snorted. "Like Aurelius can see through the night. Besides, there's something called Face Changer. All the killer has to do is change his face and wait until night, time to strike, and boom. Wrongful accusation."

The lackey had no argument for that, but still, he stood aside and glared at Matthew.

Tiger snarled. "Damn idiots. Not like they'd listen to us anyway. Why don't we just call the Damrons?"

Melvin waved him off. "No point. Falconn is important to them. Too important. His death means they don't get to be one of the Ten Greatest Families of Cathay. This is beyond a fight for profit. This is a fight for honor. At this point, even if we aren't the killer, they'd come after us just to vent."

Tiger froze. "So, we're in a stalemate?"

Melvin answered, "No. But we'll have to find evidence that proves our innocence. That'll stop them from coming after us."

Tiger looked around. "Evidence? Where are we supposed to look for evidence?"

At this moment, Matthew, who had been crouching down, suddenly said, "It's right here."

Everyone was stupefied, but Tiger quickly approached him. "Really?"

"Is there actual evidence?" Melvin quickly huddled closer as well. "What did you find?"

Matthew held up a stick and drew a circle on the ground.

He pointed at the center of it. "See the white powder on the ground? That's the larvae of a certain cursed bug."

Melvin's eyes went wide.

With a trembling voice, he said, "There are cursed bugs at play? So, Lord Voodoo is behind this?"

"Hah! Now we have the evidence!" Tiger stood up and pointed at the Damrons' lackey. "Hey, you! Get a gander. Here's the evidence. Now call your family and tell them about it!"

The Damron Family's lackey came to have a closer look, but he frowned when he saw it. "How should I know if this is the real deal?"

Matthew said, "Your family's top dogs can decide for themselves. Just tell them what we've found."

The guy was still hesitant, but Matthew didn't bother and instead said, "Get someone to cordon this place off. Let nobody approach. And take pictures of the whole place as evidence."

Tiger nodded. "Yes, Matthew."

Matthew stood up and looked at Salazar. "Let's go, Salazar."

He gave him furtive looks. Salazar got the idea. He followed Matthew to the car.

The moment they got in the car, Matthew's face fell. "We have trouble. Lord Voodoo must have taken Falconn's body away."

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Melvin followed them inside, and he gasped. "What? Why did he steal the body? Are you sure it wasn't eaten by animals?"

Matthew shook his head. "Yes. I'm sure he stole it."

Melvin asked, "And how do you know?"

Matthew opened his hand, revealing a little patch of white powder on his fingertip. It was the same powder he saw on the ground.

"Hey, that's the bug's larvae, but this can only prove they killed Falconn and can't prove that Lord Voodoo stole his body," Salazar said.

Matthew shook his head. "The larvae are a clue. It's the offspring of something called Vitality Devouring Bug. It can devour its victim's vitality and take their power. It's a vile bug even among Orleanians."

Melvin asked, "So, Lord Voodoo took Falconn's power before he killed him? Well, that's redundant."

Matthew said, "And therein lies the problem. Falconn was helpless before he died. He could have killed him easily, so why did he take his powers away?"

"And they were trying to pin the blame on me. The best way is to leave no trace or evidence behind, but the guy used his cursed bug for this. Don't you think it's strange?"

As Melvin scratched his head, he replied, "Yeah. Do they have something else in mind?"

Salazar looked at Matthew. "That bug... Does it have another use?"

Matthew nodded. "Vitality Devourers have another important use. They can be combined with Stargulf, and the concoction can absorb its victim's inner energy."

His words caused Salazar and Melvin to freeze.

"W-What did you just say?" Melvin stammered.

Matthew told them about the combination of Stargulf and Vitality Devouring Bugs.

Salazar and Melvin exchanged a look of shock. Melvin was a veteran who saw a lot of things in his life, but this was the first he had heard of something like this.

He gasped and muttered, "So, that b*stard is gonna absorb Falconn's inner energy? Oh my god..."

He whispered. "If it works, we'd be facing a disaster. His curses are already powerful in the first place. If he gets even more power, he can rule the world..."

Matthew said, "I'm not sure if he has Stargulf, but let's assume the worst-case scenario. Melvin, send your men on a search for Falconn's body. Lord Voodoo can't have gone far with the body in tow. Once the bug finishes absorbing the energy, it'd start processing it. That's a waste of energy Voodoo won't allow. My guess is they're still around these mountains. Twenty-mile radius from here, tops."

Melvin nodded. "Right away. But what about the Damrons? They'll be in Eastcliff real soon."

A frown furrowed Matthew's forehead, and he sighed. "I'll stay out of their way for now. They're here for my head. Reasoning with them is off the table. We'll deal with the Voodoo problem first. Everything else can wait."

Melvin nodded and hurriedly got out of the car to start arranging the search.

Matthew remained in the car, his brows still furrowed. 'This is a bigger problem than the last...'

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Melvin and his men scoured the mountains for more than two hours, but finally, they found Falconn's body.

Matthew met up with them the moment he got the news. When he saw the state the body was in, his face fell.

A sigh escaped Melvin's lips. "Goddammit. I wouldn't have recognized him if not for the clothes. He's literally skin and bones. No flesh, no blood, and no innards at all. He's a celebrated guy, and this is what he gets?"

"Bro, can that bug actually do this? Eat up its victim's flesh and blood?"

Matthew shook his head. "Alone? No. But some practitioners can make the bug more aggressive and prod it into consuming its victim's flesh and blood."

Melvin asked, "They can do that?"

Matthew nodded. "Yes. Flesh and blood are the best fertilizers for Stargulfs. Lord Voodoo must have whipped the bug into a frenzy with his blood, forcing it to consume everything in Falconn's body. For one, he can speed up the Stargulf's growth, and two, he can keep Falconn's energy fresher for a longer time."

Melvin's eyes went wide. "That b*stard has gone too far. Falconn deserves some respect! This is unbelievable!"

Matthew sighed. 'Lord Voodoo will do anything for power...'

Just then, a commotion broke out in the distance.

Matthew turned around and saw the Damrons coming over to them. He had told them the news the moment he got it.

Matthew waved to the people outside, telling them to let the Damrons in.

When the group reached Matthew and the leader saw the body, he plopped down on the ground.

"W-What is that?" he asked, his voice trembling.

"Falconn's body," Melvin answered.

The man's eyes went wide with terror. "I-Impossible. There's no way that's Falconn's body. Y-You're lying! Falconn doesn't look like that at all!"

Melvin asked, "Just look at the clothes."

The man snapped, "You're lying! It's not like clothes can prove anything. I bet you've hidden his body and put his clothes over this! And you think we'd believe that? We're not stupid!"

That got on Melvin's nerves. "I don't give a f*ck what you think! His body is right here. You wanna take it? Take it! You don't believe us? Then f*ck off!"

The Damrons exchanged a look, and the man roared, "Larson! The family's going to be here any minute. Explain yourself, or you will die! Aurelius will not rest until you die!"

Matthew didn't even bother to look at him and waved the man off. "F*ck off!"

The man roared, "You think you're all that? We're bigg..."

Before he could finish, Tiger and his men surrounded the guy. "You heard the man. F*ck off, or I'll make you. I don't mind throwing all of you down the mountain!"

The man shivered in fear, but still, he retorted, "Y-You wouldn't dare. My family is coming, and by then, none of you can escape! Larson, hand over Falconn's body right now! Just you wait! Your death is coming soon!"

Furious, Tiger roared, "Who do you think you are, dipsh*t? Boys, toss them down the mountain!"