

# DOROTHY'S FORBIDDEN GRIMOIRE

## Chapter 7: Squad

The night shrouded Vulcan. At the police station entrance, a group of officers stood in a circle around the corpse lying on the ground. Their faces showed unease as they listened to the earlier sentry recounting the horrifying event in vivid detail. A faint sense of fear rippled through the gathered crowd.

From a corner some distance away on another street, Dorothy watched the scene at the police station from afar. Once satisfied, she quietly turned and left.

Everything was in place. Now, it was just a matter of waiting for all parties involved to make their respective moves.

From the letters found on Edrick, Dorothy had learned the contact method used by the mysterious organization's operative stationed in Vulcan. According to their agreement detailed in the letters, Edrick only needed to place a photograph of Dorothy into the mailbox at 24 North Street in Vulcan after completing his task. The organization's operative would then wait for

Edrick the following night in the western forest of Vulcan to finalize the exchange.

The plan was straightforward: the mysterious organization would hand over their reward to Edrick, allowing him to step into the so-called "realm of beyond," while they would take possession of Dorothy.

But now, Edrick was dead—a fact known only to Dorothy. The locals of Vulcan had yet to realize that their local overlord had met his demise, let alone the operatives sent by the mysterious organization.

Using this to her advantage, Dorothy, originally the intended victim, took a photograph of herself and sent it to the designated address. Receiving the photograph would signal the mysterious operatives that Edrick had succeeded. They would then head to the agreed-upon location in the forest the next night to carry out the trade.

To ensure her actions went unnoticed, Dorothy spent most of the day wandering around Vulcan, casually inquiring about Edrick and confirming that no one knew of his untimely fate.

She also took precautions to avoid walking into a trap. Knowing the photo studio had been operating in Vulcan for nearly a decade, Dorothy deduced it

was unlikely to be connected to the mysterious organization, which had no influence in the area before its dealings with Edrick. To be extra cautious, she even had someone else deliver the letter for her.

At this stage, Dorothy had executed every step with great care.

Once the photo was retrieved from the mailbox, the mysterious operatives lurking in Vulcan would be drawn out and head to the forest's "exchange site" the following evening.

Of course, this didn't mean Dorothy intended to confront them head-on. She had no idea how many there were or what mystical abilities they might possess. Facing them alone as a 13-year-old girl, even with two corpse marionettes and some traps, was far too risky.

Her solution was simple: let professionals handle it.

Dorothy's plan was to exploit the information about Edrick and the mysterious organization's correspondence, which repeatedly mentioned two other groups—the Serenity Bureau and the Church.

From the letters, it was clear the mysterious organization was wary of both entities, possibly even outright enemies.

The enemy of my enemy is my ally. If the mysterious organization feared the Serenity Bureau and the Church, Dorothy could leak critical information to one of them and let them fight it out.

Between the two, she chose the Serenity Bureau. The decision was based on mentions in the letters of hunter squads from the Bureau being active near Vulcan.

The next challenge was finding a way to contact this so-called Serenity Bureau. Dorothy had no prior knowledge of such an organization, let alone its contact information.

From its name, Dorothy deduced the Bureau was likely a government agency tasked with handling mystic-related incidents. If it was part of the government, she reasoned, there must be ways to reach them indirectly through other government departments.

To that end, Dorothy forged a reply from the mysterious organization to Edrick, detailing all the critical information. She then had a corpse marionette deliver the letter and "die" at the police station's entrance.

Now, all Dorothy needed to do was wait for the Vulcan police to contact the Serenity Bureau and for the so-called hunter squad to find the letter on the corpse marionette.

"What is left is to wait for tomorrow night..."

Dorothy murmured to herself as she walked down the deserted street, glancing up at the bright moon in the sky.

"So next, there are just a few more preparations needed..."

Dorothy quickened her pace and disappeared into the darkness. For tomorrow's grand show, she had no intention of remaining a mere spectator.

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The night grew deeper. The lights in Vulcan gradually dimmed, and soon, apart from the scattered streetlights, there was almost no other flickering illumination. The dense darkness engulfed Vulcan's streets.

At the police station, the lights still shone brightly. But unlike earlier, there were no longer any officers at the entrance.

A lifeless corpse lay cold on the ground, a strange, stiff smile frozen on its face. Standing beside the body were two figures, neither of whom were police officers.

In the cold night breeze, the uniformed figures stood upright at the station's entrance. They were all dressed in pitch-black, double-breasted, formal frock-style suits. Their upper bodies were tightly fitted, collars raised, and the coat tails extended to their knees. They all wore gloves and black bowler hats. Beneath the hats, their faces were covered with lifeless, expressionless iron masks.

These dark-clad individuals surrounded the corpse, carefully inspecting it.

Meanwhile, inside the police station, no officers were to be found. In the police chief's office, a figure sat in the chair originally belonging to the chief.

This figure wore the same uniform as the individuals at the entrance. His feet were propped up on the chief's desk, his mask set aside atop a cabinet, and his hat covered his face, giving the impression that he was napping.

On the other side of the office, another figure stood before a map of Vulcan. She, too, wore the same black uniform, her fitted outfit emphasizing her curves at the chest and waist, making it clear she was a woman.

The female officer scanned the map, occasionally flipping through the station's files, as though searching or pondering something. Suddenly, she seemed to discover something and turned to her colleague sitting in the chief's chair.

"Hey, Gregor, I found something here..."

Seeing the man's relaxed posture, the female officer paused, then raised her voice sharply in reproach.

"Captain Gregorius! This is work time!"

Startled by the sudden volume, the man jolted awake, his entire body shaking, causing his hat to fall to the floor.

“Ugh... I say, Elena, keep your voice down—we’re working here...”

The man quickly lowered his feet from the desk and bent down to pick up the fallen hat, promptly putting it back on.

Now fully visible, the man seated in the chief’s chair, Gregor, was a young man with short chestnut hair, brown eyes, and sharp features. Despite the lingering fatigue in his expression, his determined aura was unmistakable.

“You know we’re working, do you? It looked like you were about to fall asleep. That’s no way for a captain to behave...”

Standing before the desk, still wearing her mask, Elena spoke with a hint of exasperation. Gregor scratched his head sheepishly in response.

“Ah... it couldn’t be helped. We were supposed to head back to Igwynt tomorrow, but then this case came up, forcing us to work overtime. I’m not exactly thrilled about it—I’ve got important matters to attend to back home...”

Gregor grumbled, his tone filled with complaint. Hearing this, Elena paused briefly before replying.

“Ah, right... I almost forgot. Captain Gregor’s sister is on her way, isn’t she? She’s supposed to arrive in Igwynt soon. If you’re not there to meet her, no one else will.”