

304: He Finally Wakes Up

The body was discovered near a reservoir on the outskirts of New York, in a patch of reeds. A local villager, who was fishing with electricity, accidentally found it and reported it to the police.

By the time Caitlin and Sebastian arrived, both the police and forensic experts were already on site, investigating. Yellow police tape was set up around the area.

"Felix!"

Sebastian called out when he saw Felix, who came running over and signaled his team to let them cross the yellow tape.

"What's the situation? Has the identity been confirmed?" Sebastian asked.

"Mostly confirmed. Come and take a look."

Felix led them over to the body, where forensic expert Eric was performing an on-site autopsy.

One look at the victim's face confirmed it was Freya, but Caitlin and Sebastian immediately noticed something disturbing: Freya's body was incomplete. One of her hands was missing.

"Her hand..."


Eric spoke up, "There are clear signs of strangulation around the victim's neck, indicating she was likely strangled with something like fine wire, causing suffocation. The estimated time of death is around 10 hours ago. After death, the body showed no signs of sexual assault, but the left hand is missing, and there are blunt force trauma marks on the wrist. From the wound, it appears the weapon used could have been an axe or a machete."

Other investigators were nearby searching the reeds for the weapon and other clues.

Caitlin asked in shock, "Who could have killed her so cruelly, brought her here, and chopped off her hand? Why would they do this?"

Felix analyzed, "The victim was likely strangled first, then moved here, and her hand was chopped off afterward. Based on our investigative experience, the killer might have taken part of the body as a way to 'close the deal' or as a form of intimidation."

Caitlin and Sebastian exchanged a glance, both of them horrified at the brutality of Freya's death. They couldn't understand why someone would go this far to kill her.

Felix thought for a moment and added, "This reminds me of two old cases from five years ago. One victim had their hand chopped off after death, and another had both their ears cut off. Both victims were strangled to death as well." 

"Have those cases been solved?"

"No, they're still cold cases."

Caitlin asked, "Since the method is the same, could the killer be the same person? Could they have killed again after five years?"

"It's possible," Felix said.

If Felix was right, the killer might be a serial offender. If they weren't caught soon, they could continue their killing spree!

Felix made a note of the new lead Caitlin had provided, saying he would head to Freya's residence to investigate.

"Felix, we've secured the scene. I have a suspicion," Caitlin spoke up.

"What's your suspicion?"

"I kept Freya around to keep Ximena in check, meaning I held leverage over Ximena. Could she have gone after Freya to eliminate the threat?"

After Caitlin expressed her theory, Felix nodded. "I'll record this lead, and I'll investigate it further. Thanks for your help."

"No problem, we're happy to cooperate."

Felix had a lot of work ahead, so Caitlin and Sebastian left the scene.

On the way back, both of them were deeply troubled. Neither of them could understand why Freya had to die so horribly. Who was behind such a brutal murder, and why take her hand?

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In an artistic underground room,

Sienna and Teresa, the two sisters, returned and placed a box containing Freya's severed hand in front of Zeke.

Zeke opened the lid, glanced at it, and a cold smirk appeared on his lips.

"Well done."

He closed the lid and asked, "Did you go find Caitlin?"

"Boss, we went to find her, but she refuses to let us stay close to her for now."

Zeke nodded. He guessed that Caitlin probably suspected them because of the situation with the child.

"Then never mind. Keep monitoring her in secret."

"Yes!"

After the sisters left, Zeke took the box containing the severed hand to the processing room.

The room resembled a chemical lab, equipped with all kinds of chemical agents and tools.


Zeke, now in a white lab coat, began processing the hand.

After repeated treatment, the hand was sculpted into a nearly perfect work of art, almost like jade.

The final step was to take a photo of the hand sculpture and post it on his bidder spider web.

The bidding began!

Many anonymous users on the site immediately started bidding, and in the end, the hand sculpture was sold for one hundred million.

Zeke closed the bidder spider web, feeling satisfied with the day's work. 

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Over ten hours after the auction house explosion, Sable and Xian, having completed their mission, returned to The Silent Order.

"Zero, we're back!"

Xian reported.

Dustin Lambert, wearing his mask, turned around. "Why are there only two of you? Where are Kairos and Ryuji?"

"Kairos and Ryuji were in charge of executing James, but the mission failed. Ryuji was captured, and Kairos was injured and can't leave the country for now. It's just the two of us with the codex."

"So, James is still alive?"

"Yes."

"If he's alive, he'll definitely expose us."

Dustin paused for a moment, then took a deep breath and summoned his other subordinates. "Tell everyone, we need to evacuate from here."

"Yes!"

"Bring me the codex!"

Xian handed him the mask, and Dustin carefully placed it on the table. He put on gloves and opened it.

When the "Yun's Aromatic Codex" came into view, a trace of joy appeared in Dustin's eyes.

He took out his professional identification equipment to authenticate the ancient text. However, after examining it, his expression immediately froze.

"This isn't the real thing!"

Dustin slammed his hand on the table and swept the codex off the desk.

Sable and Xian were startled, picking up the codex from the ground and opening it, but they couldn't tell with their eyes.

"Zero, this isn't the real one?"

"No, you've been duped. This isn't the original; it's just a replica."

"But this is the one we risked our lives to obtain at the auction! How could it be fake?"

"Of course, you can't tell the difference. This auction was likely someone else's trap. We've been played!"

Who could have set up this trap behind the scenes?

Dustin narrowed his cold eyes and finally ordered, "Contact Kairos, have him stay in the US. Once he's healed, keep an eye on Caitlin! As for James, if there's an opportunity..."

He made a killing gesture.

"Yes!"

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Good news came from the US New York hospital.

Caitlin heard that James had finally woken up, and she rushed to the hospital immediately.

Sebastian, upon hearing the news, also came over, and together they arrived at the special observation room where James was recovering.

The doctors had already checked James. His injuries were mainly from knife wounds, none of which were life-threatening, so his chances of recovery were very high.

Following the doctor's arrangement, Caitlin changed into sterile clothing and was allowed into the room.

She stood by her brother's bed, looking at him lying there. Before she could say anything, tears started to flow uncontrollably.