2472 Presumption of Innocence  
  
Mordret showed no reaction to Sunny mentioning the Nihilist — outside of how a nоrmal person would react, that was. Unease, discomfort, and a hint of indignation showed on his face, but nothing more.  
  
If he was acting, the man deserved to be a lead performer in a renowned theater.  
  
But then again, that was exactly what Mordret was capable of.  
  
He sighed and shook his head.  
  
"I see. I heard there was a new victim?"  
  
Effie nodded.  
  
"Indeed. The body was discovered yesterday, in a park by the river."  
  
Mordret seemed saddened by the news, but also a little curious.  
  
"How very tragic. However, detectives… I wonder why you deemed it necessary to speak to me, of all people?"  
  
His expression was full of innocent confusion.  
  
Sunny cleared his throаt.  
  
"Well, you see, the victim was an employee of yours. A graduate of one of the Valor Group's charities and a security guard right here in this building."  
  
Hearing the name, Mordret seemed genuinely shocked.  
  
"That young man? But… but I greeted him only two days ago."  
  
Sunny nodded solemnly.  
  
"I'm afraid so. Did you interact with him often?"  
  
Before Mordret could answer, one of his people leaned in and whispered something into his ear. He frowned, and a hint of anger suddenly flashed in his mirror-like eyes.  
  
"...Why would I need to have a lawyer present? What nonsense!"  
  
He sent the man away and turned to Sunny and Effie with an awkward expression.  
  
"I'm sorry. My employees can be... overzealous, at times. Obviously, the Valor Group will help the investigation in any way we can — just tell me what you need, detectives."  
  
Sunny remained silent for a while. He was starting to become convinced that Mordret had not regained his memories… but even then, that did not absolve him of being the Nihilist.  
  
It was hard to imagine this pleasant, affable, sleek and polished man stalking the streets of Mirage City at night to carve out people's eyes.  
  
There was no madness in his own eyes, no murderous intent… more than that, there was no killing instinct in them whatsoever. Sunny was a killer himself, so he knew killers well — despite that, his senses told him that the CEO of the Valour Group was nothing but soft, pampered by life, and harmless.  
  
But then again, he had been fooled by Mordret before.  
  
He could even imagine a number of bizarre scenarios… the memories of the real Mordret only awakening at night, for example, then disappearing when the moon vanished behind the horizon, so that the man woke up genuinely unaware of what his true self did while he slept. Who said that such nonsense was impossible?  
  
Sunny hesitated a little, then decided to stop wasting time.  
  
"Well… first, it would really help us to know where you were on the night of the murder."  
  
Mordret looked at him in confusion for a few moments, then opened his eyes wide in disbelief.  
  
"Am… I a suspect?"  
  
Sunny shrugged.  
  
"Sure. Why not?"  
  
Mordret studied him for a bit, then suddenly exploded with laughter.  
  
"I'm… I'm sorry! I know that this is no laughing matter, but me? Me, going around killing people? What a ridiculous notion."  
  
He shook his head.  
  
"What reason would I have to do something that ghastly, detective?"  
  
Sunny met his amused gaze, with not a hint of nervousness in it, and sighed.  
  
"Well, to be honest, we haven't quite figured out such a reason yet."  
  
Mordret raised an eyebrow.  
  
"I see. Then, perhaps, a better question would be — what reason do you have to suspect me?"  
  
He seemed genuinely curious.  
  
Sunny and Effie exchanged a glance. Then, she leaned forward a little.  
  
"Do you really not know, or are you just pretending not to know?"  
  
Mordret blinked a few times.  
  
"Know what?"  
  
Effie clicked her tongue.  
  
"About the evidence found on the first crime scene, naturally. Just a few drops of blood that did not belong to the victim… instead, Mr. Mordret, it belonged to you. The DNA test confirmed it."  
  
He looked at her with an utterly lost expression.  
  
"My blood was discovered at a crime scene? Surely, you jest, Detective Athena."  
  
Sunny frowned, dismayed that there was still not the slightest indication that Mordret was lying to them.  
  
"Do you mean to tell us that you had no idea about that DNA sample? I find it hard to believe, considering how persistently we were forbidden from pursuing that avenue of investigation. Somebody knew, and somebody gave an order to suppress the investigation. Oh… was that done by those overzealous employees of yours without your order, as well?"  
  
Mordret remained silent for a while, the amused expression slowly draining from his face. Eventually, he looked at his subordinates scornfully.  
  
"...I understand you find it hard to believe, detective, but I really had no idea that such a DNA sample existed before you told me. Still… if memory serves, I was at a very public charity dinner on the night the Nihilist claimed his first victim. There should be plenty of video recordings showing me mingling with the guests."  
  
Sunny smiled darkly. "Video recordings can be doctored."  
  
Mordret looked at him with curiosity.  
  
"And I guess witness testimonies can be bought off? But, detective, there is a flaw in your logic. Wouldn't it be much easier for someone to plant my DNA at a crime scene?"  
  
Sunny glared at him for a few moments, then admitted reluctantly:  
  
"Sure. A few drops of blood could have been planted. But who would go that far to frame you?"  
  
Mordret remained silent before letting out a bitter sigh and looking away.  
  
"I have countless enemies, detectives. Sadly, that comes with the job."  
  
It did not escape Sunny's attention that Mordret looked at the family photo while saying that.  
  
So… there was trouble in paradise, after all.  
  
Sunny leaned forward a little.  
  
"Anyone in particular come to mind?"  
  
Then, he added with a faint smile:  
  
"How is your sister doing, by the way?"  
  
For the first time, Mordret's expression showed a sign of cracking.  
  
What was revealed behind the pleasant smile was not the heartless malevolence of his true self, however. Instead, it was… pain? Sorrow? Confusion?  
  
Mordret froze for a few moments, then leaned back and looked at Sunny with a cold expression.  
  
"My sister can't be behind this. She… has suffered a psychotic break a while back."  
  
Sunny raised an eyebrow.  
  
"A psychotic break?"  
  
Mordret nodded slowly.  
  
"She… might have… tried to harm me, in her compromised state. She is now receiving treatment in a reputable establishment — she hardly could have done anything from there."  
  
'Did Morgan try to kill Mordret?'  
  
That would surely make a lot of sense, considering what she had told him.  
  
Sunny summed up what they had learned.  
  
The Great Mirror version of Mordret seemed to have no memories of his true self. There was no concrete evidence connecting him to the murders, and the man himself seemed eerily innocent. Clan Valor was one big, loving family in this fantastical realm, and Morgan had tried to kill her brother some time ago, which landed her in a psychiatric hospital…  
  
For her own good, if Mordret was to be believed.  
  
'Damn it. I think I understand even less now.'  
  
Morgan… Morgan had all the answers, it seemed.  
  
Sunny looked at the family portrait of the Valor family with a dark expression.  
  
"We might have a talk with your sister, then."  
  
Mordret's expression changed.  
  
"Absolutely not. Under no circumstances will you — or anyone else — disturb my sister. She doesn't need more shock and trauma to distract her from healing."  
  
His voice sounded cold and absolute, showing the harrowing authority of the ruler of the Valor Group for the first time.  
  
Sunny wanted to respond, but at that moment, Effie leaned forward and put a hand on Mordret's shoulder.  
  
And said:  
  
"Hey. Mordret… snap out of it."  
  
'What is she doing?!'  
  
Sunny's eyes widened slightly, and so did Mordret's.  
  
For a few moments, the luxurious office was silent.  
  
Then, something changed in Mordret's gaze.  
  
He suddenly seemed…  
  
Confused, and a little bit embarrassed?  
  
Taking Effie's hand gently, he awkwardly removed it from his shoulder and asked in a hesitant tone:  
  
"Excuse me, Detective Athena? Snap out of what?"  
  
Effie frowned, then retracted her arm and cleared her throat.  
  
"That… uh… just saying. Never mind."  
  
She looked at Sunny and raised an eyebrow.  
  
Whatever authority she had as the master of Bastion did not seem to have affected Mordret at all. He was still blissfully devoid of any memories... allegedly.  
  
He was also quite keen on seeing them off now.  
  
A charming smile returned to his face.  
  
"As I've said, I'll be glad to help the investigation in any way I can. We can request the personal file of the unfortunate victim from the Human Resources… security footage of his latest shift can also be arranged. I'm afraid I will have to hand you over to my assistants now, detective — please excuse me, but my schedule today is quite full."  
  
Just like that, the meeting was over. Before too long, Sunny and Effie found themselves standing in front of the Valor Tower, looking at it with grim expressions.  
  
Effie sighed.  
  
"Well. That was…"  
  
But before she could finish, Sunny's communication went off.  
  
He took it out of his pocket, looked at it darkly, and pressed the green button to receive the call.  
  
A second later — and for a while longer — the Homicide Division Captain's angry screams could be heard flying out of the flimsy speaker.  
  
Sunny took a deep breath.  
  
'Damnation...'