



“The Only Place Open As Late As You’re Up”

Store #67 – 117 Avenue Têpes
Joachimstätt, Transylvania

FORM #49-A1 EMPLOYEE ABSENCE RECORD

Employee Name: *Joe Drake*

Employee ID #: *20026*

Date of Absence: *Köllendørgren 17 - 18, 1449*

Shift Scheduled: *8 PM – 4 AM*

Scheduled Absence? Yes No

Explanation for Absence:

I was in the process of walking to work when, as these things will sometimes happen, I found myself at an unknown crossroads having a conversation with a guy who was trying to beat Death at chess. He lost – but then, don't they always? Anyway, a couple of acquaintances of mine, Mist and that girl with a sword (see my report of Glättenmørgen 21 last year), happened along the road at about that time, and having no better ideas we decided to check out the abandoned café nearby. Besides, it was the only place around that was in out of the rain, and there was a fire going in the hearth.

You'll have thought by now that that's odd behavior for an abandoned café, which is why you're the manager and I just work

(use additional sheets as necessary)

Employee's Signature:

Iosef V. Dracul

Excused Absence? Yes No

Manager's Name: Marcel J. Tyngsborough III

Manager's ID #: 717

Manager's Signature:

Marcel J. Tyngsborough III

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the night shift. It didn't occur to any of us until the colors got all weird and it flared up, then went out, leaving us in the dark with a giant Easter basket full of chocolate Mussolinis, plastic grass, and a circus runaway with facial tattoos and a sharp suit.

Exploration of the café turned up an Elder Thing trapped in a donut safe, some donut hole snacks of the same approximate vintage, and an abandoned mini-golf course where the storeroom belonged. Well, why not? I'm always up for a little mini-golf, even if we did seem to be coming into the course at the back and there were no clubs or balls apparent. The donut holes were stale enough, and what else do I carry that sword around for anyway?

Eventually we ran out of mini-golf holes to play backward (or, in Mist's case, to chuck donut holes down and note the results) and came to the front, where the ticket booth showed just how long the place had been abandoned (hint: a long time) and our new friend the snappy dresser (name, it turns out, of "Phoenix" – I said he looked like a circus performer, right?) showed a weird aversion to vending machines.

Lacking any better ideas (would you have?) we headed down the only corridor in evidence. Eventually we came to one of those old robot-gypsy fortunetelling machines. Since none of us can be proven to know better, we each tried our luck and were rewarded with selections from the Tarot. At least I think they're supposed to be. I don't remember seeing a Major Arcanum called "The Guy" before, but it's been a while since my last visit to Madame Szorbâ's.

(Joe Drake's Form 49-A1, continued)

Phoenix went last, at which point his weird aversion to vending machines started seeming less weird. I don't know about you, but I've never seen a robot gypsy machine go haywire in quite that way before. Fire and everything! Quite a trip. He got the weirdest cards, too. I mean, "The Agent"? What's that supposed to be?

Anyway, we kept walking and eventually came to a theater entrance. (Note to self: go online and see about scoring a copy of The Hills are Alive on video. I haven't seen a really good comedy in a while.) The bellhop wouldn't tell us what the show was, so I laid a little charm on him and got us in for free. Sounds like a good deal, right?

Well, I suppose it would've been if we'd been able to watch the performance instead of being involved in it. I mean, I don't mind putting on a show every now and then, if it's for a good cause, but I'd rather tell a joke or do a little levitation or something, rather than FIGHT A FREAKIN TELEKINETIC GORGON. Never seen one in person before, and if I never see one again I'll honestly be just as happy. And if I do run into one at some time in the future, then I'd like to have a little more backup than a pyrokinetic circus performer, a 12-year-old girl with a sword and... whatever Mist is. Not that they aren't great pals or anything, but to take on a Gorgon I'd really rather have... oh... say a dwarven artillery regiment? In the first few minutes, all we managed to really accomplish was to piss off the orchestra, set the place on fire, ruin my favorite Einstürzende Neubauten shirt, and generally get thrashed.

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I was all for leaving at that point – one nice thing about theaters, they have clearly marked exits – but Phoenix had the utter lack of tact to get himself turned to stone at about that point. I tried a little aerial rescue action, but let me clue you in on a little fact of life that may have eluded your notice up to this point: A pyrokinetic circus mentalist who has been turned to stone by a Gorgon's gaze is **FREAKIN HEAVY!**

So I figured, well, if I'm gonna drop the guy, I might as well drop him where he'll do the most good. Unfortunately I don't have much experience in dropping statues of circus mentalists on Gorgons, so I sort of missed – but it certainly got the thing's attention. With the girl with a sword and Mist taking every opportunity to piss the thing off in turn, we managed to keep it nicely occupied, and being turned to stone didn't seem to stop Phoenix from doing his fire thing, which was handy. Eventually, since as far as I could tell I had the heaviest weapon, I went in for a close attack. By this time I was feeling in the zone.

It would've been nice if I hadn't missed in the freakin zone (though at least I distracted it enough for the girl with a sword to get in a decent poke).

It would've been nicer if I hadn't looked at the thing in the process of missing.

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Now we come to one of the reasons I'm glad I'm a Type 1-A vampire. Being turned to stone by the eldritch gaze of the Medusa may seem like a major disadvantage in a fight at first, but if you can still fly, you can actually turn it to your advantage. You've got mobility, you've got mass, and it doesn't really matter if you look any more! I may be the first person in the history of the world to clobber a Gorgon by squashing it under the weight of his own stoned carcass. You've never seen such a surprised-looking monster! I just wish Phoenix could've seen it... unfortunately he was looking the other way, poor guy. I should've dropped him facing west, I suppose, but when I did it I wasn't really thinking about the Feng Shui of the situation.

Applause, audience appreciation, all the wonderful things for which performers like ourselves live every day... and then they all pissed off and left us there, alone in the theater with two of us turned to stone, part of the stage still on fire and what was left of a Gorgon. Freakin ingrates!

Once the flush of having dealt with our snake-headed pal wore off, I was feeling pretty low. I still didn't know where we were. I was going to miss work for sure. I wanted a smoke like you wouldn't believe. And I was getting hungry. And worst of all, I couldn't even complain about it to anybody.

Or could I? Ever have one of those days when you suddenly discover you're telepathic? I did. It was pretty cool. I especially enjoyed

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the look I got from the girl with a sword when I popped into her head just to say hi and tell her how bad my day was biting (so to speak).

Mist and the girl with a sword went off backstage to see if they could find anybody with... oh, I dunno... de-Gorgonifying spray or some such, leaving me and Phoenix alone with our stonitude. Did I mention that Phoenix is pyrokinetic? I'd noticed him doing some neat things with fire during the fight, but it didn't really sink in until his stony form started glowing cherry red and setting the stage on fire. He was trying to bust himself loose, I guess. I figured he was just going to burn the freakin theater down around us, which would've been a real treat come sunrise. But I guess he knew what he was doing, 'cause it seemed to work.

That left only yours truly stoned. I've been the only guy in a place who was stoned before, but this time it wasn't any fun, especially since I was freakin starving by this point. Luckily, though, the Gordon's gaze caught me in what we in the biz call an "action pose", which means I happened to be stuck with my mouth open and my fangs out. (They tell me I looked really cool. Wish I had a picture. Chicks would be all over that. "Oh cool, is that a statue of you?" "Well, sorta. Lemme tell you the story...")

Now, I already knew that there was something special about the girl with a sword. I'd had her blood before, and it had done some seriously spiffy things for me. And I knew she was willing to roll the dice and let me take a bite if the situation was really desperate. I figured this qualified, so I ran it by her. What a

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trouser that girl is. You find me another 12-year-old girl who'll willingly open a vein for a bloodsucking fiend of a convenience store clerk who's been turned to stone by a Gorgon's gaze.

I feel like a jerk about the next part, 'cause by this time I was getting more than a little desperate and I went a bit over the top. One of the perks of being Type 1 is that we don't get all freaky about feeding, usually, but this time... well, I'm gonna have to get her something nice, is all I'm saying. Still, it took the edge off – way off – and got me about half unstoned. (As an aside, you know what feels really weird? Being back to normal from the waist up and still stone from the waist down. It doesn't hurt or anything – it just feels really weird.)

After I got through savaging her (and apologizing, and feeling like an asshole... well, actually, I wasn't done with that last part, but... well, anyway), the girl with a sword went off to have a lie-down. So did Phoenix, who'd toasted himself pretty good with his little cook-off-the-stone trick. I had a smoke (at last, at last); then I didn't feel like dragging my stone legs around too much, so I figured I'd lean up against a wall and try to get a nap. Mist went off to ransack the joint some, then came back to see how I was doing.

About that time I noticed a janitor. I figured he could maybe lead me to someplace where I could get the rest of me unstoned, and he seemed to be down with that idea, so I followed him farther into the theater.

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Unfortunately, I was a little frazzled by that point, so I didn't notice he was a Type 3-C until he'd led me into his killbox. (Nice one, too. Tile and everything.) Mist slipped in too, but that didn't bother Psycho Boy any. Stupid jerk figured that with my sword turned to stone and my legs not doing much for me, I wouldn't be able to outfight him, and he'd get a two-for-one deal.

Well, you know, here at the Quik-n-Bite we don't do two-for-one deals, and anyway, you remember I mentioned that the girl with a sword's blood does some interesting things for me? I'm pretty good with a sword any day of the week, but after I've had a taste of her, man, I am a killin' machine. What's more, this asshole just dangled a cure for the rest of my problem in front of me and yanked it away. At this point I was officially not a happy bloodsucker.

The pisser about Type 3-Cs, aside from the fact that they're all psychotic freaks who give vampires a bad name, they're ugly as my grandmother's horse's ass, and they stink, is that they're so freakin' strong. Sucker like to pulled my head off a couple times, and neither Mist nor the girl with a sword (who Mist yelled up from her nap) was strong enough to dent his hide. Once he got my sword away from me, I was on my back on the tiles thinking, "Is this the end of Mama Dracul's little boy? And if so, is my bastard of a roommate Dirk going to steal all my Megadeth albums? And who will Marcel ever find to work my shift?"

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The thought gave me strength! Like a phoenix (sorry, Phoenix) rising from the ashes, I came up off the floor! Mist gave me back my sword, the girl with a sword gave me her sword, and damn, man! I want to tell you right now, if you had seen me in action against this guy, you would give me a raise just for being so damn cool. I said I was in the zone before? Now I was the zone. I redecorated that joint with Psycho Boy. For a minute there I was thinking of changing my name to "Joe Nosferatusbane", but I figured that probably wouldn't fit in the "employee name" blank on my ID badge so I gave it up.

Well, as luck would have it, the freak was a hoarder. Over in the next room was the manager of one of the theater companies, who he'd grabbed the day before and hung onto for a midnight snack. The girl with a sword got him untied and he was most grateful. He didn't have any de-stonifying spray, but he let me bag a new sword from their props room, gave us clothes and let us use his bathroom, then showed us how to get the hell out of that nuthouse... and after the day we'd just had, what more could we have asked for?

So there you have it – that's why I missed work Monday. By way of proof, I offer the sad condition of my "Fünf auf der Nach Oben Offenen Richterskala" t-shirt, my stone sword (complete with dried Psycho Boy blood!) and the fact that my freakin legs are still made of stone.

Quik-n-Bite forever,
Iosef V. Dracul