

Soup and Spies

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Marcy and Kylie rode the fancily decorated elevator downstairs from their small but homely hotel room in Zambia, Africa. The two spies were getting an early start on the “all expense paid” continental breakfast for guests only. The lobby was fairly clear, all except for the lifeless concierge and a burly looking man eating breakfast alone.

The two girls chose an isolated table in the far corner and seated themselves quietly. In a hushed tone, they began discussing the day’s traveling plans. One wrong move and their whole mission, which was to locate and retrieve a stolen ancient Greek scroll, would be set back.

“According to headquarters, we need to head south to Botswana. That’s where the last sightings were,” Kylie said, stabbing a finger at the map in front of them. Marcy, clearly rethinking this idea before deciding, nodded her head slowly. At this, a rather monotonous looking waitress approached the table. She opened her mouth to ask a question, but Marcy cut her short and ordered pancakes and orange juice. As the waitress scribbled something down, Marcy stole a peek at the man across the room.

She noticed that he had extremely crooked, black teeth, an eggplant purple turban, a dirty, scruffy beard, and a few earrings. Overall, his appearance was particularly uninviting. “*We won’t be visiting him any time soon,*” Marcy thought silently. She then noticed something even more peculiar; he was reading a scroll! As this clicked in Marcy’s mind, the man looked up and caught her gaze. Marcy nudged Kylie and motioned for her to look. At first, he appeared shocked, but then, he appeared very anxious. In the blink of an eye, the man was out of his chair and gathering up his belongings, including the scroll. He shoved it in his back pocket and darted out of the room.

“He can’t be up to any good. Let’s follow him,” said Marcy in haste. The two girls rocketed out of their seats and began their pursuit after the mysterious man. The chase led them to a door marked in strange letters, but had a translation under them: ‘Employees Only’. Apparently, the man had disregarded this caveat and had continued up the vast amount of stairs. There was no trace of the man’s presence on the stairs, so they continued cautiously. As they reached the very top, they encountered another door with markings on it. The English translation stated: “Roof.” With great force, the spies pushed the door open. Surprisingly, the man was standing right in front of the open door. He raised a fist, and the girls knew that he had ambushed them. Nobody would hear the screams of the girls on top of a hotel roof.

Kylie acted quickly and ducked. Marcy was not so lucky. She fell to the ground, but she wasn’t out cold. She recovered the blow quickly. With great might, she surprised the man with a sucker punch to the nose. Kylie added onto this attack by elbowing him hard in the throat. He gagged and gasped for air, but the girls were relentless. Marcy jumped onto his back and began choking him further! The man attempted to heave her off, but Marcy’s hair got caught in one of his earrings. Kylie grabbed the strands of hair and freed them with a hard tug. Her force was so great that his earlobe was ripped right off! A howl of pain filled the air.

Marcy took this chance to give him one last blow and grab the scroll out of his back pocket. This last and final whack knocked him out. He was defeated.

“Open it! What’s it say?” Kylie asked anxiously. Marcy obeyed this request and unraveled the parchment. She held it out with both hands and scanned the page. Her expression turned from excitement, to deep disappointment, then to guilt.

“What’s the matter?” Kylie asked, wondering what the reason was for her friend’s dismay. Marcy looked up at her and took a slow, deep breath. She began to read the title aloud,

“Mother Tina’s Recipe for the Perfect Chicken Noodle Soup.” She stopped and slapped her forehead in frustration.

“You’ve got to be kidding me.”