

BROOTY-ROO!

IN

THE HAUNTING OF THE GRIM HACKER

Part Three

The Scarlet and Laki Creature Feature

Trouble is brewing in Starfall, with little Laki forced to fend for himself! Meanwhile, things heat up between our main detectives... but what will happen when they're put in a position to save one another?

Meanwhile, at the Nendo Office...



Laki was watching the gateway portal to the game in case anybody tried to sneak in. Well-strapped, Laki felt confident he could weed off any intruders.

“I got this...” Laki confidently stated to himself, “Nobody is getting in between Dad and finding the criminal.”

He could hear a light giggle in the office. Slightly panicked, Laki looks around the room. “Wh-who’s there?!” Laki shouted, aiming the gun around the room as he tried to rediscover the sound.

As he followed his ears, he noticed he began to point the gun at the portal...

“Huh?” Laki asks, “I could’ve sworn I...”



The portal lights up, ejecting ghost after ghost into the empty office! Laki falls back in shock, shooting frenziedly as the ghosts exit from any exit possible. The Starfall House was being haunted by game ghouls!

“BACK! GET BACK!” Laki shouted, firing shots into the room. “AT LEAST THROW ME THE VACUUM HE USES TO KILL YOU GUYS!” Laki drops the gun, realizing any retaliation was hopeless.

The ghosts wouldn’t listen to his objections. If anything, it inspired them to get even crazier, filling the room with a tint of each ghost that entered the room. Try as he might, the poor boy was helpless.

Luckily for him, however, it was over as fast as it started.

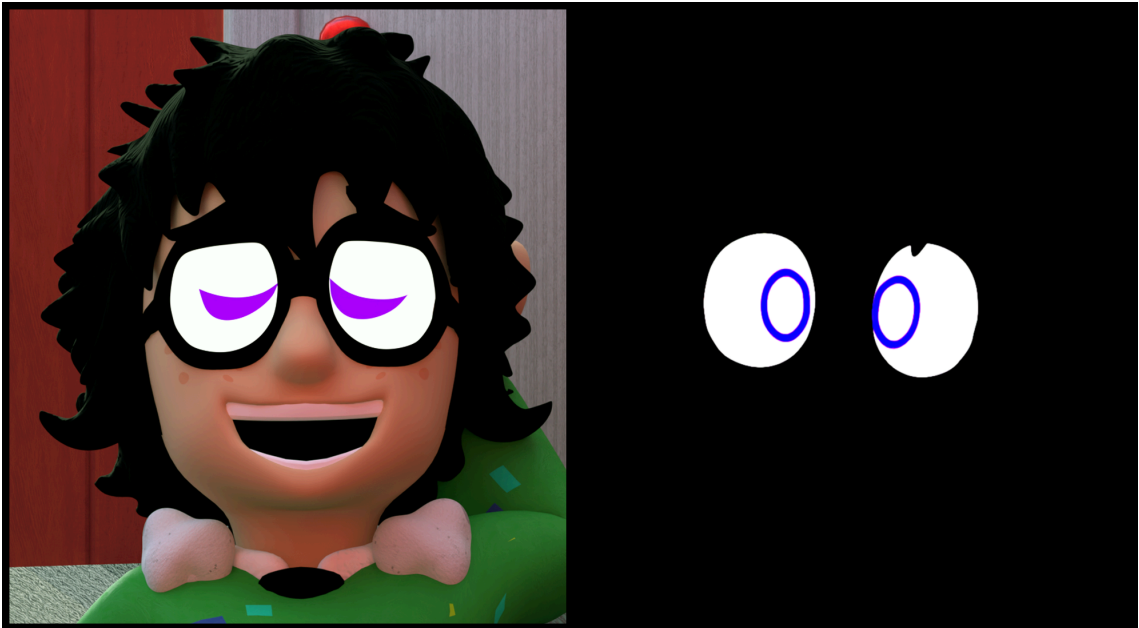
Laki was cradled on the floor, processing everything. “Ghosts.... ghosts....”
Laki repeated to himself silently, “All over Starfall... Nothing I can do....”

That last bit of information almost gave him a tragic sort of relief. He was right: There was NOTHING that could be done about the ghosts until his dad gets back. After all, how could HE predict that? He was only supposed to watch for intruders OUTSIDE of the portal!

“You fight like a hero,” Laki lied to himself, “And that’s worth more than any dead ghost.”

Laki sat up from the ground, gun dropped.

“Well! At least it’s-”



“...over...”

Meanwhile, Scarlet and Mr. Nendo were dealing with their own dilemma inside of the portal.

“You shouldn’t have proclaimed yourself the leader,” Nendo started, “I’m the oldest one of anyone here.” “But it’s my group!” Scarlet responded, “Besides, they know me AND like me better.” “Your friends like you better because they share your dim-wittedness and inability to follow instructions.”

Scarlet glared at him angrily and stated, “Don’t do that. They don’t deserve to be brought down by some ungrateful old man.”

“I’m simply staging it how it is,” Nendo replied, “If you can’t stand that, you can leave.”

Scarlet thought on his proposal for a second, and shook his head. “Not if the job will be left undone,” He said, “You can’t do this alone, even if you can’t come to terms with that.” For a minute, Nendo almost seems impressed with Scarlet’s response, but proceeds to scoff. “Whatever,” he mumbles.

Getting his mind off the argument, Scarlet notices an unusual room amidst all the normal, empty ones.

“Ay, N?”

“...Yeah?”

“Didn’t you say you disabled all the assets?”



Nendo was stunned when he looked into the room. Assets, as well as a chest were spawned. Even weirder, a chest usually isn't visible in that room. The pair stepped inside, looking at the chest carefully.

“Is this... bad?” Scarlet looks over at Nendo for answers, **“That he can...”**

“Well...” Nendo starts, slowly nudging Scarlet closer, **“Your move, hero.”** Scarlet glared at Nendo angrily, slowly moving closer to the chest. He picks up the key in front of it, and opens up to reveal...

“...my phone?”

Scarlet was confused; he was sure he had it on him when they stepped through, so how...?

“You had to have used it to call your friends over,” Nendo reminded.
“Brilliant, *Einstein*,” Scarlet grimaced, “You don’t think I would know where my own phone is?” “Clearly not,” Nendo remarked.

Scarlet rolled his eyes, redirecting his attention to the phone. Attempting to unlock it at all would result in an unusual “Error 666.”

“You thinking what I’m thinking?” Scarlet said, looking over at Nendo.
“Don’t download apps off the verified app stores,” Nendo joked.

“No...” Scarlet sighed, “Obviously whatever this monster is got access to my phone.”

Scarlet looked at his phone: The tacky image of The Grim Hacker as his lock screen, the corny usage of 666 to try and scare him, and the targeted ability to manipulate technology... he began to smile. He then started to laugh to himself for a bit, scaring Nendo a little.

“What?” He asked. “Oh, haha... it’s nothing~” Scarlet smirked, “I just find it funny that after all the stuff you said, this mess is now my problem, too.”

Nendo thought about it for a second and shrugged. “Whatever helps you sleep at night.”

Scarlet gets up from the floor, putting his phone back into his pocket. “Is that all the monster wanted from us here?” Nendo asked, “To give you your phone back?”

“I’d rather he give it back than keep it...” Scarlet commented.



"Oh, what fun~!" The Grim Hacker laughs, *"Your banter bored me to death!"*

Scarlet and N run as fast as they possibly can, trying their best to scrape off The Grim Hacker. Unfortunately, their attempts remained fruitless, as The Grim Hacker continued to advance them without a second thought.

As if to test the duo, The Grim Hacker summons something under Nendo's leg, making him trip. Instinctively, Scarlet catches him, picking up his speed despite the extra baggage.

"Not bad, old friend!" The Grim Hacker hollers, *"But what will you do when the stakes get higher?!"*

"I imagine I'm about to find out, huh?!" Scarlet shouted back, summoning his sword.



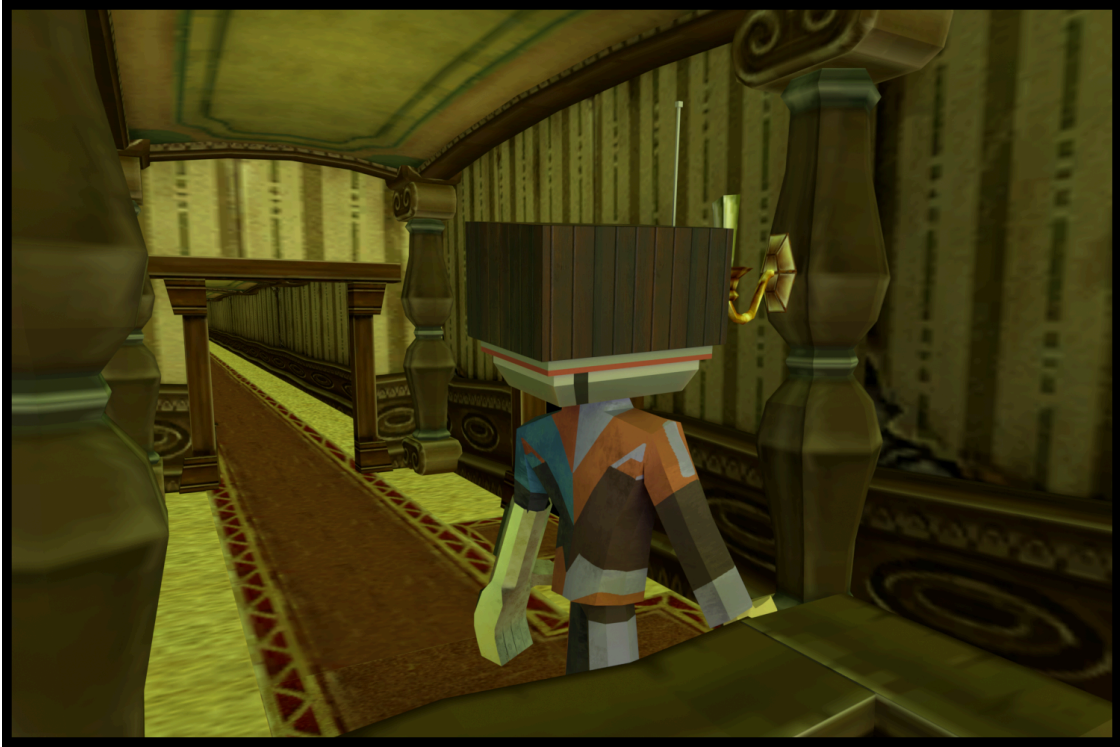
Arms begin to appear from the doorways, attempting to grab Scarlet and Nendo. Sweat drips down Scarlet's head as he slashes his way out of any issue, getting physically worn out from the fight. Nendo could only watch as the guy he just tried to put down fights back for him, closing his eyes out of fear and guilt.

Nendo could hear Scarlet's grunts as he swings his sword, layered by The Grim Hacker's hearty laugh. Minutes turned into hours as they ran through the endless hallway.

Suddenly, he could feel Scarlet's grip loosen as he's flung across the hallway. He opens his eyes to a loud scream... but not one of his own.

As he hits the ground, it all comes to an end. He stands up, realizing he's back at the main lobby of the mansion.

“Well... that could have gone much better,” Nendo stated, brushing dust off his suit, “But hey, we did what we could, right, Scarlet?”



“...Scarlet?”

He feels his own breathing get heavier as he steps back, nearly falling down the steps as he desperately looks down the hall for his friend.

“Oh... oh no...”

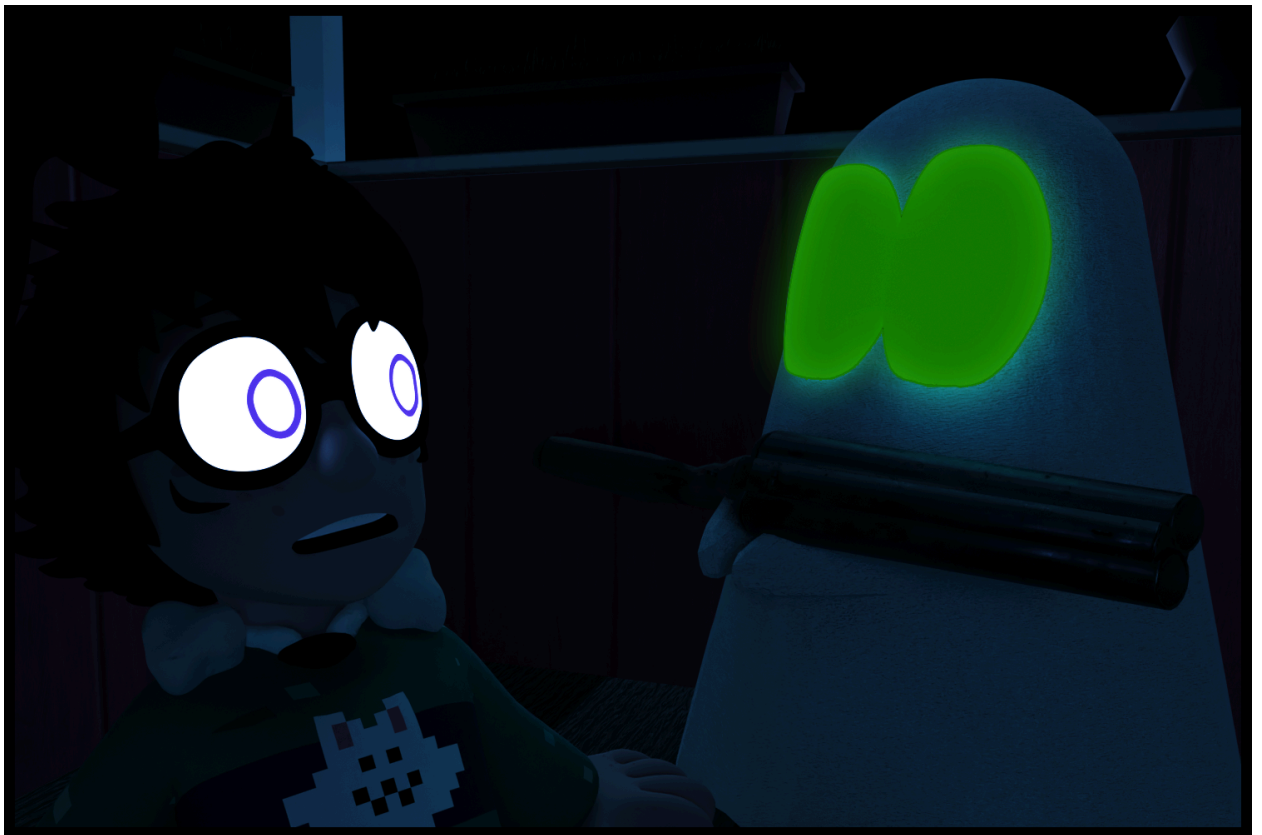
He thought to call out for his son, desperate for some kind of remedy for the situation he feels like he got them into. However...

Laki was breathing heavily as he held himself in the corner. The gun was dropped, and there was no way he could find it in this darkness. All he could do was stare at the portal to the mansion.

“I can’t stay here...” Laki mumbled, “They might need me... and... and I need them...”

He braces himself, trying to pick up his gun, when he notices it’s not with him. “Th-that’s right! I... oh no...” He scurries around, trying to look for it, just to turn around and see something holding it for him.

“Oh... haha.... Th-thanks, I-”



“eeeYYYYYYYYYAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHH-!”