

driest creatures

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/21122327) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/21122327>.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	Graphic Depictions Of Violence
Fandoms:	The Adventure Zone (Podcast) , The Magnus Archives (Podcast)
Relationship:	mentions but nothing worth a tag
Characters:	Mama (The Adventure Zone) , Jonathan Sims , Thacker (The Adventure Zone) , Barclay (The Adventure Zone)
Additional Tags:	Statement Fic , Canon-Typical Violence , for tma anyways , TMA vampires , Threats , Death Threats , Threats of Violence , Mama goes ham to protect her kids , Pre-Canon , (for amnesty anyways) , you don't have to have any real knowledge of tma to understand this , kinda dark for amnesty but p typical for tma i'd say , jon's a bastard but hes my bastard , Gun Violence , bruh just read it it's mama delivering a monologue what more could you want , I thought about it and theres no way mama takes kindly to jon compelling her to say anything , the timeline doesnt work fuckin ignore it im having Fun , Rated For Violence , rated for language , Panic
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2019-10-21 Words: 4,791 Chapters: 1/1

driest creatures

by [gayprophets](#)

Summary

Statement of Madeline Cobb, regarding a vamp- an abomination she eliminated in her town. Statement taken directly from subject January 20th, 2018.

-

“Hold on - sorry, I have a, ah, thing,” Jon says, just after hitting the record button on his old tape recorder, holding up one finger as Mama opens her mouth to start talking. “Statement of Madeline Cobb, regarding a vampire she ki-,”

“Not a vampire,” she interrupts, her initial reaction of ‘a thing? What the fuck, are you goin’ to jack off to this later or something?’ dying in her throat at his words. She most certainly did not kill a vampire.

Notes

i fell down a new rabbit hole lol

as described by tumblr user nathan lightclerics (thank you for your help also): jon shows up to the lodge, smells some trauma, gets a statement, and promptly gets kicked the fuck out sorry if jon's out of character i'm only on ep 90 as i write this

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

“Hold on - sorry, I have a, ah, thing,” Jon says, just after hitting the record button on his old tape recorder, holding up one finger as Mama opens her mouth to start talking. “Statement of Madeline Cobb, regarding a vampire she ki-,”

“Not a vampire,” she interrupts, her initial reaction of ‘*a thing?*’ *What the fuck, are you goin’ to jack off to this later or somethin’?*’ dying in her throat at his words. She most certainly did not kill a vampire.

“What?”

“Weren’t a vampire,” she says bluntly, leaning back in her chair. They’re in her office at Amnesty Lodge, a warm, homey place, amber floorboards and clean walls, with a faint bit of chatter in the background from her residents: Barclay’s clanking around the kitchen, mid cooking dinner, Jake’s shouting at Dani for beating him at a video game, muffled by the closed door. She feels safe here. Usually. Mama gave him her nice, comfortable chair - her mother taught her to always give the guests the best, but she’s regretting it a bit as her shoulder blades dig into the metal back of the folding chair. She should really get something nicer. “I know what vampires look like, that thing wasn’t one of ‘em. Was an Abomination.”

Jon - *the Head Archivist of the Magnus Institute*, as he’d called himself, like that title was supposed to mean anything to her beyond *bookworm* - gives her an odd look. “I...” he starts, then trails off, shaking his head. “Mrs. Cobb, what you encountered? That was a vampire.”

“Nope,” she says, popping the P. She crosses her arms and looks at him for a few moments, until he shifts in his seat, uncomfortable. Jon’s got an odd sort of appearance - frail, younger than her although she’ll bet in a few years he won’t look it. He’s got the look of someone who’s aging prematurely: his hair an early grey, face lined and full of tension, deep bags under his eyes. His limbs seem slightly too long for his skinny frame, the bones of his wrist jutting out at angles as his narrow fingers tap on her desk, impatient. Finally, he sighs.

“Fine,” he says, obviously frustrated but resigned. “What did you call it, again?”

“An Abomination,” she says, drawling the words out, dry as the desert. She knows what a damn *vampire* looks like. She can hear one laughing at Jake right now, squawking as Jake must kick her off the couch, given the thump of her body hitting the hardwood and her affronted call of *cheater!* She’s suddenly not quite sure why she’s talking to this man, and it makes her *nervous*, but -

“Well, I suppose that’s... accurate enough,” Jon says with a little nod that’s almost to himself, eyebrows raising, lips pressing into a considering line. “Statement of Madeline Cobb, regarding an *Abomination* she killed on February 6th, 2001. Statement recorded directly from subject January 20, 2018. Statement begins.”

Mama squints at him, crossing her arms. He’s twitchy, like he’s about to get a fix of something only she can give him. She’s... not sure she wants to. Her head feels strange - she kind of wants to call Barclay in just to keep an eye on them, but he’s busy and- and- Jon’s

tiny. She could snap him over her knee like a twig. She can handle one nerdy *weirdo* who somehow knows about the *Abominations* but not the Sylphs.

She also, if he *is* someone to be wary of, would like to keep him as far away from everyone else as possible. He checks out tomorrow, moving onward and away from them. She can keep an eye on him until then. She's got this.

"Well?" Jon says when she lets the silence drag out, wasting tape.

"*Hell* of an accent you've got there," she says in lieu of an answer, offering up a little half smile. She doesn't want to make this... statement. "Where'd you say you're from again? Britain? Thought they made that accent up for TV."

Jon's nostril's flare. "Stop stalling," he demands, and Mama's about to cuff him on the back of the head and boot him out of her office when he follows it up with a sharp, "Give me your *statement*, Mrs. Cobb, what *happened* that night?" and there's a - her face tingles like it does when she's about to have a panic attack, her breath sharp in her chest, something putting *pressure* on her brain, and her mouth *opens*.

"We were - well, it was that time again, you know? Every two months, the Abomination comes and we'd all head out to track it down," she says, even as she tries to force her own mouth closed. She had planned on feeding him the crock of shit she'd told the paramedics, the police, not *this*. "This was early 2001, so it was me, Thacker, Bar-,"

"Use full names, please," Jon instructs, and her hands go numb as well. "For the record." She flexes her fingers a few times, trying to get feeling back into them as she replies, and the buzzing feeling spreads throughout her body - like she's in a pool of carbonated water and he's pushing her head under, holding her down.

"It was me, Arlo Thacker, Barclay Cobb, and Vern Crawford. Vern was - he was new, and he was kinda *young*, y'know?" she says. "Barely old enough to drink. He was nice, he found out about us durin' last hunt on accident and rather'n turnin' around and runnin' he'd asked what he could do to help. Barclay was sayin' we should tell him to keep his head down and cut him out, but, ah," she licks her lips, her mouth is *dry*, like she hasn't had water in days. "A little thing about me, Jon: I'm *horribly* practical. And it's a *dangerous* thing that we do. Three people don't make a fireteam. Three people don't make much of *anythin'*, honestly, 'cept three corpses. So I told Barclay that since ain't none of us wanna *die* we should probably accept some help, and Thacker'd said that we'd be able to keep an eye on him if he was with us, that way Vern wouldn't go pokin' sticks at things tryin' to be helpful without any information and gettin' his ass killed, and together we managed to convince him."

Jon is leaning forward towards her now, the closed off twitchiness from earlier gone, his dark eyes bright with something she can't quite put a name to. He waves a hand at her as if to say *go on*.

"We'd trained him a little - just baby steps, how to shoot a gun, how to throw a punch, how to hold a knife, how to hit like you damn well mean it." She's staring at him, unable to do anything else, her eyes wide. She can't seem to make herself blink. "Nobody was expectin'

him to do much else but have our backs straight off. Nobody *wanted* him to do anythin' other than play lookout, 'sides. He was - he was a *kid*. A sweetheart. A -,"

"You all went to a bar," Jon interrupts, as if to say *get to the good part*. "What happened there?" He licks his lips, and she can tell what that gleam is now - his eyes are *ravenous*. His words make her skin prickle all over again. If he's noticed the fact that she's white-knuckling her pocket knife in the pocket of her fleece vest, he gives no indication of it.

"We went to a bar," she says, her breath shuddering on the exhale. "The Little Dipper. It was just before the Abomination was set to hit, and we all liked to go toast ourselves. Kind of - in hockey, they've got pre-game rituals, for luck, right? We started doin' that when Barclay joined us," she barely manages to avoid saying *crossed through the gate*. She knows she has to keep him as far from Sylvain as possible. "And since ain't none of us had died yet, it was as good a ritual as any."

She can smell the air in the bar, a bit smokey even though nobody had any cigarettes out, feel the stickiness of the table under her hands as she kicked her feet against Barclay's, offering him one of her french fries, Thacker pressed up against her side in the booth in a line of canvas and heat. He'd refused to take off his jacket, she remembers, as he'd been carrying his gun in an underarm holster. Her own pistol and small collection of knives and brass knuckles were squirreled away into various pockets, tucked into her boots, but Thacker was never one for concealment. The place was dimly lit, but she could still tell Barclay was blushing while they did their usual *are we or aren't we* routine of flirting. All of them were buzzed but not drunk, not yet. It was a Friday night, so it was as busy as physically possible for a place in Kepler, the karaoke machine on in the corner with folks caterwauling into it, the bartender fluttering about, a parking lot packed enough it was like most of town was there.

"We'd been there for a bit when Vern stood up suddenly and said he was goin' to buy us all another round. I think he might've just wanted to get away for a minute, lookin' back. Thacker 'n I'd been doin' this a long time, we were best friends, and, well, I ended up *marryin'* Barclay, so it was probably pretty awkward for him. Always hard to integrate into groups like that, 'specially when you're young 'n tryin' to impress everyone, show that you're mature and you belong." Her hands are shaking. She tries to get up and leave - she can't regurgitate all this to him if they aren't in the same room, and she has some half-baked hope that maybe if they aren't making eye contact, whatever spell this is will break - but her body won't move. The story feels like coughing up water after inhaling it: it hurts coming out of her, leaving her empty and scraped up, only she's not sure spitting it out will save her life. She thinks she'll dry-drown on it later.

"He was at the bar a long while - longer'n he needed to be, so I figured he was prob'ly gettin' heckled by the bartender. Sheryl was real friendly, nice lady, but she had a bit of a *thing* for younger men, so I thought he might need a rescue. I made Thacker get up so I could go get him." Thacker had grumbled a bit, muttered something like *I got old bones, Maddie*, and *that'll learn 'em not to talk to strangers*, but he'd acquiesced. She'd hip checked him on her way up to the bar.

Jon has his hand on his slightly scarred face, thumb rubbing back and forth across his lips. The scars are... odd. Perfectly round, pitted like they could be acne scars, but too wide, too

deep. Like something *ate* him. As her mouth moves without her permission, her spine locked up and numb, blinding panic crawling up her neck, she wishes it had finished the job.

“When I got there, he was talkin’ to a woman I’d - I’m not sure if I’d seen her before or not, even now. She had a face that was *familiar*, but I didn’t know her name. I asked Vern to introduce me to his friend, said somethin’ ‘bout bringin’ her over to the rest of us, just *jokin’*, but she made it clear that she wasn’t gonna do that, let me know that Vern would be goin’ home with her tonight. And Vern - Vern didn’t look right. I mean, we’d been drinkin’ but we sure as hell weren’t *drunk*, y’know? But he looked *wasted*.” she can see the scene, unfolding in front of her like from a movie, vivid details catching her eye - the Abomination’s lack of a drink, the water rings on the bartop, the way the bartender wasn’t approaching that end of the bar as if they didn’t exist.

“Vern looked at me,” she says after a pause, “Like I was a ghost. A *movie* ghost, not a real one. His face was... slack, and loose, like it didn’t fit him right. His pupils were blown out wide, and I didn’t know why it was so unnerving at the time, even with the strange *calm* comin’ off of the Abomination, but lookin’ back I can - I can see it. His pupils were... They were two different sizes. Wasn’t enough to immediately be *off*, but I’d seen the same thing when Harris - Harris Fisher, sorry,” she apologizes through gritted teeth, feeling like she might throw up. She can’t fucking *stop the words*, unspooling like fishing line, her mouth pierced with the hook. “He took a hit to the head in 1993, mid hunt. I’d peeled his eyes open, flicked on my penlight, tryin’ to access the concussion, y’know? Because there weren’t no blood or brains, and I hadn’t put my hands on the spot he got hit in, so I thought he was just... just out.” Her voice is shaking, breathing ragged, but the words keep coming. “His left pupil was huge and the right was so small I almost didn’t see it. And I realized, ah. So that’s it, then. Brain death.” She manages to cover her face with the hand not clutching her knife.

“Hand away from your face, please,” Jon says, like he’s trying to be mild about it, but her hand jumps away from her mouth like it’s been burned. “Just so the recorder picks up everything.”

She imagines her body unfreezing, how she’d *lunge* for him, *beat* his head against her desk until his skull breaks like Harris’ had, all soft and smashed up inside, she’d keep going after that, until there was *nothing left of his head*. She’d have to burn her desk with his body, have to scrub the floorboards until her hands went livid red from bleach, have to carpet over her office, but there’d be nothing left of his head for him to use to peel the story out of her like shucking corn. Her body does not move. She continues her statement.

“The Abomination alerted me that she was gonna be headin’ out with him now and just... walked out of the bar with him. I went back to the table and put on my coat. I remember Thacker askin’ where Vern was, Barclay askin’ me what I was doin’, if I was okay, but I just... I didn’t reply. I *couldn’t*. I knew there was somethin’ wrong, and I had to follow Vern. I managed to get out of the bar before they’d made it too far down the street and trotted on after them. I didn’t really... *decide* to do it? It was like I was sleepwalkin’. I only realized when Barclay ‘n Thacker’d caught up to me why I knew she was the Abomination. And I told them - she’d talked to me, but she’d *never opened her mouth*. She never said a word. I told them I wanted to make sure she was really the Abomination, and we didn’t speak after

that - we knew the drill at this point. We just followed. Didn't want to hit at the wrong time and lose track of it, have to find it again, 'specially if it could manipulate your mind."

Jon is looking at her very seriously, like he's *interested*, like he *cares* about what she has to say. The look on his face is sympathetic - faint, like he's not too good at showing his emotions, like he's had to practice doing it, but it's definitely sympathy. She can't help but think it's a real emotion, despite the fact that he's somehow reached inside her and is plucking her brain like a harp.

"We walked a long while. There's not really any streetlights in Kepler, 'specially not back then, but the Abominations only come at the full moon, and there weren't any clouds, so there was plenty of light to see by. Vern and the Abomination didn't talk, not that we heard, but we were pretty far back so they wouldn't see us, walkin' on the fresh snow to be quiet. We came up on this - on this shack," she says, hoarsely. "I'd seen it 'couple thousand times, just never thought about it. Was probably attached to a house once, but it wasn't no more, time'd brought most of it down. There were broken boards all over the place, and it was obvious nobody *lived* there, but she brought Vern right on inside and he followed like it was *normal*. We started runnin' then, 'cause we knew this was it, but we were too far away. And by the time we got there we were... we were too late."

Jon makes a soft, sympathetic hum, tilting his head. She's not sure how she's managed to keep it together this well - she and Barclay *never* discuss past hunts, not anymore, seeing as how even the ones that went well tend to make her throat close up and her hands shake, if it doesn't just give her a panic attack straight off the bat. They write down the results of the latest one on Thacker's busted old laptop, shut it, and never speak of it again. She figures it must have something to do with whatever Jon's doing to her - he commanded her to *give me your statement*, and now she's damn well going to give it to him. The snarled mess of her brain is not going to get in the way of her words.

"When we got there, It already had - had its mouth on Vern's throat. Its mouth was - it was all teeth, like a sharks, and this thick, long tube of a tongue -," she almost gags, but keeps it together. "I got to it first, just slammed into it. I had a bit of rebar I'd cut like a baton - we have a couple of quick tests we do our first head on collision to see what'll hurt it - physical force is one of 'em, and I can hit a hell of a lot harder with a bit of steel than I can with my fists, and a lotta the Abominations don't like the iron content in the rebar. It felt - my hit *sunk in*, like its flesh wasn't firm, really. It had a lotta give to it that you just don't *get* with muscle and bone. I felt - a lot of blood came outta Vern, and I felt it splash up my leg. It was so *strong*. It kept tryin' to bite *me*, like it was in some sort of a frenzy, and it was all I could do to keep it from puttin' its teeth in my throat. It got me once on the arm - here," she says, rolling up the sleeve of her flannel. It wasn't a bite, really, more a few long scars where its teeth had flayed her arm open after she'd punched it across the face. "I managed to drop my rebar and when I tried to grab it again I came up with a broken wooden plank, so I just... jabbed it in the chest, and it sunk in so easy, like pushin' a pin through fabric. It froze. Then Barclay lit the road flare," she says. She can see his face - she'd looked as he'd shouted her name, his voice bright with terror. He was washed out blue-grey in the bleaching moonlight reflecting off the snow, and then he'd struck the ends together, lighting up a volley of sparks, his scared, determined expression lit up red from below.

“That’s our second go-to. Things don’t like fire. He jammed the flare into the Abomination’s mouth,” she says, “And it just... went up. Like flashpaper. Barclay had to drag me out from under it - I got a few burns.” She shifts her neck sideways to show him - some molten material had splashed onto her right above her collar bone, the skin there is darker than the rest, wrinkled. “Just like that, it was gone. It didn’t make a sound.”

Vern had, gurgling and choking on his own blood.

“That’s a vampire,” Jon says. “I know you called it an... Abomination, but that’s a vampire. Not one of whatever those things you keep talking about are. Continue,” he instructs, cutting off her protests of *it wasn’t a damn vampire* and *if we didn’t kill the abomination it’s still out there somewhere* and *oh god how many people’ve gotten killed ‘cause we didn’t get rid of the right damn thing?*

“When I got to my feet, Thacker had his hands on Vern’s throat, tryin’ to stop the bleedin’. He managed to get his fingers in the artery to try’n keep it right while Barclay sprinted back for a payphone - no cell phones in Kepler - and I held Vern’s hands. T-Talked to him. It worked for - for a bit. But there was just... a chunk of his neck missin’. So it didn’t work too long. Eventually he just... was gone. We didn’t talk after that, just... waited.”

It was quiet, she remembers. Vern’s eyes had gone blank, his hand loose in her grip. Thacker pulled out of and away from Vern, sat back on his heels, pushed his hair away from his face, leaving two streaks of wet dark at his temples and through his greying hair. He was crying, silently. Mama buried her face in the crook of the elbow of her uninjured arm, screamed until her voice went raw, muffled by her ruined coat. Her blood dripped off her other hand, mixing with the pool of Vern’s, melting the snow.

It was cooling off by the time Barclay showed back up to drag them away from his body, burying the still burning road flare deep in the snowbank where the police wouldn’t find it, putting pressure on her arm and running over their story until the ambulance and the police showed up.

“We told the police we’d been jumped and he’d gotten stabbed. I got stitched up. We had the funeral,” she says, and she can feel his hold draining off of her in the lightness in her head, a feeling like a balloon pushing against the inside of her ribcage. “No suspects were ever found. That’s it.”

“Statement ends,” Jon says, but he doesn’t click off the tape. “*Fascinating,*” he muses, almost to himself, “It seems that your extensive experience from... *whatever* you do gave you good enough instincts not to fall into the... thrall of the vampire. What *are* the ab-,” he stops, eyes going wide, because Mama’s reached under her desk, pulled out her pistol, and is now aiming it directly at his face, so close his eyes cross to keep an eye on the muzzle.

She reaches over and switches the tape off. It clicks back on immediately, so she does it again. And again. And again. Finally, she laughs breathlessly and ejects the tape with one hand, then crushes it in her fist, plastic shards cutting into her palm. Jon swallows.

“Get the fuck out,” she says.

“Okay,” Jon replies, his voice very small. He goes to stand up, and she does too - she’s a full foot taller than him, even though he’s obviously got lifts in his shoes.

“Did you - did you pull any of this *bullshit* on my *kids*?” she spits, stepping towards him, voice rising. Outside in the lodge, she can hear everyone pause, the general chatter quieting. “Huh?” she shouts when he doesn’t immediately answer. “Fuckin’ *answer me*, before I paint the fuckin’ wall with your *head*!”

“*No!*” he yelps, snagging the tape recorder off her desk and backing up until his back hits the wall of her office, next to the exit. “You’re - you’re the only person I’ve talked to, I *swear*!”

She fists her free hand in his stupid shirt - some tourist shop monstrosity, slams him into the paneling once, twice. He makes a small, pained noise, fumbling her door open and stepping out. “Do you like makin’ people talk, huh?” she snarls, and she can hear footsteps running towards them. Her hands are numb. “I can make people *talk* too, understand me? Get *out*! I don’t want you anywhere *near* my fuckin’ kids!”

Barclay lurches into view, holding a paring knife, Jake, Dani, and Moira in a cluster behind him. “*What-*,” Barclay starts, then stops dead. She can hear Moira gasp. “Jake, Dani -,”

“Kids, *get to your rooms*, ” she tells them, desperate, still with her gun at Jon’s pale, sweating face. She doesn’t dare take her eyes off of him. “Moira, would you go to this *gentleman’s* room and grab his luggage? I don’t want *anythin’* of his in my house.”

Jake runs, coming back and pulling Dani along with him when she seems to be rooted in place, staring at them, open mouthed. Moira vanishes on the spot, and she’s glad Jon seems unwilling to take his eyes off her gun, else he might have seen her do it. Barclay sticks at her side as they march Jon into the lobby, which has thankfully cleared of all her residents.

“You run on back to England, now,” she tells him, backing him up to the door. “And *you don’t fuckin’ come back*, you hear me? You don’t fuckin’ set *foot* in Kepler *ever* again. Don’t even come into *West Virginia*, because I’ll find out.” Her voice is cold, steady, although she can feel a tremor starting in her chest, so she’s got a *very limited window* to get him out of the Lodge before she loses it. “I’ll *find out*, and I’ll *kill* you. I’ll beat you so bad your own *mother* won’t even recognize you. I will make sure there’s nothin’ left of your ass but a *stain*. I will *destroy* you. If there’s anyone else like you out there, you tell ‘em that if I catch them sniffin’ ‘round here I’ll fuckin’ kill them too. You stay far, *far* away from me ‘n my family. Do you understand me?”

“I was just -,” Jon gasps, eyes darting from her face to the gun to Barclay behind her, then to the corner by the stairs.

“Coming up, don’t shoot me,” Moira says, stepping quickly into her peripheral vision, dropping Jon’s suitcase by his feet and skittering back, out of reach.

“I was just,” Jon says again, licking his lips, the hand not clutching his tape recorder to his chest held up in surrender. “*Interested*. You seemed - I could *tell* something had happened to you - doesn’t it feel *good* to talk about it? Cathartic?”

“Stop *talking*, ” Barclay growls, and Jon swallows but doesn’t stop, visibly switching his tactics.

“Your statement is *important*, Mrs. Cobb, it’ll help me with *saving the world*, it is *invaluable* information! I’m sorry that I *scared* you but it’s - you see, the work I do -,”

Mama squeezes the trigger. Jon jumps at the noise, yelping, and the window behind his head breaking into a thousand glittering shards.

“I’ll show *you* scared,” she snarls. “I’ll show you *work*. Get. *Out*.”

Jon grabs his suitcase and whirls out the door, into the night he’d appeared from. She hears his rental car start in the driveway, the crunch of gravel as he peels out of there. She keeps pointing her gun at the space where he used to be standing, ears ringing, until Barclay steps up to her and pulls it from her nerveless hands.

“I’ll tell everyone it’s safe,” Moira says quietly. Mama only gets a glimpse of her blank expression before Barclay pulls her into his chest, tucking her head into the crook of his neck, and the panic attack that’s been building hits her so hard Barclay has to keep her upright.

It takes a week before she can enter her office again, and she finds that the smashed tape is gone, as if it’d never been there. It’s for the best, she thinks, trying to swallow down the lump in her throat and the horrible suspicion that crawls up the back of her neck, that maybe he’d never been there at all. Maybe she’d *dreamt* the whole encounter, made up the way he pulled a confession from her, imagined not being in control of her body, her voice, her *head*.

She ignores the paranoia and hides a few more weapons in her office, like she ignores the nightmares that follow, and Jon becomes just another story she and Barclay don’t talk about. With any luck, nobody like him will ever be back to drag it out of her again.

End Notes

comments and kudos are appreciated!!!

i might write a full on multichap thing with these lunatics that would be a lot less dark and more jon being spooked by the lodge and the lodge being creeped out by jon. i would LOVE to bully jon some more. As for the abomination - they wouldn't have found it even if they had continued looking after the vampire. Leo killed it the day it arrived.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!