

Game Over (by Matthew Floyd) – Character Monologues

MARCUS:

It's okay. It's okay. I know I screwed up with that window. I locked Lee in that shed, had the door closed and locked. Didn't really think he could fit through that window, it was pretty tiny. But Lee's a skinny guy, I guess he pulled it off. My bad for underestimating what he was prepared to do.

I did everything else right. Charlotte comes to me asking for help on Ray, typically I'm always willing to do that sort of stuff, but I've done the math. Me, Charlotte, Ray, Lee, only four people left. I charted everyone who entered the tournament, and I charted everyone who got bumped off. I knew who was alive – if Charlotte's dead, I knew one of two things would happen: Ray would kill Lee and then come directly for me, or use Lee to come after me. Either way, I can start planning for an attack, and once I sense one, I can put the shoe on the other foot. So she had to die that night. Unfortunate, yes, but necessary.

I knew Jack wasn't going to help. That's why I brought the change of clothes. I brought the gun. Jack was good for good while – he helped me out by keeping me in the loop on who was dead and who wasn't, but the times when we used to be partners planning on taking on the Assassins world, that's over. But I know Ray – I know he thinks I was dependent on Jack for help and thus would know I'd go to Jack. I thus could know him or Lee would follow me there, I'd sneak out, and then follow *them*. Smart, right?

I did cut it kinda close though, I kept my conversation with Jack going on a little too long and Lee almost busted me, but I made it. Change of clothes, Lee didn't notice, I followed Lee, locked him in that shed outside the safe house, and waited for Ray. Always underestimated us all. If he'd been a tad less arrogant, maybe he could've seen it coming.

I took his teasing, I took him mocking me – I'd seen him do it to Lee enough times to know how to take it. Once he was done, I prepared on how I'd kill him. I guess some people would say I've been a bit obsessive with this game, but I never saw it as such. I'm learning, the same way I'd learn how to excel in class, and in class I was never that good, not even top 10. But in Assassins, I was second-best. I knew

was second-best. All I had to do was learn how to be the best, and to be the best, I had to take down Ray.

Lee won. Congratulations to him. He got a few lucky breaks to be able to do it, but congratulations to him. The bottom line is that I would've beaten Ray if not for Lee and that's what matters. People are gonna say that he won this year but... yeah... I actually did.

RAY:

Fucking Lee, man. I mean, damn, if not for that guy I would've found a way out of that situation, believe you me. Sure, sure, a guy has you on the ground with a gun to your head, 99.999 times out of 100 you're going to lose, but I had it figured out. Because I know Marcus, or at least I knew what became of Marcus at least.

I remember Marcus from earlier when we first started playing Assassins. Of course, I had already won the year before, and, if I can remember, Marcus and Jack were two of the last people left in the game. I killed Jack like I always did before, and Marcus basically let me kill him, that was beautiful. Just bumbled around for a bit before I shot him in the back. I remember that year. And of course the two times we played Assassins after that. Every year, Marcus swore he'd win and dethrone me but, come on, it never happened. I don't make mistakes. That's why I've been – or, well, was – the three-time-defending Assassins champion.

See, the Marcus I remember from back when we first started playing Assassins never ever would've had the guts to take out Charlotte, and definitely not in the way he did. You can imagine how pleasantly surprised I was once I realized what he really did.

Because Marcus was supposed to either be in two places. I, of course, can't be the one to kill him, Lee was assigned his name, but come on, we all know that I was organizing all of the stuff with Lee and Marcus. So straightforward. I send Lee out to tail Marcus through town. Marcus goes to Jack begging for help like he used to do, figures out Lee is tracking him, runs back to his room, I lock him inside, he doesn't have the guts to run, Lee comes back, I get him to kill Marcus and promise him... eh...

I must've promised him something to get him to kill people for me. People generally enjoy pleasing me, I feel.

I mean, take Marcus. The only way he was able to challenge me was to become me. I realized that after I climbed into his room through the open window. His little character diagram on the wall always used to lead to me, it would scream of ways for him to try and kill me. This time, it seemed more organized at least. Like he was enjoying killing people, marking them off in red ink and stuff like that. To challenge me, Marcus had to become me, which of course pleases me. I mean, who doesn't want other people to want to be you? Boo-ya, of course!

Anyway, Marcus thought he had me, but he didn't have me. I had his mind spinning, I had spent the last few minutes challenging who he thought he was and shit like that. Because people, you don't become the Assassins champion without learning how to manipulate your enemy and make them feel like shit. Because A: they are. And 2: if they think they are, they'll be afraid to challenge you. Marcus would've waited to pull that trigger, I would've kicked his leg out from under him, I take the gun, free Lee, Lee kills Marcus, I kill Lee, and then I win... again. Seems predictable, but I mean, boo-ya, it's happened before, it *was* going to happen again.

But fucking Lee, man. He kills Marcus, okay, that's fair, I mean, he *was* supposed to, after all. But then he just offs and shoots me while I'm lying there on the ground? Man, come on, at least play fair, dude. Eh, whatever. It's a one-time thing, believe me. Lee knows the only reason he was in that position to sweep in and win was because of me, so it's basically my win anyway. Semantics, really. I'll be back next year. Lee won't stand a chance and neither will Marcus.

LEE:

I always preached that I didn't care. Always, always, always. Ray would always be like, "Lee, isn't this great, we just killed this guy," and I'd be like, "yes, boss," and he'd be like, "Lee, we only have to kill three more people," and I'd be like, "yes boss," and he'd be like, "blah blah blah blah blah blah blah" calm the fuck down man. Jesus.

I agreed to help him out because no one challenges Ray. People are afraid of him for some weird reason, I don't know why, he's just an ordinary dude who thinks he's God. If I helped Ray, I knew there'd be less people following me around and shit like that. I have classes I have to finish, papers to write, there's actual, *real* stuff I need to do before I start worrying about a silly game. I don't even know why I signed up and joined. I'm like, "oh, okay, you tell me how to kill these people, I do it, and I'm protected, I can go about my business."

But then it's every fucking day. "Lee, we need to meet to figure out how to kill this guy." Four hours later. "Lee, we need to sneak into that stupid little shack for an hour so people won't suspect anything." Dude, enough. It's just a stupid game. And another thing, dude. It's one thing to tell me to kill people so I can care less, but come on – you can't just, like, kick my thoughts all the fucking time, that gets annoying.

But I'm cool. I'm the guy who doesn't care. I do my part, take his shit for a little bit, and then the game's over. Okay, cool. I'll admit, sometimes I *did* used to stop and think: this guy thinks I'm dirt, if I just up and shot him in the face, he wouldn't see it coming at all, at all, at all. That was always in the back of my head though. I had to finish my schoolwork first, so worrying about ways to stab Ray in the back had to wait.

Even after Marcus locked me in that damn shed I wasn't going to do anything. I just going to let the kids have their silly fun, come out with my hands up and be like, "ey, sheriff, or ey, partner, you got me. I surrender." And then they up and start kicking me again. And I'm sitting there in the dark, listening and thinking, "that's not me. That's not true. You don't need to say that about me." Somewhere in between the laughter I just decided enough was enough.

So I squeezed out of the teeny window. Grabbed the gun. Shot Marcus. Shot Ray in the face – I'll admit, that *was* pretty sweet. Game's over. Let's move on. Next year I'll be sure not to be someone's bitch. Because that stuff, even if it's quote-on-quote, "safer", gets old real fucking fast. Even though I don't really care *that* much about winning the damn game.

CHARLOTTE:

Well, at least I was close. I signed up to play in the first place because the rest of my classes and that stuff had gotten kinda lame, I'm gonna have to say. Classes are boring, don't really have too many friends, gotta find something to do. I had seen Ray play before, really, really briefly, but he definitely seemed to be having fun with what he was doing. So that's what I did. Killed a person, that was kinda fun, at least.

Although I didn't know that the second person I'd be assigned to kill was Ray himself, that was stupid. That was stupid of them to do. But, it was okay. I decided to have some fun with it, because of how I knew Marcus. I've the guy since freshman year, and he always was out trying to prove something. Never was *that* great in his classes, never could hold onto a steady girl, at least not from where I was standing. This Assassins tournament, he lives for it even though he's never been able to defeat Ray.

So I gave him what he wanted. He wants to prove something, I gave him the good ol' "Oh, Marcus, I think Ray is coming for me, and only you can save me" routine. It seemed better than saying "you need to teach me how to kill Ray" because every guy loves playing the role of the protector. At least most do. And he seemed like he was eating it up at least, that silly, boyish grin kept coming up on his face. He was like, "Ray is so dangerous because he doesn't have loyalty, that sort of stuff," I was like, "okay, that's cute, honey, tell me more." And he did. Because every guy loves playing the role of the protector. At least most do.

I suppose I should've accounted for the possibility that I was his next target though. If I hadn't been, he probably would've brought Ray to me so I could kill him, I would've been, "thanks, honey, that was sweet." Given him a kiss on the cheek – kinda lame and stupid, but whatever. Then if I ran into another dude in the future who was tough to kill, he'd have helped him. And then of course I'd kill him once it was his turn. A girl's gotta have a goal in mind, right?

Stupid, stupid. I should've accounted for that. Instead I end up running around through the woods at night like out of a dumb horror movie and wouldn't you know it? All the doors to the safe house are locked. Even the door to that little

shed Ray and Lee are always sneaking into at night was locked. And wouldn't you know it, I end up dead. Boom, red paint splat in the face and I have to look that stupid, impish grin on Marcus's face as he's like, "gotcha, gotcha, gotcha." Should've seen it coming. Stupid. Stupid.

JACK:

How'd I get sucked back into this again? I promised myself that after I became administrator and organizer and got out of actually playing the game, I wouldn't have to be Marcus's bro-pal who helps him figure out ways to kill Ray. I was done with it, out, doing my work and stuff. All I had to do was send out e-mails and messages to people telling them they had to kill so-and-so.

Maybe it's because I felt bad for the poor guy. I don't why he cares so much about beating Ray, but he does. And the guy, the guy *is* an arrogant douche, too, let's be honest. So, I helped him a bit. Let him store some things at the tea place. Gave him some 411's here and there. When it was his turn to kill Tom, I gave him Tom's schedule, that sort of stuff.

But then I stopped myself and was like, "this isn't right. I'm the administrator, I'm supposed to be impartial." That *and* I had be roped back into doing Marcus's dirty work so he could muse on his obsession and shit like that. And I was like, "I'm done, man, I'm done." I told myself I wouldn't do this anymore so I'm not going to.

Maybe because Lee won and not Ray, Marcus can let it go. Maybe. Hopefully. I don't know, he's a decent guy, he's just not *that* good at whole lot of things. But hopefully he can move on a bit like I have. Hopefully.