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"Of course! This place is off-limits. My Dad and Levant have repeatedly warned me not to come here. Otherwise, they'll lock me up with you."

After sizing up Stephen, the girl sighed, "I wouldn't complain about being stuck here with you if you're ten years younger. Too bad..."

"Are you saying that I'm old?" asked Stephen after checking himself out.

"Come on. You're as old as my Dad."

Stephen lowered his head and chuckled, "That's true, I guess. You're not much older than my daughter. I'd consider myself blessed if I were to have a daughter like you."

"Excuse me? You're treating me like I'm your daughter now? Please don't. Besides, I think we're a pretty good match, and I don't mind that you're a little older."

Meanwhile, Evan who was hiding in the room was as shocked as Stephen to hear those words.

He had initially thought that his father-in-law was getting tortured in the Wicked Palace, but he never expected the man to have such luck there. I wonder how Nicole is going to feel about this if she ever finds out.

"I know that you're an open-minded and cheerful person, but you shouldn't joke about that."

"I'm not joking, I mean what I said. Let's just forget about our age and run away together. What do you say?"

Stephen gazed at the spontaneous girl with the bold but terrifying idea. "You didn't come here just to talk about this, did you?"

"No. I want to know why my Dad hates you so much. He wants nothing more than to send you to hell, and I need to know why."

Stephen would rather not bring up the past as there were more important things to do at hand.

"You really want to know?"

"Yes." Avril nodded vigorously.

"Do me a favor then, and I'll tell you when it's done."

"Name it."

Stephen brought Avril into the room, and her jaw dropped when she saw Evan.

After staring at Evan's handsome face for a while, Avril turned to Stephen. "Who's he?"

"A friend who sneaked in to see me. Can you get him out of here safely?"

"I'm not leaving here without you!" Evan was determined.

"What does a man like you want him for? Besides, I'll be lonely if he leaves." Avril looked at Evan in puzzlement.

Narrowing his eyes at Avril, Evan found it hard to believe that the girl before him was Murphy's daughter. "You could run away with us. Then, you won't have to sneak in here ever again. Didn't you just say that you wanted to elope with him?"

With her brow knitted, Avril thought about it and decided that it was a good idea. Not only will I be able to get Stephen out of here, but I'll also be making my dream come true. But how am I going to get these two out, though? It's going to be hard sneaking two men out under the guards' nose.

Stephen looked at Evan with mixed feelings. What is this punk planning in that head of his? If we get tangled up with Murphy's daughter, there will be no more peace at the estate. On top of that, taking Avril with us will only make it harder for us to leave unnoticed.

Looking as calm as ever, Evan thought it was more important for them to get out and deal with the girl later.

After some thought, Avril sighed because they seemed to be out of options. "We have to be careful. If my Dad and Levant find out about this, we'll be dead before we know it."

"Your father would kill you?"

Avril nodded. "It's possible."

Wow. That bad, huh? Then we better be extra careful.

"I'm going to go now. I'll be back again once I think of something."

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"Alright, be careful."

Avril nodded before sneaking out on her toes, but she bumped into somebody as soon as she got out.

"What are you doing here, Levant?"

Levant looked at Avril before shifting his focus to the courtyard. "I could ask you the same."

Avril's heart was beating so fast that she could almost hear it. If Levant goes in, he's bound to discover that Stephen is hiding somebody inside. Then, they'll both be in trouble.

Sighing, Avril then raised her voice purposely, "The Wicked Palace is my home! Wherever I go here is none of your business, Levant!"

She deliberately shouted Levant's name louder so that the two inside could hear it.

"You don't usually talk like this. Is there a reason why you're shouting?" Levant got suspicious of Avril's unusual behavior.

"I don't need a reason to shout! I'll shout whenever I feel like it!" replied Avril with an even louder voice. If the two didn't hear me before, they should now.

Levant shifted his focus away from Avril and started walking into the courtyard.

He could see Stephen calmly enjoying his tea in the living room from far away.

"Why did Avril come to visit you?" asked Levant after scanning around the living room.

"She had some questions," replied Stephen as he glanced at the man.

"About what?"

"About the grudge between Murphy and me," Stephen answered calmly before taking a sip of his tea.

Levant looked at the Duke suspiciously and wondered why Avril would care about the past.

"That's it?"

Stephen lifted his head to look at Levant with a sharp gaze. "What else would there be?"

Levant gulped as he realized that he would not be getting anything from Stephen, so he scanned every inch of the room with his sharp eyes. Something's not right here.

"Search the room!"

"Yes, sir!"

Stephen's face darkened as he watched the guards carry out their order.

When Levant and his men found nothing, they finally left Stephen alone. Just then, Evan crawled down from the roof and went back into the room.

"Levant's getting suspicious. We'd better get out of here soon."

Evan nodded in agreement.

Tossing and turning, Nicole had trouble falling asleep for she had not heard back from the secret informant she hired to find out if Evan was in the Wicked Palace. The people at Wicked Palace sure are tight-lipped. Would Levant kill Evan if he's really here?

Although she hated Evan, she didn't want to see him dead. After all, he was the kids' father, and his death would definitely break their little hearts.

It wasn't until past midnight that Nicole finally fell asleep, but she had not slept for long before she jolted awake from a nightmare.

She dreamed that Levant had imprisoned Evan and used a gleaming knife to cut the man's flesh.

In contrast to Evan's look of pain and horror, Levant looked absolutely deranged with a sadistic grin on his face.

As he continued to torture Evan, the unhinged man merely laughed menacingly as Evan wailed in pain.

Even after waking up from the nightmare, Nicole could still hear both the wail and laughter echoing inside her head.

"Evan..." She sat up abruptly, her forehead was drenched with sweat, and her heart was pounding frantically. Could it be real? Could Levant really be hurting Evan?

Feeling helpless, Nicole held her head with both hands. None of this would have happened if Evan had listened to me. That idiot should have stayed away from the Wicked Palace!

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"Damn it, Evan! You brought this upon yourself!" murmured Nicole to herself. She felt as if an invisible hand was pulling her down and drowning her in fear. Hating someone isn't as easy as I thought it would be. As much as I hate Evan, I don't want him to die.

Nicole clutched at her hair as tears ran down her cheeks.

To prevent the nightmare from becoming reality, she decided to spend more time with Levant in order to make sure that he would not have the time to hurt Evan.

Levant was puzzled by Nicole's unusual behaviors. Maybe she's getting attached to me because we're getting married soon, and she's just happy to be my bride.

Although they were together most of the time, Levant could not help noticing how distant Nicole was. To him, it felt like Nicole was simply tailing him for some reason, as she would always ask where he was going.

"Nicole, What's with the sudden clinginess?"

Nicole kept quiet and only responded with a faint smile.

Whenever Levant tried to get close to her, she would keep her distance and nervously say, "We're not married yet, Levant."

How's that an excuse? She never got married to Evan, yet they had four children and were living like a married couple.

Realizing that Nicole had not accepted him, Levant gave her a half-smile. "Fine. After marriage it is then. Let's get married the day after tomorrow."

That's two days earlier. But I guess that's fine. The sooner we get married, the sooner Stephen can return to the estate. I might even be able to look for Evan as madam president of the Wicked Palace once I become Levant's wife.

"Sure."

Levant only felt better when Nicole agreed with him.

The four little ones were baffled when they noticed how their mother seemed to be getting tangled up with Levant instead of looking for their father.

"How could Mommy do this?" sighed Juan.

"Does she really not care about Daddy anymore?" asked Nina, who was confused.

Rubbing her chubby little hands, Maya thought it was wrong of her mother to be so cold. I told her that I'd cry until I'm out of tears if Daddy died. Does she not care? Mommy seems to only care about Levant.

Standing aside with a blank expression, Kyle crossed his little arms in silence.

The boy believed in his mother, for he noticed how worried she seemed to be these days. Whenever she came home from Levant's, she would look sad.

Kyle believed that there was a reason his mother got close to Levant. She's probably doing it to find Daddy. But, with that many guards in the Wicked Palace, it must be hard to find him. What can we do to find him as soon as possible?

"Stop complaining about Mommy. We should think of a way to help instead," suggested Kyle to his three siblings, who sighed before starting to brainstorm.

In the afternoon, Juan pretended to play with Kyle as he ran around in the Wicked Palace, taking the chance to map out the place in his mind. After that, the two returned to their bedroom to draw out an actual map and analyze where their father would most likely be held at.

Juan drew circles on the drawing with his little hand. "This spot and this spot are the most hidden. Do you think this is where Daddy's at?"

"Let's mark all the suspicious spots and go through them one by one. I believe we'll find Daddy that way," replied Kyle after some thought.

After deciding on a few spots and sneaking their black suits out of the suitcase, the two talked on their bed and waited for nightfall.

Juan suddenly sighed, "I heard that Mommy's getting married to Levant the day after tomorrow. If we can't find Daddy by then, do you have any idea how to stop the wedding?"

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The question stunned Kyle. "Levant's definitely going to be on the lookout for us. Trying to stop the wedding won't be easy."

"That's why it's imperative for us to find Daddy. He'll know how to get Mommy back."

Kyle nodded in agreement.

Soon, the sky dimmed as the sun gradually disappears below the horizon. The two little ones knew it was time to move out.

Fortunately, they had no problem sneaking into Avril's residence.

Sighing in the courtyard, Avril was startled when she inadvertently saw two small figures moving. "What the hell?"

She stood up and walked over to take a closer look, but the two shadows had already disappeared.

"That's weird. I thought I saw two figures moving. Something must be wrong with my eyes." Even after rubbing her eyes, Avril couldn't find anything.

However, when she turned around, she suddenly saw two little kids ran into her room.

Avril immediately rushed in after them and locked the door behind her.

"Come out now!"

Juan and Kyle both trembled as they wondered if that was the end of their operation. This lady sure has sharp eyes. We're doomed now!

"If you don't come out on your own, I'll seek you out myself. And when I do, I'll fry you up as my dinner!"

Juan shivered all over before whispering to Kyle, "This madwoman is scary. Should we just surrender ourselves?"

"Let's wait a little longer," replied Kyle after some thought.

Juan held his breath and prayed that they would not be discovered as he waited for the woman to make a move.

"Not surrendering, are we? Fine. I'll drag you out myself!"

Avril rolled her sleeves and started rummaging through boxes and cabinets.

Listening to the noises of the search, the kids' hearts almost beat out of their chests, for they had never seen a woman so hellbent on catching them. Who knows what's going to happen if she catches us.

Suddenly, the wardrobe door was opened, and the two kids desperately backed as far away inside as they could.

"What are you two doing in my courtyard? Are you after my body or money? Is this an attempt on my life?" asked Avril as she dragged the children out unceremoniously.

Why would we need her money or her body? Look at how young we are! And how would we kill her without any weapon? This madwoman is just weird.

Juan looked at Avril with rounded eyes and smiled. "We're not here for your money or your life. Even though you're as beautiful as a diamond sparkling in the morning light, we kids are not here for your body either."

This kid sure knows how to butter up someone.

"Then why are you two sneaking around in those outfits?"

After some thinking, Juan answered sincerely, "Well, that's because we're playing hide-and-seek."

However, Avril was unconvinced. Why would anyone think it's necessary to wear black suits for hideand-seek?

As she continued to look at the two suspiciously, Avril suddenly realized how similar they looked to someone she knew. Could that person be the reason why they're here?

After serious consideration, she stared at Juan intently. "I can tell that you're not being honest with me. I can read minds, so there's no point in lying to me."

She can read minds? Nobody can do that! This madwoman must be lying to us, but jokes on you! We won't be fooled!

"If you can read minds, tell us why we're here then," requested Kyle coldly.

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"You're here to look for someone," replied Avril calmly with her arms crossed.

Huh? How did she know?

Juan looked astonished while Kyle furrowed his brows. Can she really read minds? Or perhaps it's just a wild guess?

Seeing how the two were still unconvinced, Avril confidently added, "In fact, the person you're looking for is a man."

Looking at the astounded children, Avril cleared her throat before continuing, "I also know that he looks exactly like you."

Seeing how Avril got everything right, Juan gaped at her in shock. Do mind-readers really exist?

Kyle stared at Avril with his piercing gaze and thought of two possibilities. Either she can really read minds, or she knows something.

"If you can really read minds, tell me what I'm thinking right now." Kyle decided to test the selfproclaimed mind-reader.

At that, Avril pretended like she was focusing on her power. "You're wondering how I knew you're looking for someone, aren't you?"

Kyle shook his head. "No. I'm thinking you must've seen the person we're looking for, haven't you?" Avril fell silent.

My, my! I didn't expect this little guy to see through me like that. What a smart kid.

Hearing Kyle's words, Juan then looked expectantly at Avril. "Did you really see someone who looks like us? You look like a nice lady, I'm sure you'll tell us where he is, right?"

Avril sneered at the two and said nothing in response. I do know where he is, but why should I tell them?

"Someone as pretty as you must have a kind heart, so would you please tell us? It's been so long since we last saw Daddy. We miss him a lot." Juan put on his boyish charm while Kyle nodded and made a sound of agreement.

Looking at the boys with two different personalities, Avril inquired, "That man's your father? Then what's his relationship to Sir Musgrave?"

Avril believed that the two men shared a special relationship. Otherwise, Evan would not have risked his life just to see Stephen.

On the other hand, the children were surprised to realize that the woman knew their grandfather. So not only has she seen Daddy, but she also knows Grandpa? Then, should we tell her the truth?

Avril could tell that they were hesitant, so she suggested, "How about I tell you where your Daddy and Sir Musgrave are, and you tell me their relationship?"

After some thought, Kyle replied, "Sir Musgrave's our Grandpa."

The word "Grandpa" shocked Avril, she never expected Stephen to have grandchildren that old. And here I thought we could run away together and have our own children.

Looking at the boys, Avril could not help imagining them calling her newborn baby their uncle. Now that would have been a horrible sight to behold!

"Now it's your turn to tell us where they are." Juan's voice pulled Avril back to reality.

She cleared her throat and answered, "Your Daddy's with your Grandpa."

"And where exactly is our Grandpa?"

"The Wicked House, but you'll never find it, so go home. It's too dangerous for you to run around in the Wicked Palace."

"We're not running around, we live here."

"You live in the Wicked Palace?"

"Yup! Our Mommy lives here too."

Avril suddenly remembered hearing that Levant brought a woman back with him a few days ago, and the woman had four children.

Realization finally dawned on her that the boys were Levant's stepsons. So why would Levant imprison Stephen here if he wanted to be with the man's daughter? What kind of b*stard treats his future father-in-law like that? I have to warn Stephen's daughter not to marry that b@stard!