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Chapter 46: Wrong House

Ding dong

The doorbell rang.

Millie's mother rested the TV remote on the green couch, closed her laptop and went to open the door. Both her daughters had keys, so she had no idea who was there.

"Hell- oh" her mouth dropped open. She stared. She stared as if her extensions were about to fall o-

A gorgeous boy - heart-racingly handsome- was standing at the entrance. He held her daughter in his arms.

Millie was lying in his arms bridal style. Her eyes were closed. Luke faced Mrs Ripley, who was feeling a strong desire to switch places with her daughter. This boy was delicious.

And she'd forgotten lunch.

He realized that Millie's mother was not about to speak any time soon. She was still staring at him like a life-sized doll, and it had already been a couple minutes. It was creepy.

So he said, "Do you mind if I come in? Your daughter isn't exactly light."

Wordlessly, Mrs Ripley stepped out of the way and watched the boy walk into her home. He held Millie carefully, resting his arm under her head protectively to avoid bumping into anything.

Mrs Ripley watched him from behind as he made his way to the living room. He seemed to know his way and the thought crossed her mind; He must have been here before.

What was he doing with her ugly daughter? Could it be that all this time they were laughing at Millie, she was telling the truth? Was she really friends with the hottest boy? How could that be? Why would he take an interest in her?

The questions swirled in Mrs Ripley's head, making her almost dizzy enough to collapse into Luke's arms. Luke rested Millie on the green couch and moved the remote from under her. Mrs Ripley leaned against him.

Ignoring her daughter passed out next to her, she purred, "May I ask you something?"

Surprised at the sudden proximity, Luke took a step back.

"No," he said.

He didn't like the way the was looking at him. She was literally wishing she was seventeen again.

"What are you doing with my daughter?" she asked, unconcerned by his reaction.

The doorbell rang.

Luke admitted, "I told Millie I want to be in her life. She ran away... and passed out."

Mrs Ripley's staring took on a whole new level of crazy. Her eyeballs bulged. Inaewnted to be with hentaighter? And shaeaid NO!! She always thought Millie had her head screwed on wrong.

The doorbell rang again.

"Are you going to get that?" Luke asked.

"No," Mrs Ripley answered, curling a strand of hair around her ear seductively. "Let it ring."

But the doorbell kept ringing and Luke made no attempt at continuing conversation, so she reluctantly went to answer. Luke sat on the couch next to Millie, resting his hand on her forehead to check her temperature. Mrs Ripley couldn't resist nosily watching him from outside the living room, but the doorbell rang again.

She opened it, and that's when her jaw really dropped.

In front of her was another strikingly gorgeous boy. A motorbike was parked in the driveway behind him and he held a black helmet with a red stripe under his arm.

"Is Millie here?"

"Do you have the right house?"

His cheeks were flushed, and concern was etched in his handsome face. "Is Millie here?" he repeated.

"Do you have the right Millie?" Mrs Ripley asked a follow-up question.

She was convinced that either (a) they were delirious or (b) this was a practical joke - because this could not be about her daughter. But from serious expressions on their pretty faces, she doubted this was a joke. The answer must be (a).

Jake glanced over the woman's shoulder and saw the crop of Millie's messy hair on the couch. Suddenly, Luke blocked his view. He stood protectively in front of her.

"Wrong house," Luke growled.

Mrs Ripley got out of the way, her eyes switching from one eye candy to the other. She didn't know what to do. Was this the right time to ask for a picture?

"What are you doing here?" Jake walked into the house uninvited.

"I could ask you the same thing." Luke replied, nonchalantly.

Jake ran to the couch and bent over Millie. "Why the hell is she passed out? What did you do to her?"

Luke had to admit that the optics didn't look good for him.

But he remained firm. "You don't ask the questions here. Why are you here?"

Jake laid his cards on the table, metaphorically speaking. He told the truth. And it's bad Luke ya like nothing else could.

"I came to apologize. I kissed her, and she ran away."

"WHAT?!" Luke fumed.

"What?!" Mrs Ripley echoed.

Jake wasn't used to seeing his brother mad. It rarely happened, but when it did, it was not good. He hoped that his brother would not blame faced Mrs Ripley.

"I tried to kiss your daughter, Mrs Ripley, and I apologize if that o ends you. My name is Jake Dawson and I live across the street. It's a pleasure to meet you."

Jake o ered his hand but Luke slapped it away. "You touched her, you ick F."

"Don't touch me"

Luke touched him again.

"You don't have a monopoly over her!" Jake argued.

"No but I can defend her from ass**es like you."

"What makes me an ass**h!! Last time I checked you were the monster."

"Are you both going to fight over my daughter?" Mrs Ripley asked, "Because I have a prettier daughter I could introduce you to."

Jake glanced at Mrs Ripley. He paused, and then returned focus on Luke, "I told her I liked her, but she ran away. Why is this your problem, Luke? You're not involved."

Luke's voice lowered into a strong, intimidating tone, "When it comes to Millie, I ammoved."

Jake felt the emotions boil up within him. He asked, "She's lived next to you for the last seventeen years and you never cared. Why does it take me coming here to show you that?"

"Great question," Mrs Ripley nodded from the sidelines.

"Don't flatter yourself, brother. You've got nothing to do with our relationship," Luke replied, thinking of the very first day she ran over his laptop.

Millie literally came crashing into his world.

Jake shook his head, calming himself down, "Let me get this straight. A ex I told her I liked her, she ran to you?"

The hurt was apparent in his voice. Event Mrs Ripley went silent.

Luke stared down at an unconscious Millie as she slowly began to stir. He broke the silence, "She ran away from me too."

"So she doesn't like either of us?" Jake asked.

"I never said I liked her."

"Yeah. Whatever."

"Wow, I need a drink." Mrs Ripley said, accidentally interrupting the brothers' conversation.

She couldn't believe this conversation. Not even if it were part of a movie. This was all getting a bit too much.

"It's getting hot in here," Mrs Ripley fanned herself and unbuttoned her shirt a little bit.

"Maybe you could open a window?" Jake suggested, staring at her weirdly.

"Great idea," she winked at him and opened all the windows in the living room.

While her back was turned, Jake mouthed to his brother, "What's up with the mother?"

Luke shrugged his shoulders. "No idea."

Suddenly, Luke's phone rang. He pulled it out of his pocket, relieved for the distraction. Millie's home life was a bit stranger than he expected.

"Hey Char... oh Nicole, yeah you're on my sister's phone... it's all good."

Millie stirred a little on the couch and Luke immediately dropped his phone on the table. He bent down to check on Millie, forgetting all about Nicole. Jake came over and tapped the screen so that Nicole's voice was on loudspeaker.

"Where are you, Luke? We've been looking for you. The Jeep's outside but you're not at home and your friends are here. They're like the Mickey Mouse Club."

They could hear Chad protest against that description in the background.

"We're with Millie across the street."

"You're at her house?"

"Yeah. Number four."

Austin yelled through the phone, also apparently in the background, "We're coming!"

Through Millie's open window, Luke and Jake saw their own front door open and a parade of the Mickey Mouse Club walk across the street. Austin, Chad, Dina and Bianca sauntered over. They were unintentionally dressed alike: wearing blue, white, gray or black.

"Visitors?" Mrs Ripley asked, "Let's get some co ee going. Jake, would you like to help me?"

Jake mouthed to his brother, "Save me."

Like a lost puppy, Jake followed Mrs Ripley to the kitchen. Luke stayed by Millie's side. He raised her head and propped a few cushions under it.

"Come on Minnie, wake up," he sighed in disbelief, "You have me babysitting you here."

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The front door to 4 Dupont Avenue was wide open and the four musketeers marched inside.

Dina fixed her hair in the glass reflection and Bianca made a beeline for Luke. Austin checked out the fox statues by the living room entrance and Chad exclaimed, "Are they poor? Why is there no art on the walls?"

"Co ee anyone?" Mrs Ripley asked, walking out of the kitchen with a tray of cappuccinos.

The boys took one each and Mrs Ripley o ered one to Nicole, who was smoking outside in the front yard. She had come over to check out what was going on, but wasn't planning to stay.

"No thanks," Nicole waved her hand away.

She finished her cigarette outside.

Mrs Ripley had o ered her the cappuccino through the open window, but now retracted her hand.

"What's going on?" Millie slurred, her eyes half open as she took in the sight around her. "Am I dying?"

"Another great question Millie, as usual," Austin said, turning to Luke and Jake for answers, "What -ligning on?"

"A misunderstanding," Luke muttered.

"Is it about the photo again? Did someone take another naked photo of Millie while she was sleeping?" Dina guessed, finally paying attention to the situation.

"What photo? There's a naked photo?" Jake asked.

"Let's not spread this," Luke said and then told his brother, "She's not naked and you won't see them. Oma, how did you hear about that?"

Bianca folded her arms across her chest, "Stacey from summer camp."

"I thought we talked about that."

"We did, Luke."

The front door creaked open for the eighth time that a ernoon and Flora entered the home. She had just come back from a co ee date with Matt. He'd used his employee discount at the Co ee Bean.

Flora dropped her bag onto the floor and gasped.

"I don't know what's going on here, but I'm gonna go with it," she said, staring at her sister in front of her. Her hands reached out towards them, almost expecting them to disappear.

"How did you find me? Was it my outfits this week?" she asked them.

The most popular people in school were in her living room. This was a dream come true.

Austin pointed at her, "And you are?"

"Flora Ripley. This is my house," she said.

Austin continued to stare at her. "So that makes you..."

"Flora Ripley. Aren't you here for me?"

She tried to sneakily take out her phone to record this. She was going to post it online later.

"Did I miss something?"