

The Hunt

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May 2014

"Do you think I look good like this?"

My mother stepped out of her closet wearing a sheer black top with a cutout in the back and a knee-length, bright orange skirt. Inspecting herself in the mirror above the sinks, she smoothed back her straight black hair and dabbed at her mascara. Stepping back to look at her outfit, I frowned. "The colors don't really match and you look like a candy corn," I admitted.

"I do?!" she fretted, heading back inside the closet. She emerged a moment later, wearing the same top along with a black skirt with gold buttons down the front. "How does *this* look?"

I glanced at her critically and shook my head. "It's even worse than before."

She rushed back inside the closet. "How about *now*?" she said triumphantly. This time, her skirt was a deep red, which matched the black shirt.

"Yeah, that looks better," I said, my fingers fumbling as I weaved my long, dark hair back into a braid.

We were getting ready for our Easter egg party that would take place at our house. We had invited several friends who lived in the same neighborhood to come over and be a part of the egg hunt that we had organized. Glancing out the window, I watched my father as he tucked a colorful plastic egg behind a rosebush for the kids to find later.

My mother smoothed a flat iron over her hair and tugged at the hem of her skirt, frowning at her reflection in the mirror. "Does this skirt make me look fat?" she fretted.

"What? No, it looks fine," I replied, slipping on a gray sweater as I headed outside to the street behind our house, where my father was hiding the Easter eggs. His face glistened with sweat as he wiped his forehead with his sleeve. "Hey," I said. "Need some help?"

"Yeah. Here, take some eggs and hide them along the street. Don't make them too difficult to find, but don't make it too obvious."

"Sure." I grabbed a couple of pastel pink Easter eggs and balanced one of them on the lowest branch of a tree. The bright colors were easily visible among the dark

tree trunk. I tucked the other egg at the base of a bush, where it was slightly obscured by a few leaves.

My mother bustled out of the house and headed toward us, straightening her crimson skirt. "Some of the guests have arrived," she announced, just as my father and I finished hiding the last of the Easter eggs.

I rose to my feet and dusted off my black leggings as we headed back toward the house. My best friend, Jennifer, was waiting for me in the living room. "Hey!" I said as I slipped off my black combat boots and stepped inside.

"Hi," Jennifer replied. She was wearing a black, short-sleeved shirt with silver lettering on it, along with light-washed skinny jeans and black eyeliner around her dark eyes. Her long brown hair was gathered back into a high ponytail.

My brother's best friend, Austin, stood nearby. He was busy explaining some complex video game cheat to Alex, who had been his best friend since second grade. Austin had olive skin with caramel-colored hair and hazel eyes. It was almost unnerving how similar he looked to my brother. Austin's mother and his younger sister, Emma, were standing nearby.

When the rest of the guests eventually arrived, we headed to the street behind our house where we had hidden the Easter eggs. Grasping our cloth bags to collect the eggs in, we lined up along the side of the street. Muscles tense and poised to run, I stood next to Jennifer. "Let's go down to the end of the street first and collect all the eggs down there," I muttered to her. She nodded in agreement.

"On your mark," my father said. "Ready . . . set . . . go!"

Before he had even finished saying the word "ready," I sprinted down the street and began searching furiously for the eggs. I grabbed an egg off the branch of a tree and another one among the bushes.

Glancing around, I spotted a large chocolate Easter bunny on the branch of a nearby tree. I sprinted toward it and stretched my arm as high as it could go, straining to reach the chocolate bunny. Suddenly, my hand was knocked out of the way just as I was about to close my fingers around the bunny. Whipping around, I saw my brother's obnoxious friend Brandon trying to reach the bunny as well. I shoved him out of the way with an indignant grunt and stood on tiptoe to reach the bunny.

"No! It's *mine!*" he snarled, jabbing me in the ribs with his elbow. Since he was much shorter than me, I had the upper hand. He started to climb the tree, hoisting himself up onto the lower branches.

"I found it *first!*" I screamed at him, and made a wild grab at the bunny. It lost its balance on the branch and fell to the ground, where I snatched it up triumphantly and shook it in Brandon's flushed face. "Hah!"

Then, I spotted another Easter egg amongst the leaves of a rosebush. I sprinted toward it at full speed.

Suddenly, a blurred figure darted across my path. I slammed into the person and the impact jarred my bones. The person's basket filled with candy flew open and Easter eggs were scattered across the ground. I stared at the mess, eyes wide. "I'm sorry!" I gasped. I recognized the boy as one of my brother's friends. His name was Josh.

Tears welled in Josh's eyes and he burst into tears. I stared at him helplessly as he sobbed. Most of his plastic eggs had popped open and the candy inside of them was scattered all over the ground. I bent down awkwardly and gathered up the few eggs that weren't damaged. After dumping the eggs back inside his bag and giving him several of my own eggs, Josh stopped crying, which was a relief. I rose to my feet and continued on my search for Easter eggs.

Most of the eggs had already been found by the kids, but I did manage to find a couple more eggs obscured behind a rosebush. Jennifer and I sprawled under the shade of a tree and opened all the Easter eggs we had found. I gnawed on the ear of the chocolate bunny I had competed with Brandon for, feeling the smooth milk chocolate melt on my tongue. Nearby, Brandon was glaring at me with a jealous expression on his frowning face as he watched me eat the chocolate bunny. I grinned and stuck out my tongue at him.

After we had finished eating all our chocolate, Jennifer and I headed back inside the house, where we played Just Dance 2014 on my Xbox. By the time we were finished dancing, my forehead was sticky with sweat and we were both exhausted. One by one, the kids' parents came to pick them up and our house slowly emptied. Jennifer was the last person to leave. As I waved goodbye to her and her mom, I couldn't help thinking what a successful egg hunt it had been. I could hardly wait for Easter next year.