

## Runaway Princess

<echoed footsteps fade in>

<muffled laughter>

<a doorknob clicks>

<hinges creak>

<conversation unmuffles, intensifies>

JEAN

But it's not just a sword, your majesty--

KING GEORGES

I know that, Jean. The Old Sword is my birthright. We've discussed this--I'm not risking my men for a new museum exhibit. (burp) Come back with a better plan.

<footsteps cease>

LOUIS

(clears throat)

KING GEORGES

Ah, my favorite Knight! Finally! Sit, have a drink.

<footsteps fade out>

LOUIS

Good afternoon, my King. How can I help you? Aesir mentioned something about a quest.

<loud slam>

<a few people cheer>

<bottles rattle>

KING GEORGES

(loud sip)

Oh, ho! A quest indeed. You see, no one's been able to find Madeleine all morning.

LOUIS

The Princess? Why am I here? Shouldn't you be speaking with the General?

KING GEORGES

No, Louis, that's not necessary. I'm certain she just ran off with the Prince boy from the Nougat Kingdom.

LOUIS

I will make haste to the Nougat Kingdom, then.

KING GEORGES

(loud, obnoxious burp)

And if you feel like teaching her a lesson for running away, be my guest.

LOUIS

Sir, I don't know--

KING GEORGES

(through jovial laughs)

Oh, nonsense. You're family! Just a... detour through Cotton Candy Forest. Let the gummy reptiles nip at her heels a bit.

LOUIS

Yeah, why don't I take her through the Brown Sugar Desert? Those twin snakes are pretty terrifying when they slither at you full speed.

KING GEORGES

(hearty laugh)

That's the spirit! Madeleine is fine; she knows what she's getting into. Now go on, leave us to our mead. I'll save one for when you get back!

<footsteps echo>

<door slams shut>

<footsteps fade out>

<walla fades in>

<footsteps crunch>

<distant bird chirps>

LOUIS

Where's... ah.

<footsteps cease>

<loud, sharp whistle>

<rumble of a car engine fades in>

<car door opens>

PIERRE

Good afternoon.

<car door shuts>

<walla ceases>

<bird chirps cease>

LOUIS

Hey, Pierre. Heading to Nougat Kingdom.

PIERRE

Didn't feel like using your legs today?

<buckle clicks>

<engine revs>

<road rumble begins>

LOUIS

(chuckles)

No, I thought I'd give myself a bit of a break for once.

PIERRE

Can't say I blame you, with all that running around you do.  
So, business or pleasure?

LOUIS

Well, don't tell anyone, but the King thinks the Princess has run off with Prince Graham. I'm being tasked with bringing her home.

PIERRE

Oh, I see. Well, if it helps you any, I've driven her there a couple of times before.

LOUIS

What about recently?

PIERRE

No, actually. The Princess stopped using the car services altogether about two weeks ago.

LOUIS

Where did you normally take her before she stopped coming around?

PIERRE

The first bus stop in the Nougat Kingdom. Every single time. Sometimes, I wished she'd want to go to a restaurant or something so I could actually see the city. I hear all that chocolate architecture is beautiful.

LOUIS

Well, I need to go to the palace; maybe that'll give you an excuse to look around.

<car speeds off, fades out>

<car idle fades in>

<car door opens>

<distant traffic ambiance begins>

LOUIS

Thank you again.

PIERRE

You're very welcome. Would you like me to wait here?

LOUIS

No, that's okay. I'm going to make her walk home. You go take a joyride.

PIERRE

(laughs heartily)

<car door shuts>

<car drives away>

<soft footsteps begin>

LOUIS

(sighs)

<footsteps cease>

<three knocks>

<hinges creak>

PRINCE GRAHAM

What do you want?

LOUIS

I'm here on behalf of--

PRINCE GRAHAM

I know who you're here on behalf of, *Knight*. I don't want anything to do with her.

LOUIS

Is she here?

PRINCE GRAHAM

What? No. I haven't seen her in weeks. Can you leave now?

LOUIS

Do you have any idea where she'd be? I... was expecting her to be here.

PRINCE GRAHAM

You know what, yeah. I do. She probably went after that *stupid* sword after I told her not to.

LOUIS

What sword? Why does everyone keep talking about a sword?

PRINCE GRAHAM

(sighs)

The Old Sword--it was sworn to her grandfather or something. A local community found it years ago, and she's been talking about wanting to reclaim it ever since. Which is more important than our relationship, apparently.

LOUIS

What community? Where?

PRINCE GRAHAM

I don't know, she said something about crossing the river. I thought she was talking about the Peppermint Kingdom because, y'know, it's like, right in that area. But she (mocking) *wasn't going that far*.

LOUIS

Thank you, Prince Graham. You've been a huge--

<door slams shut>

LOUIS

Help.

<soft footsteps fade out>

<distant traffic ambiance fades out>

<steady stream of river fades in>

<footsteps echo on wood>

<soft thud>

<footsteps squish>

<river fades out slowly>

LOUIS

Is that... smoke?

<footsteps speed up>

<fire crackling fades in>

<slink of metal>

LOUIS

Madeleine? Madeleine?

MADELEINE

(groans)

LOUIS

Hold on!

<footsteps stomp quickly before stopping>

LOUIS

Madeleine, hey, can you hear me?

MADELEINE

Ugh. Yeah, I'm fine.

LOUIS

You're not fine; you're bleeding! Were you stabbed?

MADELEINE

Only a little. C'mon, help me up.

<hands clap>

LOUIS

That question calls for a binary answer, you know.

MADELEINE

(groans)

<soft thud>

MADELEINE

What are you doing here?

<rough hands dusting off clothing>

LOUIS

I was sent to retrieve you. Your father thought you were with Prince Graham.

MADELEINE

(scoffs)

Yeah, no. We broke up, like, a month ago.

LOUIS

So you... what? Attacked a village in your heartbreak?

MADELEINE

Really? No. The village thing is unrelated to Graham. Well, mostly. He knows I came here to get the sword back.

LOUIS

That damn sword! What were you thinking?

MADELEINE

It was all pretty standard. I came in and challenged their leader. By the time I'd bested him, everyone had just... left.

LOUIS

Probably because you set the place on fire!

MADELEINE

Okay, that was not me. I don't know how that happened!

LOUIS

(sighs)

Okay, come on, we gotta get you out of here.

MADELEINE

It'll be fine. Pierre can give us a ride--

LOUIS

I sent him home; your penance for running away was going to be walking the journey back.

MADELEINE

Oh, what a bright idea. Like a four-mile walk is that much of penance, anyway.

LOUIS

It certainly is now. Come on.

MADELEINE

(groans)

<two sets of footsteps begin to squish>

<one set of footsteps begins to drag>

<distant river flow fades in>

LOUIS

Did you see where everyone ran off to?

MADELEINE

(winces)

I don't know. The Peppermint Kingdom, probably.

LOUIS

Are you okay?

MADELEINE

Fine. Getting stabbed just hurts a bit more than I expected.

LOUIS

Okay, stop. This isn't going to work.

<footsteps cease>

MADELEINE

(huffs)

I'm fine; let's just keep going.

LOUIS

If we keep going like this, we won't get back until nightfall. You need a medic, and we can't risk running into any Red Coats. I'm sure they're ready to act on their grudge, given the chance.

MADELEINE

Louis, come on, just--

LOUIS

It is my duty to get you home safe and sound. Dragging your body unconscious from blood loss does not meet those parameters. We have to figure something else out, Madeleine.

<the river fills the beat of silence between them>

MADELEINE

What if... I have an idea.

LOUIS

And I have none, so I'm all ears.

MADELEINE

It's logging season; there's probably a bunch of leftover branches on the forest floor. That and some licorice vines, and we could make a raft. Ride down the chocolate milk river and get out by the castle. Easy.

LOUIS

Easy, huh? You think you can make a raft?

MADELEINE

Well, it's worth a shot, isn't it?

<a beat>

LOUIS

Yeah, okay. Why not?

<one set of footsteps fades out>

<footsteps fade in>



<heavy scraping against ground>

LOUIS

(heavy breathing)

<footsteps cease>

<clatter of wood>

<plop of rope>

<thwack of rope tying>

MADELEINE

Can you--perfect, thanks.

<another thwack>

LOUIS

Not bad. We'll probably be covered in chocolate milk by the time we get back, though.

<two sets of footsteps begin>

<large object drags>

<flowing river gets louder>

MADELEINE

You ready?

LOUIS

You seem a little too happy about this.

<footsteps cease>

<large object plops into water>

<distant shouting fades in>

MADELEINE

You're just afraid of fun.

RED ARMY GUY

(off mike)

Hey, that's her! I saw her myself back in the village!

<distant war cry>

<distant horse galloping>

LOUIS

Okay, yep. Go, go, go.

<water splashes>

LOUIS

(grunts)

<water splashes>

<flow of river intensifies>

<angry shouting fades out>

<horse neighs in the distance>

MADELEINE

Well?

LOUIS

Well, what?

MADELEINE

Pretty impressive, huh?

LOUIS

You had no idea if this would even work, did you?

MADELEINE

My chances were 50/50. Felt like good odds.

<flowing water fades out>

<footsteps sloshing fades in>

<door slams shut>

<distant, muffled walla begins>

LOUIS

Medic! We need the Medic. Can someone--

LADY IN WAITING/ALLY

I'll go alert him, sir.

LOUIS

Okay, let's sit you down.

<thunk>

MADELEINE

(groans)

Thanks. I gotta get these boots off. I think they're--

<liquid splashes against hard floor>

MADELEINE

--full of chocolate milk. Nice.

<liquid splashes once more>

<door knob turns>

<hinges creak>

<walla unmuffles, barely intensifies>

KING GEORGES

What is with all the ruckus out here? Oh, good. You're home.

LOUIS

Lie back.

MADELEINE

I'm fine.

LOUIS

Lie back!

MADELEINE

Okay, okay!

KING GEORGES

Oh, ho. What did you do to irritate our dear Knight?

<heavy footsteps>

KING GEORGES

What happened?

LOUIS

Your daughter tried to take on the entire Red Licorice Village by herself. She's lucky this is all she was met with.

KING GEORGES

And what would possess you to do such a thing, young lady?

MADELEINE

I wanted to get Grandpa's sword back. It belongs here, with us.

KING GEORGES

Well... did you get it?

<metal slinks>

MADELEINE

You know it.

KING GEORGES

Oh, wow. I haven't seen this since... well, since I was your age. (beat) Good work, kid. Let Hugo patch you up, then come join us for a drink. You too, Louis.

LOUIS

Thank you, sir.

KING GEORGES

You earned it, both of you. (quieter) Thank you for getting her home safely.

<heavy clanking footsteps fade out>

<heavy door shuts>

<thunk>

LOUIS

You alright?

MADELEINE

Did you hear that? He said, "Good work."

LOUIS

He sure did. He was right, too.

MADELEINE

Thanks, Louis. For everything. You're the only one around here willing to go along with any of my ideas.

LOUIS

It worked out well for us today, didn't it?

MADELEINE

It sure did. Alright, c'mon. Screw Hugo, let's go get a drink. Help me up.

<hands clap>

MADELEINE

(groans)

Thanks.

<two pairs of footsteps begin>

<door unlatches>

<hinges creak>

<party sounds spill out>

<one set of footsteps fades out>

<one set of footsteps ceases>

LOUIS  
Hey Ally?

LADY IN WAITING/ALLY  
Yes?

LOUIS  
Send Hugo in whenever he's ready, please.

<door slams shut>

<muffled walla and laughter fade out>

**THE END**