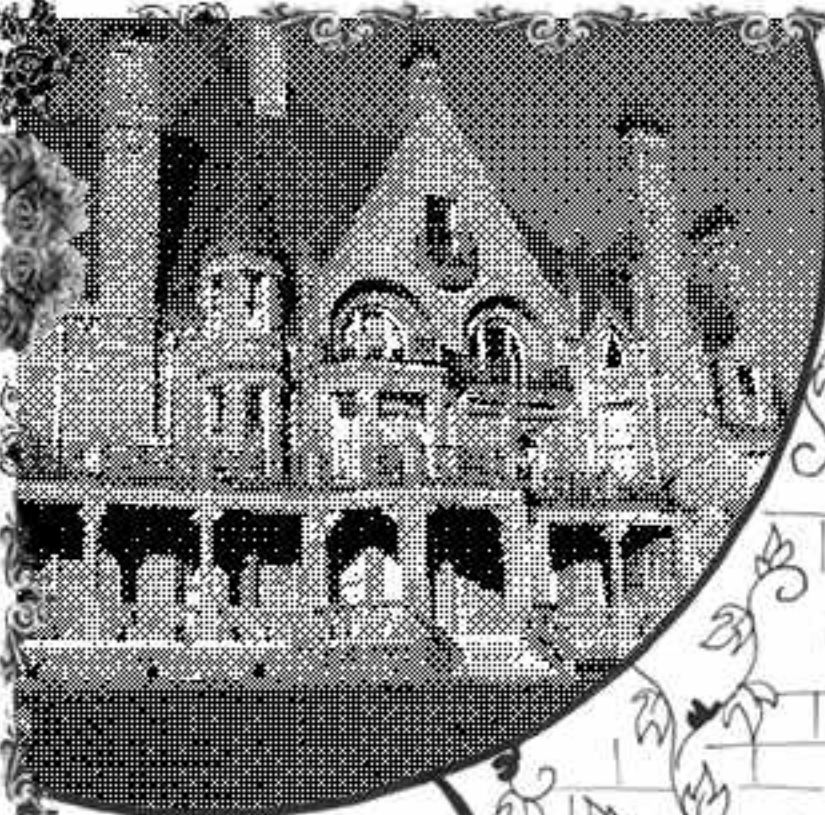


# *Midnight Heir*

3x4



Story by: Lorena Manuel  
Illustration by: The Fables spinner "D"



Your blood is  
cursed, my  
darling.

I hate  
what I am. And  
I'm tired of  
being alone

It's not your  
fault. Chance forced  
you into this.  
The Children always  
pay for the sins  
of the fathers.  
And you're not alone.  
See? I'm here.  
I'll always  
be here.

I  
hate  
him.

And so you should, my love.  
And so you should...



I see that you're keeping  
our roses healthy, darling.  
Amazing how well flesh  
and bone can feed a  
garden. And it seems your  
lover's taking good care of  
the other end of the orchard  
as well. The blooms are so  
plump and red. Now aren't you both  
pleased that you're finally being of some  
use to this house?

You deserve this. You've  
always loved HER - the cheap,  
useless slut that she was. I never  
had a chance - all for a whore of  
a servant. Bastard. Bastard!  
And you leave me with your brat,  
who's just as weak as you were.  
He'll pay, oh yes. He'll pay.





It's only  
for the  
Night...

I'm  
sure  
someone  
lives  
here

Those flowers look well  
cared for

I suppose  
it wouldn't hurt  
if I...

Hello?!

I'm sorry, but I was wondering if I could ask for  
some shelter for the night. I've been traveling for  
days, and I'm...





Hello?

You're welcome  
to stay here  
for the night.  
Your room  
isn't  
ready,  
though, so  
you'll have to  
wait in the  
sitting room.

Sitting-  
room...

Where?...

The door to  
your left.


Uh...  
my name's  
Trowa Barton.

Your room's  
ready.

And...  
thank you for  
letting me  
stay.

Whom am I  
speaking to?

Does it Matter?



You owe  
me nothing.

It does  
to me. You're  
my host, and  
I owe you.

Why shou...

Your room's the  
first door on  
your right at the  
second floor landing.  
Go out the same door  
you came in, and you'll  
find the stairs just behind  
the door directly  
facing you.

Who are you?

*"peek"*

*"sigh"*

Your dinner  
will be ready  
at six.  
Rest for now.  
I'll call you  
when the time  
comes.

Wait!



Yes. Why is that?

Am I the only one eating?

I'm not feeling particularly hungry.

You're not feeling particularly sociable is more like it.

I just don't think it's necessary.

Why not?

Because it's not necessary. You're here for shelter, I'm offering that to you. That's all there is to it.

My mother said it was for my own protection.

Don't you know that it's in bad taste for the host to keep himself separated from his guest?

I don't understand.

You're better off this way.

I've been exploring your manor... well, some of it, actually.

It's a hereditary curse. I was born with a defect my mother did not want me to see.

There's not much to see.

No, there isn't. Why aren't there any mirrors anywhere?

You've NEVER seen yourself?


We've never had any.

Why's that?

Never.







That Hardly  
seems  
Possible.

I live it. It is  
possible

May I ask what  
what defect  
you're suffering  
from?

That I look  
◦ like my father ◦

Adulter!  
Pay with your  
Soul!

I don't mind you  
staying another day.  
It's ... nice ...  
having someone  
else here for a  
change.

It's  
difficult with  
you being  
invisible like this.  
I don't exactly enjoy  
talking to air.

Is your family  
still alive,  
Trowa?

Yes,  
of course.

Then you have nothing  
to complain about.





XII  
XI  
X  
IX  
VIII  
VII  
VI  
V  
IV  
III  
II  
I

It's always the same,  
isn't it? It's the children  
who pay, and they  
pay dearly.

You've  
been  
awfully  
quiet  
today.

Really?  
I'm  
sorry.

Nothing.

What's  
on your  
mind?

I've  
just  
been


You've got  
a pretty good  
selection of  
folklore, I see.

reading.

I've always  
admired the wisdom  
of those stories

What...  
you mean about  
ridiculous spells  
and curses and  
magic? Where's  
the wisdom in  
those?

*It lies in change.*



Your food  
is getting  
cold.

The stories  
are deceptively  
simple, aren't  
they? How does  
one get from one point  
to another? A desire for  
change. The proper course of  
action. And risk. I've always  
considered folktales to offer a lot  
more wisdom than we give them  
credit for.

But some stories  
have the heroes  
ending up in worse  
situations.

That's the risk, isn't it?

Why  
even  
bother?

Does anyone deserve  
it? I know that even  
you wouldn't want to  
wish it on anybody, no  
matter what the cause.

Because we never know  
how the story ends. What do you prefer to  
see, Quatre? Stagnation? Imprisonment?


I'll have to  
leave in the  
morning,  
Quatre.

I've  
Over-  
stayed  
my welcome.

Thank you  
for  
everything.

As you wish...





No, I never wanted to wish it  
on anyone, Trowa. But I don't  
even know what I deserve —  
surely not you.

I suppose — a little  
sunlight would be a good start.  
I'm sick of shadows.

I'm tired  
of seeing  
you alone  
too.

Quatre?

*\*mmm\**

None of this is your  
fault. It never has been.  
Let the past rest with  
the dead.

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