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“What do you mean?” Hunter squinted at her, a cold fury flashed dangerously across his eyes for an instant. Evelyn misinterpreted his gaze and pressed on in the wrong direction.

She twirled a finger in her hair coyly while she touched Hunter’s cheek with her other hand. “I remember when we were at A Nation, you told me that you liked me, didn’t you?” she smiled.

This was another affirmation of Evelyn that there was no way that Hunter would genuinely like Vivian. He used to like her; his taste in women wouldn’t be as bad as to find Vivian attractive. Yes, admittedly she had become more beautiful. But that doesn’t change the fact that she was hideous in the past.

“So?” Hunter took another sip of his tea and egged Evelyn on.

“If you help me deal with Vivian, perhaps we could pick up where we left off,” Evelyn breathed. “What do you think? Not too bad of a thank you gift, isn’t it?”

As she said that, she allowed as much lust and suggestiveness to flash before her eyes to ensure that Hunter got the message.

She was brashly confident in her proposition. She recalled when they were in A Nation together, Hunter held a bouquet of roses and stood under her dormitory for three days in an effort to court her. All the other girls in the faculty threw jealous looks at her for days.

But at the end, she did not accept his proposal after all.

Hunter was a good suitor, but a notorious playboy. Besides, she had her heart on Finnick back then. Her relationship with Hunter eventually became platonic, but throughout the years there were traces of romantic tension between them.

But she firmly believed that being unattainable is the best way to cultivate desire in men. Evelyn was confident that Hunter still had feelings for her. She was the epitome of perfection; which man wouldn’t?

If Hunter didn’t have feelings for her, why did he agree to help her seduce Vivian without hesitation and exerted so much effort into this endeavor?

Now that she knew the extent to which Hunter would go for her, all she had to do was dangle some perks of being with her in front of him, and he will try all the harder to seduce and then dump Vivian!

Her charm was so powerful that Hunter was helpless in her grasp, succumbing to obey her every whim and fancy.

As he watched Evelyn's confident monologue, Hunter couldn't help feeling amused.

She really does think he likes her? Does she think that bringing up their history together will seduce him?

The reason why he tried so hard to court Evelyn in the past was that he was deceived by her looks. Yes, she was very beautiful. And austere to all the boys too; she remained indifferent to their attention. He took it as a challenge and tried to succeed where the other boys had failed.

This attitude wasn't just towards Evelyn, but to other girls too. It got to the point where he would try his best to win them over even when he wasn't actually interested in them. He lost interest as soon as he managed to; it was the thrill of the chase that was the most appealing for him.

He had played this game with himself for years, but only recently had he realized that he was a fool all along. To have wasted his time building meaningless temporary connections and believing that it gave him confidence and a sense of accomplishment.

If Evelyn had dropped hints as she did back then, it would have tempted him like a dog with a scent. But now all it did was just repulsed and irritated him.

Hunter was distinctly aware of the change within him. But what had caused it? As he pondered on this, Vivian's face floated up in the sea of his subconscious.

Yes, ever since he met her, he didn't feel interested in other girls anymore. The feeling that she gave him was different from what the other girls gave him.

Never had a girl caused him such anxiety and longing. He'd feel happy when she was happy, and feel pain in his heart when she was sad. He was willing to do anything in the world for her.

Yes, Evelyn was beautiful. So what? She was just pretty on the outside but rotten, wicked, and hateful on the inside. She made him sick to his stomach.

As for Vivian, every gesture she made, every frown or smile on her face was perfection in his eyes, without him even realizing it.

At the thought of that, Hunter smiled. I've fallen head-over-heels, he thought. But so what? He was ready and willing for a chance at real happiness.

Evelyn saw him smile and thought that it was for her. The sight pleased her even more. She purred, her voice exuding a charm that was smooth as silk.

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"Oh Hunter, I regretted not saying yes to you back then. But maybe my mistake in the past provided an opportunity for us to reconnect under better circumstances. This is our fate, isn't it?"

Fate? Hunter looked at her incredulously. To him, her action now was punishment for his advancement back then.

But Evelyn did not think that Hunter was ridiculing her. It seemed to her that the amusement in his eyes was the product of joy at the prospect of being with her.

"There will be a new film airing on the day after tomorrow. The trailer seems promising. Would you like to come with me?" Evelyn took the initiative and extended an invitation.

"I'm sorry, I can't. I have matters to attend to on that day." Hunter rejected at once. He got up and excused himself. "I still have things to work on, I have to go."

Evelyn watched in shock silence as Hunter departed.

She returned to her senses only after he had disappeared from sight. Her face was full of embarrassment. She had made herself so clear that she was practically throwing herself at him, but he still did not take the hint!

Doesn't he remember that it was he who had shamelessly begged her to go out with him? Now that she was the one initiating, he actually rejected her! She was furious!

Hunter must not have been in a good mood today. He would have accepted her invitation under normal circumstances.

Though she was paralyzed in both legs, she was still confident in her ability to seduce. Men are creatures of sight. Faced with a woman like her, how could they find it in their hearts to reject?

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Vivian got home and looked over the evidence from Hunter again, as though intent on memorizing every word.

She was excited at the prospect of the interview on the following day. It was finally a chance to prove her innocence. Though it's been five years, it had been a constant thorn in her heart, and the source of all that had happened.

Finally, the truth will be revealed.

Suddenly, there was a knock on her door, and Benedict entered.

"Are you going to interview Mark?" he asked bluntly.

"Yes I am. Tomorrow." Vivian nodded.

"Do you know how dangerous that is? What are you thinking?" Benedict raised his voice angrily.

This was no small matter. Why didn't she discuss it with him before deciding? Mark was capable of kidnapping her once. Who's to say he won't do it again? She was gambling with her safety!

Vivian could count the number of times her brother had lost his temper at her on one hand in the span of as many years. All of those times without exceptions were because he was worried about her. She knew that this time was no different.

"Ben, please relax. I will be careful. I couldn't let it go. I must avenge myself and Larry," Vivian said determinedly.

Benedict knew that Vivian was still haunted by the events of that year, and it pained him to see her this tormented. "Leave the avenging to me, will you? This matter is too dangerous for you to handle alone. If Mark tries something again..."

"This is something I must do alone," Vivian cut across him; it wasn't often she did that. "Ben, trust me. I will take extra precautions. Let me handle it."

She must exact revenge by her own hand!

Benedict was at a loss for words in the face of her insistence. The antidote to a happy life lies at the root of the problem. Vivian can only let go and start a new life if she personally sees this through. But...

Ah, damn it, he'll just send a couple of men to watch over her from the shadows.

"You must be wary. If there's any danger, call me at once." Benedict was still uneasy.

"I will." Vivian nodded seriously.

Benedict was just about to remind her of something when Larry stumbled in and rubbed his eyes. "Mom, can you accompany me to sleep tonight? I want a bedtime story."

Vivian carried him in her arms lovingly. She turned to Benedict and said, "Ben, I'll put Larry to sleep now. Please don't worry, I will be cautious."

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Benedict grunted in approval. "Have a good night," he said to Larry and tousled his hair.

Back in Larry's bedroom, Vivian tucked him in and patted him on the back. "What story would you like tonight, little pumpkin?" she asked in a gentle voice.

"The rabbit and the tiger, please," Larry answered excitedly. It's been a long time since Mommy told bedtime stories.

"Okay," Vivian agreed and pecked Larry on the forehead. "Long ago in the forest lived a little white rabbit. One day, the mommy rabbit said..."

Under the lull of Vivian's gentle storytelling, Larry dropped off very quickly.

She touched his cheek and felt her heart melt. At the same time, she steeled herself for what was to come, fuelled by the powerful love of a mother.

Vivian in the present has to be strong, unlike Vivian in the past. Only by being strong and powerful was she able to protect Larry, the Morrison name, and herself.

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The next day, Vivian brought Sarah and Charlie, the photographer from the magazine company to Norton Corporation. Prior to that, Mark had an appointment with the magazine company.

"Alright, please have a seat. I will notify Mr. Norton," the receptionist said when Vivian explained their purpose for visiting.

They nodded and took their seats on the couch.

Soon after, the receptionist came over. "Mr. Norton is expecting you in his office," she said with a polite smile. "Please follow me."

They entered the elevator. The higher up it went, the more Vivian felt her anxiety dissipate. Today is the day.

Mark awaited them with a big smile in his office. The opening of the hotel was undoubtedly the biggest project in a few years undertaken by Norton Corporation. Mark had put in a lot of effort in gaining the approval of the numerous relevant departments to make that happen.

Everything was in place. They just needed to make a media appearance to officially set this in motion. He foresaw the possibility of redirecting the traffic of the entire city to the street of the hotel once it opens.

Hmm! He and he alone made all of this happen. Finnick did not lift a finger. When the hotel is officially opened, his position within Norton Corporation will be secured once and for all. Finnick would not stand a chance to contest against him to lead.

Mark's thoughts were interrupted by a knock on his door. He hurriedly rearranged his features into a welcoming smile.

"Come in."

"Mr. Norton, the interviewers are here. Where would you like to conduct the interview?" the curvy receptionist asked coquettishly.

"Let's do it here in my office. Let them in," Mark said distractedly as he studied her body with lust-filled eyes.

"Right away, Mr. Norton," she replied. She wiggled her buttocks and winked at him before departing.

Mark tugged at his tie in an attempt to subdue his urges. Little minx. You're in for a rough night later.

Vivian was brought to Mark's office promptly. At the sight of the stern and prim man on his throne, the facade of a successful entrepreneur, Vivian sneered grimly to herself.

At first sight, Mark felt like he'd seen Vivian before. He took a closer look and leaped out of his chair. "Vivian William, it's you!"

"It's an honor to me for you to remember me, Mr. Norton," Vivian said wryly. "It's been five years, hasn't it?" "And it's Vivian Morrison now. Mr. Norton, does the sight of me surprise you? Is it your conscience speaking?"

Mark had heard that Vivian William returned to the country and seemingly transformed herself into the heiress of the Morrison family. But he did not take much notice of that. She had divorced Finnick, anyway. He didn't have to bother himself with her anymore.

But he did not expect to meet her again under these circumstances. Shouldn't she be in a high-ranking position within Morrison Group? What business did she have with a magazine company?

And what did she mean by conscience? Could it be possible that she had found out that her kidnapping was orchestrated by Evelyn and himself?

Mark was instantly wary of the interview.

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“Ms. Morrison, we were once family. How could I forget? And what’s all this talk about consciences?” Mark had been in the retail industry for years; he knew a thing or two about keeping up appearances. “Please, have a seat.” He gestured.

Vivian did not attempt to hide her disdain. With a scathing look at Mark, she sat down on the couch directly across from him.

He was much nearer to her now. He noticed that she had indeed become much prettier than she used to be. So the rumors were true.

Silky long hair, pristine features, her body clad in a professional-looking romper; she looked comfortable yet without shortages in elegance. He was struck in awe when she first entered. She was unrecognizable.

That’s strange. He’d never thought of her as much of a beauty before. When he first learned that Finnick had decided to marry her, he had jested at their expense. An ugly girl with a paraplegic was a match made in heaven.

However, she was now beautiful!

He would go as far as to say that Evelyn in the past is comparable to Vivian in the present.

Vivian caught Mark studying her like a piece of meat and couldn’t help suppressing a wave of nausea. “Mr. Norton, can we get started with the interview?” she asked coldly.

“Of course.” Mark tore his eyes off of her and sat upright. Nevertheless, he remained watchful of her out of the corner of his eye.

Sarah and Charlie were ready. Vivian started the interview. “Mr. Norton, is there a confirmed opening date of the hotel? How are the preparations coming along?”

“Our hotel is scheduled to be opened in late September,” Mark reported, looking pleased. “The design team’s preparations of the structure’s blueprints are in full swing and right on schedule. We are confident that Norton Corporation has designed the finest, largest, and best-equipped hotel in S City. It will be a landmark of our fine city for generations to come.”

"Really? Would we have the opportunity to witness that?" Vivian said in a sarcastic tone.

"Ms. Morrison, what do you mean?" Mark asked as he controlled his rising temper.

She does not know her place. He gave the magazine company an opportunity for an exclusive interview with him, and she disrespects him?

"Nothing, just feeling awestruck," Vivian answered with a smile. She pressed on. "Though Norton Corporation is an influential brand, the opening of this hotel is admittedly just the first step. I would like to know if Norton Corporation has any expansion strategies in place yet?"

"Our committee is currently promoting our grand opening on media platforms. We are also conducting sales calls. It's a strategy to bolster our presence both online and offline. In addition to that, we have various fundraisers in place to promote the hotel as we speak."

Mark felt the smile he had to put on was starting to strain his face, but he persevered. He also had to constantly remind himself that he was not being interviewed by the individual Vivian William, but the media she represents. He had his image and reputation to maintain.

"It really is unexpected for someone like you, Mr. Norton, to be hosting fundraisers. I was under the impression that you only operated in the dark with heinous measures to achieve despicable goals." Vivian could no longer hide her contempt.

She had finally gone too far. Mark had lost all pretense as well. He slammed a fist on the table and shouted, "What is the meaning of this? What are you trying to do?"

He finally broke! Vivian smirked. She turned to Sarah and Charlie. "Wait for me outside. I have some matters to discuss with Mr. Norton."

"Vivian..." Sarah looked at her with concern, unwilling to leave her in here alone.

She helped with the investigation as well and knew that the interview would not go smoothly. If Mark lost his temper, Vivian could be harmed.

"It's alright, wait outside." Vivian smiled reassuringly.

After some hesitation, Sarah tugged at Charlie's arm and they left together. Perhaps Vivian had something she would rather them not hear.

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Only the two of them remained in the office. Vivian decided to cut to the chase and turned to face Mark. "You and Evelyn kidnapped me and tried to get someone to rape me five years ago, didn't you?"

It was more of an accusation than a question.

Vivian's glare was venomous. If Finnick hadn't mistakenly thought that I'd been sexually assaulted, none of this would have happened! Larry wouldn't be missing a father as soon as he was born!

Panic flashed across Mark's face for a split second, obviously not expecting that she would have any idea about his involvement in the case. "I have no idea what you're talking about."

She scoffed internally. Of course, Mark would never admit to having done such a horrible thing so easily.

No matter. She had come prepared and was determined to make this bastard admit the truth.

"What? No balls to take responsibility for your own actions? If you don't confess right now, I'll have to resort to some extreme measures," Vivian threatened.

Mark looked down his nose in disdain at her, sneering, "Extreme measures'? Try me. I'd like to know what you have up your sleeve."

If she thinks she can abuse her authority as a member of the Morrison family, she's sorely mistaken. I barely care for Benedict, let alone her!

Vivian opened up her bag and pulled out a file, slamming it down in front of him with a haughty smirk.

"I think you should take a look at this before trying to defend your innocence, Mr. Norton."

Glancing suspiciously up at her, he slowly picked up the file. Shock and rage flared up inside of him when he took a good look at its contents.

“Where did you get this from?”

The document was filled with information about how Mark had bribed the relevant authorities when opening his hotel. Everything, from the list of names to the bank transfer receipts, was printed as clear as day on the papers.

“You forget that I’m a journalist and that I have my sources,” Vivian snickered. “Still plan on denying what you did all those years ago?”

This was what she had asked Sarah, Jenny, and Hunter for help with a while ago. Fortunately, she had discovered something that could be used against Mark.

“What do you want?” Mark stammered, his voice trembling slightly.

He’d thought that she was just exaggerating in order to scare him into submission, but he never expected her to uncover all of this. If these documents were publicized, his plans for the hotel would go up in flames, and he would most certainly be thrown into jail for several years straight.

By that point, he would have to pay for his crimes with all of his wealth and his freedom, as well as cause the Norton Corporation to suffer a tremendous loss.

In the worst-case scenario, I might even lose my life...

He refused to imagine any further.

“I want you to personally tell Finnick how you and Evelyn kidnapped me and set me up. I want you to tell him how you misled him to think that I’d been raped.”

Vivian’s entire body was shaking, but her voice was firm and clear as she spoke. She had to make the culprit who framed her for all these years be the one to clear her name.

Mark’s heart was in his throat as he met Vivian’s furious gaze. This woman was clearly not the same pushover that they had manipulated to their will in the past.

“Set you up? Rape? I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Mark insisted, although his face was already starting to pale.

How could he tell Finnick the truth? Knowing the man's personality, Finnick would never have mercy on him. He might even personally drag him to court!

Finnick never cared for friendship or familial bonds, and would be bound to care even less under these circumstances! Mark couldn't hope that he would forgive him based on the fact that they were brothers.

Finnick was much more terrifying to deal with than Vivian.

"Then I have no choice but to submit this evidence to a public prosecutor's office. Maybe you'll regain some of your memory during the police interrogation."

With that, Vivian turned around to leave. Only now did she come to the understanding that she couldn't afford to be soft-hearted when dealing with someone like Mark, or else she would be the one who ended up getting hurt.