

## **Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1071**

Hannah breathed a sigh of relief, feeling the invisible weight on her shoulders lifted. She was honestly worried that she might faint from the amount Franchot would quote. "In that case, I'll be on my way then, but thank you so much. I love it!" Hannah quickly got out of the car, but not before flashing Franchot a genuine smile.

As she walked towards the entrance, Hannah called her colleague who was supposed to be her cameraman in that event. To her dismay, he had not arrived, so she headed inside alone.

When she entered the hall, the place was still not crowded. No spotlights shone on the spacious stage either. Clearly, the important guests had yet to arrive.

Hannah made her way to a quiet corner and took a seat. She disliked attending formal events as she would much prefer to relax and enjoy a quiet moment to herself. Glancing at the fancy cakes served on the table, Hannah swallowed her saliva hungrily. She yearned to have a taste but was afraid to smudge her makeup and ruin her look. An inner dialogue started within her mind. Remembering that Yvette would be attending the event, Hannah ultimately decided to give up on her craving. Hmpf, with Franchot's help today, there's no chance I'd look inferior standing next to her. Hannah was certain that Yvette would have a personal stylist as a celebrity. Even so, Hannah was confident that she would be prettier than Yvette even without putting on any makeup. Not to mention she got a makeover by the amazing Franchot Dunn. Soon, the crowd in the hall grew larger. Hannah found her colleague among the crowd, carrying a bulky camera with him and he left right after that. Following the cheers and screams of the crowd, all eyes were turned to the stage. Right that instant, Yvette Tanner made her entrance—shining bright like the star. She was dressed in a

white flowy gown that reached her ankle with her feet in a pair of silver heels with studded diamonds.

Her shoulder-length hair danced behind her while an exquisite necklace hung around her neck, adding more glam to the outfit. She looked as though an angel had stepped down from heaven into the receiving crowd.

Seeing Yvette's dramatic entrance, Hannah twitched her lips in annoyance. "Such a showoff," mumbled Hannah to herself.

Reluctantly, Hannah lifted the camera to capture a few photos. Staring at the photos, Hannah rolled her eyes again. Tsk, you're still not as pretty as me even with all the makeup! Soon, the loud atmosphere began to mellow. Yvette shook hands with some people in the crowd from time to time. Most of the audience that day were upper-class socialites, which was why Yvette treated them with caution and curtesy.

"How pretentious!" Following Yvette waltzing through the crowd with her eyes, Hannah could hardly hear her own voice as she scoffed.

"Hello, miss, are you here alone?" a voice called out to Hannah.

Tearing her eyes away from Yvette's silhouette, Hannah raised her guard as she sized up the man in front of her. "Why? Is there anything?"

Hmpf, I'm nothing like Yvette. I'm not gonna flash you a fake smile or try to please you. If it wasn't a stern order from Mr. Dijon, I wouldn't even be here now.

"Erm... I just thought you looked a little lonely, so I thought I'd approach you. Hope you don't find me rude," replied the man apologetically.

Hannah nodded in response. She didn't find the person in front of her irritating. He looked and carried himself like a gentleman, all dressed up in a black suit. He probably did not have any bad intentions, but Hannah just did not have the habit of approaching strangers nor making small talk.

"I'm not some wealthy heiress, so there's no need to address me as 'miss' or anything as such. My

name's Hannah Young. I'm a journalist for a magazine company and I'm here to interview Yvette Tanner.

We are probably not of the same social status, so there's really no need for you to sit here with me,"

rejected Hannah curtly.

Shock flashed across the man's face. He had not expected Hannah to turn him down in such a

straightforward manner. "Hannah Young," chuckled the man awkwardly.

"I shall keep your name in mind."

With that, the man got up to leave. After making a few steps, he suddenly stopped in his tracks and

turned around to face Hannah. "By the way, my name's Xavier Jackson."

With a smile, he left.

As the man walked away, Hannah peered at his shrinking silhouette out of the corner of her eye. What

does your name have anything to do with me?

Hannah gently wiped away her lipstick and picked up a glass of wine on the table. As she was preparing

to take a sip, a sharp voice interrupted her movements. "Hannah Young, are you drinking alone? Poor

thing, does Fabian not want you anymore? Well, I did tell you that

Fabian is not gonna like a woman as

shabby as you. He was probably just messing around with you."

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Yvette's irritating voice rang in Hannah's ear, instantly giving the latter a headache. Glaring at Yvette,

Hannah scolded silently in her mind.

Tsk, are you any better? The only thing you know is to seduce men.

What's there to brag about? You're

just an idiot fantasizing about becoming Mrs. Norton. Do you know that he has already taken me as his

wife?

Hannah frowned slightly but managed to squeeze out a smile. "Yeah, you're right. I am shabby, but

you're just a little shabbier than I am, else Fabian wouldn't be so nice to me," mocked Hannah,

swallowing the rage in her.

“Oh, really? Is Fabian really that nice to you?” asked Yvette, feigning surprise. “How come I’ve never heard of it? All I know is that he told me, I will soon be his wife,” declared Yvette proudly with a raised eyebrow. Even if she were lying, Hannah couldn’t tell.

Utterly devastated at those words, the scenes where she interrogated Fabian, demanding to know if he really did consider marrying Yvette surfaced in Hannah’s mind.

Stay calm... stay calm...

Hannah repeated those words nonstop in her head as if chanting a magic spell, trying to ground herself.

Hannah stayed frozen in position for a few seconds, lost in thoughts.

Yvette, on the other hand, enjoyed seeing how Hannah reacted like an idiot.

Hmpf, do you want to compete with me? You’re still missing years of excruciating training. Look at how you are all dolled up. Are you trying to seduce Fabian after knowing he would be here? Hmpf, in your dreams. Only I get to be Mrs. Norton.

Yvette twisted her body, pretending to stagger. The wine glass in her hand slipped out her grasp, spilling all over Hannah’s gown.

Regaining her senses, Hannah leaped to her feet and exclaimed in surprise, “Ah! Yvette, what do you think you’re doing?”

Hannah’s scream attracted many heads to turn in their direction.

Yvette slowly twisted her body, seemingly trying to stretch out her waist in a painful manner. “Oh my

gosh, I’m so sorry,” said Yvette weakly, “I’ve accidentally twisted my ankle. It wasn’t done on purpose.

Please don’t be mad at me,” continued Yvette with trembling lips and she looked apologetic.

Hmpf! You sure deserve an Oscar for this act. We both know you did it on purpose, yet here you are playing the victim. You are really such a professional actress.

Yvette leaned slightly towards Hannah, “What? Do you think my acting skills are good for nothing?”

whispered Yvette with a smirk.

Hannah trembled in anger as her fists clenched beside her body. Everyone around them had accepted the lie that Yvette had hurt her ankle and unintentionally spilled the wine on her dress. Hannah swallowed all the words she wanted to say to refute, knowing it would be in vain. Without another word, Hannah picked up her bag and hurried towards the restroom. Seeing Hannah scurrying away, Yvette's lips curled up into an evil sneer, twisting her features into the ugliest look a person could have, despite the heavy, exquisite makeup she had on.

In the restroom, Hannah desperately tried to remove the stain with tissues. After struggling for a few minutes, she realized her attempts were futile. No matter how hard she rubbed, the stain would still be visible. Giving up, she decided not to wear the evening gown Franchot had picked for her anymore but rather changed into her own lilac cocktail dress.

Thank goodness I brought this dress with me. How embarrassing would it be if I didn't?

After changing her outfit, Hannah fixed her makeup and checked herself in the mirror. Only when she's satisfied with the way she looked did she exit the restroom.

The resentment of being humiliated was still coursing through Hannah's veins. "Hmpf! Yvette Tanner, you must be so envious of my dress that you have to ruin it. That's okay, I will defeat you regardless of what I'm wearing!" Hannah mumbled softly to comfort and pacify herself.

The second Hannah stepped foot outside the restroom, she caught sight of Yvette being all over Fabian, which infuriated her even more.

Oh, do you not have any bones on you or are your muscles so underdeveloped that you have to be glued on to someone else for support? Do you have no shame in doing that in front of all those eyes and cameras? Hannah rolled her eyes again before shooting daggers at the pair.

"Fabian, my ankle is a little painful. Can you please help me?" Yvette stuck out her lower lip and gazed at

Fabian with her round, glassy eyes, searching for sympathy. Yvette had purposefully put on her best makeup that day and it gave her an exquisite look. The flawless skin on her face looked even more radiant than usual. How could a renowned ladies man like Fabian possibly decline her request? "Alright," answered Fabian swiftly with a charming smile while reaching for her arm.

Hannah felt a pang in her heart at Fabian's actions, as disappointment filled her eyes. In reality, Fabian just wanted to take the advantage of having a beautiful woman in his arms out of boredom with no feelings attached. Sadly, in Hannah's perception, the scene showed that Fabian had feelings for Yvette because Hannah knew one thing for sure—Fabian wouldn't touch a woman he doesn't like.

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Are you really thinking about dumping me so you can marry her? Hannah chuckled icily, "Heh, 'dump' isn't even the correct word for it. We have only been faking it since the beginning."

Bitterness filled Hannah's heart as she felt it crumbled into pieces. She admitted to herself that she was feeling jealous, but she was careful not to let her emotions show. With the best smile she could muster, Hannah walked towards them with her camera. I'm here to do an interview, not to see the lovey-dovey show you two are putting up. Whatever you do is none of my business.

Hannah reminded herself of the reason she was there and turned her head away from Fabian and Yvette, leaving the pair out of her peripheral vision. Out of sight, out of mind.

As Fabian helped Yvette to stand on her feet, his gaze did not stop searching the crowd for a familiar silhouette. This is odd. I'm sure that dum-dum would be here, so how come I don't see her?

After a few minutes of searching, Fabian finally found Hannah seated in a lonely and well-hidden corner. Fabian's brows furrowed as he caught sight of her. Hmm? Why is she not wearing the evening gown I've requested for her? Fabian pursed his lips into a flat line, displeased.

He then noticed the bag and camera on the table in front of her, causing the flame of anger to burn ever more ferociously. As Fabian was late to the party, he had no clue about what happened before he arrived. Naturally, he thought Hannah chose not to wear the gown he had chosen for her deliberately.

I had meticulously picked out an elegant evening gown that suits her best, and that ungrateful woman just simply stuffed it in a bag?

Fabian tightened his grip on Yvette's waist out of anger. Feeling the subtle pain on her waist, Yvette looked up at him, only to see his dark, cold expression, with his eyes focused elsewhere. Following his gaze, Yvette saw Hannah seated at the corner.

Huh, you have angered Fabian again, you little b\*tch? You can't even make a man happy, how can you possibly win a man's affection?

Yvette intentionally leaned closer to Fabian. She wanted Hannah Young to see how intimate she was with Fabian, crushing any hopes Hannah had for Fabian.

Unfortunately for Hannah, the launch event for the new drama series had officially started. Sighing heavily, she picked up her camera with zero enthusiasm. Frustration boiled in her blood as she headed towards Yvette. She had been bullied and humiliated by Yvette. Yet, not only could she not seek revenge, she even had to interview Yvette as it was her assignment.

Yvette stood in the spotlight in an elegant and graceful posture, her movements laced with impeccable class.

"Thank you all for coming here today to witness the launch event of my new drama series. I am more than honored..."

Yvette started her eloquent speech onstage, earning another eye-roll from Hannah in the crowd. “Oh please. Are you a product that you have to promote yourself and pull the interest from the crowd?”

scoffed Hannah under her breath.

As the speech ended, Hannah couldn’t help but scold again, “Finally. Just how she was dragging on her speech, blah, blah, blah... Don’t you know the crowd is starting to hate your voice?”

Contrary to her words, the audience erupted into cheers and thunderous applause followed suit. Hannah coughed awkwardly to hide her embarrassment. Well, that was humiliating.

It had then reached the session where Yvette would be answering interviews. Swarms of journalists rushed forward with microphones and cameras. The sound of cameras clicking and chatters filled the hall instantly.

The purpose of Yvette’s previous visit to the company Hannah was working at was only for the chance to embarrass Hannah during the launch event. She had no intention to give their company the invitation to do an exclusive interview and coverage for the event.

Yvette was not stupid. She knew the presence of many journalists would boost the popularity of her drama to a higher notch.

A simple invitation by Yvette to half of the news industry had given an immense headache to Hannah, who was carrying a bulky camera. Although she was petite and agile, the camera in her hands had severely slowed down her pace and increased the difficulty of her squeezing through the crowd, causing her to lack behind.

“Ms. Tanner, do you think this series will breakthrough in the entertainment industry?” asked a journalist.

“Mm hmm, I think so,” nodded Yvette.

“Why is that, Ms. Tanner? Care to enlighten us?” Another journalist extended the microphone in her hand towards the star.



“Because the genre of this series has established a precedent in the market in our country. On top of that, the visuals and special effects in the series are top-notch. Not to mention the cast are mainly famous actors and actresses in the series, I’d say this series stands a pretty good chance,” announced Yvette in all smiles.

Chatters and clicking continued as the journalists continued pestering Yvette relentlessly for more details of the series.

The journalists kept bombarding Yvette with different questions and she answered all those questions graciously. Perhaps it was because the questions asked were nothing special, the journalists did not seem to have much enthusiasm. After a few boring minutes, one of the reporters finally lost his patience and blurted, “Ms. Tanner, there have been rumors flying about that you are currently dating Mr. Norton, the president of Phoenix Group. Is that true?”

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Hannah was stunned. The camera wobbled on her shaky shoulder as she looked up at Fabian, who stood on the stage, waiting for his answer.

Everyone else in the audience was also taken aback by the question; gasps and countless whispers erupted from them:

“Is this true? Why didn’t I know of this?”

“Doesn’t that make her Fabian’s lover if they’re seeing each other?”

...

The sudden question had flustered Yvette. She wanted to admit their relationship, but she didn’t dare to blabber without Fabian’s consent since all of this would be published in newspapers the next day. So she narrowed her eyes at Fabian, sending him a questioning gaze. At this, Fabian’s lips twitched into a sly smile. He stepped forward and declared to the journalists, “It’s true!”

Those words had slapped hard onto Hannah's cheek and dulled her vision. She gripped tightly onto the camera, steadying it on her shoulder although her knees were on the brink on giving in.

You're seeing her? Then, what does that make me? Some plaything of yours?

The journalist's eyes widened at his answer. Uninhibited excitement flashed on his face as he eagerly followed up with another question. "Then, Mr. Norton, is your current investment because of Ms.

Tanner?"

You even invested funds in her drama? I thought you attended this event simply because she invited you... Hannah brimmed with disappointment. She looked quietly at Fabian, who was still stood on the stage.

Fabian smiled at the journalist. "Both Yve and I believe that this drama will be a hit. Naturally, it's only sensible that I invest in a valuable drama. But of course, Yve did play a part in my decision to invest."

The journalists buzzed on the edges of their seats. They could already envision juicy titles for tomorrow's headline: Breaking News! President of Phoenix Company Admits to Relationship With Starlett Yvette At Press Conference.

Yve? Hannah snorted at this. How sweet, you two sound like you're so close. And here I thought that you loved me... I guess I just lived in a fantasy made-up in my head. Hannah suppressed the grating pain in her chest. She rolled her shoulders back before approaching the stage to ask Yvette, "Ms. Tanner, do you think Mr. Norton is a perfidious person?"

The other journalists frowned in confusion, unsure of how Fabian's perfidiousness was related to the conference.

On the stage, Fabian's lips curled into a derisive smile. What's this? You think I'm traitorous for divorcing you? Is this meant as a jab towards me? So you still care about me? Similar to the journalists, Yvette couldn't comprehend Hannah's question and thought that she was

deliberately making things difficult for her.

“He’s certainly not. I wouldn’t have gotten together with Fabian if I doubted his feelings for me,” Yvette answered in a sweet voice as she fluttered her lashes at Fabian endearingly.

“Good for you,” Hannah uttered caustically while glaring at Fabian before turning to leave.

Hannah looked around the place dejectedly. It wasn’t clear when the party would end. But given her understanding of these events, it would likely be after nightfall. She felt annoyed about this and headed off to a pizza joint in the nearby area. I may as well ditch work. For a food-loving woman like me, there’s nothing like good pizza to solve all my problems. If that doesn’t make me feel any better, then two pizzas surely will!

There really is nothing quite as luxurious as enjoying a pizza in an air-conditioned room in such hot weather. But as she chowed down a couple of slices, bitter thoughts surfaced in her mind. Right... Fabian and I had shared a pizza the last time we were here. Just look at how he is having the time of his life with Yvette.

At this, Hannah chided herself. You’re so pathetic, Hannah! Fabian doesn’t even care about you, yet you still miss him secretly!

Ugh, forget about him! This is really stressing me out.

Loneliness overwhelmed Hannah as she finished her meal. The pizza didn’t quite improve her mood as much as she initially thought it would. Sadly, resentment still leached onto her heart like a parasite. Since she ditched work and didn’t have to rush home, she decided to go shopping instead. After all, one mustn’t set themselves up for torment, right?

I don’t need you to love me, Fabian. I’ll love myself and that’ll be just fine.

Hannah hadn’t been out to shop ever since she and Fabian got married because he often had items delivered to their doorstep. However, the circumstances this time were different. She shopped as if she

had been transported back to her high school days of scavenging through sales racks, snacking on popsicles whilst hopping from shop to shop for clothes and accessories that she liked, then heading home with arms full of bags.

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Arriving home to a pitch-black living room, Hannah felt a lingering sadness in her clenched jaw. She couldn't help but wonder what kind of life she would lead if she had never met Fabian. Will I be living happily ever after with someone who loves me, or will I struggle to make ends meet in a rented apartment until I shrivel up and die? Who knows? But even if I live a difficult life alone, wouldn't it still be better than my life now where I live alone and uncared for in a luxurious and spacious home?

At least in a poorer life, I wouldn't be harrowed by the helpless sorrow of having to watch my husband messing around with other women.

Hannah frustratingly banged her fists onto the countertop and shouted at herself, "He's not even a real husband! Our marriage was all a lie, a silly act to deceive others. You're just stupid enough to think that whatever we had was real."

After switching on the light in the living room, she tossed her shopping bags onto the couch before making some dinner to feed her empty stomach. Then, she showered at after that.

Hannah then slid into a lavishly pink, silk pajama set and lounged on the sofa to binge-watch a romantic drama.

The scene showed a home-wrecker who was sabotaging the heroine.

She couldn't help but shed tears

near the plot's climax as she felt a gut-wrenching pity for the heroine.

But a tiny voice inside her sarcastically sounded, how is that heroine pitiful? Aren't you pitiful too?

Hannah froze as countless visions of Fabian and Yvette being intimate flashed in her mind. Her face

burned treacherously red at the idea of Fabian spoon-feeding Yvette meals and both of them hugging each other and kissing in bed...

Hannah shook her head furiously, scattering those repulsive visions along with droplets of water from her wet hair onto the floor. Sweat beaded on her forehead, prompting her to go back into the bathroom to rinse her face in hopes that she would snap out of such thoughts. Hannah then dried her hair and returned to her bedroom. She began trying on the clothes that she had bought earlier to pass the time. It also gave her an excuse to wait for Fabian to get home.

As she stared straight at her reflection, Hannah noticed how haggardly pale she looked. Am I really that much of an emotional wreck? I'm that easily influenced by Fabian? "He's not even important! He's just some womanizer who doesn't feel anything for you at all! Why do you put yourself through this? Men like him are not worthy of your love, absolutely not!" The words vented out of her like thunder.

Hannah felt lighter and more refreshed after shouting those words from the top of her lungs. Next, she plopped onto her bed. He's literally chatting away with Yvette right now. Why are you still waiting up? Just go to bed!

So Hannah tucked herself into the fluffy duvet. Not long after shutting her eyes, she felt herself sink into a deep slumber.

The sound of a car pulling up interrupted the harmonious silence of the night. Glaring headlights beamed into the small courtyard of their home—Fabian finally returned. He hadn't intended to return so late. He initially planned to get home after dinner, but then he bumped into a few of his business partners who insisted on going to a bar. Unable to decline their kind gestures, he joined them then waited till everyone left the bar before getting home.

Fabian opened the bedroom door and saw Hannah, who was sound asleep. This caused dissatisfaction to violently bubble in his chest.

You really are something, Hannah. How could you sleep like a log while your own husband is out and about with some other woman? How generously trusting of you! Or you just don't care?

Fabian paced over to the bedside with an urge to yank Hannah out of her slumber, but he suppressed it in the end. He stared hazily at her sleeping face and slurred drunkenly, "I'll make you fall in love with me, Hannah. Don't believe me? Let's make a bet..."

Then, he washed up before climbing into bed, settling down next to Hannah, and falling asleep.

Early the next morning, Hannah's eyes cracked open to the faint smell of alcohol. Huh? Why does it reek of alcohol? Did Fabian come by last night? At this moment, Fabian had already got up and left for work.

Hannah shook her head, reminding herself that it didn't matter even if he did show up last night. He couldn't care less about me anyway.

So Hannah got dressed and commuted to her company. Upon arrival, the senior editor gave her a mouthful for the poorly executed work from yesterday.

"Hannah, look at the rubbish you've shot. Who's going to be interested in this? Look at the publicized shots from the other magazine companies; they're clearly on a whole other level. I specifically told you to capture some good shots yesterday, yet you return with this mess! Ugh, do you not want your job anymore? Or are you just torturing me on purpose?"

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Hannah knew that her behavior yesterday was uncalled for. She was an emotional wreck and didn't capture any of the important events during the launch event. She lowered her head and apologized to the senior editor, "I didn't mean to. Well, I'll accept any punishment you decide on."

Hannah was currently in charge of Fabian's interview. So if she got fired now, then all her previous efforts would be for naught. The senior editor sighed and spoke helplessly, "Alright. I'll give you another

chance. You'll interview one of Sunshine city's top families, the Jackson family's only heir—Xavier Jackson.”

“Xavier Jackson?” The name sounded awfully familiar to Hannah. She thought long and hard, trying to put a face to that name. Eventually, a man's face surfaced in her mind. Once Hannah figured it out, her jaw dropped. She couldn't utter a single word as waves of questions crashed in her mind.

That frivolous man? No, it can't be that coincidental. Hannah's brows scrunched tautly. What if he intentionally requested for me to do the interview? No, that can't be since we have only met briefly.

Unless... this was what fate wanted?

The senior editor's eyebrows raised at Hannah's wide-mouthed expression.

Then, he questioned loudly, “What are you gawking at, Hannah? Do you not want the task? Don't assume you're all that just because you did Fabian's interview. I'll sack you if you mess this up again.”

Hannah didn't dare to reject the senior editor's request after hearing his threat. Hannah nodded without hesitation and said, “You can count on me. I'll do my very best in this interview.”

At this, the senior editor's features loosened from its initial frown. He spoke in a friendlier tone, “Good, consider that as redemption for your previous hiccup. I also heard that Mr. Jackson is fairly easy to get along with, so this interview cannot fail under any circumstances. I'll have someone send you his details in a bit. Please read through it thoroughly, then get on with the interview immediately. The early bird gets the worm, after all.”

Relief washed over Hannah. It's just an interview, what's the big deal? She then returned to her office and scanned through Xavier's information before heading to his company.

“Do you have an appointment?” The receptionist asked coldly and shot a cautious look at the camera in Hannah’s hands.

Huh? Are all receptionists in the world clones of the same person? They literally only ask that one question. Hannah scoffed to herself.

“Err, no. I’m a journalist from a magazine company, and I was hoping to get an interview with Mr.

Jackson today,” Hannah explained courteously.

This reason wasn’t well-received by the receptionist, who glared daggers and snorted with disgust at

Hannah. A journalist? Well, I suppose you are easy on the eyes; your boss certainly knows how to cater to Mr. Jackson’s tastes.

Regardless, the receptionist responded as she usually would to any visitors who walked in without an appointment. “Mr. Jackson won’t see you without an appointment, so you’ll have to wait until his schedule frees up before you can go to him.”

Great, Hannah mentally complained. Today’s interview is pretty much going down the drain. Hannah

sighed pronouncedly after being denied entry. Despite how upset she felt, she still had to complete the

interview task assigned by her company, so she had no choice but to wait.

Suddenly, an idea flashed in Hannah’s mind. She gnawed on her bottom lip and boldly approached the

receptionist again. Her eyes gleamed with hope while she stated in a low and resentful tone, “Mr.

Jackson and I are acquaintances. Tell him that Hannah is here to see him.”

The receptionist eyed her doubtfully. After pondering about it for a second, she dialed Xavier’s office.

“Mr. Jackson, there’s a reporter named ‘Hannah’ who claims to be your acquaintance and wants to see you now. What would you like me to do?”

Hannah’s heart pounded with tension. The palm of her hands joined while she muttered silent prayers.

Please let me in.



I'll be kicked out of my job if this interview doesn't happen, so I have to get it done at all costs. Hannah had firmly settled on this and had even devised a plan to wait outside the company all day if he refused to see her.

"A-alright, Mr. Jackson. I understand," the receptionist answered.

Sensing that the call was ending, Hannah's gaze snapped towards the receptionist's facial expression, examining it for clues on whether she was finally allowed in.

"Ms. Young, Mr. Jackson will see you now." Although the receptionist had a much friendlier tone, Hannah still felt inexplicably odd and uneasy about the receptionist's way of speaking.

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Nonetheless, Hannah perked right up after receiving an affirmative answer. At least now I won't get another earful from the senior editor.

"Wren, take her to Mr. Jackson's office," the receptionist said.

Once Hannah was out of sight, the receptionist grumbled aloud to herself, "I knew it! There's no way that she's only here to interview Mr. Jackson; she's taking advantage of her identity as a journalist to seduce Mr. Jackson."

"Alright, this is Mr. Jackson's office," Wren declared. He stepped closer to the door and knocked on behalf of Hannah before leaving.

"Come in," a sensuous and insistent voice called from the inside. It soothingly drew her attention.

Hannah straightened her collar before entering. As she crossed the door, Hannah caught a whiff of a fruity yet floral aroma. She trailed after the ambrosial scent and saw that Xavier was brewing some tea.

Xavier wore a white suit, which was a rare occurrence. However, his slender fingers stood out more as

they moved nimbly, as well as elegantly while preparing the tea.

Xavier didn't even spare her a glance. Instead, his eyes focused on the tea brewing before him as he said

through a smile, "Have a seat."

Hannah's lips curled over her teeth into a tense smile. "I came over because I'd like to interview you. I hope you'll kindly agree to do it."

Xavier placed a teacup in front of Hannah, then lifted an intricately painted teapot to pour her a cup of tea.

"I knew it. Here I was wondering why you would seek me out, turns out it's for this reason." Xavier filled another teacup for himself.

Bringing the teacup to his lips, Xavier took a sip and lightly shook his head in satisfaction. "Try it. I had someone source it from abroad recently. It tastes rather good."

Hannah sampled the tea as if she knew a thing or two about professional tea-tasting. Fabian had taught her a bit about tea quality when they got their marriage certificate back then. After taking a sip, her lips smacked lightly. "The tea has a refreshing note on the first sip and ends with a slight sweetness. It's really good."

Xavier widened his eyes at Hannah's evaluation. She's well-versed in the subject of tea?

"Impressive, Ms. Young. I have never expected you to be a tea connoisseur."

"You're flattering me, Mr. Jackson. I only know a thing or two when it comes to basics of tea."

Xavier assumed that Hannah was humble, not wanting to boast about her knowledge. Little did he know that she had actually told the truth. Even her evaluation earlier was a repetition of what Fabian used to say.

"I'm starting to wonder if fate sent you here as my love interest, or perhaps you just came over to seduce me. After all, we just met yesterday; isn't it a little too coincidental that you're here to interview me today?" Xavier had a playful smile and tried to flirt with her.

Hannah's face scrunched with skepticism towards Xavier's improper behavior. Nevertheless, she put on a stern face and reminded, "Mr. Jackson. My reason for being here is purely for the sake of interviewing

you. Please, I hope you refrain from making such jokes again.”

For a slight second, a bright red blush crept across Xavier’s face. He felt appalled that she hadn’t behaved like other timid, mice-like journalists who only nodded and bowed at his words. Instead, she was the first to talk back to him in such a reprimanding tone. Yet, it immediately reeled in his attention, making him more intrigued. His lips curved at the woman sitting before him. “I was only joking Ms. Young. There’s no need to take me so seriously,” Xavier explained and lifted the teacup from the table, then downed its contents. A bitterness burned down the back of his throat.

Women often flocked around Xavier, throwing themselves at him willingly. Now that he finally encountered an exception to those women, he was obviously not going to let her off easy. He wanted to have a bit of fun with her and see how long she could keep her prudish composure.

Xavier Jackson. Typical womanizer and has probably dated more than half of the women working in showbiz. Decently capable of managing and maintaining order in his family’s company, Jackson Group.

These sentences surfaced in Hannah’s mind. She recalled reading them in Xavier’s information in the file that the senior editor gave to her. Maybe it was her mind playing tricks, but the more she looked at Xavier now, the more he seemed like a pervert in disguise.

At some point, Hannah texted her current location to Fabian, thinking that he may go around searching for her since she wasn’t home and hadn’t left him any calls despite it already being noon.

Fortunately, Xavier had stopped with the inappropriate jokes after Hannah’s warning. So she picked up her camera and began the task that she came to do.

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With Xavier’s smooth and concise response to every question, the interview soon came to an end.

Hannah let out a sigh of relief when the interview finally ended. Tidying the documents in her hand, she

stood up to announce, "That's all. I've got no more questions for you. This interview will be published shortly after I get back to the office and tidy up the loose ends."

Xavier hummed in agreement whilst nodding. Deep down, he had to hand it to Hannah for meticulously asking questions that were simple yet straight to the point. At the same time, her style of interviewing was impartial and reasonably paced. The way she handled the interview had added points to his impression of her greatly.

"Mr. Jackson, I'll be taking my leave now that the interview is over." Hannah packed up hurriedly. She was terrified of not being to defend herself should Xavier harass her with his sly innuendos again, especially since she couldn't reply or react too outrageously. After all, the senior editor had threatened to end her career if she didn't complete this task properly.

"Okay. As chance would have it, I'm getting off work too. Shall we leave together?" Xavier casually announced after glancing at his watch. Then, he took the lead and exited the office, leaving her with no choice but to follow.

They soon waited inside the descending elevator. Hannah's eyes cautiously darted around while she kept a distance away from Xavier. She deliberately stood in front of the doors, ready to run if anything were to happen. Of course, she knew that this was an impolite thought to have. But what am I to do if Xavier suddenly wants to take advantage of me? I can't just allow him any chance to do that!

Her actions didn't go unnoticed by Xavier, whose smile curved deeper at this. This woman is getting more fascinating by the second.

Xavier teasingly raised his hand and patted Hannah's shoulder. "Ms. Young, I believe that you're also a fellow tea lover. It just so happens that my friend had gifted me some rose tea which is rich with

elements good for skin complexion. Honestly, this tea doesn't suit my taste, so I'd like to gift them to you. I'll have my secretary pass it to you in a bit."

Hannah's heart hammered in her chest when Xavier's hand first landed on her shoulder, but after hearing what he had to say, she exhaled loudly as she patted her chest and rolled her eyes with relief.

Dude! You scared the daylights out of me. While Xavier's actions had scared her senseless, they also lightened the mood and simultaneously improved her impression of him. He's not so bad. How does he earn himself such a reputation then?

At this, she couldn't help but compare him to Fabian. Oh, Fabian... you're both presidents of big companies, yet the two of you are so strikingly different. Xavier is so refined and well-mannered. Meanwhile, you're always so uptight. It's as if everyone in the world has wronged you.

When the elevator doors opened, Xavier extended his arm and gentlemanly gestured for her to exit first. His arm had also considerately blocked against the elevator door in case it closed on her.

I get it now. His attentiveness to women as well as his prestigious background makes female celebrities crazy for him. He's probably too nice to reject their advances, so he comes off as a veritable casanova in the public's eye. Mm-hmm, this explains everything perfectly. It was painfully obvious that Hannah's imagination was so vivid that she managed to convince herself of such implausible reasons.

As they arrived side by side downstairs, the receptionist was convinced of her earlier suspicions. She really is the president's new flavor of the month, but when did the president change his dating preference from pursuing all sorts of gorgeous celebrities to a mere journalist?

Xavier casually raised a hand to summon his assistant and instructed, "Pack the rose tea that Mr. Norton previously gifted me and bring it over to Ms. Young here."

Mr. Norton? Did he mean Fabian? No way. Fabian wouldn't gift this guy rose tea, would he? Hannah contemplated this for a moment before pushing the entire thought aside. It must be Mr. Norton from another company with the same name. Yeah, that person probably gifted the tea to Xavier.

Xavier's assistant narrowed his eyes in confusion. A gift from Mr. Norton? Are you certain, Mr. Jackson?

Why am I not aware of this?

The assistant's face paled uncomfortably. He tapped on Xavier's arm and leaned in to whisper, "Perhaps you're mistaken, Mr. Jackson?"

Xavier flashed an 'excuse me' smile at Hannah before turning his head to growl in a lowered, hoarse voice at his assistant. "You idiot. It's the rose tea that I got from Finnick whilst hitting on some girls that one time."

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Oh! I understand now, I'll get them right away."

The assistant lowered his head and mumbled to himself. Mr. Jackson, you are such a joker. Instead of insisting it was a gift, you should've just called it "stolen rose tea" from Mr. Norton. I knew Mr. Norton never gifted you anything.

This assistant had been close with Xavier since their university days.

When Xavier inherited Jackson

Group, he invited the assistant to work by his side, so the two were also friends in private.

"Oh, dear. My lax staff management is starting to encourage negligence in my employees. How could he forget all about the gift to the point where I have to remind him myself." Xavier coughed lightly as he embarrassingly explained his odd exchange with his assistant earlier.

"It's okay," Hannah said as she shook her head. She didn't want to cause the assistant any unnecessary punishment. As an employee herself, she hated unfair treatment. Several of her team members had

been sacked due to customer complaints, so she could empathize with him.

Hannah took the assistant's side and defended, "Actually, employees go through the worst. Take us, journalists, for instance; the company requires us to forage for juicy content, but this can easily upset the interviewees and lead to complaints against us. Plus, the more serious cases can lead to lawsuits.

However, if we fail to write anything interesting, we'll get punished by our superiors. Perhaps your assistant is too overwhelmed with arranging your daily schedule, so he forgot about the tea

unintentionally. It's not entirely his fault for forgetting".

Xavier almost snorted at this. He thought to himself, Him? Arranging my daily schedule? How's that possible? This bugger has been indulging in feasts and drinking to his heart's content alongside me these past few days. He's had too much of a merry time to be bothered by any work.

For obvious reasons, Xavier couldn't outright say these thoughts. So he pretended to brood at her words, then nodded solemnly and said, "You're right, Ms. Young. Life has not been easy on these employees."

Immediately after, he flashed a sly grin and asked, "It sounds like your superiors are exceedingly strict with employees. I wonder if you were forced to interview me today, Ms. Young?"

Hannah really wanted to retort and say, "Oh, you couldn't tell?"

But she wasn't sure whether the senior editor would allow her to continue interviewing Xavier if she did blurt out those words. Moreover, saying those words meant revealing to Xavier that it wasn't her intention to interview him at all. I'd be too embarrassed to conduct any more future interviews with him.

"No, the senior editor didn't force me," Hannah lied through her lips.

Oh, Mr. Dijon. Look at the extreme lengths I have gone for the company. At this point, I'm more than deserving of the 'employee of the month' award. Or at least a gold star or some kind of recognition.

Xavier interjected before Hannah could elaborate. He hummed suspiciously at her answer. The smile on his face widened, revealing a neat row of pearly-white teeth. Then, he chuckled and affirmed his own assumption, "So you came to interview me on your own accord, Ms. Young? I must say I'm flattered."

What? Hannah was taken aback by what he said. Can you be any more narcissistic than you already are?

She wanted to correct him, but her lips thinned into a line as she didn't know how to go about it. How do I explain it to him? What do I tell him next?

As luck would have it, Xavier's assistant appeared with an elaborate gift bag looped in his hand and saved Hannah from her flabbergasted state. He announced as he gasped for air, "Mr. Jackson, I've brought the tea."

Xavier's sharp gaze snapped at his assistant. How convenient! Of all the times for you to show up, you chose to appear while I'm in the middle of picking up this woman. I'm starting to wonder if you did this on purpose.

Yet, Xavier only glared at his assistant without saying a word. What a bloody timing! He reached for the bag in his assistant's hand and passed it over to Hannah. "Ms. Young, my apologies for making you wait. This is the rose tea from my friend, that I was telling you about. Here, sample it and let me know if it's to your liking. If it is, I can ask my friend for more right away."

Hannah's hands twitched uncomfortably as she took the bag of tea from Xavier. She felt odd at the unexpected gift as she was only doing her job to interview him.

"Thank you for your kind gift, Mr. Jackson."

"Come on, Ms. Young. I predict that there'll be more future interviews to help increase our company's exposure and whatnot. Given how professional and efficient you are, I may turn to you for assistance frequently, so please accept this token of my appreciation in advance. Besides, it's a great honor to be friends with such a fine woman like you."

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Xavier spoke with a straight face on. It sounded like he meant every word he said, but he was the only one who knew how he truly felt.

Hannah was proactive in showing up and asking for an interview, but he had somehow turned things around. At that moment, it sounded like he asked her to help promote his company.

Still, hearing how Xavier praising her skills and her beauty got Hannah to grin happily. That was understandable. After all, who wouldn't enjoy being complimented like that?

Hannah was shy, and her face turned to a shade of red. That made her even cuter and sweeter to Xavier.

"Mr. Jackson, your words are so kind. I was worried that I'd bother you with this interview. As for being friends... Someone as powerful as you are willing to lower your stance and be friends with a lowly worker like me. That is truly rare. I'm glad that you don't see me in distaste. Let's be friends."

Hannah had been working in that industry for some time, so she had learned the social rules. She knew how to handle such questions, but she didn't just respond politely as most experienced individuals do.

Instead, she paid slightly more attention and spoke in a more considerate tone.

"Haha, that would be amazing," replied Xavier, after chuckling aloud. His admiration toward Hannah increased yet again.

He thought that women like Hannah, who is youthful, beautiful, and intelligent, were rare. In fact, she was the only person he had ever met with all three traits. Most women he met were either pretentious creatures with greedy hearts or brainless bimbos with huge breasts. None of them attracted him.

"It's late, and I should leave," added Hannah. She recalled how she had to send a message to Fabian or

he would rush over when he couldn't find her at home. Things would be troublesome if he causes a scene here.

"Alright, let's go. It's time for me to clock off as well, so let's head out together," replied Xavier. If she were any other woman, she would've made an excuse and said she'd like to treat me to a meal to thank me. After that, she'd try to seduce me.

Hannah didn't think much of anything. She simply nodded before exiting the place with Xavier.

"Where are you headed to? Do you need a ride?" asked Xavier, who spoke nonchalantly even though he was working hard and was taking the initiative to build a rapport with her.

If I tell him that I'm heading home, he will likely offer to drive me. It'd be awkward if I reject his offer

then. I should just tell him that someone is picking me up. The worst I'd have to do under that

circumstance is to wait until after he left before I grab a cab.

"Oh, there's no need for that. Someone's picking me up," replied Hannah after considering the situation.

Xavier had dealt with a lot more people than Hannah had, so it was virtually impossible for him to not see through what Hannah was thinking.

Xavier secretly thought, Seriously? I bet you just don't want me to give you a ride. Looks like I will have to bring out the big guns.

"Okay, then. I'll leave without you since someone will be here shortly to pick you up," said Xavier, before

he stepped forward. He reached out and tried to kiss the back of her hand like a gentleman to bid her

goodbye. Dozens of beautiful women had fallen for Xavier after he made that move and kissed their

hands. Hence, he was rather confident about it since it had never failed him before.

However, something unexpected happened. He hadn't even touched Hannah's hand before someone else blocked him and slapped his hand away.

Slap! Both Hannah and Xavier turned to the source of the slap at the same time. They thought that what

happened earlier was too surprising and bordering on ridiculous. Who on Earth would attack the head of the Jackson Group while standing in front of the company's headquarters? Are they tired of breathing or something?

The two adults blurted simultaneously, "Fabian!"

In addition to being surprised, Hannah was also a little excited and happy. You came? The way she saw it was that since Fabian showed up to look for her, then it must mean that he still cared about her.

Xavier, on the other hand, was glaring with anger and suspicion. It was as if he was demanding an answer from Fabian and asking why the latter showed up to disrupt his plans.

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