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"Vivian, we've been searching for hours, but Sarah is still nowhere to be seen. You don't think she's in trouble, do you?" said Caroline, who was a little scared at that moment.

"I don't think so. You shouldn't assume the worse," replied Vivian. Truth was, Vivian was just as nervous about the situation, but she knew that she couldn't freak out. "Let's head back. Maybe the others have already found Sarah and they're back at the camp now. That's probably why she can't hear us calling out for her."

"You're right. Sarah must've returned to the campsite. She is definitely safe," said Caroline. She felt a lot calmer after hearing what Vivian said.

Vivian and Caroline turned around and went back to their camp. That was when they realized that almost everyone else had returned as well.

"How did it go? Did anyone find Sarah?" asked Vivian hurriedly.

"No."

"Sarah is nowhere to be seen, and Mr. Norton and Charlotte aren't back yet either."

Vivian got even more anxious to hear everyone's response. How am I going to face her family if something happened to Sarah?

"Calm down, Chief Editor. Some teams haven't returned yet. Maybe they've found Sarah," said a guy to comfort her after he saw how she was getting jumpy. He then added, "I'll go look for her again. This isn't an abandoned island, so it's unlikely that she's in trouble. I bet Sarah just lost her way."

"What about Mr. Norton and Charlotte? The place to get the water isn't far and they would've found the place so long as they travel down the main road. Why aren't they back yet?" complained another colleague. He couldn't help feeling angry because he was getting too worried. What is wrong with these people? They're not kids, anymore. Why must they make us worry?

For some unknown reason, hearing those words prompted Vivian to picture Finnick flirting with Charlotte. They were happy and smiling brightly at each other in Vivian's mind.

She couldn't stop jealousy from swelling up inside her mind, so she shook her head to prevent herself from thinking too much about it.

"Let's just wait for everyone else to return. I don't want to risk anyone else getting lost in our quest to search for Sarah," instructed Vivian. She was worried that the others would get into trouble as well, so she had them wait there.

More time passed, but no one returned. Vivian couldn't bear with the anxiety anymore and wanted to head out to look for the others again. Just then, Shannon rushed over while looking frightened.

"What's wrong? Did you find them?" asked one colleague hurriedly.

"No, but I think I heard Sarah calling out for help over there," informed Shannon. She looked absolutely horrified.

Vivian's heart instantly jumped when she heard what Shannon said. Sarah's in trouble? Vivian quickly ran over to Shannon and asked, "Where did you hear that call for help? Are you sure it was Sarah?"

"I can't be certain. I somewhat make out a call for help, and that person sounded like Sarah, but I was alone and was too scared to forge ahead. That's why I came back to get help."

"Why were you alone?" asked Vivian. The two of them weren't on good terms, after all, so Vivian had her guard up around Shannon.

"I was supposed to be with Ken and Melinda, but we later got into an argument and went our own ways," replied Shannon hurriedly, "Honestly, Vivian, now is not the time to look into this matter. Hurry over with me. I'm really worried about Sarah now."

Given how nervous Shannon looked, it was unlikely that she was lying. Vivian's judgment was also clouded because she was worried about Sarah, who hadn't returned yet.

"Okay, hang on a second. I have to go get something from my camp," replied Vivian before she rushed to her camp.

Before leaving the country, Vivian thought about how most employees the magazine hired were women. She was worried about everyone's safety, so she brought pepper spray along. I didn't think that I'd actually need to use it.

"Let's go look for Sarah now, Shannon," urged Vivian after she retrieved the so-called weapon she brought with her. We have to hurry. The longer we wait, the more danger Sarah might be in.

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"Chief Editor, it's not that much safer for two women to go over on their own. Let the boys and I come with you," suggested a male colleague in a worried tone.

"No, there's no need for that. We only have a few men around, and most of us are already at camp. You boys should stay guard over here, just in case. The girls would be defenseless if something happens while you're gone," instructed Vivian sternly.

Everyone tagged along happily to go on a vacation with Vivian, so she had to make sure that everyone was safe and would go home in one piece.

"But then, who would protect the two of you?" pointed out a guy. Vivian's words made sense to him, but he was still worried about letting two women leaving on their own.

"Gah, stop wasting time and talking bullsh*t. Sarah is still waiting for rescue," said Shannon before Vivian could even speak up. She later added, "The Chief Editor is armed with pepper spray, so we should be fine. Stop worrying needlessly, will you? Besides, she is right. The most important thing is to make sure that everyone is safe."

After that, Shannon turned to Vivian and continued, "Vivian, let's hurry over. Sarah and I aren't on good terms, but we have been colleagues for years. If anything were to happen to her, I-I'd feel terrible."

Shannon's voice was thick with tears when she said those words, and sorrow donned her face. No one would suspect her words under those circumstances.

"It's fine, Lionel. Stay here with the others and keep everyone safe. Shannon and I will go look for Sarah," instructed Vivian quickly to the guy at her side. Then, she dragged Shannon towards the path Shannon came from earlier.

“Shannon, where did you hear Sarah’s call for help? Why haven’t we heard anything, even though we’ve gone so far?” asked Vivian. She was getting worried because they were venturing further away from camp.

At first, Vivian assumed that they wouldn’t be traveling that far from camp, but they had since gotten to the deeper parts of the wood. Despite that, they still hadn’t reached the place Shannon was talking about.

“We’re almost there. I heard Sarah’s call for help somewhere nearby. I’m guessing we’ll find her soon,” replied Shannon. For some unknown reason, Shannon seemed a little off when she spoke. It was as if she was worried about Vivian discovering something.

Shannon obviously didn’t need to worry at all, though. Vivian was too worried about Sarah to notice anything.

Vivian didn’t suspect a thing and forged ahead when she heard Shannon saying that Sarah was nearby. As Vivian walked, she called out Sarah’s name.

Shannon was secretly relieved to see that Vivian had bought the lie. The former grinned evilly as she walked behind the latter.

Shannon observed her surroundings while following closely behind Vivian. After traveling a little further, Shannon saw the mark she made earlier.

Glee flashed past her eyes. Shannon shouted in a nervous tone, “Chief Editor, quick. Over here!”

“What is it?” asked Vivian, who turned around quickly and headed towards Shannon. The former asked, “Did you find any clue? Is Sarah around here somewhere?”

Vivian walked to Shannon and looked in the direction that Shannon was pointing at. The former bent down to take a closer look, and that was when she felt a force pushing her harshly from her back.

“Ah,” yelped Vivian. She flew uncontrollably downward and saw that she was getting closer and closer to the ground. At first, she thought that she would fall hard, but as she fell, she realized there was a trap right underneath her.

Thump! A loud noise echoed when Vivian fell into the pit. She felt as if her organs were all crushed, and she kept her eyes closed for a long time before she got herself accustomed to the pain.

Upon opening her eyes, Vivian realized that the pit was extremely deep. It was likely that hunters set the trap up to catch dangerous animals. Vivian shifted her gaze upward and saw that Shannon was grinning evilly over.

Seeing Shannon's taunting expression, Vivian realized that Shannon had pushed her in. Why the hell did Shannon bring me over?

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"Shannon, didn't you say that Sarah is somewhere nearby? Why did you push me in?" demanded Vivian angrily.

"You actually bought that? My gosh, Vivian William, looks like you haven't gotten any smarter in the past five years. You are still that idiot who is, oh so easy, to con," replied Shannon while crouching down and looking right at Vivian.

"What is the meaning of this? Did you trick me over? Why would you do that? Where is Sarah?" demanded Vivian, who was furious at herself when she finally grasped what was going on. I knew it. I shouldn't have trusted that woman!

"That brat is as annoying as you are. How would I know where she is? To tell you the truth, I never heard her calling for help. I only told you that to con you into coming over, and as for my intention of bringing you over..."

Shannon trailed off and paused for a moment before she glared evilly and answered, "Well, it's to teach you a f*cking lesson, of course."

"Shannon Ulrich, I will freaking fire you!" roared Vivian. Resentment and regret filled her heart when she heard what Shannon said.

Shannon had always gone against Vivian at work, and Vivian would've fired the girl if she wasn't a senior in the office who had contributed years to the company. Not only is she not thankful for it, she's trying to hurt me!

"Awh, how intimidating," said Shannon sarcastically before she added, "You'd have to actually get out of there to threaten my job."

"I'm warning you, Shannon. You won't get away with it. I came over to look for Sarah with you, and everyone saw us leaving together. You'd be the first one they turn to if they can't find me," reminded Vivian, who was performing pretty well under duress.

She added, "You will be the primary suspect, so you better find a way to get me out of here before the situation spiral out of control."

"Really? Aw, you're scaring me, Chief Editor," said Shannon sarcastically before she laughed aloud and added, "Vivian William, do you really think that you can frighten me just like that? I can tell them that we parted ways to look for Sarah, and that is why I have no idea where you are."

Shannon reminded, "Tons of people get into trouble while on camping trips, and there is no evidence to prove my guilt. No one can pin this on me, so you can rot here for all I care! Don't worry, though. If anything were to happen to you, I will take over your position as the Chief Editor and will manage the magazine perfectly in your place." After saying her piece, Shannon turned around and left while laughing aloud.

"Come back here, Shannon. Get me out of here," roared Vivian loudly from the bottom of the pit. All she got in response was Shannon's laughter getting softer until it was completely gone.

What do I do now? Am I really going to die here? Vivian struggled to come up with ways to get out of that trap.

On the other side, Finnick and Charlotte had gone to get some water. Charlotte kept trying to strike up a conversation with Finnick the entire way. "Mr. Norton, isn't the scenery on this island amazing?"

Finnick ignored Charlotte. He continued filling up the buckets and collecting the water. He never even looked in the general direction of where Charlotte was standing.

After her experience in the cable car, Charlotte had already gotten used to how distant Finnick acted toward her. Hence, she remained smiling and asked, "Mr. Norton, I remember that you were down with a cold just before the trip. Are you feeling better now?"

Finnick had finished filling one bucket up, so he got another empty bucket and started filling that up, too. He acted as if there was no one around him.

Seeing how Finnick ignored her prompted Charlotte to bite her lip a little. She had always had admirers coming after her, even when she saw a kid. No one had ever made her look so bad before.

No, I can't give up so easily. It took me forever to find a rich guy that I quite like. No matter what, I must make him fall for me!

After filling both buckets up, Finnick picked up the buckets in each hand and turned to leave. Charlotte quickly stepped up to act like she was going after the bucket he was holding. She said, "Mr. Norton, you can't carry both buckets on your own. That is too heavy. Let's carry one each."

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Finnick frowned when he saw that Charlotte's hand was about to touch his. He put one bucket on the floor before walking around Charlotte and continued forging ahead.

Charlotte was instantly dumbstruck. She didn't expect Finnick to do that. In fact, she thought that he would act like a gentleman and insist on carrying the bucket so that Charlotte wouldn't be worn out. I can't believe he's actually making me carry a bucket that heavy.

Charlotte gritted her teeth as she watched Finnick walking further away. She spent all her effort picking up the bucket before she stumbled behind him.

"Mr. Norton, p-please slow down. I... whew, I can't keep up," said Charlotte soon after. She was so tired that she was panting at that moment.

Finnick hesitated when he heard the pants behind him. He ultimately slowed down. She may be annoying, but she's still just a young lady, after all.

Charlotte could help feeling delighted when she saw Finnick slowing down for her. I knew it! He does care about me.

Charlotte suddenly felt energy surging through her veins. She picked up the bucket and rushed to Finnick's side before she put on a shy expression and said, "Thank you, Mr. Norton."

Finnick's eyes glowed with distaste when he heard the woman making that superficial noise. He didn't look at her or respond to her words. Instead, he kept moving forward.

At this rate, we would reach the camp soon. That thought got Charlotte nervous.

No, I fought so hard to get some alone time with him. I will not go back just like that!

Her mind spun, and she tripped herself.

"Ah!" Finnick heard a loud shriek behind him. When he turned around, he saw that Charlotte had fallen, and the bucket was tossed to the side. Water spilled everywhere.

Annoyance flashed past Finnick's face, but he turned around and walked to Charlotte, anyway. "Are you hurt? Can you walk?" asked Finnick.

Finnick's tone was cold, but his words were spoken out of concern, after all, so Charlotte couldn't help feeling gleeful.

She put on a pitiful expression and pressed on her ankle. Her voice seemed thick with tears when she said, "I think I twisted my ankle. It hurts so much."

Finnick scanned the surroundings and noted that there was absolutely no one else around to help. He secretly sighed exasperatedly because he had no choice but to help Charlotte up.

Charlotte's eyes shone with happiness when she saw Finnick helping her up like that. She deliberately acted like she couldn't stand on her own and flung herself into Finnick's arms.

"I am so sorry, Mr. Norton," said Charlotte, but her body never moved away from Finnick. She even tugged her collar a little and rubbed her soft chest on Finnick.

Finnick was instantly infuriated when he saw that Charlotte was obviously trying to seduce him. How dare she still hold such vile thoughts towards me? He didn't have much time to think before he pushed Charlotte away.

Charlotte instinctively stepped backward and steadied herself when Finnick pushed her away without any prior warning. She didn't notice what was wrong until she was already standing firmly. At that moment, she was tempted to slap herself across her face.

Finnick couldn't suppress his anger when he saw that Charlotte wasn't hurt at all. His tone was freezing when he roared, "I warned you earlier that I will chase you out of Sunshine City if you try anything to get to me again. Looks like you didn't heed my warning. Pack your things and leave the city on your own accord once this trip is over. Don't force me to resort to extreme measures."

What? Charlotte was momentarily stunned after hearing Finnick's words. Her emotions ran wild when she finally registered what was going on. I worked so hard to create a stable life here in Sunshine City. Am I going to be chased out just like that?

For a moment there, Charlotte couldn't accept the reality. She couldn't believe that Finnick would actually do something so cruel to her. She couldn't control her tears, and as she wept, she demanded, "Why? I am younger and prettier than that old hag, Vivian William. Why must you treat me so cruelly for her sake?"

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Rotting disgust and indifference filled in Charlotte's eyes. Seeing this, Finnick uttered without a trace of emotion, "You're not worthy of being compared with Vivian. You'll never match up to her. Not a single part of you stands a chance of beating her."

Then Finnick picked up his bucket. He returned to the well and fetched another bucket of water before heading back. He did all of this without sparing a single glance at Charlotte.

Seeing Finnick leave without any concern for her, Charlotte's knees gave in. She fell into a squat and bawled. Her shoulders trembled rapidly as angry tears slashed down her face.

Her appalled thoughts questioned Finnick's audacity. How can he say that I'm not good enough? I won't accept this defeat. It's not fair! Plus, do I really have to leave Sunshine City once we get back?

A shudder rattled in her chest as she thought back to when Finnick threatened, "Don't force me to take extreme measures". There was no doubt that Finnick's intervention could easily remove Charlotte from Sunshine City. Plus, he could get the entire media industry to boycott her.

At the thought of this, Charlotte sobbed harder. She was only trying to secure her ideal husband; how did it lead to such a pitiful ending?

Finnick returned to the campsite with a hardened expression. He ignored her cries that howled from behind him.

From afar, the others caught sight of his return and sighed in relief. They rushed towards him and asked, "Mr. Norton. Why did you take so long to fetch the water? And where's Charlotte?"

"Yeah, Mr. Norton. You've been gone for a long time and everyone was starting to wonder if something happened to you guys. We even went out in groups of search parties but couldn't find you guys at all. It was driving everyone crazy."

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Finnick felt a pang of guilt after being surrounded by everyone's worried faces. "The water spilled on our way back, so it took longer than planned. I apologize for the delay and for making everyone worry."

"The important thing is that you're alright." Comforting smiles bloomed on everyone's faces as they frantically waved at him. They felt flattered after seeing their boss explain so apologetically. "Speaking of which, where's Charlotte? Didn't she accompany you earlier? Why didn't she return with you?"

Finnick's features darkened at the mention of Charlotte. He responded coldly, "She's on her way. She'll be here soon."

Noticing this stark change in Finnick's expression, everyone pondered quizzically. Did they get into an argument? But why would there be conflict between them? That's just not possible.

Although they thought so in unison, no one dared to ask Finnick what happened. After all, he was their superior.

"Where's Ms. Morrison?" Finnick asked. He had glanced around but couldn't find Vivian in the crowd.

"After you guys left, Sarah went by herself to collect firewood and hasn't returned till now. We also tried searching for her earlier but failed. Then Vivian got worried for Sarah's safety since there's no telling what dangers could happen to an unattended girl. So she and Shannon set off to find her again."

"Just the two of them?" Finnick's face was anxiety-ridden.

"Yeah," Caroline nodded. "Vivian was afraid that we'd encounter more danger if we all went, so she told us to stay here. Then she left with Shannon."

Hearing this, annoyance blew up in Finnick. Always so concerned for others being in danger... why can't she look out for herself! Must she worry me all the time?

Finnick grew more anxious as he waited for almost ten minutes. Seeing that Vivian still hadn't returned, he couldn't wait any longer. Before he could gather everyone to form search parties, he saw Caroline emotionally racing off somewhere.

"Sarah, where have you been? Why did you take so long to get back?" Caroline asked. She sprinted over to Sarah's side with a face full of concern and self-blame. Sarah's disappearance must have really worried her.

"I thought I'd pick up some firewood nearby, but I accidentally got lost. I just couldn't find my way back. I took a couple of wrong turns, then started wandering further away. Took me a lot of effort but I made it back eventually," Sarah explained as she lugged some firewood in her arms.

Earlier, Shannon had mentioned hearing Sarah's cries for help. This made Caroline worry. She checked Sarah from top to bottom for injuries. "Did you get into any trouble? Did you get hurt?"