

Chapter Four

Vivian sat alone for a few moments, considering her options and the possible outcome from each. She sighed, and stood to leave the room, not completely satisfied at where her thoughts were going. Still, she hoped there might be **her silver lining** around the impending cloud of marriage she was undoubtedly going to be forced to accept. Her gaze wandered to the decorations and the pictures on the wall. Lord Hyacinthe was by no means poor. Surely he could take good care of her. He had presented her every opportunity to do what she needed and with a logical and legal excuse.

However, **and** she sighed **thinking about this**, she had always wanted to marry for love. Yet this had seemed an impossible dream **as she could not go out into society**, and her life had forbade her the chance to meet gentlemen who were eligible to offer for her hand. She surely would have no finer offer than what was here in front of her. Then again, surely the engagement would be long enough that perhaps she would find that she could care for this man, or simply find a way out of the situation.

Shaking her head, she remembered why she was there. **If he was proven guilty** while they were betrothed, then it would all come to naught. He would be taken away for treason, and she would be freed from the engagement. But she could only complete her assignment by remaining under his roof, and agreeing to be married would provide that needed arrangement. By all means, it was the simplest solution to the problem at hand.

She was so occupied with her thoughts that she almost didn't see the little girl that scampered around the corner ahead of her. Smiling, Vivian slowly crept toward the corner and peeked around it. The child gave a loud squeak and began to giggle, tucking a small blanket

Comment [B11]: Qu: If this is referring to a specific silver lining in a previous chapter, I think it would read better with "...a silver lining..."

Comment [NK2]: Qu: Why can she not go out into society? Has she not been introduced or is it because of the secret work she does? If she is 19 then she should have been introduced to society about 2-3 years ago. I feel like this would be a good part to either give the reader a little more background of Vivian, even if it's a snippet. For example: "Since she began this life of secrecy after her father passed away." This could be placed after the 2nd sentence. It would then give the reader a step into her past which could help them relate with her, creating a connection because they know her on a personal level.

However this is contradicting in the previous chapter that she didn't care what people thought of her.

Comment [B3]: Yes, I will expound and elaborate. Good catch there. And very good question! Now I have to get creative! She doesn't go out into society much as it would conflict with the secrecy, yes, but she still would have to interact with people on some level – just not people of high society or fashion.

Comment [NK4]: Here would be a great place to introduce more of what is going on. For example: "due to the his actions/workings with the opposing government." This would give the reader an insight that what is going on is against the government and that's why he could be tried for treason. But if it's too early to mention some of the reasons that would cause him to get tried then this is fine.

behind her, crouching to the ground, not sure whether to run or not. Vivian remained still until the girl stood up again, obviously deciding that Vivian was harmless. Vivian watched as the younger sister peaked out of a small alcove ahead. Finally the older of the girls came close to Vivian and stared directly up at her, all fear gone.

She crouched in front of the child. “Pleased to meet you, I am Lady Vivian. What is your name?”

The little girl followed suit and crouched on the ground in front of Vivian, folding her hands in her lap as Vivian had, a small blanket clenched in one of her fists and dangling down at her side “Venessa. Papa talls me Nessa,” she added as an afterthought. “Don’t tell Papa we yeft Nana. Nana’s still sweeping and we want to pyay.”

Vivian took a moment to decipher her childish talk, smiling at Venessa’s inability to say her *Ls* or her *Rs*. She remembered her father telling her that she struggled with *Vs* and *Fs* at the age of four and insisted on telling everyone her name was Bibian and that she was sore years old.

“I certainly shall not tell Papa.” She ventured, taking advantage of how talkative this child was. “What is your sister’s name?”

“Amanda.” Venessa glanced over her shoulder and her little sister ducked out of sight again.

“Do you think she will meet me?” Vivian asked, standing again as her legs began to tremble from holding her crouched position. Venessa nodded and ran down the hall toward her sister, her blanket dragging behind her. She disappeared into the alcove. She waited as she heard Venessa talking sweetly to Amanda. “Dat yady is weally nice. You will yike hew.”

There was a long silence and Vivian wondered if they were going to return.

Comment [NK5]: Parallelism with the rest of the sentence.

Comment [B6]: What do you mean?

Comment [NK7]: I mean that the verb was originally past tense like “crouched,” when previously you used the action form with the word “tucking.” By changing the verb to have ‘ing’ at the end it help the next verb have the action also, following what you have already done by using present actions, instead of both present and past.

Comment [NK8]: I think the child talk is cute but sometimes it’s done a little too much. This first example is good, but later on such as in the part where they are being chased by their dad and hiding from him, it becomes confusing for the reader. So possibly taking it out or only having her not say her *l’s* or *r’s* and not other letters or just one of them instead of two.

Formatted: Indent: First line: 0.5”

Finally Venessa's voice came floating from the alcove again. "Come on, Manda. Come see hew. She is weally nice."

Vivian had only another moment to wait before the two sisters came out of the alcove, Venessa holding Amanda's hand and guiding her forward, talking quietly the whole way. "Come with me. She is weally nice." Finally they arrived in front of Vivian.

Vivian slowly lowered herself again to the children's level. Amanda's innocent and trusting brown eyes looked into her own and soon Amanda was willingly sliding up to her side and taking Vivian's hand in her own small sticky one.

"Hi," she said quietly.

"Nice to meet you," Vivian replied in a soft voice, trying not to think of what was sticking between the little girls hand and her own.

Venessa came up on the other side of her and took her other hand. "Can we go pyay? Will you take us to the gawden?" Venessa glanced hopefully up at Vivian.

Vivian knew she was in love. "We must ask your nanny, and change our clothes to go outdoors." She replied, still holding one hand on each side of her. "Come, we shall find her."

"Wait!" Venessa cried, and she ran back to the alcove where Amanda had been hiding. Amanda tugged on Vivian's hand and she followed the anxious child. Inside the small alcove Venessa was crouched on the floor piling a stash of hidden jam tarts into the front of her skirts. Red jam stuck to her hands, the carpets, her white frock, and the wall. Vivian bit back a laugh, remembering all too well her own escapades to the kitchen as a child, stealing what she could and thinking the cooks never saw her, though in truth they probably had seen it all. As Venessa stood, Vivian saw herself as a child, holding tarts in her own dress and never guessing what sort of mess she was making of it.

Comment [NK9]: I think this is modern term. In the Oxford English Dictionary it says that the first "hi" was used in 1847, a bit later than this novel's time period. The earliest for 'hello' was listed in 1827. I'm not saying you need to get rid of the greeting but you could change it to "Good day" or "How do you do." I think this would be good, because little children were taught to address their elders with respect and politeness even if they were shy.

Comment [NK10]: Qu: Why is she in love with them? Is it because of their sweet spirits? Or because she can feel their longing of wanting to be loved by a mother figure, just like she was when she was younger and lost her mom? For example: "She could see herself in these little girls. The yearning for a love of a mother." You then show why later, explaining she lost her mom. This will help the reader see that she has a soft spot and she had to grow up at a young age. That's why she is self-reliant and capable working as a secret agent.

Comment [B11]: If I was to move this comment until after the next sentence, when she sees in them what she was herself as a child, would it make more sense? Or would it still need further explanation do you suppose?

Comment [NK12]: I think that is a really good idea, then it would have the idea of why she loves them implied! Plus it would be a great lead in to the next paragraph.

These two children suddenly touched her heart as she remembered growing up without her mother; inventing her own ways to keep entertained while escaping the nursery. More than anything at that moment, she felt the need to give these adorable children what they did not have. Though she knew her papa had loved her, she would have given a lot for a mother's love at times while she grew into a young lady, and she wanted to give that to these children.

Vivian let Venessa lead her to the nursery, where the old nanny was waking up. Blinking rapidly, she spotted Vivian with the two little girls. Venessa dumped the tarts onto the table with a pleased expression and wiped her sticky hands on her already ruined dress.

"Gracious!" The older woman squeaked, jumping from her chair where she had fallen asleep and rushing forward to curtsy to Vivian.

Smiling politely and pretending she hadn't noticed the older woman sleeping, Vivian inclined her head, but quickly reassured the woman. "I'm sorry; I came to find the girls' things to take them outdoors. My name is Lady Vivian **Thorpe**. I am a guest of his lordship."

"Mrs. Harlow," the woman said by way of introduction, seemingly stunned by the appearance of Vivian in the nursery.

"If you will help me ready these young ladies to go outside, I shall return to collect them. No need to fret yourself, you needn't accompany us, they will be in good hands." The older woman curtsied before hurrying to find the girls some clean clothes and **warm wraps**.

Vivian slipped from the nursery and down to her room. Bitsy was nowhere to be seen. Knowing she would have plenty of trouble getting into a **riding dress** on her own, she called for Bitsy and was soon changed into a more appropriate dress for a walk in the garden with the two young girls.

Comment [NK13]: Qu: I thought it was Oglethorpe?

Comment [B14]: Double checking – but I'm almost certain they didn't carry the title, just the father's last name Maybe I will simply cut this and leave it as Lady Vivian.

Comment [NK15]: Yes, but isn't the last name: Oglethorpe, not Thorpe? I thought she would introduce herself as "My name is Lady Vivian Oglethorpe."

Comment [NK16]: Qu: Do we get to know what time of year this is taking place or takes place? Is this happening in the fall, or early spring? I think it would be good to develop the setting, helping the reader to picture the outside scenes. You could add a sentence like: "Due to the cool autumn morning." Or "Though it was spring the air was still chilly in the morning." These can be placed where ever throughout the text when the characters are outside or talking about it.

Comment [NK17]: Qu: I thought it was a outside dress that she needed to change into, not a riding one?

Comment [B18]: Ha ha ha yes, yes it is!

Bitsy held her tongue for most of the process but Vivian saw her smiling as she finished tucking in a few strands of hair that had escaped while dressing her hair.

Comment [NK19]: "Process" and the dressing was already address in the beginning of the sentence. By changing it to "while dressing her hair" points back to why the hair escaped.

"Why the sly smile, dearest?" Vivian finally asked as the maid bit her lip to repress the grin.

"I am wondering that you are taking such an interest in these children. I have never seen this side of you, Lady, and it is endearing."

Comment [NK20]: I liked you're idea of Bitsy calling her "Lady" as a name. So I am fine if you want to keep those parts capitalized.

"So are the children," Vivian commented lightly. Then she sighed, knowing she would have to let it out eventually. "Lord Hyacinthe asked me to marry him."

Bitsy dropped the purple short jacket she had retrieved for Vivian and stared in shock, not even moving to pick up the fallen piece of clothing. Vivian collected the short jacket and pulled it on over her cream-colored walking dress.

Bitsy still did not move.

Vivian smiled at her, almost grateful the maid had not responded. She was sure Bitsy would have asked what the answer had been, but Vivian did not feel like discussing it as she was not yet sure how she was going to respond. She admired the affect of her dress in the mirror before quickly running from the room to collect the girls and fulfill her promise.

Holding the now clean hands of one child on each side of her, she led them down the stairs and out into the gardens. The footmen paused to stare before opening the door for her and bowing. Smiling at the excited faces of the girls on either side of her, she knew her mind had been made up for her. She would fulfill her assignment, as she would indeed marry for love - not love of the man, but for his excitable and beautiful daughters who were in need of a devoted mother.

Comment [NK21]: Qu: This is a little confusing. ...she is holding just the hands of the clean child on each side of her? Maybe you could change it to "Holding the now clean hands of the one child on her right with the other child on her left..."

Comment [NK22]: I think it would be good for Vivian to use this as a reminder later, because she is saying to herself that is why she is marrying Terrence. Such as: "Terrence made her blood boil, why did she marry this awful man? She then paused and the faces of his daughters came into view. She did this for them and the mission, she could not let either on both sides be let down." Etc. You can play with it if you like the suggestion.

#