

ONE PIECE: New Beginnings - Nami

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An AU fic that places Nami and her adoptive family in a new location.

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ONE PIECE:

New Beginnings

Nami

Chapter 01

Belle Mere took one last drag from her cigarette, snuffed it on a nearby window sill, and went back to patrolling the halls of Marine Base 55.

“Why did I ever agree to rejoin the Marines?” she mused to herself. True, she was now getting triple standard wages, what with the base being located on the Grand Line, and she was fortunate the Major at the recruiting office helped her find a base that allowed families.

Belle Mere chuckled a bit as she heard the sounds of children's shrieks and laughter coming faintly from outside. No doubt Nojiko, Nami, and the rest of the Marine Base 55 children were out playing in the first rainfall in two months. A desert country wouldn't have been Belle Mere's first choice, but her choices were limited if she wanted to bring her daughters with her.

As Belle Mere continued her rounds, she heard the sound of at least two men in conversation coming near. A shudder ran through her body as she recognized the voice of her commanding officer. No doubt he was buttering up some local dignitary for a huge donation, most of which would go in his own pockets. Belle Mere silently prayed for a closet or something to duck into so she wouldn't have to deal with the jerk. No such luck.

Right around the corner came, in Belle Mere's opinion, one of the worst Base Captains in the history of the Marines. Instead of the standard uniform, Captain Slique wore a leisure suit with the Marine's symbol on the back, cuffs, and pant legs. As if that wasn't tacky enough, Slique also wore a large number of

rings on his fingers and gold chains around his neck. He also probably used about a gallon of gel when slicking back his dark purple hair. The first time Belle Mere met Slique, she had to bite her lower lip to keep from laughing at his sunglasses with the Marine's symbol on each lens.

“Ah, Lieutenant Belle Mere, what perfect timing. I want to introduce you to a very important person.” Captain Slique exclaimed as he draped his left arm on Belle Mere's shoulders. Though he wasn't actually touching anything, his hand was just a little too close to Belle Mere's chest. With his right arm, he pointed towards two men who, just as Belle Mere guessed, looked like local nobles.

“Lieutenant Belle Mere, this is his Royal Highness King Nefertari Cobra of Alabasta. He played a great part in establishing this base.” Cobra put a hand behind his head and chuckled a bit.

“Now really Captain, I only sold you the land on Alubarna's riverbank for you to build the base on. It's the people who actually built the base who deserve the credit.” Slique let out that annoying, almost feminine, laugh of his.

“Uhuhuhuh, how like you, Your Majesty, to stick up for the little people. And speaking of little people...” Slique motioned his right hand back to Belle Mere. “This, Your Majesty, is one of my favorite subordinates. Allow me introduce the lovely Lieutenant Belle Mere.”

The only thing keeping Belle Mere from introducing Slique to all kinds of pain was that she was in the presence of royalty. In fact, Belle Mere knew quite a bit about King Cobra and she had a lot of respect for him. It was refreshing, in this day and age, to know there was a ruler who considered himself his people's servant instead of the other way around.

Cobra was about to introduce Igaram in turn when a loud bell started sounding from outside. Just then, Cadet Tashigi rushed in and made a beeline for Belle Mere. Slique was more than annoyed.

“CADET TASHIGI! What is the meaning of this uncalled for interruption?” Tashigi made a clumsy salute then stammered out an explanation.

“Well, err, Captain, I just thought that the Lieutenant here, I'm really sorry about the interruption, by the way, might want to know that Nami's in trouble.” Belle Mere quickly slipped out of Slique's grasp.

“What sort of trouble?”

“Well, I really don't know the details, but she's in a fight with some local kid just outside the base.” Belle Mere sighed and put a hand over her face.

“Aw geez, I just bought her that dress a week ago. OK Tashigi, take me there.” As Tashigi led Belle Mere outside, Slique made a desperate attempt to save face.

“Uhuhuhuh, I apologize for that disruption. A well meaning Admiral decided to make this a base where officers could bring their families with them. I'm not one to speak ill of higher ranking officers, but I don't think he took into consideration what a bother children can be sometimes.” Cobra let out a hearty laugh.

“Don't worry Captain; I have a little girl of my own. I know exactly how the Lieutenant must feel.”

“Excuse me sire,” said Igaram “But wasn't Princess Vivi pla- pla- *Ahem* ~Ma, Ma, Mwa~ playing with some of her friends just outside the base?”

“Ah yes, you're right Igaram. Why do you...” Cobra and Igaram looked at each other, and suddenly took off after Belle Mere and Tashigi. Slique, left all alone, made a fist and gritted his teeth.

“Arrrrrgh! That brat Nami is going to get it this time!”

“Aw, come on Leader. Let them fight.”

Belle Mere and Tashigi arrived just as Nojiko and some boy were pulling Nami and her opponent away from each other. Before saying anything, Belle Mere took a moment to assess the situation. Just as she feared, Nami's new dress was a mess. But that was probably more from rolling around in the damp ground than anything else. Nami would still have to be punished a bit, but overall things weren't too bad in that department.

As for Nami herself, she had bruises all over, her nose was bleeding a little, and there were a few light scratches here and there. Nothing she hasn't gotten before. The other girl, Belle Mere could see it was a girl now, was pretty much the same as Nami except she had a black eye instead of a bloody nose. The girls were just now starting to calm down, but Belle Mere didn't think Nami was ready to talk just yet. So she turned to Nojiko.

"Thanks for looking out for Nami, Nojiko. You can hand her over to me now." Nojiko let go of Nami just long enough for Belle Mere to take her in a gentle, but firm, grip. "Now, what happened here Nojiko?"

"Well, we Marine base kids and these Alabasta kids were throwing mud balls at each other. It was all fun until Nami accidentally threw a mud ball that hit that other girl in the eye. Nami was going to apologize, honest, but then that other girl started yelling at Nami right in her face. Nami, being Nami, yelled right back, and before I knew it they started fighting."

"Kohza is that what happened between Vivi and... Nami, wasn't it, Lieutenant?" Tashigi jumped a bit when she saw King Cobra himself had arrived. Belle Mere simply nodded to let Cobra know he had gotten her daughter's name right. As Igaram took hold of Vivi, the boy who helped Nojiko break up the fight turned to Cobra.

"That Marine Base girl pretty much summed up what happened, Your Majesty."

"So, Nami, you cause trouble for your betters even when they're your own age." Belle Mere took a second to pinch the bridge of her nose. Slique getting involved was the last thing any of them needed right now. Slique walked up to Vivi and kneeled in front of her as best he could without actually getting his pants in the mud.

"Princess Nefertari Vivi, I deeply apologize for what that awful Nami did to you. I assure you she won't

get away with it." Slique got up and turned to face Belle Mere. "Lieutenant Belle Mere! I hereby order you to finally discipline that beastly little bully..." Here Slique was cut off by several of the children.

"HEY! Nami's no bully!"

"Yeah, it was a fair fight!"

"She did throw the first punch, but only after Sub-Leader Vivi started pulling on her cheek!"

"THAT'S ENOUGH FROM YOU BRATS!" Slique bellowed at the children. Clearing his throat, Slique turned backed to Belle Mere. "As I saying, I order you to take Nami over your knee, right here in front of everyone, and give her ten hard smacks on the bottom."

Belle Mere felt Nami tense up. No way, no way was she going to embarrass Nami like that. She'd take the punishment for disobeying an order, but she wasn't going to do it.

"Um, sir..." Slique turned to a shaking Tashigi.

"What is it NOW Cadet Tashigi?"

"Well, I can't remember anything from the protocol manual, but I'm fairly certain you can't give an order like that."

"She's right," Slique's heart nearly skipped a beat when he heard Cobra speak. "This is a parenting matter, not a Marine matter. We can deal with this without your help, Captain." Slique silently hissed, then turned on Tashigi.

“Cadet Tashigi, would I be right in assuming you had your little brother ring the alarm bell?”

“Um... Yes sir.”

“Then you've just forfeited two days' wages and earned yourself a week of toilet duty. A children's fight, even if royalty is involved, is NOT worth sounding the alarm over.” With that, Slique stalked off to his office to brood.

“Now then,” Cobra stroked his beard for a bit, and then snapped his fingers. “I've got it. Since it was just a children's fight, and neither of them got hurt too badly, let's just have them apologize to each other and shake hands.”

“Heh, that sounds just fine to me Your Majesty.” Belle Mere released Nami and gave her a light shove towards Vivi. “You go first Nami. You were going to apologize to her in the first place anyway, right?” Nami let a sigh. She didn't feel like apologizing to that jerk anymore. But it was a much better alternative to Slimy Slique's idea.

“OK. Vivi, I'm sorry I ACCIDENTLY hit you in the eye with a mud ball.” Cobra turned to Vivi.

“Vivi, don't you have something to say in turn?” Vivi took a few deep breaths. Captain what's-his-name was being completely unfair. Nami was a clod and a dirty fighter, but she was fighting too. Her father, though still smiling, was giving her “The Look”. She might as well get it over with.

“Nami, I'm sorry I overreacted a LITTLE.” As the two girls shook hands, Cobra nodded with approval. Belle Mere wasn't so sure. From the way Nami and Vivi were grunting and glaring from behind fake smiles, she guessed they were letting each other know this was far from over.

“And now it's time for all good children to be heading home.” The children let out a collective “Awwww.”, but followed Cobra's suggestion without any further protest. Belle Mere made sure no one was looking, and then motioned for her daughters to follow her.

“Come on girls, we'll stop at Doc's and have him look at Nami's nose and the lump on her head.”

“Huh? What lump on my- OW! What did you do that for?”

“That's punishment for getting rough in a new dress.” Belle Mere answered with her trademark grin.

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ONE PIECE:

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Nami

Chapter 02

“Stuck up jerk!”

“Clumsy oaf!”

Outside the gates of Alubarna Elementary School, a crowd of children watched in giddy anticipation. Nami and Vivi had, quite literally, run into each other again. Each thought the other was to blame and they were now lobbing insults at each other. Nojiko, just a few feet away, made a silent prayer that Nami would remember her promise to Belle Mere not to fight in new clothes. Meanwhile, Nami and Vivi started to get a bit more creative, and a lot more personal, with their insults.

“Royal Pain!”

“East Blue Hick!”

“Well if you're so classy, Vivi, why do you keep an overgrown retarded duck as a pet?” Vivi took a step back, but then a wicked smile crossed her face. If Nami wanted to play hardball, so be it.

“Oh yeah, Nami? Well, your mom looks like she got her hair cut by a drunken lobster-man!” Nami froze for second. She started gritting her teeth and her hands balled into fists. A few kids nearby could have sworn they saw a tear run down her cheek. Nami took a moment to think. What Vivi said was technically true, but there was still no way Nami was going to let her get away it. But there was also her promise to Belle Mere to consider. After a few more seconds, Nami decided on a course of action.

“THAT DOES IT!” Nami pointed straight at Vivi “Vivi, I'm calling you out!”

“Nami, no...” Nojiko whispered as she braced herself to jump between her sister and her rival if necessary.

“But not here, not now.” Nami said. Nojiko let out a sigh of relief. “It's too crowded here, and it's getting late. But you just name the time and place and I'll be there to settle this once and for all!”

“You got it!” Vivi pointed down the street behind her. “If you go straight down this road, you'll come to some ruins on the outskirts. I'll be waiting for you there at noon tomorrow!”

“Fine.”

“Fine.”

“FINE!”

“FINE!”

“BLEAH!”

“BLEAH!”

They turned backs on each other with a “Humph!” and continued on their separate ways back home. As the crowd dispersed, one of Kohza's smaller buddies tugged on his sleeve.

“What is it Alad?”

“Are we going to help Sub-Leader Vivi tomorrow?”

“You mean other than cheering for her? Of course not! Thugs are one thing but this is a Challenge of Honor! I wouldn't have made Vivi our Sub-Leader if she couldn't handle something like this by herself.”

“But Leader, last time you...”

“Last time it looked like the adults were going to break it up anyway.” Kohza decided to leave out how he couldn't resist helping a cute girl like Nojiko. “This time, it'll be to the finish! Understand now?” Alad got a big grin and saluted.

“Yes sir, Leader!” Kohza ruffled Alad's hair a bit.

“I knew you would. Come on, let's gather the rest of the Suna Suna Clan and play stickball or something. Leave Vivi alone, though. She's not in the mood and she needs to save her strength.”

Belle Mere gave the bean soup a stir and tasted. It was just about ready. She checked the clock on the wall and nodded. She walked to the door to the girls' room and gave a knock.

“Hey girls, time to set the table. Doc will be here any minute.” As Nojiko and Nami arranged the dishes

and silverware, Belle Mere noticed Nami was still being strangely quiet. “Something wrong, Nami? You aren't afraid of what I'll see on your report card, are you? I already told you there's no way your grades could be worse than mine were.” Nami let out a sigh. Belle Mere was going to find out sooner or later anyway, better tell her now.

“No, it's nothing like that Belle Mere. I have a fight with Vivi tomorrow.” Belle Mere nearly knocked over the glasses she was reaching for as she spun around to face Nami.

“For crying out loud Nami, I thought I told you to keep your distance from that girl!” Nojiko quickly darted between her adoptive mother and sister. Another shouting match was the last thing either of them needed.

“It's not like Nami planned it Belle Mere. They bumped into each other after school. Nami remembered her promise, so she told Vivi she'd fight some other time.” Belle Mere took a few breaths as she calmed down. Something told her Nojiko was leaving something out. She looked at Nami.

“Nami, why didn't you just walk away without saying anything?”

“Well I was going to, but she called me names, so I called names back. It went on like that for a while until I made fun of her pet and she...”

“And she what, Nami?” Nami fidgeted a little. Belle Mere sighed and knelt down next to Nami. “Here, if you don't want to say it out loud, just whisper it in my ear.” Nami hesitated for a second, but then did as Belle Mere asked. Belle Mere got back up and pointed at her hair. “Seesh! Nami, just how many comments like that do you think I've gotten since I had my hair cut like this?”

Belle Mere crossed her arms and let out a deep breath. She was glad Nami was being honest with her and kept her promise. On the other hand, she really didn't want Nami fighting when she didn't have to. Then again, she was the one who taught Nami how to fight in the first place. After a few more seconds, Belle Mere decided what to do.

"I'm a little disappointed in you Nami; you're usually smarter than this. But if you feel like you have to do this, go ahead. I won't try to stop you. Just remember to wear one of your hand-me-downs." Just then a knock came at the door. Belle Mere quickly put on a smile. "OK, that's all I'm going to say on the subject. Nojiko let Doc in so we can get supper started."

Later that night, with the girls in bed, Belle Mere sat at the table with Doc with a bottle of sake between them. Doc adjusted his shades a bit.

"So, I've heard from some of the other kids that Nami has a rematch tomorrow."

"Yeah, Nami told me all about it." Belle Mere sighed. "Maybe I should have tried to stop her." Doc started laughing.

"You think she would have listened if you did? She has too much of you in her for that."

"Yeah, I guess you're right."

"I wish I could see it myself. After the last time Nami tangled with that little princess, well... Heh he, I hadn't seen her so banged up since that weekend she and Nojiko had spend at the orphanage before you could legally adopt them." Belle Mere started to laugh a bit too.

"The kids at that place probably figured my girls were easy pickings. Too bad they didn't figure on Belle Mere's expert fighting lessons." Belle Mere knocked back a glass of sake. "Say Doc, why did you come with us? I thought you said Cocoyashi would be your grave."

"And so it will be. But someone had to keep an eye on you three, and you know how easily Genzo gets seasick." Belle Mere and Doc had one last good laugh before Doc got up to leave. As he reached for the door, Doc turned to Belle Mere one last time.

“Don't worry about Nami, not too much. She's a good kid.”

“I know Doc, I know.”

The next day Belle Mere had morning watch duty. She stood by the entrance to Marine Base 55 keeping an eye out for suspicious characters. All she saw, however, was just about every kid going to the ruins to watch the fight. There no was no sign of Nami yet, but she did manage to catch Nojiko.

“Hey, Nojiko, shouldn't Nami be with you?”

“She wanted to practice some of the punches you taught her first. I'll wait for her over by the school.”

“OK, make sure Nami goes straight to Doc's office afterwards.”

“I will. Bye now!”

About an hour later, just when Belle Mere's shift was over, Nami finally arrived. Belle Mere tried to stifle a laugh. Nami was wearing the “Lion” dress Belle Mere had made from Nojiko's old sunflower dress. Belle Mere knew Nami probably choose it because it was her least favorite hand-me-down. But she still couldn't resist making a crack.

“Going to try to psyche her out, eh? That's a pretty neat idea.” When she saw the worried look on Nami's face, Belle Mere turned serious and kneeled down to put a hand on Nami's shoulder. “Look, I said I'm not going to try to stop you, and I won't. But are you sure you want to go through with this?” Nami sighed and nodded.

“It was bound to happen. Vivi and I really don't like each other.” Belle Mere considered countering this, using herself and Captain Slique as an example. But no, that first question was her last attempt to talk Nami out of this. So instead, she just gave Nami a light kiss on forehead.

“Huh? What was that for?”

“For luck, now go on, Nojiko's waiting for you by the school.”

As Nami went off, her face brightened a bit and she turned to wave goodbye. Belle Mere waved back, then went home for a small drink.

Some kids were at the ruins outside Alubarna to cheer for their Princess/Sub-Leader Vivi. Others came to show support for their fellow Marine Base 55 kid Nami. The rest, which was actually the majority, just liked watching a good fight. Vivi stood there in the middle of the large space surrounded by the other kids. She glared at the direction Nami was supposed to come from with her arms crossed and tapped her foot.

Kohza checked the pocket watch his father loaned him. It was nearly noon. Just then, as shrill whistle pierced the air. Megane, Tashigi's younger brother, pushed through the crowd and came up to Kohza. He adjusted his glasses and cleared his throat.

“My lookout just saw Nami pass the school. She'll be here soon.” While Megane wasn't exactly a “Leader” like Kohza, most of the Marine base kids followed him because he was the eldest and they liked his ideas. He bore a striking resemblance to his sister, except he was shorter and wore slightly thicker glasses. Kohza got up and raised a hand for silence.

“Listen up, this is a personal fight. It's between Vivi and Nami, no one else. No matter the outcome, the Suna Suna Clan and the Marine base kids will remain allies. Agreed?”

“YEAH!” the children answered all together.

“Here she comes!” Megane's lookout cried out. Sure enough, Nami was coming up the path with Nojiko

following close behind. The crowd quickly opened up to let Nami through to the space cleared for the fight. They also let Nojiko pass out of respect for the fact she was Nami's sister. All was silence as Nami and Vivi stood there glaring at each other.

“So Nami, you showed up. I thought you would. You're no coward, I'll give you that.”

“Neither are you, Vivi. So, I don't suppose there's a chance we could just take back the things we said yesterday and walk away...”

“Nope.”

“Didn't think so. Let's do this.”

The crowd broke into a wave of cheers as Nami and Vivi lunged at each other and interlocked fingers. After a few moments of struggling, Nami managed to force Vivi back a few steps. But then Vivi broke the grip and tackled Nami down to the ground. Vivi wasted no time in grabbing a corner of Nami's mouth and pulling as hard as she could. Nami returned the favor and yanked on Vivi's ponytail as well.

“Gooooo Princess Vivi!”

“Get her Nami!”

“Fight! Fight! Fight!”

The two girls rolled around on the clearing. All the while they tugged and twisted each other's faces and hair. After Nami finally pushed Vivi off her, they got up and took moment to catch their breath. Then they came back at each other in a flurry of kicks, slaps, and punches.

“Whoa, Leader, I don't think Sub-Leader Vivi fought even half this hard when she challenged you!”

“Well, we weren't nearly as mad at each other as she and Nami are right now.”

“Wow! Nami fights like a tiger!”

“Like a LION you mean!”

“Hey! That gives me a great idea...”

“Fight on, Lion Nami!”

“Heheh, they'd never believe me if I told them she HATED that dress.”

Nami and Vivi broke apart for a breather again. Nami had a feeling neither of them could keep this up much longer. She certainly knew she couldn't. She ached all over, her nose was bleeding again, and she was pretty sure her hair was a total wreck.

Nami looked over at Vivi. Her hair was no longer in a ponytail and was a complete mess. Her nose also had a trickle of blood coming out, and Nami had managed to give her another black eye.

“Hey, East Blue Hick, ready to give up? You've already gone long enough to save face.” If Vivi had asked after the face and hair pulling stage, Nami might have considered it for a minute. But her answer still would have been the same as it was now.

“Not a chance, Royal Pain. I said we'd finish this once and for all and I meant it!” Nami got back into a

fighting stance. Vivi did the same. Nami swung a right with all her might. Vivi swung a left with all her might. Both shots connected right in the opposing girl's face.

Time seemed to freeze for a few seconds. Then both girls were sent flying into the ground. Nami landed on her side while Vivi went down flat on her back. After a moment, Nami managed to get back up. She gingerly touched her left arm, which got a nasty scrape from the fall. Then she looked over at Vivi. Vivi was still conscious, but she didn't look like she was in hurry to get back up. Nami then remembered a rule Belle Mere taught her.

"Girls, if you're still standing but other kid isn't, count to ten. If they don't get back up by the time you're done, fight's over. You won."

"All right Belle Mere, I'll do this your way." Nami began counting "One... Two..."

"Huh? What's Lion Nami doing?"

"Well obviously she's not going to hit Vivi while she's down!"

"Three... Four..."

"I know that! But what's the counting for?"

"I think... She's counting Vivi out!"

"Seven... Eight..."

"Can she do that Leader?"

“As good a way to finish a fight as any, I guess.”

“Nine... TEN! It's over Vivi. I WIN!”

“YAH! LION NAMI! LION NAMI! LION NAMI!” Nami silently prayed that nickname wouldn't stick as she walked over to Vivi. One look at Vivi told Nami that she accepted her defeat. Nami reached out with her right arm.

“Need a hand?” Vivi nodded and grabbed onto Nami's hand. Nami pulled her up and they both stumbled a bit. “Don't feel too bad about losing. You went down fighting, and that's just as good as winning in Belle Mere's book.” Vivi bit her lower lip.

“Nami, does this make us friends now?”

“I wouldn't go that far Vivi. But now, I think, we can at least stop being enemies.”

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