

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 26

"No, I-I can't do this..." she stammered, taking a few steps back on shaky legs. "G-Grandpa? I'm not feeling well... I think I'll take my leave first. I'll definitely come back another time! I'm so sorry!"

With that, she rushed out of the private room without even looking back.

The elder Mr. Norton sneered as he watched her disappear down the corridor. "So that's the girl you married? She's so rude."

Finnick glared at him. "I wouldn't have even tried if you haven't been breathing down my neck the whole time."

The elder Mr. Norton widened his eyes in shock. "Y-You're no better than her!"

He loved his youngest grandson more than anything in the world, but everything changed after the accident ten years ago. Reading his grandson's mind became incredibly difficult.

Finnick decided that he did not want to continue the conversation any further. Pushing the wheels of his wheelchair, he made a move to leave the room as well.

"Hey! Where are you going?" the elder Mr. Norton demanded.

"I've lost my appetite," Finnick said without bothering to look back. "You can eat with Mark and Fabian."

Upon reaching the villa, Finnick heard from Molly that Vivian had locked herself in her room ever since returning.

Finnick eyes darkened, visibly annoyed.

He pushed open the door to the bedroom and saw Vivian lying face-down on the bed, still clad in her wine-red gown. Her gaze was empty and lifeless.

That only irritated Finnick even further.

He pushed himself over to the bed and stared at her with a blank expression. "Vivian, get up."

Vivian simply ignored him, as though he was invisible.

Finnick flew into a rage. "Vivian!" he yelled. "Talk to me! Why did you come back?"

He paused as the air in the room grew colder by a few centigrade. "Are you scared of meeting my nephew Fabian?"

Vivian sat up immediately, the blank look on her face replaced by a look of disbelief.

Her face paled as she stared at him. "H-How did you know about my relationship with Fabian?" she asked, her voice trembling.

Did I just get deceived by the men I trust twice in a row?

"That's right," Finnick said, not even bothering to make her think otherwise. "I'm sure you know that I won't marry a random woman on the street. I know exactly what happened to you two years ago."

Vivian shivered as she continued to train her eyes on his face.

"So?" she asked, her throat throbbing painfully. "Were you trying to embarrass me by taking me to that gathering?"

"Embarrass you?" Finnick growled indignantly. He grabbed her wrist and squeezed it with all his might. "He's just an ex-boyfriend! There's nothing to worry about if you've already gotten over him!"

Vivian glared at the handsome man before her, her lips pursed into a thin line.

"You don't understand," she said after a long pause. "You don't understand how much Fabian meant to me."

Fabian had been her life force and her reason to live, and the pain from two years ago still felt fresh and piercing.

Can't he just understand how much Fabian meant to me?

Finnick thought that he could not get any angrier, but he was wrong.

This stupid woman!

It's been ten years already! Just as I thought I wouldn't be distracted by another woman...

He knew that Fabian was her first love and her boss, and he had flown to Q City out of panic when he heard that she had gone for a business trip with Fabian.

The last thing he wanted to see was someone taking advantage of Vivian.

I should have killed that jerk Hark!

In fact, I haven't been so emotional in a while...

This woman is challenging my patience!

How dare she confess her love for my nephew in front of me?

What am I to you, Vivian William?

"Fine. I don't understand," Finnick said, smirking. Without warning, he stood up from his wheelchair and shoved Vivian onto the bed. "What I do understand is that you're my wife!"

Vivian froze the moment Finnick stood up from his wheelchair. "Y-You can stand?"

She tried to break free of his grasp to no avail. Finnick had already straddled himself over her body and held her hands down, hovering over her menacingly and covering her in the darkness of his shadow.

"Vivian..." he growled, his voice colder than ice. "I just remembered that we haven't done anything as husband and wife yet..."

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Boom!

“What the hell are you doing?” Vivian screamed as the shock from seeing Finnick stand up was long forgotten.

Before she could finish her sentence, he had already ripped her dress into shreds.

Finnick rested his body against hers, encasing her in a wall of muscle and masculine dominance.

“Finnick! What...”

Vivian tried to say something, but was cut off abruptly when he pressed his lips against hers.

It was as though he was punishing her for everything she had done, and it was something she would never be able to escape from.

No!

I don't want this!

The events from two years ago popped into her mind, and the pain was so strong that it brought tears to her eyes.

Finnick noticed her tears and froze in shock.

He stopped what he was doing immediately and lowered his head. “Are you scared of me, Vivian?”

Instead of answering him, Vivian grabbed her exposed shoulders tightly and continued to weep.

It was as though someone had poured a bucket of ice-cold water over him, dousing the angry flame inside of him immediately.

He let go of her and stared at her pale, tear-streaked face in bewilderment. His heart throbbed painfully at the sight before him.

Sh*t!

What the hell did I just do?

"Vivian..." he said, his voice much calmer now. He reached out to help her up, only for her to flinch away from him, as though he had electrocuted her.

Seeing how natural her reaction was, the flame within Finnick that had just been extinguished threatened to come back to life.

"Get some rest," he said awkwardly before leaving the room.

After he left, Vivian continued to sit on the bed in a daze.

It's been two years...

I thought I've gotten over it already, yet the memories of that incident keeps coming back whenever a man gets close to me...

She never saw Finnick again that night.

The next morning, Vivian took her own sweet time to go downstairs after waking up. To her surprise, Molly told her that Finnick took a midnight flight overseas for a business trip.

Huh?

Maybe he's troubled over this too...

As for the events of the previous night, Vivian struggled to figure out what Finnick had been thinking.

She tried to convince herself that what Finnick was merely a show of power and dominance as a man, rather than a declaration of love.

After all, I don't think he's very happy about my relationship with Fabian...

How about his legs? Since when could he walk?

Vivian sighed. She finished her breakfast in silence and set off for work afterwards.

When she arrived at the office, she was greeted with a giant riot. She grabbed a person nearby by the arm and demanded to know what happened. "The Q City Magazine Company is gone! Our collaboration projects have gone down the drain..." the person wailed.

Q City Magazine Company?

Isn't that the magazine company that Mr. Hark runs?

Vivian whipped out her phone and was shocked to find various reports on the matter online.

The Q City Magazine Company had deep roots in the magazine industry of Q City, yet someone managed to uproot it overnight! In fact, the owner of the company, Mr. Hark, was thrown behind bars after he was found guilty of a long list of charges.

This seems too sudden to be true... Could someone be behind this?

Could it be... Finnick?

Vivian shook her head vehemently to clear her head.

Hey! Vivian William! Stop that! You're his wife, but you're not his friend! You can't count on him to save you when you're in trouble!"

With that, Vivian smirked to herself. Haha! That's karma for you, Mr. Hark!

Because of the collapse of Q City Magazine Company, the next issue's cover had to be completely redesigned. Vivian and her group mates finished their part of the redesigning process, after which she was tasked by Lesley to send the product over to Fabian.

Vivian wanted to turn her down initially, since the last person she wanted to meet after the incident in Q City was Fabian.

Fabian had let her down over and over again, and that particular incident was the last straw on the camel's back.

Am I really that dirty and undesirable to him?

I don't have even a sliver of respect for him anymore.

I don't even want to see him anymore. Even so, I can't escape from him...

Hey! It's not like I did anything wrong in the first place! Why am I the one running away?

With that, she picked up the mock-up that her group came up with and walked towards Fabian's office with pursed lips.

"Chief Editor," she said stiffly upon entering. "Here is the mock-up that my group came up with. Please take a look at it. I'll take my leave now."

She turned around to leave the room, only to freeze when his cold voice rang from behind her.

"Stop right there!"

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His voice sounded colder than ice when he spoke.

Vivian did not turn back. "What's wrong, Chief Editor?"

"Don't you owe me an explanation?" Fabian asked, louder this time. He must have gotten up and walked over to me...

"What explanation?"

"Everything. For example, why did you disappear from Q City all of a sudden?" he asked. She could feel his warm breath on her neck, and it made her shiver. "Also, what's your relationship with Uncle Finnick?"

Vivian's body trembled violently. She turned around abruptly to look into his cold gaze.

"H-How did you know about..."

Did he find out about our marriage? Did Finnick tell him about it?

Vivian panicked all of a sudden.

Their marriage had been a legitimate union, yet she still felt hesitant to talk to Fabian about it.

Finnick's his uncle, and Fabian's my first love!

"How did I find out about... What? Your relationship with my uncle?" Fabian scoffed as he closed in on her. "Of course I know! Besides, aren't you married? Didn't you know that my uncle is married too?"

Vivian's panic turned to confusion the moment she heard that.

What the hell is he trying to say?

"Talk to me, Vivian William!" Fabian yelled, angered by her stubborn silence. He grabbed her shoulders and shook her violently. "Vivian William! Since when did you become a cheater and a home-wrecker? You're no longer the Vivian I knew!"

Everything became crystal clear to Vivian at that moment.

He doesn't know about our marriage... In fact, he probably thinks that Finnick's my sugar daddy!

Vivian could feel her already stone-cold heart freeze over into an ice cube.

Huh...

Fabian Norton... What am I to you? Just another one of those sugar babies that climb onto the lap of another daddy once they've sucked the previous one dry?

Vivian could see through him like a glass window, and she could tell that she was nothing more than a prostitute to him. He would never believe her if she said that Finnick took her in as his legitimate wife.

"Vivian!" Fabian growled. "Answer! My! Question!"

Vivian raised her eyes slowly to meet his gaze. "Whatever. Suit yourself."

With that, she shoved him aside and turned around to leave.

I understand everything now...

The man I loved to the moon and back is no longer...

In fact, it's been two years since I last saw the old him.

For the next few days, Vivian threw herself into her work to distract herself from the drama between Finnick and Fabian.

Finnick did not return even after a few days, and neither did he text nor call her. She would return to an empty house every night, feeling lonelier than ever.

Getting used to things is a scary process... It's only been a month ever since I got married to him, and I can't live without him already?

One morning, Vivian stepped into the office to see several of her female colleagues huddled around a computer.

"That's rare," she said, walking over to them. "Why aren't you all having your morning tea session in the pantry?"

"Morning!" Sarah said, cupping her flushed face. "Who needs tea when you have an eye candy to look at?"

"Eye candy?"

"Finnick Norton, the president of Finner Group! The one we interviewed! He's in M Nation attending some award ceremony, and they're broadcasting it live right now!"

Vivian froze.

Huh... So they've found my missing husband?

Vivian scooted over out of curiosity. "What award ceremony?"

“The Outstanding Youth Award! Also known as the battle of the wealthy bachelors!” Sarah said before burying her face in her hands. “Unfortunately, I heard that Mr. Norton’s already married...”

Vivian looked at the screen. Sure enough, Finnick was slowly pushing himself onstage as the audience gave him a standing ovation.

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The suit hugged his lean body nicely, outlining the sculptured shape of his figure. Although he was sitting in a wheelchair, no one could ignore the intimidating aura he exuded.

“Congratulations, Mr. Norton.” The blonde hostess of the award ceremony excitedly passed the crystal trophy to him.

“Thank you,” rumbled Finnick as he received the trophy. His American accent was impeccable. “I’m very honored to receive this award.”

When he took the trophy, the hostess’ gaze landed on his finger. She instantly exclaimed in an exaggerated tone, “Oh my God! Mr. Norton, is that a wedding ring?”

The camera immediately zoomed in to Finnick’s finger. The diamond ring which Vivian bought was displayed on the big screen.

Vivian’s heart skipped a beat. Sneakily, she hid her finger, which was wearing an identical ring, behind her back.

On the screen, the hostess continued enthusing over it. “Mr. Norton, so you’re really married. I wonder how many women would be heartbroken. However, Mr. Norton, this ring is really economical, huh?”

Everyone burst into laughter after hearing what she said.

Vivian's face flushed.

Ugh, Finnick. I already said that the ring doesn't suit his status, but he insists on wearing it.

Despite everyone's surprise and laughter, Finnick maintained a calm composure. He glanced down at his finger and smiled. "My wife chose it for me. She's never an advocate for unnecessary waste."

Although his words were simple, it was somehow filled with an affectionate tone. Everyone instantly fell silent.

Vivian, who was watching him through her computer on the other side of the Earth, felt her heart skip a beat too.

Although she kept convincing herself that Finnick was just saying that for show, a part of her was starting to be charmed by him.

He had been wearing the ring all along, no matter how embarrassing it might be.

Despite the entire world thinking that it's impossible between us, he still acknowledges me as a part of his life, right?

Perhaps, Finnick was just being a little mean the previous times. Now, his affirmation managed to console Vivian.

"Mr. Norton, looks like you really dote on your wife," said the hostess enviously.

Despite being a man of such high status, Finnick wore a cheap ring just because his wife was 'frugal'. This was a greater display of love than if he gave his wife a humongous diamond ring.

Finnick cracked a small smile at the hostess' praise and remained silent.

The award ceremony ended soon. Everyone in front of the computer screen was still immersed in shock.

"Oh my God! Mrs. Norton is so lucky. God knows how many rich men refuse to admit that they're married! Yet, her husband is willing to wear such a cheap ring out!" A female colleague exclaimed.

“Forget it.” A male colleague could not help but rebuke jealously, “Perhaps, he’s just too stingy to buy a good ring and is merely using his wife as an excuse.”

“Pfft... Finnick can buy an entire diamond mine if he wants to. It’s impossible that he’ll be unwilling to spend on a diamond ring!” Sarah scoffed. “But, for some reason, Mr. Norton’s ring looks a bit familiar.”

Immediately afterward, someone replied, “Me too! I think I’ve seen it somewhere.”

Having a bad feeling, Vivian was about to sneak away when Sarah reacted quicker. She clapped her hands and cried out, “Oh, I remember now! Mr. Norton’s ring has the same design as Vivian’s, right?”

Vivian cursed under her breath. Under everyone’s gaze, she could only stop in her tracks and turn around.

At that moment, everyone was eagerly grabbing Vivian’s hand and exclaiming, “They’re really the same! They definitely share the same design!”

“What’s going on? Vivian, why do you have the same wedding ring as Finnick?”

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As Vivian’s head throbbed, she looked at the curious group of women in front of her. After mulling over it for a while, she had no choice but to explain, “Well, I guess I have to confess now. Actually, I’m Finnick’s wife. That’s why we have the same wedding rings.”

The room became dead silent.

No one uttered a single word.

Soon, everyone suddenly burst into a fit of laughter.

“Haha! Vivian, you’re so funny! You actually said that you’re Finnick’s wife!”

Vivian laughed alongside everyone else, but she secretly felt relieved.

Indeed, instead of denying it, I should just admit it as a joke and evade this topic.

Still, she still pretended to be unhappy. "Why are you laughing? Why aren't you believing me? Am I really that bad?"

"Vivian, of course, you're not bad." Sarah was laughing so hard that she had already teared up. "But he's Finnick Norton! He's like someone from another world. There's no way that he'll be involved with people like us."

Vivian chuckled softly.

Yeah.

Logically speaking, Finnick and I are like people from different worlds. Our relationship only became so intimate because of an unexpected turn of events—just like how the ring looks so out of place on Norton's finger.

Yet, he still wears it.

Upon that thought, Vivian's mood improved. Flicking Sarah's forehead with her fingers, she said, "That's enough. Go and do your work now!"

"We've already revised the draft. All that's left to do is for it to be printed. We have nothing to do now anyway."

Indeed, there was nothing much to do today. Hence, after Vivian sat down, she scrolled through Twitter out of boredom.

However, once she went into Twitter, she spotted 'Finnick Norton's Wedding Ring' at the top of the trending list.

What the heck? How can this piece of news even enter the trending list? People's yearning for gossip is really too strong.

Curious, Vivian clicked on the search and saw a bunch of posts made by excited fangirls.

Mr. Norton is really the best man in the world! I don't like any other men now. He's my only love!

Who's Mrs. Norton? Appear right now and let's have a showdown!

I just want to say that the wedding ring's design is XXX. I bought it too! Hahaha! Your ring has the same design as Mr. Norton's. I have a feeling that it'll become extremely popular.

Amused, Vivian read the fangirls' posts. However, when her gaze landed on a certain post, she was stunned.

Mr. Norton is so in love right now. However, while everyone rejoices over his current wife, his ex-girlfriend despairs. I wonder how she'll feel if she witnesses this from Heaven?

Ex-girlfriend? In Heaven?

Vivian immediately wanted to click on the account and see who posted it. However, when she clicked on it, the person had already deleted the post.

Feeling puzzled, she barely had time to mull over it before her phone buzzed.

It was a WhatsApp message from Finnick.

Stunned, Vivian clicked on it immediately.

[I'm coming home at six in the evening today. Let's eat dinner together.]

Vivian could not even explain why her lips unknowingly curved into a grin when she read Finnick's message.

She even forgot the awkwardness between them before Finnick left. Now, all she could feel a sense of anticipation. She no longer needed to return to an empty house anymore.

After making it till dismissal time, Vivian left work on the dot and hailed a cab.

When she returned to the villa and entered, she saw a familiar figure sitting in a wheelchair.

She suddenly felt like she had found the missing puzzle in her daily life.

"Finnick." After taking off her shoes, she walked into the living room and called out to him. Finnick turned around.

His face was as handsome as before. Although she had already seen him on the computer screen this morning, now that she was looking right at him, she suddenly felt like everything was a dream.

On the other hand, when Finnick saw Vivian, he felt extremely relieved, as if a burden had been lifted off his shoulders.

When she did not reply to his WhatsApp message, he thought that she was unwilling to eat dinner with him because of what happened that night.

"You're home." Although Finnick felt relieved, he still maintained a nonchalant expression on his face. "Molly has already prepared dinner. Let's go and eat."

Although she looked forward to meeting Finnick, when she finally saw him, the unhappy incident that happened before he left suddenly surfaced in her mind. Feeling awkward, she merely mumbled an acknowledgement before following Finnick to the dining room.

Molly and Liam were tactful people. Knowing that Finnick and Vivian had not met for days, they left immediately after serving the dishes.