

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 266

When Fabian noticed the changes on Vivian's face, he asked with concern, "Vivian, are you alright? Don't overthink it. Even though I'm not sure about the exact reason, I don't think Finnick will ever fall for Ashley."

"What? Of course he won't. I have faith in Finnick. I'm just... a little jealous."

So she's jealous... Fabian could feel that Vivian truly loved Finnick now.

Staring at her, Fabian fell into a trance. Vivian was still as beautiful with her black hair, thin red lips, a small but tall nose, as well as a pair of sparkling and affectionate-looking eyes.

Meanwhile, Vivian felt a little uneasy when she noticed that Fabian kept staring at her. She stood up and said, "Alright, it's time to start working, and everyone should already be outside now. I should leave and start working too."

"Vivian." Fabian stood up as well and apologized, "I'm sorry. I'm so sorry that I didn't protect you two years ago when the incident happened."

Vivian was stunned because she never expected Fabian to apologize to her sincerely. After listening to his apology, she couldn't help but heave a long sigh to let go of her sorrows and feelings for Fabian for good. At that moment, she felt like a load had been lifted from her chest. She was finally able to let go of her buried feelings.

With her back against Fabian, she simply remained silent and continued walking out of his office, with each step that she took, she felt she was finally walking out of his life.

Fabian also heaved a long sigh when he thought about the baby in Ashley's belly and that he would soon marry her.

Meanwhile, in the hospital, Finnick was sitting next to Ashley, accompanying her.

Although she lay on the hospital bed, her complexion was looking better than yesterday and she was calm and alert.

She went through a lot yesterday, including being kidnapped, almost being drugged by some sturdy men, and suddenly rescued... When she recalled back, Ashley shuddered in fear and broke out in cold sweat, she felt as if she were trapped in a nightmare from which she couldn't wake up.

Finnick sat next to her and was looking at his phone attentively.

Sensing movement, he looked up at once and saw that Ashley was staring at him with a frightened look. He said nicely, "Ashley, you're awake."

She was petrified and dared not utter a word.

Finnick quickly asked a nurse to enter the ward and check up on her. Ashley was actually in a semi coma state when he sent her to the hospital yesterday.

Everyone, including Finnick, was in a rush to send her to the hospital and look for the best doctor. As such, he was busy and didn't have time to go home. Is Vivian in the magazine company now? Will she be mad at me because I didn't go home last night?

The nurse dressed and bandaged Ashley's wound, took her blood pressure, and took a sample of her blood to be tested. After that, she explained that if the blood test results were fine, Ashley would be able to discharge from the hospital.

Finnick thanked the nurse for her help while she flashed him a sweet smile.

The woman on the bed must be his girlfriend. What a lucky woman she is!

Ever since Ashley was admitted to the hospital, she was in a muddled state and wasn't sure what happened until now.

She couldn't help but guess what would happen next because of how abnormal Finnick was behaving. Is he thinking about torturing me? Why would he suddenly take good care of me and accompany me the whole night?

She was curious about the reason why Finnick didn't leave after taking care of her. She tried to sound him out. "Why did you let me go? And why are you treating me so nicely all of a sudden?"

"I have my own reasons." Just as Ashley expected, Finnick wouldn't let go of her easily.

Since Finnick had always been cold and indifferent, she was a little afraid to see that the man changed so much and was kind to her. After a while, she said, "Mr. Norton, I dare not do it again... I didn't know that my mom did something wrong two years ago, and I..."

"Ashley." Finnick continued, "Even though your wounds are fine, the doctor suggests that you should get enough rest."

He doesn't want to mention the incident that happened two years ago anymore. Since he failed to avenge Vivian, all he could do now was to punish Emma even more.

"In that case, can I... go home?"

"As long as the nurse agrees to it, sure, you can go home."

Ashley was finally relieved. I guess Finnick really gave up on the idea of punishing me. But why? She still had some questions in her mind.

Ashley decided to voice out her concerns, "Mr. Norton, why did you..."

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Ashley paused. She was worried that if she pressed on, Finnick might change his mind and not let her off.

Likewise, Finnick also ignored her question. Instead, he pulled out a photo from his pocket. The photo was a little yellowish, but one could see a girl in a princess dress. The girl seemed familiar, but she could not tell for sure as the photo was quite blurry.

Finnick asked, "Do you recognize the girl in this photo? Is this you?"

Ashley's eyes sparkled for she instantly knew that the photo had something to do with Finnick's decision. If I said no, would Finnick treat me differently? And if I said yes, would this lead to more terrible things?

After all, I have done many hurtful things towards Vivian... I should be careful with my answer.

She decided to not answer him and instead questioned, "So what if I say I am or not? Why does it matter?"

"Do you remember on a night ten years ago, you unintentionally saved a boy with injured legs? You walked a long way and took him to the hospital. In the end, he was saved." Finnick paused, "That boy was me."

"You?" Ashley had no impression and could not recall the incident. But she knew that it was her only chance to escape punishment from Finnick. This is my lucky day!

"Ashley, thank you for saving me. If it weren't for you, I would have died that night." Finnick said in a low voice. His tone was steady but filled with gratitude.

Yesterday, when Noah received a call, the caller claimed that they had found the buyer's list of the limited edition princess dress of that year. Funnily enough, Ashley's name was on the list. In addition, the location of the photo taken was nearby Miller Residence. After comparison, the girl was indeed Ashley. She was the girl Finnick had been searching for all these years.

So, it turned that the girl in the photo was his savior. no wonder he reacted in this way. Ashley finally understood the reason behind the situation and an idea came to mind.

She was silent for a moment as she did not want to talk too much about the photo and the past.

She was suddenly reminded of Emma. I haven't seen her since last night. Did she return to the Miller Residence?

Ashley asked timidly, "What about my mom? Where is she? I haven't seen her all day, has she gone back home?"

Finnick sneered, "Here's the deal, I can let you off, but not your mom. Especially since she was the mastermind behind Vivian's incident two years ago."

Finnick was being tactful with words.

Obviously, he knew that the mastermind behind the incident was not Emma, but Ashley. However, Ashley was just a college student then. Surely Emma must have known what her daughter was doing behind her back, not to mention how Ashley had used the Miller family

to perform her nefarious scheme. Emma must have hated Vivian and her mother thus decided to help Ashley in the dark.

Unfortunately, Finnick couldn't bring himself to punish Ashley when he thought of the kindness he had received from her ten years ago. But for Emma, she will not be forgiven.

Ashley instantly understood Finnick's implication. She knew that Finnick letting her off was already a huge compromise on his part. Fearing that he would change his mind at any time, she swallowed her request of letting Emma go.

"If so, may I see my Mom then, Mr. Norton?" Ashley begged pitifully.

"I'm afraid not, I've sent her abroad. This is the only way I can guarantee Vivian's safety," Finnick replied coldly.

Chills went down Ashley's spine. What a ruthless man.

She knew what Emma would face once she was sent abroad. My Mom won't be able to live the rest of her life in peace...

She asked, "Is she alright, Mr. Norton? She's old, so please go easy on her. I really want to see her. Could you please let her come back?"

Finnick could feel nothing but disgust at the mention of Emma. However, he was reminded of the kindness ten years ago and he said, "I shall allow you to say a few words to her through video call, and nothing more."

Ashley wanted to ask for more, but when she caught sight of Finnick's cold expression, she could only concede. I'll think of something to bring Mom back myself. So hang in there, Mom!

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Turning on her charms, Ashley thanked Finnick sweetly, "Thank you, Mr. Norton,"

However, Finnick was immune towards other woman and their tricks, except for Vivian. "Have a good rest," He replied emotionlessly.

Finnick kept his promise as he ordered Noah to arrange the call for Ashley and Emma to meet before he left.

In the afternoon, after Ashley was discharged, Noah drove her to a house in the outer suburbs to let her have her video call with Emma.

In the video, Emma was sitting in a shabby-looking house. With its mottled walls and dirty floors, the house looked to be in poor condition. Aside from that, the room was poorly insulated due to the broken windows.

Emma was relieved when she saw Ashley in good condition. However, she couldn't help but burst into tears at the thought of her current situation.

She looked filthy and skinny. She also looked haggard, as if she had been working tirelessly without rest.

Ashley cried as her heart felt like it was sliced into half at the sight of her mother's misery.

As the saying goes, a mother's heart aches at the sight of her child's injury. The same could be said when a child was forced to see how their mother was suffering.

Emma had always been treated like a queen. She lived in a villa with housemaids to serve her. For her to experience such suffering... I couldn't imagine how terrible she must have felt! Ashley thought to herself as her heart ached in pain.

Noah closed the door behind as he left the room.

Once he was gone, Ashley cried while asking, "Mom, a-are you alright?"

"Yes... I'm fine..." Emma covered her mouth as tears streamed down her face.

How could I possibly say that I'm being severely punished? My days here are like hell! I'm forced to work like a slave, and the meals are horrible. There's no meat like fish and chicken, and instead, I'd be considered lucky to have leftovers.

I was also bullied by a bunch of rude country folks. They'd spit and throw punches at me. Emma's body was covered with bruises and wounds. However, she hid them away from Ashley with her clothes.

Tears streamed down Ashley's face as she said, "Mom, you've lost weight. Please take good care of yourself. W-Wait for Fabian, dad, and I. We'll come for you. Please hang in there, Mom!"

"Alright, I'll wait for you," Emma replied weakly, her arrogant and domineering attitude from the past had all but disappeared.

"I don't know what happened to your Dad but please get him to save me! I can't stand it here anymore, Ashley!" Emma pleaded.

Ashley nodded repeatedly.

She then looked around to ensure no one was eavesdropping before asking softly, "Mom, why did you own up to Vivian's incident two years ago? It was me who did it. If you didn't admit to it, perhaps you could have saved yourself from all this suffering. This is all my fault!"

Emma was a mother, after all. And as a mother, she wouldn't be able to bring herself to let her daughter suffer such a cruel fate.

Emma replied, "Silly kid, of course I knew you were the one behind what happened two years ago. Yet, I didn't stop you, right? Listen to me, never admit to it, and just put the blame on me, do you understand? Finnick is too powerful for you to go against him."

Ashley was deeply touched.

"All I wanted is for you to be safe and sound. It doesn't matter if I'm suffering a little. You should blame Vivian for this. If she hadn't brought this up to Finnick, he wouldn't have investigated this incident in the first place. It's her fault! The world would have been a better place without Vivian and her mother! Ashley, please look after yourself and live a good life with Fabian, alright?" Emma comforted her daughter.

Ashley felt extremely guilty towards Emma. Mom has sacrificed so much for me to be happy.

Mom's right! This is all Vivian's fault. She's the cause of my Mom's suffering!

Ashley replied, "Mom, don't worry, I'll avenge you one day! Both Vivian and Rachel will pay the price for the suffering they've caused us! I hereby swear that I won't go easy on them! Mom, please take care of yourself!"

"I will, don't worry," Emma promised.

Emma had always been Ashley's pillar of support and her guardian angel. Now that they were separated, Ashley felt isolated and helpless without her mother by her side.

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Everyone is on Vivian's side, no one is willing to stand by me and support me.

Emma suddenly remembered something and asked softly, "Ashley, is your..."

Before she could ask further, however, she heard footsteps.

Emma hinted at Ashley, "You have to protect your baby... The baby's your only leverage against them!"

Before Ashley could assure Emma, the video call was cut off.

I didn't even get to have a good look at Mom's face before it ended abruptly. I wonder when will I see her again...

Ashley sat quietly as she wiped the tears off her face and secretly made a decision.

Finnick arrived moments later, He decided to drop by since it was on his way.

According to Noah's report, Ashley had ended the call with Emma in the house moments ago, and Noah was waiting for Finnick's order on the next course of action.

Finnick thought it was necessary to negotiate terms with Ashley. He planned to repay her kindness and be done with her once and for all.

In the house, Ashley was sitting on a chair, lost in her thoughts as she gazed out the window.

Finnick couldn't help but think to himself, Where did the pure and kind-hearted girl from ten years ago go? How did she become such a vicious woman?

Was jealousy such a powerful influence?

Ashley still had tears on her face, but she was calm. She watched as Finnick arrived in his wheelchair.

Finnick asked, "Have you met Emma?"

"Yes, Mr. Norton. But, I don't know if I should thank you or resent you. I'm afraid my mom can't bear such suffering. She had never lived like a peasant before. She won't be able to cope with it."

Finnick thought Ashley was right. My intention wasn't for Emma to live a comfortable life. She will not realize her mistakes if she doesn't suffer. However, I still believe that my punishment was too lenient on her.

Ashley assumed that Finnick must have made a firm decision to send Emma away. She reckoned that Finnick would despise her if she begged him to let Emma go now. She was not a silly girl, thus, she decided to hold her tongue for now as the current situation was not in her favor.

She said to Finnick, "You claimed that I have shown you kindness and you intend to repay me. How do you plan to do that?"

"You can ask for anything you'd like, as long as it is within my abilities," Finnick answered contemptuously as he expected her to ask for money or shares.

Anything?

Is Finnick truly sincere in trying to repay me? Did he think I would ask for something simple and he could be done with me just like that?

To his surprise, Ashley sneered and replied, "My request is for you to leave Vivian. Can you do that?"

Leave Vivian?

Finnick's expression hardened.

"That's impossible, Ashley. You know I won't promise you this, so think of something more practical," Finnick answered in a cold voice.

"Why? You can't accept this term?"

Finnick slowly shook his head, indicating there was no possibility of him changing his mind.

"I'm surprised at how much you loved her." Ashley joked.

"Try something else, Ashley." Finnick was starting to get impatient.

Ashley wasn't ready to give up just yet because it was her only chance to turn things around. Hence, she had to consider the terms carefully. If Finnick thought she could be appeased with a few million, he would be sorely mistaken.

She would have chosen money in the past, however, the circumstances were different now. She desired something apart from money.

Ashley shrugged. "Forget it then. Since you won't leave Vivian, promise me this, Finnick, help me revive the Miller family and let me marry Fabian. All I want is to live a carefree life."

Finnick nodded in agreement as he was capable of doing what she requested.

Ashley slowly got up from the chair, she raised her head to meet Finnick's gaze and said, "Now take me home. I want to go home."

Finnick nodded before wheeling himself out. He ordered Noah to get the car and they sent Ashley back to Miller Residence.

Meanwhile, Vivian who was working in the magazine company, found that she was upset and could not concentrate on her task at hand. Her mind was filled with thoughts of Finnick...

She wondered when did Finnick become the center of her life. Without Finnick, she seemed to lose her direction in life. She felt that she had no plans, dreams, or anything that she could grasp onto in life.

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Vivian laughed at how pathetic she had become. She did not want to call Finnick as she felt that it would make her look like a controlling person.

Just when she was wallowing in despair, the office was suddenly buzzing.

Vivian heard Jenny and Sarah discussing the news. She decided to join in as a way to get Finnick off her mind.

“What are you guys talking about?” Vivian asked.

Sarah answered, “We’re discussing about investments,”

Vivian frowned, “Investments? What are you planning to invest in?”

“Haha, in stocks of course. I’m talking about the stocks from the Miller family company.”

It turned out that they were discussing the stock recovery of the Miller family and considered buying it. They predicted the Miller family might be a dark horse in the market.

Ken chimed in, “What do you guys think? Is this a new investment strategy? The stocks were in sharp decline yesterday, but they suddenly shoot back to the top today! One of my buddies felt miserable because he turned in all of his stocks yesterday when he noticed that they were declining.”

Another colleague said, “So why did the Miller family’s stock rose tremendously today? Isn’t that weird?”

“The Miller family’s stock isn’t reliable so don’t waste your money on them. Finnor Group’s stocks are much more stable, I have never lost money from investing in them. Besides, I have also invested tons in the V.M. Fund.”

While everyone was deep in discussion, Jenny pulled Vivian aside and asked, “Vivian, you came just in time. Is there any insider news you could share with us? I heard Finnor Group had invested a large amount of capital into the Miller family’s stock. Is that true?”

Feeling rather awkward, Vivian quickly recomposed herself.

She replied, “I never asked Finnick about his business, so I’m sorry, but I can’t help you.”

Jenny seemed to have noticed something and she said, “That’s fine, there’s nothing to be sorry about as long as you’re okay.”

Jenny’s comforting words made Vivian felt uneasy.

What are you trying to do, Finnick? Vivian wondered.

Not only did you stay all day at the hospital to accompany Ashley, but now you’re actually helping the Miller family recover their losses? Why are you doing all this to help Ashley? Does Ashley have anything that’s holding against you?

Forget it, I’ll call Finnick and ask him myself. Vivian could no longer resist the urge.

To her surprise, she received elder Mr. Norton’s call the moment she picked up her cellphone.

“Vivian, I’m celebrating my birthday today. Usually, the boys would plan my birthday, but I’ve refused. I’m planning to use this occasion to gather everyone together. I have called Finnick and he agreed to come, so I hope you’d come too!” elder Mr. Norton said to Vivian.

Vivian smiled, “Of course, grandpa. We’ll throw you the best birthday celebration ever! See you later.”

Vivian hung up after she had a small talk with the older man.

Vivian was very surprised. How did no one know about grandpa’s birthday? Besides, why is he only telling me now?

Vivian quickly checked her schedule and noticed she had no interviews lined up. Hence, she decided to visit a nearby mall to pick out a birthday gift for elder Mr. Norton.

The moment she stepped into the mall, Vivian began perusing for gifts. However, her hesitant attitude made her gift shopping very difficult.

After looking at many different gift options, she was still unable to decide on a gift. As the time to elder Mr. Norton's birthday celebration drew nearer, Vivian became increasingly anxious.

She walked into a branded men's clothing store and considered buying the older man a wallet. I don't think elder Mr. Norton would fancy such tacky things. Vivian thought to herself and she placed the wallet back on its shelf after much consideration.

She then looked around and noticed a store that sold massagers. She walked into the store and bought a massager that could be placed on the neck and waist area.

Although she knew that elder Mr. Norton was a veteran and had a strong body, it was no doubt that he would still suffer old injuries from the past. Thus, she believed that a massager could bring him some comfort.

While Vivian was busy choosing a massager, Fabian was also at the mall and he was window shopping. Without noticing Vivian, he went straight into a store.

Moments later, Vivian was finally done with her shopping and she went to the side of the road to hail a taxi.

To her despair, it was hard to get a taxi during peak hours. Most of the taxis' had either been taken or booked.