

# Never Late, Never Away Chapter 106

A sense of adoration swelled in Finnick's heart when he looked at the blush on Vivian's face. His eyebrows rose. "What things?"

"The ones like 'I did all the work'..." Vivian's voice trailed off as her head hung lower and lower.

Finnick let out a soft chuckle as he raised Vivian's chin with his thumb. "I'm serious about what I said. I'm supposed to be the one taking lead. Unless... you're interested to give it a try?"

"N-No need." Like a mouse whose tail was stepped on, she jumped and ran toward the wardrobe. "I-I'm going to take a shower now. Bye!"

With that said, she hurriedly grabbed her towel with her left hand and rushed into the bathroom.

Inside the bathroom, Vivian stared at her bright red face in the mirror.

Damn it.

She covered her face with her hands.

Vivian William, why are you so useless? All Finnick did was joke with you a little. Why are you so dramatic with your reactions? Idiot.

Although Vivian's arm was injured, Finnick's bathroom was well-equipped with a high-tech showerhead; she could adjust the range for the water to flow down. Carefully, she showered without wetting the wound.

When she walked out of the bathroom after her shower, she saw Finnick sitting still on the balcony.

Vivian dried her hair with her towel. She was about to tell him it was his turn but stopped after taking a few steps closer.

She saw an item in Finnick's hands, and he was staring at it in a daze.

Shining brilliantly under the moonlight, Vivian immediately recognized the item.

That necklace again.

Vivian had seen this necklace multiple times. Every time, Finnick would hold it like it was something precious and stare at it in a daze.

Vivian swallowed the words that were at the tip of her tongue; she looked at Finnick silently instead.

The moon was bright tonight. The expression on Finnick's face was vastly different from the one he often wore, as if he were someone else.

His expression was a blend of longing, regret, and helplessness.

Vivian did not know why she was feeling uncomfortably upset, as if a porcupine had pricked her heart.

Right then, seemingly sensing Vivian's presence, Finnick turned around.

"You're done?" In a blink of an eye, the expression on his face had returned to its usual indifference. His hand had closed around the necklace, hiding it away from view.

"Mm." As quickly as possible, Vivian calmed herself down. "It's your turn."

"Okay," Finnick replied, then went back into the room.

Instead of heading straight to the bathroom, he went to his desk. He carefully placed the necklace into the first drawer before entering the bathroom with his towel.

Vivian remained in the room. When she heard the sounds of running water coming from the bathroom, her eyes flitted toward the desk.

She grew curious.

What is the history of that necklace? Why does he always look so sad when he sees that necklace?

Vivian did not know what was wrong with her. She had never been a nosy person, but now she felt an invisible hand was pushing her in the direction of the desk.

Just one look.

It should be fine, right?

After making sure Finnick was still showering inside the bathroom, Vivian held her breath and sneakily opened his drawer.

She did not know what was wrong with her. That necklace felt like a thorn in her heart, and she could not get it out of her mind.

She had never felt like this, not even when she was with Fabian back then.

Finnick's drawer was not locked and she could easily open it. Vivian saw several documents inside. On top of the documents were several photos as well as that necklace.

She carefully took out the necklace and rested it on her palm.

It was a beautiful crystal necklace. Although it was not as luxurious as one made of diamonds, it gave off a sense of innocence. It was apparent from the workmanship that this was no cheap necklace.

Vivian turned the necklace in her hands. When she saw the back of it, she stopped in her tracks.

The front of the necklace showed a heart, and at the back of it was a word.

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While the rest of the necklace was carved delicately, it was obvious that this word was carved by someone unfamiliar with jewelry. It was slightly rough but readable—Eve.

Eve...

The elder Mr. Norton's words suddenly echoed in her mind. It's been ten years. Ever since Evelyn died, I thought Finnick won't fall in love with anyone else anymore.

Does this necklace belong to that woman named Evelyn?

Who is she? Is she Finnick's ex-girlfriend? What happened to her?

Driven by curiosity, Vivian could not help but take the photos out of the drawer as well.

When she saw the photos, her hands stiffened.

In the photos were a young man and woman in their late teens.

Vivian easily recognized the young man as Finnick.

It was Finnick when he was much younger; he did not look like the mature man he was now. In the photos, he looked just as handsome but more youthful and exuberant.

If today's Finnick were a cup of aromatic and gentle white tea, the Finnick back then must have been a glass of whiskey, intense and proud. But just as good-looking to attract anybody with one glance.

However, what Vivian was more concerned with was the girl in the photo.

She was beautiful, so pretty to the point even Vivian could not tear her eyes away from her.

She had always thought Ashley was beautiful, but in comparison with this girl, who was like a rose, Ashley was a mere carnation. There was something the girl had that Ashley did not.

Is this pretty girl... Evelyn? The owner of this necklace?

A sense of misery surged in Vivian's heart.

It was the same feeling as she had felt back in elementary school when Harvey finally grew a conscience and transferred her to a private school. The first time she saw Ashley, the

latter was wearing a pretty dress while she herself was in hand-me-downs that had belonged to a neighbor's son. Vivian now felt the same anxiety.

Vivian was lost in her thoughts. She did not even notice that the sound of running water from the bathroom had ceased.

Not until a cold and furious voice traveled into her ears.

"Vivian, what are you doing?"

By the time Vivian snapped back to her senses, a cold bucket of water had metaphorically poured onto her. She swiftly stood up to see that Finnick had come out of the bathroom. He was in pajamas and his hair was still damp. His cold, dark eyes were fixed on her.

Still holding onto the necklace, Vivian panicked, feeling like a thief caught in action. "Finnick, I- Ah!"

She frantically tried to explain herself while putting the necklace back into the drawer. In the midst of her nervousness, she dropped the necklace.

The color on her face drained.

It was a crystal necklace! It would shatter when it fell onto the floor!

She instantly crouched down to catch it, without caring that her arm was injured. Vivian could feel her wound tear, but the thought of her injury was at the very back of her mind.

Yet, Finnick was faster than she.

He crouched after a quick step over and caught the necklace before it could come into contact with the floor.

As such, Vivian only grasped the air instead of the necklace. She heaved a relieved sigh when she saw that the necklace was safe.

Before she could finish sighing, she heard Finnick's frigid voice above her head.

"Vivian, can you explain to me what you're doing?"

Her heart skipped a beat. When she lifted her head, she could see Finnick staring at her coldly while holding onto the necklace.

When she locked eyes with him, her heart ached as though a hammer had struck it.

She never thought that Finnick would ever look at her in this way.

Even when they were unfamiliar with each other back then and Finnick had been indifferent to her, he had never given her a look like this.

His frigid look embodied disgust and hatred.

Vivian's lips trembled before she finally whispered, "I'm sorry. I keep seeing you lost in your thoughts while looking at the necklace. I couldn't help but feel curious..."

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Her voice grew soft, so soft that it could barely be heard.

Even Vivian knew how terrible her excuse was. She had been snooping around. She could barely believe that she had done something so horrible.

When Finnick saw how pale Vivian was, he felt a blunt ache in his heart.

Damn it.

Was I too harsh with her? Did I scare her?

Finnick did not want to sound mad at her, but when the necklace was nearly dropped on the ground, wrath had exploded in his chest.

The necklace meant too many things to him. If it had shattered...

Finnick dared not imagine it.

Knowing that he would not be able to speak with Vivian calmly now, he turned and went toward the wardrobe. He took out his shirt and muttered, "I have some things to attend to in the office. I'll go out for a while. Rest early."

Vivian's lashes fluttered.

Does Finnick not want to see me?

She could not say anything but bite on her lower lip and nod.

Finnick was quick to change. Without drying his hair, he sat in his wheelchair and left the room.

Molly was cleaning the house when she saw Finnick come downstairs. She stared at him with wide eyes.

"Mr. Norton, it's already so late in the night. Where are you going?" She hurried over. "And your hair! Why is it wet? Dry it quickly!"

Finnick paused in his tracks. Although his expression remained cold, he calmly uttered, "Molly, I have things to attend to in the office. Remember to remind Vivian to change her bandage."

"Sure, but..."

Before Molly could finish her sentence, Finnick had wheeled away without sparing another glance at her.

In the room.

As if she had lost her soul, Vivian collapsed onto the bed.

Pangs of sharp pain came from her arm. She carefully unwrapped the bandage to look at it and found that her wound had indeed ruptured.

Vivian knew she had to clean the wound again, so she picked up a new cotton swab. Unfortunately, her left hand was not as nimble and she stabbed her wound a few times, causing more bleeding.

Tears fell from her eyes. She did not know if it was from the pain or from Finnick's reprimand earlier.

Seems like the necklace means a great deal to Finnick.

All she did was to hold it in her hands, and Finnick lost his temper.

But...

How cruel. I'm a person, but I'm no match for a necklace. 'm just a speck of dust in Finnick's heart.

The unpleasant thought reared its ugly head in her mind, so much so that it even surprised Vivian herself.

The next second, she flashed a bitter smile.

Vivian, Vivian. Why should Finnick think that you're more important than that necklace?

That necklace should be a gift from his ex-girlfriend, Evelyn. She's such a pretty girl. Even a strand of her hair is prettier than your entire being. Naturally, her necklace matters much more than you.

Besides, aren't you too carried away recently? Just because Finnick is now slightly nicer to you, you've forgotten who you are. How dare you rummage through his things!

You think too highly of yourself.

Vivian should have known that other than her mother, no one else would truly care about her in this world.

Her biological father, Harvey, and Fabian, who had promised to stay by her side forever, were only passersby in her life.

How can I possibly hope Finnick will treat me differently?

Vivian understood this better than anyone.

But...

Why does my chest feel so tight?

Vivian reached out to put her hand on her chest. It was painful and uncomfortable as if it were squeezed by an invisible force.

Is it because...

A thought flashed across her mind. She suddenly felt there was something in her heart she could no longer ignore.

Is it because...

I'm falling in love with Finnick?

.....

That night, Finnick did not return.

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Molly wanted to help Vivian clean her wound but the latter rejected her offer. Vivian did not want Molly to see her reddened eyes, so she decided to clean it herself.

Vivian woke up early the next morning and felt instantly lonely when she realized there was no one around her.

Damn it.

She patted her cheeks to wake herself up.

Vivian did not like how she looked at this point; she needed to pull herself together.

After breaking up with Fabian two years ago, she swore to never fall in love with anyone again, even though she would still get married and have children.

Am I going to lose myself again?

No. No way.

Vivian made a swift decision.

She got out of the bed and dragged a few luggage bags downstairs with her left hand.

"Where are you going, Mrs. Norton?" Molly was taken aback.

"My mom was recently discharged from the hospital, so I plan to go home and take care of her." Vivian pursed her lips and looked at Molly. "I miss her."

"But you're still injured. How are you going to take care of someone else?" Molly panicked. "Why don't you bring your mom over? I can take care of her as well."

Vivian rejected. "It's alright, Molly. My mom wouldn't feel comfortable staying here. I'll tell Finnick about this, so don't worry."

After finishing her breakfast, Vivian called a car and left the residence.

Upon arriving at her own home, Vivian spent some time cleaning the space. After all, she had been away for quite some time. She took a glance at her watch and decided to go to work since it was still early.

By right, she should have returned to work since her injury was just a minor one. She was, however, still given a week off, and no one from the magazine company questioned her. It must be because of Fabian.

When she arrived at the office, Sarah and Jenny went up to her to genuinely inquire about her health. Though Shannon and a few other colleagues made fun of her from afar, Vivian did not let that bother her.

Just as she was about to start working, she heard some fast-paced footsteps coming in her direction.

She turned around and saw Fabian's tensed expression.

"Mr. Norton?" Vivian stood up from her chair right away. She looked at Fabian and knitted her brows. "Yes?"

She was not sure if her mind was playing tricks on her but felt Fabian looked strange today.

It was as if a demon had possessed him. He disregarded the people around, went up to Vivian, and grabbed her by her shoulder. Fabian growled in a deep voice, "Why didn't you tell me you were innocent? Someone framed you two years ago, am I right?"

Vivian was thunderstruck; she became as white as a sheet.

Her lips began to twitch. She glared at Fabian and was at a loss for words.

Fabian got even more teary-eyed as he continued to shake her. "Why didn't you explain yourself? Why did you allow me to humiliate you and insult you?"

Fabian had reached his breaking point.

It was clear that someone had set Vivian up when Fabian investigated her two years ago. He could not describe his feelings at this moment after learning that she had been wrongly accused.

He could not imagine the pain and struggle she had gone through over the years.

Not only did he not offer her the help she needed, but he also even rubbed salt into her wound by humiliating her.

At the same time, he was also mad at her for suffering in silence ever since they reunited. He was mad at her for not clearing things up.

Fabian could not control his emotions, and this was why he wanted to seek Vivian's confirmation today. Even if she's at Finnick's place, he would still make a trip there to hear what she had to say!

But as he was about to leave his office, he realized Vivian had returned to work.

Fabian did not care what the people around would think of him; he just wanted Vivian to tell him the truth.

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Fabian was so emotional that he had forgotten Vivian was injured. The way he shook her shoulders gave her excruciating pain, and her face turned even paler.

Upon seeing her ashen face, Fabian finally calmed down a little. He immediately released her from his grip. "I'm sorry. I forgot you're injured."

Vivian, too, regained her composure. She took a sidelong glance at the crowd and whispered, "Let's talk in the office."

Fabian realized he had gone overboard. He nodded and walked into the office with Vivian following right behind.

The minute the two of them entered Fabian's office, the crowd started discussing the unexpected turn of events.

"Oh my, what was that? So the rumors are real? They used to be a couple?"

"Yes, they were. I heard they broke up when he learned that Vivian sold herself, but it seems he's now realized it was all a misunderstanding?"

"So Vivian is innocent? I knew it! We all have known her for two years now, and she's a great girl! She can't be involved in that kind of filthy business!"

Upon seeing everyone started taking Vivian's side, Shannon could not help but grit her teeth and stand up.

"Shannon, where are you going?"

"I'm not feeling well. I'm taking a day off!"

...

In Fabian's office, Vivian sat on the couch, and her face still looked as pallid as ever. She looked at Fabian pacing back and forth in front of her and did not know what to say.

In the end, Vivian let out a sigh and said, "Calm down, Fabian."

She knew Fabian would act like this when he was emotionally unstable.

He stopped walking and stared at her while his expression remained unchanged. "Why didn't you tell me the truth?"

Vivian's eyes glistened. "So you now know?"

"Yes! I know everything now!" He stood in front of her and let out a low grunt, "Why didn't you explain yourself? Despite all the things I've done and said, you just... how could you stay silent?"

"Did I not explain myself?" Vivian finally spoke in a louder voice. She lifted her head and looked into his eyes. "Even if I explained myself clearly, would you have believed me?"

Fabian trembled. He wanted to answer "yes", but the moment he thought of how cruel he had treated her over the years, he could not bring himself to spew out the answer.

Vivian looked at him and put on a wry smile. "I don't know who fed with you that false information, but I knew you left me at the most vulnerable point in my life, when I needed you the most. You said you would believe me, but did you come looking for me to listen to my explanation? No. You left without a goodbye because you believed what people said. After all these years, you expect me to come up to you and say I don't hate you?"

Vivian maintained eye contact with Fabian when she made her point. Her eyes were so crystal clear that Fabian did not know how to face her.

He looked away from her and defended himself. "Someone showed me some photos. I thought since the evidence was clear, there was no way you could deny it."

Photos?

Vivian finally understood it was all because of those scandalous photos he saw two years ago.

She smiled wryly. "I see. Just a couple of photos were enough for you to lose faith in me." She continued with a gentle voice, "Perhaps you never had faith in me, after all. If you did, you would have told me you're from the Norton family."

"They're two different things, for goodness sake!" Fabian panicked once again. "I hid my identity because..."

"Don't you understand?" Vivian interrupted him before he could explain himself. "You never really trusted me. Not two years ago, and not now. You only believe in yourself."