

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 21

Vivian forced herself to stay calm as she asked, "You're going to the bathroom too, Mr. Hark?"

"Of course not..." Mr. Hark slurred, scooting over to her. Vivian recoiled at the alcoholic stench that his body emitted. "I'm here for you..."

Vivian almost puked at the sound of that.

You're here for me?

You could almost be my father at this age!

"That's really funny, Mr. Hark," Vivian said, giving him a strained smile. She put a hand against the wall and tried to walk towards the ladies' bathroom, only for him to grab her by the arm.

"Hey, Ms. William... Don't you like me?" Mr. Hark drawled.

Of course not!

Vivian resisted the urge to snap at him for the sake of her job. "Mr. Hark, you're drunk."

"Haha! It doesn't matter! I can still have my way with you!" Mr. Hark sneered, moving over to pin Vivian against the wall with his large belly. "I'll show you just how good I am in bed!"

Vivian glared at him and started to struggle against him. "Hey! Watch your words, Mr. Hark!"

Her struggling irritated Mr. Hark, and his smirk turned into a scowl. "Stop resisting, Vivian William! The Chief Editor practically handed you over to me!"

It was as though an explosion had gone off in Vivian's head, and she could only stare at Mr. Hark in shock and disbelief. "What do you mean?"

“Stop pretending you don’t know!” Mr. Hark growled, pressing his face against hers. “The Chief Editor agreed to all of this, so you’re just a gift from the magazine company. You’re mine now!”

Vivian’s mind went blank, and her arms relaxed out of grief, drooping to her sides.

Fabian probably despises me for what happened two years ago, but why would he do something as despicable as this?

Am I just a prostitute to him?

Suddenly, Vivian looked up to see a familiar figure at the other end of the corridor.

It’s Fabian!

Fabian had come after her as he was concerned for her safety.

He had been suspicious of Mr. Hark since he caught the latter eyeing Vivian throughout their meal, and his anxiety only mounted when Mr. Hark followed Vivian out just shortly after she left to go to the bathroom.

The scene before him caught him off guard.

Mr. Hark was practically squashing Vivian’s tiny frame against the wall, yet Vivian stayed still, as though she had given Mr. Hark permission to treat her as such.

Fabian could feel his blood boil.

Why the hell are you not resisting, Vivian William?

Are you really the sl*t that I think you are? Do you have a fetish for old, slimy men like Mr. Hark?

Fabian considered pulling Mr. Hark away from her, but her lack of resistance disappointed him.

What’s the point of helping you out?

What if she does have a thing for those old geezers? Won't I be ruining her fun if I intervened now?

With that, Fabian turned around and left the scene without hesitating for even a second.

As for Vivian, a glimmer of hope appeared when she caught sight of Fabian.

There's no way he would give his female subordinates to other people as gifts, even if he hates me!

However, before she could open her mouth to scream for help, Fabian had already turned around and walked away.

Boom!

The last sliver of hope Vivian had crumbled into a heap the moment she saw Fabian turn his back on her.

Why would you do that, Fabian?

Didn't you see me just now? Why did you just walk away?

Vivian shuddered. Maybe Mr. Hark is right... Maybe Fabian was the one who suggested this...

She began to shake uncontrollably.

How could you, Fabian? How could you?

Suddenly, a revolting stench filled her nostrils, and she raised her head to see Mr. Hark pressing his lips against her face.

"Ew! Get away from me!" she yelled, smacking him on the face with her hand and leaving a red handprint on his cheek.

Unfortunately, it only angered him even further.

“Vivian William!” he yelled, grabbing her by her hair roughly. “Do you still want your job in this industry?”

Vivian scrunched her face up in fear and pain. When she noticed Mr. Hark raising his hand to slap her, she squeezed her eyes shut and braced for the pain.

However, the stinging pain never came. In fact, the next thing she knew, Mr. Hark gave a frightening yelp and pulled away from her.

“M-Mr. Norton? Why are you here?”

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Mr. Norton?

Vivian’s eyes flew open to see a familiar figure on a wheelchair.

Her eyes widened immediately. “F-Finnick?”

Am I dreaming?

Finnick studied her from head to toe, taking in her flushed face, sparkling eyes and body-hugging outfit that brought out her beautiful curves.

Her beauty irritated him.

Who would go to work in that outfit? No wonder she attracts so many perverts!

Finnick ignored Vivian completely and glared at Mr. Hark.

Mr. Hark had wanted to slap Vivian, but Finnick popped out of nowhere and grabbed his wrist.

Finnick was wheelchair-bound, but it did not hinder his movements at all. His height advantage made the maneuver as easy as if he had been able-bodied.

Finnick was a prominent figure in the magazine industry, which was why Mr. Hark recognized him immediately. The fat on his cheeks trembled as he stared at Finnick in shock and forced a smile onto his lips. "Mr. Norton? W-Why are you here?"

Finnick's gaze was colder than ice, yet Mr. Hark was sweating as though he had been standing under the sun.

Finnick shoved Mr. Hark's hand aside and took out a piece of tissue paper to wipe his hand down. With a disgusted look on his face, he spat, "Scram!"

Scared out of his drunken daze, Mr. Hark scurried off immediately.

...

Fabian strode out of the restaurant, still brooding over what he saw in the corridor. His phone suddenly rang, jolting him out of his trance.

"Hey! Fabian Norton! Are you trying to get me killed?" Mr. Hark yelled the moment he picked up the phone.

"Huh?" Fabian was caught off guard.

"Why didn't you tell me that Vivian William was attached to the president of Finnor Group?" Mr. Hark demanded.

"What?"

"What do you mean 'what'? Finnick Norton came just before I got what I wanted! Why didn't you tell me more about that woman? I would have avoided her at all costs!"

Fabian skidded to a halt.

Finnick's here?

Since when did he come to Q City?

“Hey! Fabian! Are you listening?”

Mr. Hark continued to bark at him, but he no longer had the patience to listen to him.

He had not made his true identity as part of the Norton family public, hence he regularly got yelled at by insignificant people like Mr. Hark.

After a while of staring into space, he finally took out his phone again and gave Vivian a call.

A few long beeps later, the call finally went through, but the voice that greeted him was that of a man's.

“Hello?”

Fabian's heart skipped a beat, and he ended the call without hesitating for even a second.

He stared at his phone for a long moment before bursting into maniacal laughter.

I know that voice!

It's Finnick, isn't it?

Don't tell me it's him...

Are they actually living together?

Fabian could almost cry from laughing too much. Her contact in his phone suddenly felt like a needle to his eye.

Oh... Vivian... What did I ever do to you? Why did you have to make me suffer so much?

You're already married, and yet you're still eyeing other men? Why Finnick, of all people?

On the other end of the line, Finnick gently set Vivian's phone down with a blank look on his face.

“Who is it?” Vivian asked weakly, already half-asleep from the alcohol. Finnick had helped her pick up the call just now, seeing how intoxicated she was.

"Just a spam call," he answered.

"Oh..." Vivian answered as she nursed her throbbing head.

"Does your head hurt?" Finnick asked gently, noticing how much pain she seemed to be in.

"Yeah..." Vivian said. She almost jumped out of her skin when a pair of hands came to rest at her temples.

"How does this feel?" Finnick asked as he rubbed her temples gently.

His fingers felt coarse and cold on her burning skin, and it made her heart race for a few seconds.

She shifted away from him. "T-Thanks. I feel better now."

However, she was pulled back by him immediately. "Don't move!" he commanded coldly.

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Vivian froze and looked out of the window. Under the dim glow of the streetlights, she noticed how Finnick's expression seemed more stern than usual, as though something had been bothering him.

She sobered up immediately. "Are you angry, Finnick?"

I'm sure any man would be mad if they saw someone harassing their wife...

"What do you think?" he asked, making the temperature in the car drop by a few centigrade.

"I'm sorry..." Vivian whispered.

"That's it?" Finnick said, raising an eyebrow.

Vivian froze as something popped into her mind.

“Hey! Don’t overthink things!” she exclaimed. “It was just a normal business meal... I didn’t know Mr. Hark would do something like that...”

She feared that Finnick would misunderstand things too, just like how Fabian did two years ago.

In fact, she was gravely frightened by the very prospect of it.

Finnick was her husband and the only person who cared about her, and the last thing she wanted was for him to hate her as well.

Finnick stared at her with a strange glint in his eyes.

“I know,” he said, sounding relaxed.

Vivian heaved a sigh of relief, only to freeze when Finnick spoke again.

“Don’t go to these business meals anymore.”

Vivian nodded obediently.

As Finnick continued to massage her temples, she found herself leaning into his touch.

Finnick shivered when he felt something soft burrow into his shoulder.

He looked down to see her resting her head against his shoulder, taking in her baby pink cheeks, long eyelashes and lightly parted lips.

His eyes widened for just a second.

What is this I’m feeling...

“Vivian...” he rasped.

“Hmm?” Vivian drawled as she looked up. She realized with a start that their faces were less than five centimeters apart.

"Ah! I'm sorry!" she exclaimed, pulling herself away from him out of shock.

However, before she could react, Finnick's hand had already slid down her face and grabbed her chin.

Without warning, he pressed his lips against hers.

The coolness on her lips made her snap out of her drunken, confused state immediately.

Finnick's kissing me? He's actually kissing me?

By the time they reached the hotel, Vivian had already fallen asleep.

Finnick placed her on his lap and took her to their room.

When he lifted her onto the bed, he noticed that her wrists were still red from the scuffle with Mr. Hark.

His gaze turned cold immediately, and he took out his phone to make a call.

"Hey, Finnick! I haven't heard from you in ages!" The person on the other end of the line drawled.

"I need your help," Finnick said. Anyone who was familiar with him could feel the dangerous tone in his voice.

"Wow! That's rare! Just say it, and I'll do it!"

"I need you to get rid of someone for me," Finnick said, his voice a low growl. "He hurt someone on my side, so I must make him suffer."

Vivian woke up the next morning with a splitting headache due to all the alcohol from the previous night.

She struggled to get up from the bed, and a low voice made her freeze.

"You're awake?"

Vivian looked up to see a full course meal waiting for her on the table and Finnick sitting nearby.

"Finnick?" Vivian exclaimed as the events of the previous night flooded into her mind.

I almost got violated by Mr. Hark, and Finnick appeared just in time to save me... Wait, what did we do in the car afterwards?

Oh my... Did we kiss?

"What's wrong?" Finnick asked when she did not get off the bed. "Are you alright?"

Vivian looked up at him with a start.

Finnick's room was a presidential suite, and the sunlight pouring in from the gigantic windows bathed him in its golden glint. He looked like a literal deity, though the blank look on his face reminded her that he was just a mere handsome mortal.

It made her feel as though the kiss was just an illusion.

"I-I'm fine!" she stammered as she clambered off the bed, only to freeze when she saw what she was wearing.

It was a white shirt that was obviously too big for her, considering how it reached all the way to her thighs.

"W-What are these clothes?"

"Have you forgotten?" Finnick asked, raising an eyebrow. "You threw up last night after getting drunk. I asked a female hotel employee to change you out of your soiled clothes and dress you in one of my shirts."

Oh... So the hotel employee did it...

Vivian sighed in relief, not noticing Finnick's gaze studying her from head to toe.

Finnick grinned, only to freeze the moment Vivian got up from the bed.

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His shirt hung off her tiny frame like a gigantic curtain, exposing her collarbones and slender legs every so often.

Finnick looked away, his face heating up rapidly.

He had always prided himself with his self-control, yet he had no choice but to take a few sips of ice-cold water to calm himself down.

Vivian sat down at the table, not having noticed anything strange about him.

"I'm going back this afternoon," Finnick said halfway through their meal. "Are you coming along?"

Vivian recalled the drama from the previous night and nodded solemnly. "I'll follow you."

She could not care less about her relationship with Fabian, even if it would cost her job in the future.

"Alright."

"Oh, before I forget," Vivian said. "Why are you in Q City?"

Finnick's hands froze for a moment, but he regained his composure just as quickly. "I had a last-minute meeting."

"I see," Vivian said, stuffing another bite of food into her mouth.

After they collected their clothes from the dry cleaning store, they set off for the airport to catch a flight back to Sunshine City.

Noah had been waiting for them when they arrived at the lobby. He raised an eyebrow when he saw Vivian walking towards him.

No wonder he was in such a rush to come to Q City! He's here to look for Mrs. Norton!

"Mr. Norton, here are some documents that require your signature," Noah said, trying his very best to hide his shock. He managed to steal a glance at Vivian when he handed the documents over to Finnick.

He had heard some spicy rumors regarding Mrs. Norton the previous day, and he didn't expect Mrs. Norton's first love to be...

"Ahem."

Noah shivered and turned around to meet Finnick's cold glare.

He lowered his head immediately.

Vivian did not notice a thing. When Finnick got into the car, she hurried over to follow him.

Finnick glanced at the documents in his hand before closing the folder abruptly and looking up at Vivian. "Vivian, let's go and meet my family this weekend."

Vivian?

Vivian froze for a few moments, completely caught off guard by how he addressed her. She took a while to digest the situation before answering, "Sure."

I'm curious about his family anyway...

Vivian did not think much about it, but her words almost made Noah jump out of his seat. He glanced at the couple in the backseat through the rearview window.

Oh my god! He's actually bringing her to meet his family?

Could that mean...

Noah did not dare to think any further.

Vivian and Finnick arrived at Sunshine City after just a few hours, while Fabian was held back by some matters that he had to attend to.

He had wanted to establish ties with Mr. Hark's magazine company, only to wake up to reports of Mr. Hark's company getting sued and going bankrupt.

What in the world?

This is definitely not a coincidence.

There's only one person who could destroy Mr. Hark's life overnight!

Fabian could feel his blood pressure rising.

Darn it!

Why would he go to such lengths just for Vivian? Doesn't he know that Vivian is married?

It took a while, but he managed to clear up the mess in Q City and return to Sunshine City. When he stepped out of the plane, he saw Ashley waiting for him at the gate.

"Fabes!" Ashley yelled, rushing over to him the moment she caught sight of him. "You're finally back? Why didn't you pick up my calls?"

Fabian glanced at her, annoyed by how much she resembled Vivian.

"Nothing much. I was just busy," Fabian said before turning around and leaving the airport.

Ashley's face fell as she watched Fabian disappearing into distance.

She recalled what his secretary told her a few days ago.

"Oh, the Chief Editor's going to Q City for a business trip with a journalist from the company. Her name? Vivian William."

Ashley clenched her fists, her nails digging into her palms painfully.

Vivian William! It's you again!

Who gave her the right to compete with me?

Ashley bit her lip and whipped out her phone.

"Hello?" she said into the phone, her voice laced with an icy malice. "Do you still have the pictures from last time? I need them. Every last one of them."

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Vivian was concerned that Fabian would be annoyed by her sudden departure from Q City, therefore she was surprised when all she heard from him was radio silence.

Soon, the weekend came.

That day, Vivian dressed herself in a wine-red gown that Finnick had prepared for her. She proceeded to put on a diamond necklace and a pair of high-heel shoes to her outfit before walking downstairs slowly.

Finnick had already been waiting for her downstairs, and the sound of her high-heels clicking against the wood of the stairs made him look up. His eyes widened the very next second.

Vivian was prettier than the average girl, but she was never the type to put much effort into dressing up. In fact, she was used to hiding her beauty rather than flaunting it.

As a result, she looked like a shimmering diamond in light makeup and the dress he picked out for her.

Vivian walked over to Finnick and stared at him, wondering why he was being so silent. "What's wrong? Do I look weird?" she asked bashfully, running a hand through her hair.

That was the first time she wore something like that, and checking its price online did nothing to help with her anxiety.

"No, you don't," Finnick said, snapping out of his daze. "You look beautiful."

Finnick was not one to be stingy with praises, particularly when the receiver was his wife.

Vivian froze.

Did he just praise me?

"Let's go," Finnick said, pushing himself to the car on his wheelchair with Vivian following close behind.

They picked a high-end restaurant for their gathering with Finnick's family.

When they arrived at the restaurant, Vivian alighted from the car as Finnick held her hand. As they got onto the lift, Vivian's anxiety suddenly mounted. "Finnick... Are your family members... Difficult people?"

"No," Finnick said. He paused for a short while before continuing, "Though... I'd suggest that you get ready for it."

Vivian froze for a moment. Before she could ask him what he meant, the lift door opened at their floor.

Vivian ran after him, and they soon arrived at the largest private room at the end of the corridor.

The moment they entered, Vivian noticed an old man sitting at the table. That's his grandpa!

Vivian gave him a polite smile and walked over to greet him, only to stop abruptly in her tracks when she took a good look at his face.

The man before her had gotten on in his years, yet his eyes were bright and his back was straight. His gaze was stern as he trained his eyes on her, and it made her recoil just a bit in fear.

Vivian had seen that memorable face countless times before, be it in magazines or in the news.

That's Samuel Norton, the Old Master of the Sunshine City Norton family!

Vivian's eyes almost popped out of their sockets as she stared at him in shock.

He's Finnick's grandfather? Does this mean that Finnick is that mysterious, unknown son of the Norton family?

As the most prominent family in Sunshine City, everyone knew every single detail about their family history. The elder Mr. Norton had one son, who in turn gave birth to two grandsons. However, both his son and daughter-in-law passed away early, leaving their two sons in the care of the elder Mr. Norton.

His grandsons had a huge age gap. The older one was almost forty years old, and his son Fabian Norton was known to the world as the 'grandson of the Norton family'.

His other grandson was only about thirty years old, but he got into an accident about a decade ago and ruined his health forever. His family sent him overseas and never spoke about him again.

Could Finnick be that mysterious second grandson of Samuel Norton?

Vivian's face turned pale as a sheet.

She knew that Finnick's last name was Norton, but she had never put two and two together before. Everyone thought that Finnick got to where he was by his own hard work, and no one guessed that he had the entire Norton family backing him up.

Does that mean that... Finnick is Fabian's uncle?

Am I living in a drama?

My first love became my brother-in-law, and I'm his aunt now?

"Vivian?" Finnick whispered into her ear as he pushed himself over to her. "You alright?"

"I..." Vivian stammered. "I-I... Finnick? I don't feel so good..."

Finnick's eyes darkened before he spoke. "Let's just get this over and done with. Besides, my brother and nephew is coming soon."

His nephew is coming too?

Vivian's face turned even paler at that statement.

