

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 36

Vivian turned around and saw that Finnick had returned.

Finnick was standing there. His figure was lean and his legs were long and slender. His light blue shirt outlined his perfectly sculpted body.

A solemn look flashed across Vivian's eyes.

He's such an exceptional man, but he's forced to sit in a wheelchair. How does that even feel like?

"I'm telling Vivian that I've fallen in love with her at first sight and is planning to steal her away from you." The moment Xavier saw Finnick, a frivolous smile appeared on his lips again. "Finnick, you know how charming I am. I've got so many women fawning over me. You must be careful!"

"Don't think that Vivian's the same as those women around you," rebuked Finnick calmly. He walked to the dining table and opened the bottle of red wine. "She won't ever like you."

"Hmph! How confident!" Xavier snorted in disdain.

With the lively Xavier around, there was not a single moment of boredom during the meal. Vivian was laughing from start to finish because of him. Only after they finished dessert did Xavier wipe his mouth and reluctantly stand up.

"Alright, Vivian. I have a date today, so I won't disturb you and Finnick anymore. I'll visit you again."

Vivian stood up with Finnick to send Xavier off. They only returned to the dining room after Xavier's ostentatiously red sports car sped away.

Finnick was bringing the plates on the dining table back to the kitchen.

"Let me do it," offered Vivian immediately, wanting to take the plates away from Finnick's hands. However, he raised his hand and stopped her.

"I can do simple things like this," replied Finnick in a deep voice.

Left with no choice, Vivian could only clear the table with him.

As Finnick placed the plates in the dishwasher, he abruptly asked, "What did Xavier tell you just now?"

Vivian was taken aback. However, she still replied honestly, "He told me why you're pretending to be crippled."

"I see." Finnick nodded, not surprised at all.

Vivian expected it too. Since Finnick and Xavier shared so many years of friendship, Finnick definitely could guess what Xavier told her.

"Do you blame me?" Finnick suddenly asked again as he shot a brooding glance at Vivian.

Surprised, Vivian didn't understand what he meant. "Blame you for what?"

"I should be the one telling all these things to you," mumbled Finnick as he placed the last plate into the dishwasher.

Vivian burst out laughing. "There's no difference. Without your permission, Xavier wouldn't have dared to tell it to me, right?"

Finnick could not help but steal another glance at her.

Although she's never nosy, she's actually very observant.

This is the woman I chose!

"Yeah." Vivian and Finnick walked out of the kitchen, hand in hand. "Xavier's better at talking than me."

In other words, he was saying that Xavier could probably explain it clearer than he could.

"As for the specific reason..." Finnick hesitated for a while before adding, "I still can't tell you. The more you know, the more danger you'll be in. I hope that you'll understand."

Vivian nodded. "I know. You're trying to protect me."

Vivian uttered those words very softly and light-heartedly. Yet, when Finnick heard her, he felt a flutter in his heart. He unknowingly tightened his grip on Vivian's soft hand.

Sensing Finnick's grip on her hand, Vivian started to blush. She was about to say something when her phone in the living room rang.

"Um... I'll go pick up the call." With her head lowered, Vivian mumbled, withdrew her hand and walked to the living room.

When she grabbed the phone on the table and saw the incoming call, her brows furrowed.

She accepted the call and asked expressionlessly, "Ashley, why are you calling me?"

Ashley and Vivian shared the same father, but different mothers. Although they were related by blood, they grew up in completely different environments and barely saw each other. Hence, there was no sisterly bond between them.

Especially after what happened with Fabian, Vivian felt like there was no need for them to feign friendliness with each other anymore. Hence, she did not know why Ashley called her.

"Vivian." Ashley's sickeningly sweet voice sounded on the phone. "You seem unhappy to receive my call."

"There's nothing to be happy about." Vivian could not be bothered to keep up the act with her. With an impatient tone, she snapped, "Cut the crap. What do you want?"

"Of course I'm calling you to report good news," said Ashley in a cutesy voice. "I heard that Ms. William's condition is improving, right?"

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Vivian's heart sank.

Why does she have such detailed information about my Mom?

“What about it?” Her voice became colder.

“Don’t be like this, darling sister. After all, I’m very concerned about Ms. William too.” Ashley’s friendly tone was as fake as ever. “Hence, when I heard that Ms. William’s hospital fees are going to increase, I was worried sick. I keep thinking about how I can help you.”

Ashley wants to help me?

Vivian coldly scoffed, “How do you want to help me?”

“I know a friend who runs a magazine company. They’re in need of manpower now. Also, they have really attractive employee benefits.” Ashley finally revealed her objective in calling Vivian. “Since you’re so talented, you’ll definitely be treated better if you join her company instead.”

Vivian finally understood.

After beating around the bush, Ashley simply wanted her out of Glamour Magazine.

The reason was obvious—it was because of Fabian.

Having figured out Ashley’s intentions, Vivian could not help but mock, “Ashley, are you so concerned about me and Fabian?”

Vivian’s words were so brutally straightforward that Ashley paled.

Biting her rosy lip, she still replied in a sweet voice, “What are you talking about, Vivian? Why should I be worried about you? You’re just a married woman who has sold her body for money.”

Vivian’s face stiffened.

She’s saying such cruel and harsh words in such a disgustingly sweet tone. This is totally like Ashley.

Vivian’s voice turned frosty. “Ashley, regardless of what your intentions in introducing this job to me are, I will not accept the job.”

She understood Ashley all too well. If she actually joined the new magazine company, she would not be treated well at all. In fact, she would fall right into Ashley's grasp and be tormented by her.

Upon hearing Vivian's firm rejection, Ashley started to feel humiliated. A hint of fury finally crept into her voice as she yelled, "Vivian! You ungrateful and rude b*tch!"

"Oh my! Your embarrassment has morphed into anger so quickly!" scoffed Vivian. "Don't worry. I'm not interested in Fabian at all, so you don't need to be so paranoid."

Ashley was so furious that she wanted to scream out loud!

What do you mean you're not interested?

Vivian, you b*tch! You're very skilled at playing hard to get, huh?

"Vivian!" Now that things had come to this, Ashley could not be bothered to put on an act anymore. "I'm warning you. Leave the magazine company! Otherwise, I'll teach you a lesson!"

Vivian scoffed in contempt. "Teach me a lesson? Ashley, what can you even do to me?"

What can I do to you?

On the other side, Ashley's lips suddenly curved into a ruthless smirk. "I can make you suffer so badly that you wish for death."

Ashley's voice was extremely sweet, yet there was a vicious note in it. Vivian could not help but feel a chill run down her spine.

However, she impatiently snapped, "Do what you want! Anyway, I need my job. Also, I am completely uninterested in your fiancé!"

With that, she hung up the call, not wanting to entertain Ashley anymore.

When Ashley heard the busy tone on the phone, her pretty face twisted in fury.

Vivian!

I gave you a chance to save yourself! Since it's your fault for not taking it, don't blame me for this.

Ashley quickly picked up her phone and dialed a number.

"Hi, it's me." Ashley's voice was laced with menace. "Send all the photos. Yes, send them to Fabian. Be careful. Don't let anyone find out where they're sent from."

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After hanging up the call, Ashley was still fuming as she painted her nails red. In her anger, she jammed the brush against her nail.

Even till now, she could still remember the first time she met Fabian.

Fabian always assumed that their first encounter was during the banquet half a year ago. Yet, he was oblivious to the fact that she had already met him three years ago.

It was at Z College. Back then, she and her friends had visited H City for fun. Her father instructed her to bring some things for Vivian. Although she was reluctant to do so, she still obeyed him as she needed to seem like an obedient daughter.

It was then that she coincidentally saw Vivian together with Fabian.

She could recall clearly that it was a beautiful, sunny day. Fabian was riding a bicycle, while Vivian sat behind him. He was wearing a white blouse, looking like a prince who had come straight out of the fairy tales.

The moment she laid eyes on him, she was attracted by him.

Although that encounter was brief, and both Vivian and Fabian probably had no impression of it, but that was deeply engraved in her mind.

After returning home, she specially hired someone to investigate her sister's boyfriend. Only then did she get a huge shock.

Surprisingly, Vivian's boyfriend, whom she described as a poor student relying on financial aid to attend college, was actually the grandson of the Norton family!

After discovering this, Ashley was over the moon!

She knew that with her taste in men, it was impossible for her to fall in love with a poor bloke. Certainly, the person she liked must be an extraordinary man!

From then on, she was determined to marry Fabian and no one else.

Unfortunately, Fabian only had eyes for Vivian.

She still recalled the occasional times Vivian visited the Millers. When she received Fabian's call, there was always this sickeningly blissful expression on her face.

Similarly, she had also snuck to Z College to steal a glimpse of Fabian. She could never forget Fabian's affectionate face whenever he looked at Vivian.

Indeed, she must admit that she was overcome by jealousy.

She was actually jealous of Vivian—that crude, unrefined and illegitimate daughter of the Millers!

Although she despised Vivian since young, it mostly stemmed out of disdain. It was because she never thought that Vivian could compare up to her.

Yet, never in a million years would she imagine herself being jealous of Vivian.

This marked the start of her hatred for Vivian.

Hence, she orchestrated the incident two years ago. Her aim was to force Fabian to never love this dirty, illegitimate daughter again.

She always thought that she had succeeded. Fabian broke up with Vivian, returned to the Norton family and went abroad to A Nation—just like what someone from a wealthy family should do. As planned, she met him there, started dating him and even got engaged.

Everything was going according to her plan. However, when they returned to Sunshine City, everything changed.

Fabian actually became Vivian's direct superior. Was it a coincidence or a deliberate move by Fabian?

After the few encounters and the business trip, she was truly afraid.

Hence, she had no choice but to unleash her trump card.

Vivian, I'll make it impossible for you to ever be with Fabian!

Monday arrived. After Vivian woke up and was prepared to go downstairs for breakfast, she received an unexpected call from the hospital.

"What?" Vivian stopped in the middle of the staircase. "Ten thousand? Do you need it urgently? No, it's not that I can't afford it. Just prescribe the medicine. I'll go retrieve the money today."

Vivian hung up the call and sighed.

After her mom's health condition improved, she started to take imported medicine. Most of them were not covered by insurance, so Vivian was struggling to afford them.

However, as it concerned her mom's life, she had no choice but to steel herself and call the Human Resource Department.

"I'm sorry, but I'll need to collect my salary in advance." Even Vivian felt embarrassed at her request. "But my mother... Okay, I understand. I'll wait for your update."

After hanging up the call, Vivian sighed again before heading to the dining room.

Finnick was eating porridge there. When he spotted Vivian, he asked calmly, "What's wrong?"

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Vivian guessed that he probably saw her calling at the staircase. However, as she could not think of an explanation on the spot, she merely replied, "Well, it's just some stuff at work. It's not anything important."

Vivian was not deliberately trying to conceal her mother's condition from Finnick. It was because she really did not know how to bring it up.

If she said that her mother was severely ill and she was in dire need of money for her treatment, it would sound like she was demanding money from Finnick.

Although they were married and she was starting to develop some reliance on Finnick, she was still unwilling to reveal her vulnerabilities to others.

Perhaps, this was a habit she had cultivated since young. Her mother always reminded her that even if everyone mocked her for not having a father and for being an illegitimate child, she must never display any weaknesses. She must never let someone else make a joke out of her.

When Finnick noticed that Vivian's gaze flitted, he pondered for a while and decided against asking further.

Naturally, he knew about her mother's condition.

However, he did not plan on taking the initiative to offer her help. As he knew how sensitive and stubborn she was, he was afraid of affecting the fragile trust between them.

Let's take it slow. I don't want to scare her.

Gazing at Vivian, who was preoccupied with her thoughts, Finnick silently mocked himself.

He never imagined himself, who had always been so decisive during business negotiations, to become so hesitant just because of Vivian.

"Let's eat." In the end, he merely said, "After the meal, I'll send you to the train station."

Vivian nodded, heaving a sigh of relief that Finnick did not insist on sending her to her office.

Does this mean that he's starting to think from my perspective?

Vivian took the train to the magazine company. Before she could sit at her desk, the secretary informed her that Fabian had summoned her.

Vivian's heart sank.

After returning from Q City, Fabian stopped giving her a rough time. Why is he calling for me now?

With that puzzling thought, she walked towards Fabian's office.

"Mr. Norton, how may I help you?"

"Vivian." Fabian stared at Vivian coldly and went straight to the point. "I heard that you're collecting your salary in advance for this month again?"

Vivian's heart sank. "Yes, I need money."

"You need money?" Fabian scoffed coldly. "What for?"

Vivian could feel her fingertips trembling. Her voice turned frostily as well as she rebuked, "That's the Finance Department's business. As the Chief Editor, aren't you being excessively concerned?"

"Why? Is it for something shady?" When Fabian saw that Vivian was avoiding the question, his mocking tone intensified.

Vivian shot a glare at him. She took a deep breath and smirked. "I want to buy a bag that's just been released. It's a limited edition. If I don't collect my salary in advance, I won't be able to snatch it in time."

Since Fabian already thinks that I'm a gold-digger, I'll just let it be.

Anyway, I don't care anymore.

When Fabian heard her nonchalant tone, he could not help but clench his fists. Smirking coldly, he scoffed, "Huh? It's just a bag. Those men refused to buy it for you?"

Those men?

Vivian thought that she had already become immune to all these attacks. Even though Fabian insulted her like that, she didn't feel a thing at all.

"Vivian, why aren't you saying anything?" Fabian abruptly stood up and raised his voice. "I'm asking you a question. What about those men? Or did they dump you after getting what they want from you?"

Frowning, Vivian was starting to lose her cool.

Is Fabian nuts? Why is he acting up again?

"Mr. Norton, if I can't collect my salary in advance, forget it." Vivian had lost her patience. "If there's nothing else, I'll take my leave now."

Vivian was about to leave when Fabian suddenly strode forward and flung something directly on her face.

"Vivian, can you explain to me what these are?"

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Stunned, Vivian lowered her head to take a closer look at what he just threw at her. Suddenly, all the color drained from her cheeks as her body shivered uncontrollably.

They were photos. The images was blurry and unfocused, so it was evident that they had been taken in secret. However, the person in the photos was clearly recognizable.

It was none other than herself!

She was lying on the bed with her clothes disheveled and her cheeks flushed.

Although the photos were blurry, it was evident what she was doing.

Vivian's mind went blank.

She quickly recognized when the photos were taken—two years ago.

“Where did you get these photos from?” Clutching the photos, Vivian glared at Fabian and demanded in a sharp voice.

What happened two years ago was a nightmare to Vivian. However, after all this time, she was starting to put her past behind her.

Never in a million years did she imagine that someone actually snapped photos of her! With that, the horrible incident would become an irremovable taint that would stay with her forever in her life.

“What’s wrong, Vivian? Are you scared?” Staring at Vivian’s ashen face, Fabian could not help but scoff coldly. “If you’re scared now, why did you even do such dirty things back then?”

Vivian’s emotions were getting out of control. Fabian’s mockery only made her feel frustrated.

“Fabian, I have nothing to do with you! Stop poking your nose into my business!” Vivian’s voice was extremely cold. “Just tell me where you got those photos. Who took them? Who gave them to you?”

When Fabian saw how pale Vivian was, his heart could not help but ache. However, when his gaze landed on those revealing pictures, his fury rose again.

“Don’t you know very well who took them? Why are you asking me instead?” Fabian looked at Vivian mockingly, his eyes filled with disdain. “Or did you mess around with so many different guys that you can’t even remember when is this from, or which man took these photos?”

Vivian’s body shuddered uncontrollably.

Evidently, Fabian could not tell that this was a photo from two years ago.

Indeed, Vivian always had long hair for these two years. It was hard to see any difference.

Hence, due to the deep misunderstanding he already harbored of Vivian, he naturally assumed that those photos had been recently taken by some random man.

Vivian bit her lips. Knowing that she would not be able to get any information from this madman, she turned around and left, not wanting to talk to him anymore.

“Vivian, stop right there!”

Fabian’s furious voice sounded behind Vivian. However, she dashed out of the office without looking back.

After leaving the office, Vivian ignored everyone’s curious stares and ran straight to the toilet.

She closed the cubicle door, slumped on the toilet seat and panted heavily.

Photos?

Those photos?

Who took those photos and sent them to Fabian? Is it the person who sabotaged me that year?

What is the culprit’s objective? It’s already been two years. Is the person still not satisfied after ruining my reputation? Is that why he or she revealed these photos now?

While Vivian was on the verge of breaking down, Fabian was not exactly feeling happy either.

He sat on the sofa furiously and tugged on his tie which was suffocating him.

He still remembered receiving a picture of Vivian on the bed two years ago. It was what forced him to believe that Vivian had really betrayed him.

Two years had passed since then. He expected that he would have given up completely on this shameless woman by now, but when he saw those pictures, he was still overcome with fury!

Is this a new photo with another man? Who’s the man this time? Finnick? Or someone else?

Fabian was so frustrated that his chest felt like exploding. He must do something about this, otherwise he might go mad!

He suddenly grabbed his phone and dialed a number.

After the person picked it up, Fabian squeezed out a fake smile.

“Hello, Uncle Finnick. It’s me, Fabian. I haven’t met you after I returned, right? Yeah, you left during the family dinner because you had something on. I’m going to pass by your company today. Why don’t we grab a cup of coffee together?”

After half an hour, he arrived at the café nearby Finner Group.

Finnick was sitting on a wheelchair beside the window. When he lowered his head and spotted the envelope on the table, his eyes narrowed. “Fabian, what’s this?”

Fabian was sitting on the other side of the table. Although he was slightly intimidated by Finnick’s overpowering aura, he said stoically, “I think that you should know about some things, Uncle Finnick.”