

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 176

"Is that why you shut down my scarf factory? Because you thought I did it and wanted to avenge Vivian? Well, you might as well go the whole nine yards and kill me off while you're at it!" Xavier shouted.

Finnick motioned at Noah who then untied Xavier and poured him a glass of whisky.

Finnick has gone too far! First he's protecting Vivian, and now he's become her private investigator? He is such a lovesick b*stard! Does he not care about his friends anymore now that he has a wife? I won't forgive him for this! Xavier cursed at him in his head.

Finnick still had his doubts as all evidence pointed to Xavier, and he knew just how much of a playboy Xavier was.

"Try your best to recall, Xavier. Look, I won't kill you or do anything to you even if you were the one who did it. I just want to find out the truth and help Vivian seek the justice she deserves so she can be happy again. Think hard, Xavier, think! What happened at the Century Hotel two years ago?"

Xavier downed the glass of whisky and tried his best to recall what had happened.

"I swear I have never laid a hand on Vivian, and I would definitely admit to it if I did! As for that scarf... I don't know how it ended up being there either," he replied.

Finnick was still unconvinced and asked, "Could it be that you've slept with so many women that you simply forgot about it?"

Xavier buttoned up his shirt and tidied up his outfit. "That's impossible. You see, I keep a record of every woman I sleep with. With the amount of women I sleep with, I'd go crazy trying to remember them all! I assure you I have never seen Vivian, let alone sleep with her!"

Xavier flipped through his diary and checked his schedule from two years ago. "I've never been to Century Hotel two years ago. See? It isn't recorded in my diary, and I don't remember ever going there either."

If it wasn't Xavier, then who else could the scarf belong to?

Noah followed up with another question. "What about the scarf, then? It was produced by your factory and has the initial of your family name on it."

What? Even Noah is questioning me now? I guess they really do see me as a suspect, huh? This is injustice!

"It's true that the scarf looks a lot like mines, but that letter "J" doesn't necessarily stand for Jackson! It can also stand for Johnson, Jordon or even Jenkins!"

Finnick threatened him. "Don't try and worm your way out of this one, Xavier! You know I can do far more than just shutting your factory down, don't you? If that scarf isn't yours, then whose is it?"

Man, it's been forever since I've seen Finnick care so much about a woman... Back then, Finnick would do whatever he wanted without a care in the world. However, everything changed over time, and he even went as far as pretending to be wheelchair-bound to hide his capabilities. Now that he has Vivian in his life, I can see some life in his eyes once again. As his friend, I must do what I can to help him out! Xavier couldn't help but sigh at the thought of that.

"I have a lot of scarves which I give out to my close friends and major clients every year. As for the scarf you found from two years ago... I'll need some time to recall and look into it. Rest assured, Finnick, I will do whatever I can to help you get to the bottom of this!" He quickly stormed out of the office after saying that, afraid that they would suspect him of lying again.

Of course, he would still deliver his promise to Finnick and try his best to help him out.

Finnick went into deep thought as he pondered over what Xavier had said.

If what Xavier said is true, and he only gave the scarves out to his close friends and business clients, then... Could it be that one of them was responsible for what happened to Vivian?

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I wonder if I know any of them... Although that incident was an accident, I had planned on teaching that man a lesson anyway. It'd be awkward if it's someone I know, but I won't let him off the hook for what he did to Vivian! How dare he touch my woman before me? He deserves nothing but death!

Finnick frowned at the thought of that.

Noah didn't trust Xavier either.

"Mr. Norton, do you really believe what Xavier said?" he asked.

"Xavier and I go way back, so I know him very well. He isn't the kind who'd do something he wouldn't admit to. I'm not so sure about his efficiency though," Finnick replied firmly.

Noah nodded without saying a word.

"I just hope he can find us something useful. At least we'd be a step closer to uncovering the truth."

Meanwhile, in the Norton family villa, Mark's assistant, Harry came by to report in on his work. He started off his report with the trivial stuff, all of which Mark noted down in his journal.

"Is there anything else you have to report?" Mark asked.

Harry stood up straight as he felt what he had to say next was extremely important.

"Yes, Mr. Norton. I have big news for you, sir!"

Mark's eyes lit up. "Well? Go on, then!"

Harry continued, "A few days ago, I received word of a few people having a fight in the Century Hotel lobby. There was a drunk woman..."

Mark almost lost his temper when he heard that. What nonsense is this? How is this big news? Is Harry trying to get himself fired or something?

Harry noticed the impatient look on his face and said, "Calm down, Mr. Norton. Please let me finish."

"Hurry up then!" Mark couldn't stand how long Harry took to get to the point in his reports.

"Now, under normal circumstances, there wouldn't be anything odd about that. However, in this case, all security camera footage in that hotel had been deleted! My genius brain tells me something isn't quite right here, because Finnick, Fabian, and Vivian were there," Harry said with a chuckle.

"Why didn't you tell me about this sooner?" Mark asked. "What else did you find? Who deleted the footage? Was it Finnick?"

Harry nodded. "That's right, Mr. Norton. On top of that, there's something much stranger."

Mark waited silently for Harry to continue. There's definitely something going on here. Vivian, Fabian, Finnick, the security camera footage... Finnick must've been trying to hide something by deleting it...

"A guest at the hotel saw someone who looked like Finnick that night, except he wasn't in a wheelchair. That man was walking and running about like any other man," Harry said.

Mark stood up from his chair in shock.

What a surprise!

He grabbed Harry by the collar and shouted, "Are you sure? Is this true?"

Harry could barely breathe and struggled to speak, "T-This is just my speculation... Why else would he delete the security camera footage otherwise?"

He coughed and wheezed when Mark let go of him.

He wouldn't have done that if he didn't have anything to hide. The only people Finnick would delete the footage for is Vivian and himself.

"Harry, I want you to investigate this incident thoroughly! Leave no stone unturned!" Mark ordered.

"We're unable to find the witness, so we can't really prove anything now," Harry replied.

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Mark was starting to worry and fear.

If that really were Finnick, then wouldn't that mean he's pretending to be crippled? Why would he do that? I wonder if grandpa knows about it...

Harry noticed the frown on Mark's face and asked, "Mr. Norton, shall we try using that method from ten years ago?"

Finnick was just a little punk ten years ago, but he has become a monster after being severely hurt once. Now that he's being cautious with us, things won't be so easy.

"You idiot! Do you really think Finnick is that easy to catch now that he has Noah by his side? You could never hope to defeat that guy, and he's practically glued to Finnick except when he's sleeping!" Mark scolded him angrily.

Harry felt ashamed of himself. It's true that my skills martial arts aren't as good as Noah's, but I'm smarter than him!

He came up with an idea and said, "Mr. Norton, we could target Finnick's wife, Vivian. I can tell that he loves her very much and would probably have her by his side at all times if he could."

Vivian? I've met her before. Grandpa seems to like her very much too. From that video, we can see that her background and identity are a complete mystery. She's definitely not as innocent and pure as she pretends to be, but there must be something special about her if she's able to win Finnick's heart.

He nodded and complimented Harry, "Vivian, eh? Yes, that's a very good idea. You've finally said something smart, Harry!"

Harry didn't know how to respond to that compliment. Wait. Does he mean that everything I said before was stupid? That can't be right...

Mark realized what Harry truly meant a moment later and urged him, "What are you waiting for? Hurry up and make the necessary preparations! There'll be a huge reward for you if you get this done well!"

With that, Harry ran off and got to work.

Heh... I now know you're pretending to be a cripple, and that Vivian is your weakness! Once I strike you in both your soft spots, you'll be done for!

Mark let out a sadistic smile at the thought of that.

Despite the carefree vibes that Xavier gave off, he was very efficient at getting things done and had arranged for a meet-up with Benedict a day after his meeting with Finnick.

Xavier was the first to arrive at Ocean Café. After ordering a latte and two desserts, he began observing the people around him to see if there were any pretty girls nearby.

Benedict showed up moments later, and his flawlessly handsome appearance caused quite a commotion in the café.

The waitresses wanted to hit on him, but were too shy to make a move because of how pretty he looked.

Benedict had crystal clear skin, an arched nose, beautiful black pupils, and very charming lips. His fitting suit provided the perfect complement to his physique, and his overall appearance left all the women drooling over him.

Benedict was the son of the scholarly Morrison family as well as the older brother of Evelyn Morrison. The two had lost their parents at a very young age, and Benedict had to look after his sister all by himself.

After meeting up with Xavier, Benedict sat down gracefully and began ordering from the menu.

Xavier noticed that the girls were still staring at Benedict and teased him, "Man, you sure are overpowered with that charm of yours. Even a handsome man like me has been defeated by your good looks! Heck, I think I'm starting to fall in love with you!"

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Benedict ordered an espresso and said, "You haven't changed a bit, Xavier. Still the swinger surrounded by women, I see."

Xavier chuckled and nodded. "Haha! Spare me the pleasantries, buddy!"

"So, what do you need from me?" Benedict asked.

"Oh? What, a guy can't just catch up with his friend?" Benedict sure is a sharp one! Xavier thought to himself.

"I know you, Xavier. Now, how about you get on with it?"

Xavier figured there was no point in hiding his intentions anymore, but he didn't want to confront Benedict directly either as he might not admit to doing it.

"Do you know about what happened to my scarf factory a while back?" he asked.

Benedict nodded and waved as he said, "Yeah, I heard it was shut down all of a sudden. You should've put more effort into that factory of yours, you know? It was a real waste of potential!"

"I know, right? What a shame!" Xavier cursed at Finnick in his head. My scarves were selling great! If it hadn't been for Finnick, I'd still be in business right now! It pisses me off just thinking about it!

"Say, what happened to that scarf I gave you two years ago? You didn't lose it, did you?" Xavier asked.

Benedict wasn't sure what Xavier was playing at, but he could tell that he was hiding something.

"I don't even remember what I had for breakfast, and you expect me to remember what happened two years ago?"

Xavier sighed. He knew he had no choice but to ask him directly instead.

"You've always been the smarter one, Benedict. Fine, I'll cut straight to the chase with you. I gave you a scarf two years ago, didn't I?"

Benedict admitted to having received a few scarves from him.

Xavier pressed on, "Do you remember being in Century Hotel, then? Did you sleep with a drugged woman there and lose your scarf?"

Benedict realized how serious it was and quickly said, "Hold up, what is this all about? Could you at least explain to me what happened? What drug? What woman?"

Xavier didn't want to tell him everything about Vivian so as to not embarrass Finnick.

"Just answer the question. Have you been to Century Hotel two years ago?"

Benedict recalled the important events that took place two years ago and replied, "Yes, I have."

Xavier went wide-eyed when he heard that. "Did you see a woman that was drugged?"

"No. I did see plenty of women that were charmed by me, though." Benedict replied.

"And you didn't sleep with any of them?"

Benedict gave Xavier a strange look upon hearing that. What the hell is wrong with him today?

"Come on, you know me. I may like women, but I don't sleep around like you do."

Xavier agreed with what he said. Benedict is indeed well-known for keeping his distance with women. Being the sophisticated scholar that he is, he always turned down invitations to parties and never had any scandals whatsoever. Heck, even Finnick is impressed by that!

Benedict found Xavier's questions boring and didn't understand why he was asking about such things.

He had other interests in mind, like Finnick for example.

“What has Finnick been up to lately?” he asked.

Xavier decided it was a good time to change the topic too as he didn't want Benedict to ask him about the incident.

“Oh, that guy? He's enjoying life with his beautiful wife so much that he's forgotten about his friends! That guy has become a family man now!”

Benedict frowned in concern. “Finnick is married?”

Xavier nodded. “Yeah, his grandfather forced him into it.”

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So he really has forgotten about Evelyn, huh? Finnick left her to die in the fire back then, and now he's gotten married ten years later...

Benedict was displeased at the thought of that.

“Hmph! So he's forgotten about those who died for him now that he has a successful career and found someone he likes. What a scumbag!” His tone was filled with hostility.

That put Xavier in an awkward position, and he began to regret telling him about Finnick's marriage.

The two of them continued to chat for a little while longer before going their separate ways.

Vivian heard Sarah gossiping the moment she came in the office the next morning.

“We're in for a treat, people! I saw Mr. Norton's fiancée come by just now! She's dressed from head to toe in branded goods and looks really fashionable. She had a gloomy look on her face when she went in his office, so they probably had a fight or something. Be careful not to get caught in the crossfire!”

Vivian sulked upon hearing that. What's Ashley doing here? Is she trying to pick a fight? I'd better avoid her. Maybe I should come up with an excuse to be out of office.

Shannon stared at Vivian from her desk with glee. Ha! Look who's cowering in fear now that the Chief Editor's wife is here! Serves you right!

Meanwhile, Ashley was close to tears in Fabian's office as she questioned him, "Fabian, what's the meaning of this? Why are you breaking up with me through a text message? What did I do wrong? Do you know how much that hurts me?"

Fabian sneered when he saw her.

Wow, the bold Ashley has the guts to show up here and act all pitiful... I bet those who don't know the truth would easily be fooled by her! Oh, Ashley... You don't know when to give up, do you?

Fabian retrieved Vivian's photos from his drawer and tossed them in front of Ashley. "Drop the act, will ya? How much longer do you plan on pretending, huh? You're the one who did this to Vivian, aren't you?"

Ashley went pale and took a few steps back when she heard that.

"No, it wasn't me! This is a misunderstanding, Fabian! Don't just jump to conclusions like that! Besides, what can these photos even prove anyway?"

Ashley insisted that she was innocent, but that only made Fabian even more furious.

I had someone investigate the incident, and we managed to track down the people involved in taking the photos and trading them. It was none other than Ashley herself, so she must have been the one behind it all!

She was jealous of Vivian, so she used the photos to ruin her reputation! Rumors about her spread throughout the entire campus, and everyone pointed fingers at her wherever she went! This is all Ashley's fault!

She's the one who put Vivian through all that pain and suffering! Had it not been for these photos, I wouldn't have lost my trust in Vivian and broken up with her! She wouldn't have ended up with Finnick either!

He hated her the very sight of her.

"A misunderstanding, you say? You may have the others fooled, but you can't fool me! She's your sister, Ashley! How could you do this to her?" Fabian shouted in both anger and disappointment.

He was completely shocked when he found out Ashley was the mastermind. He just couldn't believe that almost married such a cruel and heartless woman. She was so malicious! Beneath that angelic appearance of hers lay the heart of a devil.

He had always thought of Ashley as a kind and genuine girl, and yet she was the person who hired someone to take indecent pictures of her sister and spread rumors about her.