

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 121

Fabian was slightly bewildered when he saw her. “Vivian, didn’t you receive the email with the notice saying that the meeting will be delayed for half an hour?”

Damn it! Vivian cursed internally; she forgot to check her emails as Finnick’s appearance yesterday threw her plans into disarray.

“I totally forgot.” She excused herself, “Sorry, I’ll take my leave now.”

“Wait!” Fabian halted her.

Frowning slightly, she asked, “Mr. Norton, is there anything else?”

“There’s something I want to ask you.” Fabian rose to his feet, asking softly, “Do you love Finnick?” Unlike his usual spitefulness, at that moment, he sounded gentler like how he used to in his youth.

Vivian’s brows knotted as his direct question caught her by surprise. “I’m sorry, Mr. Norton. This has nothing to do with work, so I refuse to answer.” With that, she turned to leave.

However, Fabian grabbed hold of her wrist and gabbled, “I’m not asking in the capacity of the Chief Editor but as your ex-boyfriend. Or maybe... I’m asking out of concern as your friend.”

He didn’t go home the other night as he couldn’t stop thinking about Vivian’s marriage with Finnick. Before this, he thought that she married Finnick for his money; but now, it seemed like that was not the case.

If she wasn’t going after Finnick’s wealth, there were only two possible reasons for her to marry him, which were either out of love or pressure.

To Fabian, it seemed impossible that Vivian would fall in love with another man. He was not over her yet even though two years had passed since their breakup, and he believed she felt the same as him. As such, he would rather believe that she was forced to marry Finnick.

When he asked his subordinates to look into their marriage, he found out that Vivian had gone on numerous blind dates just a month before marrying Finnick.

Those men were all ineligible, but they had one thing in common — all of them resided in Sunshine City. As he recalled about her mother, who was seriously ill, he seemed to have understood the true reason behind her marriage.

Even so, he felt that he needed an answer from Vivian herself to account for the sudden end of their relationship two years ago.

Vivian's face turned pale when he tried to probe into her marriage, but she gripped her composure and retorted, "Fabian, did you forget that Finnick is your uncle? Don't you think it's inappropriate to pry into your elder's private affairs?"

Fabian never thought Vivian would use her identity as his elder to shut him up. He uttered through gritted teeth, "Vivian William, aren't you saying that just so you could avoid my question? Is it because you don't love Finnick at all? You married him to get the status of permanent resident so that you could stay in Sunshine City, am I right?"

A smidge of worry appeared on her face as she never thought Fabian could delve that deep into her marriage.

My guess is right! Fabian's spirit lifted upon capturing the nuances of her expression. He gripped her shoulder and continued to grill her, "Vivian William, is it true about what I said just now? You don't love Finnick at all, do you? Well, it makes sense... It's impossible that someone would like a cold-hearted cripple!"

He didn't know why he cared so much about Vivian and Fabian's relationship, but jealousy was eating him up at the thought of Vivian sleeping by Finnick's bedside every night. It drove him crazy to think that the two might already have had intimacy with each other.

He could only seek relief from the pain of envy by humiliating Finnick about his disability and cold personality, which seemed to be the only chinks on his armor.

Initially, Vivian decided to laugh him off, but her fury sprang to life upon hearing him insulting Finnick. "Fabian Norton, are you done?" With all her might, she shook his hand off and came back at him coldly, "Who do you think you are to pour scorn at Finnick? Unlike you, he is always trustful of me! You are incomparable to him! No matter why I marry him, I never regretted my decision!"

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Fabian's face turned pale as he looked at her face that was purple with rage. He never expected Vivian, who was an apathetic person, to take up the cudgel on Finnick's behalf by making such caustic remarks.

Is she mad because I insulted Finnick? Seems like it's not just a paper marriage between them, and she genuinely regards Finnick as her husband.

Fabian felt suffocated at the mere thought of it. The next moment, he gripped her arms with greater force and bellowed, "Vivian William! Don't tell me that you have fallen in love with Finnick? Are you an idiot? You don't know that man at all!"

Vivian couldn't even say a word. Her face was twisted with pain, but Fabian took no notice of it as he continued to spat out, "Finnick is nothing but a heartless man. Do you know that he left his girlfriend to die ten years ago in order to save his own life? I couldn't believe that you would have eyes for such a selfish prick!"

Vivian, who was struggling to break free from his grasp, was thunderstruck upon hearing his words. Her face was pale as she blurted out, "You're lying! Don't you try to throw mud at Finnick!"

Seeing her defending Finnick further roused his anger. Overwhelmed with fury, Fabian totally forgot that the incident from ten years ago was a taboo topic. "If you don't believe in me, you can always look into the kidnap incident ten years ago. You will find out how Finnick managed to escape from the hands of the kidnappers and how Evelyn Morrison, his girlfriend, died because of him."

The last bit of color left Vivian's face. She was at a loss for words as this revelation was too much for her to handle. Evelyn... Is she the owner of the crystal necklace? She's dead?! And she died in the kidnap incident ten years ago?

Fabian loosened his grip on her arm. A hint of remorse flashed across his face the moment he regained composure.

The Norton family had imposed an information blackout on the news relating to the kidnap incident. It was a tacit understanding between the Nortons to never bring it up again. But now, he spilled the beans because of his jealousy.

Vivian doesn't know Finnick at all... I am only telling her these so that she knows Finnick's true colors!

Fabian justified himself that he was telling Vivian about the incident for her sake. With a calm expression, he uttered, "Vivian, even though we are no longer a couple and we might never be one again, I don't want you to be deceived by Finnick."

Vivian could no longer hear anything he said because her mind was jumbled up.

Just then, the workers swarmed into the meeting room. Upon seeing Vivian and Fabian alone in the meeting room, they exchanged meaningful glances with each other before settling down in their seats.

Vivian, too, took her seat. She was absent-minded during the meeting as she was bothered by what Fabian said just now.

It turned out that for the past few days, she was troubling her head over a woman who had passed away years ago.

Is it true that Evelyn, that beautiful girl, died because of Finnick? Vivian dared not think further.

She was back in her office when the meeting finally ended. During the lunch break, she hesitated but eventually made her steps toward Jenny's cubicle.

"Jenny, can I ask you something?" asked Vivian.

Jenny was an experienced investigative journalist who had worked for more than ten years in the press. It was a demanding job for her, so she decided to jump ship to Glamour Magazine and became an editor for the interview column. The two got along rather well with each other. "What is it?" asked Jenny cordially.

Vivian bit her lips and said, "I want to ask you about the kidnap incident that happened to the Norton family ten years ago."

Jenny was slightly bewildered as she never expected Vivian to ask about that incident. Inexplicably, she was visibly panicked. "Vivian, why are you asking this?"

A decade had passed since the incident. Vivian knew Jenny was the only one she could turn to because apart from the Nortons, only the journalists and the policemen in charge of the case could help clear her doubts.

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Therefore, she decided to try her luck by asking Jenny, the long-serving journalist. "I..." Vivian steeled herself and replied, "I am just asking out of curiosity."

"If you're asking just to satisfy your curiosity, I advise that you better not pursue this matter any further." Jenny put on a stern face as she continued, "It is not our place to inquire into the Norton family's affair." With that, she resumed her work at hand.

Jenny's unduly reticent attitude only further aroused Vivian's curiosity. I believe Jenny must know something...

"Jenny." She pulled a chair to sit next to her. "I couldn't tell you the reason, but I really need to know about the incident."

At that moment, Vivian and Jenny were the only ones left in the office as the other workers had gone for lunch.

Jenny lifted her head and cast a meaningful glance at Vivian before she spoke, "Vivian, I can tell you about it, but you need to be frank with me. Are you asking this because of your husband?"

Vivian was taken aback by her words. "Jenny, you actually know about..."

"Yes, I knew about it quite some time ago." Jenny let out a sigh. "Your husband is Finnick Norton, am I right? He is the second son of the Norton family, and the victim of the kidnap incident."

Vivian's eyes widened. She had always tried to stay low-key, but Jenny still managed to discover her husband's identity and his relationship with the Norton family.

Although Vivian remained silent, her reaction made Jenny certain of her conjecture. "Are you surprised that I actually know about your husband's background?" Jenny gave a resigned shrug and then explained, "Actually, I already knew that Finnick comes from the Norton family when I first interviewed him. I became suspicious that he was your husband when I saw your wedding ring, so that's why I tested you just now."

Being deeply impressed by Jenny's intuition and attention to detail, Vivian couldn't help but look at her with admiration. It would take at least ten years of working experience in the press to acquire those qualities.

Since Jenny already had it all figured out, there was no need for Vivian to hide from her. After all, there was nothing for her to hide in the first place. It was just that she disliked being the center of gossips, that was why she never mentioned her marriage with Finnick.

"Yes, Jenny, you've guessed it right." She lowered her voice and asked, "So now, can you tell me what happened ten years ago?"

Vivian thought Jenny would turn her down again, but to her surprise, she seemed to have gotten through to the other woman when Jenny looked deeply into her eyes and said, "Vivian, I always know that you're a nice lady. Even though rumors are circulating in the magazine company saying that you are a gold-digger, I will only believe in my own judgment."

Vivian's eyes reddened. "Thank you, Jenny." Since two years ago, she had been facing all sorts of misunderstandings and derision from her colleagues. Soon, she no longer bothered to dispel those rumors because no one would believe in her. She was touched when Jenny said she trusted her.

"I was shocked when I first heard that you were going to marry Finnick." Jenny gave her a sympathetic look. "I admit that he is an excellent man, but from what he did two years ago, I don't think he is husband material."

Vivian's expression changed. "Jenny, what do you know?"

Jenny let out a sigh. "You sure are lucky because you've asked the right person. I was still working in the press when that incident happened, and I was responsible for reporting the case. At that time, I had dug deep into the case, but I was threatened by the Norton family to not leak any information about it. I knew how powerful the Norton family is, that's why I stayed tight-lipped all these years."

Vivian finally understood why Jenny knew that Finnick came from the Norton family. If Jenny had investigated the kidnap case, she would definitely know about Finnick's name and how he looked.

However, Vivian felt unsettled by Jenny's tone. "So what happened at that time?"

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Jenny started spilling the story. "At that time, Finnick was still a freshman in university. Initially, the Norton family planned to let him study abroad, but he decided to stay in the country because of his girlfriend. If I'm not mistaken, her name was Eve..."

"Evelyn Morrison." Vivian interjected.

Jenny was slightly bewildered. "You know about that girl? That's right! Her name was Evelyn Morrison. They made a sweet couple, and I guess they were each other's first love. Anyway, Finnick decided to stay for her."

Vivian suddenly recalled the photos in Finnick's drawer that pictured the two smiling broadly in their youth. They must have loved each other very much... Just like Fabian and I in the past...

"In their first year at university, Finnick and Evelyn got rid of the bodyguards to have fun in a small town. That was the place where they were kidnapped."

"They?" Vivian interrupted Jenny, "You mean Finnick was not the only one being kidnapped, but Evelyn as well?"

With a solemn expression, Jenny nodded, "That's right. The Norton family has suppressed the news, so everyone thought Norton was the only victim. No one knows about this poor lady being the other victim."

"What happened next?"

"The kidnapers demanded a huge ransom. The elder Mr. Norton paid the ransom to save his grandson. However, maybe Finnick and Evelyn saw their faces, the kidnapers decided to kill them. They locked the two in a warehouse and set fire to it."

Vivian tensed up. "So Evelyn was burned alive? Finnick was the only one who managed to escape?"

"It seemed to be so." For some reason, Jenny's face looked grim. "But according to the crime report kept at the police department, I found out both Finnick and Evelyn were tied up

by the kidnapers. Finnick managed to free himself and escaped the burning warehouse with his legs injured. However, when Evelyn's body was found, she was being left in the warehouse, with her limbs all tied up."

Vivian's face became ashen. "You mean..."

"Yes," Jenny deepened her voice, "Frankly speaking, Finnick left her behind in the burning warehouse to save himself."

"No..." Vivian blurted out, "Finnick is not a selfish person... He will never do something like that..." Although they had not been together for long and that he seems to be unapproachable, she could tell that Finnick was a warm-hearted person. He was not someone who would leave his girlfriend for dead.

As if she already expected Vivian to defend Finnick, Jenny looked at her and sighed. "Vivian, those who are born with a golden spoon are more fearful of death than us common folks. It was normal for him to leave his girlfriend behind since he was injured, not to mention that he was still young when the incident happened."

Biting her lips, Vivian remained silent.

"This is all I know because the Norton family prohibited the media from following up on the case. I never intend to tell you all these, but I guess it doesn't matter since you are already married to Finnick. I might be a little extreme, but I honestly think that a man who doesn't even try to save his girlfriend from death is unworthy of your trust." Jenny held Vivian's hand in hers as she continued, "You are a nice lady, and I don't want you to get hurt. Don't have high hopes for Finnick, or else you might be disappointed. You can only count on yourself."

Vivian understood that Jenny's advice was straight from the heart, but she was still reluctant to think poorly of Finnick. She forced a smile and said, "Jenny, thank you for telling me all these, but I don't believe Finnick would do something like that."

Jenny was worried as she looked at the stubborn Vivian. "Are you blinded by Finnick already? Vivian, listen to me. Those wealthy men are all stand-offish prigs, and you can never count on them nor believe in them."

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Vivian smiled and stopped talking.

The initial shock had worn off as she gradually digested what Jenny and Fabian had just told her.

She finally knew the identity of the woman she envied, which was none other than Finnick's first love.

Not only that, but the woman was also already dead. No matter what the truth was, she had sacrificed her life for Finnick. It was an indisputable fact.

At last, Vivian understood the reason Finnick had such a sorrowful expression every time he looked at that crystal necklace.

He had once loved that woman deeply. She was burned to death because of him and perished at the age when she was at her prettiest and when he loved her most. Under such circumstances, how many people would be able to truly let go of the past?

The emotions which Finnick was experiencing inside his heart was unimaginable to Vivian.

Suffering severe injuries to his leg from the kidnapping incident was nothing compared to losing the love of his life, which was what really scarred him.

As for what Fabian and the rest said about Finnick abandoning Evelyn for his own survival—Vivian did not believe a single word of it.

Even if that was indeed what happened, Vivian trusted that Finnick must have had his reasons for doing so.

Perhaps that sounded a lot like trusting someone blindly, but the woman would always choose to believe Finnick.

Finnick had done the same for her with regards to the incident that happened to her two years back.

Trust and understanding were two important building blocks for every marriage.

Besides, Finnick had already suffered too much from that accident ten years ago. How could Vivian bear to add on to his pain by accusing him of being heartless?

When Vivian and Jenny ended their conversation, most of their co-workers from the magazine company had already returned from lunch.

The two women did not dare to continue talking about it any further and went back to their own work stations, continuing with their tasks.

After a long day, Vivian finally managed to complete all her work and was ready to knock off.

She had received Molly's text in the afternoon, telling her that a caretaker had already been hired for her mom.

However, Vivian decided to make a trip back personally as she was still a little worried. Only after she made sure that the caretaker was indeed professional and responsible did she feel assured enough to return to Finnick's villa.

Meanwhile, at Finnor Group, Finnick was studying the newest endowment model in his office.

Just then, a knocking was heard at the door before Noah walked in.

"Mr. Norton," Noah addressed his boss, while acting somewhat strange. "You have tasked us to find out about the man who violated Mrs. Norton two years ago and we've made some progress. We checked every surveillance camera in the hotel and all the hotel records but did not discover anything out of the ordinary. The only noteworthy finding is an item which was left behind in the hotel room."

Finnick stopped typing on his keyboard and replied in a cold tone, "How did your work efficiency deteriorate to such a level? You guys have been investigating for so long, yet you can't even find out who was the man who did it? Moreover, if you have found a suspicious item in the hotel room, why didn't you look further into it? Do you need me to do it myself?"

Noah was already breaking out in cold sweat but bit the bullet and answered, "Mr. Norton, I will definitely look into the item, but before that, I feel that it would be better for you to take a look at it first... "

Only then did Finnick turn his attention away from his computer screen.

Noah quickly placed the item on the table and explained, "Century Hotel is a five-star hotel, so everything left behind by guests, even if it's just a coin, would be properly kept by the hotel. They would then try to contact the guests to retrieve their items. However, they have not been able to get in touch with the owner of this item, as such, this item has been kept in the hotel's storeroom for the past two years."

Lying on Finnick's desk right then was a handkerchief.

It was green in color and made from premium silk. It was a men's handkerchief which was thoughtfully designed. One look at it and anyone would be able to tell its exquisite workmanship. There were no prints on it, except for a cursive letter "J" sewn at the corner of the handkerchief.

Finnick's expression changed straight away when he saw the handkerchief. He then picked it up and scrutinized it, before suddenly looking up at Noah. With an ice cold gaze, he asked, "Are you sure that this handkerchief was found in the hotel room?"

Noah had taken out his own handkerchief to wipe off the beads of cold sweat which had formed on his forehead. "Yes, Mr. Norton. That's why I brought it here for you to take a look," the assistant replied.

Finnick gripped tightly onto the handkerchief, so much so that the delicate piece of cloth was already crumpled.

"Get Xavier here!" The man ordered through gritted teeth.