

# Never Late, Never Away Chapter 326

When they arrived at the restaurant, Vivian helped Finnick to get out of the car. The usher outside the door welcomed them warmly as soon as he saw them.

“Mr. Norton, are you coming for a meal with Mrs. Norton? We have a private room upstairs.” The usher quickly asked when he saw Finnick’s wheelchair, “Do you need help? I’ll get someone right away.”

Upon speaking, the usher tried to push his wheelchair.

“It’s fine. I’ll take care of it.” Vivian tilted her body to avoid the action.

The other guests couldn’t help but sigh as they saw the way those ushers treated Finnick and Vivian. They had never experienced such warm reception before. However, those ushers didn’t care about how they thought.

After all, he was Finnick Norton. If he were happy, the revenue of the restaurant would be a few times higher. Thus, their pay would definitely be a few times higher as well. So, how could they not be friendly towards Finnick?

“It’s alright. We’ll just stay on the first floor for a while,” Finnick answered calmly.

“Sure, sure! This way, please.” The usher bowed politely and welcomed them.

Vivian wheeled Finnick into the restaurant. In fact, she still didn’t quite understand the reason for being there. They didn’t come here for a meal often. Furthermore, it wasn’t mealtime then.

But she was feeling a little bit hungry. Perhaps... I’ve used up all my energy back in the office.

Vivian’s face blushed at the thought. It reminded Finnick what happened earlier as well when he looked up and saw the red blush on Vivian’s face. His lips curled into a smirk.

Finnick told Vivian to push him to a table at the corner of the restaurant. It was a quiet and private area with a partition screen there.

“Finnick, why are we here?”

“You’ll find out soon.” He looked at the other side with his dark eyes.

Vivian was confused. She followed his gaze and saw the people on the other side. Instantly, the anger in her chest started burning.

Mark, Fabian, and Ashley were sitting somewhere not far from them and eating.

Vivian wanted to step forward and question them at that moment. She desperately wanted to know why they did such a thing. I don’t understand. After all, we are a family. How could they be so heartless? Did they have to drive Finnick up to the wall?

Finnick grabbed Vivian right in time. “Calm down. They will begin to quarrel among themselves in a bit.”

“Huh?” Vivian didn’t understand what he was trying to say, but she trusted Finnick. Therefore, she stopped and waited for Finnick’s instruction.

Finnick grabbed her hand and made her sit beside him. “Soon, you’ll know.”

Vivian looked at Finnick’s confident expression. Then, she turned and took a glance at Fabian, Mark, and Ashley. She sat beside Finnick silently and waited patiently for what was going to happen next.

On the other side, Fabian was obviously unhappy. The last thing he wanted to do was to let Ashley have a meal together with his father.

Meanwhile, Ashley looked extremely happy. She was trying so hard to please both the father and son.

“Mr. Norton, have a taste of this. It’s delicious.” Ashley passed Mark the dishes attentively. “Fabian, have a try too.”

She was in a good mood that day after seeing those angry tweets about Vivian on Twitter. Hence, she was having a good appetite.

On the contrary, Mark appeared calm.

Mark and Ashley were having a discussion. They couldn't imagine how embarrassing Finnick would be once the news was released.

Fabian's face was full of worries, "Will it be too much to Vivian?"

"What do you know?" Mark reprimanded upon hearing Fabian. "You're so soft-hearted! How are you going to achieve something great?"

Fabian wanted to refute his words. After much thought, he decided to swallow his words. He knew that it's useless to say anything. However, he had made up his mind to protect Vivian.

Meanwhile, Vivian and Finnick remained seated at the hidden corner. Fabian and the rest couldn't see them, but Vivian and Finnick could see them very clearly.

All of a sudden, Fabian received a call.

"Hello, what's the matter?" The person on the other line said something to Fabian. His facial expression changed instantly. "What? Is that true? Are you serious? Are you sure? It can't be! What exactly is going on? Did you check properly? Are you sure it is not a mistake?"

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"I see." Fabian's grip on his phone tightened. "Thank you for informing me."

Ashley looked on apprehensively, sensing that the man was growing livid. Grabbing onto his arm, she asked nervously, "F-Fabian, is something wrong?"

Fabian hung up the call and directed a glare so cold that it sent chills down the lady's spine. Then, shrugging her arm away, he boomed, "Ashley Miller, how much longer are you going to lie to me!"

At the side, Mark was taken aback by the outburst. "Calm down Fabian! You're going to scare the baby! Ashley, are you good? Does your stomach hurt?"

"I'm fine, Mr. Norton." But mentally, she was nowhere close to being fine. Her heart was thumping wildly, and she feared for the worst.

"What's with the tantrum, Fabian!" Mark bellowed.

"Tantrum? Do you think I'm that childish? Oh, speaking of "child," do you have anything you want to explain?" The question was directed at Ashley.

The lady's heart skipped a beat as a surge of fear overtook her. "H-Huh? What do you mean? Is this some prank?"

She really hoped it was an April Fool's joke.

"Really! You're still not going to admit the truth till now? Do you really want me to go as far as to produce the medical certificate that you're not at all pregnant? Now then, you're going to ask how I know this. Well, the lovely doctor you're in cahoots with has left the hospital! Some other doctor took his place, and luckily has some form of respect for the Doctor's Oath to tell me everything!"

Fabian was fuming as he continued his tirade, "I seriously can't imagine how you manage to live with the guilt every day while others show so much affection to the so-called "baby" inside of you. I hope you've had fun fooling the entire family and me."

"I-It's not..." Ashley tried to defend herself, but words failed her.

Instead, she broke down on the spot, drowning out the flurry of emotions with her pouring tears. Her mind was in a chaotic mess. On one hand, she cursed at the doctor's betrayal. I gave him so many incentives, and yet he has the audacity to walk out on me like this...

On the other hand, extreme fear overwhelmed her as she felt Fabian's cold gaze lingering on her.

She was also terrified that all her efforts all this while would just go down the drain in an instant.

Fueled by desperation, she picked herself up and scrambled towards the man, begging for his forgiveness.

“I lied because I love you! I can’t live without you! Please, Fabian... Don’t leave me...”

“Get your filthy hands off me!” came his merciless response as he struggled to unlatch the lady from his body.

But the lady refused to budge. Hanging onto him like a drowning passenger hanging onto a buoy, she continued exclaiming, “When you wanted to break up with me that time, anxiety overtook my rationality. I loved you too much to let you go. I’ll die if you’re not with me! P-Please... Fabian... Please forgive me this once and don’t leave me... ”

Back then, Ashley really did wish she had gotten pregnant when she drugged Fabian. Unfortunately, things did not go her way following the night at the hotel.

Ever since then, Fabian had been cautious around Ashley, and thus the lady had no other means to try again.

When Fabian asked for a breakup, Ashley was out of playing cards. No matter how pitiful she acted, the man was determined to leave her. Out of desperation, she conjured a playing card herself, and that was how the whole pregnancy saga began.

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Ashley knew Fabian too well. She knew that the man would soften his resolve to leave because of the child. Moreover, so long as Ashley carried his child, the man would always accommodate to her and any of her follies.

And the lady knew very well that Fabian was a man who valued the virtue of responsibility. Therefore, carrying a child was also equivalent to earning a marriage certificate.

She had everything planned out for the future. While Fabian was by her side, she would make him fall for her bit by bit, and hopefully, try to become legitimately pregnant.

But now, everything was all for naught. Before her was a seething partner who hated her, along with a fuming Mark who equally detested her lies.

Mark was willing to give up part of his shares thinking that he could use the child to gain more authority in the board of directors, and subsequently earn the elder Mr. Norton's trust and inherit more rights.

Now that Ashley's façade was revealed, he could not help but feel utterly foolish for all the needless investments he made.

Out of a moment's rage, the man delivered a harsh slap to Ashley's cheeks, sending her flying to the ground.

Consequently, blood seeped from the side of her lips, mixed with her tears, and dripped off her chin.

Despite so, Ashley was relentless in her pleads. Crawling over to grab Mark by the hems of his pants, she begged, "Mr. Norton, I-I shouldn't have lied to you! But please give me another chance. I'll get pregnant this time around. Please forgive me! Don't make me leave Fabian!"

"Scram!" bellowed Mark as he lifted his leg and kicked her in the stomach, causing the lady to double over once again.

A shriek echoed throughout the room, followed by a series of uncontrollable sobs.

For a moment, Fabian felt bad for her. "Let's just leave her be and go."

But then it hit him. If not because of Ashley, I may just be living a blissful married life with Vivian by now. Thinking of that made his blood boil, and he contemplated lashing out at the lady once again.

But like Mark, he was too mentally exhausted by then to argue with Ashley any longer.

As the pair took their leave, Ashley scrambled to make them stay once more. The words that came from her were the same as before. "Don't leave me alone," "I love you Fabian," and "I'm sorry." They were also as ineffective as before.

Vivian watched on at the side as Ashley wept her eyeballs out. Unlike the other customers in the restaurant who watched the scene unfold like it was an entertainment show, Vivian's feelings bordered on being nonchalant.

She could not feel sympathy for the lady. Instead, watching her go from being the spoilt little princess in the Miller family to the damsel she was only brought a sense of woefulness.

Ashley, do you feel the pain? Let this pain be carved into your heart forever so that you can understand the agony I have gone through for the past two years because of you. Vivian sighed as unpleasant memories came flooding back. Back then, her life plummeted overnight because of Ashley. Walking on the school campus, all she got was onlookers' judgmental stares and hushed gossips.

Worst still, Fabian disappeared without a trace, plunging her further into an abyss of negativity.

Unlike me, you brought this predicament upon yourself, Ashley. Why did you have to inflict so much pain on me? Do you know how close I was to losing it back then? If my mother wasn't around, I may not even be standing here today.

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But in a twist of fate, her pain also brought her and her future husband together.

She smiled upon realizing this, thinking how lucky she was that Finnick appeared at the right place and at the right time two years back.

Across her, the said man sniggered at the saga that had just unfolded. "This is just the beginning. I'll be sure to deal with Mark too and make him pay."

"Mm," Vivian responded with relief that she was on the same side as Finnick. After all, the man was merciless when it came to revenge, as evident.

“Okay, the show’s over. Let’s dig in!” There was no trace of sympathy or guilt in the man’s countenance. It was almost as if executing all these ploys was a mere walk in the park.

The waiter noted Finnick’s signal and came over to take the couple’s orders. “... And we’ll get this. Thanks. Also, do you mind getting that hysterical lady out of the restaurant? It’s kind of annoying.”

“I’ll see to it, Mr. Norton.”

In a moment’s time, Ashley was evicted from the premise despite great reluctance. The lady screamed her lungs out like a patient from the mental hospital—a stark contrast from her usual elegant appearance.

Vivian’s mind wheeled in a flurry of emotions as she had her meal. On one hand, she wanted Ashley to feel the agony she felt in the past. On the other hand, she could not help but feel taken aback by how cruel Finnick could be. After all, the man took away what Ashley needed the most. It was equivalent to switching off her life support.

By the time she reached home, Vivian felt nothing but lethargy.

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On the following day, Vivian had an errand—conducting an interview with the popular designer, Elaine.

Elaine had her own work studio in a small alley located in the bustling city center, where the land was considerably expensive to purchase.

When Vivian arrived, the first thing she noticed was the workplace’s classy décor. The sleek design exuded a sense of sophistication. The next thing she realized was how relatively empty the studio was that day.

She was soon directed to the meeting room upon arriving. Not before long, the star of the interview arrived.

“Apologies for the wait, Ms. William.”

Elaine stepped into the room and greeted her. The designer boasted a clean shoulder-length hairstyle that complemented the outline of her face aptly. Her outfit for the day was a simple

white formal top and wide-cut black pants, giving off an air of elegance that resembled the workplace's interior design. To top it off, the lady had a pleasant voice that suited her unmatched beauty.

Vivian was awed by how she looked even more charming in real life as compared to the photos she saw online. No compliments could sufficiently justify the living perfection she was seeing.

And her portfolio is amazing! Whoever marries her in the future must be extremely lucky. If I were a man, I would marry her without hesitation too. She's simply the cream of the crop amongst all the beauties there are out there.

Though, an odd sense of déjà vu bothered her. Vivian thought Elaine looked familiar, but she could not pinpoint how she could have ever met her before.

Moreover, if Vivian did meet Elaine before, she would definitely have an impression of her, given how unforgettable she looked.

I need to stop my overthinking.

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"No worries, I've just arrived. Nice to meet you, I'm Vivian William."

"Glad to meet you too, Ms. William. I'm very honored to be interviewed by you. Do call me Elaine."

"It's more of my honor to be able to talk to you, Elaine."

Following the courteous exchange, the pair settled down. Vivian quickly got down to work by fishing out her notepad of questions and began the interview.

It was a short question-and-answer kind of interview. The questions ranged from asking about her recent achievements, her ideal type, and how satisfied she was with her life currently.

Elaine answered every question thoughtfully without a hint of impatience, unlike some other celebrities Vivian had interviewed before. This made Vivian even more certain that Elaine was the definition of perfection.

When the questioning ended, Vivian took out her camera, intending to snap some shots. It was a common practice.

But Elaine refused. "Sorry, I have to decline."

"Why?" Vivian was perplexed, though she still kept her camera away out of respect and professionalism.

"Now is not the time yet," came her cryptic reply. Her tone sounded different when she said that. The smile plastered on her face seemed less genuine than before too.

Vivian immediately felt a sense of foreboding, as if something was going to go terribly wrong and rob her of her happiness soon.

But she was unable to read between the lines to figure out what the lady was implying. Or perhaps, she subconsciously refused to read deeper into her response, fearing that the truth might break her.

"Why did you specify me as your interviewer?" Vivian finally could not contain her curiosity any longer.

Elaine smiled at the inquiry as if she long expected her to ask.

With tell-tale honesty, she replied, "I'm interested in the president of the Finnor Group, and heard that you're his wife." Her polite smile never left her face.

"Ah. I see."

Vivian twitched slightly at her answer. Interested in Finnick? What does she mean? A love rival? Vivian shuddered at the thought. If so, there's no way I can compare to her.

But she quickly caught herself and her spiraling thoughts. What are you thinking? Finnick loves you. Don't ever doubt that.

Vivian took a quick breath and recollected her thoughts. Maybe she just admires Finnick for his charm and capabilities, that's all.

Before Vivian could continue, Elaine asked, "Are you guys doing fine? How's the marriage?"

"We're doing well. Finnick is very nice to me. I love him, and he returns the affection without qualms." For a moment, Vivian felt like she was a teenager talking about her first boyfriend.

"I see. I've heard of the V.M Fund set up by the Finnor Group. He must really love you."

Vivian noticed a lace of sadness when she said that. "Elaine, I believe you have someone who loves you as much. You're so lovely after all."

Elaine looked up and noticed Vivian with a smile that was meant to be comforting. But unbeknownst to the lady, all Elaine could feel was a sense of irritation. Nevertheless, she did not let it show. "Actually, I do have someone like that. I love him a lot, and he's very nice to me."

"Who is it?" asked Vivian almost instantly out of immense curiosity. This was news to her.

"All I can reveal to you is that we're temporarily not together for now. But I'm certain that I still have a place in his heart. I would like to believe that I'm irreplaceable and that I would always be his true love. Do I sound really inane saying this, Ms. William?" Elaine responded with a smile that did not reach her eyes.