

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 31

In the dining room, it was completely silent except for the clanging of Vivian and Finnick's cutlery.

"Um..." Unable to bear such an awkward silence, Vivian took the initiative to speak, "About that night..."

"I'm sorry."

While Vivian was still hesitating on how to bring it up, Finnick unexpectedly interrupted her.

"What?" Vivian was still stunned.

Is Finnick apologizing to me?

"I was too rash that night," said Finnick softly. By then, Finnick had already finished his meal. He elegantly lifted the napkin and wiped his mouth.

"I was at fault too." Since he had already apologized, Vivian naturally had to be gracious about it too. "It was rude of me to leave the family dinner. When I'm free, I'll apologize to your grandpa."

With regards to that night, Vivian had been thinking about it recently.

It was indeed an act of discourtesy to leave the dinner just like that, especially in front of Finnick's grandpa. It was very unbecoming of her.

As for Fabian, although it made her slightly uneasy that Finnick investigated her background, Finnick was right too. It was impossible for him to marry a woman with an unknown past.

As for what happened afterward...

When Vivian recalled that night, the images of Finnick's muscular body and masculine scent caused her to blush.

Vivian knew about what men and women did in bed. Since she was legally married to Finnick, she had the obligation to do it with him too.

However, she just could not bring herself to do it. Due to her reluctance, Finnick did not continue either. Hence, there was nothing for her to be angry over.

After hearing Vivian's apology, Finnick pursed his lips. Not wanting to dwell on this topic anymore, he asked, "Vivian, is there nothing that you want to ask me?"

Stunned, Vivian suddenly remembered something.

Indeed, other than the unhappy incident that happened between her and Finnick a few days ago, many events also took place.

Gazing at Finnick, Vivian's mind was full of queries. Not knowing how to bring them up, she could only utter, "Your leg?"

That night, she personally witnessed Finnick standing up before her. Evidently, he was not crippled.

"Just like what you saw." Finnick did not seem surprised to hear Vivian's question. "My legs aren't crippled."

"Then, why..."

"There are many reasons for it." Finnick gave a vague reply. "But remember, you must not tell anyone about this."

Vivian's heart skipped a beat.

Naturally, she understood that Finnick had his own reasons for faking this. Although she did not know the details about it, she would certainly keep her lips sealed since Finnick told her to keep it a secret. Hence, she nodded.

Finnick glanced at Vivian, satisfied with her thoughtfulness. Suddenly, he recalled something and a dangerous glint flashed across his eyes. He asked in a deep voice, "Other than that, is there anything else that you'd like to ask me?"

He paused before adding, "Or rather, is there anything that you'd like to tell me?"

Vivian's body shuddered and her face paled.

"You know about what happened two years ago, right?"

If Finnick really did investigate her background, it was impossible for him to be unaware of the incident two years ago.

Looking at Vivian's ashen face, he replied, "Vaguely."

Although he knew about what happened two years ago, it was the version that most people talked about. He never conducted a thorough investigation to find out the truth.

Initially, it was because he did not care. Now, it was because he hoped that Vivian would tell him herself.

The color drained from Vivian's cheeks. Forcing a smile, she said, "Since you know about it, why did you still marry me?"

"At first, it was because I didn't mind at all." Finnick stared straight into Vivian's eyes, looking like he had no intention to hide anything. "I just needed a wife in name. A gold-digger would be easy for me to manipulate."

Hearing Finnick's brutally honest response, Vivian could not help but smile bitterly.

So, right from the start, he had always thought that I was a woman who would sell my body for money?

For some reason, when this thought surfaced in her mind, she felt extremely despondent.

"However." Just when Vivian was biting on her lip, she suddenly heard Finnick speak again. "I want to hear you tell me the truth behind what happened."

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Vivian's body quivered. "The truth?"

Finnick nodded.

With a trembling voice, Vivian asked, "You don't think that the version you've found out is the truth?"

Vivian gazed straight into Finnick's dark eyes as if she were seeking something in his unreadable gaze.

Finnick also met her gaze. After a while, he said slowly, "I don't think that you're a woman who will betray your body for money."

I don't think that you're a woman who'll betray your body for money.

Those simple words were like a magical spell, causing Vivian to freeze in shock.

Observing Vivian's reaction, Finnick thought that her dazed look was quite adorable. A smile played on his lips. "What's wrong?"

Only then did Vivian realize her embarrassing reaction. Averting her gaze quickly, she said, "It's nothing. I'm just a bit surprised."

As he stared at her, his voice became a few notches deeper. "So? Are you willing to tell me, Vivian?"

When she recalled what happened that year, Vivian's face paled.

Noticing her ashen face and trembling eyebrows, Finnick's heart suddenly ached. He said, "If you don't want to, it's okay."

"No, I want to tell you." Vivian took a deep breath, raised her head and stared at him with bright eyes. "Two years ago, I attended a banquet at the company I was interning at. For some reason, I became drunk after just one glass of champagne. Someone then brought me to a hotel room and... And..."

When she reached that point, she could not utter a single word.

Noticing her reaction, Finnick's gaze turned solemn. "What happened?"

A stern tone crept into Finnick's voice. Seeing how Vivian still kept her silence, he repeated seriously, "Vivian, you must learn how to face it."

Vivian's body shuddered. Biting her lip, she managed to finish her story. "Someone spiked the champagne. That was how an old man who was over sixty years old took my virginity."

After saying that, Vivian slumped on the sofa as if all the strength had left her body.

Looking at her ashen face, Finnick could not bear it anymore. He stood up from his wheelchair, sat down beside her and gently pulled her into his arms.

"It's alright now." His deep voice had its way of calming others down. "It's all in the past. If you want to cry, just cry."

When Vivian leaned against his warm and broad shoulders, she felt like her soul had left her. Instead of crying, she merely shook her head blankly. "There's nothing to cry about. It's all in the past."

However, Vivian's reaction caused Finnick's heart to ache even more than if she had burst into tears. Gazing at her pale face, he could not help but ask, "How do you know that he was an old man who was over sixty years old?"

Vivian's eyelashes fluttered. "As I was drugged, I don't really remember what happened that night, not even the man. When I woke up, he was already gone. There was ten thousand in cash left on the bedside table. I asked the concierge and they told me that the man who stayed there for the night was an old man who was over sixty years old. That wasn't the end yet. Someone then reported me to the school, accusing me of giving out sexual favors."

The scenes of having insults hurled at her by everyone returned to her. Even now, she still did not dare to meet her college classmates as they would all scold her for being shameless.

Vivian thought that she would not have any courage to talk about this incident again. However, for some reason, she had the strength to narrate everything when she was snugly in Finnick's arms.

Listening to Vivian's words, a hostile look crept into Finnick's eyes. He asked in a deep voice, "Which hotel was it?"

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“Century Hotel,” replied Vivian instinctively. However, she immediately looked at Finnick in surprise. “Why did you ask that?”

“Nothing.” Finnick’s expression was calm. “Have you never wondered who sabotaged you?”

First, her drink was spiked. Then, she was sent to the hotel room, while the scandal was reported to the school. It was evident that someone had deliberately sabotaged her.

“I don’t know either. I tried investigating too, but I didn’t discover anything,” said Vivian. Suddenly, she realized something and stared at Finnick. “Finnick, do you truly believe what I say?”

Finnick turned to the side to look at her. When he saw that she was leaning against his shoulder and looking dependent on him, his mood inexplicably improved. He replied in a deep voice, “You’re my wife. Why wouldn’t I believe you?”

He said those simple words so matter-of-factly. Yet, it struck Vivian like a sledgehammer.

He believes me.

Despite having spent so many years with Fabian, he had never believed her. Yet, Finnick did.

“So?” Vivian’s voice trembled. “Are you disgusted by me?”

This incident that happened two years ago was like a thorn in Vivian’s heart. In the past, she had wallowed in despair, thinking that she would never marry.

“No.” Finnick frowned. “This isn’t your fault, so why should you blame yourself?”

Instead, you should let the true culprit pay the price.

However, Finnick did not say that. He merely made a silent decision.

After Vivian relayed the entire incident to him, she was so exhausted that she went to sleep.

With Finnick staying by her side for the entire night, Vivian fell asleep faster than usual.

In her sleep, she was still furrowing her pretty brows. Standing beside the bed, Finnick could not help but smoothen her brows out.

As he listened to Vivian's steady breathing, he whipped out his phone and called Noah.

"Hello, Noah." He lowered his volume, afraid of waking Vivian up. "Help me thoroughly investigate what happened to Vivian two years ago."

After he hung up, he mulled over what Vivian told him. Suddenly, he frowned.

Century Hotel?

Why does the hotel sound so familiar?

The next morning, Vivian was eating breakfast with Finnick in the dining room. Glancing at her, he suddenly asked, "How was your sleep yesterday?"

"Not bad." Vivian raised her head. "Why are you asking this?"

"I'm afraid that you'll not have a good sleep with me beside you." Finnick sipped his coffee calmly. "If you want, I can move to the guest room."

Vivian was slightly taken aback. Then, she realized that Finnick was referring to that particular night. Blushing, she said, "Since we're married, we should sleep in the same room."

Finnick shot a glance at Vivian. "So, you're not mad at me for what I did that night?"

He still remembered how terrified Vivian was when he approached her that night. Her resistance made him very uncomfortable.

Looking at Finnick embarrassedly, she said, "I don't blame you. What you did was reasonable, anyway."

"Reasonable?" Finnick suddenly raised his eyebrow. "Why?"

“Huh?” Not expecting Finnick to persistently ask her, she became more embarrassed. However, under Finnick’s intense gaze, she steeled herself and answered, “It’s because I made you feel humiliated that night. There’s also the matter about Fabian... It’s normal that you’ll get angry. After all, I’m your wife.”

Finnick was even more surprised.

Although Vivian’s answer was vague, he still understood what she meant.

So Vivian thinks that I did that to her because of my possessiveness?

Finnick could not help but chuckle.

“Why? What’s so funny?” asked Vivian embarrassedly, thinking that she had said something wrong.

Finnick gazed at her thoughtfully.

He was never a man who cared to deny things. Both his concern for Vivian and the jealousy he felt when he learned about Fabian led him to a realization.

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He was starting to developing feelings for this wife, whom he had married on a whim.

For so many years, he thought that he would never fall in love with anyone again. However, the fated woman appeared just like that.

Fortunately, that woman was his wife.

Unfortunately, she was so obtuse that she had not noticed it yet.

Should I directly tell her my feelings and conquer her, or should I slowly make her fall for me?

Finnick smiled bitterly.

It's been too long since I've liked a woman. Now, I even feel like Vivian is even harder to deal with than those business deals worth billions.

I should just take things slow.

Finnick stared at Vivian with a faint smile playing on his lips. "Think about it that way, then."

Puzzled over what Finnick meant, Vivian could only nod blankly.

Looking at her dazed look, Finnick's grin widened as he asked, "Are you free tomorrow? A friend of mine is visiting us for a meal."

"A friend?" Vivian was stunned.

"Yeah." Finnick nodded. "What's wrong? Even if you're unwilling to meet my family, you can't possibly refuse to meet my friend too, right?"

Vivian chuckled embarrassedly. "Stop teasing me. I'm free tomorrow."

The next day, Vivian and Molly spent the entire morning in the kitchen. The guest finally turned up at noon.

"Hey, Finnick! Your house looks much more homely after marrying a wife."

Before the person appeared, his voice rang out first. His tone was arrogant and proud.

Vivian briskly walked into the living room just to see a man, who was wearing a pink shirt, enter.

He was around the same age as Vivian. Although he was quite handsome, he did not share Finnick's calm composure. Undoubtedly, he was a flamboyant man.

"Hi, Vivian. My sister-in-law, huh?" When the man spotted Vivian, he quickly headed toward her. He even glared at Finnick, who was sitting in the wheelchair at the side. "Finnick, you rascal. You didn't even tell me that your wife is so pretty!"

Still looking calm, Finnick ignored him and merely introduced them to each other. "Xavier, this is Vivian William. Vivian, this is Xavier Jackson."

Xavier Jackson?

Due to her journalism background, she was quite familiar with this name. After thinking for a while, she suddenly recalled. "Oh! Xavier Jackson from the Jackson family?"

There were three major families in Sunshine City.

The most powerful was the Norton family, who ran the largest conglomerate. Next up was the Jackson family who was very influential in the entertainment industry. Lastly, there was the Morrison family, who was starting to go into a decline in these recent years.

Xavier Jackson was the only son and heir of the Jackson family.

"Hello." Vivian was a little nervous, but she still smiled politely. "I'm Vivian."

"My pleasure to finally meet you." Xavier had a pair of charming eyes. Holding Vivian's hand like a gentleman, he raised it to his lips, preparing to kiss it.

However, Finnick suddenly raised his hand and snatched Vivian's hand away.

"Don't touch her," snapped Finnick expressionlessly.

Stunned, Xavier's eyes lit up.

Oh my! Is Finnick being jealous right now? This is getting interesting.

Feeling intrigued, Xavier smirked. He clung onto Vivian and whispered mysteriously, "Vivian, Finnick is so thick sometimes. Don't worry about it. If you're bored, come and chat with me. I'm a much more interesting person than him."

Shuddering, Vivian laughed awkwardly. "Xavier, you jest."

Finnick's expression was completely dark now. He grabbed Vivian's hand and walked toward the dining room.

After preparing the dishes, Molly and Liam went out due to family commitments. Only Vivian, Finnick and Xavier were left in the villa.

Crossing one leg over the other, Xavier demanded, "Hey, why aren't there any alcohol? Finnick, go get some. There are no outsiders here anyway. Why are you still sitting on that stupid wheelchair?"

Vivian was shocked when she heard him. Finnick stood up from the wheelchair, poured a bowl of soup and passed it to her. He said in a nonchalant tone, "Drink this."

Then, he turned and headed to the cellar.

Only then did Vivian realize how close Xavier was to Finnick. He even told Xavier that he was not actually crippled.

Xavier's eyes followed Finnick as he left. Only then did he turn around and look at Vivian. The playful smirk on his lips was no longer there.

"Thank you, Vivian."

Vivian felt uneasy by his sudden formal attitude. "Why are you thanking me?"

"Thank you for marrying Finnick." Xavier leaned against the chair and grinned. This time, it was a genuine smile. "You're the second person who knows the truth about Finnick's legs. This proves that he really trusts you."

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When Vivian recalled why Finnick suddenly stood up that night, she blushed. Yet, she said with a smile, "A couple should trust each other."

Xavier's eyes sparkled as he looked at Vivian. He asked, "Vivian, did Finnick ever tell you why he pretends to be crippled?"

Taken aback, Vivian shook her head.

Finnick had said that it was better if she remained oblivious to certain things. Hence, she never pestered him for the answer.

“Ten years ago, a car accident happened to Finnick.” On the other hand, Xavier did not seem to have any reservations and told her outright. “Everyone thought that Finnick became crippled due to that accident. In reality, he only got injured and was fully healed after going to A Nation.”

Vivian searched her memories. She seemed to have read about his car accident in the news.

Back then, at barely 20 years old, Finnick had just started college. However, someone kidnapped him and demanded an exorbitant ransom. This created a huge commotion then as the news dominated the headlines for a long time.

According to the news, after the kidnappers received the ransom, they wanted to leave with the second son of the Norton family as their hostage. Unexpectedly, they got into a car accident mid-way. The kidnappers died on the spot, while the son of the Norton family got severely injured.

However, as most of the details were strictly withheld from the public, no one knew that his legs were injured. They only knew that he flew to A Nation for his medical treatment and he became really weak after the incident.

“I’ve heard about it vaguely,” muttered Vivian. “So, after being healed at A Nation, he still pretends to be crippled?”

“Yes.” Xavier tilted his head to the side. “But can you guess why?”

Vivian was amused.

Xavier is completely different from Finnick. With a personality like that, he’s probably very popular with the ladies, right?

“I have to guess?” Vivian pretended to contemplate it. “Does he want the Norton family to drop their guard against him?”

Actually, Vivian had wondered why Finnick pretended to be crippled. Hence, she had her own guesses already.

After all, she worked in the journalism industry. Although she was not so knowledgeable about these elite families, she was not completely clueless either. She could guess that the Norton family had a role to play in why Finnick went to such lengths to fake his condition.

She had not seen Mark, Finnick's older brother and Fabian's father, before. However, the rumors said that Mark was an extremely ambitious and ruthless man. Now that the elder Mr. Norton was getting old, Mark was the one running the family business.

On the other hand, Finnick went down a completely different route that had nothing to do with the Norton family. He started a business on his own probably to avoid a conflict with his older brother.

Hence, Vivian wondered if Finnick pretended to be crippled because he was wary about Mark.

This was just Vivian's wild guess. However, after listening to her explanation, a hint of admiration crept into Xavier's eyes as he gazed at her. "Not bad, Vivian. You're quite smart."

Vivian chuckled embarrassedly. "I watch too many soap operas."

Xavier stifled a laugh. "Actually, the Norton family's business is very huge. So the family drama is probably as complex as those soap operas. Anyway, although Finnick is a successful man now, he has led a tough life."

Vivian was momentarily stunned before she returned to her senses and nodded.

For ten years, he had to sit in a wheelchair despite being perfectly fine. He even had to guard against his own family. It must have been a tough feat.

"So," continued Xavier. This time, his smile had faded and a serious expression took its place. "Vivian, you must make him happy."

Shocked, Vivian did not expect Xavier to suddenly say this.

Make him happy?

But what happiness can I give him?

Before Vivian could reply, she suddenly heard the sound of steady footsteps approaching them. A cold voice rang out, "What are both of you talking about?"