

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 6

"It's nothing," Vivian stammered out. Hiding the box behind her back, she added, "It's the same color as yours. Err... I'm having a terrible stomachache. I need to rush to the bathroom!"

She did not wait for a response as she fled for the nearest bathroom.

As soon as she was in the privacy of the cubicle, she perched on the toilet seat lid and carefully lifted the lid of the box once again.

Unlike Sarah and the others' silk scarves, there was a bunch of keys in her box instead.

She was still staring at it in dumbfounded shock when she received a message.

Finnick had sent her his home address, which revealed that he was living in the most expensive villa neighborhood in Sunshine City.

His address and a bunch of keys. He was serious about me moving in to live with him? I guess it's not wrong of him to think as such; after all, we are lawfully wedded to one another. It's normal for us to live together...

Soon after that, she left the bathroom and headed back to the magazine company with Sarah and the rest.

They had managed to get several good shots of Finnick during this interview. However, they did not dare to publish his photo without his consent.

Hence, the chief editor called to ask Finnick if they were allowed to do so.

The chief editor had only done this because he had wanted to try his luck. He did not really expect a positive response. After all, the president of Finner Group had always been hiding in the shadows. Agreeing to an interview was already a huge surprise on his end.

To the utter amazement of everyone, Finnick had actually agreed! Immediately, the entire magazine company was buzzing with chatter.

"Damn! The president of Finner Group is allowing us to publish his photo? Looks like we're going to be famous!"

"Quick, quick! Show us his photo! Is he really as handsome as Sarah claims?"

Previously, Vivian and the others had not dared to show Finn's photos without his consent. Now that he had given them permission to use his photos, they took them out for public viewing.

All the women in the magazine company squealed and shrieked when they saw his photos.

"Hot damn! He's so gorgeous! Sarah, the way that you'd described him doesn't do him justice at all!"

"Yeah! None of the celebrities can compare to him! None at all!"

"Hey, why is Mr. Norton's chair so weird? It kinda looks like... a wheelchair?"

Someone had finally noticed the wheelchair that Finn was sitting in, as a hush soon descended upon them.

Sarah spoke up loudly, "Yeah, Mr. Norton is wheelchair-bound. But so what? He's handsome and filthy rich. To me, that still makes him Prince Charming!"

All the other women fervently agreed, which sent jealousy shooting through their male colleagues. The men scoffed and made disparaging comments. "Who cares if he's rich and handsome? Do you know that nearly eighty percent of men in wheelchairs can't 'perform' anymore?"

"That's right! Didn't you say that he was already married? His poor wife is probably going to have to remain celibate for the rest of her life."

Cough, cough, cough!

Vivian, who had been quietly listening to their chatter while drinking water, very nearly spat the liquid out. As it was, she choked and started to cough violently.

One of her colleagues moved over to pat her back. "Vivian, what's wrong with you? It seems as though Mr. Norton's charm is just too much for our perpetually calm Vivian too, huh?"

"Yeah, exactly!" Sarah piped up, "You guys should have seen her just now at the interview. She was so nervous!"

Grimacing slightly, Vivian protested, "Hey, don't speak of such lies! I wasn't the one swooning over him like a fangirl."

"How could I not?" Sarah cradled her cheeks while admiration shone in her eyes. "He's simply too perfect! If it weren't for his crippled legs, he would be the stereotypical president male lead, like in all those romance novels!"

It was clear that the women were completely ignoring their male colleagues' scornful remarks.

For the next few days, the magazine company was busy, working on the article about Finnick. Everyone seemed to be in high spirits as they threw themselves into their work with newfound gusto.

At long last, it was the weekend. Vivian was completely burned out from the hectic week. Nonetheless, she was still unable to rest, to her utter misfortune. First, she took the time to visit her mother in the hospital. After that, she went back home to pack her belongings, in preparation for moving into Finnick's house.

She was worried about dragging this on any longer. She did not want him to think she was being insincere in the 'relationship' of theirs.

As she had expected, Finnick's villa was massive, with a slight hint of a mid-century design in its architecture. He did not have a lot of servants in his villa, only an old couple named Liam and Molly.

Liam helped Vivian in carrying her luggage to the master bedroom on the second floor. The interior was a simplistic but modern design. Opening the closet, she noted that half of it was filled with men's clothing, while the other half was empty.

Understanding dawned upon her. She would be sleeping in the same room as Finnick.

Not finding anything wrong with that, she put her own belongings in, neatly filling up the closet.

By the time she had finished unpacking, it was already nighttime. Finnick was still not yet home though.

Her dinner was a plate of spaghetti, cooked by Molly. When she was done, she returned to the master bedroom to take a shower.

Done with her shower, she reached out for a towel to dry herself, only to realize that she had forgotten to bring one in with her.

Cursing herself for being so careless, she warred with herself for several long moments. In the end, she carefully cracked open the bathroom door and peeked out.

Seeing that there was no one in the room, Vivian stepped outside fully and sprinted for the closet. Water dripped down her wet body, landing on the floor.

Just as she was rummaging through the closet for a towel, she heard a loud click from behind her.

She jumped a little in shock, as she whirled around to see Finnick entering the room in his wheelchair.

The man was visibly astounded to see her as well, evidently not expecting his new wife to be so bold as to welcome him home in such a... provoking manner.

Vivian froze to the spot, as her mind went blank. When her brain kicked into gear again, she let out a shrill scream as she dashed towards the bathroom.

Unfortunately for her, the floor was slippery from the water that she had shed, on her trek across the room. Her feet slid out from beneath her and she fell forward.

"Watch out!"

Finnick's expression scrunched up, as he swiftly moved his wheelchair over to catch her. Thankfully, he got there in time, so she tumbled right into his lap.

As his fingers brushed against her soft and wet body, he stilled in surprise.

Bowing his head, he took in the two spots of bright red on her cheeks.

Although Vivian was not a typical world-class beauty, her features were delicate and fine. She was the sort of woman that would appear increasingly beautiful, the more one had looked at her.

This moment was one that was as such. Her face was free of all makeup, while her damp hair was tucked behind her ears. Beads of water trickled down her silky strands, trailing down, past her prominent collarbones and along the curves of her petite figure.

Finnick swallowed, his throat suddenly feeling as dry as parchment, as his eyes darkened considerably.

Finally righting herself, Vivian lifted her head and met the man's heated gaze.

She was no innocent child. She knew what the look in his eyes had meant.

Oh no!

"S-sorry..." She instantly tried to get back on her feet. While scrambling to stand, her hands landed on Finnick's legs as she paused briefly.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 7

However, there was no time to think over what she had felt. Not daring to look Finnick in the eyes again, she rushed for the bathroom.

Slamming the door shut, she leaned back against it, with her heart thumping in her chest rapidly.

That was too close! Just a little bit more and...

Just the thought of what could have happened scared her. At the same time, she was a little puzzled.

We're officially married, so technically us doing 'that' is normal and within reason. Is it mean of me to run off like that?

Even as she wondered this, the dangerous look in his eyes flashed past her mind again. She could not help the shiver that had run down her spine.

This was only the third time that she and Finnick had seen each other. She could not accept them having sexual relations, after only knowing each other for such a short period of time.

Nevertheless, taking into account his earlier reaction, did that mean that her male colleagues had been wrong? Finnick had been affected, just like any other normal man. So, did that mean that he was not affected at all in 'that' way, despite being crippled?

Realizing where her thoughts were heading, she mentally slapped herself.

Vivian William, what are you thinking! Why do you care about whether those functions of his are normal? The only reason that you'd married him was to get in the household register of Sunshine City! Stop thinking about all this other nonsense!

Though, there was one thing that was very strange.

When she had fallen into Finnick's lap earlier, she had accidentally touched his legs.

She had always thought that wheelchair-bound people would have thin, weak legs, from not being able to use their muscles. Oddly enough, his legs were actually quite firm. They were nothing at all like how a crippled man's legs should be...

Knock, knock.

The sudden rapping on the bathroom door had cut through her chaotic thought processes.

Nearly jumping out of her skin, Vivian lifted her head to stare at the door. "What?"

"Open the door." Finnick's deep voice called out from the other side.

Her heart leaped to her throat as it threatened to crawl out of her mouth.

Open the door? Why?

Recalling the lustful look in his eyes earlier, her fingers gripped the countertop harder, as her imagination ran wild.

Since Finnick did not get a reply from her, he spoke up again, "You'd dropped something."

At such words, her thoughts screeched to a halt, as she soon hesitated. Several moments later, she approached the door and opened it up a tiny sliver.

A fine-boned hand appeared, with a fluffy white towel.

Vivian was taken aback.

"You were looking for this earlier, weren't you? That's why you had come out." There was a barely noticeable note of laughter in his tone, causing her to blush brightly.

"Thank you," she murmured while accepting the towel. She hastily closed the door after that.

When she was done drying and dressing, she exited the bathroom to see Finnick already dressed in navy blue silk pajamas. He was sitting on the bed, with his laptop on his legs. His fingers flew across his keyboard rapidly, as he seemed engrossed with whatever he was doing.

This scene had Vivian's curiosity rearing its head again.

She had thought that with him having difficulties getting around, he would have had a lot more servants to care for him. Yet, there were only Molly and Liam in this entire house to look after his needs. It is strange that he does not have a personal caretaker.

How did he get on the bed himself? Doesn't he have to shower?

Unable to restrain herself anymore, she asked, "Hey... Do you need to take a shower?"

"I've already showered," was his simple reply.

And here I was, worried that he would have trouble cleaning himself. Yet he's already showered? Wait a minute, he has bathed somewhere else, other than here? Does that mean that he has another woman on the side?

The random, ridiculous thought had her scoffing at herself mentally. Truthfully enough, she would not have minded it if he really did have someone else.

She made her way towards the desk, planning on packing the things that she would need for work tomorrow. A glint caught her eye and she saw that it was the ring that she had taken off before she had gone into the bathroom.

She paused, having forgotten about the pair of rings that she had bought earlier today.

Back then, she had not known that her husband was a billionaire and president of such a powerful company. Hence, she had bought the most simple design that she had been able to find.

Now, it would seem as though the ring was absolutely unbecoming of a man of his stature.

With this thought in mind, she snuck a glance at the man on the bed. Satisfied that he was focused on his work, she quickly stuffed her own ring into her bag. She then dug out the ring that was meant for him and stuffed it into one of the dressing table's drawers.

Only after that did she crawl into bed.

To her immense relief, the bed was rather spacious, with two sets of bedding and pillows. Sitting on her side of the bed, there was still half a meter between them.

"You're done?" Finnick questioned when he sensed her settling down. He did not even look away from his screen.

"Yeah." She eyed his screen inquisitively.

She knew that his company had mainly dealt with financial bonds. The red and green graphs dominating the screen made absolutely no sense to her, so she gave up trying to understand.

"Shall we sleep?" The man's head abruptly tilted slightly, so that he could glance at her from the corner of his eyes.

"Sure."

Less than a minute later, Finnick shut down his laptop and turned off the bedside lamps.

As darkness encompassed the room, Vivian grew nervous.

Even now, she had no idea why he had wanted to marry her. Thus, she did not know if he would be engaging in sexual relations with her.

She continued to lie there stiffly, as the minutes ticked by. Eventually, Finnick's breathing evened out and she could finally relax. Within seconds, she had fallen into a deep slumber.

The next morning.

Vivian's phone alarm rang on time and she woke up. Finnick was already gone, the space beside her empty and cold.

It did not take her long to go through her morning routine. Putting on a light layer of makeup, she headed downstairs.

She was only at the staircase when she smelled the delicious aroma of breakfast.

Molly was bustling around the kitchen when she noticed Vivian. A warm smile bloomed on her face as she greeted, "Mrs. Norton, you're awake! Come, come, have some breakfast!"

"Okay, thank you."

Finnick was already seated at the dining table. One hand held up a newspaper while the other lifted up his mug to take a sip.

When Vivian's gaze landed on his slender fingers, her eyes brightened in shock.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 8

There, on his ring finger, was a simple and plain ring.

It was the one that she had bought yesterday.

Utterly stunned by the revelation, she temporarily forgot to sit down at the table. In the end, Finnick raised his head to glance at her.

“What’s wrong?” His eyes moved to glance at her empty finger before his brow rose up in question. “Where’s your ring?”

Embarrassment coursed through Vivian.

She had felt like the rings that she had bought were not worthy of his status. Hence, she had not worn her own. What she had not expected was for him to find the ring and actually put it on!

Left with no other choice, Vivian fished her ring out from her bag and slipped it onto her finger. She murmured lowly, “Sorry, I picked this design at random.”

Finnick’s lips curled upward. “It’s fine. It looks very nice.”

Not sure what to say to that, the woman soon sat down and focused on eating her breakfast.

After they were done, Finnick set his newspaper aside and stated, “I’ll take you to work.”

“There’s no need for that,” Vivian answered swiftly. “I can hail a taxi or take the subway.”

Heck no! If anyone at the magazine company recognizes you, the women are going to tear me to pieces!

“There aren’t any subway stations near here and you won’t be able to catch a taxi either.” His brows furrowed slightly.

It was true. On her way here yesterday, Vivian had noticed that this was a neighborhood for the filthy rich. All the residents here had their own cars. Naturally, there would not be any taxis or subway stations around.

She checked the time only to see that it was getting a bit late. Resigned, she uttered, “Then I’ll have to trouble you. Could you drop me off at a subway station on the way to your company?”

He leveled her with a blank gaze for several long moments, causing her to panic internally. At long last, he gave her a nod.

By the time they exited the villa, a black Bentley was already waiting for them.

A young man was standing beside the car. He introduced himself as Noah Lotte, Finnick's personal assistant.

Noah opened the car door but made no move to help Finnick. Just as Vivian was wondering how he would get in, a ramp descended from the vehicle. Soon, his wheelchair rolled up smoothly.

She entered the car, whereupon she discovered that the interior had been modified as well. There was a specific area for Finnick's wheelchair.

Sitting down on a seat, the car soon started up and they were off to the nearest subway station.

The car rolled to a stop before the subway station. Through the windows, Finnick took in the crowded place with a small frown. "It's rather inconvenient for you to go to work like this. If you don't want me to take you to work, I can get you a car."

Astonished at his words, she instantly refused, "There's really no need for that."

Of course, she knew that buying a car was nothing to him. However, she still did not feel comfortable spending his money.

Her immediate rejection of his offer had Finnick's eyes darkening as he rumbled, "I'm not always at the villa. How will you get to work then?"

That was something that she had been pondering, ever since she had gotten into the car. She took out her phone and waved it at him, replying, "It's really easy and convenient to hail a taxi now. I'll have to wake up a little earlier to book one. Erm... I'm going to be late soon, so I have to go. Bye."

She did not wait for his response as she practically fled from the car.

From his position inside the vehicle, Finnick stared at the rapidly retreating back, with an indecipherable look in his eyes.

Noah had noticed where his boss's attention was placed and he could not help but comment, "Mr. Norton, is it just me, or is Mrs. Norton rather different from what our investigation has suggested?"

Finnick's tone was thoughtful as he murmured, "She really is quite different."

He had honestly never expected that she would so swiftly and thoroughly reject his offer of buying her a car.

Based on what Noah had managed to find out of her past, she was a shallow woman, who would do anything just for a bit of money.

That was the exact reason why he had chosen her.

A woman who could be satisfied with a small amount of money was infinitely safer and easier to control, as compared to the young daughters from influential families. After all, they only ever had one thing in mind- obtaining all of his fortunes.

There was another reason for his choice. He could admit that she did not irk him as much as the other women.

Nonetheless, she was acting on the contrary, to his expectations. It was almost as if she had not cared for his wealth at all.

Or maybe she was a lot smarter than he had thought and was merely playing hard to get? Perhaps she had some other long-term plan?

Eyes darkening, he finally turned his gaze away from the direction that she had left.

"Drive."

...

At the financial district of Sunshine City, on the top floor of Finnor Group.

Finnick was sitting at his desk, his fingers darting across his keyboard. In response to his actions, the images and data on his screen changed.

Ring, ring.

Suddenly, his phone rang and he reached out to answer it.

Noah's voice came through the other end of the line, "Mr. Norton, Mr. Lawson is here."

"Let him in."

A few seconds later, his office door swung open and a man in a flamboyant, pink dress shirt flounced inside.

"Finnick, why are you still working?" The other man cried out in an exaggerated manner, "You've finally married someone! Even if you refuse to have a wedding ceremony, the least you could do is go on a honeymoon or something!"

Finnick's eyes never left his screen as he retorted shortly, "I've got no time for that."

The other man sat down in front of his desk, not at all angry at Finnick's cold attitude. His eyes crinkled in a smile as he chortled, "Your poor wife! How could she have married such a boring man, like yourself?"

At long last, Finnick lifted his head to pin the other man down with a blank stare. "Stiles, just what are you trying to imply?"

"I'm just feeling kind of bored. I want to meet your wife." The grin stretching Stiles' lips widened.

"Forget it," Finnick did not even hesitate in refusing. "You know why I've married her."

"Yes, I do." Stiles pouted before the amusement left him and he continued seriously, "Whatever the case, you have a family now. It's about time that you let go of what had happened in the past."

His last sentence had Finnick's fingers tensing imperceptibly.

He was silent for a while before he uttered, "There's no such thing as letting go when it comes to this. Dead people don't come back to life."

Stiles' mouth opened and he seemed like he had wanted to say something. However, the words got stuck in his throat, as they refused to leave his mouth. In the end, he swallowed them back down.

After a few seconds, he queried, "What about the little girl from all those years ago? Have you found anything yet?"

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 9

"We've found some clues," Finnick stated simply.

"That's great!" Another grin appeared on Stiles' face. "And here I was, wondering how you were going to repay her for what she had done. I had hoped that you would offer yourself up to her, but it turns out that you've already given yourself to another woman."

Finnick completely ignored his friend's shameless teasing.

Stiles pouted a little, seeing as he was unable to get a rise out of the other man. Then, his gaze shifted to Finnick's wheelchair as his eyes gleamed. "Finnick, have you told your wife about your legs yet?"

Finnick, who had been scrolling through the finance department reports, stopped moving his mouse.

A few beats later, he muttered, "No."

Stiles furrowed his brows. "Finnick, it's not that I want to be a nag, but it really doesn't matter what reason you've married her for. Since you're already husband and wife, are you sure that you still want to keep the truth from her? Maybe..."

Here he paused for several seconds, debating on whether or not he should continue. At long last, he gritted his teeth and forged on, "Maybe you should try to accept your new wife. You can't always live in the shadows of the past."

He was all too familiar with Finnick's personality. Although Finnick had insisted that the only reason that he had married the woman was to deal with his grandfather, there was no way that he would accept marriage and living together with her, unless he had truly liked her.

Finnick did not speak. A short while later, he was done reading through the reports. Only then did he respond in a soft voice.

“I can’t forget about her.”

Stiles was rather stunned.

He took a closer look at Finnick’s face, noticing the calm indifference on it. Pity flashed in his eyes.

The car accident that had happened ten years ago was a nightmare for everyone.

Everybody thought that Finnick had lost the use of his legs in that car crash.

It turned out that they were all wrong.

What Finnick had lost in that car crash was not his legs. Rather, it was his heart.

...

When Vivian returned home after work, Molly and Liam came into the living room with their luggage.

“Molly, Liam, what are you...”

“Mrs. Norton, our son is getting married tomorrow, so we’re going to his wedding!” Liam clarified with a delighted grin.

“Really? Congratulations! How many days will you be gone for?”

“The wedding will take place here in Sunshine City, so we’ll be back tomorrow night.” Molly smiled pleasantly. However, a worried expression crossed her face when she turned to look at Finnick. “However, with nobody at home, Mr. Norton would have no one to prepare breakfast for him.”

Vivian was speechless.

Is this how the rich live? It's merely breakfast! Do they really need to hire someone to specifically cook for them?

"It's fine." Finnick's deep voice interrupted her thoughts. "Vivian, you know how to cook, right?"

"Huh?" was her eloquent response. Locking gazes with his dark orbs, she stuttered out, "I-I do..."

Then, remembering the hearty breakfast that Molly had cooked in the morning, she could not help but add, "Just a little..."

There was a brief flicker of amusement in Finnick's eyes before it was gone.

"That's enough then," he intoned.

The next morning.

Vivian woke up an hour earlier than normal to labor over breakfast.

She was just about to head upstairs to call Finnick down when he had appeared out of the elevator.

"Do you have batteries?"

Bewildered at the question, it took her a moment to realize that he was holding an electric shaver in his hands.

Taking the shaver from him, she checked the battery slot. "You need a button cell for this. Are there any in the house?"

"No."

She eyed the stubble lining his jaw, confirming that he really did need a shave. "Are there any supermarkets or convenience stores nearby?"

"No."

Exasperated, she pressed, "There's nothing around here?"

He shook his head.

Vivian could have wept at the way that these rich people had lived.

"Now what shall we do?" she huffed in frustration. "Maybe you could get that assistant of yours to buy one and bring it over?"

"He's already on his way here. I have a very important meeting later that I can't afford to be late to." Finnick's brows furrowed and he added, "I asked Liam and he'd said that he has a new razor. However, it's not electric so I don't really know how to use it."

She stared at him for a while until it clicked in her brain. She soon understood the reason that he was here. He had wanted her to help him shave!

"Where is it?" She could not help but find him rather adorable at the moment. Pursing her lips, she continued, "I know how to use one and I can do it for you."

"It's in the storage closet."

Rummaging around in the aforementioned closet, it did not take her long to find the razor. It was a traditional razor, the kind that had needed to be used together with shaving foam. She slathered a thick layer of foam on his jaw before she began to carefully shave his stubble.

Their faces were so close to one another that her breaths had puffed against his cheeks lightly.

All Finnick had to do was lift his gaze a little and he would be able to get an up-close look at her face. He could even see the tiny hairs on her smooth, pale skin. They reminded him of peach fuzz.

As though she had sensed his gaze, her already tensed nerves tightened further. "What's wrong? Did I nick you?"

"No." His voice was as cold as ever. "I was just thinking about how much you're really acting like my wife right now."

Taken aback by his statement, Vivian's cheeks warmed in a blush.

We are husband and wife, yet he used the word “acting like.” Does this mean that, like me, he feels that this abrupt marriage of ours is too surreal?

“Alright, I’m done.” In little to no time at all, she was finished. Wiping away the remaining foam, she eyed her handiwork and smiled. “I’ve done a good job.”

“Thank you,” he murmured before wheeling over to the dining table to eat.

Due to their earlier intimate actions, breakfast was a rather awkward ordeal. Vivian had even forgotten to ask him if he was satisfied with her cooking.

Noah arrived soon after they had finished eating. Since Finnick was in a hurry today, he would not be able to drop her off at the subway station. Hence, Vivian called a taxi to take her directly to the magazine company.

The moment she stepped inside, she discovered that the pleasant atmosphere from yesterday was gone. In its place was a tense and nervous air. Grabbing Sarah’s arm, she whispered, “Did something happen?”

“Vivian, didn’t you read your email this morning?” Sarah’s eyes were wide as she answered. “Yesterday, someone bought over our company! All the higher-ups have been switched out!”

Vivian was dumbfounded at the news.

Their magazine company was not very big, but it had still been around for quite a while. Why would it suddenly be sold off?

She did not get a chance to reply as there was a disturbance near the doors.

“He’s coming! The new Chief Editor is coming!”

Glancing over, she saw a tall figure striding into the company, with a cluster of people following behind him.

When she got a closer look at the man’s face, she felt as though a bucket of ice-cold water had been dumped over her head. Her blood froze in her veins.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 10

He was almost as she had remembered him, albeit the angles of his face were sharper, and had lost the youthfulness that he had during his university years. The way that he carried himself was also a lot more mature and steady.

However, what had changed the most was the expression on his face. Gone was the warmth that she recalled seeing on his face every day. All that was left was a harsh and hard look.

Currently, he was listening to his subordinates' reports. Every now and then, he would nod and utter out a few commands.

Not once had his gaze ever landed on her, as the group swept past her and entered the Chief Editor's office.

The color drained from Vivian's face.

Fabian Norton... Why is he back here? Two years ago, he had suddenly left, without even saying goodbye. Why has he returned now?

It had been two years. She had more or less given up on their broken relationship by now. However, his abrupt reappearance in her life still had waves of emotions crashing against her relentlessly, threatening to drown her entirely.

She did not even know if he had recognized her as she had him, at first glance.

At this, a self-deprecating smirk curled her lips.

Does it matter if he recognizes me or not? He and I... We're fated to be apart. There's no way that we can go back to how we'd used to be...

The rest of the day passed in a haze of unease and worry. She was worried that Fabian would recognize her.

Reality would soon prove that her worries were unfounded.

Being new to his position, Fabian was kept busy in meetings with the various departments. There would be changes happening around the magazine company.

In one of the meetings, he listened intently, as the senior editors made their reports, giving a comment or order here and there. He never once paid any attention to Vivian, who was sitting at the far end of the table.

Seems like he's forgotten me... But I guess that's expected of him. If I had been anything of worth to him, he would not have left without a word two years ago. I've never heard from him ever since either.

The hours passed by agonizingly slow to Vivian. At long last, it was time to get off of work. Not wanting to stay in the office a second longer, she hurriedly snatched up her bag and prepared to leave.

Unfortunately, her senior editor suddenly called out to her.

"Hold on, Vivian. Could you take this document to Mr. Norton for me, please? Give him a verbal report as well."

Vivian stiffened before she slowly turned around to face the other woman. Her voice was slightly pleading as she uttered, "Lesley, I have something urgent to attend to at home. Could you-"

Her senior editor, Lesley Jenson, was already in a foul mood from a meeting earlier where she had been rebuked. At hearing Vivian's refusal, a terrible scowl twisted her face. "So, you think that you're all that just because you got to interview the president of Finnor Group, is that it?"

Paling at the sharp words that had escaped Lesley, Vivian had no choice but to reply, "Don't be silly, Lesley. I'll get right to it."

She took the document from Lesley and walked toward Fabian's office. Standing in front of the door, she took several deep breaths to calm herself before raising her hand to rap on it.

Knock, knock.

Just that one simple motion seemed to have drained all the energy out of her.

"Come in."

Upon hearing his familiar voice invite her in, she pushed the door open and entered.

Although Fabian's office was not as lavish as Finnick's, it was still quite luxuriously furnished. The man was sitting behind his desk, flipping through the magazine that had featured the interview with Finnick.

"Mr. Norton." Vivian struggled to make her voice come out steadily. "Senior editor Jenson wants me to give you a simple report on the interview with the president of Finnor Group."

Fabian hummed in acknowledgment, not bothering to lift his head. Thus, Vivian steeled herself and began her report.

Even after she was done, he did not make a single sound. At this point, she was at her wit's end.

Her voice tremored a little despite her best efforts, "Err... Sir, if there's nothing else that you need, I'll be taking my leave."

With that said, she spun around and made her way towards the door.

Just as her hand landed on the handle of the door, a large hand seized hers tightly.

Fabian's eyes were narrowed, as he zeroed in on the ring on her finger. "You're married?"

Not having the courage to look him in the eyes, she turned her head away and nodded.

She did not see the way that his emotions had coiled, in his dark orbs, as he glared at the ring on her finger.

Abruptly, a mocking smirk curved his lips.

"Vivian William, in the end, the man you'd chosen could only afford to buy you this plain, simple crushed diamond ring?" As though something had only just occurred to him, a disdainful and disgusted look crossed his face. "Then again, a woman who would be willing to sell her body for the sake of money can be easily bought off. It wouldn't have been hard for a man to obtain you."

Vivian was thunderstruck at his words. Her face paled dramatically and she was as pale as a sheet.

“Y-you... You know about what happened two years ago?” she was barely able to choke out, while her lips trembled.

Fabian grunted in reply. For some reason, his chest ached dully, seeing that her first response was not to deny it.

He squeezed her wrist tighter, his voice coming out frosty, “Yes, I do. In fact, I’d already known about it two years ago. You know, I really have to thank you, Vivian. I’m grateful that you’ve shown me just how dirty a woman I’d loved for three years was. Because of you, I’d firmed my resolve to further my studies in A Nation.”

The last shred of color left in her cheeks had soon drained away.

Two years... In the past two years, she had constantly wondered why he would suddenly leave the country when she was at her weakest. He had left her alone just when she had needed him the most.

Now, she was finally aware of the truth.

It was all because of that incident.

In spite of that, however, another thought soon arose in her mind. Two years ago, Fabian had gone out of the country before that incident had even come to light.

Could it be that he had known about it before it had even happened? No way, that’s impossible...

However, it was painfully evident that this was not the right time to think about that. Hence, she struggled to set herself free as she tried to explain, “Fabian, what had happened two years ago was merely a misunderstanding! What actually happened was that I-”