

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 156

However, he managed to shove her away with the last bit of rationality in him. He leaped out of bed, grabbed his clothes from the floor, and dashed toward the bathroom.

As for Ashley, she ended up crashing onto the bed after being pushed by him.

Dumbfounded by his action, her blood was boiling with rage.

She had been trying to seduce him countless times, but her attempts always ended in failure. He had shown nothing but disgust in response to her seduction. Would he turn Vivian down if she were the one seducing him?

If I didn't drug his drinks last night, would he have spent the night with me?

Ashley could remember vividly how their bodies tangled with each other in bed last night.

However, what she could never forget was how he had been mumbling Vivian's name when they were having a good time in bed.

With that thought in mind, she clenched her fists so tightly that her nails almost pierced through her palms.

She couldn't believe that the woman was all he had been thinking about even when he was experiencing waves of ecstasy with her.

How despicable!

It's sickening!

Despite finding it revolting, she had decided to put up with it, thinking that it would be a waste if she let slip the opportunity to be with him. In order to have Fabian to herself, she was willing to do anything!

Inside the bathroom, Fabian turned on the faucet to its maximum while splashing cold water onto his face in an attempt to calm himself down.

Everything that had taken place last night seemed perfectly normal, but then again, he could still detect the slight possibility that it was all premeditated.

It was suspicious how Ashley had appeared right in front of the club entrance. Also, there was something fishy about his unusually low alcohol tolerance and the way they ended up in bed.

As he recalled the photo Ashley revealed during the party last time, he became all the more convinced that there could be more to the mischievous and adorable girl than met the eyes.

At the same time, he was seized by a spasm of fear.

Should I dig out more information on her?

Hastily, he finished washing up and walked out of the bathroom. Ashley, who had already gotten changed, was staring at him with a wide grin on her face. He quickly turned his eyes away from her to avoid conversation.

Although Ashley and her sister did look similar to each other, she could never replicate her sister's dazzling smile.

He kept his eyes downcast as he frantically picked up his belongings from the floor. In a nonchalant tone, he said to her, "I've got to go as I have a busy schedule today."

"Fabian!"

Looking anxious, Ashley intended to have a talk with him, but to her dismay, Fabian did not even give her one last glance before he left. The door was shut mercilessly following his departure.

She was left standing rooted to the spot with a long face.

Stroking her belly with her right hand, tears started welling up in her eyes.

Fabian, am I such a nuisance to you? It's alright if you feel that way. Hopefully, I'll get what I want with my effort last night.

People always said how children could work wonders on the relationship of a couple. As long as she was pregnant with his child, he would never be able to get rid of her for the rest of his life!

After Fabian made a hurried exit from the hotel, he immediately called his assistant and asked him to begin an investigation on Ashley. He wanted to find out how Ashley had gotten her hands on that photo, especially that one which he didn't even have in his phone.

What was the truth behind that horrid incident that happened two years ago? Who was the mastermind behind it? Before Fabian returned to the country, he had never expected to be involved in an incident that was shrouded in so much mystery.

Ashley went to the hotel lobby after fixing her appearance. Coincidentally, she bumped into Vivian, who was lounging on the sofa there.

Vivian, who was waiting for Finnick to do the checkout, was surprised to see Ashley.

A triumphant smirk appeared on Ashley's face at the sight of her sister.

Since Vivian is here at the hotel at this hour, does it mean my plan to sabotage her by drugging her drinks last night had succeeded?

"The great Ms. Vivian, how come you're sitting here? What could have happened last night that made you look so tired? Could it be..." Ashley approached Vivian and drawled, "I wonder who was the lucky guy who got to spend a good time with our Ms. Vivian here last night."

Ashley grabbed the opportunity to rub salt in Vivian's wound. The thought of watching her agonized expression after being raped last night was a pleasure for her.

However, Vivian only furrowed her brows at her in confusion.

How did she know what happened between Finnick and me last night?

"Hey, why are you not answering me? Are you too shy to talk about it? Goodness gracious, will an easy girl like you even be shy about what you did with men? I really wonder how Mr. Norton would react once he finds out that you've been screwing around!"

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Colors drained from Vivian's face at once.

She knew that she was drugged last night, and she had been wondering who was the culprit ever since. Judging from the smirk on Ashley's face, it did not take her long to associate the incident with her.

Despite feeling infuriated, she did not treat Ashley too harshly for the sake of their kinship. At last, she only confronted her in an icy voice, "Ashley Miller, you'd better come clean about the thing you did last night."

Ashley's eyes were laden with hatred when she stared at Vivian.

As she had always been enjoying a sense of superiority over Vivian, there was no way she could be overwhelmed by her.

"What did I do last night? I'm speaking nothing but the truth, and you should know what you did last night. I can't believe you still have the audacity to criticize me after having a fling with some random guy as a married woman!" Ashley raised her voice, feeling agitated. She was making full use of the chance to vent her frustration after being ignored by Fabian that morning.

To her utter surprise, a sonorous and powerful voice came at that juncture.

"Ashley, do you have any idea who you're speaking with?"

She spun around to find an extremely good-looking man making his way over to her in a wheelchair.

His presence immediately drew the attention of everyone else present at the hotel lobby.

Ashley was stunned to see him there.

Finnick? Why's he here?

Instead of being terrorized by his presence, a smile broke out on her face as she greeted the handsome man. "Mr. Norton, you're here just at the right time. You know what? Last night, Vivian and..."

Finnick interrupted her right away by shooting her a penetrating and icy stare while saying, "Ashley, do you really want to know what your sister and I did last night?"

Upon hearing that, Ashley was stupefied as though she had just been struck by lightning.

W-Was Finnick the one who was with Vivian at the hotel last night?

Does it mean my plan actually failed?

Ashley felt a pressing urge to let out a shriek in exasperation. However, she had no choice but to watch her behavior in Finnick's presence. Clenching her fists tightly, she bit her lip and stormed away without giving Vivian another glance.

"Ashley, hold on!"

She paused in her tracks when she heard Vivian's voice.

With her arms crossed in front of her chest, she turned around and stared at Vivian. She kept her chin up to show that she was not intimidated by her.

"Ashley, you'd better listen to me carefully. I'll let you off the hook this time and forget about what you did." Fixing her with a cold stare, she continued, "However, if you try to sabotage me with one of your dirty tricks again, I'll surely let you have a taste of your own medicine."

Ashley's body trembled in fear. However, she still tried to maintain her high and mighty demeanor when she strutted her way out of the hotel.

After that, Vivian and Finnick left the hotel by car.

Vivian remained silent throughout the entire journey, immersed in her own thoughts.

There was no doubt that Ashley was the one who drugged her last night. It was disheartening to know that her own sister would actually drug her and allow a stranger to rape her.

Thinking about all the wicked stuff Ashley had done to her before this, she couldn't help but shudder in terror.

What happened last night actually resembled that fateful night two years ago in many ways. Could Ashley be the culprit behind that too?

Sensing that she was bothered by something, Finnick gave her a nudge on her shoulder. "Vivian, are you feeling unwell? Is it because you're... too tired?"

Noah was focusing his attention on the road ahead when he heard the questionable choice of words that escaped Finnick's mouth. His face reddened instantly as his mind couldn't help but be filled with some obscene thoughts.

Too tired?

Vivian, who realized what Finnick was trying to imply, shot him a glare as her face flushed with embarrassment.

Immediately, he cleared his throat and responded, "You really should take some food supplements if you're feeling too tired."

"No, I'm not tired at all!" Her face turned even redder as she desperately tried to explain her distracted look earlier.

"Oh, I'm glad to hear that. Why don't we..."

She quickly stretched out her hand and placed her palm on his mouth to stop him from spouting nonsense.

However, he made use of the chance to hold her hand.

Looking solemn, he asked, "Please share with me what was on your mind just now."

I must say, he really is an astute observer.

Leaning back in the seat, she turned to look out the window at the heavy traffic as she took her time to figure out an answer. It was only after a while that she spoke slowly, "I have a feeling that Ashley might have something to do with what happened to me two years ago."

"Do you need my help to get to the bottom of it?"

Vivian hesitated before responding to his offer.

Back then, she had not been strong enough to face the traumatic experience alone. But now, with Finnick by her side, she seemed to have the courage to find out the culprit who had brought about the loss of her most precious thing!

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"Yes, I do need your help," Vivian agreed.

Just then, Finnick remembered something which he felt he should share with her now. He said tentatively, "Actually, I already gathered some information on that incident."

The fact that he had started the investigation on his own showed that he was quite bothered by it too.

Vivian's eyes fell pensive, but she did not condemn him for what he did. Instead, she placed emphasis on the outcome. "What information have you got?"

He told her that the man who raped her two years ago was not an old man as per her assumption. However, the identity of the real perpetrator had yet to come to light.

The one who did the horrendous thing to her was not an old man.

To Vivian, that piece of information did not really matter.

Knowing that the perpetrator was not an old man did not make things better in the least bit because the fact that she had been humiliated could never be changed.

She sighed. "Finnick, to be honest with you, the question of who did it doesn't matter that much to me at the moment. Right now, I just want to find out who was the one who drugged me and orchestrated the entire plot that night. That person even went to the extent of spreading that scandal at school in order to destroy me. Who could be the mastermind behind everything?"

Without saying anything in response, he drew her toward his chest gently.

Since what she wanted was the truth, he would go all out to get that for her.

After all, he wanted to find out the truth too.

Yet...

At the thought of that scarf, he grew reticent as his eyes turned icy.

"I'll get to the bottom of it," he promised her in a soft voice.

Suddenly, a thought struck Vivian. "By the way, did anyone find out about the condition of your legs last night?" she asked worriedly.

Finnick broke into a faint smile, feeling pleased to see how much she cared about him. "Don't worry. All the necessary arrangements are in place to make sure everything is alright."

The car pulled to a stop at that moment. As she looked out the window, she found herself staring at the apartment she was staying at instead of the villa. She couldn't help but turn to look at Finnick in puzzlement.

"I'd like to visit your mother," he answered.

Vivian had her reservations about his idea because it was obvious to her that Finnick was not her mother's favorite.

That did not bother her during the time their marriage only existed in name.

However, things were so much different at the moment.

Should I tell Mom the truth?

She nodded to herself before getting out of the car together with Finnick.

Inside the apartment unit, Rachel was sitting on her bed reading a copy of Glamour Magazine.

"Mom!" Vivian stepped into the unit and was happy to see her mother's glowing face.

"Pleased to meet you, Mrs. William." Finnick entered at the same time in his wheelchair.

Rachel's face stiffened for a split second before greeting him back politely.

In the meantime, Noah put down the gift bags and was sensible enough to wait for his boss outside.

"I'm sorry as I didn't have much time to prepare better gifts for you. Here are some food supplements which are good for your health. I hope they aren't too shabby for you, Mrs. William," Finnick said in a level voice.

Rachel, who did not fancy Finnick as her son-in-law, deliberately pulled a long face. "We are just some ordinary folks who don't deserve your expensive gifts. Please don't bring anything for us in the future."

Finnick's face was inscrutable in response to her comment.

"Mom!" Vivian couldn't help but chime in. Sitting down at the edge of the bed beside her mother, she held her hands and tried to put in some good words for Finnick. "He only brought those gifts for you as a kind gesture."

As someone who had never known how to get along with his mother-in-law, Finnick was at a loss as he stood dazedly beside Vivian.

It was her first time witnessing such a helpless expression on his face, and she found it hilarious. "Finnick, since it's lunchtime soon, why don't you go out and fetch us some takeaway food? Mom loves braised pork."

He nodded in agreement.

After he left with Noah, Vivian started criticizing her mother, "Mom, what you said to Finnick just now was too harsh. He's a kind-hearted person, and he's different from all the other rich guys."

"Well, I don't care because I just don't like the idea of you and him being together. In fact, I prefer Fabian to be my son-in-law."

"Mom, it's time you forget about Fabian because Finnick is my husband."

Seeing how fervently her daughter was trying to defend Finnick, Rachel couldn't help but ask curiously, "Vivian, just be honest with me. Have you fallen in love with him? Otherwise, why are you trying so hard to defend him?"

Had she fallen in love with him? Of course!

She was so in love with him that her life literally depended on his. She loved him so deeply that she cared about his every movement, and she couldn't wait to spend the rest of her life with him.

Seeing the concern in her mother's eyes, Vivian finally made up her mind to tell her the truth. "Mom, I really love him very much, so much so that I'd like to spend the rest of my life with him."

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Rachel's eyes became dodgy when she learned that her daughter had developed feelings for Finnick.

Knowing well that Vivian had gone through a fair share of ordeal in her past, all she wanted for her was a dependable man who knew her well, treated her nicely, and loved her with all his heart.

However, is Finnick the right man who can bring her happiness in life?

Trying to blend into the world of the rich is something easier said than done.

Would Finnick turn out to be a fickle-minded man in relationships? Could his relationship with Vivian withstand all the challenges and obstacles that are looming ahead of them?

Vivian knew the doubts her mother was having about their relationship. In a soft voice, she tried to convince her mother, "My beloved mother, Finnick risked his life on several occasions before just to protect me from danger. I really love him, and I believe he's the right guy for me. So, please don't worry about me."

The moment Rachel saw the blissful smile on her daughter's face, she finally caved in.

"Well, since you're married to him, I guess the right thing to do is to make the most out of your life with him. I'm happy as long as you are."

Wrapping her arms around her mother, Vivian said coyly, "Mom, I know you're the one who loves me the most, and you should know that you're the most precious person in my life. Please don't worry about me because I know how to take care of myself."

"You silly girl." Rachel's eyes glistened with tears when she said that.

Finnick bumped into the heartwarming scene when he made it back with food. He had the gumption to sit down by the door so as not to interrupt their moment.

Satisfied with his sensible action, Rachel's attitude thawed substantially. Surprisingly, she extended her hand toward him and invited him for a talk, "Finnick, come over here because I have something to tell you."

"Finnick." She placed emphasis on every single word of her sentence to show how serious her speech was. "Vivian is my only daughter, and she's gone through quite a difficult time when she was staying with me. Therefore, all I want for her is a good guy who knows how to take care of her well, regardless of whether that guy has deep pockets or otherwise. Since she's told me that you're the love of her life, I have no choice but to entrust her happiness to you."

Finnick turned to look at Vivian with astonishment in his eyes.

He knew Vivian must have told her mother something that led to the sudden change in her attitude.

He could still remember the time Vivian assured her mother that she had no feelings for him and their marriage only existed in name.

So, is Rachel treating me so amiably because Vivian has confessed to her how much she would like to spend the rest of her life with me?

At the thought of that possibility, the tensed muscles in his face relaxed a great deal.

This is perfect.

Is she finally willing to acknowledge me as her husband?

With that thought in mind, he looked up at Rachel and declared in a composed tone that was tinged with a trace of solemnness, "Mrs. William, please rest assured that I will take good care of Vivian in the future."

Although he was inarticulate, he meant every word he said and would honor his promise for sure.

Rachel, who was moved by his sincerity, nodded at him approvingly.

At long last, the tension between the three eased up a great deal. Knowing that her mother was one who sought solace in solitude, Vivian left with Finnick after the meal.

A smile slowly took over Rachel's face while watching Vivian's back as she left.

In fact, she considered herself really lucky to have a daughter as filial as Vivian.

Yet, she couldn't help but feel ashamed of not being a good enough mother for her.

She knew she had let her daughter down. The feeling of guilt toward her had been growing increasingly intense with the years.

Would Vivian still acknowledge me as her mother after learning about the truth behind everything? Would she hate me for the rest of her life?

Putting her hands together, she started praying to God for Vivian's happiness. At the same time, she begged for His mercy and pleaded for a chance to redeem her sins.

Vivian, Mom's never done enough for you, but I really hope you can have a happy and blissful life.

...

After leaving the apartment, Finnick sent Vivian back to the magazine company.

Just as she was about to exit the car, he suddenly called after her, "Vivian."

She turned around upon hearing his voice. Before she could even respond to him, he grabbed her wrist and hauled her toward his arms.

Her pulse started racing as she was close enough to feel his warm breath on her.

As for Noah, he had the gumption to bury his head into his shirt as much as he could.

Mr. Norton has definitely become very unpredictable lately. Is he treating me like I am non-existent?

Despite feeling awkward with Noah around, Vivian was not strong enough to break free from his embrace. In the end, she could only plead for his mercy with her face flushed with embarrassment, "Let go of me now. We should talk when we get back home."

"Thank you, Vivian," he spoke in a deep and husky tone.

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"What're you thanking me for?" Vivian sounded baffled.

With a smirk, he answered, "Thanks for telling your mother how much you love me."

Vivian was taken aback by his words. All of a sudden, her heart was seized by a surge of warmth, and she couldn't resist hugging him back.

In fact, I'm the one who should be grateful for you.

Thank you for appearing in my life.

They engaged in the sweet embrace for quite a long while until Vivian realized that she was about to be late for work. Then, she wiggled herself away from him and said, "Finnick, I should get back to work."

Despite feeling reluctant to part ways with her, he gave her forehead a light peck before letting her go. "Go ahead."

After bidding farewell to him, Vivian headed to the magazine company. Before she could even settle down, Sarah made a hurried entrance to her room and started rambling on, "Vivian, oh Vivian! You're finally back! You know what, something huge happened!"

Frowning at Sarah's face which had astonishment written all over it, Vivian asked, "What is it?"

"It's something related to the president of Finnor Group!" Shocked, Sarah stared at her with widened eyes as she asked, "Haven't you heard about it? It's all over Twitter at the moment!"

Something related to Finnick?

Vivian was dumbstruck for a moment to learn that the matter was related to her own husband. Out of curiosity, she asked Sarah, "What's the matter with Finnick?"

"It's a rumor about Finnick and Yasmin, which has gone viral on the internet! Everyone has been talking about how the popular celebrity, Yasmin, tried to seduce Finnick in order to dethrone his wife! Vivian, don't you think it is very shameless of her to pull off something like that? There's no way Mr. Norton would be tempted by a girl as mediocre as her! Hmph, she'll never be good enough for a guy like him!"

As Sarah was talking about the rumor agitatedly, Vivian looked stunned.

Yasmin?

Oh, she's that celebrity who's got the most potential to make it big in the movie industry. Also, she's hailed as the dream girl by many guys.

Yasmin had an alluring, well-toned body and full luscious lips. Her eyes always sparkled with charm, and her voice was so sweet that it could make one's knees go weak just by listening to her. No man in the world would be able to resist the seduction of a stunner like her.

Why would Finnick have anything to do with a famous celebrity like her?

A babble of voices was ongoing among her colleagues at the office. Obviously, everyone was talking about the rumor.

"Alas, I've always thought of Yasmin as an aloof girl who's hard to approach. It really surprises me that she actually made the first move for Mr. Norton."

"It's mainly because Mr. Norton is too much of a hottie that even Yasmin couldn't resist his charm. But then again, I don't think they really did anything out of bounds, did they? Mr. Norton should know better than getting involved with her since he's already a married man."

“Who can be sure about that? Mind you, the woman who seduced him was not just any ordinary woman but Yasmin, the girl who has such a hot body and beautiful face. As we all know, men’s minds are mostly controlled by their junks. So, I highly doubt any one of them would be able to turn down a looker like her!”

Although Vivian trusted Finnick completely deep down, she couldn’t help but be slightly bothered by some of the remarks made by her colleagues. Immediately, she whipped out her phone and checked her Twitter.

Just like how Sarah had described it to her, both Yasmin and Finnick were the trending topics on Twitter. She did not find out about their rumor until now as she had been having too many things on her plate lately.

As it turned out, it all started with Yasmin expressing her admiration for Finnick on several occasions lately. She kept on showering him with compliments on his exquisite demeanor and taste as well as how talented he was in doing business.

Then, Vivian went on to check out her profile on Twitter. Her timeline was full of posts that were directly portraying her admiration for Finnick. Her infatuation with the man was very obvious, and it seemed like she deemed him as her dream man.

Because of the rumor, her followers spiked to an all-time high, making her one of the top five most popular artists on Twitter.

Comments below her posts were mushrooming too.

You and Finnick will make a perfect couple! My goddess, I’ll support you no matter what you do!

I can’t believe you’re shameless enough to express your intention of getting yourself a rich sugar daddy! You’re really despicable!

Are mistresses nowadays all so cocky and insolent? Yasmin, you’d better beware whenever you’re walking alone on the street because you might be ambushed by assassins sent by Finnick’s wife.

All of us should do our part to stop the mistresses out there from getting rampant! Mrs. Norton, it’s about time you did something to banish her!

None of you have the right to humiliate my Yasmin! Everyone has the right and freedom to pursue their love. Yasmin, we'll always be your pillars of support!

Vivian found the comments amusing. She was glad that she did not reveal her identity as Finnick's wife to the public. Otherwise, she might no longer be able to dine out without being recognized by people.

At the same time, she was surprised to see how a mass condemnation against mistresses was launched on the internet just because of Yasmin. Indeed, the power of media was really capable of making or breaking something.

At that juncture, Lesley, the senior editor, visited her after walking out of Fabian's room. She was there just in time to catch Vivian poring over Yasmin's Twitter account.

Her eyes brightened up with inspiration at once. "Vivian, I knew you would be paying attention to the topic as you always have such a good nose for juicy news. I just had a discussion with Mr. Norton, and we've decided to pursue this topic and do a coverage on it. With a famous female celebrity and a handsome president of a company as the protagonists, I'm sure the news would turn out to be a sensational one in no time! So, we've decided to let you be in charge of this topic."