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“Yes, Vivian. I’ll always have your back.” Clenching her fist, Sarah uttered with determination.

Vivian was amused by Sarah’s serious expression and pulled her back to her seat.

“Oh, isn’t this Mrs. Norton?” Vivian heard Shannon say in a sarcastic tone as soon as she sat down.

When or how did I offend Shannon? Why is she always mocking and making fun of me when gossip arises?

Vivian ignored Shannon and pretended not to hear a single word.

“That’s incorrect. You’re still Mrs. Norton now, however, we don’t know what will happen after a while.” Seeing Vivian remained silent, Shannon continued to sneer arrogantly, “That’s true. Since his real lover has returned, there wouldn’t be any place for you anymore. I think that you have to give up your title of Mrs. Norton very soon.”

“What do you mean by that?” Vivian couldn’t hold back her anger anymore as she stood up and confronted Shannon.

After seeing Vivian becoming infuriated, Shannon continued to mock, “Tch, Vivian, you’re still dreaming. Finnick’s first love has returned and she is gorgeous as always, do you think Finnick would still want you?”

Sasha felt relief at the thought of Vivian being abandoned. What makes Vivian so special that she was able to hook up with the president of Finnor Group? Hmph, it’s about time for your downfall after so much time in the spotlight. Since Evelyn has returned, I don’t believe Finnick would still want you!

“You!” Despite her desire to retaliate, Vivian was not sure how she should respond. Her mind went back to what Benedict once told her in the hospital, talking about how a man’s first love would always have a special place in their heart.

After seeing that Vivian remained speechless, Shannon rolled her eyes and slowly went back to her seat.

“Some people are just too delusional after getting a short moment of recognition.”

“Pfft!” After hearing Shannon’s words, several colleagues couldn’t help but laugh out loud while they gloated and looked at Vivian. Even the few people who once supported Vivian looked at her with sympathy, as if they were sure that she would be abandoned by Finnick.

Vivian couldn’t endure the strange looks at work anymore, so she picked up her bag and left the office without greeting Fabian.

Since Vivian hadn’t seen her mother for a long time and she needed her comfort as well, she went to Rachel’s apartment after she left the magazine.

Within seconds of reaching the door, Vivian could hear Rachel’s laughter.

Mom seems very happy. A smile appeared on Vivian’s face. This is the first time I’m hearing her laugh so happily in a while, I wonder why.

As Vivian rang the doorbell, Rachel answered the door with a smile on her face.

“Mom, why are you so happy?” Vivian asked smilingly.

“It’s Vivian, quickly come in.” The moment Rachel saw it was Vivian, her expression changed as her smile slowly faded.

Having said that, Rachel opened the door and Vivian entered.

“What’s the matter, mom? Do you not welcome me?” Vivian was confused by Rachel’s expression and she asked jokingly after.

“Don’t say that, silly child.” Rachel gave Vivian a glare.

“Haha.” As Vivian saw the childlike expression on Rachel’s face, she laughed and walked towards the house with her arm around her shoulder. However, Vivian froze when she spotted the person sitting on the sofa.

Why is Evelyn here?

“Evelyn, you should know Vivian, right?” Rachel introduced Vivian to Evelyn, then she turned to look at Vivian and said, “Vivian, this is Evelyn, Benedict’s younger sister. You might have seen her before.”

Vivian smiled at Evelyn awkwardly while trying to figure out how to greet her in this situation.

Evelyn, however, reached out to Vivian and grabbed her arm. “Vivian and I have known each other for a long time, Ms. Rachel. You don’t need to introduce us.”

“Is that so? That’s good then, that’s good.” Rachel was also very happy to see Evelyn and Vivian so close. “Why not the both of you stay here for a meal today? I’ll go and cook now.”

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“Alright Ms. Rachel, I loved your cooking when I was a kid. Since I haven’t had it for so many years, I really miss it.”

“It’s good that you liked it. Tell me what you feel like eating and I’ll cook for you today.” Rachel was filled with joy after hearing Evelyn’s words.

“Baked ribs, garlic butter seared scallops...” After Evelyn listed a number of dishes, Rachel jotted them down one by one, then went into the kitchen with a smile.

When Vivian saw that her mother only asked Evelyn what she liked to eat, but not herself, a deep wave of sadness swept over her. However Evelyn is a guest, so it’s only appropriate for Mom to take care of her.

Seeing Rachel had left, Evelyn let go of Vivian’s arm and sat on the sofa to drink tea instead of conversing with her.

Vivian felt awkward and wasn’t sure what to talk to Evelyn about. Both of them remained silent.

After sitting for a while, Evelyn got up and went into the kitchen as well. "Ms. Rachel, is there anything I can help with?"

"Sure, come on in. Put on the apron so you don't dirty your clothes." Rachel's laughter filled the kitchen.

Hearing laughter from the kitchen, Vivian sat in the living room with tears already in her eyes. She felt like a guest in this house instead.

After a long wait, the food was finally ready. As the three of them sat down, Rachel ushered them to begin eating.

"Evelyn, try these baked ribs. I remember this was your favorite when you were a kid." Rachel took a piece of baked ribs and placed it on Evelyn's plate.

"Alright, thank you Ms. Rachel." Evelyn took a bite and said, "Ms. Rachel, this tastes really good! It's the same as what I had when I was a kid."

"Really?" Rachel was overjoyed to hear that, then she said, "Come, try this one."

As Vivian watched her mother fill Evelyn's plate with food while completely ignoring her, she felt the tears she had repressed earlier bubbling up from within once more.

I don't care about other people. However, she's my mom and the closest person to me in the world. How could it be that she likes Evelyn even more than me?

In an attempt to keep her tears from falling, Vivian lowered her head and continued eating. However, the other two people at the table were talking and laughing, and no one noticed Vivian's odd behavior.

After they finished their meal and she helped her mother wash the dishes, Vivian could not bear the sight of Rachel and Evelyn laughing and talking anymore. Hence, she told Rachel she had something to attend to and that she needed to leave.

After hearing Vivian was going to leave, Evelyn quickly said, "Just in time. I have something to attend to as well, I'll give Vivian a lift."

Rachel responded sadly, "You're leaving too? Remember to come and visit me when you have the time."

"That's for sure, Ms. Rachel. I'll come over for dinner more often in the future." Evelyn smiled and gave Rachel a hug.

"I look forward to it. Rachel laughed as she was amused by Evelyn's remark, then she said, "Alright then, since you girls are busy, you should go ahead and don't let me hold you back."

"Alright, take care of yourself Mom. We'll make a move now." After she bid farewell to Rachel with a heavy heart, Vivian and Evelyn went downstairs together.

The moment they arrived downstairs, Evelyn asked Vivian, "Vivian, where are you going? I'll send you there."

"No thanks, I can take a cab home." Vivian didn't want to spend another moment with Evelyn, so she refused.

"It's not safe for a girl to take a cab alone, I'll send you." Evelyn uttered while dragging Vivian to her car.

It would look pretentious if she refused again, so Vivian was left no choice but to get into Evelyn's car.

"How are you feeling now?" Vivian asked Evelyn when she recalled that she had recently been discharged from the hospital.

"I'm fine, it's just some regular illness that I have," Evelyn simply replied. "Vivian, don't you mind?"

"Mind what?" Vivian didn't know what Evelyn was referring to.

After taking a glance at Vivian, Evelyn uttered, "About Finnick carrying me to the hospital."

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Vivian scrambled for a suitable reply. How can I possibly admit that it bothers me?

"You passed out. Finnick carrying you to the hospital is perfectly understandable."

"I'm glad that you think that way," Evelyn said with a saccharine smile. "After all, Finnick is your husband. I wouldn't want this incident to drive a wedge between you two."

"You probably don't know about this, but back in the elevator, Finnick was so worried about me that his face paled. I guess he was afraid that something bad would happen to me, which is why he picked me up and rushed me to the hospital as soon as the doors opened. He didn't have the mind to care for your feelings then, so I hope that you don't hold that against him." Evelyn simpered and glanced at Vivian, trying to capture the slightest change in her expression. "Although Finnick still cares about me like he always did, we're just friends. There's no need to worry about me; I promise that I wouldn't come between your relationship with him."

On the surface, Evelyn appeared to be justifying Finnick's actions the day before. However, relish seeped through her voice as she recounted the incident.

Although Evelyn stated that she had no intentions to pursue Finnick, Vivian could hear the other girl's unspoken taunt. Finnick is mine. He is still in love with me, so you have no right to take him from me.

Vivian did not respond. I'll have to keep an eye out for Evelyn in the future, but can I really prevent the inevitable by sheer willpower? Vivian felt like Finnick was slipping through her fingers.

"This is my stop. You can drop me off here." Vivian had no idea where she was, but being in the same space as Evelyn was so suffocating that she needed to escape.

Evelyn, too, had no desire to spend time with Vivian and promptly sped away the moment Vivian exited the car.

Through the rearview mirror, Evelyn watched Vivian's figure shrink in the distance. Her eyes gleamed with contempt and disdain. My jabs at her couldn't have been more obvious, yet she didn't even try to retaliate. What a spineless loser. I suppose it's good for me – I can easily trample her beneath my feet.

The following day, Vivian received a call from Finnick's grandfather out of the blue. He invited her to have a meal with him. Realizing that she had not seen the old man in a while, Vivian agreed without hesitation. She headed straight to the agreed location after work.

"Vivian, I've heard about everything that happened with Evelyn. How are you? Are you alright?" Mr. Norton cut to the chase as soon as they took their seats. He was worried that the incident would take an emotional toll on Vivian.

"I'm fine," Vivian reassured him. Gratitude warmed her heart when she met Mr. Norton's concerned gaze. At least grandpa genuinely cares about me. "Don't worry about me, grandpa. I'm doing well, and I won't make silly assumptions."

However, Mr. Norton's expression grew more troubled when he heard Vivian's nonchalant reply. He opened his mouth to speak, but the words stuck in his throat.

Vivian realized by then that Mr. Norton did not ask to meet up just to console her. He had something important to tell her.

"Grandpa, is there something that you want to say? Does it have to do with Evelyn?" Vivian inquired solemnly.

"Yes," Mr. Norton confirmed. Since Vivian had brought it up herself, there was no need to avoid it anymore. "It's about the kidnapping incident ten years ago that you asked me to investigate. We've recently had a new break in the case."

Vivian's face took on a melancholic look at the mention of the kidnapping case that occurred ten years ago. "Grandpa, since Evelyn has returned and brought to light everything that happened ten years ago, there's no need to continue the investigation. Thank you for all your effort thus far."

Mr. Norton shook his head in dispute. "Evelyn's explanation is plastered all over the news network, and I've read it as well. However, it does not correspond with what we've uncovered during the investigation."

“What do you mean?” Vivian asked anxiously. She had never considered the fact that Evelyn’s story would differ from the investigation findings.

“I looked into the janitor who allegedly saved Evelyn, but sources said that they saw the janitor playing cards during the time of occurrence. He was nowhere near Evelyn.”

“Grandpa, are you implying that Evelyn lied?” Vivian felt like he had dropped a bomb on her. A wave of incredulity and confusion washed over her. “But why would she do that?”

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“I can’t be sure too. We still don’t have a clear outline of what exactly went down that year. For now, all we have are fragments of information.” Mr. Norton could not make sense of the situation as well. “Vivian, I’ll be honest and tell you that I’ve never liked Evelyn. She has been manipulative and cunning since young. Do keep your guard up whenever you interact with her,” Mr. Norton cautioned.

“I understand, Grandpa,” Vivian replied earnestly.

Vivian mulled over the conversation as she walked home later. Based on Mr. Norton’s words, it was without doubt that Evelyn had fabricated a story. There had been dozens of discrepancies in her narrative when she first described the incident to the Morrises.

But why would Evelyn lie about this? And if the janitor didn’t rescue her, how did she escape the fire?

Vivian’s mind exploded with questions as she tried her best to wrap her head around the situation, but her efforts were to no avail. Curiosity eventually got the better of her. She made a call to Evelyn and asked to meet up. Vivian wished to question her in person.

Evelyn breezily agreed to Vivian’s request, not giving it much thought.

“Let’s meet at the same café we went to on the shopping trip,” Vivian suggested. With that, she ended the call and headed to the venue.

There was no sign of Evelyn when Vivian arrived at the destination. Vivian ordered a coffee and sipped on it, savoring its aromatic bitterness as she recollected her frenzied thoughts.

Evelyn would never admit it if I asked her point-blank if she lied. How can I prove that she lied and convince her to tell the truth at the same time?

Then, murmurs rose around Vivian, jarring her out of her thoughts.

She lifted her head to scan her surroundings and noticed that everyone’s gazes were fixed in the same direction as they whispered amongst themselves, their eyes shining with amazement.

She followed their stares and noticed Evelyn approaching her.

Evelyn’s baby blue blouse was adorned with intricate embroidery, and her A-line leather skirt fell to her knees, adding to her classy appearance. However, the star of the outfit was a pair of white stilettos that elongated her slender legs.

Elegant, pure, and striking. Three wholly different characteristics blended harmoniously to create a picture of sophistication that was Evelyn. She exuded such allure that it took one’s breath away.

Vivian was in no mood to appreciate Evelyn’s beauty. Her mind was dominated by one thought, Why did Evelyn lie? Vivian was certain that Mr. Norton would never lie to her, so that left only one possibility – Evelyn had twisted the truth. What exactly happened that year?

“Vivian, why did you want to meet up with me?” Evelyn walked across the café and took a seat opposite Vivian. The men ogled at her with infatuation while the women’s eyes blazed with envy.

“No particular reason. I have some time to kill but no accomplice to do it with, so I contacted you.” Vivian bluffed. “I didn’t interrupt anything, did I?”

“No, I have time to spare as well,” Evelyn replied with a gracious smile before ordering a cappuccino.

"Evelyn, do you remember what the janitor who saved you looks like?" Vivian tried to act casual as she struck up a conversation.

Alarm bells rang in Evelyn's head when Vivian brought up the event that happened that fateful year. "Why the sudden interest?" she countered with another question.

"Oh, nothing. Your brother told me that he wants to repay the person who rescued you but could not find the janitor." Vivian's mind raced to come up with a passable excuse.

"He asked me for help since I'm working at a magazine company. Unfortunately, we have no leads at all, and I don't know where to start. That's why I resort to asking you directly. It would really speed things up if you could describe his appearance."

"Is that so?" Evelyn contemplated Vivian's words. "Why have I never heard of this?"

"He probably hasn't found a good time to tell you," Vivian gave her an ambiguous answer and glossed over Evelyn's question to avoid more suspicion. "Why don't you start with describing the janitor's looks or any unique characteristics? I'll talk to the senior editor and try to put out an advertisement stating that we're looking for this man. Who knows, it might just work!"

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As soon as she finished her piece, Vivian scrutinized Evelyn's face for the slightest shift in her expression. If what Evelyn told the Morrises was true, then she would definitely remember the janitor's appearance.

After all, according to Evelyn, she had suffered from amnesia after the accident. If so, the face of the first person she had seen upon waking up should be etched in her brain, especially since he was her savior.

"I don't know too," Evelyn confessed, her eyes flickering with an unfathomable emotion. There was a slight tremor in her voice when she spoke. "The person had already left when I came to. It was the nurse who told me that a janitor had brought me to the hospital."

"I distinctly remember you telling the Morrisons that you saw the janitor the moment you woke up. Why are you contradicting yourself now?" Vivian caught the inconsistency in Evelyn's tale and clung to it like a dog with a bone.

"Did I? I said that?" Evelyn could barely keep her calm facade. Anxiety rose within her. "You must have misheard me. I'm sure that I never mentioned meeting that janitor."

"In that case, how did you know that he untied you and Finnick? You also said that he dragged you out of the burning building first but couldn't go back to save Finnick because the fire grew too big. How did you know all of the details? Surely, the janitor told you everything." At this point, Vivian was almost positive that everything Evelyn had told them was no more than an elaborate concoction.

"I-I initially..." Evelyn stuttered, rendered speechless by Vivian's merciless bombardment. She eventually collected herself and snapped at Vivian, "What is it that you want, Vivian?"

"Evelyn, you're a liar," Vivian announced with conviction. "You were not rescued by a janitor that year. Be honest and tell me right now what exactly happened that year! How did you escape?" Infuriated, Vivian's voice went up quite a few decibels.

"You're right. I lied." Evelyn decided to come clean. Vivian had seen through her deception, so there was no need to keep up the pretense anymore. "I escaped on my own," she confessed.

Although Vivian had an inkling of what happened, hearing the truth out loud still felt like a blow to her stomach. She was overwhelmed by anguish for Finnick. "Since you were conscious, why didn't you wake Finnick up? Why did you leave alone? Did you want to see him burn alive in the fire?" Vivian shrieked, losing her composure.

"That's none of your business," Evelyn said curtly as she stood up and took her bag to leave. Vivian's outburst had caused quite the commotion, and the people around them were staring unabashedly in their direction.

"Stand right where you are!" Vivian grabbed Evelyn's wrist. "You can't leave until you tell me everything that happened that year."

Evelyn flung Vivian's hand away and snapped, "Are you done? Stop this nonsense! What does that incident have to do with you? I'm warning you — stay out of this matter, or you'll get into deep trouble."

Vivian quivered with rage when she realized that Evelyn did not feel even a hint of remorse for what she had done. On the contrary, the liar had the audacity to threaten her! "I'll tell Finnick everything. I'd love to see you try to mend things with him!"

Evelyn burst into a fit of manic laughter when she heard Vivian's words. "Oh, Vivian. Are you threatening me? Go ahead and tell Finnick everything. We'll see who he believes — you or me," she taunted.

Their dispute had attracted the attention of many. Upon noticing this, Evelyn sat back down instead of leaving and smirked at Vivian.

"Vivian, are you really so naive to think that Finnick actually likes you? Take a look in the mirror and think again. Do you know what we did when we were stuck in the elevator for 3 hours?" Evelyn gave Vivian a suggestive look. "Finnick told me that he's still in love with me. As for you, he'll divorce you sooner or later. I'm telling you, Vivian William, Finnick is mine, and I will get him back! Do you actually think that you're a match for me?" Evelyn's goading words were akin to a declaration of war.

"Don't you dare, Evelyn!" Enraged, Vivian slammed her hand onto the table. "Do you think that I'd actually believe your claims? I—"

Before Vivian could finish her sentence, Evelyn tilted her chair backward and toppled to the floor. Perhaps it was unintentional, but as she fell, the tip of her foot caught a table leg. The table tipped over from the momentum, and the coffee mugs crashed to the floor, shattering into pieces.