

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 691

"No," Sarah chuckled after seeing Caroline so panicked. "Not a scratch at all. It just took me some time and effort to find the way back."

"Then why did Shannon hear you crying for help?" Caroline asked quizzically. "She thought you were in danger, so she and Vivian went to find you. Didn't you bump into them?"

"What cries?" Sarah frowned before continuing, "I didn't call out for help at all."

At this point, the two of them had walked to where everyone else waited. Everyone sighed at the sight of Sarah being back safely. They fluttered around her and asked questions.

"Sarah, what took you so long? Where's Shannon and Ms. Morrison?"

"Shannon said you were in danger, are you hurt?"

"Why are you back alone? Ms. Morrison went to find you, didn't you see them on your way back?"

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Listening to everyone's babbling questions, Sarah's head pounded overwhelmingly. "I wasn't in danger. I just got lost, and I didn't even see Shannon or Vivian on my way back. Did they go searching for me?"

"Yeah. Unless... they couldn't find you and got themselves lost instead?" Nervous whispers came from everyone. While they were worried for Shannon and Vivian's safety, they also couldn't help but feel upset at the state of things.

Really? Didn't we come on this trip to have fun? All they had been doing since they got here was worry. They worried helplessly as people started disappearing one after the other without explanation. What the hell was going on?

Hearing Sarah's and everyone's conversation, Finnick felt even more on edge than before. Although this island had undergone urban development, there were still very few visitors. Not to mention, the terrain here was harsh and uneven. What if Vivian gets into trouble?

“Everyone wait here and be safe. I’m going out to find Ms. Morrison. Does anyone know which direction they went in?”

“That way,” Caroline pointed. “Vivian and Shannon headed that way to look for Sarah.”

“Thank you. Please contact the police if I don’t get back in two hours. Have them look for us. Remember, stay safe and don’t act recklessly on your own.”

After saying this, Finnick dashed in the direction that Caroline had pointed out. A silent prayer hummed from deep within him. Vivian... you better be safe.

The air turned dense after Finnick’s last words. With heavy and anxious hearts, everyone prayed for their safe return.

After half an hour of searching, Finnick still hadn’t found Vivian or Shannon. His heart pumped furiously as if it were about to explode out of his chest. Where on earth did they go?

“Vivian! Vivian!” He projected his voice as loudly as he could, but there was no response.

Then he ventured deeper into the forest. As he walked, Finnick paid careful attention to the ground and his surroundings. He scanned them for any clues showing that Vivian and Shannon had passed by.

A footstep! Finnick’s heart dropped with excitement, with relief at the shoe-shaped mark on the ground. At first glance, the footprints looked like a woman’s. Maybe these belong to them!

Trailing the footsteps, Finnick finally saw someone sitting on a rock not far away—it was Shannon!

Although he heaved a joyful sigh of relief, something still bothered him. Why is she alone? Where’s Vivian?

“Shannon!” Finnick shouted. He moved closer and continued, “Why are you are alone here? Wasn’t Vivian with you earlier? Where is she?”

Stunned by a sudden voice, Shannon’s head whipped back in surprise. Panic rose in her chest at the sight of Finnick. How did he manage to find me here?

She hopped off the rock hurriedly. It was too late to conceal the alarming look on her face. "M-Mr. Norton, how did you manage to find me?"

Sensing something wrong with her reaction, Finnick tensed warily. He even took on a sterner tone. "Weren't you with Vivian? Where is she now?"

"I-I don't know." Shannon's thoughts scrambled to find an excuse. "We were separated, so I'm waiting for her here. I don't know where she's gone."

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Shannon didn't want everyone asking her where Vivian went, so she hid here. She planned to go back a little later. This way, if anyone asked, she could say that she and Vivian had split up to search for Sarah. She would explain that she couldn't find Vivian after being separated, so she came back on her own.

However, she didn't expect that Finnick would find her so quickly. It threw her off guard and made her too flustered to react normally.

Shannon's incoherent story made Finnick more suspicious of her. If she really got separated from Vivian, then she should be happy to be found and rescued. Why was she so nervous and afraid?

Five years ago, before their divorce, Vivian mentioned that she didn't get along with Shannon from the magazine company. She said that there was always animosity between the two of them. And now, Shannon reacted so suspiciously. Could it be that she did something bad to Vivian?

The thought of this boiled anger in Finnick. He pounced towards Shannon and snarled, "You really don't know where Vivian went? How did you two get separated?"

"W-we couldn't find Sarah. Vivian got worried and said we'd have better chances of finding her by splitting up. So we did that. Then... then I lost sight of her. All I could do was wait here."

Finnick's rough tone made Shannon, who already had a guilty conscience, even more panicked. She was a bundle of nerves, and her words came out all jumbled. There was no way she could fool Finnick.

"Spit it out! Do you really not know where Vivian is?" Finnick raised his voice. His brows furrowed tautly as he roared, "I'm warning you, best not lie. Otherwise, I'll make you pay the price of lying to me."

Finnick's superiority had always been eminent; now, hostility coursed from his body, dangerously seeping into the air around them. It threatened Shannon, making it impossible for someone meager like her to withstand.

For a moment, she was so frightened that she couldn't think straight. She yelled frustratedly, "She was so ruthless to you before! Why do you still care so much about her?"

Shannon's response confirmed Finnick's suspicion. She definitely knew where Vivian was.

Sarah said that she hadn't cried for help at all. So how could Shannon have heard someone's cries? She probably said that to lure Vivian out here.

A murderous glare shot from Finnick's eyes. He jolted forward to grab Shannon by the collar. "Where the hell did you leave her? Tell me the truth! If anything happens to her, I'll make sure the rest of your days are miserable. Trust me when I say that I'm a man of my word!"

A shiver ran down Shannon's spine. Witnessing Finnick's blazing anger at such close proximity made her tremble uncontrollably. She couldn't withstand his pressuring any longer.

"Fine. I'll tell you," Shannon sobbed. She pointed a shaky finger and said, "Vivian's in a pit over there. You'll see it when you get closer."

"You pushed her down?" Finnick's mouth ran dry. A fresh swell of rage rose in him.

"I-I..." Shannon wanted to deny it, but Finnick's stern expression made it impossible to lie. Her teeth chattered ever so slightly. It was like the words refused to leave her mouth.

Shoving Shannon aside, Finnick pointed at her and said, "I'll deal with you when we get back to the camp!"

Finnick sprinted in the direction that Shannon pointed to. He feared that he was already too late, that Vivian had already suffered unspeakable injuries.

Meanwhile, a shiver rattled in Shannon's chest as she thought of Finnick's promise to deal with her later. Finnick's powerful status and his promise to make me pay for lying... can I even keep my position in the magazine company?

Moreover, if Vivian makes it out alive, she'll surely fire me. She might even sue me and take this whole incident to court. People go to jail for intentional assault, don't they?

At this, Shannon staggered furiously towards the campsite. She couldn't stay here anymore. She had to leave quickly before the two of them make their way back to the camp.

Meanwhile, Vivian was trying her best to climb out of the pit; the sides of the pit were sky-high, and no matter how much she tried to climb, there just was no getting out.

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The sharp pain on her foot was so unbearable that she had to sit down. As she took off her shoes, she realized that her foot had swollen into huge, red lumps. This made sense since she had twisted her ankle from falling earlier. On top of that, she flung herself up the pit's sides and landed harshly on her feet countless times. It's no wonder her foot swelled badly.

The sky was darkening by the second, and the forest's temperature dropped rapidly around Vivian. It wasn't long before she was trembling from the cold.

How will Shannon explain my disappearance to everyone when she gets back? Will they come looking for me? Am I really going to spend the night in this cave? What if a wild animal shows up suddenly?

These thoughts ricocheted in her mind, bouncing back and forth furiously. Her heart raced with fear. What if no one finds me? What do I do? Will I die here?

No, absolutely not! She still had to take care of Larry. There was no way that she was letting anything bad happen to herself.

Vivian hurriedly pulled out her phone, but there was no signal. White-hot anger blurred her thoughts as she threw her phone aside. Latching onto the hope that someone might still pass by, she shouted at the pit's opening, "Is anyone there? I've fallen in. Please help me, anyone!"

She called out again and again. Her voice had become hoarse and grated, but there was still no response.

Spending a night in freezing temperatures without any source of heat... I'm going to freeze to death, aren't I? To make things worse, her foot was starting to ache. Hopeless desperation engulfed Vivian.

Just when she had surrendered to fate completely, a familiar voice sounded from above. It was deep and shaky with anxiety. "Vivian, are you okay? Is everything alright down there?"

Had someone finally come for her? Hope swelled in Vivian's chest. Looking up, her eyes widened in surprise. Finnick crouched at the pit's opening and leaned in. He stared at her with a face full of worry.

She was moved, not expecting him to be the one to find her. But her delight didn't last long. It was immediately replaced by an inexplicable sourness in her chest. Wasn't he taking his sweet time fetching water with Charlotte? Why is he here now?

Not getting any responses from Vivian, Finnick thought she must have been hurt badly. Pressing on the pit's edge with one hand, he launched himself down without a trace of hesitation.

He approached her anxiously and immediately noticed her bright red, swollen foot. It had become more unsightly as purplish-green bruises surfaced her skin. Distress sank his spirits. He crouched down and leaned in closer. His hands hovered above her ankle, not daring to touch it for fear that it would only worsen her injury.

"Does it hurt?" He looked up at Vivian, his eyes filled with immense concern. Then he mentally yelled at himself for asking such a dumb question. It swelled up to double its size! How could it not hurt?

Seeing Vivian tremble, Finnick immediately peeled off his jacket and placed it on her. "I'm sorry, Vivian. I got here too late, but everything's okay now. Don't be scared. We'll get out of here soon."

Touched by Finnick's warm and gentle actions, tears welled in Vivian's eyes. She gnawed on her bottom lip and scoffed stubbornly, "Weren't you with Charlotte? Why'd you come looking for me?"

Finnick didn't know whether to be offended or laugh at the obvious jealousy in Vivian's tone.

His fingers brushed against Vivian's lips, stroking them lightly to stop her from biting herself. He soothed, "Don't jump to your own conclusions. There's nothing going on between us. Besides, didn't you arrange for us to go together?"

Finnick eyed her reproachfully before continuing, "I'm not into char-whatever that woman's name is. The one I like... the one I truly care for has always been you. Don't ever shove me into another woman's arms again, okay? I'll feel hurt if you keep doing that."

Vivian could no longer hold back. Tears poured down her face as a thousand emotions fluttered in her; she felt wronged, yet at the same time sorrowful, frightened, and there was also an indescribable joy.

Wiping her tears away, Finnick's arms wrapped around her in a warm embrace. "I'm sorry. I'm so sorry, Vivian. This is my fault. It's because I didn't look for you sooner... you must've been terrified."

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Vivian lay in Finnick's arms, choking and sobbing. She had no idea where her boundless emotions sprouted from, nor did she think she was capable of producing so many tears; but she hadn't cried like this for a very long time.

As he patted Vivian's shoulder, Finnick's heart filled with self-blame. She must have been really scared to be bawling so violently... why didn't I search for her sooner?

"Try to calm down, okay? Let's find a way out of here. We have to deal with your injury first. Also, the temperatures here are too low. You might get hypothermia if we don't get you out soon."

A bright pink flushed across Vivian's face. She felt embarrassed; she had never expected to cry so miserably in front of Finnick. She broke away from his embrace and wiped her tears. "My foot's injured though, how do we get out now?"

Finnick suppressed the gut-wrenching pity that surged in him. He needed to be calm. He eyed the height of the pit's walls and said, "Step on my shoulders. You should be able to get to the top. Then once you're out, I'll jump out of this pit by myself."

"Okay," Vivian nodded. They had to try, there was no other way.

"How's your foot?" Finnick asked. He eyed her red and swollen foot warily. What if she gets hurt again?

Sensing great concern in his tone, Vivian's face flushed pink. "It should be fine. This is the only way to get out."

"Bear with it for now, okay?" Finnick petted Vivian's head. He continued, "Climb onto my shoulders slowly. Be careful."

Then Finnick crouched into position with his back facing her. At this, a tear trickled down Vivian's cheek again. Even she had to admit that his sincere actions touched her completely.

Vivian stepped carefully onto Finnick's shoulders. To steady herself, her hands pressed against the soil wall before her. "Okay, I'm on. You can slowly stand up now."

At Vivian's mark, Finnick stood cautiously. He didn't want to risk making big movements that could cause Vivian to fall over.

They reached upwards, little by little until Vivian's body made it halfway out of the pit. Vivian grabbed onto the weeds near the pit's opening and gradually pulled herself out.

Below, Finnick was starting to feel uneasy. He asked, "Are you out yet, Vivian? Is your foot okay?"

"I'm fine. Can you get out by yourself?" Vivian responded. The pit was definitely not shallow. It made her worry if he could make it out on his own.

"I'll be okay," Finnick's voice echoed from below. "You should stay away from the pit. I don't want to bump into you when I land."

Heeding Finnick's words, Vivian darted farther from the pit.

Finnick picked up some branches at the bottom of the pit. Using their sharp ends, he carved out dents that were big enough for his feet to grab onto in the soil wall. He ran a couple of steps in place to prepare himself. Then he lunged at the two dents in the wall and climbed up with his feet on them.

"Are you okay?" Vivian asked. Her voice bubbled with joy when she saw Finnick climb out of the pit.

"I'm fine." Finnick patted down his chest, dusting the soil off. He approached her with a gentle smile. His arms reached out to scoop her into a bridal carry.

"You don't have to carry me," Vivian said. She dodged his arms in a flash and continued. "I can walk just fine on my own."

"Vivian," Finnick sighed. He sounded hurt as if he felt dejected at Vivian's avoidance.

"Your foot is badly swollen, and it's getting darker. We have to get you back quickly so that we can deal with your injury. Imagine how long we'll take if you waddle the whole way. What will we do if we get lost again and it's completely dark out?"

Makes sense. Vivian couldn't find a single reason to refute his logical explanation.

Seeing Vivian grow silent in defeat, Finnick stepped forward and scooped her into his arms. Then she subconsciously wrapped her hands around his neck.

When she finally realized how intimate her action was, Vivian's arms recoiled. However, Finnick stopped her immediately. "Leave them there. It'll help save some of my strength."