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## Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1486

Just as Finnick spoke, he looked at Joan. "Joan, next time, come by our place whenever you are free. Since Larry is staying by himself outside, you can remind him to come home more often."

"I understand, Mr. Norton. I definitely will," Joan replied with a smile.

"Vivian and I have never interfered in Larry's relationships. As you are the first girl he has brought home, it must mean that he fancies you a lot. We are equally happy to meet you too. Both of you should try your best to be happy together and take care of each other," Finnick advised in a serious manner.

As his words resonated with Joan's feelings, she replied immediately, "We will try our best to be happy. Don't worry, Mr. Norton."

After that, Joan chatted with Vivian about random topics while Larry talked to Finnick about other matters. Before they knew it, night had already fallen.

When it was time for dinner, Vivian invited Joan to sit beside her. After that, she took a bracelet off her wrist.

"Joan, this bracelet used to belong to Larry's grandma. In other words, my mother-in-law handed it to me. And now, I'm giving it to you. Both you and Larry must strive to always be happy. Whatever problems you may encounter, you have to face them together, alright?"

Joan was surprised at how warm Vivian was to her. She didn't expect Vivian to shower her with such attention on their very first meeting, to the extent of giving her a family heirloom.

She quickly stood up and replied, "Mrs. Norton, this gift is simply too valuable for me to accept. Larry and I will be happy together. But this is something I don't deserve to have yet."

"As long as I say you deserve it then you do."

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Vivian had expected Joan to refuse. “Joan, it’s obvious to me that both of you love each other dearly. It’s just a matter of time before the two of you are married. With that in mind, there’s nothing wrong with me giving this to you ahead of time. Besides, are you really going to turn down the first present I’m giving you?”

“But...”

Before Joan could say anything further, Larry interrupted. “Joan, just take it. My mom really likes you. If you refuse, you will only upset her.”

After giving it much consideration, Joan finally accepted the bracelet with both her hands. “Mr. Norton, Mrs. Norton, I will treasure this bracelet more than my own life. And I will also do my best to protect the relationship I share with Larry so that you will not be disappointed.”

“That’s the spirit!”

Vivian laughed in delight while Finnick let out a gratified smile.

“Don’t just stand there, sit down and eat,” Finnick reminded.

With that, the whole family happily enjoyed a scrumptious dinner together.

As it was getting late after dinner, Larry took his leave. “Dad, Mom, we have to go now. I need to send Joan home.”

“Are you leaving already?”

Vivian was reluctant for them to leave. But she knew it wasn’t the right time to invite Joan to stay over. Hence, she had no choice but to reply, “Send her home safely, then. Joan, whenever you are free, you are welcome to visit us. I look forward to seeing you again soon.”

“Mrs. Norton, I will definitely drop by often. But for today, I have to go off first.”

After that, she turned toward Finnick. “Goodbye, Mr. Norton.”

After bidding their farewells, Joan held onto Larry’s arm and left together.

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The moment she stepped out the front door, Joan heaved a sigh of relief. Beaming in joy, she remarked, "Larry, I didn't expect your parents to be such wonderful people. I'm just so happy!"

Tenderly helping Joan tidy up her hair, Larry replied in a gentle tone, "Of course, I told you that they were easygoing and warm. You were the one who overreacted out of fear."

"I wasn't afraid at all! I knew that they would definitely like me because I'm just too adorable!" Joan insisted.

Obviously, she would never admit that she was scared.

When he saw how she shamelessly declared her cuteness, he simply found her irresistible and pulled her in to kiss her cheeks. However, she managed to duck away with a nimble move.

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"Hmph! I'm not letting you kiss me. What if someone sees us?"

"I'll kiss you when we're home then."

"No, you're still not allowed to!"

"I won't stop kissing you when we're home. In fact, I have more plans for you," Larry remarked with a mischievous smile.

"You pervert..."

After both of them got into the car, their voices faded away.

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Under Larry's persuasion, Joan finally agreed to move into his villa. From then onwards, both of them enjoyed a wonderful time cohabiting together.

However, one man's meat was another man's poison. Just when Larry and Joan were immersed in their happy lives, Gabriella couldn't stand for it.

"What did you say? Joan and Larry are living together in his villa?"

She was outraged by her subordinate's report.

The man was a private investigator she hired just to monitor all of Larry and Joan's movements.

"Yes. Over the last two days, Larry even brought Joan to see his parents," the private investigator added.

upon hearing that, Gabriella smashed the glass she was holding onto the floor. She could feel a heavy burden hanging over her head to the extent of suffocating her.

"Why! What gives her the right!" Gabriella screamed out her lungs.

"Larry, how is Joan better than me in any way? Why do you treat her so well and yet be so cruel to me! I can't accept it! I just can't!"

After venting her frustration, Gabriella suppressed her rage and asked the private investigator, "Did Larry's parents say anything?"

Perhaps, his parents might not approve of her.

Gabriella tried to be optimistic. After all, Joan wasn't from a prominent family which was an important consideration for society's elite.

"This, I have no idea."

The private investigator could only follow them and observe their movements. As to what happened in the Norton residence, there was no way he could find out.

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Although she didn't receive a confirmation from the private investigator, she calmed herself down and began racking her brains.

How can such a prominent family like the Nortons accept a nobody like Joan into their family?

So what if she's as pretty as a fairy? Without the backing of a prominent family, she still won't be worthy of joining the Nortons.

With that thought in mind, Gabriella snorted.

Only I am fit to be Larry's girlfriend and the lady of the Norton family.

Joan you are but a third wheel in our relationship.

Gabriella was so consumed by the matter that she now saw herself as the rightful Mrs. Norton.

"Joan, I won't allow you to break apart my relationship with Larry. Just you wait!"

Her eyes glistened as schemes filled her head.

After clearing the air with Larry, Joan returned to work at Opulent Designs.

Although they were now in a relationship, her competitive nature pushed her to make her own living instead of staying at home and relying on Larry.

While she was working in the office, her phone suddenly rang.

When she saw that it was an unknown number, she ignored it due to her busy work. However, when the call kept coming in incessantly, she finally picked up the call as she was worried it might be something urgent.

"Hello," Joan answered cordially.

"May I know if this is Joan Watts?"

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A woman's voice rang out.

Joan was stunned as she couldn't recognize Gabriella's voice over the phone. Furthermore, a long time had passed and the only impression Joan had of her was from the recent glimpse she caught.

"It's me, Gabriella. Joan, have you forgotten me?" Gabriella added in a half-joking manner.

"Oh, it's you, Gabriella."

Joan was actually delighted to hear her voice.

"I'm at work now. Is there anything I can help you with?"

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"Joan, do you still remember what we said the last time we met? That we agreed to meet up another time?" Gabriella suggested with a smile.

She continued, "Don't tell me you already forget?"

Of course Joan didn't.

"But, Gabriella, I'm at work now. Why don't you decide on a venue and I will see you there after work?"

"Fine with me. Meet me at Rainbow Café when you get off work then. I'll send you the address in a while."

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Gabriella pretended to be friendly.

“Alright Gabriella, I’ll head over there once I’m done with work,” Joan replied.

“I’ll be waiting for you. Anyway, sorry for bothering you at work. See you later, Joan.”

Gabriella ended the call smiling. However, in the very next moment, her expression changed drastically.

As for Joan, even though she was quite surprised at receiving Gabriella’s call, she didn’t find it suspicious at all.

Thinking back to the time when she just entered university, everything was unfamiliar yet exciting. Gabriella was the first friend she got to know.

“Hi, I’m Gabriella, it’s a pleasure to meet you.”

“Hi, I’m Joan.”

Both of them quickly became good friends. They went to class together, ate together, shopped together, and even had sleepovers.

In Joan’s eyes, although Gabriella was gorgeous and came from a rich family, she didn’t look down on anyone and treated everyone with respect. Hence, Joan considered Gabriella to be her best friend.

Despite how sincere Joan was in their friendship, Gabriella didn’t share her sentiments at all.

When she first got to know Joan, Gabriella assumed she was from a rich family given how pretty she was. That was the only reason she made friends with her in the first place.

Once she found out about Joan’s ordinary background, she no longer concerned herself with her.

Even when they interacted with each other, Gabriella would always treat her in a condescending manner.

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However, for the sake of maintaining her own reputation and the fact that Joan was also popular in school, Gabriella kept up the charade that they were close friends. Unfortunately, Joan didn't notice her hypocrisy at all.

After work, Joan hailed a cab and headed to the address provided by Gabriella.

When she entered Rainbow Café, she spotted Gabriella in a corner and approached her quickly.

"Hi, Gabriella," Joan greeted with a smile.

"Joan, have a seat."

Gabriella didn't sound as enthusiastic as she was on the phone. In fact, she even sounded upset.

As Joan took her seat opposite Gabriella, she noticed that there was a cup of coffee ready for her. Joan was delighted by Gabriella's thoughtful gesture.

"Gabriella, it's been a while now. We didn't manage to talk much the last time. So, how have you been?" Joan enquired warmly.

"Not bad," Gabriella replied coldly, staring at Joan.

The moment she arrived, Joan had noticed Gabriella's gloomy expression. She figured that something unpleasant must have happened to her.

"What happened, Gabriella?" Joan asked with concern.

As her close friend, Joan felt the need to show some concern.

"The man I love has been stolen by a gorgeous yet shameful b\*tch. I come from a better family than her and am more highly educated. Furthermore, I'm not inferior to her in terms of looks. So why does my man like her so much? What makes it worse is that I have always treated that b\*tch as a good friend," Gabriella gritted her teeth as she explained.

"The person you are talking about..."

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Stunned, a sense of dread suddenly fell upon Joan.

"That's right. I'm talking about you! Joan Watts!"

Gabriella stared daggers at her.

"Why must you interfere with my relationship with Larry when I have always treated you as my friend? Do you really enjoy being the third party?"

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"But, Larry denied that you are his girlfriend. He says that both of you were just acting in front of me," Joan retorted as she was skeptical of Gabriella's words.

"I'm not his girlfriend? We are already engaged and everyone in the high society knows that. It was your appearance that has thrown our happy relationship onto the rocks," Gabriella blatantly lied in order to deal a blow to Joan.

"Larry won't lie to me. In fact, he has brought me to see his parents."

Joan began to waver as Gabriella didn't look like she was lying. However, she still had reason to be confident of her own stand.

"How unscrupulous can you be? So what if you have met his parents? He brought me to see his parents too. Furthermore, both our parents had decided upon the engagement. Joan, do you think someone like you deserves Larry? The Nortons are a distinguished family while you... you are a nobody!"

Just as she spoke, Gabriella grabbed her glass of water and threw it at Joan. Thereafter, she shrieked hysterically, "You are nothing but a vixen that seduces the boyfriends of others!"

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Gabriella's screams had attracted the attention of everyone in the café. They were all watching curiously and ridiculing Joan in front of her.

"Look, everyone! This is the vixen that stole my fiancé. To think that I even treated her as my best friend! Joan, you are nothing but a mistress that destroys the relationship of others!"

Gabriella was so convincing in twisting the facts that the crowd gradually believed that she was the victim.

Within a short time, many of them sympathized with her and their criticism against Joan grew louder.

"This woman is really pretty, why does she need to be a mistress?"

"The prettier they are, the more tempting they become when seducing the fiancé of others!"

"Pfft, what a shameless woman!"

"That's right, death to mistresses!"

Joan sat dumbfounded in her chair, drenched by the water that Gabriella had thrown on her.

At that moment, she was utterly confused. She didn't believe what Gabriella said but reality seemed to persuade her that it was true.

"No! I'm not a mistress, I'm not! Larry and I truly love each other!" Joan yelled with an insecure tone as if she was trying to convince everyone around her, including herself.

Just as she screamed, she grabbed her bag and pushed her way through the crowd before running off miserably. She needed to calm herself down and gather her thoughts about the shocking news she had received.

Looking at Joan's pathetic retreat, Gabriella finally felt satisfied over venting her frustration. Pointing at Joan, she declared, "Look, that vixen doesn't dare stay and challenge me because she knows she's in the wrong! A mistress will definitely meet a miserable end!" Gabriella ended her sentence with a gloating laugh.

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When the crowd realized the altercation was over, they slowly dispersed as there was no point in staying.

Only Gabriella was left standing there, staring in the direction that Joan had run.

“Joan, just you wait, there is more to come. Challenging me will only end in your doom!”

Just as she spoke, Gabriella left with a sneer as she had something more important to attend to.

The next morning, the headline: Mysterious Mistress Breaks Apart Relationship of Ward Group’s Daughter and Norton Corporation President was splashed across the front page of all the major newspapers.

As the Norton Corporation was among the largest conglomerates in Marsingfill, the young president of Norton Corporation was naturally a character of interest for gossip and the subject of attention of many youngsters.

Meanwhile, the Ward family was also a prominent family, as they too wielded enormous influence in the city.

Therefore, the scandal about Larry and Gabriella easily spread like wildfire.

While everyone was discussing the controversy, they were extremely curious as to who this mysterious mistress named Joan Watts was.

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“Hey, have you heard that Larry of Norton Corporation is engaged to Gabriella of Ward Group?”

“Yes, I’m sure many single young men and women would be heartbroken to hear the news.”

“That isn’t even the juiciest part. Who do you think the mysterious mistress named Joan Watts is?”

“Gabriella is already a beauty. To be able to steal Larry away from her, Joan must be even more of a stunner.”

“Sheesh, so what if she is prettier, isn’t she nothing but a relationship destroying vixen?”

“What a pity. Why did she need to be a mistress?”

The scandal became the talk of the town while Larry, Gabriella, and Joan’s names were now the most recognizable within the city.

Meanwhile, Gabriella, who was the culprit behind the news, was drinking tea at home triumphantly while closely monitoring the latest developments.

After she left the café, she had instructed her men to share this news with all the major media outlets.

Naturally, such a juicy scandal attracted a lot of attention from the media. Thereafter, the headlines were all published.

Following that, a “good Samaritan” leaked Joan’s home address to the media.

This resulted in a huge group of reporters swarming Joan’s rented place. They had wanted to see the face of this mysterious mistress and also interview her.

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After leaving pathetically last night, Joan returned to her own rented abode. As she had been staying in Larry's villa, this was the first time she came back since then.

After giving it some thought, Joan realized that there were tons of loopholes in what Gabriella had said. But, there were some parts that were undeniable still.

She felt what Gabriella said was right. An ordinary girl like her was not worthy of Larry. Only a girl from a prominent family like Gabriella would make a good match for him due to their similar family backgrounds.

However, Joan couldn't ignore how Larry's parents treated her.

She could tell that they were being sincere to her. After all, they had given her the bracelet which was a family heirloom. Therefore, how is it possible that such a distinguished couple lie to me?

With that thought in mind, Joan's fears were allayed a little. After covering herself with her blanket, she fell asleep right away.

By the time she awoke, it was already the next morning.

As it was a habit of hers to check her phone, she saw the shocking news right away.

Mysterious Mistress Breaks Apart Relationship of Ward Group's Daughter and Norton Corporation President. When Joan saw the headline, she subconsciously tapped into the article.

The moment she finished reading it, her face turned as white as a sheet.

Gabriella actually announced it to the media?

Then... could it be that what she said was really the truth? That I destroyed their marriage and stole Larry? Otherwise, what gives her the confidence to publicly declare such a thing?

Holding that thought, Joan suddenly felt that everything was preposterous. She had naively assumed that she got together with Larry when in reality, it was all just a farce. She was but a mistress who interfered with someone else's relationship.

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Clenching her fist, she dug her fingernails into her skin in anger. However, the pain she felt in her hand was nothing compared to what she felt in her heart.

Joan felt dejected. No matter how hard she tried, she couldn't escape the jaws of fate. She seemed to never be able to get her way in love.

Given how sad she was, her thoughts began to fall into a vicious cycle of negativity.

At that moment, Joan had forgotten how well Larry treated her and how his parents had handed her the bracelet.

There was only one thing in her mind, that is to leave Larry. After having betrayed Gabriella and labeled a vixen, she felt tired and didn't want to continue the relationship.

Just then, she suddenly heard a commotion outside her house followed by someone knocking on the door.

Peeking outside, she saw a large group of people with cameras and microphones standing outside.

It was obvious to her that the reporters were there to interview her.

She decided not to open the door as she didn't know how to deal with their questions. More importantly, she didn't even know how to face herself.

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