

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 201 -

“To provide for you and our child!” He said, smiling widely.

Pursing my lips, I returned it to him and said, “I don’t need money. Grandpa left quite a lot of money to me and I’ve saved up over these few years of working in Fuller Corporation. I don’t have much to spend on, so I don’t need it!”

He paid for most of my living expenses, such as food, accommodation and transport. Furthermore, as I was not in the habit of shopping nor did I have sudden impulses to buy things, I rarely spent any money.

When I stuffed the file back to him, he frowned. “You don’t want to spend my money? Or are you just unwilling to?”

I was rendered speechless. Is there even a difference between these two questions?

Looking at him, I replied, “None of the above. I don’t really spend money that frequently. Aren’t you planning to expand your business? Just use these funds for it. It’ll be useless to leave them with me.”

He frowned unhappily. Just when he was about to say something, his phone rang.

I got up from his lap. When he picked up the call, I realized that it was from Jared.

“What’s up, Jared?”

After placing the file back in the drawer, I left the study room instead of listening in to their conversation.

A short while later, Ashton hurriedly rushed out. It seemed like he needed to attend to something urgent.

As Molly and Mrs. Eriksen refused to let me leave the house, I baked some pastries with them out of boredom.

When the doorbell rang, Mrs. Eriksen was rushing to take the pastries out of the oven and Molly's hands were still covered with flour.

As I was the only one idling around, I walked to the living room and opened the door. I was taken aback when I saw Marcus standing there.

Why did he come here?

"Hello, Mr. White!" I greeted him with a smile.

He raised his eyebrow. "Aren't you going to invite me in?"

"Of course I am! Please come in." I led him into the living room.

As Mrs. Eriksen and Molly did not know him, they merely greeted him politely.

We sat down opposite each other in the living room.

Feeling confused, I could not help but ask, "Why are you here, Mr. White?"

Instead of answering immediately, he passed a box to me before explaining, "Your phone was damaged after you dropped into the pond. I took out the SIM card and inserted it into a new phone."

I was stunned. Suddenly, I recalled how he followed me last night just to return my phone to me.

However, I...

At that thought, I could not help but blush and apologize, "I'm really sorry about what happened last night. I assumed that you were... I'm sorry!"

He raised his eyebrows. "What did you assume?"

After a slight pause, he smirked. "That I want to take advantage of you?"

I quickly shook my head and denied, "It's not that." How could a handsome man like him possibly be interested in a pregnant woman like me?

I thought that he resented me and Ashton because of what happened to Sally, so...

Mrs. Eriksen laid the pastries out and said, "Letty, I'll accompany you to the office later and bring some pastries to Mr. Ashton. If he knows that you baked them yourself, he'll definitely be very happy."

I smiled and did not respond. After all, I did not bake those pastries on my own—at the very most, I merely helped out.

She merely said that because she wanted my relationship with Ashton to improve.

Hence, I did not say anything else.

Marcus glanced at Mrs. Eriksen and asked, "Can I take some home?"

I gaped in shock.

He did seem like someone who likes to eat pastries. I had visited the White family twice and the chefs there were all extremely skilled. Yet, I had never seen him eat any pastries. Why...

Mrs. Eriksen nodded and went to pack some pastries.

Surprised, I looked at Marcus and exclaimed, "So you like to eat pastries?"

He raised his eyebrow. "It won't hurt if I eat some occasionally."

He was not wrong.

After Mrs. Eriksen finished packing the pastries, Marcus stood up and prepared to leave. Looking at the phone he left behind, I could not help but say, "Mr. White, about the cost of the phone..."

"These pastries make up for it!" He lifted the bag of pastries and said, "We're even now."

With that, he left.

Mrs. Eriksen, who did not know him, watched him leave and asked me, "Who is he?"

“Marcus White. He’s Benjamin’s son.”

“I see!” She nodded as she mumbled to herself, “I don’t know him.”

I smiled, but did not elaborate further.

After packing some pastries up, Mrs. Eriksen held onto my arm and said, “If you send the pastries to Mr. Ashton personally, he’ll definitely be delighted.”

I did not know if he would be delighted, but one thing was for sure—he was probably very busy now.

I rarely visited the company’s office in K City. When I arrived at the building in a taxi, I could not help but be slightly surprised.

It was really showy of Ashton to have bought three magnificent skyscrapers right smack in the city center.

Crowds of people surged in and out of the building. Afraid that someone would bump into me, Mrs. Eriksen held onto my hand carefully and reminded me, “You must be careful!”

Soon, we arrived at the receptionist.

Despite calling for assistance twice, everyone ignored Mrs. Eriksen. The pretty receptionist was so busy dealing with the visitors that she dismissed Mrs. Eriksen a few times.

Frustrated, Mrs. Eriksen scolded, “Why can’t you tell us where the president’s office is? Why are you so unprofessional?”

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 202

Her voice was loud, attracting the crowd’s attention. The receptionist had no choice but to turn toward her and say politely, “I’m not concealing the information from you deliberately. Mr. Fuller receives many guests every day, but each of them has to make an appointment with him. If you don’t have an appointment with him, I’m afraid that I can’t let you meet him.”

Mrs. Eriksen was annoyed. "How busy is he? Does his wife need to make an appointment to visit him?"

The receptionist was stunned for a while before bursting into laughter. "Ma'am, Mr. Fuller's fiancée just visited. How is it possible for him to have a wife? Did you mistake him for someone else?"

"That's impossible!" Mrs. Eriksen placed the pastries on the table and said furiously, "Mr. Fuller has been married for almost three years. Why would he have a fiancée? He's even going to have a child soon. Are you sure that you aren't mistaken?"

The receptionist scoffed disdainfully. "You mustn't spout such nonsense, Ma'am. Of course we'd know if Mr. Fuller is married or not. His fiancée has been visiting him for the past few days. We can't possibly be mistaken, right?"

Mrs. Eriksen was about to rebuke when I interrupted, "Mrs. Eriksen."

"Letty!" She looked at me and asked worriedly, "What's wrong? Are you tired? Sit there for a while and I'll speak to them."

Chuckling, I shook my head and walked to the receptionist with my hand on my stomach. "There's no need for that!" Looking at her, I asked, "Is Mr. Fuller's fiancée's last name Larson?"

She was shocked for a while before nodding. "Yeah! She's the missing daughter from the Moore family. She got to know Mr. Fuller in J City and they already have a child together. I heard that they're going to be married soon!"

"Nonsense!" Unable to stand it anymore, Mrs. Eriksen cursed, "What crap is that? Even until now, Rebecca's still constantly pestering Mr. Fuller. It's impossible for that child to be his."

"Ma'am, please be more careful with your words. Don't slander others so casually!" The receptionist seemed to be very defensive of Rebecca.

Mrs. Eriksen scoffed, "Slander her? Ha! If she's a decent and upright woman, it's impossible for her to be slandered."

After glancing around at the silent crowd in the lobby, I looked back at the receptionist and asked, "Does Ms. Larson come here frequently?"

She nodded. Gazing at my stomach, she asked hesitatingly, "She's been visiting regularly ever since Mr. Fuller came to K City. Who are you, Ma'am?"

"I'm Ashton's official wife!" Pointing at my stomach, I smiled. "This is his child who's going to be born soon."

Then, I ignored the receptionist's doubtful gaze and called Ashton.

The call went through almost instantly.

"Hello!" A female voice answered the phone, so it was obvious that Ashton was not the one who picked it up.

It was Rebecca!

"Let Ashton answer the phone!" I was not particularly upset either. After all, it was normal for other women to be obsessed with a man like Ashton.

"He's having a meeting!" Rebecca said smugly. "Your baby's about to be born, right?"

I narrowed my eyes and hung up.

When the receptionist saw that, she scoffed, "Don't think that anyone can pretend to be Mr. Fuller's wife. A random woman on the streets isn't worthy enough of him!"

"Why are you so rude?" Mrs. Eriksen flushed in fury as she glared at the receptionist. She looked like she was on the verge of cursing at her.

I pulled her back and shook my head slightly. As there were many people watching us, it would be inappropriate to create a ruckus here.

I decided to call Jared next. He picked up the call almost immediately.

His voice was as calm as usual. "What's up, Scarlett?"

"Are you in K City?"

He replied, "Yes!"

"I'm on the ground floor of the Prism Building. Can you bring me up? The receptionist said that I need to make an appointment, but I didn't make one with Ashton." I spoke calmly, my voice devoid of any emotion.

"Sure!" Jared replied and hung up.

The receptionist's expression was turning unpleasant. Dumbfounded, she looked at me skeptically.

Stroking my stomach, I stood there silently with my head lowered. Mrs. Eriksen glared at the receptionist and mumbled, "How snobbish!"

She was about to retort when someone approached her. "Hello, I made an appointment with Mr. Fuller. Please pass the message on to him!"

The receptionist nodded. "Alright, hold on for a while."

As his voice sounded familiar, I could not help but turn around and glance at the person. It was none other than Thomas, the president of AC Credit.

Stunned, I called out to him, "Mr. Lowe!"

When Thomas spotted me, he exclaimed in surprise, "Why have you come to K City as well, Mrs. Fuller? As your pregnancy is in its late stages, I thought that you'll remain in J City to manage Fuller Corporation."

I chuckled. Glancing at my stomach, I said, "My stomach's getting bigger, so I can't travel to work anymore. Why did you come to K City too?"

He smiled and replied, "Fuller Corporation is planning to expand its business in K City. Naturally, I'm here for potential future collaborations."

AC Credit had been around for decades. The Fuller Corporation was a massive conglomerate with an extensive production chain. The gains from a collaboration with Fuller Corporation could amount to half of AC Credit's annual revenue. Hence, he would not give up on such an opportunity.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 203

I nodded and did not continue the conversation.

When he saw me standing there, he frowned and asked, "Are you waiting for someone?"

I nodded. "I didn't tell Ashton beforehand that I'm coming, so I'm waiting for him here."

"Mr. Lowe, Mr. Fuller has allowed you to go up!" announced the receptionist as she looked at me uneasily.

Thomas nodded. Looking at me, he suggested, "Mr. Fuller is probably busy. Why don't you go up with me? Since you're in the later stages of your pregnancy, it's not good if you stand for so long."

I shook my head. "I'm fine. You can go up first. Mr. Crest will be coming down to fetch me. Please go ahead! I don't want to disrupt your work."

He raised his eyebrows and smiled. "Mr. Jared Crest?"

I nodded.

Smiling, he entered the lift without saying anything else.

Having witnessed such a scene, the receptionist had probably figured out what was going on. She immediately looked at me and apologized, "Mrs. Fuller, please don't take what happened earlier to heart. I didn't do it on purpose. I'm just doing my job, so please forgive me."

Mrs. Eriksen rebuked furiously, "Doing your job? What's your job supposed to be? You're supposed to welcome guests and convey messages. Yet, you failed to welcome us warmly and did not even convey any messages to Mr. Fuller."

After a slight pause, she scoffed, "It's not your fault that you didn't inform him. After all, we had not made an appointment. But an important part of your job is to welcome guests! Not only did you fail to do a good job in it, but you also mocked us. Why should the company continue to hire you?"

As Mrs. Eriksen had worked for George for a long time, she had witnessed all kinds of scenarios. She was thus able to retort skillfully and sharply.

The receptionist was rendered speechless for a while. Gazing at me, she said, "I'm sorry, Mrs. Fuller. I didn't do it on purpose!"

"Do you think that an apology would matter much after I murder someone?" As Mrs. Eriksen had been suppressing her anger earlier, she was starting to vent it out through her words.

"Why are you acting like this?" The receptionist raised her volume. "I've already apologized. Why are you still being so overbearing? Mr. Fuller's the one who has a mistress. Your own husband is cheating on you, but why are you venting your anger on others? Do you think that you can do anything just because you're rich?"

Her loud voice attracted a lot of people. Her volume increased as she spoke, "It's no wonder that Mr. Fuller is unwilling to have a petty woman around with him. Unlike you, Ms. Larson is beautiful and kind. You need to have some self-awareness. You probably had to resort to some unscrupulous methods to marry Mr. Fuller!"

Her words became meaner as she spoke.

Furious, Mrs. Eriksen raised her arm and was about to slap her when I pulled her back. I said calmly, "Let's not create a ruckus."

There were people filming us. Someone might make a huge deal out of this by spreading the videos. Suppressing the rumors in K City would be harder than if we were back in J City.

Furthermore, Ashton was trying to expand the business now. It would be undesirable for scandals to break out at this juncture.

"So, are you just going to let her bully you like that?" said Mrs. Eriksen as she furiously glared at the receptionist.

I shook my head. "She's just shooting her mouth off. It's fine!"

When Jared came and saw the huge crowd, he frowned and looked at me. "What happened?"

I glanced at the receptionist. Despite rebuking us so feistily earlier, she now looked quite flustered. An embarrassed look quickly crossed her face.

It was normal for people to admire talented people. This lady probably had a crush on Jared.

Averting my gaze, I shook my head. "I'm fine. Let's go!"

When we were in the lift, Jared raised his eyebrows and commented, "You're still coming along despite knowing that Rebecca's here. Won't you feel upset?"

I laughed. "I'll feel even more upset if I didn't come."

Chuckling, he glanced at my stomach and his gaze became solemn. He reminded, "Your baby's about to be born, so you mustn't roam about!"

I nodded and asked curiously, "How did you find out that I know Rebecca's here?"

"The receptionist looked pale. She probably said something inappropriate," replied Jared calmly.

He was right. As expected, intelligent people were very observant.

Hence, I did not elaborate further.

The lift soon reached the top floor. Glancing at the corridor, he said, "Just walk along the corridor and you'll reach Ashton's office. You can go ahead first. I have other matters to attend to."

I nodded. "Okay, thanks!"

"You're welcome."

While he returned to his office, Mrs. Eriksen and I walked along the corridor. She glanced at me and whispered, "Letty, that receptionist shouldn't remain in this company."

"I won't intervene with the company's affairs. It's got nothing to do with me whether she's working here or not. Don't overthink!"

When I reached Ashton's office, I knocked on the door. As no one responded, I pushed the door slightly.

The door was not locked, so it immediately swung open.

There was no one in the office. After placing the pastries in the lounge area, Mrs. Eriksen looked at me and said, "I'll go out for a while and wait for you downstairs later. Have a chat with Mr. Ashton for the time being!"

I nodded, thinking that she probably needed to buy something.

Ashton returned soon with Rebecca following behind. When he saw me, he was surprised. "When did you come?"

"Around an hour earlier!" Although I had just reached the office, I wasted a lot of time due to the receptionist.

Raising his eyebrows, he walked toward me and tucked my hair behind my ears. "Why didn't you call and inform me?"

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 204

I raised my hand and glanced at Rebecca, who was clad in branded goods from head to toe. Averting my gaze, I calmly said, "I called you, but Ms. Larson said that you're in a meeting."

He frowned. The veins in his temples throbbed as he looked at Rebecca. "Interesting."

Noticing that he was furious, Rebecca's face paled. "I'm sorry, Ash. I didn't touch your phone on purpose. As it kept ringing a few times, I picked up the call, thinking that it's about something urgent. I didn't expect it to be from Scarlett!"

After hearing her words, I raised my eyebrows and remarked thoughtfully, "I only called once before the call went through." Smiling coldly at Ashton, I said, "Looks like you normally receive a lot of calls."

Ashton frowned. "Don't be so sarcastic!" Then, he glanced at Rebecca and said coldly, "It's getting late. I'll let Joe send you back."

An unpleasant look crossed her face. She looked at me and protested unhappily, "Ash, my Dad wants you to send me home."

Ashton frowned. "Since when did I become your chauffeur?"

Rebecca paled and was rendered speechless.

Feeling aggrieved, her eyes reddened. "You know that's not what I meant."

"But that's how I understood it." Ashton was becoming more skilled at rebuking others.

If I were Rebecca, I would have felt utterly defeated by now.

Rebecca clasped her hands so tightly that her fingernails dug into her flesh. With tears brimming in her eyes, she said, "I'll visit you tomorrow."

When she left, she kept turning around to look at Ashton.

Propping my chin up with a hand, I could not help but comment, "The receptionist said that your fiancée visits you every day. Looks like she isn't lying. Should I go home and prepare to welcome your fiancée?"

He frowned. "Fiancée?"

"Yeah!" As my arm felt a bit sore, I stretched it toward him. While he instinctively massaged it, I continued, "She visits you so frequently and is even pregnant. Who can she possibly be if not for your fiancée?"

With a grim expression, he raised his eyebrows and looked at me. "You believed that?"

"It's not up to me whether I believed it or not!" As I was not in the mood to argue with him, I remained calm.

He whipped out his phone and made a call. As I was near him, I could clearly hear the person speaking on the phone.

It was Joseph. "Yes, Mr. Fuller?"

"Change the receptionist on the ground floor. She's barred from working here forever." Then, he continued, "Without my permission, don't let any irrelevant personnel in."

Joseph was a bit confused. "Who are you referring to, Mr. Fuller?"

"Rebecca!"

With that, Ashton was about to end the call when Joseph quickly protested, "She came with Mr. Quinn. I'm not in the position to intervene!"

Ashton frowned. "Find a solution, then."

He hung up immediately after. Glancing at me, he asked, "How's that?"

I nodded in approval. "Simple and straightforward!"

He frowned. "So, are you satisfied?"

Pouting, I rebuked, "What's your business got to do with me?"

As I could not be bothered to argue with him, I passed the pastries I brought to him. "Mrs. Eriksen said that if you knew that I baked these pastries, you'd definitely enjoy them."

Taking the box from my hands, he glanced at it then back at me. "Did you really bake them?"

"I helped out!" As Mrs. Eriksen and Molly baked them too, I did not deserve full credit.

Chuckling, he commented, "Although they look quite ugly, they probably taste quite good."

Ugly?

I was rendered speechless.

It was already evening, so the workday had already ended. Mrs. Eriksen called, saying that she would return first and that I should go home with Ashton.

Knowing that she was deliberately trying to make me spend more time with Ashton, I agreed without saying anything else.

Ashton was not particularly fond of pastries, so he merely took a few bites. Not commenting on it, I leaned against the couch and used my phone.

However, he snatched my phone away. "Stop using your phone so regularly. It's bad for your eyes."

"Then, do I look at you instead?" I was extremely bored. Furthermore, as I was quite upset by what happened downstairs, I felt an urge to rebuke Ashton whenever he spoke.

He laughed and offered generously, "Sure, you can look at me to your heart's content!"

Completely uninterested in his offer, I rolled my eyes. "You should ask Rebecca to do it instead. I'm not interested!"

"Are you still angry?" He pulled me into his arms as he said exasperatedly, "Rumors spread easily in a company as large as this. It's inevitable for some people to deliberately stir up trouble. What's the use of being bothered by it?"

I said sarcastically, "So you knew about it right from the start, but you just idly stood by? If I hadn't visited today, would you have been enjoying this a lot? Your wife and your mistress are both pregnant. Once we both give birth, you might be blessed with a son and a daughter! How perfect!"

Hearing the sarcasm in my words, he massaged his temples. "You have such a wild imagination. Why can't you think about other issues instead?"

I scoffed, "Like what? Should I think about your passionate relationship with Rebecca and how the both of you are sleeping with each other behind my back?"

He frowned, feeling frustrated. "I keep saying that there's nothing between both of us, so why do you keep harping on it? Are you never going to get over it?"

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 205 - 205

"How can I get over it?" As I was upset, I spoke in a very blunt manner. "You let her enter the office whenever she wants to and allow the staff to call her your fiancée. Yet, you still act so indifferently about it, as if it's got nothing to do with you. Are you lying to yourself or to me, Ashton? What's the point of all this?"

When he met my gaze, he suddenly laughed. "You allow John to shower you with concern, send you fruits and reminisce over good memories. Why can't you tolerate Rebecca's presence?"

Not expecting him to mention these things, I immediately seethed in fury. When I stood up abruptly, I almost lost my balance and fell. He tried to hold me, but I shoved him away. "Stay away from me!"

I stomped out of the office. When I opened the door, I saw Joe who was about to knock on the door. There was an awkward expression on his face, probably because he had overheard our conversation earlier.

"Did you have a fight?" He suddenly asked. I was stunned for a while before returning to my senses.

"No, Mr. Quinn. We aren't a couple!" With that, I brushed past him and left.

Ashton caught up with me and grabbed my arm. "Where are you going, Scarlett?"

"It's none of your business." I flung his hand away and was about to leave when he dragged me back to the sofa. Looking at Joe, he asked, "What's the matter?"

Having witnessed this scene, Joe felt a bit embarrassed. "I've settled the matters regarding the European market. Jared and I are planning to celebrate tonight. Will you be coming along?"

Ashton glanced at me and raised an eyebrow. "Do you think that I can go?"

Joe was rendered speechless for a while before suggesting boldly, "Why don't you bring Scarlett along? She can just refrain from drinking alcohol!"

"Do you want to go?" Ashton asked, still holding me.

"Is Rebecca going?" I asked Joe with a determined gaze.

Taken aback, he paused for a while before saying, "Yeah."

I nodded. "I'll go!"

Joe glanced at me, then back at Ashton. Without commenting any further, he left the office.

Ashton grabbed my hands. "What are you planning to do?"

I laughed. "What can I do? The Moore family is so powerful. It's impossible for me to ruin Rebecca, right? I just want to keep an eye on my husband. Why? You don't want me to come?"

He said exasperatedly, "Your baby is about to be born. It's not safe for you to roam about!"

"Isn't Dr. Crest there?"

"He's really busy so he won't have time to take care of you." He made me sound like a burden.

"Fine, I won't go then." Since he was already trying so hard to persuade me, it would be shameless of me to insist.

With that, he fell silent.

Glancing at me, he asked, "What do you want to eat for dinner?"

I could not think of something in such a short span of time. After deliberating about it, I suggested, "What about barbecue?" I had an urge to eat something heavy perhaps due to my pregnancy cravings. I rarely ate barbecue in the past because it was too hot and oily. However, I now felt uneasy if I went too long with eating any barbecue.

He frowned. Not very fond of barbecue, he said, "Eat something else."

"Why?" I disliked it whenever he acted like that. "You're the one who asked me what I wanted to eat. Now that I've said barbecue, you're unwilling to eat it. What do you want me to do?"

He frowned. "The smell is too strong and it's very crowded. It's not safe!"

"It's even more dangerous if I go hungry!" Ashton was extremely annoying at times. "Oh, right. It's more suitable for a dignified president of a company like you to dine at a Western restaurant with an elegant lady like Rebecca. You can enjoy classical music and bask in the romantic atmosphere instead of suffering in a crowded and noisy place like a barbecue shop. It's not worthy enough for a nobleman like you."

Since I was in a bad mood, I did not mince my words.

Pursing his lips, he chided, "Scarlett, can't you be gentler like other women? It's pointless to be so mean."

I chuckled. "If I'm being pointless, look for Rebecca instead. Why are you criticizing me here?"

As it was getting late, I did not continue arguing with him. Instead, I stood up and left the office. Glancing back at him calmly, I said, "It's alright if you don't want to eat barbecue. But if you're worried that something bad might happen to your son, wait for me outside the restaurant. Send me home after I finish eating."

He was so furious that he burst out laughing. "Are you even a woman, Scarlett?"

"How could you not know about that?" When the lift doors opened, I strode in.

He followed me silently and our conversation ended right there.

In the barbecue restaurant, I ordered a lot of dishes. Ashton looked at the oil dripping down the meat and averted his gaze.

I had always known that he disliked barbecue. Not only was it noisy, but he also thought it had a strong smell and was unhygienic. Hence, he rarely ate barbecue.

As the meat was still being barbecued, I felt bored and started using my phone.

He snatched my phone away and repeated his usual catchphrase. "Stop using your phone so regularly. It's bad for your eyes."

I pursed my lips and ignored him.

Propping my chin up, I stared at the barbecued food. When I noticed his hungry expression, I could not help but suggest, "If you really dislike barbecue, you can dine in the adjacent Western restaurant. Let's meet after eating."

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 206 - 210

I was not trying to imply anything else. Instead, I genuinely thought that this was a win-win situation for both of us. However, he glanced at me coldly and instructed, "Eat quickly!"

At that moment, his phone rang. He glanced at it and frowned. "I'll go and answer this call."

I nodded and watched as he left with his phone.

The barbecued meat was ready after a while. Not waiting for him, I stuffed them into my mouth eagerly. It felt so carefree to eat without anyone disturbing me.

When I raised my head and glanced at Ashton, I saw him enter the car with his phone. He probably wanted to talk in his car.

Ten minutes passed. While I was eating happily, he came in and sat opposite me. However, he did not touch his cutlery at all.

Instead, he asked, "Jared and Joe are having a celebration tonight. Will you be coming along?"

"Where?"

"The Paramount Club."

The Paramount Club was the most luxurious place in K City. It was where men visit to splurge and a place for women to seek their riches. I was not interested in a place like that.

Hence, I replied calmly, "I don't want to go."

He nodded. "Good!"

Ashton really disliked barbecue, so he did not take a single bite. Instead, he merely watched as I ate.

By then, I was already slightly full. Looking at the remaining food that had not been barbecued, I felt that it was a pity that I could not bring them home.

Hence, I could only give up and say to Ashton, "Pay the bill!"

He stood up and went to the cashier without a single word. After dragging me out of the barbecue shop, he asked, "Are you tired? Do you want to take a stroll?"

I shook my head. "I'm fine!" Remembering that he had not eaten anything, I asked, "Would you like to eat something?"

"It's okay." After a short pause, he said, "Let's go home first."

At that moment, my phone suddenly rang. Sitting on the passenger's seat, I accepted the call.

Jared's voice rang out. "Scarlett, is Ashton busy now?"

Taken aback, I shook my head. "No."

He chuckled. "We're at Paramount Club. Would you like to come over?"

I glanced over at Ashton. He had already started the engine and was driving back to the villa.

After hesitating for a while, I replied, "Okay, we'll come soon."

Hanging up the call, I looked at Ashton and instructed, "Let's go to Paramount Club."

Ashton raised his eyebrow, but did not say anything.

We soon arrived at the third floor of Paramount Club.

With the energizing music booming beside my ears, I followed behind Ashton and headed to the private room.

He glanced back and reminded me, "Stay by my side later. We'll leave after a short while."

I nodded.

Ashton pushed the door open, revealing a dimly lit room. The lights on the stage were flashing brightly while a young girl danced.

When Ashton entered, Joe and Jared stood up and dismissed the girl on the stage.

The room was basked in a warm yellow light, which made the atmosphere less lively than before.

Rebecca was sitting beside Joe quietly, while another girl wearing a blue skirt sat beside her. She looked quite familiar to me.

After mulling over it for a while, I suddenly realized that she was Kristina. I could not help but frown. She was sitting next to Jared and looked very intimate with him.

I felt slightly upset. Although Jared was clueless about what happened to Macy, she was currently pregnant and hiding in the countryside, while Jared was here acting so intimately with another woman.

More importantly, Kristina was not as naive as she seemed. She was so obsessed with Ashton earlier, so why did she suddenly shift her target to Jared?

After we sat down, Ashton and Jared started talking about work, so I did not join in the conversation. As for Rebecca, she was a very unlikeable and arrogant person who was unwilling to socialize with others.

Instead, she watched as Kristina eagerly poured alcohol for the other men with a bright smile while occasionally interjecting their conversation.

The resentful look in Rebecca's eyes intensified. After Kristina finished pouring some alcohol into Joe's glass, she could not help but stand up and instruct Kristina, "Ms. Larson, buy some tacos for me. I didn't eat much for dinner tonight, so I'm feeling a little hungry."

The men did not pay much attention to her. However, Ashton looked at me and asked, "Would you like to eat anything?"

I thought for a while before shaking my head. "I'm not hungry."

Ashton fell silent. On the other hand, Kristina's expression became slightly ugly. Smiling at Rebecca, she said, "Ms. Larson, you can order food over if there's anything you'd like to eat. It's getting late, so it's not safe for a girl like me to go out alone."

"There's nothing in the food delivery options that catches my eye. Why can't you just run an errand for me? Are you afraid that I won't pay you?" Rebecca's arrogance and stubborn personality was acting up.

As she had always been like this, I had already gotten used to her attitude.

The other men were the same too. However, Kristina was not used to it. In her opinion, Rebecca was deliberately trying to put her in a tight spot. After all, she was the only one whom Rebecca could order around.

Although Kristina's face clouded over, she still squeezed out a smile and tugged Jared's sleeve. She asked gently, "Jared, is there anything you'd like to eat? I can buy some for you when I go down to buy Kristina's food."

Jared frowned. Glancing at Rebecca, he asked, "Didn't you eat earlier?" He always had a cold demeanor. If he had no intention of treating someone gently, he often acted in an aloof manner.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 207

"I'm still hungry!" Rebecca replied stubbornly.

"Why don't you buy it yourself?" Jared responded in a frank and unemotional manner.

Upon hearing that, Rebecca and Joe became visibly upset. Rebecca pouted as she argued, "What's the matter with you? She's just a mere employee. Why can't I order her to buy something for me?"

"Mere employee? What about you?" Jared continued relentlessly, "You have forgotten about your past, haven't you?"

Rebecca had been a helpless orphan before being adopted by Cameron and Zachary.

Upon hearing those words, Rebecca felt humiliated and could not hold back her anger. "Screw you! Are you seriously getting mad at me because of her?"

Jared sneered, "You expect others to be submissive and tolerate you just because you are now part of the Moore family, don't you?"

"Jared, shut up!" Joe interrupted and glanced at Kristina in annoyance. "What a scheming little mind you have! Why are you deliberately creating a scene and upsetting everyone over such a simple request?"

Shaking her head vigorously, Kristina was aggrieved at his allegation. "Mr. Quinn, that's not true! I didn't mean it!"

Jared scoffed at the statement, "Why are you blaming her? Is there a need to make her life so difficult? Why don't you buy it for Rebecca if you care for her so much?"

His words aggravated the situation and infuriated Joe. "Jared, what do you mean? Did Rebecca offend you? Are you looking for trouble?"

The tit for tat continued and made the atmosphere tense.

Bam! Ashton slammed his glass on the table and looked at them coldly. "Did you guys invite me here to watch you quarrel with each other?"

Joe immediately pointed at Kristina and directed all blame at her. "Ashton, it's all because of her!" He screeched while looking utterly disgusted at her.

I had gotten used to Joe's habit of insulting others who annoyed him.

Though Kristina and I did not get along well, I sympathized with her at that moment.

Ashton frowned and glanced at Kristina. Then he asked impassively, "Are you reluctant to buy?"

She immediately shook her head and denied, "No, it's not like that!"

Ashton raised his eyebrows and ordered, "Then go buy it now!"

Hearing Ashton's order, Kristina shot a glance at Jared. However, seeing that even he chose to remain silent, she reluctantly stood up and left.

"What are you? In love with her?" Seeing that Kristina had left, Ashton looked at Jared and asked blatantly.

"No!" Jared immediately denied the accusation and took a sip of wine, refusing to say anything else.

"Then don't let her ruin your relationship with Joe!" Ashton chided softly. He then shifted his gaze to Joe, "And you, play nice next time!"

Joe nodded and raised his glass towards Jared. "Jared, I'm sorry for losing my cool just now!"

Without saying a word, Jared toasted to him and emptied the glass. That was considered as a reconciliation.

The relationship between men was not complicated, and they let bygones be bygones.

The three of them continued to chat, and it seemed like they have chosen to forget about the ruckus relating to Kristina.

Rebecca pursed her lips and was obviously unhappy. She stayed in the room for only a while longer before she stood up and left.

Having sat for a prolonged period of time, I was starting to feel uncomfortable, so I approached Ashton and whispered in his ear, "I need to get some air!"

He nodded and stood up. "I'll go with you!"

However, I shook my head and refused. "It's all right. I'll go by myself."

I then gently pushed him down to his seat and smiled before I left.

With all kinds of people coming to Paramount Club, I dared not travel too far and chose to stroll along the corridor.

Rebecca saw me wandering along the corridor when she came out of the bathroom. So she approached me and sarcastically remarked, "It looks like your baby is due soon! But it's hard to say if it will be safely delivered, nor will it survive!"

I frowned and immediately leaned against the wall to steady myself. After ensuring my own safety, I looked at her and replied, "Ms. Larson, I thought you would be gracious and become more gentle after joining the Moore family. But it seems like you are getting worse instead. No wonder Ashton is getting more tired of you!"

Rebecca was speechless with rage for a moment. She then glared at me. "Scarlett Stovall! Who do you think you are? Do you really think you can make Ashton stay by your side by having his baby? That's impossible! Killing a person, not to mention a baby, is a simple task for the Moore family. You won't have him! I won't let you give birth to the baby!"

Going through all means to destroy one's enemy was the darkest aspect of human nature.

While I held on to my belly, I gave her a cold-eyed stare and sneered, "There is always rule of law, no matter how formidable the Moore family is. They won't simply hurt an innocent because of you. Look at yourself, all anxious and panicked. There must be tons of people in the Moore family who look down on you and refuse to accept you into their family!"

If Rebecca led a comfortable life in the Moore family, she would not engage in such attention-seeking behavior.

Seeing as she was losing to me in argument, Rebecca stomped her feet and threatened me, "Just you wait!"

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 208

Rebecca turned around and walked back to the room.

Perhaps it was because she walked so fast, but she ran into Kristina at the corner, and the both of them collided together. "Ah!"

"Are you blind?" The collision irritated Rebecca utterly, and she pushed Kristina to the ground after balancing herself.

At that moment, Rebecca presented herself as a domineering and arrogant woman.

Kristina suppressed her anger and got up from the ground with the tacos in her hand. Fortunately, the tacos were not crushed.

She scampered to her feet and began apologizing profusely. "I'm sorry! I was in a hurry just now. It was an accident."

"Accident?" Rebecca yelled. She then gave Kristina a side glare and responded in disdain, "It was disgusting to come into contact with your filthy body!"

Then, she grabbed the tacos from Kristina and threw them into the trash bin without hesitation.

Rebecca contemptuously ordered, "It's dirty. Buy me a new one!"

Furrowing her brow, Kristina was speechless with rage. "Ms. Larson, you've gone too far!"

Rebecca responded arrogantly, "Okay! Should I inform Joe that you refuse to buy tacos for me? Should I also tell Jared and Ashton that you hit me deliberately as a payback?"

"You're a jerk!" Kristina gritted her teeth in anger.

"Haha! Are you going to buy or not?" Rebecca looked at Kristina condescendingly with her arms folded.

I witnessed the incident from afar and chose not to interfere.

After a while, Kristina bit her lip and nodded, concealing her fury. "Okay! I'll buy it for you."

She then turned and walked toward the lobby of Paramount Club.

Rebecca leaned against the wall and gave me a contemptuous look. "I thought you were a brave person and would stand up for her. It seems that you are colder than I thought. Scarlett, you are not a good person either!"

She entered the room after finishing her speech.

I followed behind her and sunk in thought.

I've never said I am a good person. I don't act blindly to seek justice for anyone! Besides, I find Kristina more scheming than Rebecca after having dealt with her several times.

Didn't she have a crush on Ashton? Since when did she turn her target to Jared?

As Ashton saw me following Rebecca into the room, he immediately stood up and approached me. Then he asked while cuddling me, "Are you all right?"

I remained silent but glanced at Rebecca, who was glaring at me and pursing her lips.

Indeed, she was jealous.

Ashton noticed my gaze and looked toward Rebecca with a scowl on his face.

Though he did not say a word, Rebecca was aggrieved at his silent warning.

I guessed Ashton had never looked at her that way.

However, he ignored her and turned to Jared and Joe. "It's getting late. We are leaving."

Jared got up and threw down the blanket, "I'm leaving too."

Joe immediately stood up and replied in annoyance, "Damn! Why are you guys leaving so soon?"

Ashton glanced at them and explained, "Scarlett is not supposed to stay up late. You guys have a nice chat!"

Knowing I was pregnant, Joe did not say much but looked at Jared. "Why are you in such a hurry to leave?"

"I want to sleep!" Jared said flatly.

Joe was this close to lashing out curse words, but he held them back and paused for a while before speaking, "Fine! Let's go! We must get together for a drink some other day!"

At that moment, Kristina came back with the tacos. She realized everyone was about to leave and handed the food to Rebecca immediately. "Ms. Larson, here's your taco."

Rebecca did not even spare her a glance. "Why did you take so long to buy the food? I'm no longer hungry!"

She took the tacos and threw them into the trash. That was a skillful operation!

Ashton gave me an impassive glance and dragged me away. Jared frowned but did not say a word. He then looked at Joe. "See you!"

Although Kristina was upset, she remained silent and calm, keeping up her facade of being meek and gentle.

Ashton went to get his car and asked me to wait at the entrance of Paramount Club.

The sky was dark with an occasional cool breeze. It was about to rain.

"When is your due date?" A voice from behind startled me. I turned around and saw Jared.

"Soon. Two more weeks."

He nodded. As Kristina was not there, I asked him, "Is Kristina your assistant or...?"

"Secretary!" Jared answered without hesitation. He then continued, "Did you get in touch with her recently?"

I was confused. "Who?"

"Macy!"

I froze for a while and then shook my head. "No! I am kind of busy and seldom call her. Why?"

He shook his head and said no more.

I hesitated, unsure of what to say. "Why don't you visit her after you complete the task at hand?"

I did not know much about their story, but I did know that people who missed each other would hold the other in their hearts.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 209

Macy was unsure if Jared fell for her. Thus, she was reluctant to tell him about the baby as she did not want him to compromise because of it.

Truth be told, Jared himself was probably still uncertain about what feelings he had for Macy.

Ashton's car was approaching, and we bade each other goodbye. "I'll talk to you another day. I have to go now!"

Jared's voice sounded out behind me after I barely took a few steps, "Get a trustworthy person to be by your side when you deliver the baby!"

I froze for a moment but found it strange. "All right!" Well, I don't have a mother-in-law. Unless I suffer from delivery complications, do I have to hesitate in choosing whether to save the mother or the baby?

After I got into the car, I moved clumsily and leaned into the seat, feeling tired. "When can the job at hand be settled?"

Macy was going to deliver her baby in two months. I was worried about her as she was on her own, and the healthcare over there was limited.

Ashton started the car engine and glanced at me. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing! Let's visit Macy when everyone is free. I haven't seen her for quite some time."

He agreed and sighed, touching my belly, "You must have suffered these few months."

I remained silent and felt flustered. It would be Rebecca's birthday two days later.

I looked at Ashton and asked, "Are you going to celebrate Rebecca's birthday?"

Knowing Rebecca, she would definitely invite them for a party.

Much to my surprise, he shook his head and replied, "The baby is due soon. I shouldn't go out."

I could not help but laugh. "The exact date of delivery is not confirmed yet. Besides, there is a doctor and maids at home. What are you afraid of?"

He raised his eyebrows and looked at me. "They are not your hubby!"

I burst out laughing and stopped talking.

Looking at the scenery along the road, Cameron's words came to my mind and made me uneasy. Though those days seemed to be calm, I felt as if threats were hiding in the dark, crouching and waiting for the time to make their death strike.

Cameron would do whatever it took to make the engagement between Ashton and Rebecca happen.

Though Rebecca was arrogant, she dared not cross the line. But Cameron was different. She was a self-made tycoon and was definitely a worrisome foe.

Ashton noticed my less than favorable condition, but he dismissed his worries, thinking that I was just tired. Thus, the moment we arrived at the villa, Ashton carried me to the bedroom right away.

I pretended to be asleep in his arms, as I was in no mood to chat. I waited till there was a pin drop silence in the bedroom before opening my eyes.

I then called Jackson and he answered after a few seconds.

"It's five in the morning here, my dear!" His voice was a little hoarse.

I was taken aback and responded, "Why are you still at M country? Haven't you already returned? You haven't come back, have you?"

I thought he had returned when Nick last called me.

"No! I'm taking a flight back tomorrow afternoon." He sounded rather tired. "Why did you call me suddenly? Is the baby here yet?"

“Not yet!” I paused for a second. “The baby is due within these few days. I feel uneasy, and Macy is not around. Could you please come back early?”

“Yeah, I know! I’m trying to settle the things over here so that I can rush back immediately. But I got caught up in the client’s matter, and it’s a bit of a headache.”

I knew he was occupied most of the time, so I nodded but didn’t press on. “Okay! My baby is due in about two weeks. I should be able to wait till you come back.” Then I continued, “By the way, I can’t reach Macy. What’s going on?”

“There is no signal at her place occasionally. She’s in a mountain, after all. Don’t worry about her! Take care of yourself and call me if you need me, or else you can look for Nick! He’s already in K City.”

I nodded and felt more secure. “Please take care of Macy. She lives far from the city, and it’s difficult to reach out for help if anything happens.”

Jackson sighed, “I know! Both of you are weird, with one hiding in the mountain and the other one feeling insecure even with her husband by her side.”

I kept quiet when I heard the sudden footfall in the corridor. “I’ll talk to you another day. Have a good rest!” I spoke softly and promptly ended the call.

Two days had passed.

Though Ashton had been busy, he would dine with me every day.

I had gotten used to waiting for him at the yard around dinner time.

It was autumn, and the evening breeze was cool. The deciduous trees shed their leaves and covered the yard with yellowish-brown leaves. Some plants had withered from the cold temperature.

Ashton promised to get some new plants to make the yard more lively as soon as he had spare time.

“Madam, there’s a call!” Molly handed the phone over to me.

It was John.

"Happy birthday, Letty!" He was smiling and wished me with a soft tone.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 210

Upon receiving his birthday wishes, I glanced at the phone to look at the date and realized it was my birthday.

"Thank you!" I was stunned. I had forgotten my birthday after getting married to Ashton. Truth be told, if it were not for the occasional glances at my identity card, I probably would have lost track of my age.

"Do you have any plans for the evening?" He inquired.

I raised my head and looked at the sunset. The night was falling. I seldom went out as I was about to deliver the baby. Thus, I answered, "I'm staying at home!"

"Oh. Do you want me to come over then? To celebrate your birthday?" John asked.

"No, thanks! It's fine." I appreciated his kindness, but Ashton would rather not see him.

I thought it was Ashton when the doorbell rang. Why did he press the doorbell when he could unlock the door with his fingerprint?

John ordered, "Open the door! There's a gift for you!"

After sitting there stunned for a while, I got up and opened the door.

There was a huge pink cake placed at the entrance, surrounded by many heart-shaped balloons with fluorescent lights inside. They looked beautiful in the night.

"Do you like it?" John's voice traveled over from the other end of the line.

I was stunned and tried to suppress the feeling of joy. "You made that?"

He replied softly, "Yeah! Raise your head and look at the sky!"

I followed his instruction and was amazed by the beautiful fireworks. The night sky was filled with colors and light.

“Thank you, John!” I was touched, and I could feel myself tearing up.

It was great to be on someone’s mind.

“You’re welcome! I’ll celebrate your birthday every year onward,” John responded calmly.

Watching the fireworks shattered into thousands of sparks, I was dazzled by its beauty. Rebecca and I shared the same birthday.

After the colorful sparks faded, the pink cake was carried into the villa. Mrs. Eriksen and Molly looked around and asked me whose birthday was it.

I smiled and told them, “It’s mine!”

Mrs. Eriksen was shocked to learn that. “Oh my, it’s your birthday today, Letty? I should call Mr. Ashton right now! I’ll tell him to give you a big surprise!”

I smiled and rejected, “No. I’ve never celebrated my birthday all these years. We can all have dinner together once he comes back. That’ll be more than enough.”

Mrs. Eriksen was trying to call Ashton but to no avail. She frowned and complained, “Why did he turn off the phone? Could it be out of battery?”

Staring at the beautiful cake, I wondered how Macy was doing as she did not call me recently.

During those years on my birthday, she used to call and wish me well, or she would get me a cake.

Thinking of Macy, I tried to call her, but she did not pick up.

After a few attempts, I was worried and called Jackson instead.

When the call was connected, he spoke anxiously, “Letty, something happened to Macy! Make a move to Clermont now!”

I was shocked to hear that. “Isn’t Macy by the countryside in J City? Why is she back here all of a sudden?”

“I’m not sure. Nick called to inform me that he found Macy unconscious in his courtyard half an hour ago. He has called the doctor. We have no idea what’s going on.” He then continued, “I’m at the airport now and should arrive tomorrow morning. Please check on her first. Take care!”

After I ended the call, I put on a jacket and called Nick. There was no time to give anything any thought.

Seeing that I was so anxious, Mrs. Eriksen followed me and asked worriedly, “Letty, what’s going on? Don’t panic! I’ll call Mr. Ashton.”

I had no time for her nagging and left in a hurry. “Mrs. Eriksen, please inform Ashton that I’m going to Serene Villa in Clermont.”

I ordered the bodyguard to drive me to Clermont.

Nick finally answered my call after few attempts. I could hear the background noise.

“Scarlett!”

I hurriedly asked, “Is Macy at your place? Are Macy and her baby all right?”

I could not calm myself down and was so anxious that my hands and feet turned cold and kept trembling.

He assured me, “The doctor has checked on Macy. Both she and her baby are fine. She has taken some sleeping pills and will awake when the effect of drugs is over.”

Then he tried to comfort me. “Don’t panic and rush over! You should stay at home and get ready to deliver your baby!”

I was so panicked that I could not think straight. Why would someone give Macy sleeping pills? Why is she back here in K City instead of J City?

All those questions, including Cameron’s words, came into my mind.

Thinking about these, I panicked, tried to call Ashton but he did not pick up.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 211 - 215

When I called again, the phone was off.

Something must have happened!

These words kept going round and round in my mind. I could not help but think that Cameron's real targets were my child and me.

When this thought came to my mind, I blurted out, "Turn around! Head back to the villa!"

Before the bodyguard could turn the car around, however, we were hit by a huge force.

Instinctively, the bodyguard stopped the car. Thankfully, he was trained personnel. In less than two seconds, he quickly regained his senses and realized that something was wrong, so he started the car again.

Before the car started, however, a black off-road vehicle crashed into the front of the car. These two huge impacts came flying at me one after another, and they terrified my senses.

I started to feel the pain of falling in my lower abdomen. At the same instant, I felt cold and sweaty. I was sure I was about to give birth.

Taking a breath of air, I said, "Don't open the door! Hurry, call the police!"

The pain in my lower abdomen got more intense, and I panicked. If the police could not make it in time, both my child and I would be in danger.

With some difficulty, I got out my phone and dialed John's number. The phone rang twice before being connected.

"Letty!"

"John, help me, Southvale Road..." Before I could finish, a loud noise interrupted my speech.

Crash! The windscreen of the car was smashed, and a few men in black pulled the car doors open forcefully. The bodyguard tried to protect me, but the men in black injected some substance into his neck, and he passed out immediately.

The men in black dragged me out of the car, ignoring that I was a pregnant woman, and roughly stuffed me into another vehicle. Then they tied my hands and feet, gagged my mouth, and started driving away.

I could not make a sound. From a distance, I watched them pour gasoline on the three cars, which were then blown up together. I looked at all this in disbelief. There was still a person in the car. How could they just take a life like this without hesitation?

Horror, disbelief, and fear – all these emotions flooded into my mind at this moment.

My lower abdomen hurt, and I sweated profusely. My legs were tied tightly together, but I could feel my cervix tearing, and the child seemed to be coming out.

The hem of my skirt was soaked with amniotic fluid as the water broke...

I struggled desperately to untie my legs, to spread them and give birth to the baby. But no matter how hard I tried, I could not break the rope.

Instead, my legs were cut by the ropes and started to bleed. I could feel my son's desperation as the amniotic fluid drained out, and I could feel as he struggled for breath.

If he were not out of my womb before the fluid drained completely, he would soon suffocate.

He would die from lack of oxygen, suffocated to death.

As these thoughts entered my mind, the pain in my heart started to spread. No, this mustn't be. I must give birth to my child!

After much struggling, I moved the rope down a little, and my knees could be separated slightly. I tried my best to spread my legs.

The speeding car stopped abruptly, and the door was opened. Then two men in black lifted me out of the car.

My mouth was gagged, and I could not speak. The men dragged me into a warehouse that had been cleaned up in advance and did not look too messy.

“Boss, she seems to be giving birth? Shall we do it now?” one of the men in black said.

“Wait a minute!” another black-clothed man said, “The big boss ordered that as long as it’s past eight o’clock, we need not bother about her life or death. Looking at her current state, she probably won’t be struggling for long.”

After they finished speaking, a phone rang. The man in black glanced at the caller ID, looked at his partner, and said, “Boss, it’s the Big Boss calling!”

“Accept the call!”

The man answered the call, and after listening to the caller, he replied hesitatingly, “Ms. A... won’t that be too cruel?”

As if hearing the affirmative answer on the other end, the man hung up the phone and looked at the boss, saying, “The big boss commanded we tie her legs together firmly. As long as the child remains inside her womb, once the amniotic fluid runs out, the baby will suffocate and die.”

Hearing this, the black-clothed man was stunned and said, “Isn’t this too cruel? It seems that this child is already full-term.”

“The big boss promises to double the price. We only need to tie her legs and leave her here. Whether she lives or dies depends on her luck!”

After the two finished their discussion, they decided to tie my legs together. I kept shaking my head, begging them to stop.

The pain in my lower abdomen was like tens of thousands of needles piercing me, but my mouth was gagged, and I could only make a whining sound.

After finishing their job, the two men in black drove away.

I was alone in the dark warehouse, and the pain in my lower abdomen came in waves one after another. In the lower part of my body, I could feel the child struggling to be born.

I tried over and over to break free, but the strength exerted by the two men in tying the knots made it impossible for me to break free.

The pain became more and more intense, and I could vividly feel every single movement of the baby, who was struggling inside of me.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 212

After all the struggling, I was close to total exhaustion. The fluid was getting less, and the movements from the baby were dying down.

I guessed that the baby's strength was slowly draining away as he could not breathe.

No, not like this. My baby! You can't die like this! I have not seen what you look like, and I haven't brought you to look at the world. I can't let you go just like this!

I was tormented by the pain in my heart and my abdomen. Then, I saw something shiny in the dark warehouse. It was a mirror!

A glimmer of hope was ignited, and I moved my body with difficulty towards it.

It was only two steps away, but it seemed to take me an eternity to reach the mirror. I knocked on it with my head.

Crash! The mirror broke into a few pieces, and I felt a sharp pain on my forehead.

Without giving it much thought, I grabbed a piece of glass with my hands, which were tied together, and began to saw at the rope that tied my legs together.

The hemp rope was very thick, and I did not know how long I was cutting at it. There was a sharp pain in the palm of my hand, and I felt warm blood on my hands and legs, which felt sticky like batter.

However, this pain could not compare with the pain of feeling the baby dying slowly in my womb.

That pain was worse than death.

Boom! Suddenly, thunder struck across the sky, and the air was filled with moisture.

The pain in my abdomen continued, but the child's strong movements gradually stopped. I suddenly froze, and the piece of glass in my hand fell.

I went limp and collapsed on the floor, which was covered with a thick sticky liquid. I could not tell if it was blood or amniotic fluid.

Suddenly, there was a heavy downpour. The thunder became louder and louder, and the lightning flashed brighter and brighter.

In the flashes of lightning, I seemed to see that child struggling to live as he tried again and again to crawl his way out.

Certainly, he cannot understand why his mother refused to let him out. He must be blaming his mother for keeping him in, even though he tried so hard.

I was wrong. It was really my fault. I should not have yearned for Ashton's warmth, should not have trusted him to protect the child and me. I should not have challenged the authority and viciousness of Cameron and the Moore Family.

It was stupidity to take them too lightly. It was my fault. If not for me, this child would not die in such an inhumane way.

As time passed by, I began to think it was okay. I'm going to die with my baby. At least, my baby won't be alone and afraid in the netherworld.

I'll accompany him. He won't be bullied. Here on earth, I could not protect him, but in the next world, I will.

Bang! The warehouse door was opened, and a strong light shone in.

In a daze, I saw a tall man walk in. I was so dizzy. When I tried to see him clearly, I did not have the strength to open my eyes.

Perhaps, this is the door to the next world. This door is opened.

In a daze, I felt as if I had stood up and under my feet was this thick red liquid which I knew was my blood.

Instinctively, I felt my abdomen with my hand and found that it was flat. In shock, I looked around for my child.

"Baby, Baby..." I called innumerable times. I seemed to see a small figure in a sphere of light.

He tottered toward me stumblingly, for he was so tiny and unsteady.

Overjoyed, I ran towards him and held him in my arms. Then I looked at the child carefully. He was so small, and there was a red mark on his head. He must have tried so hard to get out of my womb that he squeezed himself red.

His tiny nose and eyes looked so cute. He even knew how to smile, curving his lips like a little flower.

"Scarlett, Scarlett..." A low faraway voice came to my ears again and again.

I tried to find the source of the voice, but it was white everywhere, and I could not see anything.

When I looked at my child again, he was gone, and I was alone, lost in the midst of the thick, white fog.

"Scarlett, Scarlett..." The voice came to me again. I covered my ears, not wanting to hear it as I only wanted to look for my child.

However, that voice kept haunting me like a curse. Again and again, it came to my ears.

In desperation, I shouted with all my strength, "Baby, Baby..."

There was a sudden pain in my heart. I drew in a deep breath and forced open my eyes. What I saw was a familiar whiteness all around.

I was surrounded by a group of doctors wearing white coats and masks.

Someone heaved a sigh of relief and said, "She's finally awake, and she's alive."

"Well, it's best to take precautions and transfer her to the intensive care unit. Observe the situation. If she stabilizes one day later, she can be transferred to the normal ward."

"Yes, sir!"

In a daze, I was taken to the ward. My throat hurt, I had difficulty breathing, and I could not speak.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 213

After the anesthesia wore off, my body began to ache everywhere, especially in the abdomen. It was the kind of pain that comes with every breath.

"The doctor said you can't eat for these six hours, and you can only drink water. You can only eat after the effects of the anesthesia wear off." The person who spoke was none other than Marcus.

Never had I imagined that he would be the one to appear. I had thought it would be Ashton or John, but he was the only one I had never thought of!

I could not speak, so I just looked at him with tears flowing from the corners of my eyes.

He seemed to understand what I was thinking. He sighed softly and said, "Take care of your health. In the future, you can still have kids."

In that instant, I felt like my heart had been torn apart, and salt was being rubbed into my wounds. An intense pain started spreading, right to my bones.

Unable to control the pain in my heart, I began to tremble and sob. Marcus held my hand, his expression gloomy, and in his dark eyes was this deep bottomless pain.

Silently, he held my hand and let me cry. I did not know for how long, but I cried myself to sleep. He called me a few times as I dozed off. I responded in a daze and fell asleep again.

This catastrophe was indescribably painful, and the pain seemed to have no end. It felt like I had been physically broken into pieces and then joined back together again.

After three days of suffering, I was able to get down from the bed and speak a little. Pulling at Marcus's sleeve, I spoke in a hoarse voice, "I want to see my child."

With tears in my eyes, I said, "At the very least, let me see what he looks like."

After carrying him in my womb for nine months, I wanted to see him face to face.

Marcus frowned, and his brows throbbed faintly as his veins pulsated noticeably, "In the morgue, I've handed him over to the hospital!"

"No!" I pleaded with a heart-rending voice, pulling at him as I shook my head, tears rolling down my face, "Don't throw him away like this, please! He is my child. He had just come into the world. Even if he is... dead, as his mother, I should take care of the funeral."

He knitted his brows while his dark eyes were filled with distress. "Okay, take care of yourself well. When you have fully recovered, we shall do it, alright?"

I nodded even while my heart ached. All this while, the pain gnawed at me ceaselessly.

Marcus looked after me well. He hired two confinement nannies for me. Everything that women must have after giving birth was provided for, and every care that was needed was met with.

The child was suffocated to death inside my womb. His dead body was taken out by surgery. Hence, there was a long scar on my abdomen that was slowly flattening.

Every time I touched it, the painful memory returned. This kind of pain had no visible outward sign, and I had no one to talk to.

Nearly a month passed by before I realized that the hospital I was in was a private hospital, far away from K City, and belonged to Marcus' industry.

These days, all my thoughts had been on the child, and there was nothing else on my mind. Then, I realized that I had to tell Macy and Jackson that I was safe.

I borrowed a mobile phone from one of the nannies to call Macy, but then I realized that I do not remember any phone numbers, so I gave it up.

Marcus came to visit me every day. He brought me a lot of news each time, mostly about finance and trade. Some of them I could understand, some of them I could not.

I knew that he meant well, and he just wanted to distract me from thinking about the baby.

One month passed. My confinement was over, and I could sunbathe in the garden yard. Sometimes I would stare blankly at the plants and flowers, thinking of my baby.

It was late autumn, and the trees in the surroundings were turning brown. Fallen leaves were covering the landscape, and it was a depressing sight.

"It's windy outside. Come back inside soon!" A low magnetic voice was heard, and I turned around to find that it was Marcus.

I smiled and said, "You're back!" He was holding some documents, so I guessed he had just come from his office.

After handing the file to the nanny, he walked up to me and was about to pick me up according to our ritual as of late. I quickly avoided his arms and smiled, "I'm getting better now, and my confinement is over. Besides, my wounds have healed well."

He had been carrying me lately because I could not walk as my wounds were deep. Now that I have healed, I did not want to burden him.

He frowned, narrowing his dark eyes, and he said, "What would you like to eat later?" He always tried to get me food for fear that I would die on a hunger strike.

I shook my head, smiling as I replied, "I'm not hungry. I just had my breakfast not long ago!"

He turned around and looked at the nanny, asking in a low voice, "What time did she eat?"

"Seven o'clock in the morning!"

Marcus frowned and raised his hand to look at the Swiss watch on his wrist. He looked at me with his dark eyes. "It's already afternoon. You need some food!"

I nodded. These days, I seemed to have grown accustomed to his temperament. Externally, he looked distant, but he had a kind heart deep within.

Perhaps it was because of the child I lost. For one month, I hardly ate, and even after the one-month confinement period, I had no hunger pangs. If not for Marcus' constant reminder, I would have skipped many meals.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 214

The nanny prepared a lot of delicious food. After a few bites, I could not eat anymore. Marcus frowned and was a little displeased. He selected a few choice pieces and placed them onto my plate. Then he spoke quite seriously, "Eat these!"

I pursed my lips as I really did not have the appetite. Knowing he meant well, I took a few more bites.

Retch! Before I could swallow, however, I vomited it out together with the food that I had already swallowed before.

I vomited over the sink for a long time, and Marcus turned to the nanny in the living room, "What's wrong with her?"

The nanny said with some hesitation, "Ms. Stovall has always been like this. Basically, she can't eat much. Sometimes it's okay, and she could at least get some down, but if she took an extra bite, she would throw up all of it. The family doctor has also examined her, but he said it's psychological, so he cannot treat her."

Finally, the retching stopped, and I washed up. Then I straightened up and looked at myself in the mirror. In just one month, I had become completely unrecognizable.

My cheeks were almost hollow, my eyes were sunken, my brows were protruding, and my chin was so pointed that it looked sharp. The plumpness from my pregnancy was all gone.

I looked down at my hands that were just skin and bones. I looked like a skeleton.

"What happened to me?" Looking at the mirror, tears gathered in my eyes and dripped onto the white basin.

Pitter patter. The sound pierced my ears.

"Your body is just recovering, so you will get better in the future!" Marcus was not eloquent when it came to comforting the distressed. His tall and slender figure stood beside me as he spoke in a low voice.

I pursed my lips as I brushed off the tears with my hands, and he handed me a tissue.

I could not eat anymore after I dealt with my emotions. Sitting in the living room in a daze, my heart still felt painful and in distress.

“Shall we go out for a stroll later?” He asked.

I lifted my eyes to him, feeling a little dizzy. The autumn sun shone on him from behind, and he seemed translucent and brilliant, looking gorgeous.

I nodded. “Okay!”

The bedroom.

The White family was huge. I have always known that this villa of Marcus’ was located in the suburbs. It was extraordinarily large, like an ancient European castle, extraordinarily luxurious and elegant.

There were a lot of rooms in the villa. I have not looked at them carefully, but the one I lived in seemed to be the largest with a huge cloakroom in it.

I did not know if Marcus had a girlfriend. I always felt that the clothes he bought in the cloakroom were not only designer costumes, but they were also some very beautiful clothing.

“Do you need me to help you choose?” Marcus leaned against the door with his arms folded, and he smiled as he watched me looking at the clothes with a stunned expression on my face.

We were to go out in a short while, and I wanted to change, but looking at so many clothes made me feel at a loss of what to wear.

After turning around and shooting him a glance, I gave it some thought and decided on a black dress with gold trimmings. Then, I selected a black coat and a pair of black Dr. Martens shoes.

Holding the clothes and about to enter the next room to change into them, I was stopped by Marcus. He raised his eyebrows and asked, “Every item is black. Are you sure?”

I paused and then nodded. “Can’t I?”

He pursed his lips. “No!”

Taking the clothes away from me, he picked a gold-pink dress of the same style from the cloakroom, with a rose embroidered on it. It looked dazzling and gorgeous.

Instinctively, I resisted this color, looked at him, and shook my head, "Can I change it?"

He pursed his lips, looked at the dress he had chosen, and said, "This one looks good!"

I shook my head. "I do not like it!"

He was silent, and his gaze darkened, "Must you choose lifeless black?"

I was stunned. I had never thought of black as lifeless. Yet, after he mentioned it, this color, which had been normal to me, now seemed lifeless and dull.

I sighed softly and then said with resignation, "Well, I'll change it then!" My eyes explored the cloakroom, and I decided on a blue dress. It was not eye-catching but warm and pleasant.

I took it from the rack and looked at Marcus questioningly. His countenance was approving, and he looked at me, saying, "Yes, go and change into it."

After I had finished changing my clothes, he had replaced the black coat with a white mink coat and told me, "Put it on!"

I was stunned but dressed up as he suggested, and then I wore the Dr. Martens shoes.

He looked and was satisfied. Nodding his head with approval, he said, "You look beautiful. How about some light makeup?"

For the first time, I felt that this man could be a good judge at a beauty contest.

These days, I had become really haggard. So, if I went out without makeup, I am afraid that I will scare passers-by.

I nodded and put on some light makeup. Then, I went out with Marcus.

Stepping into K City again, it felt like a world away. The streets were still busy. It was late autumn, and everyone had their coats on. Fallen leaves gathered on both sides of the road. The sanitation workers finished sweeping and then turned back to sweep again. It was an endless repetition.

“What do you want to eat later?” Marcus questioned me, asking for my opinion.

I tilted my head for a moment, then shook my head and said, “Dessert!”

He smiled. “I’m talking about dinner!”

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 215

“Haven’t we just eaten?” It was a little past noon, and we had eaten lunch.

He raised his brows, “You consider that as lunch?”

I went speechless at his question. I pursed my lips and contemplated, “I can’t think of what to eat right now.”

The car passed by the city center. There was a dessert shop in the streets with a long queue.

I asked curiously, “Is their food nice? There are so many people queueing.”

Marcus took a side glance and parked the car by the road. He looked at me and said, “Wait for me in the car. Don’t get out. It’s cold outside. I will be back soon !”

Before I had the chance to reply, he jogged towards the dessert shop and joined the queue.

His good looks shone in the crowd. Moreover, his tall and slender figure made him stand out like a crane.

I leaned against the car window and watched quietly. People approached him with their phones occasionally, probably trying to ask for his number.

He was friendly. He pointed to the car and waved his hands with a faint smile. It seemed like he had rejected them.

After that scene repeated a few times, the girls stopped approaching him. On the other hand, people seemed to be looking towards my direction more frequently.

I didn’t know what happened, so I could only nod and gave a faint smile to look friendly.

Half an hour later, he jogged towards me with the dessert in his hands. He boarded the car and passed the dessert to me, "I bought a little of everything. You can try it all and tell me which one you like."

I nodded and took the Blueberry Cheesecake from him. I'm not sure of the reason, but I really liked this flavor.

The corners of his lips curved upwards after he saw me taking a few more bites, "It is good?"

I nodded in agreement, "It's delicious!" I saw him looking at me, so I paused and said, "Do you want to try?"

He went through the trouble of queueing for a long time. So it seemed inappropriate not to get a taste of it. I instinctively scooped a mouthful and brought it to his lips.

He was stunned for a moment, and then, his eyes lit up brightly. He ate from the spoon with a hint of a smile.

Looking at him chew, I asked, "Is it good? There're blueberries inside!" Not everyone was a fan of blueberries.

Marcus smiled slightly and nodded. He seemed to be in a good mood today, "Yeah. It's delicious and sweet."

The mood was contagious. Since he was in a good mood and we had desserts, I felt more relieved. I looked at him, "Where are we going later?"

He chuckled, "We are going to eat!"

"What are we going to eat?" It seemed like he was more chatty when he was in a good mood.

He smiled and said, "You decide!"

I thought for a second and said, "Steak?"

He raised his brows in agreement and started the car.

There was a popular restaurant in the mall, and it was fairly empty since it was after lunch hours.

We found a place with a wide view and sat down. He ordered some dishes and raised his eyes to look at my desserts, which had a bit leftover.

He raised his arms and took away the desserts, "Don't eat too much. Or else you won't be able to eat other food," he said.

I froze in my tracks and nodded. I ate quite a few bites of desserts just now, so my stomach did feel a little funny.

After watching him finished my leftover desserts, I spoke, "Do you like this flavor too?"

He smirked and smiled widely, "Yeah, I really like it!"

"Should we buy some when we go back later?"

"Sure!"

Marcus seemed to be in a particularly good mood.

Because of the desserts, I couldn't eat much food, but he ordered a lot. I stared at the leftover dishes and said pitifully, "What a waste!"

He smiled faintly, "We can takeaway the leftovers!"

I was stunned. He didn't seem like someone frugal. He was picky with his food at home too.

Yet, he finished my leftover desserts and is going to take away the leftover food?

He saw me staring at him and smiled, "If you turn right ahead, there are many stray dogs and the homeless. We can leave it there. They will take it when they are hungry."

I was stunned for a moment. I couldn't describe what I was feeling. I thought he was a rich man who didn't know about the difficulties in life, but...

"Yup, sure!" I asked for the takeaway boxes and packed the food.

After leaving the restaurant, I followed him. He walked a while and turned his head to me, "Are you tired?"

I shook my head, "I'm not tired!"

"Alright. We are reaching soon!"

The city center was supposed to be a bustling and lavish place. I never expected that there would be hidden corners, forgotten by society, in such a place.

This area was not easily found, and the corner was fairly hidden. There was food placed neatly beside the rubbish bin. Marcus left the food boxes over there.

When he was about to bring me away, I looked at the surroundings. The area nearby was kept clean, and even the space beside the rubbish bin was spick and span. The food boxes beside were placed neatly too.

After walking a few steps with him, I couldn't help but raised my eyes at him. I smiled, "Marcus, there are still many kind souls in this city, right?"

He saw me smile and was stunned for a second. Then, he nodded and held tightly onto me, "Yes, there are still many of them!"

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 216 - 220

My tears rolled down uncontrollably. He raised his arms and tugged me into his embrace. He comforted me, "No matter what, you will have a place in the sun!"

I nodded and cried uncontrollably. After a while, I pulled out from his embrace. Then I saw the stains of my tears and snot on his expensive suit. It looked hilarious.

I couldn't help and laughed. "Your clothes?" My voice was hoarse.

He sighed helplessly. He took out a tissue and passed it to me, "Clean up your own mess!"

I took the tissue and cleaned it for him, but there were still some stains.

I raised my head and looked at him, "It seems like it can't be wiped off." I said apologetically.

He raised his hands and flicked my forehead. He smiled, "I will have to send it for cleaning."

I nodded, that was all we could do now.

After eating and taking a stroll, my mood was brightened up.

When we reached the mall's car park, he went to fetch the car, and I waited for him at the exit. I was bored and stared blankly under the sun.

The autumn sun was not glaring, but it would still give one a headache if one stayed for too long.

"Jackson, did your driving skills get rusty? Aren't you only reversing? Why are you so bad at it?"

The voice was particularly familiar. I froze in my tracks and turned over to look instinctively.

But I froze again. The voice echoed from my back. It was Jackson, "Can you stop talking? Just stay quiet!"

"I can't!"

While listening to their voices, Marcus arrived with his car. He had also caught sight of Jackson and Marcy, and he looked up to see that my expression was grim.

He furrowed his brows, "Do you want to meet them?"

I shook my head and boarded the car, "Let's go!" I said.

I was in a half-dead state. I would only make them worry if I met them. I might as well meet them when I get better.

He paused for a moment and said nothing else. He drove the car back to the villa in the suburbs.

On the road, the sceneries went past in a flash. I stared out the window and was lost in my thoughts.

I heard a faint sigh, "You would have to get through it by yourself."

I went silent. I knew that I had to get through it, and I needed to do it by myself.

The rest of the days were peaceful. Marcus was good at taking care of people.

But I couldn't possibly stay here forever and impose on him.

Until now, I had been avoiding everyone for two months. I didn't want to meet anyone. I didn't check my phone, the television, nor the news. The days were peaceful as they went by.

Marcus was back early at night. He saw me reading in the hammock chair in the yard.

He covered a blanket on my legs and said, "The weather is cold. Stay warm, don't get sick."

I closed my book and looked up at him. I smiled faintly, "You are kinda like my grandma!"

He raised his brows. But he wasn't angry because I compared him to an elder. He smiled lightly, "How so?"

I tilted my head and gave it a thought, "Hm...you are both naggy."

He chuckled, "Then I'll have to do something about that. If not, you are going to dislike me."

The maid walked out from the living room and said politely, "Ms. Stovall, Mr. White, the dinner is ready."

Marcus briefly responded and took away the book from my hands. He took a glance and raised his brows, "Romeo and Juliet? You seemed to be reading this these days?"

I nodded and got down from the hammock chair. I smiled, "I used to only feel pity for the love story between Juliet and Romeo. But now I could see the life stories of every character."

He nodded and placed the book on the bookshelf, "Let's eat first!"

The villa was huge, but it didn't seem empty. At the dining table, Marcus saw me drinking a few sips of the fish soup and scooped me another bowl, "Drink more if you like."

I smiled as I touched my face and looked at him, "Do you see any changes in me?"

He nodded and looked at me closely, "Yes, you have lost weight!"

What the...

It was obvious that I had gained weight since Marcus had been using all types of methods to get me to eat these days. My thin face had grown chubbier.

I saw him putting down his cutlery, so I thought he was done with eating. After a short pause, I asked, "Marcus, I have something to say!"

He nodded and looked at me, "Go ahead!"

Having stayed here for some time, I would have thought that my life was always this peaceful if weren't for the painful memories that had been constantly pulling me back to reality.

I paused before speaking, "I'm planning to move to the city." I looked at his face, which had gone grim. I continued, "I'm grateful for your care all this while. But I can't be staying here forever. I can't let you take care of me for life, nor hide here forever. You were right. There are

some things that I have to get over by myself, and nobody can help me with that. K City is huge. I think I can stand on my feet in the city.”

Even though the past was painful, but I still have to look forward, right?

Thud! He slammed down the cutlery in his hands and said in a low voice, “I can’t untie the knot in your heart. But if you are willing to stay here, I can take care of you forever. You don’t have to worry about providing yourself.”

I smiled forcefully and said cruelly, “I do not want to!”

His handsome face froze. After a long silence, he spoke, “Alright. It’s fine if you are going back to K City. But you have to promise to contact me at any time. Call me if anything happens and tell me any time if you need anything.”

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 217

I nodded. My heart felt warm from his words. With the tears brimming in my eyes, I forced a smile, “Yeah, okay!”

After a pause, I continued, “I’m planning to go back during the upcoming public holiday!”

He furrowed his brows, “You haven’t fully recovered yet!”

“I’m all better now!” I always felt that he was treating me like a porcelain doll. I said helplessly, “I had been resting for the past two months. Moreover, I can rest in K City too. I can find a job that is not so tiring.”

He gave some thought and nodded, “Fine. But you don’t have to rush for the job. I will settle it for you. I have houses in the city too. I’ll find a nearby house after knowing your workplace’s location.”

I wanted to reject him, but he interrupted, “Just nice there are vacancies in my company. Since you think you owe me a favor, you can come and help out. Also, I’m going to collect rent from you too. I’ll deduct ten percent of your salary for the rent.”

I was speechless and said helplessly, “I still have some savings. You don’t have to do this for me. Anyways, I was planning to find something else to do.”

"Yes, I know!" He seemed a little angry knowing that I was rejecting him.

I did not say much after looking at him.

Whatever. The White family's business was big. If he really had the heart to help me, it will be easier for me in the future too.

After I made the decision and had dinner, he asked someone to pack up. We were ready to leave tomorrow morning.

The next day.

The daylight came later in the late autumn. The sky slowly turned bright only at seven.

I woke up early to clean up. By the time I was done, Marcus was already waiting downstairs.

Noticing my arrival, he kept his phone and spoke, "Grab a quick bite. We will set off after you're done eating!"

I nodded in response and nibbled on some bread. He knew that I didn't usually eat much, so he furrowed his brows as he looked at me dine, but he didn't say much.

After bringing me to the car, he started the engine and passed me a notebook, "I found a few job positions that suit you. Take a look and let me know which do you prefer. I will settle it. You can start working after the holidays!"

I flipped open the notebook, and the neat handwriting first came into sight. I took a look. He had listed around ten job positions, and they were all easy jobs.

I furrowed my brows, "Can I do projects? Or you can put me under the project management department. I'm fine with starting from the bottom!"

He nodded, "Alright. The project director just went home after an accident. You can replace him."

I was stunned for a moment. I never thought he would agree so quickly and asked, "You are going to decide just like that? Won't you worry that my ability is not of standard and ruin your company?"

He took a side glance at me and smiled, "Will you?"

I pursed my lips, "That's hard to say!" After all, I had not been working for almost a year.

At the traffic junction, he rested his arms on the steering wheel and looked at me, "If you could handle a huge project like Fuller Corporation, White Corporation would just be a piece of cake!"

I didn't know how to react to him. He was humble with his words. White Corporation was huge, and they worked towards internationalization. Fuller Corporation was huge as well, but it still lacked at certain aspects.

The traffic at the city center was fairly heavy. Marcus briefly explained the company history of White Corporation while driving. He also told me some general work affairs and current developments in the company to prepare myself.

Benjamin White wasn't very well, so Marcus had been taking care of the company in place of his father. He would occasionally face some difficulties, and he admitted that he had his own motive for arranging me into his company.

He wanted to nurture his own trusted men.

The car entered the Central Park residence in the city center and stopped under a residential block.

I looked at the surroundings and was shocked. This area was in the city center, where the housing prices were staggeringly high. Even upper-middle-class people could barely afford the housing in this area.

He saw me staring and smiled, "Let me bring you in first. We can buy whatever that's lacking afterward!"

I looked at the time and said, "You're not going to the office today?"

He smiled faintly, "I'm having a week-long holiday!"

Alright then!

We entered the residence, and he spoke when the elevator door opened, "This area is nearby the office. We'll see what's missing in the house and get it at the supermarket nearby. I will bring you to the office two days later. You can take a look at the surroundings and see what's lacking, then buy them later."

I nodded in response and thought, I'm probably the person who has the least worries at work. The boss had already settled everything.

The house was on the tenth floor. It was not high and spacious. The interior was cozy yet different from the villa. But it was comfortable to live in.

I looked at the arrangements of the rooms and looked at him, "The rental should be a few hundred thousand, right? Especially since it's located in an expensive land like the K City."

He raised his brows, "Are you worried about the rental?"

I shook my head and smiled, "I was wondering what are property investors like you were thinking. You bought the house and renovated it nicely. But no one lives nor rent here. It's such a waste to just leave it like this!"

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 218

Ashton tends to do things this way too. I hung my head low at the sudden, intrusive thought about him while my nose wrinkled in discomfort.

Marcus did not notice my minute reaction. He merely grinned. "It's not a waste. See, we're using it now, aren't we?"

We took a spin around the house. It didn't look like we need to buy or replace anything, but the kitchen looked quite empty. Perhaps Marcus, assuming that I was not much of a cook, did not bother too much with the layout.

"Is there anything missing?" He said, changing the house key and fingerprint code to mine.

I nodded in response. "Since you're free tonight, why don't we cook at home? I can give Macy and Jackson a call later, invite them to join in. I should let them know I'm safe anyway. Ever since I left, it's like I've been cut off from the outside world."

Marcus nodded. He did not look too good, but I paid little mind to that.

We left the residence together and headed to the supermarket. There, we stocked up on basic cooking necessities, including rice, cooking oil, sugar, and salt. Marcus turned to me with a look of surprise. "You can cook?"

It was so embarrassing to have that question thrown at me. Impatiently, I rebutted, "Don't underestimate me, alright? What makes you think I can't cook?"

I picked a few seasonings and added bluntly, "Just you wait, I'll show you what I'm capable of tonight!"

Laughter escaped him. He raised a hand, patted me on the head, and said, "Alright then. I'll wait!"

I lifted my head and smiled at him. My eyes fell upon an item on the shelf behind him, so I asked for a favor, "Marcus, can you help me get that seasoning bag? I can't reach it!"

He did not respond. Instead, he just stared at a target behind me, looking rather solemn. I froze, faintly wary of an icy glare that seemed to be directed at me.

Out of instinctive reaction, I was about to whip my head around, but Marcus pulled me into his arms and buried me into his embrace.

When he spoke, it was in a stern tone, "It's getting late. Let's head back!"

I was stunned, but before I could figure out what was going on, someone forcibly grabbed hold of my wrist and pulled me out of Marcus' embrace.

I was shell-shocked when my eyes took in Ashton's face, filled with depth, eagerness, and delight interwoven in a complicated mess. In short, the emotions reflected in his eyes were an impetuous, messy lot. The thoughts in my head crashed to a halt as though my brain had been struck by a lightning bolt.

I was at a loss of what to do. My body stiffened, my heart began to ache, and the dense pain began to spread. Fear and bewilderment engulfed me.

I felt my hands and body tremble. In a moment, I broke off eye contact and stopped looking at him while my heart suffocated from the pain.

I was not ready to face him yet. I was not ready to tell him what happened to the baby. I was not ready to give him any sort of explanation at all.

“Scarlett, why are you...” A woman’s dainty voice suddenly rang, and it fell heavily on my ears.

My eyes darted to Rebecca, whose belly had already begun to show. She was standing next to a shopping cart stacked with lots of baby supplies fit for baby girls.

I suddenly recalled Ashton picking out these items before. They were more or less the same things.

Rebecca, Cameron... Staring at Rebecca with a pair of reddened eyes, I was on the brink of emotional collapse. In that instant, I lost control. I shoved Ashton’s arm away with all my might.

And then I launched myself almost frantically at Rebecca. No one expected I would turn out like that.

Rebecca stepped back in shock. I did not give her time to respond at all. The next thing I knew, I tore at her delicately styled hair, yelling in a frenzy, “Rebecca, a life for a life! I won’t let you and Cameron escape!”

“Ah... she’s gone mad! Scarlett, you mad woman! Ash, save me!” Rebecca, scared out of her wits, kept screaming. The scene descended into chaos.

Someone tackled me from behind. They had me tightly secured in their arms. A low, gruff voice rang in my ear, “Scarlett, it’s me! I’m Ashton! I’m your husband!”

Almost instantly, I felt my strength dwindling, my eyes still maddening red. I broke myself free from his arms with what little strength I had left.

Marcus held onto me. I squeezed his hands tightly, my voice hoarse and painful, “Marcus, take me away from here!”

I really did not want to stay here a minute more. I feared I would not be able to control myself and engage in another fight with Rebecca.

I was even more afraid of seeing Ashton protecting her and much more afraid of seeing them being intimate with each other.

“Alright, let’s go home!” Marcus complied. He carried me in his arms and headed towards the exit.

Random shoppers kept looking our way. Ashton, hot on our heels, eventually blocked Marcus’ path, his voice deep, chilly, and terrifying, as he ordered, “Let her go!”

Marcus sneered, looking rather grim. “Do you think she will go with you?”

Ashton’s eyes flitted to me, and his pupils shrank. Then, he shouted, “Scarlett, come back to me!”

I clung onto Marcus like my life depended on him, my eyes now red and swollen. I begged him, “Take me away, take me away from here!”

Marcus nodded. Then he turned to Ashton, lips pursed, and pronounced one word at a time, “Ashton, you’ll hound her to death if you keep pushing it!”

Ashton pursed his lips, and I could vaguely see in his dark eyes that he was crumbling bit by bit. For a long while, he had his eyes fixed on me before he slowly spat out a few words, “Fine! Go!”

Without Ashton on our trail, I was finally able to breathe a sigh of relief. Marcus carried me into the car and brought me straight back to Central Park residence.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 219

When we got home, he laid me down on the sofa in the living room before getting me some water and my medicine. He then squatted next to me and said, “Do you still want to take your meds?”

I nodded, reached out to take medicine from him, and swallowed it. I managed to calm down a bit after that. Feeling exhausted, I proceeded to lean back on the sofa.

He sat down and stayed right there next to me throughout a very long silence. I felt lucky that every time something bad happened, there was always someone who would stand by me, and we would pull through whatever it was together.

When Grandma died, George Fuller stayed with me. And now it was Marcus' turn. I had no clue how much longer I could stay sane, but I always felt that perhaps tomorrow, or someday later, I would not be able to hold on anymore.

Depression kept coming back. I could not tell whether I was just really bad at coping with it or was it destined to be this way.

I fell asleep without knowing it. I did not know how long I had slept, but night had fallen by the time I woke up.

Noises came from the living room. I rose to check, only to find Marcus in the kitchen, donning an apron as he cooked. His stance and actions resembled those of a master chef.

Hearing movements coming from behind, he turned around and, upon seeing my conscious self, smiled as he said, "You should go wash your face. Dinner will be ready soon!"

I leaned on the door frame, watching him prepare the food with great expertise. "Were you a student at Neo Oriental Academy?"

He chuckled, pride glinting in his eyes. "Ho? You're talking about that famous culinary school? Well, hearing this question come from you, that should be a compliment!"

I nodded, not holding back on flattery. "You seem to know your stuff very well!"

He turned off the stove, looked back at me, and nagged, "Go wash up!"

I nodded and obediently entered the bedroom for a quick wash-up. By the time I came out, he had a full course ready on the table, complete with a pleasant aroma.

I sat down at the dining table, and he brought me a bowl of rice. "You should eat more. When you're done, we'll go for a walk outside!"

I nodded. The food was wonderful, but I did not have much of an appetite and only managed to consume several mouthfuls.

Despite that, Marcus did not force me to continue. He merely said, "We have fruits in the fridge, and snacks too! Go get what you like."

I chuckled, "Have you always been this experienced in taking care of women?" As a woman, I admired his attention to detail.

He nodded and replied frankly, "That's how I take care of Snowball!"

That caught me off guard.

I could not go on. I looked in the refrigerator and found that he bought quite a number of fruits. He probably went out on his own when I was asleep.

I took out a small box of strawberries and was about to wash them in the kitchen when he called out, "They're already washed. You can go ahead and eat them!"

I... Fine, he's quite considerate.

He cleared the table while I returned to the sofa. Noting my lack of activity, he suggested, "Why don't you change into something else? We can go for a walk outside later!"

I opened my mouth to speak. Initially, I did not want to go, but then I thought, why not? We need to live a little, don't we?

It was late autumn, so the sun would descend earlier than usual, casting our surroundings into darkness. Marcus was rather good-looking, so much so that he managed to draw the attention of the many people wandering around the residence, especially young women, who also happened to be out for a walk.

After some time, I got tired. I sat down on a bench under a street lamp. Looking up at him, I said, "The woman who marries you in the future will be very happy."

With both hands in his pockets, he arched his eyebrows and said in a laid-back manner, "Are you happy now?"

I froze. Without knowing it, certain memories began to flood into my mind, and for a while, I bowed my head without saying another word.

Marcus must have perceived my emotions, for he let out a loose sigh. He stayed beside me and patted me on the back, "Sorry about that. I didn't mean it!"

I shook my head. It had nothing to do with him. It was my own problem, and I could not get over it. No matter how hard I tried, I seemed to be stuck.

"Did you get him... a funeral portrait?" I choked. My hands had begun to tremble on their own.

Pursing his lips, he lifted a hand to wipe away my tears. He sighed silently, "Don't look. It'll get better!"

In the end, I did not have the courage to bury my own child myself, nor did I have the guts to see what he looked like.

Marcus said I had an adorable baby boy with a healthy weight who was fair and chubby.

I could not bear to see him. I was afraid I would lose control and would want to die along with him. I was afraid that, if I saw him, I could not bear to have him buried.

"Fine, I won't!" I lowered my eyes. At the same time, I pinched my palm so hard it actually hurt.

It was getting late, and the night got cooler too. Marcus rose to his feet before assisting me as well, "Let's get back inside! It's cold out here."

I nodded. Slowly, we headed back to the residential building together.

As soon as we got there, he came to a halt. I looked up at him. He was staring grumpily at something straight ahead. I followed his gaze.

I froze at the sight of our guest. Why is Sally here?

When she saw Marcus and me, Sally sprinted towards us and pulled me away from Marcus. Holding onto me, she asked, "Letty, where have you been all this time? What happened? Where's the baby?"

Her series of questions left me at a loss. I instinctively looked at Marcus, who furrowed his brows.

Eyes still on Sally, he said in a solemn tone, "What are you doing here?"

Stunned by his inquiry, Sally turned to him, her brows knitted, "Marc, why is Letty with you? Why haven't you gone home? What exactly is going on here? Ashton has gone crazy looking for Letty! Do you think it's appropriate for you to do this?"

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 220

Marcus sneered. His voice turned ice-cold as he continued, "He's gone crazy looking for Scarlett? What do you take us for? Idiots?"

"Marc!" Sally said angrily, "Watch your tongue!"

"My tongue?" Marcus snorted. "The best way to hide a misdeed is not to commit it. Go back and tell Ashton that Scarlett doesn't need him. And tell him to stay away from her!"

Sally realized there was no way to communicate with Marcus, so she took my hand and said, "Letty, if for some reason you're not willing to see Ashton, then come back with me. Don't stay here. Marc is an unmarried man, while you are a married woman. This is K City. People talk. If you're caught by someone with ill intentions, think of what it'll do to the Fullers and the White family's name!"

J"Ho!" Marcus scoffed, "Family name? Oh, now you bring it up! Haven't you done enough damage to the Fullers and the White family? What? Are you here to put the blame on us?"

Those words hit Sally like a hard slap on the face, rendering her speechless.

I was not in a good state of mind. I pushed Sally's arms away and, unable to answer or add anything to their argument, I ran towards the residential entrance.

Sally called out to me from behind. She wanted to give chase, but Marcus stopped her. "That's enough. Do you think the Fullers haven't hurt her enough? Her baby died two months ago, on the night of Ashton and Rebecca's engagement. He died from suffocation. Where were you all then? Where were all of you when she was locked in a warehouse, struggling to escape? Her baby's dead. The Scarlett you know is dead too. Now, she wants nothing to do with the Fullers." Marcus' booming voice echoed in the night.

I froze in place when my eyes took in the figure standing in front of me. It was Ashton. Under the night sky, his eyes appeared red, while agony crossed his face.

Behind me came Marcus' angry voice. "You go back and tell Ashton to stay far away from her, or I'll beat him into a pulp each time I see him."

Ashton had his eyes locked on me as he approached me, one step at a time. I could not move away. Once again, the searing pain in my heart caused my whole body to tremble.

"What happened to the baby?" He spoke, his voice lowered to the extremes. Indescribable emotions rose to the surface.

I opened my mouth but could not utter a single word.

Marcus caught up to us. When he saw Ashton, his face was overcome by fury. "The baby's dead. He couldn't be born in time, so he died from suffocation. Are you satisfied with the answer now, Ashton?"

"Shut up!" Ashton barked at him, his eyes still reddened. He directed his gaze towards me and, with restrained emotions, he uttered, word by word, "Scarlett, tell me, what happened to the baby?"

I wanted to speak, but the whole thing was too painful to be put into words, so I could only look at him in a daze.

After a long while, I breathed in deeply and spat out the two words that could potentially cost me my life, "He's dead!"

Ashton's tall form took a step back, seeming to have lost his balance. He looked at me with a faint glimmer glinting in his dark eyes.

I knew he was crying.

We can't be crying all the time. If we suffer but flesh wounds, there is nothing to cry about. If we cry, let it be because of sorrow.

That was what he used to tell me.

I had been locking away my emotions, and it was making me feel horrible. My head was starting to feel dizzy. Realizing that the situation was getting from bad to worse, I reached out a hand to hold onto Marcus and whispered to him, "Get me out of here!"

Marcus' eyes darkened when he noticed something was off. He promptly carried me into the residence and got me home.

He passed me my medicine, which I swallowed, and brought me to the bed. He stuck around to console me, "Don't overthink it. They aren't blaming you. They just don't know what you've been through. "

I did not speak. Tears began to flow down my cheeks uncontrollably.

Life is too hard!

Time passed slowly. I could not fall asleep. At two o'clock in the small hours, Marcus received a call. Benjamin White's condition had taken a turn for the worse, and he was sent to the ER.

Before Marcus left for the hospital, he worried about my being alone. He placed a phone next to me and gave his instructions, "Get some sleep. Call me if there's anything. I have stored Macy and Jackson's phone numbers in there. If you can't sleep, call up Jackson and have a chat with him."

I nodded and gave him a faint smile, "You should get going. Drive safe!"

He nodded and left in a hurry.

My insomnia had been a common occurrence in the past few months. In the beginning, I relied on drugs to fall asleep, but consuming too much of them would be detrimental to my health.

Marcus worried that I would be too dependent on the antidepressants if I take them too often, so he would only let me take them when my emotions were beyond control.

At the moment, it was dark outside. The lamp on the bedside table was dim. I stared at the ceiling, my head still a little dizzy.

Rumble! Suddenly, thunder roared outside. The residence was a tall building with a wide view, with the curtains currently drawn open. One after another, bolts of lightning flashed. The scene was especially horrifying.

Before long, the heavy rain came pouring down. As the storm crackled outside, I closed my eyes, trying to force myself to sleep.

But the more I wanted to sleep, the more I could not. Bolts after bolts of lightning lit up the room. Devastated, I rose and got out of bed.

I headed to the balcony and pulled the curtains close. Then, I turned back and went to bed. But along the way, I accidentally tripped over the chaise lounge and fell onto the ground.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 221

My knees hurt. It took me a long time to get up from the ground and make my way to bed.

Boom! Thunder roared again before I could reach my bed, and the lamp on the bedside table suddenly went out.

The whole house immediately sank into darkness. Only the sound of thunder mixed with rain outside could be heard.

The house was pitch black. I could not see anything. My body stiffened as I laid low on the floor, the memories bringing me back to that particular night.

My arms and legs were tightly bound. I wanted to move but was unable to.

Fear and grief began to spread within me. In the darkened room, I seemed to hear a baby crying, each cry more miserable than the last.

I wanted to look for him, but no matter what I did, I could not get up from the floor. I did not know what was going on with my mind, but I had actually thought of death.

If I die, I can reunite with my baby. With that thought, I fumbled and stumbled into the living room.

Because of the darkness, everything was flipped and tossed onto the floor, making crackling noises wherever I stepped.

I did not know where Marcus stored the knives, so I could only look for them blindly, but the tool was nowhere to be found.

The baby's cries rang again. The noise sounded so close to me, yet so far away. I did not think much of it as I hurried to the source.

By the time I regained consciousness, I found myself on the sidewalk, with no memories of how I got there.

It was raining heavily. There were no pedestrians, only cars coming and going on the road. I was freaking out. I had no idea what was wrong with me.

There were many times where I could not control myself. I kept having hallucinations. I kept seeing my baby and hearing his cries.

I wanted to go with him, but whenever I did that, I ended up losing him and getting myself lost as well.

Looking at the cars on the road, I felt desperate. This was the soberest moment, since I felt ill, that suicide was on my mind.

Given my current condition, I would only be a burden to others. Without knowing it, I began walking towards the middle of the road.

I heard the harsh sounds of car horns honking. I looked up and saw a flash of white light ahead. My mind went blank.

Right when the car was about to crash into me, someone suddenly caught my waist and dragged me away.

I fell to the ground. My head was spinning. All I could think of was the baby.

I murmured to myself, "Why did I lose him? How could I lose him?"

Tears began to leak.

"It's okay. It's okay. We'll get him back eventually!" A low, hoarse voice rang in my ears, and I was drawn into a warm embrace.

I froze. When I looked up, I was gazing into Ashton's eyes, dark as night. As though something had struck my head, I lifted my arms and pushed him away. I stumbled as I got up from the ground.

I ran aimlessly, just wanting to get away from him.

“Scarlett!” Ashton was faster than me. He got hold of me and held me tightly in his arms. He was incredibly strong, and I had no room to struggle.

I was shaking all over, and every cell in my body screamed at me to push him away.

Marcus was not here. There was no one I could turn to for help. My body went stubbornly numb as I let him hold me.

The longer we stayed there, the heavier the rain poured. I was losing strength by the minute, getting increasingly lightheaded.

The next time I woke up, I was in the hospital.

I looked sideways and saw Ashton’s pale, haggard face. Even so, he was still as handsome as ever.

Perhaps he was physically drained, too, for he had fallen asleep on the edge of the bed. I had not seen stubble on his chin in a long while, and he looked even more sloppy with that.

Was he the one who brought me here?

That thought gave me a headache. I fumbled to get out of bed. I might have moved too much, for he was soon roused awake.

When he saw me attempting to get off the bed, he got up and forced me back down. Eyes darkened, he said, “Take a good rest. The doctor will come over for an infusion shortly!”

I knitted my brows and frowned, my heart surging with irritability and restlessness. I shoved aside the arm he had placed on my shoulder and barked at him, my emotions unstable, “Ashton, I want you to stay away from me. As far as possible. Do you hear me?”

When I was with Marcus, I could keep my mood swings in check, but that was not the case with Ashton. I would take his association with Rebecca to the extremes, revealing the misery and hatred that I had buried so deeply within me.

When Ashton saw how furious I suddenly was, he seemed lost for a moment, but only for a moment. He soon composed himself and tried to calm me down. "Alright. Take it easy. I'll be leaving now. But you have to get your infusion and take your medicine later."

"Ash! I'm done with my checkup!" Rebecca's voice rang from outside the ward.

In just a second, she entered my ward with her medical records in hand. When she saw me, her lips curled upwards, and very gently, she said, "Oh, Scarlett, you're awake. Are you feeling better?"

I did not want to see her, especially her bulging belly, the image of which cut into me like a sharp knife. I felt a stabbing pain every time I see it.

The agony of that night drifted into my mind, filling my heart with hatred. I gritted my teeth. The depression was killing me. I picked up a random object from the bedside cabinet and, without checking what it was, I threw it at Rebecca.

The scare made Rebecca's face turn pale, but Ashton reacted quickly and took the blow in her stead. The object struck him on the back.

I gritted my teeth, still boiling with resentment. The despair in my heart took over like water bursting out of the riverbank. I wanted them dead. That was all I thought about. Anyone who had hurt me must die. I wanted them to be buried along with my baby.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 222

Glaring at Rebecca's pregnant belly, my face turned stone-cold. "Rebecca, my baby is dead! Don't think you'll get away with it! You, and your mother, will get what's coming!"

"Scarlett, you mad woman! What nonsense is that?" Rebecca dropped her façade entirely following my threat.

My anger contained, I clenched both my fists tight. "Mad? When your mother did what she did, she should have considered how a madwoman such as I would retaliate against you!"

I took note of the chair next to me. Without warning, I lifted it and aimed it at Rebecca. She let out a scream.

"That's enough!" Ashton, being the strong man that he was, snatched the chair from me and glared at me in disbelief. "Scarlett, what's the matter with you? How did you become like this? We might have lost one baby, but we could always have another one."

"Ho!" I scoffed. I lifted my chin and gave him an icy stare before flashing my palm in his face. Very slowly, I said, "Ashton, you're one to talk. It's easy for you, isn't it? Giving birth. All you need to do is fire several shots. You don't have to go through ten months of hard labor!"

His eyes fell on the scar on my palm, and frowned, "How did this happen?"

I laughed, but it was much more painful than crying. Glancing at Rebecca, I resisted my tears. "How did this happen? You should ask your most precious Rebecca over there how I got this scar."

I looked back at Ashton, a lot calmer this time, and continued, "Ashton, do you know how our baby died? That night, he tried so desperately to get out of me, but he was not able to."

Seeing the tormented expression on his face, I suddenly realized, why do I have to suffer alone? Why is it only my burden to bear? "Ashton, do you know? When I was abducted, I tried calling you over and over again, hoping that you would come and save us. But no matter how many times I called, your phone was always turned off. Ashton, do you know how desperate I was?"

He wanted to say something, but I interrupted him with a snort. "You don't know. I believe, at that time, you should be admiring your dear princess, celebrating her birthday. At that time, you must have prepared a wonderful gift for her."

"Scarlett!" He yelled, his voice hoarse. "I left my phone in the company. I really didn't know."

"Exactly. You didn't know!" I sneered. "You have no idea that I was locked up in a warehouse, with my arms and legs tied up. You don't know how I felt when my baby tried so hard to come out, but I couldn't help him. You don't know how I felt when he slowly stopped breathing inside of me..."

I began to choke. I could not go on. But as Ashton's face got paler and more frightful, all of a sudden, I felt better because I was not the only one in pain anymore.

I cracked a smile. "Ashton, do you know what it feels like to have a baby die inside you? Do you know what the baby looked like when it was taken out? Do you know how it felt like to be suffocated to death?"

"That's enough!" On the verge of breaking down, he covered his face with his hands as his tall body gradually crouched down to the floor. In front of me now kneeled a helpless and fragile man, visibly in pain.

I felt better seeing him like this. Then, I turned to Rebecca, whose face had gone pale, and sneered, "How is it, Rebecca? Do you feel more at ease after listening to my story? The money you and your mother spent had been worth it!"

"Scarlett, what are you babbling about?" Rebecca raised her voice, fuming. "What makes you think my mother and I were behind it?"

I cackled. "Why are you so eager to deny it? You have caused such a huge uproar. Do you really think I won't be able to find anything about the culprit? Does the Moore family really think they are so invincible that they can bury the truth?"

Rebecca was so terrified that she backed away, her mouth hanging open as though in a trance. "I didn't do it!"

Ashton turned to look at her with an extremely icy glare, "So your family's behind it?"

Rebecca shook her head, her body trembling non-stop, "No! That's not what I meant!"

I did not want to see how she would put on airs, so I exited the ward. Ashton wanted to run after me, but Rebecca stopped him. In tears, she pleaded, "Ashton, you have to believe me. I have absolutely nothing to do with this. I don't know anything..."

I was not familiar with K City, so after I got out of the hospital, I did not know how to get home.

Looking at the crowds, I had no clue where I should go from here. I had neither phone nor cash on me, and I was afraid that Ashton would catch up.

Along the way, I kept asking the passers-by for directions. By the time I reached Central Park residence, my feet were worn out.

When I got home and took off my shoes, I had already bled a fair amount.

Bang! The door slammed open. Marcus was still panting when he saw me. My appearance stunned him, if only for an instant, for he soon pulled me up and into his arms.

"It's been a day and a night. Where have you been? Why didn't you give me a call?"

I was stunned by his reaction. My heart leaped when I only realized his feelings for me in hindsight. I seemed to be in trouble.

After what seemed like an eternity, he released me. Next, he composed himself, gazed at me, and said, "Where did you go? Why didn't you come back after one night?"

"I don't know why, but I ran out. Then, when I came to, I was already in the hospital." I mumbled, omitting the part about Ashton.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 223

He nodded with a sigh. "You're safe. That's what matters." He looked down at my bloody feet. A frown crossed his face. "You walked all the way here?"

I nodded, too, my head hanging low. "My phone's not with me, and I don't have any money. I can't get a taxi!"

“Can’t you call me to get you?” He closed his eyes in frustration and then sighed. “Forget it. I didn’t think this through.”

He led me to the sofa and went to get the first aid kit. Then he knelt on the ground, placed my foot on his knee, and started cleaning the wound.

When the cotton swab came into contact with the wound, I winced from the pain and sank back into the sofa. He let out a loose sigh. “It’ll be over soon!”

To reduce my pain, he blew on it several times while applying the ointment. I got a little distracted seeing him at work.

I should not be staying with him. Sally was right. If word got out that there was something between us, the Fullers and the White family would be subjected to public opinion. The outcome would be much more horrifying than what we imagined.

“What’s on your mind?” He said, looking my way as he kept the first aid kit.

I retracted my feet as I watched him put away the kit. And then I watched him sit next to me. I watched him pour me a glass of water.

There was a pause before I answered, “Marcus, you... don’t have to come here again!”

He paused, his dark eyes gazing at me. “What do you mean?”

“Thank you for taking care of me all this time. If there’s anything you need in the future, I won’t hesitate to help you. But for now, Aunt Sally’s right. You and I are but a single man and a single woman. We have such a close relationship... and if anyone with ill intentions starts to spread rumors, both the Fullers and the White family will be dragged into the mess.”

I should not have said those words. I should not have said them so bluntly.

But what had been said could not be unsaid.

His face hardened, looking rather grim. “What are you worried about?”

I pinched my own palms as I spoke, "I owe you too much. We can't keep going like this!"

"I don't care!" He exclaimed as he looked at me with mixed emotions. "Scarlett, if you're worried about what other people will say, then I can stay away from you. But know that you only have one other option, and that is going back to Ashton. Otherwise, I can't leave you alone here."

I kept my head low as I muttered. "Don't worry. I'll be fine. I... can't deal with pain, and I'm afraid of heights!"

Even if I considered suicide, I might not have the courage to commit it. I was awfully afraid of pain.

He was still staring at me, his eyes unreadable. "There's no way to hide it. I can never hide it now!"

I looked at him in alarm, not understanding what he said, "What does that mean?"

He shook his head, chuckling. "Let's talk about it when you feel better. Right now, the Independence Day celebration is coming to an end. I'll be real busy soon. I won't have as much time to spend with you. You'll have to take care of yourself from this point forward."

I nodded. Exhaustion and the desire for sleep were beginning to creep on me. The medicine I had taken must have come into effect.

I rose and announced, "I'm going to rest!" Then, off to the bedroom, I went.

I had a dreamless sleep that night!

It was several days later when I learned that Ashton had been coming to the residence. Because my emotions were still unstable, Marcus hardly let me go out.

I believed he really understood me inside and out. He knew how to keep my mood in check. And he certainly got busy after Independence Day.

On the other hand, I had started working for the White Corporation. Marcus had arranged for me to work in project management. Since I just started, there were many aspects of the job that I knew nothing about. Therefore, he arranged an assistant to help me.

Working on projects was different from other jobs. It was almost impossible to have fixed working hours because I had just started. Hence, I usually kept myself busy until late at night.

Benjamin had been admitted to the hospital because of a stroke, so Marcus got the assistant to take me home.

These days, I could manage well on my own. He had little to worry about me.

Lindsay, my assistant, dropped me off at the residential entrance. Before leaving, she told me, "Ms. Stovall, Mr. White wanted me to give you this. He also reminds you to eat well."

I nodded as I took over the documents from her and got out of the car. It was only a five-minute walk from the entrance to the residential building. I walked slowly, thinking about the new project along the way.

Marcus already had a company abroad, but for now, he might prefer to develop domestically. Both were tech companies, which made me think of OrbitTech in J City. They had excellent technicians.

The quality of their products was guaranteed too. The one thing I worried about was their management issue. The White Corporation was a listed company. It would be a wise choice if the company could acquire OrbitTech.

I was very engrossed in my thoughts when the phone rang. It was Jackson.

I had been calling him almost every day for some time now, but I could never get through. Macy should be going into labor anytime soon. I wondered how they were doing.

Now that he had finally called, I quickly picked it up. "Jackson, how's Macy? How are you two doing? Has she delivered the baby?"

On the other end of the phone, Jackson probably got caught off guard when he heard my voice. There was a long pause before he eventually spoke. "She's fine. The baby's fine. It's a girl. So... where are you? How's your baby?"

My heart ached. I was beginning to feel sick. I took a detour to the nearest resting spot and sat down. "I'm fine. Where are you? Why can't I contact you at all? Where's Macy? Why can't I get through her phone?"

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 224

“She’s doing great. She’s in postpartum confinement now and is caring wholeheartedly for her child. That’s why she probably didn’t have time to answer your call.” I had a nagging feeling that he sounded weird, but I couldn’t put my finger on what it was.

So I replied, “Then where are you guys now?”

I could vaguely hear the voice of a kid crying over the phone. It brought tears to my eyes, and my heart clenched in pain

“We’re still in the countryside. We’ll come to visit you in K City once Macy is feeling better.”

I quickly nodded and couldn’t stop the feeling of happiness from welling up in me. At least Macy’s child is doing good.

He was probably busy taking care of his child. That was why he hung up hastily after talking for a bit more.

As autumn approached, the temperature in K City dropped by the day. I already felt cold even though I had only been sitting outside for a while.

After taking a few steps, I stopped walking when I saw the familiar black Jeep with the car plate number JA888C on it. Ashton.

What is he doing here?

Instinctively, I turned and walked away.

However, I only managed to take a few steps when he grabbed hold of my arm. “When do you plan to stop hiding from me, Scarlett?”

My body froze, and I started to feel suffocated. "Let's get divorced, Ashton."

Not only was I running away from my problems, but I was also hiding from him. I just couldn't continue living with that man anymore.

Initially, I could accept the fact that he didn't love me. I could also tolerate the complicated relationship he had with Rebecca and the way they flirted with each other.

As long as I could keep the child, I was able to keep going. Even if he didn't love me, he would still love the child since it was his.

But now, I had lost our child, and I couldn't find a reason to stay with him anymore. I didn't want to lie to myself, nor did I want to go berserk whenever I saw him and Rebecca being intimate.

"Divorce?" Hurt flashed across his face as he added, "Must it end this way, Scarlett?"

I nodded. My face looked much calmer by then, but I was hurting inside. "I can't go on with you anymore, Ashton. I married you back then all because of my gratitude toward George for taking care of Grandma and me. I was willing to repay him at all costs. But now that I've gone through so much, I've already done my part. So just let me go now."

A cold smile appeared on his lips upon hearing that. "So you married me because you wanted to repay him?"

"Yes," I said with a nod.

Ashton's face turned ugly. "Well, since you married me to repay Grandpa, you should finish what you started by staying with me for the rest of your life. Anyway, I never planned to break up or leave you."

I was stunned by his words and was close to an emotional breakdown. "Can't you understand, Ashton? I hate you. I don't want to be with you, and I don't want to see you!"

He narrowed his dark eyes, hiding the pain in them. "Then get used to it slowly. Get your revenge since you hate me. The best way to take revenge is to pester me, isn't it?"

"You're crazy!" I broke down and screamed. "You'll get your karma when the time comes. I don't want to dirty my own hands."

With that said, I walked toward the door. He quickly followed suit. "Marcus wouldn't be able to take care of you forever. Go back with me!"

He grabbed my arm, but I didn't want him to touch me. I couldn't care less even if I fell down the stairs as the only thought in my mind was to push him away.

Realizing that he was falling backward, Ashton was afraid that I would be dragged along with him, so he quickly released my arm.

I watched expressionlessly as he collapsed onto the floor and turned to open the door before stepping into the elevator.

Once I was home, I quickly ate my medicine to control my emotions. Then, I got into bed and waited for sleep to come.

Suddenly, my phone rang, and I answered when I realized that it was Marcus calling, "Hello?"

"Remember to eat. Don't just go to sleep immediately." His words made me suspect if I was being spied on.

I couldn't stop myself from asking, "How did you know I was going to sleep?"

"Because I know you too well." He chuckled.

I bit my lips as I continue lying in bed. "I took my medicine earlier. Now I'm too lazy to move."

"Why did you take them all of a sudden?" His voice turned serious.

"I met Ashton downstairs a while ago," I said.

Since my emotions had been more stable these days, I didn't need to take my medicine anymore.

He kept silent for a moment before saying, "There's food in the fridge. At least eat a little before you sleep. Otherwise, you might not be able to fall asleep at night."

I nodded and took a glance at the clock. It was only around seven. After some thought, his words actually made sense. If I slept now, I might not be able to fall back asleep if I woke up at night.

I went into the kitchen to get something to eat once we hung up. Marcus must have expected that I would be too lazy to cook. Hence, he prepared a meal for me beforehand and left it in the fridge. All I needed to do was reheat it.

The medicine started to kick in after I took a few bites. I quickly went to bed and fell asleep soon after.

After some time, I was woken up by the sound of thunder, trembling from the cold when I opened my eyes. As thunder roared outside, I realized that I had forgotten to close the windows before going to bed, which explained how the cold rain invaded my room.

Fumbling around in the dark to get my phone, I looked at the time to find that it was only midnight. I couldn't help but frown. Now that I was awake, I might not be able to fall asleep anymore.

Then, I noticed that there were multiple missed call notifications shown on the phone screen. Even though there wasn't a caller ID, I knew that the familiar numbers belonged to Ashton.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 225

Irritated, I was about to turn off my phone when another call came in. I frowned as I answered the call, "Are you still not satisfied with how miserable I am now, Ashton? Do you want to see me die?"

"You know what I actually want, Scarlett. If I could stay by your side..." His voice was hoarse, and I could vaguely hear the sound of rain over the speaker.

Feeling more irked, I had a strong urge to hang up immediately, but he added, "I'm downstairs."

I was stunned. The next thing I knew, I was walking to the balcony. The moment I looked down, I saw Ashton standing in the rain by the lamppost downstairs.

Instantly, I was infuriated. "Are you crazy, Ashton?" Is he trying to torture himself by standing in the rain in the middle of the night?

But he chuckled. "You're angry. Does that mean you're worried about me?"

What the...

He's crazy!

"You need to see a doctor, Ashton." I hung up after saying that, a wave of frustration rising in me.

It was still pouring outside, and it wasn't warm like the rain during summer. I was worried as he would definitely get sick if he stayed out there any longer.

After thinking about it, I gave Jared a call, but it went unanswered, so I called Joe. After some time, he finally picked up.

"What's wrong, Scarlett?"

I pursed my lips. "Ashton is harming himself at the residence near Central Park. You'd better come and get him if you don't want him to die. And please tell him that if he wants to die, he should do it far away from here. I don't want to watch him die. Thanks."

"What the hell! I knew you weren't a good person! You—" I turned off my phone before he could finish his sentence. Joe was known for having a sharp tongue, and I didn't want to hear him insult me.

There was no sign of the rain stopping anytime soon, but Ashton remained rooted to his spot nonetheless. Joe finally arrived to pick him up after half an hour.

I was too high up in the building to hear what they were talking about, but I watched as they fought for a little before they left.

After that, I drew the curtains shut and sat on the bed, knowing well that I wouldn't be able to sleep anymore.

The next day at dawn, I got out of bed and went straight to the company after washing up.

Marcus came early in the morning. When he saw that I wasn't in good spirits, he frowned and asked, "Didn't you sleep last night?"

I nodded. "Ashton was downstairs. It was so annoying."

His brows knitted together but said nothing else about it. He then changed the topic, "Did you read through the document I gave you yesterday?"

I froze immediately. It was all because of Ashton's sudden appearance that I forgot about my work. Without a choice, I replied truthfully, "I forgot."

Rendered speechless, he gave me a helpless smile. "There's a meeting that you have to attend later. You'll have to think on your feet since you didn't read the document."

Me?

Alright then!

I nodded and glanced at him. "What is it about?"

He got up and poured me a glass of water before telling his secretary to hand me my breakfast. "I'll talk you through it as you eat."

I was beginning to suspect that he was worried that I would starve to death. That was why he was always trying to feed me something.

I started to eat after taking a seat on the sofa. "Go on."

"It's about the research and development of new technology. White Corporation made a fortune by selling automotive and electrical appliances. A few years ago, when the market for new technology blew up, many companies were trying to benefit from it. White Corporation managed to get a slice of the pie, mainly focusing on phones and computers. Currently, the company intends to dabble in the AI field. However, the IT Department of the company has been stumped. That's why we need to discuss whether or not we should continue pursuing AI technology. And if we do, how should we promote it? Besides, we would also need to hire a group of skilled technicians to work on the project."

I nodded before stuffing a few mouthfuls of bread into my mouth. "Are all the current technicians in the IT Department the same ones as before?"

He shook his head and said, "No. We spend a fortune to hire the best technicians to work for us every year. But we haven't managed to get any results so far."

"The meeting starts in an hour, right? Can I meet these people first?"

Marcus was stunned by my question, but he nodded nonetheless. Seeing that I was almost done eating, he got up and said, "Of course."

I followed him out of the office. White Corporation valued AI a lot and had reserved two floors just to do research in this field.

Since it was a research laboratory, the protocols for the entry and exit of staff were stringent. Marcus and I had to put on protective gear before going in.

I glanced around at the equipment around me but didn't really understand their usage, so I immediately went to meet the technicians.

Since there wasn't much time, we only talked for a little before Marcus and I had to return to the office.

"How was it? Do you have any afterthoughts?" he asked with a slight smile as he plopped down into his seat.

I only answered after giving it some thought, "Why are all the people you hired foreigners? And why do they have so much authority?"

He raised a brow. "So far, there aren't many great technicians in our country. Since they have the skills and qualifications, of course I have to give them more benefits."

"But have you ever thought about the fact that AI is being researched and studied by every country? What if the foreigners return to their own countries with these research results?" Although I knew that I might be wrong, I still couldn't help but worry about it. After all, we weren't the only ones who loved our own country.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 226

His brows were knitted tightly as he drummed the table with his fingers and only looked at me after a long time. "We've considered this possibility previously, but if we want to get involved in the AI field, we need their help. Never hire the person you doubt and never doubt the person you hire."

Nodding, I took a glance at him. "If I can find a batch of elite local technicians and guarantee to make a breakthrough in the AI field, would you dare to give it a try?"

He froze for a moment before letting out a smile. "How can you be so sure?"

"I'm not, but I want to give it a shot!" If this project is successful, I'd probably have a way to go up against the Moore family.

After all, most of the Moore family's success in the business world was attributed to technology.

Marcus kept silent for a moment before he nodded. "Go ahead."

Almost all of the higher-ups of White Corporation were in the meeting room, including Sally. When she saw me, she furrowed her brows slightly, but her expression was back to normal almost immediately.

Marcus told me to take a seat, then got up to turn on the projector. "Let me introduce the person who just came in with me. This is Scarlett Stovall. I have appointed her as White Corporation's project director, and she will be in charge of the company's AI project from now on."

A commotion broke out in the meeting room in an instant. Someone questioned, "Mr. White, even though the project director's position is currently empty, White Corporation isn't like other small companies. Not anyone can take on this role. Besides, we're all here today to discuss if we should continue with the research on AI. We haven't even finished our

discussion and yet you have already made a decision. Don't you think you're being a little hasty, Mr. White?"

Marcus nodded his head slowly and raised his brows. "Am I?" He smirked, showing his unruly side. "It seems like all of you are used to being overambitious. That's why you think the people you recommended are more competent, isn't it? This isn't a problem for me. If you feel that you have someone who is much more capable than Scarlett to take on this responsibility, you can make your recommendations anytime. My only goal is for AI to be introduced to our country's market within a year."

Someone replied, "Does that mean we won't be discussing whether we're continuing with the AI project?"

He nodded. "Yes. Within a year, if all of you decide that Scarlett isn't suitable to manage this project, you can recommend someone else. But I expect to see results in a year. Otherwise, don't waste my time."

"Alright!" Sally said. The soft demeanor she had at the White residence was nowhere to be seen, and she resembled a lady boss as she spoke. "We've already invested billions in this AI project after all. Not only that, but we've also spent so much time and energy on it, so of course it would be great news if Ms. Stovall is capable of producing the results we want. And if she isn't, we can just cancel this project."

For a second, the people in the meeting room exchanged glances with each other before they started to discuss among themselves. After a moment, someone finally said, "Since Ms. Fuller has said so, let's just give it a try. It would be great if we manage to achieve our goal. However, if we fail, half of White Corporation's assets will go to waste, and Ms. Stovall will have to compensate for that."

I got up and assured them, "If I can't make any progress with the AI project after a year, I will bear the losses that White Corporation suffered due to the project."

"Hah!" someone snorted. "Which prominent family are you from, Ms. Stovall? Did you come to White Corporation to experience life? White Corporation invests at least a billion per year in AI research. It's easy for you to say that you'll bear the losses for it. But the corporation will still be the one paying if you leave by then."

Unperturbed by his harsh words, I put on a faint smile. "I'm willing to hand over HiTech to you as collateral. If none of you believe me, we can sign a contract. In the case that our AI research doesn't make any progress after a year, then HiTech will be placed under the ownership of White Corporation through acquisition. How about it?"

Even though HiTech wasn't considered a big company, the new products they developed were hot sellers, and the source of Fuller Corporation's profit came mostly from HiTech.

Back when George put HiTech under my name, he wanted to make sure that Ashton and I would be entangled for the rest of our lives. If I wanted to get a divorce, I had to make sure that I wasn't the legal owner of the company anymore. But this process was extremely troublesome.

Everyone in the room began murmuring among themselves except for Sally. She glanced at me as she said, "From what I know, Ms. Stovall, even though you're the wife of Fuller Corporation's president, you don't have the rights over HiTech. Don't you think you're being a little too ambitious here?"

"You might not know this, Ms. Fuller, but while HiTech is indeed under the Fuller Corporation, George already arranged a lawyer to transfer the company to me before he passed on two years ago. To be precise, I'm the legal owner of HiTech. Although it is under the Fuller Corporation, it doesn't legally belong to the Fuller family."

Her face darkened, but she said nothing else.

All of them could not find anything to pick on after they heard what I said. If HiTech was under the White Corporation, there would be more technical resources available. At the same time, the company would rise to a whole new level.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 227

No one would reject such a great advantage.

After leaving the meeting room, Sally blocked my path and said, "Let's have a chat, Scarlett."

She probably wants to talk about HiTech. I nodded and took a glance at Marcus. "Let's get lunch together later."

He nodded. "I'll wait for you."

The woman frowned unhappily when she saw our exchange. After Marcus left, she asked, "Shall we talk in my office?"

I nodded. "Alright."

Her office was nicely decorated with lots of flowers. Once we were in there, she gestured for me to sit down and poured me a cup of coffee.

Then, she sat down in her chair. Instead of talking about HiTech, she asked, "How are you and Ashton doing recently?"

Since she was an elder to me, it didn't seem inappropriate for her to ask that question. I answered indifferently, "We don't meet, nor do we poke our noses into each other's business."

She nodded but didn't say anything in response. After pausing for a moment, Sally asked, "What are your plans now?"

"I'm not sure yet." I had been giving her somewhat lukewarm reactions so far, and she seemed unsatisfied with them. However, she didn't say much about it. "Both you and Ashton are husband and wife. No matter what mistake the other party made, you should solve the problem and stay by each other's side. You shouldn't hold grudges and force the other party to leave!"

She harped on earnestly, "I know that you've gone through a lot, Scarlett. But you have to talk it out. We're a family, not enemies. You shouldn't carry all these burdens alone. You can hate Ashton all you want, but you're still his wife. And when you're living under the same roof, you have to solve the problems you're facing. You can't just run from them, Scarlett."

I lowered my gaze as I started feeling annoyed. She was right, but I was afraid that I wouldn't be able to stand living in the same house as Ashton.

Seeing that Sally was about to say something else, I quickly said, "Aunt Sally, we're at work right now. Let's talk about private stuff at home, alright? You called me here to talk about the company's matters, right?"

There wasn't any problem with what she said. In fact, I could understand her reasoning and even agreed that she was right. But things were always easier said than done.

Sally stopped talking about this matter when she saw that I was getting impatient. After sighing slightly, she said, "Alright, then. We'll talk about the company's matters. Do you know what the consequences would be if you use HiTech as collateral and there is no progress after a year?"

I raised my brows. "Are you thinking for the Fuller family or the White family? If you're concerned about the former, don't worry, Aunt Sally. I obviously already have a plan in mind if I had the guts to make that suggestion. Besides, George already handed over the company to me before he passed on, so I have full discretion over it. It's my own business, to put it bluntly."

A displeased look appeared on her face once I was done talking. "Dad handed over HiTech to you only because he trusted you and hoped that you could make it a better company. He also wanted you and Ashton to be together for the rest of your lives. He didn't give you the company just to let you put it at stake so hastily," she said in a low voice.

Seeing that she was getting worked up, I got to my feet and retorted, "You said it yourself that George trusts me. Since it's my decision to make, it's not something that other people or even George can control. After all, never doubt the person you hire."

"You—"

"Sorry, I still have an appointment in the afternoon, so I'll take my leave now." I wasn't a good person, and I had no right to judge whether someone was good or bad. After all, everyone's experience in life was different. Therefore, I could only endure the hardships I experienced. As for everyone else, I would never be able to fathom their suffering, nor did I want to.

I headed straight to Marcus' office after leaving Sally's.

The man was in his seat, looking really bored.

Upon seeing me, he raised a brow as he asked, "What did you talk about?"

"Relationships!" I sat down on the couch and gulped down a few mouthfuls of water to suppress the irritation I was feeling.

His lips twitched. "Did she manage to convince you?"

I looked up at him and replied, "Do you think I would be convinced so easily?"

He pursed his lips. "That's hard to say."

Marcus paused for a while before adding, "I know you really love Ashton. Wouldn't you regret it if you just gave him up like that?"

I rolled my eyes at him. "How were you able to tell that I love him?"

He shrugged and got up before saying, "Would you have pushed yourself to this point if you didn't?"

Marcus walked over to me and reached out his hand. "These are the information of the two men from that night. I'll continue investigating if you really want me to."

Then, he handed me a file. I was stunned for a moment. Unable to contain the frustration I was feeling, I quickly opened up the file to read the documents. It was as though the old wound in my heart was about to be ripped open again.

After reading up their files, I couldn't stop myself from saying, "Both of them have their own families. Do you think they would stop being so cruel if they experienced the pain of losing a child?"

Marcus pursed his lips as his gaze landed on my cold face. He heaved a sigh and asked, "What do you want to do?"

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 228

I stared at the files for a long moment before keeping them. "Just continue investigating. I have nothing to do with them. There must be a reason for them to attack me."

He nodded and paused briefly before adding, "Ashton seems to be investigating this matter too."

"It involves his child after all, so it's quite normal for him to investigate this," I sneered.

"Let's go. What do you want to eat?" he asked as he took his car keys.

With no particular food in mind, I stood up and answered, "Anything is fine."

After we entered the elevator, he said, "Are you using HiTech as a stake so that you can go against the Moore family with White Corporation?"

"I can't believe you noticed. Are you going to stop me?" I asked with a smile.

Frowning, he said, "The Moore family isn't as simple as we think. It's troublesome enough dealing with Cameron, let alone Zachary."

I nodded but remained adamant about my decision. "So what? I can't accept what happened to me."

Marcus knew that he wouldn't be able to change my mind no matter what he said, so he stopped talking.

Once we left the company and got into the car, he began driving without saying another word.

He always had great taste in food. When we stopped at a French restaurant, I took a glance at it before saying to him, "You should write a book about the food in K City. I think lots of people will like it."

Marcus grinned at my words. "You're just going to assume that they serve good food even before you start eating?"

I nodded. "This place is quite low-key, and the environment here is serene. No one would be able to find this place if they weren't purposely looking for it. Normally, people who open up places like this don't lack money, and their boss must be quite a sentimental person. If I'm not wrong, the chef here must be the boss."

His lips curled into a faint smile as he locked the car. "You're right!"

As I followed him into the yard, a waiter greeted us and brought us to the second floor. The restaurant wasn't spacious, but there were lots of flowers and plants in the yard. It was quiet and had an artistic vibe to it.

Marcus didn't ask what I wanted when it was time to order. Instead, he took the initiative and picked the dishes. Normally, he would choose unique dishes while making sure that they were to my liking.

I had a feeling that whoever became Marcus's girlfriend in the future would definitely be spoiled.

This man was really good at taking care of people.

He handed the menu back to the waiter and said, "We'll have tea, please."

"Alright. Please wait for a moment."

After the waiter left, I propped my chin up with my hand and said with confidence, "You'll definitely have a daughter in the future."

Stunned by my remark, he smiled and asked, "And how did you know that?"

I nodded. "Because you take such good care of people. You must've been a playboy with lots of mistresses in your past life."

"Hah!" He burst into laughter. "Since when did you become a fortune-teller?"

"Since... a long time ago!" Out of the corner of my eye, I saw three people who just came upstairs. Immediately, I shut my mouth.

Noticing my odd reaction, Marcus looked over too. Seeing that it was Rebecca, Cameron, and John, he frowned and glanced at me. "Do you know all of them?"

I nodded and shifted my gaze from them, my face turning grim.

When John saw me, he quickly walked over to us, looking flustered. Grabbing my arm, he said somewhat emotionally, "Where have you been all this while?"

I furrowed my brows and pried his hand off. "I hid away to give birth. Where else could I go?"

"Where's your child then?" he asked with a frown.

"It's dead!" Starting to get frustrated, I shot a glance at Marcus.

Immediately, he got up and pulled John away, then suggested, "Mr. Stovall, we're still eating now. It seems that you're also quite busy now. How about we find a chance to talk once you're done?"

However, the latter's face was icy cold as he looked at me. "Since when were you so close with him?"

I chuckled in amusement. "Since when did you care so much?"

Right then, Cameron and Rebecca walked over with smiles on their faces. The former's gaze landed on my belly. "Ms. Stovall, you managed to maintain such a great figure even after giving birth. I'm so envious."

I pursed my lips and clenched my fists. While suppressing my anger, I answered, "Ms. Anderson, you should pray that Ms. Larson can be in good shape like me after giving birth. Oh, right. I paid great attention during labor. I will share what I did with Ms. Larson. As long as she follows the instructions, she'll be able to maintain a great figure too."

Rebecca didn't know what I was implying, so she was baffled. On the other hand, Cameron's expression changed drastically upon hearing what I said because she knew the implicit meaning behind my words.

Her previous friendly facade disappeared as she stood in front of her daughter and replied in an icy tone, "There's no need. Not everyone is as lucky as you are, Ms. Stovall. It's all a matter of fate. Besides, Rebecca has been very fortunate all her life. As her mother, I would do my best to provide her with whatever she wants."

Hah...

People who still have their mothers around really are treated like treasures!

I smiled at that. "I hope that Ms. Larson would always be able to live a good life and never have to suffer..."

"Of course!" With that said, Cameron dragged Rebecca away. She took a glance at John and said, "Mr. Stovall, it seems that we have nothing to discuss anymore."

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 229

John was adamant that he had overheard something important as he looked at Cameron and said, "I won't keep you any longer, Ms. Anderson."

After Cameron and Rebecca left, John sat beside me and pestered me about the reason behind my two-month disappearance.

Miffed, I couldn't be bothered to explain to him. Hence, I turned to Marcus and changed the topic. "Let's order some takeaways and go home!"

Marcus nodded in response. Just as we were heading out of the restaurant, John blocked our path and asked, "Scarlet, what's wrong with you? Do you know how much trouble you've caused us just to search for you? Someone even..."

"Mr. Stovall, if you really care about her, I'd advise you to stop pestering her. The hardships she had to go through are way tougher than what you can imagine," said Marcus.

After grabbing the takeaways, Marcus held my hand and escorted me to the car as he saw that my face was getting pale.

"If you want to badger her to death, then be my guest." Marcus took a glance at John who was still on our tail.

Ignoring him, John grabbed my hand. "I thought your illness has been cured. Why is it relapsing?" asked John.

He then turned his attention to Marcus and questioned in a cold tone, "What's going on here? I thought she has fully recovered."

Perplexed, Marcus looked at me curiously and queried, "You've had this illness before?"

I nodded and said to John, "I don't want to get into it now. Let me get back home first, okay?"

Since I didn't bring my medicine, I had a hard time keeping my emotions in check.

John nodded and gave Marcus a minatory look. "You don't need to look at me like that. Ask Ashton if you have any questions," scoffed Marcus.

Having said that, he quickly drove off, leaving John in the dust.

Since Marcus was driving at high speed, we were home in no time. After taking my medicine, I looked at him and asked, "Are the two of them still in our hands?"

Marcus was stunned for a while before nodding. "I've already ordered some of our guys to keep an eye on them."

"I'd like to meet them now!" I stated. In order to deal a blow to the Moore family, I must start with Rebecca.

He pondered for a bit and replied, "Okay!"

I wasn't worried about my illness acting up again as I had taken medicine to stabilize my emotions. And so, I went straight to the suburbs with Marcus.

The warehouse was nothing different from my vivid memories of it. Upon seeing it, I reminded myself repeatedly not to break down.

"You don't have to force yourself. We can come back here some other day." Marcus stared at me with a concerned look on his face.

I shook my head, then took a deep breath and said, "It's okay. Let's just get it over with!"

When the lights were switched on, I was able to see the interior of the warehouse clearly. The warehouse wasn't that big, and there were large piles of junk in it.

Someone had already cleaned up the bloodstains on the floor, and the glass shards were gone too.

Marcus asked one of the bodyguards to bring me a chair so that I could rest my legs. Shortly after, the two people were brought in front of me.

On the night of the incident, I recalled seeing two men who were wearing hats. However, since both of them were in disguise, I only had a vague impression of how they looked like.

Marcus ordered his men to bring the men closer for me to take a good look at their faces. Surprisingly, the two of them didn't seem like vicious and violent people at all. In fact, both of them looked trustworthy and sincere.

That being said, looks could be deceiving as they were without a doubt the ones who murdered my child.

"Ms. Stovall, this isn't our fault. We were just following orders. We..."

The two of them must've been tortured for quite a while before coming here. That's why they are so desperate to be vindicated.

"Are you that deprived of money?" I chuckled.

Both of them nodded like little chickens pecking on the ground.

“Oh, I see,” I murmured nonchalantly. “Since you two are just doing things for money, that means you guys would do something for me too as long as I pay both of you. Right?” I queried.

The two of them exchanged glances before turning their gazes toward me and asked tentatively, “What do you need us to do?”

“Just do some acting!” I responded. After taking a look at the surroundings, I calmly said to them, “I want you two to act out the incident that night. And after you guys are done, it would nice if each of you could give me your confessions as well.

Upon hearing the second request of mine, their faces immediately turned pale. “Ms. Stovall, we could re-enact the scenes for you. As for the confession part, we’ve already been paid. Therefore, we can’t expose our client’s identity. That would violate the trust between us,” one of them responded.

I nodded as I fiddled with my phone out of boredom and said, “Well, if that’s the case, then there’s no point for you two to act out the scenes. I assume that both of you have wives and kids, right? How about this, I’ll return the favor of what you guys did to me by getting rid of your...”

Before finishing my statement, I turned to look at Marcus and feigned a smile. “I don’t want to kill anyone though, especially kids. Is there anything worse than death that I can put them through?” I queried.

Marcus thought about it for a while before responding, “How about chopping their limbs off or make them...”

“You two are callous b*stards!” Both of them were getting riled up and tried to lunge themselves toward us but to no avail as they were pinned down by the bodyguards.

Although I was livid after hearing what these hypocrites said, I managed to retain my sangfroid before uttering, “Oh, so we’re the heartless ones, huh? Said the guys who left the child and me in my belly to rot in this abandoned warehouse just for a few hundred thousand. I was about to give birth to my child, but you pieces of sh*t tied my legs and blocked his way out. Do you know how he died in the end? He was suffocated to death in

my belly. The two of you should be grateful that I didn't ask you to pay me back with your children's lives. So what are you guys whining about?"

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 230

"Well, if you guys still don't want to cooperate, we might have to get our hands dirty. It should be easy enough to get away with a few murders since you guys were able to do it," I said in a serious tone while staring at the two of them menacingly.

"Please don't! Ms. Stovall, we'll do anything you ask. Just leave our wives and kids out of this. They're innocent and innocuous. The blame is all on us. If revenge is what you want, then you can take our lives instead. We'll give you anything that you want!"

"Yes, we'll do anything as long as you leave our families out of this."

The two men were acting pitiful, which disgusted me. I calmed myself down before looking at Marcus and suggested, "Since they both agreed, let's have them re-enact the scene!"

Marcus nodded and brought out the actress who was going to play a pregnant lady. She was dressed in the clothes that I wore on the day of the incident. The actress we found already had some resemblance to me in terms of looks and body figure. But after a few touches by the make-up artist, the identity between us was surreal.

To top it off, Marcus also ordered his men to bring out the same mirror from that night.

After setting everything up, the warehouse returned to how it was during the incident two months ago. As for the stormy inclement weather on that night, we prepared additional lighting and sound effects to reproduce the same ambiance.

Since I didn't want to cast my mind back to the incident, I only gave the actress a laconic explanation of what I went through that night. After that, I told Marcus to get some of his men to escort me home as I couldn't care less about watching the play. The video recording of the play was what I actually wanted because I could use it as evidence.

As for the two men's confession, I already knew who their client was, so there was no need to hear it from them. I wanted their admission because I needed testimonies that I could hand over to the police. With this, I could make sure that they were indicted for the crimes that they committed and given the fitting punishment.

However, I have to admit that people do change after going through certain experiences. We become stronger as we slowly become immune to the things that once hurt us. Those who are vulnerable will learn to steel their hearts and move on.

After arriving at my residence, I went to have a quick shower and then passed out on my bed. It had been quite a while since I had such a good night's sleep.

It was pure hogwash that people couldn't sleep after doing a bad deed. In fact, no bad person would ever rue the dreadful things that they had done. Rebecca and Cameron were the epitomes of such people. Even after murdering those whom they had beef with before, they were still able to sleep soundly at night. In fact, they even felt relieved that the people who got in their way were dead.

...

The next day, Marcus gave me the video recording of the play enacted by the two men while we were at White Corporation. "So, what do you plan to do next?" asked Marcus.

It was pure torture for me to watch the video recording because I felt as though I was experiencing that incident all over again. I then turned to Marcus and said, "Schedule a meeting with John as soon as possible."

"Why do you want to meet him?" asked Marcus while frowning.

I stopped the video recording and said casually, "He's a computer expert. With his help, we can get this video recording to the eyes of Rebecca anonymously. Moreover, he would definitely go against the Moore family after learning what they did to me."

"Scarlett, you've changed. It's like you'll deign to do just about anything to get what you want now." Marcus frowned again, but this time it was out of revulsion.

I chuckled a bit and aligned my eyes with his before uttering, "So you're saying that I'm just using John's feelings for my own benefit?"

Marcus furrowed his eyebrows, seemingly rather displeased. I queried, "Marcus, didn't you notice that I'm also using your feelings for me to get my revenge?"

Having heard what I said, he was overwhelmed with complicated emotions. He then let out a sigh and uttered, "I know you're feeling depressed right now, but..."

"So are you still willing to help me out?" I asked before he could finish his sentence. I could be kind and forgiving, but I wasn't a saint. If someone took away something precious from me, I would swear to do the same to them and hold a grudge in my heart until I had exacted my revenge.

After wrapping his head around my question for a while, Marcus looked at me and replied, "Whatever it is that you want to do, I'm always willing to lend you a hand. That being said, I just don't want you to have any regrets in the future."

Regrets?

After hearing what he said, I let out a laugh, tears welling up in my eyes, but I managed to recollect myself and said to him, "Look, I don't think I'll ever regret getting revenge on the Moore family. However, I think I'll probably regret having to take advantage of both you and John someday in the future. It's not like I have a choice though since the only people who can help me out are the two of you."

Marcus sighed softly in response.

The meeting of John and I happened later in the afternoon at a local cafe. I hadn't seen him in two months, and he seemed a little strained. Upon seeing my face, he looked like he was overwhelmed with guilt and sorrow.

John was rather taciturn at first. But after a while, he broke the silence between us and said, "Scarlet, that night when I received your call, I rushed over as soon as I could. But when I arrived, the only thing I saw was a burnt car outside the warehouse. I'm sorry that I took too long to get there. For the past two months, I have been blaming myself for what happened to you that night. Can you tell me what was actually going on? How did your child die?"

The painful feeling that stays in your heart and doesn't fade away no matter how much time passes is called hatred.

It took a while before I responded in a flat tone, "I can't explain to you as I don't want to evoke the painful memories of that night. Every time I bring up the topic, my head just starts hurting to the point where I can't breathe. Here, you can take a look at the video footage that was recorded by a camera found in the warehouse. The video basically covers everything that happened that night."

I played the video recording and handed the phone over to him.

While watching the video, John became angrier by the second with a menacing expression on his face. He was gripping the phone so tightly that his blood veins were showing not just on his hand but on his forehead as well.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 231

Some time had passed when John finally looked at me with misty eyes and queried, "Who did this?"

I lowered my head and tried to hold back my tears but to no avail as they flowed down my cheeks like a broken string of pearls. "Cameron and the Moore family!"

Furious, he threw the phone onto the ground, thus attracting the attention of others in the cafe.

A waitress then rushed over to our seat and asked in a timid voice, "Sir, i-is there anything that I can help you with?"

"Get out of my face!" he yelled angrily.

To prevent things from exacerbating, I turned toward the waitress and said with a smile, "Sorry to have troubled you! Everything's fine here."

With that, the waitress walked away quietly. "I'm gonna kill the two of them!" John sprang up from his seat and was about to head out, but I managed to stop him.

After regaining my composure, I turned to him and explained, "The Moore family is backed up by the mob. If I could get rid of them that easily, I would've done it myself months ago."

After hearing my statement, he sat back down and looked at me, asking. "What do you want to do then?"

I went quiet for a while before saying, "Bro, you have to help me!" It was the first time that I had addressed him in such a way instead of his name since he moved to R Province.

He was stunned in place, unable to believe what he had just heard. "Letty, what did you just call me?" An elated expression started creeping onto his face.

"Bro!" I uttered while looking him in the eye. "Bro, you're the only help I can get. No matter what happened in the past, we're still each other's only family, so please help me. The Moore family must be punished for what they did," I added.

John stared at me vacuously like a little kid. "Okay, so what do you want to do?" he asked after nodding his head.

"Just get this video to Rebecca without exposing our identity. I want her to live in constant paranoia," I replied. As the popular saying goes, torture a man's heart rather than sever his body. We'll take our time tearing her heart apart bit by bit.

He nodded and answered, "Okay!"

Since he was a computer expert, I had no qualms letting him handle the whole thing. Relaxed, I took a sip of my coffee.

"Does Ashton know about this?" asked John after he had suppressed his anger.

I lowered my gaze and nodded.

"So what do you have in mind going forward?" he continued asking while signaling the waitress to refill my coffee.

"Can you guarantee your own safety while you infiltrate Zachary's company?" I answered with another question of my own.

He was stupefied in place for a bit before asking in a gravitas manner, "Letty, you plan to involve Zachary in this as well?"

I raised my eyebrows as I replied, "Am I not supposed to?"

John pursed his lips and looked at me confusedly. "Perhaps Zachary wasn't cognizant about any of this. It might be all be planned by Cameron alone."

"So what?" I chuckled before adding, "I doubt Zachary will just sit back and watch as I torture Rebecca. After all, she's his precious daughter too."

John seemed frustrated as he asked, "But why must we infiltrate Zachary's company?"

I rested my chin on my hand before responding, "I yearn for the day when the Moore family comes crumbling down. I'd like to see just how strong their love for their daughter is when that happens."

John was bewildered after hearing what I said. He gave it some thought before switching the topic. "About you and Ashton..."

Whenever Ashton was mentioned, I would get very irritated and an extreme headache would follow afterward. In pain, I glanced at John and said, "Bro, send me back home!"

He stole a glance outside the window. "It's still early though. Do you have something to do at home?"

I nodded in response before saying, "Since I'm now the project director at the White Corporation, I'll need to go home and figure out ways to elevate the AI technology of the corporation to the next level."

He let out a smirk and teased, "So you've become more mature and intelligent, huh? I can barely recognize you now. Anyway, I'm happy for you. At least you know to protect yourself now."

I curled my lips and stared at him blankly.

After taking a sip of his coffee, John added, "The reason you're telling me all this is my specialization in computers, right? And since I own a few companies that dabble in AI technology, you knew that I would be well versed in this field."

"If you don't want to help me, it's fine. I'll just think of another approach!" I said as I shrugged.

He then gave me a subtle smile and uttered impatiently, "Just spit it out. How do you want me to help?"

"I plan to set up a meeting with the boss of OrbitTech and discuss with him about acquiring this company of his. Therefore, I'd like you to not interfere with my plan!" I said earnestly. "Bro, I know that the Moore family isn't an easy opponent to deal with. But if I successfully acquire OrbitTech and all of its assets, I'll have a higher standing at White Corporation, which in turn gives me more opportunities to do what I want!"

John couldn't help but sigh before responding, "Okay, Letty. I won't lay a hand on OrbitTech. However, you need to know that relying on just the White Corporation won't get you anywhere against the Moore family."

"But I have you, Marcus, and the Fullers behind my back too, right?" I looked at him confidently.

John paused for a bit, then lamented with a sigh, "Letty, we have been part of your plan all along, huh?"

Like I previously said, people would always change. If we had something we desperately wanted to protect or destroy, we would go to extreme lengths to achieve it.

"You can still say no if you want because it seems like I'm just using you for my own benefit," I blurted out while looking at him.

Raising his eyebrows, John replied, "Do you think that I would reject?"

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 232

I shook my head. "I won't!"

He smiled but remained silent.

For the first time, I realized that John was actually quite talkative, seeing as he'd been babbling away all afternoon. Since the matter with the AI project was settled, I wasn't in a hurry to leave either.

So, I propped my chin on my palm and listened intently to him. "Letty, all these years, I've been thinking about where I belong in the world, but you were always the one who came to my mind. So I don't think I'll ever be able to let you go."

I stared at him, not knowing what to say. In the end, I gave him a terse reply, "Just take things one step at a time."

I couldn't give him false promises about his future when my own life had already hit a dead end. If it weren't for the hatred fueling me, I would never have lived until today. Hence, I never promised anyone anything. I was selfish like that, unwilling to spare him even a sliver of hope.

Noticing the exhaustion lining my features, he asked, "Are you tired? Do you want me to take you home now?"

I nodded and left the restaurant with him.

Along the way, I started to feel drowsy. He stopped talking and played some mellow music for me to ease into slumber.

Leaning against my seat, I closed my eyes and tried to sleep. However, it proved impossible. More often than not, I lay wide awake in bed, so falling asleep in a car was out of the question.

Even though I was sleepy, I just couldn't drift off. When the car stopped, I instinctively opened my eyes, only to see John getting out with a dark look on his face.

Ashton's towering figure was planted firmly in front of the car. He looked slightly haggard and seemed to have waited at the entrance of the residential area for a long time.

John had a lot of bottled-up anger in him, so after getting out of the car, he raised his fist wordlessly and threw a punch at Ashton. Despite that, Ashton didn't fight back, allowing John to hit him however he liked.

I didn't intend to stop the fight either. I just remained in the car, my heart as hard as a stone and my face completely devoid of emotion.

After some time, John slumped onto the ground beside Ashton, probably from exhaustion. Even so, his anger hadn't yet diminished as he roared furiously, "I've never met a b*stard worse than you, Ashton Fuller!"

Ashton remained silent and slowly got to his feet. Although he had been beaten up quite badly, there was still an air of nobility surrounding him.

As he stood in front of the car, he stared at me with dark eyes. When our eyes locked, I felt no love, only the pressure of bitter memories threatening to overwhelm me.

We stared each other down for a long while before I relented and got out of the car.

I walked toward him and said in a clipped tone, "Please step aside. We need to drive the car in!" He was blocking the entrance, and I couldn't very well make the car fly over him.

He grabbed my hand with the strength of his grip gradually increasing, causing pain to shoot through my hand. After staring at me for a long time, hurt flashed across his eyes as he forced out the words, "Scarlett, this isn't your home."

I was trembling slightly, but not because of him, no. It was probably due to the late autumn's cold weather.

I felt the urge to laugh, but my voice was caught in my throat. My eyes stung with imminent tears, and I flung his hand away with all my might, keeping my emotions on a tight leash before speaking, "Sure. You can continue standing in the way if you wanna die!"

With that, I got into the car. John left the keys behind, so I started the engine and looked at the man standing motionless in front of the car. "Get out of the way!" I shouted.

His bottomless eyes gleamed slightly when he said, "If my death will make you feel better, so be it."

The autumn wind in K City was freezing, billowing so strong that the leaves on the roadside were blown everywhere, like orphans left to fend for themselves.

"It's still not too late to get out of the way!" I paused, narrowing my eyes a fraction before continuing, "Because I will run you down."

"Mm. Do it!" His voice was calm, but John started to panic.

He looked at me and warned in a grave tone, "Letty, don't be rash!"

Am I being rash? No, I know what I'm doing. Squinting my eyes, I lifted my foot and floored the accelerator.

Love was indeed terrifying and stupid at the same time. Stupid because right before the car rammed into Ashton, I jerked the steering wheel to the side and crashed into the flowerbed on the roadside.

This suicidal act caused my head to buzz. There was a sharp pain in my chest before something warm surged in my throat.

I spat a mouthful of blood and slumped weakly onto the steering wheel, gradually losing consciousness.

Everything happened so quickly, and my hazy mind could vaguely hear two anxious shouts.

“Scarlett!”

“Letty!”

Ashton’s and John’s voices sounded in unison.

I was in the hospital when I came to.

My whole body was numb with pain. Staring at the ceiling, I began to hate myself because I had failed to kill the person I despised the most. How useless.

Turning to look at the person standing beside my bed, I said apologetically, “Sorry. I seemed to have lost control of my emotions again and got myself into trouble.”

This wasn’t the first time Marcus had seen me try to kill myself. He was terrified at first, but now that I was brought back from the brink of death, he could finally relax.

He raised his hand to push away the stray strands of hair on my forehead and uttered in a low voice, “John’s Bentley is scrapped. You’re lucky to be alive!”

I smiled feebly, uncertain whether he was relieved or freaked out. There was a needle stuck into the back of my hand which was slightly swollen, probably because I had been on a drip for quite some time already.

“Was I out for a long time?”

He nodded. “Two days and one night. Your forehead and chest sustained injuries.”

I stared at the ceiling again and said nonchalantly, “This time didn’t hurt as bad.”

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 233

I didn't have the courage to die because I was scared of the pain, be it slicing wrists or jumping off a building.

The fear of pain made me a cowardly person.

His face sank. "Scarlett, this is the last time. If you'd rather hurt yourself than get revenge, then I'm done. Whether you live or die will have nothing to do with me."

I lifted my hand to grab his arm, apologizing in a hoarse voice, "I'm sorry. I was wrong. I shouldn't have let my emotions take control of me!"

The fact was, I couldn't bring myself to die just like that.

Seeing my red-rimmed eyes, he sighed and placed my hand underneath the blanket before saying, "Don't do anything stupid again. You have a long way ahead of you. Take things slowly and you'll be fine."

I nodded and fell into a daze with my eyes fixated on the ceiling. Why couldn't I run Ashton over? Why wasn't I brave enough?

Sleep took over me once again, and it was already midnight by the time I woke up.

The moment I opened my eyes, I locked gazes with the man I was supposed to meet in the afterlife.

As usual, Ashton was clad in a black tailored suit. Perhaps because the heater was turned on, he took off his coat, revealing the impeccably ironed white shirt, which was completely befitting of his personality.

"You're awake." He came forward and looked at me with an unreadable glint in his eyes.

He was the last person I wanted to see, so I shut my eyes.

"Are you hurting anywhere?" he continued speaking.

Without any desire to talk, I remained tight-lipped.

“Would you like some water?”

A frown appeared between my brows as the back of my hand throbbed with a dull pain. I'd had too many infusions in the past two months, so the bruise on the back of my hand hadn't subsided.

It started to get annoying.

My body was lifted up all of a sudden, causing my eyes to fly wide open and see Ashton's handsome face up close.

A glass of warm water was held out in front of me. I stared unflinchingly at it but didn't react for a long time. Finally, I raised my infused hand to take it.

Truth be told, holding the glass was a rather difficult task with the needle stuck into my hand. Ashton's eyes were filled with pain as he looked at me.

As I squinted my eyes, the glass in my hand unexpectedly slipped out of my grasp. The glass shattered upon coming in contact with the floor, the loud noise reverberating through the room.

Instantly, the temperature in the room seemed to plummet. With a faint smile on my face, I said, “Sorry. I didn't mean it.”

Even though I was apologizing, my gaze on him was unfeeling and had no trace of guilt in it.

His brows drew together as he replied in a tensed voice, “It's fine.” Then, he crouched down to pick up the broken glass.

Perhaps he couldn't stand the silence hovering over us, so he spoke again, “Do you still want some water? I'll pour you another glass.”

I lowered my gaze just then. Perceiving the slight tremble in his hands, the chill in my heart intensified.

“He was suffocated to death. Did you see it?” I knew that with John's personality, he would've shown Ashton that video.

From the moment Ashton appeared, I had noticed the repressed pain in his eyes.

Yes, he had cried, and that was all that mattered to me—knowing that he was in pain.

His hand stiffened midway, and he slowly raised his eyes to look at me.

When our eyes met, I sneered, “Mr. Fuller, do you think a quick death is better or a slow one?”

He stayed silent, the pain he was feeling clearly displayed in his eyes.

Seeing as he didn’t speak, I got frustrated and pulled out the drip needle on the back of my hand.

Because I had used too much force, some blood spurted out and stained the white sheets.

I swung my feet to the side and stepped onto the ground barefooted even though I knew it was littered with glass shards.

Without hesitation, I pressed one foot down. When my sole landed on the back of Ashton’s hand, blood spilled from his palm and slowly spread on the ground. Did it hurt?

I didn’t know. All I knew was that when I held the glass shard and desperately tried to cut the rope that bound my child’s fate, it pierced into my palm again and again, staining the rope a dark red. Even so, I had failed to save my child.

I slowly looked down and saw that Ashton’s face had gone slightly pale from the sudden pain. With a casual smile, I said, “Sorry, I didn’t see your hand there.”

“It’s fine.” His voice was flat, so flat that I couldn’t detect any emotion in it.

Skirting around him, I poured myself a glass of water and sat down on the chair to sip on it.

Ashton remained crouched on the ground, pulling out the glass shards from his palm with an expressionless face.

Blood oozed from the cuts on his palm and pooled on the ground.

Did it hurt?

I was numb to everything, with only frustration as my companion.

When Rebecca arrived and saw Ashton's bloodied palm, she looked as though she wanted nothing more than to tear me apart. "What the hell did you do, Scarlett?"

Glancing outside the windows, I surmised that it was probably very late now. She was really crazy about Ashton, even more so than I thought.

With an arched brow, I shifted my gaze toward her, only to realize that both Jared and Joe had come in after her.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 234

I smiled blandly. "Thank you for visiting me even at this hour, everyone."

Rebecca glared at me and knelt down to check on Ashton. Suddenly, the television in the room switched on by itself.

As I suspected, that video started playing on the screen, forcing Rebecca to watch it until the end.

I was already numb by then, so I observed everyone's expressions instead.

There was fear, heartache, shock and disbelief.

John really was a genius to have come up with this idea to let all of them watch the video together.

The video finally ended after some time. Rebecca looked at me, then at Ashton's hand.

She was ashen-faced; I liked seeing her this way. Putting down the glass of water in my hand, I slowly approached her. Then, I crouched in front of her and smiled. "Ms. Larson, did you enjoy the video? Do you wanna know what it feels like when your child is finally taken out of you after being suffocated to death?"

Her face blanched with horror as she exclaimed, "You're crazy!"

I huffed out a humorless laugh, admiring the panic sprawled across her face as she protected her protruding belly with both hands. Slowly, my smile turned vicious, and I lowered my voice to say, "Would you like to have a taste of the pain I felt at that time? Hmm? Your mother probably likes that method too. Why else would she have used it on me? Don't you agree?"

"You can't go around throwing baseless accusations, Scarlett!" Rebecca fell back onto the ground in shock, scrambling backward on her fours.

Having just recovered from his shock, Joe helped the panicked Rebecca up from the floor. "How can you be so sure that it was her mother who did this, Scarlett?"

I raised my brows in response. "Would you like to see the evidence, people?" I paused for a moment before saying in a bored tone, "Actually, spoilers are no fun. Tell you what, I'll show you guys what a suffocated child looks like some other day."

Then, I pinned my gaze on Rebecca's belly and smiled meaningfully. "Isn't it great? You get to watch in advance what your child will look like after being suffocated to death."

"Take me away! Take me away! She's crazy!" Rebecca was so petrified that she started rambling incoherently, yanking on Joe to bring her away.

Joe stared at me with conflicting emotions swirling in his eyes.

As soon as Rebecca left, I felt immensely bored. So I flicked my gaze to the man on the ground who had a devastated look on his face, then glanced at Jared who was standing by the door.

Seeing the heartache shining in his eyes, my own heart wrenched with pain.

Frustrated, I dialed for Marcus and immediately expressed my displeasure when the call connected. "Do you not want me anymore? Don't just leave me at the hospital. I'm scared!"

Ashton looked at me with eyes that held endless darkness.

I knew that he was hurting, but so what?

To my surprise, Marcus arrived at the hospital in no time, so I suspected that he had been nearby all along.

Seeing the mess in the ward, his face clouded over as a crease appeared between his brows. Then, his gaze landed on Ashton. "Mr. Fuller, look at the state she's in. How long are you planning to keep tormenting her?"

Ashton didn't say anything. From the start until then, his eyes hadn't once left me. I could tell that he was drowning in self-blame and grief.

Despite knowing that, my heart didn't break for him.

I walked toward Marcus, who frowned upon noticing the blood on the back of my hand. "You pulled it out on your own?"

I nodded and said softly, "Let's go. I'm exhausted." Just like everyone else, there was a limit to my energy. Hence, going out of my way to hurt others had taken a toll on me.

Sensing the truth in my words, he replied curtly, "Let's go then."

At the door of the ward, Jared's face seemed to be covered with a layer of frost. His eyes glinted coldly as he blocked our way out and said to me, "The child was also Ashton's. He isn't hurting any less than you are. Why do you hate him so much? Does piling all your pain on him and letting him bear it for you make you happy?"

"Move aside!" Marcus' expression darkened. They were both men who wielded power in the corporate world. Thus, they were equally imposing.

Jared stood as still as a statue with his gaze fixed on me.

Pursing my lips, I looked back at Ashton to say, "On the night of Rebecca's birthday, you were at the Moore family's banquet, right?"

Ashton looked at me, his eyes dimming slightly. "Yes."

My chest still ached, but I pushed past it and replied, "I'm sure you know better than me why Cameron chose to do it that night, right? For two months, Marcus hasn't let me touch any electronic devices. I didn't watch the TV or read the news. I didn't even have any contact with outsiders."

Having said that, I couldn't help but release a soft laugh. "But I'm not an idiot. Even though I didn't read about your engagement with Rebecca in K City's news headlines, I already

guessed that Cameron did what she did because she wanted both me and my child dead. After all, with me gone, there wouldn't be anything standing between you and Rebecca. It's too bad she miscalculated. She never expected that Marcus would show up and take me away."

I didn't wait to see the look on Ashton's face. Whether he was hurting, distressed, or wallowing in guilt had nothing to do with me.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 235

I looked at Jared and forced a smile. "See? If you think this isn't enough of a reason for me to hate him, I can tell you more. He's like a brother to you, so I can understand why you feel the need to defend him, Dr. Crest. Perhaps to you, I merely lost a child, and no matter how you think about it, it just doesn't seem like such a big deal. Well, I'm sorry to say this, but this is how I am. I must get my revenge at all costs. Not to mention, that child was my life!"

No one in this world could truly empathize with others. Some couldn't even bring themselves to feel sympathy, and most would only stand on the sidelines to watch the show.

After leaving the hospital with Marcus, he sighed with a contemplative gaze. "John really went over the top this time. It'll be difficult for you to do anything from now on. There's no doubt that the Moore family will have their guard up."

I nodded and released a tired sigh. John had directly played the video in the hospital so that Ashton would feel anguished upon watching it.

Whatever. Since things have already been put into motion, there is no reason to stop now.

As he started the car, I looked sideways at him and asked, "Did you take a photo of the child?"

My voice was calm, but his body visibly stiffened. He glanced back at me and said, "Didn't you say you didn't want to see it?"

My breath caught in my throat as I looked out of the window, struggling to breathe through the pain in my chest. "Mm, I don't. Send it to John. Tell him to hack it into Rebecca's phone discreetly. If possible, do it at midnight."

He nodded and drove for a while before changing the subject. "Is there any news about the AI project?"

I nodded. "John is a computer expert. There's a tech company in J City. Many of their researchers are geniuses, but they have poor management. We're planning to make a trip there one of these days and find a way to acquire it."

He raised his brows. "A company like that exists?"

"Yeah!"

"Alright, it seems like you don't have to risk HiTech anymore." He smiled faintly with a subtle tease in his tone.

My eyes dipped to my lap before looking at him again. "If it fails and I lose HiTech, I'll have to live off you."

He bellowed with laughter at that. "Sure!"

By the time I reached home, it was already past midnight. Fortunately, there were many rooms in the house. He found a random one to sleep in while I went to my bedroom. With so many things on my mind, it was yet another sleepless night.

Sharon would be celebrating her 56th birthday on the fourth of November.

The Baumans were considered scholars in K City. Sharon had stayed with them after her divorce from Benjamin. They weren't a large family, and among them were two elderlies who were close to a hundred years old.

Sharon had two older brothers; one was in politics while the other in business. They both had a son each, who had moved abroad and settled down with families of their own there. Hence, they rarely came back to visit.

Sharon was the youngest daughter in the family, so she was rather spoiled and arrogant. Marcus was aware of his mother's temper and would occasionally advise her on it, but he eventually gave up.

When Marcus said he was taking me to her birthday banquet, I refused flatly. After all, I had rubbed elbows with Sharon before, but the outcome wasn't very pleasant.

Marcus smiled. "The Baumans are scholars. The two elders will be holding a birthday banquet for my mother, and they've invited many business and political figures. The Moore family will be attending too. Don't you want revenge? Well, this is the perfect time to strike."

I was stunned for a while and came back to my senses after his words registered in my mind. If I was really serious about bringing the Moore family down, I had to become their equal or perhaps superior to them. Only then would I be able to overturn them. Otherwise, everything I did would be insignificant, and I would never achieve the desired effect.

I glanced at Marcus and nodded. "Fine. I'll go!"

The world's social structure looked simple. All of us were human beings living on the same planet.

However, no human was the same. We were all divided into different categories, like a pyramid. Some people would never be able to climb from the bottom to the top even if they were given a few lifetimes.

Poor people could rely on education to climb up one level at most and live a relatively comfortable life, but to climb another level higher, they would need talent and wisdom.

However, when you reached a certain level, talent and wisdom were no longer valid. The next thing was to rely on connections and blood relations. Gaining a firm foothold in the upper-class circles at the pyramid's apex depended on how tactful you were at garnering admiration and respect from others.

The reasons Cameron was shunned by the Moore family for many years were her family background and lack of wisdom.

It was only because of Zachary's persistence, the discovery of their long-lost daughter, and the wealth Cameron had accumulated over the years that the Moore family begrudgingly accepted her.

Rebecca's instant boost through the ranks was solely because of blood relation, and such was life; no one could control the direction in which it flowed.

Marcus informed me the plan for that day, "I'll come to pick you up at 6 p.m., which is an hour earlier. Then I'll take you to shop and get your makeup done."

I nodded since doing it myself would probably be a bad idea. Seeing how compliant I was, he grew slightly worried.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 236

It was still early when I got home. Bored out of my mind, I called Macy.

To my dismay, her phone was still switched off. It's already been three months. She should've been done with her confinement by now, but why is her phone still turned off?

Helpless, I called Jackson instead. The call rang for a long time before it connected, and he sounded quite busy when he spoke. "Scarlett, I'm taking care of the baby now. What about you? What are you doing?"

I blinked in surprise. It must be quite difficult for a grown man to take care of a baby.

"Are you still with Macy in the countryside?" I asked while making myself comfortable on the sofa.

There was a momentary pause on the other end of the line before he answered, "Yeah. And you? How are you doing? Good?"

I nodded even though he couldn't see me. "Yeah. I'll return to J City around the end of the year. Are you two planning to come back to celebrate the new year? Or are you going to stay in the countryside?"

"We're not too sure yet!" He seemed busy, so I quickly asked, "Where's Macy? Is her phone broken? Why isn't she answering her phone? I haven't been able to get through to her for quite some time already."

"Yeah! She's quite busy. Anyway, I gotta go now. Let's talk again some other time." With that, he hung up the call.

I froze for a moment before putting my phone away.

...

At C Hotel, an international five-star hotel.

After parking the car at the hotel's entrance, Marcus got out. Then, he gracefully walked to the front passenger side and opened the door for me before helping me out.

The train of my royal blue gown was too long. When I got out of the car, I couldn't help but express my concern, "To be honest, this is my first time wearing a dress with such a long train. I'm worried that I might fall."

He smiled faintly. "Then you'll have to follow me closely, lest you fall."

Besides this, I didn't see any other way to prevent myself from tripping.

I shrugged my shoulders and followed him toward the hotel. There was already someone standing by the Roman columns at the hotel's entrance to welcome the guests.

It was Sharon.

Having not seen her for quite some time, she seemed to have aged quite a bit. Today, she was wearing a burgundy gown with an ink-colored shawl to match, making her look incredibly elegant.

Older women tended to exude an elegance that was accumulated over the years as time had the ability to polish off the rough edges of women, giving them a gentle and alluring aura.

"Marc, you're finally here! The guests should be arriving soon. Your grandparents are already here. Hurry up and go say hello to them, then come out to welcome the guests." Sharon pulled Marcus toward the hotel.

With that, her gaze landed on me. She smiled. "And who might this beautiful young lady be? Why haven't I seen her before?"

I was dumbfounded. Seeing as she couldn't recognize me, I was at a loss for a moment and instinctively looked at Marcus.

Marcus chuckled and answered, "Mom, you've met her before. This is Scarlett."

Sharon froze, her eyes dipping down to look at my stomach. After a transient moment, she exclaimed, "It's you!" She frowned and chided Marcus, "Marc, why did you..."

Marcus cut her off, "Mom, you said that no matter who I brought today, you wouldn't intervene. You'll respect my choices, won't you?"

Parents would always relent whenever it came to their children. Sharon obviously hated Sally and looked down on the Fullers.

However, she was willing to put up with me, the daughter-in-law of the Fuller family, for Marcus' sake.

With a soft sigh, she glanced at me and warned, "Just make sure you don't stir up trouble."

Marcus smiled lopsidedly before leading me into the hotel lobby.

There weren't many people in the lobby yet. Refreshments were arranged on both sides, and the two Bauman elderlies were chatting with some guests who had just arrived.

Marcus tugged me forward to greet them. Perhaps it was because they hadn't seen their grandson for a long time that they were overjoyed.

Even though they were close to a hundred years old, they looked as spirited as ever.

"Marc, you brought such a beautiful lady with you. Which family is she from?" Anthony Bauman asked as his slightly glassy eyes fell on me.

Marcus pulled me to the front and said with a smile, "Grandpa, she's the project director at my company. She's my date for today."

"Ahh, so she's an employee from your company. You're not getting any younger, boy. You should start thinking about marriage. Stop delaying it," Sophia Carter, Marcus' grandmother, piped in.

Marcus nodded profusely before saying, "Grandpa, Grandma, I'm going outside to welcome the guests with Mom. I'll leave Scarlett here to accompany you."

His grandparents nodded and motioned for him to go ahead.

As soon as Marcus left, Sophia pulled me to sit beside her. "How old are you this year, girl?"

I arched my lips into a polite smile and answered, "Twenty-six."

"Are you married?" This seemed to be the billion-worth question for the entire older generation. Maintaining the smile on my face, I said, "Yes, I am."

She was taken aback, glancing at Anthony beside her. Then, she chuckled. "That brat Marc seems to get more complicated the older he gets."

Anthony released a chuckle of his own as he looked at me. "By the way, what was your name again?"

I remained courteous and replied, "Scarlett Stovall."

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 237

The old man nodded and remarked, "Ah, like the color. A beautiful name for a beautiful lady."

"You're too kind, Mr. Bauman." I smiled broadly.

His turbid eyes lit up slightly. "Since Marc made the effort to introduce you to us, it means that he cares about you. It's very rare for a woman to catch his eye."

"Shush! What nonsense are you spouting, old man?" Sophia castigated him with a stern expression. "You think you're mister know-it-all, don't you?"

Anthony grinned sheepishly. "The younger generation have their own way of thinking. Even if we can see through their thoughts, we have to keep it to ourselves, or we'll end up embarrassing them."

Sophia huffed, "Good that you know!"

Even though I couldn't fully understand what they were talking about, I found their conversation intriguing. They were almost a hundred years old, but they could still banter back and forth, seemingly younger than they actually were. It was truly a blessing.

In life, not many managed to stay together until the end like them. Instead, most people would separate at some point, then walk their respective paths as they tried to forget the past.

Initially, I didn't understand why Marcus wanted me to accompany his grandparents. Later on, I realized that every guest had to come up to greet them.

Naturally, they would engage in small talk. As I was lounging with the two elderlies, many of the guests were curious about my identity. Hence, I was introduced to them one after another.

With that, I was able to know which guests were invited.

Zachary attended the banquet with Cameron. It was evident that both of them took great care of themselves. The man looked handsome and dignified, while the woman was gentle and sophisticated. Together, they were a charming middle-aged couple.

Upon greeting Marcus' grandparents, both Zachary and Cameron noticed me. They stiffened at the same time and looked at Anthony. "Mr. Bauman, this lady beside you is?" Zachary asked.

Anthony smiled and said, "This is Scarlett Stovall. An employee at my grandson Marc's company. She came here with him today."

Zachary and Cameron exchanged glances, unable to conceal their shock. "Scarlett?" Their gaze landed on me as mixed emotions flickered in their eyes.

"Mr. Moore, this girl looks really similar to your wife during her younger days. If your family hadn't already found your daughter, I would've mistaken this girl for her," Louis Stovall, who was almost the same age as Zachary, joked.

Many people agreed with his remark. Even Marcus' grandparents were slightly stunned and started to study Cameron and me more closely.

Shortly after, Anthony exclaimed, "It's true. The girl's eyebrows are shaped very similarly to Cameron's, and her nose looks like Zachary's, high and dainty. If you both hadn't already found your daughter, I would've thought this girl is your biological daughter."

Everyone laughed good-naturedly at this comment while Zachary peered at his wife, then at me, with his brows knitting together into a frown.

Marcus walked in with a smile after he was done entertaining the guests. "Since everyone thinks they look alike, why don't you take Scarlett as your goddaughter, Mr. Moore? This way, we'll have two causes for celebration today. Isn't that great?"

My limbs froze up, and I couldn't figure out where Marcus was going with this.

As soon as he suggested that, someone in the crowd chimed in, "Yeah, that's a good idea. You're so lucky, Mr. Moore. You're going to have another beautiful daughter."

No one knew about the strife between the Moores and me, so they assumed that this was something worth celebrating. However, Cameron and Zachary's faces became slightly stiff.

A moment later, Cameron smiled and said, "We appreciate everyone's good intentions, but as you all know, our daughter Rebecca is a very emotional child. She has endured a lot of hardship all these years. As her parents, we feel that we can never make it up to her. If we were to take in a goddaughter now, I'm afraid she might get the wrong idea."

What she said inevitably caused everyone's expressions to change, especially Marcus, as he was the one who suggested it.

The atmosphere instantly turned awkward.

Feeling relieved, a small smile stretched across my lips. I glanced at Cameron and Zachary before saying, "I'm sure many of us envy the love you both have for your daughter. It's a shame I'm not blessed enough to deserve the same."

"Now, now. Don't say that," Louis said heartily, "Why are you so harsh on yourself, girl? Since Marcus brought you here, it means he sees something special in you that others haven't. And for some reason, I have a good feeling about you. I only have one son, and everyone knows my late wife didn't give me the daughter I've always wanted. Now that fate brought us here today, my family is your family if you're willing to accept me as your godfather."

I blinked rapidly, rather baffled by this turn of events. Louis Stovall was a well-known official in K City and was a model of rectitude throughout his entire political career. Nowadays, very few in power were able to maintain their integrity and morals. Hence, he was a truly rare plain-spoken and virtuous city official.

Having someone like him compliment me this way caught me by surprise.

“Look, the girl is so happy that words have failed her. Louis, what are you going to do now that you’ve scared her?” Anthony teased with a bright smile on his face as pride shone in his eyes.

Marcus patted my shoulder gently and said, “Well? Aren’t you going to thank your Uncle Louis?”

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 238

I finally found my voice, saying a little too emotionally, “Thank you, Uncle Louis. It is my greatest honor.”

“See? Fate works in mysterious ways. Louis has always wanted a daughter, and now he finally has one. What’s more, they have the same surname!” Anthony beamed.

Then, he continued, “Since she’s a Stovall, you can practically consider her as your biological daughter!”

Louis let out a loud belly laugh, then picked up a champagne flute and looked at me. “Follow me, girl!”

He led me toward the stage at the front before raising his voice, “May I have your attention, please? First of all, I’d like to thank Mr. Bauman for hosting a birthday banquet for his daughter, Ms. Bauman, because it gave me a daughter in return, fulfilling my long-time wish. Today, I’d like to use this opportunity to announce that soon, I’ll invite all of you to my home so that we can celebrate the addition of a new member to my family.”

As soon as he finished speaking, all the guests were astonished, then they swiftly applauded.

Louis had a straightforward and cheerful personality. Since he wholeheartedly accepted me as his daughter, he also brought me around and introduced me to the guests present tonight.

Before long, I remembered all the upper-class socialites here. Halfway through the banquet, Louis excused himself to chat with a few friends.

Since I was free, I went looking for Marcus. Having just finished doing his part, he led me to the pantry.

“See? This wasn’t all in vain,” he pointed out.

I smiled and said with gratitude, “Mm, it wasn’t. But why did you suggest Zachary be my godfather earlier? You know that after what Cameron did, I would never agree to that.”

He boiled some water, preparing to brew some tea before glancing at me. “For many years, Louis has been yearning for a daughter, but he didn’t have any intention to marry. This is a known fact in K City’s upper-class circle. Since he pointed out the resemblance between you and Cameron, I thought I’d just go along with it. I knew for a fact that Zachary and Cameron wouldn’t want you as their goddaughter and vice versa. So, I already expected them to refuse. Louis has been a man of virtue his whole life, not to mention he wants a daughter. All I did was get the ball rolling and voilà. Everything worked in your favor.”

I stared at him in awe. Sighing softly, I said, “I thought you just suggested it mindlessly, but after listening to your explanation, I’m starting to doubt my IQ level.”

Even if I had ten brains, I probably wouldn’t be able to come up with such an intricate scheme.

He raised his brows in return. “What? Scared of getting close to me now that you know how frightening my mind works?”

“Of course not!” A smile formed on my lips. “I’m grateful more than anything. You spoke to your grandfather about this beforehand, didn’t you?”

Otherwise, why would Anthony have played along so enthusiastically?

Marcus nodded in response and placed a teacup in front of me. With raised brows, he commended, “Not bad. At least you got that right.”

I giggled softly before falling silent. “Louis is an honorable man. In the future, if I were to ask for his help to go against the Moore family, I’m afraid...”

Marcus smiled. "The Moores have extensive connections in the underground world. It's too bad they cover up their tracks too well because, truth be told, there are many people who'd like to see them completely uprooted."

My brows lifted toward my hairline. Indeed, rich and famous people would always have a target on their backs.

Marcus' phone rang just then. It was Sharon on the other end of the line, probably needing him for something. Before he hurried off, he told me to sit here to rest and to call him if I needed anything.

After he left, I sat in the pantry and spaced out. As an orphan, I guess I was lucky to have stumbled upon Louis who wholeheartedly accepted me as his goddaughter.

I sat for a while before getting up to use the washroom.

At the washroom, Cameron stood in my way and said, "Ms. Stovall, shall we have a chat?"

Taking in her slightly sagging cheeks, I nodded. "What exactly is it that you want to talk about, Ms. Anderson?"

She smiled placidly. "There's a lounging area outside the hotel. Let's talk there."

I followed her to the back of the hotel and came to an open-air lounging area. After finding a seat, she gracefully lowered herself into it, motioning for me to do the same.

As I settled myself on the seat across from her, a waiter came for our orders. I asked for a glass of water, while she asked for a cup of coffee without sugar.

Then, I fixed my gaze on her, waiting for her to speak.

However, she didn't seem to be in a hurry, waiting until her coffee was served and taking a sip from it before saying, "You don't drink coffee, Ms. Stovall?"

I nodded. "The bitter taste doesn't sit well with me."

She smiled and took another sip. Perhaps because she found it too bitter, a small frown appeared between her brows. "That's actually a blessing." Her eyes fell on me before she

smiled again. "To be honest, you really do look like me when I was younger. If I didn't personally get a DNA test done, I would've really thought you were my daughter."

I replicated her smile, but there was a hint of animosity in it. "It'd probably take a lot more than bearing a resemblance to you to be your daughter, Ms. Anderson. I'm not worthy."

The smile on her face faded as she narrowed her eyes at me, then released a long sigh. "Thirty years ago, I'd just turned 20. As I was from an ordinary background, I knew since young that in order to live my dream life, I had to work for it. When I was 23, I'd just graduated from university and met Zachary. Being able to capture his attention is probably the luckiest thing that occurred in my life. He's noble, charming, and gentle; basically what all women look for in a man. Fortunately, both he and I love and admire each other."

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 239

Wordlessly, I just listened to her with no intention of interrupting. She got the waiter to refill her cup before continuing, "When I was 24, both of us started to envision our future. I even imagined what my life would be like after getting married to him. I found it beautiful and worth looking forward to, but the reality is cruel. Very few children born from ordinary families can easily gain the respect of others. Only those who are born of noble birth are gifted with inherent superiority and elegance, which make them stand out from the crowd."

She looked at me with contempt in her eyes. "Very few people possess inherent nobility because a trait like this only runs in the blood."

I frowned inadvertently but let her continue.

She leaned back slightly before speaking again, "Because of our difference in family background, I was rejected by the Moore family. Being the proud woman I was, I left Zachary in a fit of anger, wanting to make a living for myself. So on the day I left K City, I vowed to one day become someone the Moore family looked up to."

Here, she chuckled with self-mockery. "But fate is a funny thing. I only realized I was pregnant after leaving K City. My pride did not allow me to go back to Zachary, but I was young and it was my first child, so I couldn't bring myself to abort it. Unfortunately, I couldn't

raise her either. While I was caught in a dilemma, my belly grew bigger and bigger. In the end, I had to give birth to her. I'd thought of finding a man to make things easier, but how could I settle for anything less than Zachary? So after giving birth, I went abroad alone."

Seeing the sorrow lining her features, my brows drew together slightly. This woman had been fueled by ambition her whole life, but now, I wasn't sure if it was a good thing.

A brief silence ensued before she went on, "Do you know how difficult it is for a woman in her twenties to live abroad? It's like walking on a tightrope. I couldn't sleep at night as I was plagued with thoughts about my child, missing her day and night. But I couldn't go back to get her, not until I'd saved enough money and had a stable income. Ten years passed just like that. When I went back to R Province to look for her, I found that she had already been thrown out by that damnable man. My child whom I had risked my life for!"

Noticing the mist pooling in her eyes, I lowered my gaze as a dull ache formed in my chest. Even if I sacrificed my life, I would never be able to get my child back. A sneer escaped my lips as I looked at her again. "So? Is this an excuse for you to hurt others?"

She shook her head, calming herself before replying, "Sixteen years. That's how long I've been looking for Rebecca. Even as I longed for her during those sixteen years, I prayed that she was living a good life. To find her, I wasn't willing to have a baby with someone else after I got married and would rather be a stepmother. I've been atoning for my mistakes for so many years and now, I've finally found her. You may say that I'm selfish and evil. I won't deny it. But as a mother, I'm willing to do whatever it takes to fulfill all of Rebecca's wishes. Right now, I only live for her."

I sneered. "You love your daughter more than life itself. Don't you think other people would feel the same about their own child?"

"Nothing else is more important than my daughter." She looked at me, raising her tone a little when she said, "Scarlett, you had a choice. If you'd chosen to get rid of the child and leave Ashton from the start, things wouldn't have turned out this way. I gave you a choice, didn't I?"

I really had the urge to laugh, but my anger overpowered it. There were indeed shameless people in the world who could make their selfish and evil deeds sound so noble.

"I'm impressed, Ms. Anderson. As expected of someone who has been through many hardships in life, you can even justify such heinous crimes so effortlessly. Since your hands

are covered with my child's blood, aren't you afraid that your grandchild will receive retribution because of you?" I was no saint. My heart would never waver just because of a couple of sob stories.

Right then, I realized that it was truly impossible to perform the virtuous act of burying the hatchet.

Her face darkened at my words. "Do you think you pose a threat to me just because you're associated with Louis Stovall now? To put it bluntly, you're nothing but an ant beneath my boot. If I want you dead, do you think there's anything you can do to stop me?"

Hah!

What arrogant words!

"My life isn't worth that much to begin with. If you have what it takes to claim it, by all means, go ahead. Indeed, being associated with Uncle Louis isn't all that impressive, but you'd do well to remember that the child you killed belonged to Ashton. Not to mention, I'm now connected to Louis Stovall in addition to the White family. Oh, by the way, I forgot to tell you. I also have a brother called John Stovall. You should know him. With a line-up like this, what do you think are the chances of me pushing the Moore family off the edge?"

"You..." Cameron's face blanched.

"Those are very arrogant words, young lady. What makes you think you'd be able to convince that many people to help you?"

I hadn't sensed Zachary's presence, but I wasn't intimidated by him whatsoever. He came over and sat beside Cameron, cocking a brow at me. "The matter regarding the child was a mistake on Cameron's part, but Ms. Stovall, do you really think you have the power to topple my family?"

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 240

Since the cat was let out of the bag, there was no need to put up a pretense. "It wouldn't hurt to try. Worst case scenario, I'd just lose my worthless life and join my child in the afterlife. No big deal."

He frowned slightly and glanced sideways at Cameron, lowering his voice as he reprimanded, "Harming a child? Since when did you become so inhumane?"

Cameron looked aggrieved upon being questioned. "Zachary, do you know how hard Rebecca's life has been? I just couldn't bear to see our daughter suffer anymore!"

"Outrageous!" Zachary seethed with anger. "You'll only end up ruining Rebecca by overindulging her like this."

Cameron bowed her head, her eyes turning red. "Both of us have owed her too much over the years."

Zachary heaved a sigh and directed his gaze to me. "Ms. Stovall, what's done is done. You can state your condition. We'll do our best to compensate you for the harm we've caused."

I felt like laughing. This couple was really something else; one committed the crime while the other offered hush money. They made quite the pair.

I straightened my back and looked them in the eye. "Since both of you are so sincere, forget about money and status. You know that I'm not lacking in those. How about this? A life for a life. Rather than waiting for karma to run its course, you both can make it happen right away. If I'm not mistaken, Ms. Larson is nearing her due date. Why don't you let both children accompany each other in the afterlife?"

"Don't step out of line, Scarlett!" Cameron's face flushed with panic. "Do you really think you're all that just because you have some influential figures on your side? Let me tell you, you're still an amateur!"

I smiled coldly and nodded without an ounce of anger. "You're right, Ms. Anderson. I know I'm still an amateur, but time is on my side and there are plenty of opportunities to come."

"You're a smart person, Ms. Stovall. Is it really worth it to make everyone unhappy and ruin your own future because of a child?" This was an undisguised threat.

My lips curled into a sneer. "It is! I'll leave you two alone now. Have a good chat." Then, I looked at Cameron, smilingly brightly at her as I said, "Ms. Anderson, we've got all the time in the world. I'm in no rush."

Her face was especially grim. Letting my smile drop, I went back into the hotel.

Their feelings were their business. All I cared about was my own feelings, and right now, I felt great.

People with power and wealth could indeed do whatever they wanted. One life was but a speck of dust to them. How absurd!

Back in the lobby, I found that almost all the guests had already left. When Louis spotted me, he broke into a kind smile and said, "The Stovall family is large, but since you're now my daughter, let's pick a good day to welcome you into the family. A daughter of mine deserves to be treated with dignity and respect."

A smile stretched across my lips even as my eyes stung with tears. In a voice thick with emotion, I replied, "Thank you, Uncle Louis!"

He clucked his tongue and chided, "Silly girl, you should be calling me Dad now!"

I pressed my lips into a thin line, then smiled with tears in my eyes and blurted, "Dad!"

"That's more like it!" He chuckled heartily. "Give me your current address. I'll be carrying out an inspection in other provinces for the next two days. When I'm back, I'll take you out for some good food."

I nodded and stated, "I'm living in Central Park. Remember to be careful on your trip."

He nodded with a smile. "Alright, alright. I'll have your brother take care of you these few days. We're a family now. Just tell him if there's anything you need."

Hearing those words, a warm bubbly feeling rose in my chest.

After Marcus sent off all the guests, he walked over to us and said to Louis, "Uncle Louis, don't worry. I'll take good care of your daughter."

Louis cackled with laughter, then squinted at us and whispered, "Tell me the truth. Are you two dating?"

Marcus blinked in surprise before grinning. "Uncle Louis, I'm afraid this isn't for me to answer."

"Hahahaha!"

Everyone laughed in unison at that. After sending off Louis, Marcus bid Sharon goodbye.

Sharon glanced at me, then turned to Marcus with a complicated expression on her face. "You should know your own limits. Don't complicate matters. If a scandal involving the two of you were to spread in K City, it'd affect the Fuller family and the White family, and now the Stovall family as well. Things will get messy."

Marcus nodded and reassured her, "Don't worry, Mom. I know what I'm doing."

Then, we left the hotel and got into the car.

I couldn't help but look at him in suspicion. "Although Louis has always wanted a daughter, he's a high-ranking politician. It doesn't make sense for him to accept a random girl as his daughter just based on feelings."

He started the car and smiled. "Well, would you look at that? You're not a lost cause after all. You both have the surname Stovall. Do you think it's a coincidence?"

"What do you mean?"

He drove while explaining, "John played a part in this too. He's Louis' nephew and currently under his care. In fact, John has mentioned about you to Louis more than once already. I guess he's said everything that needed to be said."

I was taken aback, struggling to wrap my mind around this revelation. "Isn't John's father a businessman?"

He arched a brow at me. "You should ask him yourself when you have the time. Louis doesn't have children of his own. As for his brothers, one is dead while the other is disabled, so even though their family is large, none of them are close to each other."

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 241

I nodded, making a few guesses of my own. Indeed, John was brought back to K City by the Stovalls a few years ago. I didn't ask him anything about what happened after that, so I didn't know the details. We were still kids back when he came to R Province, and Grandma never told us about the investor who had committed suicide.

For so many years, I'd never asked John about his origins in detail either.

After an entire night of mingling, I leaned against my seat, feeling sleepy. In my drowsy state, I vaguely noted that the car had entered the residential area.

Marcus stopped the car. Seeing me nod off, he got down and came over to my side to open the door for me. "Do you need me to carry you?"

My eyes flew wide open just then, and I hurriedly shook my head. "I can go up on my own!" Sharon was right. If someone were to take such indecent photos of us, things could get ugly for everyone involved.

I wasn't surprised to see Ashton at the gate, but a frown appeared on my face. Is this his way of convincing me to go back with him?

He was sitting on the doorstep, looking like an abandoned child.

After several days of not seeing him, he had visibly lost weight. His former defiant and overbearing demeanor was nowhere in sight, and I noticed that his eyes were bloodshot.

Marcus frowned slightly as he informed me, "I'll head inside first."

I nodded and shifted my gaze to Ashton, who was slowly getting to his feet, catching a glimpse of the white gauze wrapped around his hand.

If I could change the past, I would make sure that I never crossed paths with Ashton in this lifetime. Even though it meant living an impoverished life, I would be more than willing.

I was physically and mentally exhausted. Within three years, I had become completely unrecognizable.

We stared at each other for a long time. I tried to think of something to say, but nothing came to mind.

In the end, I said curtly, "Go back and don't come here ever again!" Ignoring his intense gaze, I skirted around him and walked toward the door.

"You're living together?" he asked with a hint of fatigue in his voice.

I frowned, pausing momentarily. "This is none of your business!"

"Mm." Then, he continued in a weak and raspy voice, "Is this really how things are going to be between us?"

Is this how things are going to be? I honestly didn't know. I had thought about a hundred ways to torture him, but I knew I would be the one getting hurt in the end. Thus, I gave up the idea.

"I know that you hate me and blame me! It's all my fault for not protecting you and our child, but Scarlett, I can't accept how things are between us now. If you hate me, you can take your revenge however you want, but... come home with me at the very least. We're husband and wife. We still have to face this together, right?"

Pursing my lips, I felt my heart squeeze in my chest. "Then let's get a divorce!" I would learn how to let go of my hatred for him. To stop hating the person I once loved would be pushing me to my limits.

My heart felt like it was being shredded to bits, and it hurt everywhere.

Humans are ironic. It's wrong to love, but wrong to stop loving too.

With nothing more to say to him, I swiveled around to climb the stairs.

"After everything we've been through, you're going to end it with just a simple sentence?" he said in a voice that was so low I could barely detect any emotion in it.

I stopped in my tracks but didn't look back.

“Scarlett, if you really hate me, are you willing to let me off just like that? The best revenge is making the other person’s life a living hell. Is what you’re doing considered revenge or giving up?”

Mystified as to what would prompt a proud man like Ashton to say something so out of character, I inadvertently looked over my shoulder at him.

With a frown, I said, “You know provocation won’t work on me, Ashton!”

His gaze seemed to pierce into my soul when he urged, “Come home with me. Only then will you have an outlet for your anger and hatred.”

“Aren’t you afraid that I might wake up in the middle of the night and stab you to death?” I would never have entertained that idea in the past, but things were different now. When you were filled with so much hatred, killing wouldn’t even be enough to dispel it.

He pressed his lips together as his eyes flickered with a barrage of emotions. “I guess I’ll just have to wait and see!”

I looked up and saw that the lights upstairs were already switched on, with Marcus’ tall and slender figure by the French windows.

At this distance, I couldn’t see the look on his face, but I could make a rough guess.

When Ashton followed my line of sight, he frowned in displeasure but didn’t comment.

A long moment passed before I glanced back at him, feeling much calmer than just now. “I’ll go back with you, but you must do something for me.”

“Tell me.”

“I want everyone in K City to know who I am to you, and cut all ties with Rebecca while you’re at it. Lastly, don’t question what I do from now on!”

His brows scrunched together as he nodded resolutely. “Alright!”

After a short pause, he continued, “I’ll come to pick you up tomorrow.”

“Mm.”

...

Upon reaching the corridor, I saw Marcus waiting by the door with his arms crossed over his chest.

He looked at me calmly and asked, "All settled?"

I nodded and bent down to change my shoes. "I can't very well hide behind you forever. Besides, I said I was going to face it myself."

"Hah!" He scoffed. "You're just worried that people will spread rumors about the two of us and end up implicating the Fullers and Stovalls, right?"

I twisted my lips together at his choice of words. "Marcus, I'm still Ashton's wife. Indeed, your mother's worries are well-founded."

He was a good man, but I couldn't be so selfish. Besides, I already had my plate full with Ashton alone. I couldn't juggle between him and Marcus.

Seeing the downcast look on his face, I leveled my gaze with his and said, "Thank you for these past few months, but I can't keep playing dumb, Marcus. I'm sorry."

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 242

Without looking at his expression, I straightened and went into my bedroom. In this world, no one would go out of their way to help someone else for no apparent reason. There had to be a motive. I was smart enough to know why Marcus treated me so well.

Sometimes, I wanted to continue feigning ignorance just so that I could stay. However, humans were complex beings. I couldn't very well put on a facade forever, not to mention the current me couldn't afford to be ignorant anymore.

"Scarlett!" He paused before asking in a low voice, "Have you ever... felt anything for me?"

His question stunned me, and my mind couldn't formulate a response for a while. "I'm sorry, Marcus!"

A low laugh came from behind me. "Okay. I understand."

His simple words carried a sense of heaviness.

Even so, there was nothing I could do about it.

I parted my lips, attempting to say something, but no words could escape.

Back in my bedroom, my chest tightened uncomfortably. Even after a whole night of tossing and turning, I still couldn't fall asleep.

During the past two months, I never once thought about how I was going to spend the rest of my days.

Besides solving the matters between Ashton and me, there was also Marcus. I had no qualms accepting his meticulous care. In fact, I even enjoyed it. However, I seemed to have forgotten that there was nothing I could give him, and at the end of the day, he was the one who'd get hurt.

I was broken and beyond repair, so I shouldn't drag him into my mess.

The night passed by so slowly that I thought the sun would never come up.

The next day.

After a sleepless night, my head buzzed with a pounding headache.

Marcus was already in the living room. Upon sensing my presence, he looked at me with a neutral expression. "Have some breakfast first."

I nodded, my gaze landing on the homey meal comprising of eggs, bacon, and bread spread out on the dining table.

As we sat across from each other., he remained silent and ate his food elegantly.

Upon noticing the dark circles beneath his eyes, I asked without much thought, "Didn't sleep well last night?"

He met my gaze and replied tersely, "Eat more." With that, he filled my plate with more food.

I studied him for a while but remained silent otherwise.

My mind had wandered off when my phone rang. When I felt Marcus' eyes on me, I snapped out of my daze and glanced at my phone.

Ashton's phone number was flashing across the screen.

Seeing my lack of reaction, Marcus raised his brows. "Aren't you going to answer it?"

After picking up my phone and swiping it to answer, I placed it against my ear and waited for him to speak first.

"Do you have a lot of stuff? I can go up and help you with them. I'm downstairs now," Ashton spoke in a monotonous voice.

I got up and walked to the windows, then pulled the curtains open. True enough, the man was standing tall and proud downstairs, clad in a black suit.

"It's fine," I declined in a flat voice, then added, "I'll meet you downstairs."

"Okay. I'll wait for you," he answered in a tone that matched mine. I guess this had always been the way we interacted.

After ending the call, Marcus looked at me with pursed lips. "You haven't finished eating."

I stared at him and hesitated for a moment, knowing that he was in a bad mood. "Thank you, Marcus."

Except for this, I didn't know what else I could say. Since everything in the bedroom was arranged by him, I didn't have anything to take with me.

I skirted around him to walk out of the bedroom, but he abruptly grabbed my wrist. Before I could react, he grasped the back of my neck.

It all happened so quickly that I had no way to dodge him. I hurriedly shoved him away and massaged my neck as anger simmered in me. "Marcus, I thought you respected me!"

He huffed out a laugh. "You always see the good in humanity!"

My expression was grave when I stared at him, then I said in a heavy tone, "Goodbye."

This happened because of me, so I didn't have the right to lecture or criticize him. Hence, I had to bear the consequences.

Ashton was waiting by the gates downstairs.

Upon seeing me come out, the crease between his brows eased slightly, and he extended his hand to me. "Let's go home."

His voice was so soft that it was almost carried away by the wind.

I pursed my lips and ignored his outstretched hand, then brushed past him and marched toward the car.

Just then, Marcus' menacing voice came from behind. "You'd better take good care of her, Ashton, or I won't let her go the next time."

I faltered in my steps and looked over my shoulder to find that both men were staring each other down in a silent battle.

Ignoring them, I got into the car and vaguely heard Ashton saying, "There won't be a next time."

Ashton revved up the engine and started driving. Since he didn't make conversation, neither did I. Instead, I gazed out the window to watch as high-rise buildings whizzed past.

As we passed by more buildings, it began to dawn on me that K City was much more than just a bustling city.

"What would you like to eat?" Ashton finally broke the silence, asking me airily. When he glanced sideways at me, his eyes darkened slightly with a hint of frost seeping out of them.

With pursed lips, I replied succinctly, "I'm not hungry." It was true since I already had something to eat earlier.

He kept silent and parked the car in front of a breakfast place, glancing at me to declare, "Well I am."

After getting out of the car, he entered the shop and found a table before settling into a seat. With an expressionless face, he asked, "Do you eat pancakes?"

I wasn't hungry to begin with, so I gave him a nod. "Anything's fine."

Right after that, I bowed my head and scrolled through my phone. Just then, I received a text from John. Are you meeting up with OrbitTech's president in J City this Wednesday?

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 243

It had almost slipped my mind. I swiftly replied to him, already making plans to visit Jackson and Macy in J City as I hadn't seen them for quite some time. Making a mental calculation, I realized that Macy's child was probably already two months old.

Right then, my phone was abruptly snatched out of my hands. I whipped my head up and was met with Ashton's obsidian eyes. With a frown, I questioned, "What's wrong?"

He put the phone out of my reach and instructed, "Eat first."

My frown deepened as I looked at the food in front of me, not having much of an appetite. "I already ate earlier. I'm not hungry."

"It doesn't matter. You should eat more." He pushed a plate of stacked pancakes toward me.

I sighed aloud to express my displeasure but didn't kick up a fuss.

After having breakfast, I could vaguely sense that he was in a foul mood, but I couldn't figure out the root cause of it. Hence, I chose to be silent.

Silence hovered between us all the way back to the villa. The moment we stepped into the bedroom, Ashton abruptly hugged me from behind. "Did he touch you?" he asked in a deep and hoarse voice, evidently trying to suppress his rage.

Befuddled by his question, I didn't get the chance to react when he started peppering me with fervent kisses, suckling the skin of my neck and shoulders.

My brows furrowed as his actions became rougher. Despite the anger surging in me, I managed to calmly say, "Did you bring me back here because Rebecca can't satisfy you now that she's pregnant? Am I replacing her?"

He paused just then and lifted his head, his breathing becoming heavy with anger. "Scarlett, am I really that despicable to you?"

"Aren't you?" I refuted, turning my head to look at him and meeting his bloodshot eyes.

The temperature around us seemed to plummet drastically.

An inconspicuous smile appeared on Ashton's handsome face, and his gaze on me was like a knife stabbing into my chest. "Very well. I won't disappoint you then!"

He pushed me onto the bed without waiting for me to react. Then, he jerked off his necktie and threw it aside, the buttons of his collar coming undone from his rough movements.

I was dazed for a while before realizing what he was about to do. With my heart pounding wildly against my ribcage, I scrambled off the bed to make a run for the door.

However, before my feet touched the ground, I was pressed down by his body, and the scent that was solely his instantly filled my senses. "Based on Marcus' personality, he probably wouldn't have taken you by force, right?"

Then, he said through gritted teeth, "Let's do something different, shall we?"

...

Mrs. Eriksen was originally delighted that I was back, so she made a scrumptious meal and came upstairs to deliver it. Upon reaching the door, she cheerfully called out, "Letty!"

However, she immediately froze when she saw Ashton and me in that posture.

“Get out!” Ashton’s features twisted with rage and viciousness.

As Mrs. Eriksen had never been at the receiving end of his wrath, she stood paralyzed for a split second before hastily backing away and closing the door.

“Hah!” A laugh escaped my lips as I stared into his impenetrable dark eyes, mocking him in a voice dripping with sarcasm. “Haha! I’m actually grateful that the child isn’t alive. I can’t imagine how miserable his life would be with a father like you.”

He pinned me with a dangerous gaze and clenched his jaw in an effort to control his temper.

During those few seconds, I thought that he was going to hit me.

But the impact didn’t come.

All he did was lean forward to place his lips to my ear before gritting out in a low and hoarse voice, “Let’s have another one and see if he’ll be miserable or blessed.”

I was stunned.

Then, Ashton smashed his lips against mine.

My mind only registered the stinging pain on my lips several moments later.

“Are you an animal?” I yelled angrily.

“Hah!” He sneered. “Good to know that you still feel pain!”

“Ashton...”

Before I could curse him to hell and back, I felt his whole body stiffen all of a sudden just as his breath hitched slightly.

Taking a closer look at him, I noticed that his gaze was fixated on the scar spanning my lower abdomen.

He raised his hand to touch it, but I slapped it away as an idea popped into my mind.

“Why? Does the scar disgust you?”

As he looked at me, I could see the heartache and pain swirling in his eyes. However, I merely found it hilarious and ironic.

“Does it still hurt?” He seemed to have regained control over his emotions as his gaze returned to being indecipherable.

My heart wrenched in pain at his absurd question, and I struggled to draw air into my lungs for a moment.

I pushed him away and got up, then put on my clothes mechanically before uttering, “You’re even more farcical than I thought, Ashton.”

With that, I swiveled around and went downstairs.

Mrs. Eriksen was in the kitchen. Seeing me come down, she stole a glance at me and turned slightly embarrassed. “You must be hungry, Letty. Molly and I cooked some food earlier. Would you like some?”

I shook my head and turned her down. “No, thank you. I’m going out for a walk.”

I was rather surprised to bump into Rebecca at the villa’s entrance, but then again, it wasn’t all that strange. With one hand supporting her protruding belly, Rebecca got out of the car with the help of her nanny.

The driver drove off after she gave him some instructions. Then, she walked toward the villa with the nanny’s support.

When she saw me leaning against the door frame with my arms folded across my chest while looking at her icily, she paused in her steps. The initial excitement on her face was replaced by surprise and hostility.

“Good morning, Ms. Larson. Aren’t you going to move in now that your belly has grown so big?” I didn’t mean for it to sound sarcastic but simply felt that it seemed inappropriate for a pregnant woman to go back and forth like that.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 244

After all, she is everyone's precious princess.

She pursed her lips as her features contorted with rancor. The tone in which she spoke to me was especially uncongenial. "I thought you hated Ash? Why are you back here?"

Amusement filled me as I countered, "No matter how much I hate him, we're still a legally married couple. Besides, I own half the rights to this house. If I don't come back, wouldn't that be an act of surrender?"

She curled her lips in disdain. "Oh, quit the snarky act. I'm not interested in fighting with you over money."

I raised my brows. "I find that hard to believe. After all, you've even set your sights on my husband."

Faced with her venomous glare, I turned and headed toward the yard before she could say something nasty to me and further dampen my mood. Realizing that it was already autumn in K City, I sighed at how time flew.

Perhaps Ashton had heard our voices outside. After a while, he came out. When he saw Rebecca, he frowned as his lips flattened into a line. "What are you doing here?"

Seeing her lover, a soft smile replaced the angry scowl on Rebecca's face. "Ash, I heard my father say that you'll be going to a border town next month to discuss the development project, so he told me to pass the collaboration contract to you."

Then, she signaled her nanny with her eyes, to which the latter took out a file and respectfully handed it to Ashton.

"Pfft!" I failed to stifle my laughter and ended up attracting their gazes to me.

Ashton pursed his lips as he ordered, "It's cold. Go in and put on a coat."

Rebecca shot daggers at me and gnashed her teeth in anger.

I ignored her death stare and walked up to Ashton, holding his arm to complain, "You were too rough earlier, so I don't really feel like walking so much. Can you go get it for me?"

To emphasize, I deliberately tilted my head slightly, revealing the bite mark on my neck.

My skin was delicate, so he would always leave a mark no matter where he bit me.

Perceiving Rebecca's increasingly vexed expression, I broke into an incredibly sweet smile at Ashton. "Please?"

Ashton was no fool, so he easily saw through my little trick.

An indiscernible frown appeared between his brows before he glanced at Rebecca. "Just get your father to look for me at the company for matters like this in the future. You don't need to come here."

"The weather's cold. Go home earlier," he added after a brief pause.

"Ash, I..." Rebecca wanted to say something but was cut off by Ashton.

"Send my regards to your mother," he said in a voice that had dropped a few octaves lower.

The hidden warning in his words was clear. Rebecca instantly tensed up, an aggrieved look taking residence on her face.

Ashton wanted to tug me back into the living room, but I released his arm at that time and said to him, "Go get me a coat. I'll send Ms. Larson off."

His brows drew together.

Seeing his hesitation, I reminded him, "You promised that you wouldn't question me no matter what I did."

After a short pause, he relented, "It's cold outside, so don't take too long."

I nodded and watched as he went back into the living room. Then, I turned back to Rebecca with a faint smile. "Let me send you off, Ms. Larson."

"That's not necessary!" Rebecca was upset after being given the cold shoulder, and seeing me only made her more displeased. "You couldn't even protect your own child, so stop gloating, Scarlett."

There was a cobblestone path that extended from the front door to where we were standing, and beside it lay a small pond.

Because of the cold weather, the fish inside were relatively inactive and the lotuses that bloomed on the water's surface had withered by now. To ensure that the pond stayed visually pleasant, snapped branches and leaves were frequently cleared away. Hence, the water was considered quite clean.

Having already shooed off the nanny, Rebecca supported her waist with the contempt on her face clear as day.

I couldn't help but sneer at her. "What is there for me to gloat about, Ms. Larson? Indeed, I failed to protect my child, but why don't we see if you can?"

Her eyes widened, seemingly just realized that she was standing close to the pond. I took a few steps toward her and grabbed her arm before yanking her to the edge of the pond.

Forcing her to look at the still surface of the pond, I said, "You won't drown even if you fall in. You'll only suffer a little bit. Why don't you jump in and see if you can protect your baby?"

"You..." she shrieked. "If you harm a hair on me, my father will give you hell!"

"Let's give it a try, shall we?" I smirked slightly and felt the urge to roll my eyes when she shivered.

"Don't you dare!" She raised her voice. "My father will never let you get away with it if you push me in!"

I felt bored listening to her yapping away about her father in an attempt to intimidate me, so I casually shoved her slightly in the direction of the pond.

She screamed in fright and instinctively pushed me away.

Splash!

Holy sh*t. The water during the cold seasons was really freezing. After thrashing in the water for a while, I was abruptly hauled out of the pond.

As the chilly air kissed my skin, I shivered violently.

Ashton wrapped the coat he had brought out around me before turning to Mrs. Eriksen who had anxiously followed him out and ordered, "Call Dr. Crest over now."

Mrs. Eriksen nodded profusely and proceeded to make the call.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 245

Ashton scooped me into his arms and shot a cold look at Rebecca, who was still dumbstruck.

Then, he snapped, "Next time, please refrain from setting foot in our humble abode. My wife has a frail body and can't handle your aggressive ways."

He was indirectly implying that Rebecca wasn't welcome here anymore.

As Rebecca slowly regained her senses, her eyes reddened while she anxiously tried to explain herself, "Ash, it wasn't me. I didn't touch her!"

Ashton scoffed, "So, are you saying that she fell in on her own?"

Rebecca once again defended herself, "She was going to push me in, but when I resisted, she fell in instead. It has nothing to do with me. She..."

"So, she couldn't even defend herself against you, a pregnant woman?" Ashton questioned. With his lips pressed into a tight line, he exuded a chilly aura.

"Rebecca, you should be well aware of why I've always indulged you. It was a privilege bestowed on you in return for Parker's kindness, but within these few years, you've completely exhausted that privilege." These words were admittedly brutal.

Rebecca's face had turned pale, and her eyes were red when she choked out, "My brother died because of you back then. How can you casually dismiss that just because of me? What's the meaning of this, Ash?"

"Do you need me to spell it out for you?" Ashton's breathing grew heavy as he suppressed his anger. "Go back and tell your mother that one of these days, we'll settle the scores between us."

With that, he carried me into the living room. After making the phone call, Mrs. Eriksen came out with an infuriated look on her face. Glancing at the pregnant woman standing outside, she said in a clipped tone, "I think it's time for you to leave, Ms. Larson. The Fullers are a simple family and can't keep up with your flair for drama."

Without waiting to see Rebecca's reaction, she shut the door in her face.

As my clothes were soaked through, water dripped onto the floor all the way to the bedroom.

Ashton directly carried me into the bathroom and placed me by the bathtub. Then, he turned on the hot water and reached out to remove my clothes, but I quickly dodged his hands.

"I'll do it myself!" I snapped.

Thereafter, I peeled off the coat around me and started undoing my clothes when I noticed that he was still standing off to the side. With a frown, I asked, "Do you like watching me undress?"

His frosty face broke into a smile. "Can't I?"

I stopped fiddling with my clothes to meet his eyes. "I'm sorry, Mr. Fuller, but I don't share your sentiment, so I'll have to ask you to leave."

He pursed his lips, but fortunately, he did as I said without any protests.

When I came out of the shower, there was a glass of milk on the nightstand while Ashton was nowhere in sight.

Casting a fleeting glance at it, I settled in front of the vanity mirror to blow-dry my hair. I was already frail to begin with. After falling into the pond, I wouldn't be surprised if I caught a cold.

Feeling lethargic but reluctant to sleep, I crawled under the sheets to warm myself.

Without Ashton here, I felt more relaxed. After reading a book, I fished out my phone to entertain myself.

Ashton came in with some documents in his hands, seemingly here to check up on me.

When he noticed me looking at my phone on the bed, his forehead creased. "Looking at your phone so often is bad for your eyes."

I flicked my eyes toward him and nodded brusquely before placing my phone on the nightstand.

After that, I burrowed underneath the blanket.

The bed sank slightly as Ashton sat beside me. "Finish the milk, then sleep for a while if you're tired."

"I don't want the milk!" I rejected as I had never been a fan of milk.

"Be a good girl, Scarlett. Get up and drink it," Ashton ordered. This was the first time I felt so annoyed by someone.

I flipped the blanket off me and stared him dead in the eye for several seconds. Then, I rolled out of bed in anger and grabbed the glass of milk before walking into the bathroom.

After pouring the milk into the toilet bowl, I came out and put the glass back down with a dark look on my face. "Please take the glass with you when you leave. Thanks!"

"Scarlett!" he growled. "Do you think this is funny?"

Flummoxed, I cocked a brow at him. "What's funny?"

Faced with my reaction, he seemed to be at his wits' end. After staring at me for a while, he sighed and said in a deflated manner, "Get some rest."

Watching him get up and leave, I pulled the blanket over myself and decided to do just that since I was indeed feeling a little tired.

Unfortunately, I couldn't fall asleep even though I was very sleepy. This feeling was torturous, to say the least.

After a few hours of rolling around in bed, I finally began to doze off.

Right then, the bedroom door was opened from the outside. Ashton walked in and stood beside the bed, his gaze landing on me. "Don't sleep too much during the day. Get up and eat something. You can continue sleeping after that."

It had taken me a painstakingly long time to finally drift off into sleep. Now that he had awoken me, I felt rather speechless. Paying him no heed, I kept my eyes shut and tried to let sleep take over me once again.

He walked up to me and pulled me up from the bed, saying in a stern voice, "Get up and eat something."

Anger tore through me, and I opened my eyes, shoving him away as I glared at him. "What's wrong with you, Ashton? Do you know how hard it is for me to get a good night's sleep? How many f**king times are you going to barge in on me? Have you ever considered my feelings?"

Perhaps I had reacted too violently. He frowned as a cold glint entered his eyes. "Fine, let's sleep together."

I was taken aback when he climbed into bed. Deep down, I was aware that there were certain things that could not be avoided forever.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 246

No matter how hard I struggled, he ignored it and coaxed me in a semi-domineering manner instead.

I dug my nails into his skin, scratching him wildly as I cursed, "You're a b*stard, Ashton!"

"Yes, I am!"

I began to suspect that he hadn't touched a woman at all during this period of time as he acted like a starved beast, ravaging me without restraint.

After the deed was done, he leaned against the headboard and lit a cigarette.

Under the dim light, I could discern the scratch marks on his sturdy chest. There were even faint bloodstains in a few spots.

I wanted to get up and wash my body, but his arms were wrapped around me, forcing my head to lie against his chest.

The smell of tobacco permeated the air in the room. When he finished smoking his cigarette, he said in a deep voice, "Let's set a date and time. I'll accompany you to see a psychiatrist."

I was dumbfounded for a moment, arching my neck to look at him. After he stubbed out his cigarette in the ashtray, I finally came to my senses and pursed my lips. "No!"

Besides finding me unresponsive, I couldn't think of any other reason he would suggest something like that right after we had sex.

I had never thought of getting treatment after my pregnancy. When there were already so many problems with my body, one more wouldn't make a difference.

Leveling my gaze with his, I said nonchalantly, "If you can't feel anything from me, you can look elsewhere from now on."

Ashton's brows snapped together, and he scooted down on the bed expressionlessly, then pinned me with a savage gaze. "Look elsewhere? Scarlett, you really don't know when to stop, do you? I want you to go for treatment because I don't want you to hurt anymore. And right now, you're unwell both physically and emotionally."

As I was enveloped in his arms, most of the light was blocked by his body. I frowned, not liking this cramped enclosure one bit. "This isn't the first day you know about my health problems. In fact, I have so many. How are you going to treat them all?" I challenged softly.

Without waiting for him to reply, I wriggled out of his embrace and went to the bathroom.

When I came out, he was sitting on the bed with the blanket covering his lower body and his phone in one hand. He looked at me and instructed, "Jared is downstairs. Change your clothes and go down to get yourself... treated."

What?

I threw the bath towel aside and replied coldly, "He can't treat me."

Ashton frowned. "Why not? He's a doctor."

I narrowed my eyes at him. "If I tell Dr. Crest that I'm unresponsive, what do you think he'll say? That I'm the problem? Or..." I trailed off.

He knew what I was implying perfectly well.

Seeing his brows furrowed together, I kindly reminded him, "I'm only unresponsive to you, so Mr. Fuller, I suggest that you find some time to get yourself checked."

When his face darkened, I immediately walked out of the bedroom because challenging a man's limits had consequences that I couldn't handle.

Sure enough, the moment I stepped out of the bedroom, a furious roar reverberated from inside. "Scarlett!" Following that was the sound of glass shattering.

I made sure to close the door behind me, lest his outburst disturbs the others.

When I went downstairs, I saw Jared sitting in the living room. Mrs. Eriksen had prepared a lot of sweet snacks for him, which he barely touched, only drinking a few sips of English breakfast tea.

Come to think of it, men usually don't fancy sweet snacks.

Upon hearing some shuffling sounds behind him, he looked back at me. His brows raised toward his hairline. "You've lost weight!"

Well... he's quite good at flattery.

I sat beside him and replied, "I didn't know you were so good at flattery." Girls always liked it when others said they had lost weight.

He took a sip of his tea, furrowing his brows slightly. "Did I sound like I was flattering you?"

"Yep!" I continued, "At least that's what I think." After all, no one wanted to be called fat.

He didn't speak anymore after that, perhaps finding it hard to continue the conversation.

Just then, Mrs. Eriksen came to me and said, "Letty, I cooked some food earlier. Come and eat a little bit first before letting Dr. Crest take a look at you."

"It's fine. I'm not hungry." With that, I looked at Jared and asked, "Do I look unwell to you?"

Jared arched a brow at me. "You do. Go eat something first."

I shouldn't have asked him...

I frowned when Mrs. Eriksen remained standing where she was. "Mrs. Eriksen, I'm really not hungry. You..."

"Does it mean you don't have to wear clothes if you're not cold? Go eat something." Ashton descended the stairs with a broody face.

The corners of my mouth turned downward. Well, someone seems to have improved in comebacks. He's even using analogies now.

I was about to snap a retort when my phone rang. The caller ID displayed on the phone screen was John's.

Seeing both Ashton and Jared staring at me, I said placidly, "Excuse me. I have to take this."

Ashton had caught sight of John's caller ID flashing across my screen. Narrowing his eyes a little, he said, "Just answer it here."

How childish!

I rolled my eyes at him and picked up the call. "Hey John, what's up?"

"Ashton seems to be interested in the OrbitTech project as well. We've been fighting in secret for so long now. If I give up this project, it'll very likely fall into his hands. What you need to do now is convince him to give up acquiring OrbitTech." John's voice wasn't loud, but given the silence in the living room and our close proximity, Ashton and Jared were able to hear everything he said.

I glanced at both of them before speaking into the phone, "Got it. I'm hanging up now."

"Wait!" John said hastily. "News about Uncle Louis accepting you as his goddaughter will probably become a hot topic in K City in the days to come. It's best if you and Marcus keep a distance from each other. Also, you should return to J City to settle the matters regarding OrbitTech as soon as possible. After Uncle Louis comes back from his inspection in other provinces and officially takes you into the family, you can proceed with your plans."

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 247

Ashton looked at me, his lips curving up into a smirk.

I ignored him and said into the phone, "Alright, I got it. I'll hang up now."

After I ended the call, Ashton's eyes were still on me while his face seemed to have become a few more shades darker. "What plans do you have in mind? Even Louis Stovall is involved?"

"I'm planning to..." Divorce you!

However, I stopped myself halfway when I remembered that I still had to persuade him to give up acquiring OrbitTech. If I provoked him now, it would be difficult to get his cooperation later on.

Glancing at Jared, I asked, "Dr. Crest, would you like to eat together?"

Jared's eyes darted toward Ashton, and his mouth tugged upward slightly upon seeing the sullen look on his friend's face. Then, he nodded. "Sure. I'm actually quite hungry now."

We went into the kitchen together to find that Mrs. Eriksen had prepared quite a spread. A short while later, Ashton joined us in the kitchen as well.

Both men sitting beside me were brought up in similarly strict households, so their lessons kicked in and they kept silent throughout their entire meal.

After eating, Mrs. Eriksen tidied up the kitchen. I automatically extended my hand toward Jared, who was beside me. "Recently, I've been experiencing insomnia, headaches, and anxiety. Take a look and see what's wrong with me."

Jared's mouth arched up as he glanced fleetingly at the silent Ashton before raising his brows at me. "Alright."

After doing the routine procedure of examining me, he reported in a solemn tone, "You have too many health problems. Firstly, you have severe gastritis, so pay attention to your diet from now on. Your insomnia has led to a weak heart rate, so your heart isn't in very good shape now. Your poor blood circulation is probably because you didn't focus on recuperating after giving birth. You have to take good care of yourself to recover from all these health problems."

I nodded and withdrew my hand. When he lowered his head to prescribe the relevant medicine, I turned to Ashton with a faint smirk. "Aren't you going to let Dr. Crest take a look at you?"

Ashton pursed his lips. "You think it's funny?"

I raised my brows and shrugged to end the topic.

Jared kept hesitating while he was supposed to leave, so I figured that he had something to say to me and offered to walk him out.

At the villa's entrance, he spoke up before I could, "Scarlett, did Macy contact you lately?"

I was stunned for a split second before shaking my head. "No." When I thought about her child, I couldn't help but ask, "You haven't seen her recently?"

He nodded. "Please contact me if you see her."

I hummed in response, wondering if he knew that Macy had a child. Since I was occupied with my own matters recently, I didn't have time to think about Macy and wondered how she was doing now.

After Jared drove away, I went back into the living room, where I saw Ashton reading a book on the sofa.

Hearing me come back in, he only sent me a cursory glance without saying anything.

After hesitating for a while, I went to make him a cup of tea and walked over to his side to place the cup in front of him. "Drink some black tea for better digestion."

He looked at me, then put down the book in his hand to reach out and pull me into his arms.

Peering at me with his abyssal eyes, he asked, "So, when are you planning to bring the matter up?"

Even though I was taken aback, I managed to control my voice. "You know what they say. Men are the most compliant when they're sated in bed."

He raised his brows. "So, were you planning to bring it up when you're lying under me?"

I nodded. "But if you're in the mood to agree right now, then there's no reason for me to wait."

"Hah!" He leaned his forehead against mine and scoffed, "What do you want OrbitTech for?"

"I can't very well be a meek little housewife. I think it's good to be a strong and career-oriented woman." My expression was serious as my gaze landed on his Adam's apple. Then, my eyes traveled down to the top button of his white shirt.

He raised my chin and grazed the corner of my mouth with his lips. There was a mirthless smile in his voice when he said, "If OrbitTech was so easy to acquire, do you think John and I would've let it drag on for a year?"

"I know, that's why I implore you to give up acquiring OrbitTech. If both you and John give up, it'll make things much easier for White Corporation."

He squinted his eyes at me and said in a calm voice, "Scarlett, should I feel blessed to have such an intelligent and money-minded wife?"

Hearing the sarcasm in it, I nodded with a deadpan expression. "Working together as husband and wife is better than fighting alone, no?"

"Hah!" he scoffed. "You're quite bold to say that."

I pursed my lips and ignored his jab, bringing us back to the topic. "So, do you agree?"

He lowered his gaze to look at me with a cold glint in his eyes. "Didn't you say you were going to ask me in bed?"

What the...

Hah!

Indeed, his mind was constantly in the gutter.

We were bound to get into an argument if this went on, but I didn't feel like fighting with him just yet.

To diffuse the ticking bomb, I simply asked, "What are you and the Moore family collaborating on?"

Actually, I wasn't that interested in knowing the details and merely asked out of curiosity.

His eyes dimmed a little as he replied, "A development project." I could hear a dangerous undertone in his words.

Fine. I guess it's not an appropriate topic.

Hence, I stood up and was about to go upstairs, but he held me down in his arms. "Let's watch some Korean drama."

What? Korean drama? Is he serious?

After being apart for a while, he seemed to have become rather eccentric.

"No thanks." With that, I tried to get up again. However, his arms remained tightly locked around me. Just then, the sound of a phone ringing reached our ears.

It was his phone.

He glanced at his phone screen. Seeing that it was Sally, he turned to me and asked nonchalantly, "Can you pick it up for me?"

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 248

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I pressed my lips and sulked. "It's inappropriate for me to answer the call."

My response clearly showed him that I refused to accept his family. This was no doubt an insult to him, and I immediately regretted it.

"Inappropriate?"

Before I could react, he reached out his hand and grabbed my chin. "Inappropriate in what sense? Are you trying to tell me you've spent so much time with Marcus, and soon, you're going to be someone else's stepmother?"

The incessant ringing got on my nerves, but I chose to ignore it.

He then exerted more force on my chin. “Have he kissed you as I did? Had Marcus made you answer a call like this, you would have done it in a heartbeat, right?”

The color drained from my face, but I tried to stay calm. I smirked, “You’re just trying to humiliate me because you think I’m filthy, aren’t you? If that’s the case, why do you still bother to come and fetch me?”

I paused for a moment and continued, “And who are you tell me what’s appropriate and what’s not? How should I face the family of a man who constantly humiliates me? Should I bow before them and wash their feet? I bet you’ve never treated Rebecca like this, haven’t you?”

He gave me a death stare as soon as I finished. Yet, his grip never loosened.

At that point, my chin was already hurting so badly, but I still put on a tough look. “There are women whom you can hit and humiliate as you wish after you’ve paid them, but I’m not one of these women. I’ll not allow a man to disrespect and degrade me all the time, and I’ll definitely not hold on to a man who failed to protect his own child.”

With his lips tightly pressed together, he let out a loud harrumph. However, by the time he turned his attention to his phone, the caller had ended the call.

After grabbing the car key, he left.

I’ll do what it takes to defend my honor too.

If you don’t know how to respect me, then don’t expect me to respect you in return!

The revving sound of a car’s engine emerged from the porch, and soon, the car left the compound of the villa.

I let out a long sigh and collapsed onto the couch, feeling utterly exhausted.

Once again, I screwed up. I should not have let my emotions get the better of me. And guess who’s going to benefit from this fight? Rebecca!

It was still early, and I couldn’t sleep. Thus, I gave John a call and asked him where he was so I could meet up with him.

I had been to Paramount Club several times, so I went straight into his suite after knowing where he was.

It was a surprise to see him singing and drinking alone in the suite as I thought he was with his client.

After seeing me standing by the door, he tapped on the couch and invited me, "Come! Sit!"

I pressed my lips, sat behind him, and lowered the volume of the song. "Are you okay?"

He took a sidelong glance at me and placed the mic in front of me. "I heard you're back with Ashton."

I nodded and poured myself a glass of wine. "Any updates about Rebecca?"

"After the video incident, Cameron found someone to hack into my computer and deleted all the videos and photos," he said as he leaned against the couch.

I could not help but frown, "She has her eyes on you now?"

In response, John raised his brows. "Why are you here at this hour anyway? Where is Ashton?"

"The White residence."

"I'm afraid Benjamin's number is up."

He nodded then turned around and looked at me. "Are you not going to pay the family a visit? Marcus has been nice to you all this while."

Of course, I wanted to visit them but in private. Hence, I ignored his question and moved on to another topic. "So, there's nothing else we can do with Rebecca?"

He pursed his lips and took a sip from his wine glass. "You seem to think I'm just a good-for-nothing other than having good looks."

What?

"That's not true." What an overly confident man.

He took a deep breath and said, "I've sent her the pictures. She should be delivering her baby by the end of the year. What are you going to do?"

Hearing his question, I was stunned for a bit and knitted my brows. "What am I supposed to do?"

By the expression on John's face, I could tell he must have thought how unbelievably stupid I was. "Are you not going to do anything to the baby?"

I could not help but bite my lips. Yes, I had made all sorts of threatening remarks in the past, but how could I harm a baby? I did not want to become just like Cameron!

He then let out a long sigh. "You're too kind. Dealing with Rebecca is not difficult, but you'll have a hard time dealing with Cameron. Not only is she cruel, but she also has years of experience in eliminating enemies who get in her way."

"I'm sure I can find her Achilles' heel. I'll start with Rebecca." The best way to crush Cameron's spirit is to destroy Rebecca first!

John kept mum and did not respond. He then looked at me, "Listen carefully. Ashton is not the father to the two babies that Rebecca had carried."

Obviously taken aback, a frown warped my face. "How did you know?"

"I found out about this by chance. It seems someone had raped Rebecca and made her pregnant, but she eventually lost the baby due to an accident. As for this pregnancy, Joe is the father to the baby, but Rebecca insisted it was Ashton's." He shrugged his shoulders.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 249

I was absolutely dumbfounded. "Does Cameron know about this?"

"No one else knew the truth except Rebecca. I bet Joe is still in the dark about this too. Since Rebecca has claimed that it's Ashton's baby, I'm sure Cameron would have believed her words." John shook his head.

Is that why Cameron tried so hard to get rid of my baby, so she could pave way for Rebecca's?

"How about Ashton? Does he know about it?" Ashton seemed to have clarified that he had not had any physical intimacy with Rebecca.

John let out a cold snort. "He would be the stupidest man in the world if he himself doesn't know it."

That comment rendered me speechless for a moment.

Alright. Fine.

So did that mean Ashton took great care of Rebecca but had never touched her? Why didn't he explain to me?

I would not have believed his words anyway. I guess he knew my temper better than I did.

Though, I really had to take my hat off to her brother, Parker. After all, he still managed to find a man who was willing to take good care of his sister even after so many years.

Despite knowing the baby was not his, Ashton was still willing to take on the responsibility.

"What are you thinking?" John patted me on the back. "My birthday is around the corner. You better get me a nice gift since I've helped you a lot."

Dude...

I pressed my lips and asked, "What do you want for your birthday?"

"Anything!"

"Like a shirt? A necktie? Or a belt?" I ran out of ideas.

He looked at me and said in a serious tone, "No. I want you for my birthday."

I scoffed, "Over my dead body."

Hearing that, he was at a loss for words.

“Don’t buy things for me. Make me something special that I can appreciate.”

I did not know how to react to that. Are we still living in ancient times? Does he expect me to sew him a pouch?

It was already 11 p.m. by the time I returned to the villa. Ashton was still not back yet, and Mrs. Eriksen seemed to be sewing something in the living hall.

Upon noticing me standing by the door, she put aside her sewing kit and smiled at me. “Welcome home.”

I nodded gently and went to get myself a cup of water. Yet, there was only cold water in the dispenser.

Mrs. Eriksen said, “I may have damaged the water dispenser when I was mopping the floor earlier, and it’s too late to get someone to come and repair the device at this hour. Should I boil you some water?”

I shook my head. She then started packing her things and was ready to return to the rear house. She must have stayed up late to wait for me to come home. “You can go and rest now. I’ll go to bed soon.”

She pointed at the water dispenser. “But...”

“I’m not thirsty. You can go now!” I frowned involuntarily as I did not want to talk to anyone at this point.

My reaction left her stunned for a bit. She then kept quiet and left the living hall.

I seemed to have lost my patience with people.

After Mrs. Eriksen had left, I sat on the couch in the living room for a while. Glancing up at the wall mindlessly, I noticed the clock had already struck twelve.

Why is Ashton not back yet? Does he plan to stay overnight at the White’s residence?

I went to the kitchen and boiled some water for drinking. In the meantime, I took out my phone to check if I had missed any messages.

After realizing there were no updates on the notification tab, I let out a long sigh. I then lifted the kettle's lid to check if the water was boiling but was unfortunately scalded by the steam.

It hurt so badly that I immediately retracted my hand. After staring at the kettle for some time, I took out my phone once again.

Just when I was hesitating if I should give him a call, I heard someone entering the house.

Is he back?

I bit my lips, brought the kettle to the living hall, and poured two glasses of water.

The moment Ashton came in, I could see water droplets resting on his coat. Perhaps it was raining outside.

After hanging his coat by the door, he realized I was sitting in the living hall. He frowned and came up to me. "Couldn't sleep?"

I nodded and looked at him in the eyes. "How's Benjamin?"

A line formed between his brows as he was surprised that I asked. "Marcus told you?"

I shook my head. "I knew Benjamin has not been in the pink for quite some."

He nodded gently and stood in front of me. "Are you worried that I might not come home today?"

I shook my head. After that, I reached for a glass of water as my throat felt dry. Thanks to my clumsy self, I accidentally spilled some water on my thighs.

It was so hot that I winced.

Just then, Ashton walked up, carried me in his arms, and brought me to the washroom.

After turning on the cold shower to relieve my pain, he looked at me with a frown. "Did you drink?"

I nodded after a short pause.

The moment he tried reaching for his phone, I knew he was going to trouble Jared again. I snatched his phone and said, "It's late now. Let's not disturb him anymore."

After seeing the red patch on my thighs, he looked up at me with a scowl. "Did you do this on purpose?"

I simply admitted, "Yes."

"Why?"

"Because I need your help." I was still waiting for him to help me with OrbitTech, though.

He responded with a smirk, carried me to the bedroom upstairs, and stripped off my wet clothes.

After helping me change into my pajamas, he applied some ointment on my thighs. It hurt a little, but the pain was still bearable.

It seemed he had intentionally avoided my question earlier. I lowered my eyes and tapped on his hand. "I feel better now. Thanks."

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 250

As soon as I said that, Ashton knitted his brows. "I'm only halfway done."

I pressed my lips and was at a loss for words.

While I was still thinking of a way to respond to that remark, he threw out this question all of a sudden, "What are you going to do if I decide not to come home today?"

"I'd probably have to scald my whole body and call you." This idea did cross my mind. I knew he would not ignore me.

He tightened his grip on my thigh, causing me to gasp in pain.

"Does it hurt?" he sneered. "Have you thought of turning yourself into a cripple?"

I kept mum, but I still gently ran my fingers all over his arm while he continued applying the ointment on my thighs.

"What are you doing?" He furrowed his eyebrows and looked at me.

I bit my lips. "Seducing you."

He let out a mirthless laugh, put away the ointment, and squinted. "You're doing this for that project?"

And again, I chose to remain silent. I got up, wrapped my hands around his shoulders, and pressed my lips against his.

He, too, wrapped his hands around my waist and said in a husky voice, "How much did you drink?"

I mumbled, "A few glasses, I think."

Frankly speaking, I was not good at seducing men, and foreplay always wore me out. I just wanted to hit the bullseye.

His breathing grew heavier as he pulled me closer to him. "So are you planning to give up?"

I shook my head and changed my position.

While he was enjoying the time of his life, I took the opportunity and asked, "Fuller Corporation has HiTech now, so how about OrbitTech..."

"Nope. No OrbitTech!" He instantly turned rough.

I looked up at him with a scowl, reached for the phone, and passed it to him. "Call Joseph now!"

He stopped what he was doing and gazed into my eyes. "You really think you can make me do things just by offering me your body?"

I did not know what to say. But I knew he was not happy about it.

I bit my lips. "You promised to support me in everything I do."

He took over the phone with a smirk and gave Joseph a call.

It took Joseph quite a while to answer the phone. Ashton then said to him in a cold voice, "Do not follow up on OrbitTech's case anymore!"

He ended the call, threw the phone aside, and went straight to the shower.

It was either I was too drunk or simply relieved that I had one less problem to worry about. Nonetheless, I fell asleep almost instantly.

By the time Ashton got out of the shower, I was already sound asleep. But he was not ready to call it a day.

He thought he could torture me the whole night by staying on top of me almost every hour. But jokes on him as I had already transported myself to a faraway dreamland.

My head hurt the moment I opened my eyes the next morning. It must be due to all the drinks I had last night. I raised my hands and clenched my fists to wake myself up.

Since I had to make a trip to the White Corporation, I had to freshen up and start organizing some documents. Yet when I tried getting out of bed, I realized someone still had his grip on my wrist.

Ashton was still asleep, and the stubble on his chin made him look even more appealing.

I could not stop myself from reaching for the sexy stubble. It was soft to the touch, but at the same time, it was also kind of prickly.

Under the dimmed light in the room, his facial features became even more prominent. Upon noticing someone was touching him, he woke up with a start and looked at me with his sleepy eyes.

With a deep growl, he asked, "Do you want more?"

I immediately retracted my hand. He then sat up, exposing some scratches on his abs.

Yes, I was the one who scratched him last night.

Ashton raised his brows after noticing I was staring at his body. "Someone has gone pretty wild last night."

Now that the alcohol's effect had mostly worn off, my mind became much clearer. "I wouldn't have done this to you had you behaved well last night."

He chuckled. "Oh? So do you want to go for another round?" He leaned forward and gave me a peck on my forehead, "You're my wife, and I'm your husband. Ask me if you have any doubts, and don't let rumors get to you. Okay?"

I nodded and gently pushed him away. "Alright, alright, that's enough. I need to go to the office today, so give me a break."

He could not help but laugh upon hearing what I said. Right after flipping the blanket over, he kept staring at my thighs for quite some time.

Initially, I thought he was aroused but soon realized he was staring at the red patches on my thighs.

He lifted his head and looked at me. "Does it still hurt?"

I shook my head. "Nope."

"Just stay home and rest today."

I refused. "I'm fine. I have to get back to the office to settle some work today."

A sudden frown warped his face. He was apparently unhappy with my answer but held back his anger. "I'll drive you!"

Since Ashton had made a compromise, I should too. I nodded and accepted his offer.

He parked his car outside White Corporation and immediately became the center of attention when employees walked in and out of the building.

When I was about to get out of the car after unfastening the safety belt, I realized the car was locked. I tilted my head and gave Ashton a stare. "Open the door!"

A sharp glint appeared in his eyes for a brief moment as he pressed his lips and looked at me. "So, you're just going to leave like that?"

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 251 - 255

At first, I did not understand what he wanted, but as soon as he pointed at his cheek, I knew he was asking for a kiss.

"We're in public, for goodness sake!" It was extremely inappropriate to display affection in front of so many people!

A corner of his mouth quirked up. "We're married, so it's normal for a wife to give her husband a goodbye kiss."

Now was not the right time or place to argue with him on this topic.

Instead of starting a fight with him, I leaned forward and gave him a kiss on his cheek. All of sudden, he winded down the window and kissed me on my lips. "Oh yes. Sweet!"

I got out of the car and tried to control my anger.

As I was walking toward the entrance, I bumped into Marcus.

He had been standing outside the entrance. I bet he must have seen what Ashton did to me in the car, especially after Ashton winded down the window for the whole world to see.

His expression changed, and I could tell he was shooting daggers at Ashton. In spite of that, I went up and greeted him as if nothing ever happened, "Good morning!"

He bit lips and gradually turned his attention to me. "Hey."

Once we got into the elevator, he gave me a document. "Take a look at some information about OrbitTech. Our chances are slim as both John and Ashton have their eyes on this company too."

I nodded and took over the document. "What are our chances if they decide to give up on OrbitTech?"

He paused for a moment and frowned, "Have you talked to them?"

I responded with a nod. Once we stepped out of the elevator, I said, "One of them is my brother, and the other person is my husband. I guess luck is on my side."

"If only things are as simple as you thought." Marcus let out a cold snort.

We did not dwell on this topic after that. I went to my office and studied the document he gave me.

At noon, Sally came to my office. "We need to talk."

"About?" I gave her a puzzled look.

Clad in a black dress suit, she looked exceptionally elegant. She pressed her lips for a bit and said, "You'll know."

I nodded, put aside the document, and left the office with her.

We arrived at one of the cafés in the city center, and I ordered a cup of coffee. Sally looked at me and asked, "What's going on between you and Marcus?"

The way she spoke to me was as if she was questioning a teenager.

"We're friends. Business partners." I gave her the standard answer.

She nodded and took a sip of her coffee. "How about Ashton? Are you planning to divorce him?"

Oops. I don't think many people know that I've moved back to the villa.

I looked at Sally and squinted. "Is this what you want to talk to me about?"

She said, "I heard you were going to divorce Ashton after Dad passed away. The only reason that's holding you back was your pregnancy. Ashton is a responsible man, and he was willing to take care of you and the baby. Does this mean there's no love in this marriage?"

Who told you this?

I grinned. "Thank you for paying attention to the problems of my marriage. I appreciate it."

She also responded with a calm smile. "Do you still love him? Just tell me."

"It seems you really like to make swift decisions just after weighing the pros and cons, Ms. Fuller."

Upon hearing that remark, she let out a mirthless laugh. "You two decided to stay together because of the baby. Now that the baby is out of the way and you don't love each other, then it's time for you to move on! I noticed you seem to be very close with Marcus. Why not give him a chance?"

That's how you convince someone to get a divorce? What a joke.

"Did Ashton agree to your suggestion?" She might have advised Ashton too since he visited the White family last night.

Sally frowned. "Stop wasting each other's time and move on."

I nodded. I could not really blame her for giving me this suggestion. After all, I had indeed been quite close with Marcus recently. Let's not forget the fact Ashton and I were also on bad terms with each other and had been separated for quite some time.

Perhaps, to Sally, the best option for me was to file for a divorce.

Hence, I believe Sally must have evaluated the situation before throwing out her suggestion.

Unless she had an ulterior motive that I was not aware of.

I had to say something in response to her suggestion. "I don't think it's fair for you to advise us to get a divorce just because my marriage is on the rocks. If there's something else on your mind, please share it with me, so I can evaluate the pros and cons like how you'd do."

She took another sip of her coffee and paused for a bit. "You should know who's the father of Rebecca's baby, right? I'm sure you know it better than I do. She's also the main cause of the problems in your marriage. Now that she's carrying Ashton's child, we have to step in and acknowledge the child as a part of the Fuller family."

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 252

I see.

How stupid of me! Of course it's all because of Rebecca's baby.

I looked at her and grinned. "You must have known about her pregnancy for quite some time, right? You didn't mention this, because legally speaking, I am still Ashton's wife, and you didn't have a reason to break us apart. Now that my child is gone, you want to get rid of me, so you can bring Rebecca into the family because of the baby she's carrying. I wonder if Ashton knows about your intention?"

Sally's expression instantly changed. She did not like how straightforward I was, even though the things I said were exactly what's on her mind.

"You're right. Don't we all make decisions after weighing all the pros and cons? Since your marriage with Ashton is doomed to fail anyway, why don't you take this opportunity to free yourself?"

I nodded in agreement. What she said made sense, but somehow, I was not pleased to hear that.

After that, I turned my attention to my phone, which I had placed on the table, and said, "You heard it? If you agree, we shall make a trip to Civil Affairs Bureau and sign the divorce papers."

Sally was taken aback when she realized Ashton was on the phone and heard what she said.

The color drained out of her pale, and she gave me a disdainful look.

Ashton, on the other hand, expressed his dismay in a deep voice. "Don't ever allow others to tell us what to do. It's our marriage, and we make decisions for ourselves. And above all, you should know my feelings for you."

He then raised his voice, "I'm afraid your understanding of love is quite different from us, Aunt Sally. How much do you, as an outsider, know about our marriage, anyway?"

She froze instantly as she was dumbstruck upon hearing the word "outsider."

Before she could defend herself, Ashton continued, "Next time, please mind your own business, Aunt Sally. You're the daughter-in-law of the White family now, so it's time for you to leave the Fullers alone. If possible, we don't even have to keep in touch anymore."

Ashton sounded harsh over the phone as if he wanted to sever ties with her.

After ending the call, Sally looked at me with her pallid face. "How dare you pull this trick on me?"

I smiled and shrugged my shoulders. "I just wanted to confirm if he wants to apply for a divorce too."

A corner of my mouth quirked up, "Well, it looks like you're doing this behind Ashton's back when he's not aware of anything. I'm glad he heard the conversation. Otherwise, we might start arguing over this unnecessary misunderstanding."

I believe Sally was smart enough to know that we had identified her as a troublemaker who tried to wreck our marriage.

All of a sudden, she raised her voice. "Fine! I'll leave your marriage alone, but Rebecca's child belongs to the Fullers, and I'll make sure the child gets the recognition he or she deserves!"

Once again, I nodded. "You're right. I agree with you totally. But how certain are you that Ashton is the father to Rebecca's child? You better investigate properly before acknowledging the child as a Fuller."

Time was running out, and I still needed to grab a quick lunch. With that, I picked up my handbag and smiled. "Oh yes, there's something else you might not know. Do you know who caused the death of my child? Perhaps you can have a chat with Cameron or even Rebecca and see what they'll tell you. It's time for you to analyze the situation and not be fooled by what you see."

Following that, I grabbed my bag and left the café.

Why on earth did she choose a café? I don't need coffee for lunch. I need a proper meal, damn it!

I went down to the second floor and passed by a new restaurant. I could not help but giggle at its name – The Unpalatable.

To come up with such an unpleasant name, the proprietor must be a young and wealthy risk-taker.

Out of curiosity, I decided to order takeout from them. Surprisingly, both the food and the lunchbox they used looked pretty good.

I supposed Marcus had not had his lunch too, so I returned to order another takeout. Lo and behold, I bumped into Cameron and Rebecca outside the restaurant.

The mother-daughter duo, who was probably shopping in this mall, was so well-dressed that I could hardly tell one of them was pregnant.

What a blessing it was to be rich.

I was just a stone's throw away from them, so if I could see them, I was sure they could see me too.

Under normal circumstances, we should avoid each other. After all, none of us wished to make a din in this public area.

But since there were not many people in the mall, the two of them noticed me right away.

Rebecca walked up to me with a look of haughty disdain. "I wonder if there are any places in this world that I can go without seeing your irritating face."

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 253

I raised my brows and shrugged my shoulders, "How funny! That's exactly what I was thinking too!"

Unlike me, Rebecca did have a way with men. But I, too, had a knack for irritating the hell out of her.

Upon seeing how I treated her daughter, Cameron shot daggers at me. "It looks like Ms. Stovall has learned to carry an air of confidence like a true Stovall now."

I responded with a giggle. "I'm sure Ms. Larson is as confident as I am."

"Stop blowing your own horn. You're just a hillbilly who was lucky enough to be adopted by a prominent family. Do you really think you're qualified to take on the family name?"

Wow. That b*tch's mouth is really one of a kind.

I grinned and said nonchalantly. "You're right. I was born a hillbilly and will forever be one. Likewise, an undignified woman will also always be the same no matter how rich she becomes. Am I right, Ms. Anderson?"

Cameron's expression turned grim, and she could not take it anymore. "You better watch your mouth, Ms. Stovall."

I played along and nodded in agreement. At this moment, Sally, who had just left the café, appeared.

Seeing that Sally was here, I intentionally turned my attention to Rebecca's belly and raised my voice, "I heard that my husband, Ashton, is the father to your baby. Is that true, Ms. Larson?"

"It's none of your business." The awkwardness was written all over her face. "Of course, it's Ashton's child. Don't you dare do anything to my baby!"

"What else can I do?" What she said was so ridiculous that I could not stop smiling. Now that Sally had walked toward us, I continued, "Ashton told me he had never had physical intimacy with you in the past. How did you exactly get pregnant? Did he shoot his baby gravy into your womb from afar?" I winked.

Rebecca's expression turned murderous. "What do you mean? Are you trying to say I don't even know who my baby's father is?"

"I'm sure you know who he is!" Seeing her panic reaction made me believe what John told me earlier. I smiled and continued, "This is why I hope you can leave Ashton alone and don't make him the scapegoat anymore. Shall we take the paternity test to find out who the father is?"

"I'm actually don't mind him having a child with someone else, but since the Fuller's and Stovall's reputation are at stake, it's better to be safe than sorry."

As Sally approached us, I turned around and gave her a smile. "What do you think, Aunt Sally?"

Sally was dumbfounded, and her eyes instantly fell on Rebecca's tummy. To defuse the tension, she looked at Rebecca and said in a gentle voice, "Shall we make an appointment to do the test? We just need to find out if the baby belongs to the Fuller family. We have to protect our family reputation, after all."

Rebecca was taken aback as she did not expect I would make this move.

At that point, she was at a loss for words. "You have to trust me, Aunt Sally. Besides, doing the test during pregnancy may cause a miscarriage. Are you willing to risk the life of a member of the Fuller family? Moreover, it's obvious that Scarlett is trying to sow discord between us because she wants to take revenge against me."

I laughed. "Take revenge against you? For?"

"For killing your baby..." Rebecca accidentally blurted out.

Cameron instantly raised her voice and stopped her, "Rebecca!"

Sally must have heard what Rebecca said as she was obviously startled at her sudden confession. However, she decided to just keep mum.

To divert everyone's attention, Cameron looked at me and asked, "What made you think Rebecca's baby is not Ashton's? And why can't we do the paternity test after the child is born?"

She then turned to Sally and said, "If you insist on doing it, fine, we'll cooperate. But from then on, we'll cut ties with the Fullers and raise the baby on our own, even if the results prove that the baby is Ashton's child."

A line formed between Sally's brows, but she did not know how to react to that threat.

She plastered a smile on her face and said, "I think we should talk to Ashton first. Besides, Ashton is already married, so I'm not the best person to make any decision on his behalf."

Well played, Aunt Sally. By shoving the responsibility to Ashton, you don't have to worry about offending anyone anymore.

Cameron's expression changed. She grabbed Rebecca's wrist and left in frustration. On the other hand, Sally gave me a sullen glare that I had no clue what it was for.

Well, I was not bothered by it, anyway. Let's see what would happen in the future.

At about 6 p.m., I received a call from Ashton. "Yes?"

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 254

"You haven't gotten off work yet?" His voice sounded calm and emotionless.

Not deliberating over the question, I merely grunted a response. I glanced at the clock casually and saw that it was already 6 p.m., which marked the end of the workday.

"I have to work overtime today. What's up?" As I had to go to J City tomorrow, I needed to confirm that everything was in order.

After tidying the files on my desk, I noted down some things that I needed to bring tomorrow. Since the phone was completely silent, I thought that he had already hung up.

When I tapped the screen, it showed that the call was still continuing. Hence, I could not help but say, "I might be quite late..."

Before I could finish my sentence, I saw a tall man standing at the entrance. Stunned, I asked, "Didn't the employees of White Corporation stop you?"

He raised his eyebrows and hung up the call. Walking towards my desk, he said, "Work has already ended, so I'm allowed to pick you up."

He's allowed to? I'm not so sure about that.

He glanced at the work I was handling at that moment. "You should eat first before continuing with it."

As I did not have much work left, I initially planned to finish them first before returning home. However, it seemed unnecessary now.

I kept my belongings and stood up. "I'll continue working at home. Let's go!"

There were a lot of people in the office, so it was inevitable for some to recognize Ashton. It was obvious what they were thinking about.

As expected, when Ashton and I left the office, there were a lot of people in the stairway glancing at him and muttering softly under their breaths.

“Isn’t he the president of Fuller Corporation? I’ve seen him on the headlines a few months ago. It was when he announced that the headquarters of Fuller Corporation would be moving to K City for future development.”

“Yeah, I saw it too. He’s much hotter in person than on television!”

“He’s such a mysterious and charming man. But why is he with Ms. Stovall?”

“I heard that he’s here to pick her up!”

“Wasn’t Ashton engaged with Rebecca two months ago? Why is he together with Ms. Stovall now?”

“Who knows? We can never know what kind of lifestyles the wealthy have. Furthermore, only the Moore family is still harping on Ashton’s engagement with Ms. Larson. He has never responded to it at all. I think that the woman from the Moore family likes Mr. Fuller, but he doesn’t reciprocate her feelings.”

As we exited the White Corporation, Ashton and I overheard a lot of gossips.

It was finally silent again when we got into the car.

Ashton started the engine. Then, he glanced at me and instructed, “Buckle your seatbelt!”

As he drove, I took out my phone and sent a message to Marcus, asking him when the flight tomorrow was.

“Do the employees in the office bully you?” I was stunned by Ashton’s sudden question.

I shook my head. “No. What’s wrong?”

He pursed his lips and continued, “Do you often hear such gossips?”

"Yeah," I replied softly. Marcus had replied to my message and sent me the timing of the flight. He also reminded me to bring all the items necessary.

When I placed my phone down, I caught him staring at me with a frown. I had no choice but to explain, "Marcus appointed me as the Project Director of White Corporation right off the bat. It's not an extremely high-ranking position, but I have only worked in Fuller Corporation for a few years and even got fired. It's expected that people in the company would gossip about me."

When I first joined the company, I could often hear people saying that I was Marcus's mistress.

To be honest, it was true that I joined the company through Marcus. All I needed to do now was to fulfill my duties well and do a good job. Otherwise, others would deem me as someone who was only hired through connections.

Without another word from Ashton, he directly drove back to the villa. Although he made no further comments, a grim look crept into his eyes.

Instead, he mentioned Sally. "Did Aunt Sally talk to you about other things?"

I shook my head. "She only talked to me about Rebecca. She probably doesn't want a child of the Fullers to be left abandoned."

He scoffed coldly, "Do you believe that the child is mine?"

"Is the child not?" I raised my eyebrows and questioned back.

He paused for a while before staring at me seriously. "Will you believe me if I say no?"

I nodded. "There's no reason for me to doubt you."

Stunned momentarily, he laughed and said in relief, "The child's not mine, and I will never marry her. As for the engagement, I was never part of the discussion right from the start. The reason why I didn't deny it publicly and embarrass Rebecca is solely because of Parker."

I smiled. Pursing my lips, I peered out of the car window and remained silent.

When he saw me smiling without saying anything, he thought that I still did not believe him. He insisted, "Scarlett, I have never touched her at all."

Noticing his serious expression, I nodded and reassured him, "I know. You don't have to keep explaining."

The car screeched to a stop at the villa. He grabbed my arm solemnly and asked, "Did you join the White Corporation and take over the AI project because you wanted to oppose the Moore family using the White family?"

I nodded, not wanting to deny it. "What's wrong with that?"

He pursed his lips in frustration. "Why in the world would you rather seek help from Marcus over me?"

Glancing at him, I took a deep breath and asked, "Is the child mine alone?"

Stunned, he fell into a brief silence. He gazed at me and said, "With regards to the child, I'll make Cameron pay the price. Don't you dare take any risks."

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 255

Knowing that he would say that, I nodded. "Okay, I understand."

Although I did not know what he planned to do, it had nothing to do with me. After all, I did not plan to rely on someone else to avenge me for all of my past sufferings. Except for myself, everyone else merely served as support.

As I had to go to J City tomorrow, I went to bed early that night. Yet, as expected, I was still plagued by insomnia.

When Ashton noticed that I could not fall asleep, he embraced me with his arms. "Why don't we do it for the night?"

I was speechless.

There's a huge difference between "do it for the night" and "do it once."

"Ashton, I need to go to J City tomorrow. I don't have the energy for that!" I chided before turning around. With my back facing him, I closed my eyes and prepared to sleep.

He hugged me from behind. Although he did not do anything, I...

After a while, I frowned and said, "Ashton, I can't sleep like this."

"We're a couple. Why can't we do this?" He sounded so righteous.

I pursed my lips and inched towards the edge of the bed, trying to distance myself from him.

However, he quickly pressed his body against my back again. Left with no choice, I closed my eyes again and tried to fall asleep.

However, the more I wanted to sleep, the more I failed to do so. Just like that, I was kept awake for the entire night.

The next morning at 6 a.m., I woke up and got out of bed. As I had not slept at all, my body was weak, and I could hear ringing in my ears. It felt extremely uncomfortable.

Ashton got up too. He probably had not gotten a restful sleep either. "I'll send you to the airport later."

"It's alright. It's still early, so you should sleep for a while longer!" I replied while heading into the bathroom to wash up.

He changed out of his pajamas and pinched his nose bridge. "I'm fine. I can rest in the afternoon."

Frowning, I suppressed my urge to refuse him and entered the bathroom. By the time I came out, he had already changed his clothes.

Soon, we arrived at the airport.

Ashton parked the car outside the airport terminal and asked, "When will you be returning?"

Quickly rushing out of the car, I replied hastily, "I'll return after the matter's settled."

When he saw how eager I was to get out of the car, he pulled me back and narrowed his eyes. "Why don't I accompany you there?"

I frowned. As it was almost time for boarding, I could not help but feel anxious. "It's fine. It's not like I'll never come back, right?"

He moved closer to me and smirked. Narrowing his eyes, he said, "I'm afraid that you'll be reluctant to return after you go there and meet someone."

His words made me so uneasy.

When I saw that he was staring out of the car windows, I could not help but follow his gaze. Stunned, I saw that Marcus had already arrived and was waiting at the entrance of the terminal.

No wonder Ashton's suddenly acting so weird. Sighing, I looked at him and asserted, "Ashton, I'm there to work!"

He pursed his lips and nodded. "I know. I'll give you three days. If you don't return after three days, I won't let you go on business trips alone anymore."

Although he said it casually, his tone was very firm.

I nodded and got out of the car, lamenting silently in my mind. He's nosing into my business.

Marcus passed the boarding ticket to me. Glancing in Ashton's direction, he narrowed his eyes and remarked, "He seems to be really worried that you'll elope with me."

I shrugged and did not comment on that. Instead, I reminded calmly, "It's getting late, so let's board the plane now!"

The plane ride from K City to J City took four hours. When we reached J City, it was just in time for lunch.

Marcus then brought me to a restaurant in which he had already reserved seats. Initially, I planned to return to Peakville Estate first. As the meeting with the president of OrbitTech was in the afternoon, I could still return to the villa for a short rest.

However, as I could not argue against Marcus, I went to the restaurant with him.

Right then, Ashton's call arrived just in time. The moment I sat in the car headed to the restaurant, he called.

I picked it up. As I was a little tired, I did not really want to speak. Hence, I waited for him to say the first word.

His voice was deep and emotionless. "Have you reached yet?"

"Yeah," I mumbled softly. When I noticed Marcus staring at me, I continued, "I just reached the airport and will be eating at a restaurant later."

"Okay. I hired a maid to take care of the house. After finishing the business meeting at night, go home earlier. Don't stay outside for too long." For some reason, he seemed a little naggy.

I nodded and muttered an acknowledgment. As he had something else to attend to, he hung up afterward.

Marcus looked at me with his lips pursed. "He seems worried about me."

I shrugged. Isn't it obvious?

When he saw my reaction, he smiled and stopped mulling over it. "After the meeting, you can rest at J City for a few days before going back. Since you're used to this place, it's probably going to be a comfortable stay for you."

I nodded. When the car arrived at the restaurant, I got out of the car and entered with him.

As I did not have a good night's sleep, I felt quite drowsy. After taking a few bites, I did not have much of an appetite anymore.

Hence, I propped my chin up with my hand while waiting for Marcus to finish his meal.

"You b*tch! Who are you to control what I do?" The voice was extremely loud, especially in the quiet restaurant, thus causing the rest to glance over.

Marcus and I peered in the direction of the voice too. A man had just thrown a plate of roasted vegetables at a woman.

As there were waiters surrounding them, we could not see their faces clearly. However, it could vaguely be seen that the woman had been badly beaten up by the man.

When I saw that, I could not help but frown. Isn't this domestic abuse? He's beating her up in public. Is no one going to stop him?

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 256 - 260

As they caused quite a commotion, Marcus lost his appetite after taking a few more bites. He looked at me and suggested, "Let's go and rest for a while. We'll go to OrbitTech at two in the afternoon."

Nodding, I stood up with him and subconsciously shot a glance at the woman, who was shrieking in pain as the man hit her.

I could not help but frown. Why is no one stopping them when things are looking so bad?

When the man was about to smash a glass on the woman, she cowered and desperately shielded her head. It seemed like she was used to being beaten up.

Instinctively, I yelled, "Stop it!"

When I regained my senses immediately after, I could not help but feel frustrated at myself. After all, it was not quite appropriate for an outsider to interfere in one's family affairs. Even if I could help this time, I would not be able to help them forever.

However, since I had already yelled at him, it was impossible for me to leave just like that.

When the man heard my voice, he paused mid-action and turned around to look in our direction.

When I saw his face, I was stunned. Felix?

Why is he here?

My gaze then turned to the woman cowering in front of him. She timidly raised her head and glanced at me.

I was once again astonished. As expected, the woman was Stacey. It had been some time since I last saw her, but her mature beauty had already disappeared and was replaced instead by a sunken and depressed look.

Only half a year had passed, but she had changed so drastically.

Both of them were stunned to see me. Felix was the first to scoff in disdain, "I was wondering who it was! So it's Mrs. Fuller, huh? Didn't you go to K City with Mr. Fuller? Have you returned?"

When he glanced at Marcus, he raised his eyebrows and remarked frivolously, "Tsk-tsk! You're still as pretty as before. Looks like you've found another man for yourself."

Frowning, I ignored his comment and gazed at Stacey instead. For a moment, I was at a loss for words.

How did she become like this?

After a slight pause, I unhesitatingly whipped out my phone and called the cops. After the call went through, I said, "Hello. I'd like to report a case of domestic abuse here, and it seems to be quite serious."

I told them about the address before hanging up. At the same time, Felix glared at me viciously, almost flying into a rage. "Why are you nosing into my business? Do you think that I won't dare to hit you?"

This was not how a rational person was supposed to react.

I glanced at Stacey. After a moment of shock, she became calm again. It looked like she was used to Felix's attitude.

Walking toward her, I stretched out my hand and offered, "It's been ages since I saw you. Do you need me to send you to the hospital?"

She shot a timid glance at Felix before shaking her head fearfully. Forcing a smile out on her face, she insisted, "It's fine. I'm alright. Thank you!"

Felix smirked coldly and shoved his hands into his pocket. Albeit being reported, he showed no signs of fear at all. Instead, he looked extremely reassured, as if nothing would happen to him.

The cops arrived soon. After understanding the situation, they brought Felix away.

As they needed evidence of what had happened, I told Marcus to look for the restaurant's owner and get the surveillance tapes.

Meanwhile, Stacey was brought to the police station to give a statement. As I was the one who reported the incident, I had to head there too.

After all that, it was already 1 p.m., and there was no time to rest anymore.

Meanwhile, Felix had been detained for intentional assault.

Outside the station, Stacey kept remaining silent. As she did not say anything, I was at a loss for what to ask her either.

Yet, I knew I couldn't leave her just like that. Hence, I walked towards her and assured her, "Although I don't know what you've experienced over the past six months, please note down my number. If the need arises, just call me, and I'll help you to the best of my abilities!"

As we had worked together for two years, I would feel guilty if I left her in that state.

Stunned, she stared at me sorrowfully as tears streamed down her cheeks. "Ms. Stovall, I... I'm sorry!"

I sighed. "It's alright. Let bygones be bygones. Call me if anything happens!"

Since I had changed my number previously, I left her my new number.

Then, I hailed a cab for her and sent her off.

Marcus stared at me with his lips pursed. "She'll probably look for you soon."

Looking at the cab that left, I replied sadly, "She wasn't like this in the past!" What has marriage done to her?

As it was already quite late, Richard, the president of OrbitTech, was already waiting for us when we arrived at the office building.

When he spotted Marcus and me, he approached us with a smile. "It must've been tiring for both of you. Have you had lunch?"

Marcus nodded and had a polite chat with him while we walked into the meeting room.

Seeing that the upper management of OrbitTech had all arrived, Marcus glanced at me and instructed, "Describe our project briefly later. We'll negotiate the scope of OrbitTech's conditions afterward."

I nodded, having prepared all those beforehand.

There were not a lot of shareholders in OrbitTech, with a total of only six. The person with the greatest shares was the president, Richard. He was in his mid-forties and was a huge techie.

As he was obsessed with developing new products, he founded OrbitTech at the start. For the past few years, OrbitTech's products had always been top-notch.

However, as he was not so skilled in management, OrbitTech had been incurring losses. As a result, many investors decided to invest in OrbitTech and participate in its management.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 257

Money was not a solution, though. Even if they were well-endowed with funds, the company would still be plagued by problems they did not know how to manage.

Over the past year, John and Ashton had realized OrbitTech's advantages. As experts in management, the first thing they thought of was not to invest but to acquire it directly.

After spending half an hour speaking, I returned to my seat. One of OrbitTech's shareholders asked confusedly, "Ms. Stovall, have you worked in Fuller Corporation previously?"

I was stunned because I had never interacted with the people of OrbitTech, nor have I appeared on the newspaper headlines. Staring at the person, I replied in surprise, "Yeah, I was the Project Director at Fuller Corporation previously."

The people at the meeting table exchanged glances with one another. After a short pause, Richard looked at me and said, "Ms. Stovall, I'm sure that you know this even better than us, but Ashton, the president of Fuller Corporation, has plans to acquire OrbitTech too. We initially planned to accept his proposal. However, for some reason, the Fuller Corporation suddenly gave up on acquiring OrbitTech. We would like to know if you had a role to play in this."

Smiling, he continued, "Although the White Corporation would be acquiring OrbitTech, we all know that you value our people and technicians the most. Hence, I wish that we can be honest with each other."

Richard was very straightforward. Hence, I laughed and admitted, "Mr. Fuller is my husband. As for why he suddenly gave up on acquiring OrbitTech, it's true that I played a role in it."

When I said that, everyone starting whispering to each other. Richard asked calmly, "In that case, why did you stop Fuller Corporation from acquiring OrbitTech? In comparison, there's more potential for our development if Fuller Corporation acquired us instead."

I nodded. "That's true!" After a slight pause, I continued, "But has everyone forgotten that Fuller Corporation also owns HiTech? Both HiTech and OrbitTech are technology companies. Upon closer analysis, you'd realize that Fuller Corporation doesn't actually want OrbitTech that badly. They're only after a certain technology owned by OrbitTech, but these aren't that hard to find in the market either. As a result, acquiring OrbitTech would not reap a lot of profits for Fuller Corporation. This is the reason why Ashton has been delaying the acquisition of OrbitTech for the past half a year."

Glancing at Richard, I persuaded, "Mr. Blackwood, you should know this better than us. No corporation will acquire another technology company when the potential of their current one has not been maximized. Most of Fuller Corporation's revenue comes from real estate development, and their only technology company is HiTech."

Richard nodded. Pursing his lips and deliberating about it, he said hesitatingly, "We don't really know about what's going on in Fuller Corporation. If we just take the current situation into consideration, the conditions they offered are quite attractive. However, we can't guarantee that OrbitTech will become better under the control of Fuller Corporation."

Raising his eyebrows, Marcus stood up and declared, "The White Corporation's businesses revolve around technology. Although we have jewelry and other businesses under our wing, our forte still lies in technology. The largest reason why we decided to acquire OrbitTech is because of your research in AI technology. Naturally, we have some conditions that need to be met for acquiring OrbitTech. If OrbitTech doesn't develop a new AI technology in the coming year, we will regard it as any other technology company. All of White Corporation's funds and manpower will be withdrawn and reinvested in other areas."

His speech caused most of the shareholders at the meeting table to turn pale. In other words, he was saying that even if White Corporation acquired OrbitTech, it would still face potential collapse if it failed to meet White Corporation's expectations.

Looking at their strange expressions, I felt anxious. Marcus is being too straightforward.

OrbitTech is very capable. Hence, it's impossible for the outcome he described earlier to happen.

After a long while, Richard looked at Marcus and said, "Mr. White, can you guarantee that you'll invest in AI research and development?"

Marcus nodded firmly. "That's a given!"

As the rest at the meeting table were investors who did not know much about technology, they did not have a large say in things. Hence, they all directed their gaze at Richard and waited for his response.

A long time passed before Richard slowly stood up from his chair. He walked towards Marcus, offered his hand, and said, "We look forward to working with you, Mr. White."

I was stunned for a while before realizing what had happened. Does this mean that the deal is sealed?

Quickly after that, we signed the contracts. After the lawyers from both parties had reviewed the contract, Richard looked at Marcus and me. "It must've been tiring for both of you to come all the way from K City. Why don't I treat you to a meal tonight? It'll be an honor if both of you would dine with me. Let's eat at the Pavilion Restaurant."

It was a common business practice to have dinner together after the signing of a contract for further negotiation. Even if Richard did not extend an invitation, Marcus would.

As there were still a few hours left, Marcus and I left OrbitTech. He went to the hotel while I returned to my villa.

It had been ages since I had come back to Peakville Estate. Luckily, someone had been keeping the place clean, so it looked no different from before.

When I returned to the villa, the maid whom Ashton hired had already prepared some food. But since I did not have much of an appetite, I took a few bites before going back to my bedroom to rest.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 258

As I woke up early in the morning and did not have a good night's sleep last night, I fell asleep in a daze the moment I lay on the bed.

I could vaguely feel that someone was beside my bed. As I was in a deep sleep, I thought that it was an illusion. However, even though some time had passed, I kept sensing that the shadow was still lurking nearby. It felt the same as sleep paralysis, which I had when I was younger.

Although I was so exhausted that I could barely open my eyes, I could still vaguely feel that someone was sitting beside the bed. Anxious and flustered, I was at a loss for what to do.

It was a huge struggle for me to finally wake up. By then, my forehead was already dripping with sweat. Yet, when I glanced around, there was no one sitting beside my bed. The entire room was empty.

It was probably because I was in a deep sleep. My body became very frail after my pregnancy, which was most likely the reason for this hallucination.

Still feeling light-headed, I went downstairs. The sky had already darkened by then. When the maid saw me walking down the stairs, she said, "Ma'am, your phone has been ringing a few times. I'm afraid that it's about something urgent. Please take a look."

When I returned earlier, I had casually left my bag downstairs. I quickly went to grab my phone after hearing that.

It was a call from Marcus. As I did not pick up his calls, he messaged me with the address of the restaurant for dinner.

By the time I arrived at the second floor of the Pavilion Restaurant, everyone was already present. Some teased when they saw me rushing in, "Our busy Ms. Stovall has finally arrived. Since you're late, take three shots as a punishment!"

I laughed as I sat down beside Marcus and downed three shots.

After that, we chatted casually for the entire duration of the meal. I was sitting beside Marcus, and he kept placing food on my plate.

I was already used to his actions. Glancing over a few times, Richard smiled and commented, "Both of you really have the chemistry. If you aren't married, Ms. Stovall, we'd think that you two are a couple."

Although this was meant as a casual remark, Marcus and I were both stunned. I raised my head and said jokingly, "It's because we've been working with each other for a long time. Please don't misunderstand. My husband gets jealous very easily."

A few people laughed out loud at this light-hearted remark.

However, Marcus's expression was grim.

When I subconsciously grabbed my wine glass, he grabbed my hand and said in a deep voice, "You've drunk too much!"

Everyone at the table glanced over at both of us. Withdrawing my hand, I replied calmly, "Yeah, I've drunk too much."

It felt uncomfortable to have everyone looking at me like I was a monkey in the circus. Furthermore, as Marcus was deliberately trying to make things difficult for me, I became even more uneasy.

As usual, he still placed food on my plate and stopped me from drinking. He even thoughtfully ordered a glass of warm water for me.

As the intentions of his actions were too obvious, everyone present there instantly understood.

I felt really uneasy. Yet, if I tried to clarify this situation, it would make things seem even more suspicious.

Suddenly, a message from Ashton popped up on my phone screen. What are you doing now?

Me: We've finished signing the contract, so I'm dining with them now.

Ashton: Did you drink?

Me: Yeah, but not a lot.

After a while, he instructed: Send me the address.

I pursed my lips. He was at K City, so it was impossible for him to fly over to pick me up. Hence, I answered: I'm at the Pavilion Restaurant. I'll be going back soon.

My phone finally stopped vibrating. I placed it down, god up, and headed to the washroom. Since I had three shots earlier, I felt a bit dizzy.

Trying to sober up, I splashed some cold water on my face in the washroom. When I came out, I accidentally bumped into a waitress who was carrying some liquor.

"I'm sorry! I'm sorry!" apologized the waitress profusely.

Slightly dizzy, I waved my hands and said dismissively, "It's okay. Just be more careful."

"Ms. Stovall!" A surprised voice sounded. Shocked, I raised my head and glanced at her.

It was none other than Stacey, who was wearing a wig and had heavy makeup applied on her face. Wearing an extremely short mini-skirt, she looked like a hostess in a nightclub.

I could not help but frown. It was a coincidence to meet her twice a day, but wasn't this a bit odd? Hence, I asked, "What happened to you?"

She's being abused in the morning and had to serve alcohol at night. How did she come to this?

Her head drooped as she whispered softly, "Mr. Fuller blacklisted me in J City's human resources field. None of the real estate or technology companies is willing to recruit me. As I have to earn a living, I have no choice but to be a server here."

I was confused. "Why would Ashton do that?" Although he was by no means a kind person, he would not target someone just like that.

She glanced at me before quickly lowering her head. "It's because of my involvement with the AC Credit and HiTech scandal. I played a significant role in getting you fired by Fuller Corporation. I forged your signature for a lot of AC Credit's documents."

I actually knew about this. Back then, I was indeed extremely furious. However, as she had worked for me for two years, I merely gave her a harsh warning. She left Fuller Corporation afterward.

Never in a million years would I expect this to happen!

So, does Ashton know about it too?

After a short pause, I looked at her and reassured her, "It's already in the past. I'll go back and talk to Ashton. You're a capable person, anyway. He might've done it out of fury, so I'll clarify this matter with him quickly. Don't work here anymore. Also, since Felix isn't a good person, you should think of a way to leave him!"

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 259

Life was bitter and short. She definitely did not wish to have such a toxic presence in her life, anyway.

As I was still a bit woozy, I wanted to go back as soon as possible. Hence, I patted her shoulders and left.

Surprisingly, she suddenly grabbed my hands and fell onto her knees. When she knelt, she sobbed softly. "I'm sorry, Ms. Stovall. I shouldn't have done that in the past. I know my mistake now and have suffered my due punishment."

I frowned and tried to help her out. However, she refused to stand and continued sobbing. "Ms. Stovall, you're the only one who can help me now. Felix is a complete devil. Back then, in order to gain a foothold in AC Credit, he instructed me to do things that I'm not supposed to. After I got together with him, I realized how terrifyingly violent he is. He would beat me and scold me for no reason, even chasing me out of the house in the middle of the night. I can't take it anymore! As I don't have any family or friends left, you're the only one who can help me."

At a loss for what to do, I asked, "Since you aren't happy, you can divorce him. Isn't he detained right now? Change a job and live a peaceful life from now on. How can I help you?"

She kept shaking her head desperately as tears streamed down her cheeks. "It's useless. When he first started to abuse me, I called the cops on him and got him detained. However, he was released a few days later and started abusing me even more harshly. I have no other choices. I wanted to get a divorce, but he refused to. I really don't know what to do anymore. I'm begging you, Ms. Stovall, please help me out!"

"T-This... It's not that I didn't want to, but how?" I did not know what to say. After all, as this was her domestic affairs, I was not in much of a position to help. Furthermore, only she could help herself when it came to something like this.

Raising her head, she gazed at me with her bloodshot eyes. "Felix's got the president of AC Credit and the Ludwick family backing him up. If they don't help him, he'll get jailed for more than three years. If I live apart from him for three years, the marriage will be dissolved automatically, and I'll finally regain my freedom. Ms. Stovall, since Mr. Fuller loves you so much, he'll definitely help you if you ask."

I frowned, feeling speechless. Since when does Ashton love me?

Opening my mouth, I was about to say something when someone interrupted me.

“She can’t help you.” Marcus had already come out. His tall figure strode towards me as he said to Stacey, “She’s already facing so much trouble, so how can she possibly help you? Her actions today were impulsive, without any considerations of the consequences. If she helped you, a ruthless man like your husband will take revenge on her after he’s released. You should know this better than she does.”

With that, Marcus dragged me away. Shocked, I turned around and saw Stacey still kneeling on the ground and crying her heart out. I could not help but feel guilty.

“Actually, she might really need my help!” I mumbled behind Marcus’ back.

“Hah!” He suddenly stopped in his tracks. However, I did not manage to stop in time and crashed into him, causing my nose to sting in pain.

“Scarlett, do you know that sometimes, your so-called kindness may backfire? Do you know how hilariously ridiculous it is?” He looked at me, his eyes blazing with fury.

Not knowing why he suddenly got so angry, I massaged my nose and protested, "I'm not being kind for no reason. She worked for me for two years..."

"So what? Does she still work for you? Is she still your assistant? Scarlett, do you even have boundaries? Why do you feel such pity for everyone, men and women alike? What are you trying to get out of it? Are you trying to make yourself seem like a saint? Do you want others to idolize you?"

His voice was agitated and aggressive, while his eyes were bloodshot. I could smell the alcohol in his breath, which puffed on my face. It was obvious that he was drunk.

"Marcus, are you drunk?" I asked, trying to steady him. However, he flung my arms away.

Grabbing my shoulders, he stared intently into my eyes. "Do you pity me too? Sally managed to squeeze my mother away and chase her out of my life. On the other hand, I have to indifferently endure her and my father's happiness while suffering from his cold treatment. Do you pity me?"

I frowned. Looks like he's really drunk.

Sighing, I held onto his arm and said, "You don't need my pity. You're drunk, Marcus. Let me send you back."

After bidding farewell to the others in the private room, I ignored their gaze and helped Marcus walk down the stairs.

He was still slightly conscious. At the entrance, he slumped down on the steps childishly and refused to walk anymore.

Exasperated, I looked at him and instructed, "Marcus, I'm sending you home!"

"I don't have a home!"

"Then go back to your hotel!"

He looked at me and pursed his lips. "Let's go together!"

Hearing that, I was rendered speechless.

"I'll send you there."

God... He's such a difficult person to handle.

"Then forget it! I'll stay here for the entire night." He was half-drunk and even throwing a tantrum.

Too frustrated to say anything, I stared at him and said after a slight pause, "Fine! Stay here for the night, then. I'm going home."

With that, I turned around to hail a cab.

Suddenly, he hugged me from behind. I heard his deep, hoarse, and helpless voice sound beside my ear. "Scarlett, where's your sense of empathy? Do you really want me to freeze to death here?"

Gazing at his flushed yet handsome face, I nodded. "Yeah! Be my guest."

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 260

I guess I shouldn't get my hopes high since I was talking to a drunkard.

As soon as he heard my words, he stared at me with his abysmal pair of eyes and a frowned look. He was cradling me in his arms while caressing my head.

I pushed him away because I knew what he had in his mind. "Marcus, you're drunk!"

Nevertheless, the man didn't even budge the slightest. Since we were next to the street, I was afraid I would push him off to the bustling streets and get him involved in an accident.

In the end, we ended up behaving as though we were making out in the middle of nowhere, being lovey-dovey in public.

"Marcus-" I yelled at him to express my frustration because he started running his hands behind my back.

Before I could reprimand him, I felt him being lunged away from me full force. A few seconds later, I heard a muffled grunt from him.

By the time I returned to my senses, Ashton and Marcus had gotten involved in an intense fight. To be precise, Ashton started beating Marcus to a pulp with all his might.

Within a few seconds, Marcus' face was bruised. Perhaps because he was awfully drunk, he was defenseless against Ashton and allowed the brutal man to throw several consecutive punches at his face relentlessly.

I sprinted over and grasped the hem of Ashton's shirt to stop him. As I was worried that something bad would happen, I warned him, "Ashton, stop! He's going to die for real if you keep going on!"

Ashton's expression darkened, and then he asked callously, "Are you worried about him?"

I responded with a frown while Marcus remarked sarcastically, "Scarlett, I knew it! You still care about me, don't you?"

To be honest, I was completely speechless because of the things Marcus said in front of Ashton – it sounded as though Marcus had a death wish and couldn't wait for Ashton to send him to hell.

As expected, Ashton got increasingly infuriated and dragged the man that was pinned to the ground up, throwing punches at him without showing him any mercy.

On the other hand, Marcus seemed to have lost his mind – he wouldn't stop grinning no matter how brutal Ashton was. "Ashton, the more you beat me up, the more Scarlett cares about me!"

Something was definitely wrong with Marcus' mind. His words worked like a charm as Ashton cast him to the ground and launched a few merciless kicks on his abdomen.

I could hear another muffled grunt from the drunk yet brutally beaten-up man when he struggled to bring himself up.

Since Ashton was about to rush over to Marcus' side once more, I got in his way and stopped him in a calm manner. "Ashton, can't you tell he's trying to provoke you deliberately? Do you really want to kill him and be thrown behind bars because of him?"

He pursed his lips and started panting heavily. "This jerk asked for it!"

I rolled my eyes helplessly and decided to stay away from the heavily injured man to prevent further conflicts. Thankfully, Richard rushed out when he heard the commotion. "Mr. Blackwood, can you do me a favor and bring Mr. White to the hospital before sending him back to his place? Thanks in advance."

Richard took a peek at the indifferent Ashton and responded with a nod and a smirk. He proceeded to bring Marcus up and brought him away soon.

Once they departed, Ashton glared at me in the eyes to express his irritation.

I should be blamed for the entire incident, but I tried to defend myself.

"I-I... H-He's drunk!"

"So what about it?"

What the heck? What does he mean? What am I supposed to tell him when I have just explained the reason behind it?

I gave it a thought and said, "Nothing was going on between us! He was the one who drank too much and ended up being drunk! Speaking of which, I ran into Stacey in the restaurant just now. She seemed to be living a tough life. Are you the one behind her misery?"

He replied with a frown and raised his volume because he was enraged. "Scarlett, stop trying to divert my attention!"

I couldn't believe he managed to see right through my plan again.

Staring at Ashton in the eyes, I decided to keep my mouth shut tight because I knew it would be impossible for me to talk some sense into him.

The frustrated man broke the silence, asking indifferently since I was dead silent. "Aren't you going to explain yourself?"

"I tried, didn't I? You have no intention to listen to me at all!"

"Y-You..." He stuttered in return because he was at a loss for better words to rebuke my statement. All of a sudden, I couldn't help but find him adorable.

A few seconds later, I offered, "Why don't you beat me up just like how you have beaten Marcus to a pulp? I mean, if it helps, why not, right?"

I knew it sounded dumb, but literally, that was the only thing I could think of.

Ashton looked a little bemused, yet he replied indifferently, "I'll definitely take you out someday in the future."

After he cast a stern gaze at me, he turned around and departed.

Since we were in the middle of the streets, perhaps the incident of him beating another man had made it to the social media due to the commotion that was caused.

I trotted over the onlookers and went after him. He boarded the car before me, but when I tried to open the door to the passenger seat, I couldn't because it was locked.

As compared to an ordinary car, his car had a higher ride height. Hence, I had to tiptoe to reach the window. "Hey, Ashton! What are you trying to do?"

"I'll have you walk your way home!" Once he finished his sentence, he started the car and departed without a second thought, leaving a confused me behind.

What the hell! Fine!

Usually, it wasn't tough to hail a cab since we were in the middle of a bustling street, but the cabs that passed were all occupied on that night.

A few minutes later, a black Cadillac stopped in front of me as the driver in the car winded down the window.

It was Joseph who showed up, and he offered, "Mrs. Fuller, Mr. Fuller has instructed me to give you a ride home."

I was astonished because he had never addressed me as Mrs. Fuller before. I wouldn't lie – I couldn't get used to it after being addressed as Ms. Stovall all this while.

In spite of being flattered, I replied in a petulant manner, "Wasn't he the one who refused to give me a ride home? He should have left me behind and allowed me to freeze to my death!"

Joseph rebuked, "Mrs. Fuller, the temperature wouldn't drop any further than seven or eight degrees Celsius. Technically, you won't freeze to death, but you may catch a cold if you spend a night on the streets."

Oh, God! Am I hearing what I'm hearing? I have never ever encountered such a geeky man before!

I asked rhetorically, "What if I catch a cold and fall terribly sick?"

He paused and gave it a thought. Shortly, he nodded and affirmed, "You may pass on as a result, but there's only a slight chance of such an outcome; that is – unless you're infected by other viruses."

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 261 - 265

Argh! I guess I can't out-talk him, huh?

"Thanks for the ride home!" I decided to keep my mouth shut and boarded the car as instructed.

He nodded and responded with a poker face.

When we were about to reach the villa, I couldn't suppress the urge to ask him about the thing that had been bothering me. "Joseph, where's your girlfriend?"

"I don't have one, Mrs. Fuller!"

I nodded and remarked, "Well, I thought so. Otherwise, your girlfriend will have a hard time dealing with you."

He took a peek at me for a few seconds before turning around to focus on the road. "Actually, I'm married."

I was completely speechless and decided to wrap up our conversation because I was pretty sure I would get increasingly infuriated if I were to go on.

Once we were back in the villa, I got out of the car as soon as possible and strode my way into the living room.

I changed into a pair of indoor sandals in the foyer and noticed the light in the living room was switched on. There was a man in the living room, enjoying his cup of tea as he indulged himself in reading a book.

“A**hole!” I blurted out the things I had in my mind almost instantly.

He frowned and stared at me silently, but I ignored him and bounced my way up the stairs without any hesitation.

“Hold it right there, Scarlett!” Ashton broke the silence and raised his volume out of the blue, rendering me incapable of motion while I was on my way up the stairs.

I turned around and confronted, “What do you want?”

The infuriated man burst out chuckling and asked rhetorically, “What do I want? How dare you raise your volume against me when you’re the one at fault?”

“Well, I guess you have proven yourself to be right! Is there anything else you want from me?” I glared at him with my mouth shut tight.

Ashton took a deep breath and announced in a righteous manner, “I’ll turn a blind eye to the incident that has occurred today, but I want you to stay away from Marcus in the future!”

“You’re ridiculous! I have to work, for goodness’ sake! Marcus was merely drunk!” Halfway through my reply, I avoided his gaze due to the sense of guilt I felt.

He rushed over and grasped my wrist because he couldn’t hold back his anger anymore. “Scarlett, what does it take to get you to stay away from him?”

I raised my head and looked at him in the eyes because he was frustrated for real. “Fine! I’ll try to stay away from him in the future. I’m conscious of the things I’m doing, okay? You have been getting in touch

with Rebecca while nothing's going on between Marcus and me! Don't you think you're being unreasonable?"

It was a habit of mine to bring up Rebecca whenever we were involved in a conflict. I knew nothing was going on between the duo, but I couldn't resist the urge to provoke him whenever I had the chance.

His expression turned gloomy all of a sudden. "Which part of me is being unreasonable? Besides, what makes you think something's going on between Rebecca and me? Scarlett, who the hell do you think you are?"

Judging by his expression, I knew I had to bring the conversation to a halt. Otherwise, things would spiral out of control soon.

I assured Ashton, "I'm so sorry, okay? I'll definitely stay away from Marcus in the future. I promise you I won't get anywhere near him anymore!"

He narrowed his eyes because he was confused by my sudden change of attitude. "Scarlett, are you keeping something from me?"

Argh! Why would I apologize and give in to his request when I hadn't done anything wrong? Actually, what does he want? I can't seem to talk any sense into him at all! I have done everything he wants, yet he isn't going to let me off the hook at all!

I took a deep breath and forced a smile. "Ashton, I have told you the things I have in mind! It's up to you to believe it or not!"

As soon as I finished my sentence, I brought myself upstairs because I couldn't take it anymore-if the conversation went on any longer, I might pass out due to frustration.

To my surprise, he grasped my wrist and stopped me once again.

“Ashton, what the heck do you want?” I turned around and confronted him because I couldn’t suppress my wrath anymore.

He finally returned to his calm and collected self as he requested, “Calm down, Scarlett. Let’s head upstairs after we get ourselves something to eat, okay? I’m hungry. Can you please make me something to eat?”

Perhaps he had just reached J City. Therefore, his housekeepers and maids weren’t around in the night. This time, it was my turn to express my discontent. I yelled, “Can’t you make yourself something to eat? Why does it have to be me!”

Ashton had his lips pursed in an aggrieved manner while he showed me his hands. “I’ve accidentally hurt my hands during the fight.”

What kind of excuse is that? I thought I was hearing things when I heard the absurd reply from him. If I hadn’t witnessed the fight he had with Marcus, I would have fallen for his words for real!

He was merely faintly bruised. I guessed he must have accidentally hurt himself when he got all worked up during the fight.

“Ashton, have you no shame at all?” He had the audacity to put on an innocent front when he was the aggressive one who had caused the uproar.

Ashton leaned over and peered into my eyes, asking rhetorically in return, “Don’t you know me better than others? Anyway, I’m really hungry because I haven’t had anything throughout the entire night.”

At that point in time, I was startled by his response because he seemed to be a needy man instead of his usual egoistic self.

I couldn’t be sure if it were a hallucination, but I walked into the kitchen to make him something to eat as requested nonetheless.

There were a lot of fresh ingredients that had been prepared by the maids in advance.

Truth be told, I wasn’t a great cook either. I diced a little garlic and started preparing a simple Spaghetti Aglio E Olio from scratch.

“Are you going to make me some spaghetti?” Leaning against the wall while crossing his arms, Ashton stared at me wide-eyed and asked when he saw the ingredients I had with me.

“Mm-hmm!” Since there wasn’t anything else I could prepare apart from spaghetti.

“Is this how you’re supposed to treat your husband?”

Halfway through my preparation, I turned off the stove and glared at Ashton. “If that’s the case, you can always get yourself something else to eat. Why don’t you get someone else to deliver you a fancy meal?”

Startled, he quickly blocked me and touched my nose. “Actually, I don’t mind at all. Spaghetti sounds great.”

The irritating man finally stopped getting in my way.

I was completely worn out after I finished making his food.

Immediately after I served him his meal, I returned to the bedroom and fell asleep after I carried out my bedtime routine.

I got irritated in the middle of the night because the buzzing phone roused me from my wonderful sleep. By the time I opened my eyes, Ashton had picked it up.

He leaned over and ran his fingers through my unkempt hair, asking gently, "Did I wake you up?"

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 262

I nodded and asked, "Who is it?" It was three o'clock early morning, so I couldn't figure out which maniac would interrupt others at such odd hours.

He looked elsewhere and denoted in a serious tone, "Rebecca is going to give birth soon."

All of a sudden, my mind was all over the place because she was nowhere close to her estimated date of delivery yet. Hence, I was confused that she was going to give birth so soon.

I wondered what the person on the other end of the call told him. Meanwhile, he held on to his phone with a frown as though he had received some upsetting news.

Ashton lowered his volume and replied, "I'm so sorry, Ms. Anderson. I'm currently not in K City."

He was aware I had my eyes on him. Hence, he decided to carry on with the conversation with the speaker.

At that moment, Cameron's voice could be heard as she pleaded anxiously, "Ashton, Rebecca needs you by her side more than ever! Can you please make a trip back to K City immediately? As long as she's able to give birth to her child safely, I'll give in to whatever request you have! Please, Ashton!"

Ashton furrowed his brows because he was slightly irked by Cameron's fretful voice.

I took over his phone and replied on his behalf, "Ms. Anderson, I'm afraid I have to turn you down because my husband is in the middle of something. I don't think he's able to make the trip back."

"Scarlett!" Cameron exclaimed in shock and yelled, "You're the one who has sent Rebecca the photos of the deceased children! She almost fell down the stairs in the middle of the night because of you – you vicious woman!"

I found her words hilarious and replied sarcastically, “Ms. Anderson, how am I, a trivial character, supposed to expose your beloved daughter to such horrible photos that can drive her mad? You should stop blaming me for everything that has gone wrong on her end. Perhaps God was behind this. After all, look at what you have done over the years. Instead of asking Ashton to fly back, why don’t you atone for your sins instead?”

Cameron gasped when she heard my sarcastic remark. She warned me in return, “Y-You! Come at me with everything you have if you’re holding a grudge against us! Aren’t you afraid of karma if you make a move against a defenseless pregnant woman?”

“Oh, I’m terrified, Ms. Anderson! However, you’re the one who should be afraid because it’s your karma that we’re talking about! I haven’t done anything to get my revenge, and I don’t think I need to do it myself anymore.”

Immediately after I made myself clear, I hung up the call and looked at Ashton. “Are you going to make a trip back to K City?”

He smirked and directed a rhetorical question at me in return. “Do you think I’ll make the trip back?”

I shook my head and asserted, “Nope! If you dare to make your way back to K City, I’ll kill you for real!”

“Shall we give it a try?” Ashton sneered and provoked me.

I stared at him and caressed my chin in silence while he narrowed his eyes and asked, “Are you a part of this?”

“Excuse me?” For a short while, his words confused me. However, after a few seconds, I noticed he was talking about the incident that had occurred right before Rebecca’s labor.

“Does that mean you’re not involved in this?”

I nodded and queried in return, “Since I’m in J City, how am I supposed to get the better of her? If I wish to get my revenge, I’ll definitely stay back to witness the outcome of my plan.”

The bedside lamp was the only faint illumination that was available in the room. Ashton stared at me and leaned over to cradle me in between his arms. He gasped and apologized out of the blue, “I’m sorry, Scarlett!”

I pushed him away and said, “Stay away from me! It’s pretty war, tonight!”

Although I couldn’t figure out the reason he had apologized, I had no intention to get to the bottom behind his odd behavior either.

I stared at the ceiling with my eyes shut tight because I felt empty deep down as I recalled the traumatic experience with our child back then.

Previously, I held a grudge against Ashton and blamed him for not protecting us. I resented him for not being around when I needed him by my side the most.

Eventually, I noticed I was the selfish one because I had never put myself in his shoes and looked at things from his perspective.

Right then, Ashton broke the silence, asserting in a serious manner, "I won't repeat the same silly mistake anymore."

I peered into his eyes and queried, "Ashton, do you love me?"

It was a foolish question, but I decided to bring it up since I didn't have anything else on my mind.

He turned over and glanced at me. "I'll never file for divorce with you."

"Oh..." I replied quietly because I didn't expect such an odd reply from him.

To be honest, his reply was as good as none because it didn't mean anything to me.

He wrapped his arms around my shoulders and asked since I went into dead silence once more. "Are you angry?"

I shook my head and denied it because I couldn't resist the urge to fall asleep anymore.

Perhaps it was due to the wonderful news right before my sleep; a few seconds after I closed my eyes, I fell into a deep slumber.

Since we had sealed the deal with OrbitTech, it wouldn't be necessary to adhere to the initial schedule that had been devised for the upcoming three days anymore.

Ashton got up early in the morning because he had something to tend to and would have to depart earlier than usual. As he was getting ready, I stared at him while lying on the bed because I had just woke up. "Have you ever put on clothes of other colors throughout your entire life?"

He got himself a necktie from the walk-in closet and ignored me. Instead, he instructed me, "Hurry up and put this on for me."

I shook my head and told him, "No! I can't tie a tie!" It was the truth because I didn't need to pick up such a skill since I had never gotten romantically involved with another man prior to my relationship with him.

As always, he replied with a frowned look, "I'll teach you!"

He refused to give up just yet and instructed me to sit upright.

Instantly, I sat upright on the bed and peered at him in the eyes. "Come over!" Since it was way ahead of my schedule, I refused to bring myself out of bed because there wasn't anything else I could do that early.

He shook his head helplessly and walked over as demanded, taking a seat by my side on the bed because I showed no signs of getting out of bed just yet. "Scarlett, why are you such a lazy bum?"

"Me? Are you sure I'm a lazy bum?"

Ashton couldn't think of better words to rebuke my statement.

Then, I started tying the tie based on the methods he taught me. After a while, I managed to tie the knot after my first attempt.

He asked with his eyes widened in disbelief, “You were saying?”

I grinned awkwardly because I didn’t expect it would be such a piece of cake. “Are you going to believe me if I say I’m a prodigy when it comes to tying a tie?”

Actually, I was surprised because it was easier than I thought it would be.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 263

Ashton sneered and pinched my cheek. “I hope you’re telling the truth.”

After Ashton departed, I planned to return to bed and take another nap before starting my day, but my phone on the nightstand had started buzzing.

I took a peek and noticed I have an incoming call from an anonymous number. The first call was hung up by the person on the other end because I had no intention to pick it up.

After several consecutive calls, I picked it up and heard a man’s hoarse voice the moment the call got through. “I’m at your doorstep!”

“John?” I was surprised.

“Are you trying to avoid me?” he replied, utterly irritated.

“N-No! I’m not in K City! Currently, I’m at J City!”

He got worked up all of a sudden and yelled, “Stop it! I’m currently at Peakville Estate! Are you going to open the door or not?”

I finally figured out the reason behind his frustration – it turned out he was right at my doorstep, yet I refused to pick up the call.

After I changed and headed downstairs, I noticed the maid had gotten the breakfast ready. I told her to get me another serving and pack it for me.

By the time I reached the entrance, I saw the Bugatti that was parked right in front of the gate. The driver of the eye-catching vehicle winded down the window and instructed, “Get in the car!”

As soon as I boarded the car, I caught a whiff of a pleasant scent. Perhaps it the air freshener that was applied to conceal the awful stench of tobacco.

John laid the seat flat and stared at me with his pale and haggard face while he took another whiff of smoke. “Why have you blacklisted my contact number?”

I was confused. A few seconds later, I asked, "Huh? Since when have I done such a thing?"

John sneered and asked, "Have you spent the night with Ashton again?"

I nodded and affirmed his thoughts while he scoffed, "Hmph! He must be the one behind it!"

Does that mean Ashton was the one who had blacklisted John's contact number? Though, why would Ashton pick on John out of the blue?

"Have you called me last night?"

John nodded and told me he called me at three o'clock in the middle of the night.

"3 a.m.? Well, you should have seen that coming!" I blurted out the things in my mind. After all, no ordinary man would reach out to others in the middle of the night.

The man, who was in a foul mood, told me, "Rebecca was rushed to the hospital last night, and I don't think her child will make it through."

I was astonished by his statement and recalled the conversation Cameron had with Ashton at three in the morning. "What have you shown Rebecca?"

John squinted his eyes and yawned as though he didn't have enough sleep last night. "I have shown her the photos of all sorts of children and given her a special souvenir."

“Which was...”

“Have you heard of a voodoo doll?” He queried with an odd expression that made it hard to read his actual mood.

It took me a few seconds to grasp the things he was talking about. In the end, I stared at him with my eyes widened in disbelief. “Is that what you have shown her?”

He nodded and explained, “I told her it would take a seven to eight-month-old fetus to produce a custom-made voodoo doll. Coincidentally, her child is about eight-month-old.”

I was baffled by his words and couldn’t be sure if I should be delighted or not. “Fine, I guess I should be grateful because you have gotten rid of her on my behalf. At least I don’t have to go through the trouble of dealing with her anymore.”

John rolled his eyes and asked, “Where’s your phone? I want you to unblock me at once.”

I nodded and reached for my phone, going through the contact list to search for John’s contact. There was no way John could reach me since Ashton had blocked both John’s phone and WhatsApp account on my phone.

Later on, John started dissing Ashton for his unbelievably childish act.

“I think Ashton is the only person who will resort to such a childish and despicable trick on this planet!”

I remained silent throughout the session and handed over the set of breakfast I had brought along with me to him. “Have you been staying up throughout the night?”

John nodded and shared, “Initially, I wanted to call you and tell you everything about Rebecca, but I ended up being frustrated for the entire night because I couldn’t reach you at all.”

He was such a sentimental man and tend to overthink things whenever he was on his own.

“Have you gotten rid of the evidence after sending those nasty things on Rebecca’s way?” Judging by Cameron’s words, I was pretty sure she was suspicious of me being the mastermind behind everything.

He stuffed a sandwich into his mouth and muttered with a scowl, but his words were inaudible. “H-Have you always perceived me as such a foolish man?”

I shrugged my shoulders and told him, “Rebecca and Cameron aren’t much of a threat, but you have to keep an eye on Zachary because we’re both doomed if he dispatches the men from the underworld society to come after us.”

In spite of my sincere warning, John scoffed as though it wasn’t a big deal. “Don’t worry. He’s not much of a threat because he will be doomed soon.”

I asked with a baffled look, “What do you mean? Is anyone going to take the Moore family out?”

“They can’t blame others for their miseries when they’re such an easy target, can they?”

John was right – the Moore family had been around for many years. They must have a lot of foes that were constantly going after them.

“When are you going back to K City? Uncle Louis is going to make a trip back to K City soon, and he’s planning to acknowledge you as an official member of the family. He told me to share his plan with you because he wants you to get yourself ready by then.”

I was slightly astonished when I heard the things John told me.

When I recalled the incident that occurred during Marcus’ mother’s birthday banquet, I lost myself in a train of thoughts and nodded. “I’ll keep that in mind because I’ll be heading to the countryside soon. I wonder if they are fine because it has been quite some time since we last got in touch.”

He responded with a nod and assured me, “Forget about Rebecca for the time being. I’ll deal with her for now and keep you updated.”

I took note of his words and got out of the car. Staring at the gloomy weather, it felt as though everything was part of God’s greater plan.

All along, I had never intended to get Rebecca’s innocent child involved, but since things had turned out as such, there wasn’t anything else I could do to turn the tables.

Shortly, Marcus gave me a call and inquired when would I be back.

“It’s going to take me another two to three days. I have stricken a deal with OrbitTech. All you have to do is to get in touch with the person in charge regarding the progress of the project.”

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 264

“Are you going to look for Macy?” Marcus went silent for a few seconds before asking.

I was taken aback by his sudden question, but I recalled I once brought it up in front of him during our random conversation.

The person on the other end of the call remained silent in anticipation of my reply. Shortly, he probed once more with a husky voice, "Have you finally located her?"

I shook my head and denied him of his thought. "No, no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't reach her. Jackson was the one who would pick up the call on her behalf. I wanted to pay them a visit and check on them for myself."

"I'll go with you!" Instead of a suggestion, it sounded more like a command.

Thus, I turned him down right away and said, "That won't be necessary because Jackson will be around to take care of me."

"Scarlett! Why don't you give Jackson a call before heading over? I'm afraid you're going to make a futile trip," Marcus rebuked in a callous tone.

"How do you know that when I haven't got in touch with Jackson? I think it's going to turn out just fine because Jackson told me he would stay by Macy's side to keep her company."

“You shouldn’t jump to the conclusion! What if they had made their way back to J City ahead of you? Perhaps they had traveled elsewhere! Don’t you think you should figure out their exact whereabouts before heading over?”

I nodded and gave in to the anxious man’s request since he sounded so desperate. “Alright! I’ll give Jackson a call and figure out their whereabouts beforehand!”

As soon as I detected the sound of the vehicle’s engine from the courtyard, I told Marcus, “I have something to tend to on my end. I got to go.”

Once I hung up the call, Ashton strode into the living room and noticed the packed meal that was in front of me. He asked with a frown, “What is this, and who’s it for?”

I was confused for a short while, but I rebuked him and said, “No! I’ll be heading out soon! So I got the maid to get my meal packed!”

“Where are you going?” Ashton asked.

“I’ll be heading over to look for Macy and Jackson!” After I told him about my upcoming agenda, I stuffed the meal into my bag, which seemed to be unnecessary at all.

As a matter of fact, I could have my meal before heading out, yet I couldn’t back down anymore since I had told him an out blunt lie.

When I was about to leave, Ashton stopped me and said, "Wait! I'll go with you, but allow me to retrieve a certain something from the study before that."

"N-No-"

"Just stay right here until I'm back!"

He didn't even allow me to stop him and proceeded to bounce up the stairs.

While he was away, I grabbed the opportunity and gave Jackson a call.

It took a while for him to pick up the call. "Scarlett."

"Jackson, can you please drop me a text of your current location? I'll be heading over to pay you and Macy a visit soon." If they were in the countryside, we would have to drive there. Otherwise, we would have a hard time maneuvering around because it would be tough to get a cab there.

"Are you back in J City?" It was evident Jackson, who was on the other end, was taken aback by our presence.

"Yeah! I came back because of a certain project. It has been some time since we last met, so I wanted to drop by and pay both of you a visit!" I told him about the truth without holding back.

"I... We're currently away from J City. A few days ago, I brought Macy along with me and made a trip back to M Country. We'll return after some time. Once we're back, I'll bring her over to K City and pay you a visit," Jackson stuttered.

I furrowed my brows because of his suspicious tone. It sounded as though he was nervous. "Why didn't you tell me earlier? Besides, how could you bring an infant everywhere with you?"

"It's fine! The baby is already three-month-old and proven suitable for a flight! We'll return and drop by K City by the end of the year, okay?" I thought Jackson was in the middle of something due to the noise coming from the other end of the call.

After he told me he had to tend to the things he had on his plate, he hung up the call without further ado.

I slouched against the couch after the call was hung up. A sense of insecurity engulfed me because it felt as though Jackson was trying to stay away from me.

"What's bothering you?" Ashton, who had returned with a folder, asked as he walked down the stairs.

I looked in his direction and paused for a few seconds. "Ashton, is Dr. Crest in M Country?"

He nodded and said, "Jared has been staying there because he's the person in charge of the expansion of the company. What's wrong?"

"Can you get him to do me a favor?" I couldn't shrug the very thought of Macy's disappearance off my mind because it had been a few months since I last heard from her.

Every time I got in touch with Jackson through a call, he would try to wrap up our conversation as soon as possible. I couldn't figure out if things were fine on their end.

“He’ll be joining us for a dinner tonight. Why don’t you bring it up in front of him when the time comes?” Ashton paused and stared at me with his brows furrowed when he noticed I had my bag on the coffee table. “What’s wrong? Are you not heading out anymore?”

I nodded and explained, “Macy and Jackson had departed to M Country a few days ago.”

He responded with a nod and stated, “Alright, if that’s the case, I’ll head out because I have something to deal with. I’ll be back and pick you up for dinner tonight.”

“That’s alright. I can drive!”

“Scarlett Stovall, have you gotten used to turning me down?”

Staring at Ashton’s downcast face, I murmured to myself, “N-No... I-It’s because...”

“Make sure you’re keeping your eyes on the road while you’re driving!” After he finished his so-called heads-up, he walked out of the house with a darkened expression.

He seemed to be angry, but I wasn’t sure of the reason behind it.

Anyway, I felt lightheaded after the series of confusing incidents I had to deal with within a day.

At seven o’clock in the evening, after I reached Imperial Hotel and parked my car, I headed over to the private dining room and made my way in before the designated time.

Apart from Ashton and Jared, there were two other figures in the spacious dining room. One was Felix, whom I had encountered a few days ago, and Thomas, the president of AC Credit.

“It has been a while, Mrs. Fuller!” Thomas could be considered a close acquaintance of mine because we used to encounter one another back in the day on several occasions for our work.

After I nodded and greeted Thomas in return, I took a peek at Felix. I was clueless about the reason he was there when he was taken into custody by the cops a few days ago. Thus, it didn’t make any sense for him to be released within a few days.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 265

Perhaps Stacey was right – the police officers were no match for the backings that were behind Felix.

With that being said, it would be close to impossible for a certain party to exert influence to such an extent in J City because it would take more than a fortune to get one’s way around the law with ease.

“Mrs. Fuller, what a coincidence! I can’t believe we get to meet again so soon!” Felix greeted me with a bright grin, concealing the despicable side of his which he had shown in the restaurant back then.

He seemed like a completely different person altogether. In fact, he appeared to be a well-educated gentleman who could carry himself politely in front of others.

I returned the favor and responded with a nod and a smile.

Since everyone had arrived, Thomas got himself engaged in a conversation with Ashton after he instructed the waiter to serve us our meal.

Most of their topics were regarding their work, including the operations of Fuller Corporation in J City. Thomas expressed AC Credit's intention to be Fuller Corporation's external audit for the upcoming quarter.

Ashton looked elsewhere and replied nonchalantly, "Mr. Lowe, my wife is the one in charge of most of the operation of Fuller Corporation in J City. Feel free to get in touch with her instead of me."

I couldn't comprehend the meaning behind Ashton's words because I wasn't given the task to oversee the operation of Fuller Corporation in J City.

Although the headquarter of Fuller Corporation had been relocated to K City, J City was one of the corporation's bases of operations. In short, I would never be given such an important role.

On one hand, Jared, who was about to finish his glass of wine, paused and looked at me when he heard Ashton's words. After he cast a skeptical glance at me, he regained his composure.

On the other hand, Thomas smiled and denoted, "I wouldn't have any idea of the change if you hadn't brought it up in front of me, Mr. Fuller! It turns out Ms. Stovall is the person in charge of Fuller Corporation nowadays!"

I peered at Ashton in the eyes in an attempt to figure out his motives, but my effort was to no avail.

However, since Ashton indicated he wanted me to engage in a conversation with Thomas, I was pretty sure the topic would revolve around the audit of the corporation.

The things that should be discussed had been brought to light since the last quarter, though. I looked at Thomas and initiated the conversation, stating, "Mr. Lowe, I'm not trying to boycott your company, but the incident that has occurred during the last quarter has brought about a huge loss for Fuller Corporation. As a result, I was no longer affiliated with the company. I will never allow myself to repeat the silly mistake twice."

"Mrs. Fuller, don't worry! I won't allow the same thing to happen twice either! In order to prove our sincerity, I have brought along Mr. Ludwick with me. He has always been in charge of Fuller Corporation's audits. Fuller Corporation is in good hands with him around." Thomas assured me everything would be fine as though he had been anticipating the occurrence of the conversation.

Judging by the tone of Thomas' words, I couldn't help but think Felix had a higher position in AC Credit.

When I turned around and looked at Felix, he responded with a bright grin and asserted determinedly, "Ms. Stovall, what happened was nothing but an accident. I assure you everything will be fine this time."

After much consideration, I turned and looked at Ashton while inquiring, "Can I turn down the audit request from Fuller Corporation?"

"Why? What's the reason behind it?" Ashton asked with his brows furrowed.

“I have no intention to get myself involved in such a nasty situation. Apart from that, I don’t want to commit the same mistake twice.” Most importantly, I was a member of White Corporation. If I were in charge of the said audit, things would end up miserably due to my ambiguous identity.

Ashton gave it a thought. A few seconds later, he told Thomas, “Mr. Lowe, I’m afraid the incident and the misunderstanding may have traumatized my wife. Allow me to make myself clear – AC Credit and Harrison Credit were given the task of auditing Fuller Corporation’s financial statement. Although Harrison Credit was a relatively small firm, they did a great job while I was on the verge of bankruptcy due to AC Credit. Thankfully, things ended up well at the end of the day. Nevertheless, AC Credit was the reason my wife had to leave Fuller Corporation. Considering the factors that were mentioned above, I’m sorry, but I’m afraid I won’t allow AC Credit to be in charge of Fuller Corporation’s audit anymore.”

Thomas and Felix were dumbfounded by Ashton’s decision. “Mr. Fuller, I believe you’re aware of the actual reason behind the incident that has occurred during the last quarter – our company might be one of the reasons the incident spiraled out of control, but we shouldn’t forget about the underlying issues of Fuller Corporation.”

“Mr. Lowe, does that mean you think AC Credit’s neglect during the incident has nothing to do with it?” Ashton replied with a faint smirk.

When Thomas heard Ashton’s question, his face turned pale and haggard.

I wouldn’t lie, though; it was one of the most embarrassing meals I had ever had throughout my entire life.

After we finished our meal and returned to the car, Ashton stared at me with his abysmal pair of eyes and asked, “What do you have in your mind?”

I stopped looking out the window and had my eyes on Ashton instead. "Since you have no intention to acquire AC Credit's service, why would you invite them over?"

"Why don't you try to figuring it out?"

"Ashton, why do you always do that!" I responded with my lips pouted. It was very immature of him to ask them out just so he could get them back for the things they had done and humiliate them in front of me.

I was completely worn out and wasn't in the mood to carry on with the conversation we had after the feud. It wasn't necessary to get worked up over such a trivial incident either.

Initially, I would make a trip back to K City after taking a day's break.

I had the flight ticket ready, but I received a call from Stacey out of the blue. "Ms. Stovall, do you have some time for me?"

When I recalled the content of my conversation with Marcus on the day we signed the agreement with OrbitTech, I hesitated and asked, "What do you want from me?"

She started sniffing and murmured through the phone, "Ms. Stovall, I should have seen it coming, but I don't wish to be confined by the man for the rest of my life! Please spare me some of your time and allow me to tell you the things I have in mind!"

Since Ashton was not around, I was quite free. After much consideration, I gave in to her request and told her to meet me at Bridge's Court at Barbara Road.

She heaved a sigh of relief and told me she would be there on time.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 266 -270

After I hung up the call, I got changed into a set of winter clothing and departed. By the time I reached the venue, Stacey was already there.

She put on an old-fashioned cashmere jacket and wrapped herself up. In order to conceal the bruises on her face, she had applied light make-up, yet they were still visible because she was heavily bruised.

"Why didn't you wait for me inside? It's cold outside." I couldn't help but ask when I caught her shivering while waiting for me outside of Bridge's Court.

"I-I have been waiting for you!" She responded with a sheepish grin, yet it could barely conceal the fact she had been having it tough. I decided to stop poking my nose into her business.

Bridge's Court wasn't the most premium eatery in town. A meal or two at Bridge's Court wouldn't take a toll on her financially at all because she had considerably high pay while she was affiliated with Fuller Corporation back in the day.

However, she was nowhere close to her prime anymore.

I wasn't aware of her actual condition, but even if Felix mistreated her or she was jobless, she shouldn't end up so miserable because she was a capable woman.

After we made our way into Bridge's Court and placed our orders, we returned to our seats. She attempted to tell me the things she had in mind a few times, but she couldn't do it.

In the end, I was the one who broke the silence and asked, "Stacey, why have you-"

She got ahead of me abruptly and asked, "Ms. Stovall, do you remember the time you were abducted from the parking lot?"

I was taken aback by her words because only a mere few were aware of the incident that had occurred back then, and she wasn't one of the few.

“Did Felix told you about it?” I recalled encountering the man back then. He was there on behalf of AC Credit to secure a deal with Fuller Corporation. Apart from that, Joe and Rebecca seemed to be the masterminds behind the abduction.

Since it hadn’t impacted me, I decided not to go after them and didn’t bother to make a fuss out of it. I didn’t want others to figure out I was abducted.

Stacey shook her head. In spite of her make-up, it couldn’t conceal her pale look. “I’ve overheard some stuff. Have you thought of the possibility of a third party that was aware of the forged abortion apart from Dr. Ludwick? Is anyone else aware of the things you have done to keep Mr. Fuller by your side?”

I thought about it, but I couldn’t think of anyone else apart from Jared and Caleb.

To be honest, it had been quite some time since the incident occurred. Thus, I couldn’t recall the details anymore.

“Don’t you find it odd when there were only a mere few who were aware of the incident? Why would those who had abducted you decided to leverage your child as the bargaining chip to secure the tender of the project?” Stacey added.

“Felix is Dr. Ludwick’s son, isn’t he? I saw the mastermind by Felix’s side... Am I thinking what you’re thinking?” Once Mr. Tuffin showed up by Felix’s side, I could rule out the possibility the abductor was aware of my pregnancy back then.

Stacey shook her head and rebuked, “Dr. Ludwick would never share it with Felix when he didn’t even tell Mrs. Ludwick about it. The father and son duo aren’t on good terms since a few years ago. Frankly, they rarely talk to one another.”

Apart from Caleb, the only person I could think of was Jared. I asked with my brows furrowed, “Dr. Crest is one of Ashton’s close friends. Are you indicating that he’s involved in the incident?”

“Do you think I’m lying to you?” Stacey stared at me and asked in a quivering voice; she couldn’t suppress her emotions anymore.

I shook my head and sighed. “Jared wouldn’t have done this.” It was the truth – Jared wasn’t the shareholder of Fuller Corporation, so he wouldn’t put my life at stake for Rebecca’s sake because they weren’t that close either.

Yet, Stacey got worked up because I expressed my doubts over her words. She paused for a few seconds before adding, "If you don't believe me, why don't you confront Ashton and get him to tell you about the things that had occurred between him and Jared back then!"

I was surprised by the overwhelming news Stacey had brought up out of the blue. "Stacey, I know you're trying your best to leave Felix, but you don't have to stir things up to achieve your goal. I have moved on from the past."

As compared to the miscarriage, the abduction was a relatively trivial incident in my life.

"Are you going to believe me if I tell you Jared is working with the Moore family and plotting something against Ashton? Correct me if I'm wrong, but the president of AC Credit has approached Ashton again, hasn't he? They're not coming after the fortune, but they're coming after the foundation of the Fullers! They can only get the better of the Fullers by jeopardizing Fuller Corporation from within, bits by bits. Otherwise, the Fullers will be unstoppable if Ashton continues to lead the corporation to its prime! The Moore family wants to take the Fullers out from J City once and for all!"

I was dumbstruck because Stacey finished her orated speech so sincerely as if it was the actual truth. "What is Jared going after?"

"Something happened between Jared and Ashton back then! You have to ask Ashton to get to the bottom of the truth!"

"Why does the Moore family want to take the Fullers out when Rebecca has a thing for Ashton? Rebecca's doting parents will never put their daughter's crush at stake."

She sneered and queried, "Ms. Scarlett, I finally figure out the reason you're terminated by the management of Fuller Corporation. Do you think Rebecca's parents are fools? Rebecca has a thing for Ashton because she can't get her hands on him no matter what! When she's sick of him, do you think her parents will allow him to get away unscathed? In fact, they're disguising their actual motives through their daughter's crush on Ashton – they're trying to acquire the Fullers through hostile takeover!"

Stacey thought of something else after pausing for a few seconds. "Ashton has decided to penetrate K City because of his ambition and the potential the city has to offer. Why don't you put yourself in the other conglomerates' shoes? There was only so much the five parties that were involved had to share. Do you think they're willing to share the limited fortune with another outsider? They won't get as much as they initially would since Ashton has shown

up. If you're one of them, do you think you're going to allow Ashton to get things his way? Are you willing to share the limited fortune with a late-comer?"

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 267

Ashton had moved the headquarter to K City due to the abundant resources and information that was available there. Stacey was right – the conglomerates from K City would never allow such an ambitious and capable man to get a share of the limited wealth the city had to offer.

The Moore family did a great job of disguising their actual motive – they wished to acquire Fuller Corporation through Rebecca's relationship with Ashton.

If Ashton and Rebecca got married, the Moores and the Fullers would be affiliated with one another. By then, the Moore family would have nothing to lose. Instead, they would gain access to all sorts of information and resources through Ashton.

All things considered, I couldn't figure out the sort of past Ashton and Jared had.

"I can barely recall the things that have occurred back then, but allow me to express my utmost gratitude to you, Stacey. Although I'm grateful, I can't possibly put my future at stake for your sake because helping you is going to expose me to immeasurable risk."

Even though I couldn't help but sympathize with the things Stacey had to go through, I wouldn't necessarily offer my help because I was never a kind woman.

In fact, if the Moore family couldn't win Ashton over, they would consider him a foe in the future. Since I was Ashton's wife, I would have to get myself ready to go against Jared and the Moore family with him.

Considering the number of foes we had to be wary of, I couldn't afford to offend the nasty and pretentious Felix anymore.

Stacey felt dejected and decided to push her luck for one last time. She said, "Ms. Stovall, I'm conscious of your concerns, but what if I trade my future for my freedom? I'm sure you're aware of my capabilities and educational background, aren't you? As long as I get to leave Felix, I'll infiltrate the Moore family on your behalf!"

She's willing to infiltrate the Moore family on my behalf?

I peered at her in the eyes and confronted, "Are you trying to deceive me? Cameron and Zachary can easily get their hands on our relationship. What are you going to do if they find out you used to be my subordinate for two years?"

She chuckled because she found my words hilarious. "Do you really think the Moore family has time for such a trivial matter?"

"You can't deny the fact you used to be affiliated with Fuller Corporation, can you?" Stacey was a capable woman. Hence, it would be odd if she were to tell others she had been unemployed ever since her graduation.

She looked at me in return and asked, "As long as you get John to do you a favor, he will never say no, won't he?"

I raised my brows in surprise as I was shocked by the amount of information she possessed regarding my closed ones.

Due to my skeptical look, she sat upright and asserted, "Ms. Stovall, you don't have to worry. I started gathering all sorts of information after Felix showed his true colors once you left J City. I had been keeping an eye on the things back in K City because I was pretty sure I was the only one who could be of aid to you."

"Are you insisting I should offer my help?"

"I don't have another choice! If you don't help me, I'll end up living a miserable life with him! No! I don't think I can make it through another few months, let alone my entire life!"

I was clueless about the things that had occurred over the past six months. She used to live a blissful life with Felix, yet things took a drastic turn for the worst within six months.

"You have been acquainted with Felix for so many years. Have you only discovered his true colors after both of you are married?"

Stacey smirked as though she found herself pathetic and foolish when she heard of Felix. "You're right. I used to think he was the right one after the years we spent together. However, I was wrong because he had been putting on a show to deceive me! I wasn't the only one he

had deceived. In fact, he even tricked his parents and his friends into believing he was a gentle and innocent man!”

Halfway through her speech, she started trembling and avoided my gaze. Perhaps she started recalling the horrifying memories she had with him again. “If I hadn’t witnessed the vicious things he had done behind others, I would never figure out he was such a cruel man! After we got married, he became another man. In the first few months, he would throw a tantrum and vent his anger on me, but eventually, he started abusing me. I once thought of acquiring the cops’ aid, but others would step up and vouch for him, stating he was a gentle and kind man. They blamed me for his vulgar acts and said I was the reason behind the change in his attitude! You saw how he behaved and got infuriated abruptly for no apparent reasons when we were in the restaurant, right? I had nothing to do with it, and I couldn’t figure out the reason behind it either!”

Hearing what she had said, I decided to stop poking my nose into her horrifying experiences and asked, “What sort of help do you need from me?”

I wasn’t in a position to judge, but I could definitely use another reliable ally instead of making myself another foe.

Perhaps Stacey didn’t expect I would give in to her request just yet; she stared at me wide-eyed and replied excitedly, “Felix is a perverted man deep down. He enjoys going after women who are hard to get, and that’s you! I need you to join me for a meal.”

“Have you been thinking about this all this while?”

She looked elsewhere and nodded because she felt guilty deep down. “You’re the only one who’s capable of taking Felix out once and for all amongst the ones I’m acquainted with.”

I cast a skeptical gaze in return and exclaimed, “I’m impressed because that’s actually a brilliant plan, Stacey! Once you’re ready, feel free to call me.”

She suggested and handed over a name card to me. “What about tonight? The address, contact number, and room number are listed on the card.”

I couldn’t help but scoff when I saw the name card. “What makes you think I’m going to give in to your request?”

“Haven’t you already agreed to it?” Stacey replied with a determined look.

“Great! I guess I’ll look forward to working with you!” I took over the name card and initiated a handshake.

She returned the favor and replied, “I won’t let you down!”

At 8 p.m., I reached the private dining room of a relatively miniature bar at a hidden alley.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 268

Stacey had arrived by the time I entered the private dining room, but Felix was nowhere to be seen. Ten minutes later, the man finally showed up and joined us.

He was surprised by my presence and greeted me with a courteous smile the moment he saw me. “Stacey told me she has a friend that’s keen to have some wild and raunchy fun together. I didn’t expect it would be you, Mrs. Fuller! To be honest, I’m surprised by your kink!”

I responded with a smirk, but I couldn’t get used to the odd set of outfits I had put on. It was a set of exposing outfits that I would rarely wear.

On top of that, I had gone to great lengths to doll myself up because I knew what it would take to charm a man like him.

“Mr. Ludwick! Have a seat!” I offered him to take a seat by my side and flashed him a bright smile.

Meanwhile, he sized me up over and over again as though I was some sort of exhibition item.

“Mrs. Fuller, aren’t you afraid that Mr. Fuller would find out that you’re here with us today? I mean, no ordinary man can accept the fact their spouse would, you know, have fun with another man,” he expressed his concerns, but his expression suggested he wasn’t worried the slightest.

The messed-up man had a vicious grin on his face because he was thrilled by the malicious thoughts in his mind. I recalled Stacey’s warning – Felix was corrupted to his very core.

With that, I tucked my hair behind my ears and denoted, "Well, all we have to do is to keep him in the dark, isn't it?"

"Hahaha!" Felix laughed and announced, "I have always wondered the reason Ashton neglected you and spent most of his time with other women! It turns out you're special!"

I was disgusted by the conversation we had, but I forced a smile and asserted, "We only get to live our life once, don't we? Thus, shouldn't we live our life to the fullest and enjoy ourselves to our heart's content?"

Felix swirled his glass of wine and had his eyes glued to me since the moment he walked into the room.

He guffawed at my words because I was spot on. As revolting as it was, he enjoyed being around a woman with the same interest as him the most.

Then, Stacey took a seat beside me and whispered, "I'll head out for a short while. Get in touch with me as soon as possible if you need me."

I nodded and muttered under my breath, "You better make your way back soon."

Once Stacey departed, Felix leaned over. Despite his gorgeous-looking face, I frowned subconsciously because I was disgusted by his superficial disguise, and the smell of his over-powering cologne made me gag.

I inched away and asked, "Have you always been so easily excited, Mr. Ludwick?"

I guess he can't resist his urge anymore since his wife isn't around, huh?

"Since we're here for some fun, don't you think it's perfectly fine for us to be who we truly are? I mean, we don't have to put on a show when we're aware of the preferences we have, don't you think? So why don't we have some fun and forget about it after the night ends!"

As he announced his sickening plan, he leaned over and ran his fingers across my lap.

Although I could barely resist the urge to throw a punch at him in the face, I had no choice but to carry on with the act.

Nevertheless, I couldn't stand it anymore because he wouldn't stop caressing my thigh. Suddenly, I raised my head and smiled while stating, "M-Mr. Ludwick, I need to use the washroom because it's the first time I'm involved in such an activity! I-I think I'm nervous!"

It was evident he didn't have enough of me yet. Although he was displeased, he nodded and said, "I'll be waiting for you, darling! Hurry up!"

After I made it to the washroom, Stacey approached me and asked, "You alright? Can you handle it?"

I nodded and started washing my face with the running tap. As I was completely baffled, I couldn't conceal my curiosity anymore.

"Have you been asking others out on his behalf through such a peculiar method all this while?"

Stacey signaled her acknowledgment with a nod and explained, "I would get in touch with university students on his behalf. If he had fun, he would allow me to live in peace for a few days. Otherwise, he would take things out on me if he had an awful session."

I glanced at her openmouthed because I had never heard of a woman desiring her husband to have some fun with another woman.

"I want you to spike his drink with this once you have the chance. He's an extremely observant and cautious man, so if he notices something's off, things may head south. However, this will make him less rational." Stacey handed over a pill to me after she finished her sentence.

"What's this? Ecstasy?"

"Yeah! It's best to take him out as soon as possible to avoid unwanted outcomes!"

I thought it was a great idea and walked out of the washroom after I took the pill from her.

A few steps later, she told me, "Ms. Stovall... please take care of yourself!"

Stunned, I turned around and paused for a short while. I then responded with a nod and left the washroom.

On the way back, I caught a glimpse of Felix while he was smoking in the corridor.

At first, I intended to pretend I wasn't aware of his presence. However, I brought myself to a halt when I noticed his disgusting pair of slitted eyes because he had his eyes glued to me.

I had no choice but to suppress the frustration I felt and forced a smile as I greeted, "Mr. Ludwick!"

He seemed to enjoy the process of seducing me. After he had one final whiff of smoke, he put off the cigarette and walked over to my side.

"Scarlett, has anyone ever told you that you look great? Your smile is what kills me!" He was merely a few inches away from me by the time he finished his flirtatious remark.

I nodded and said, "Yes! You just told me that!"

The perverted man chuckled in return and offered, "The night is still young! Why don't we go somewhere else for another round of drinks?"

"Huh? S-Somewhere else?" I queried with my brows furrowed.

"What's wrong? Do you enjoy staying here?"

I paused for a short while and asked, "N-Not really, but don't we have to wait for Stacey?"

He got slightly irked when I brought up Stacey in front of him. "Why should we wait for her? We can have all sorts of fun without her! It's better for her to stay out of our ways anyway. Let's go!"

As soon as he brought up the suggestion, he reached over in an attempt to grasp my hand, but I evaded his hands and said, "But she's your wife. Shouldn't you have at least waited for her?"

"It's fine! She'll make her way back home on her own!" Once he assured me everything was fine, he gripped my hand tightly and brought me out.

Even so, I stopped him and rebuked, "Mr. Ludwick, I don't think that's fine at all! You should allow me to tell Stacey we're heading elsewhere!"

“No!” Felix seemed to be too eager. Initially, I thought the session would be conducted in the private dining room, but I was wrong because he indicated his will to bring me elsewhere.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 269

I felt a chill running down my spine and knew I had to stop him before things got to the point of no return. “Mr. Ludwick, are you trying to take me into custody against my will? If that’s the case, I’m afraid I won’t keep you company anymore because it’s not fun at all!”

“Shut up and come with me! Since we’re going to have some fun, we should spice it up a bit!” I wasn’t a match for him in terms of strength. In the end, I was dragged out of the bar against my will.

My life might be at stake if I were to leave with the vicious man.

Therefore, I leaned against the wall and warned him, “Mr. Ludwick, if we’re going to leave, I’m afraid I have to turn you down!”

The man glared at me and confronted, “Why do you insist on staying here? Are you trying to deceive me? Scarlett, do you really think I’m not aware of the plan Stacey has devised with you? I’m conscious of the plan to trick me, but that’s not going to stop me from having you spend a night with me! I’m not afraid of Ashton at all, but I don’t want others to get in my way when I’m having the best time of my life! They’re going to ruin my mood!”

My heart sank when I heard his words – he knew of our plan all along! Immediately, I tried to yell for help, but before my voice could reach others in the bar, I was rendered unconscious the moment I felt a racking sensation from my neck.

By the time I regained consciousness, Felix was right in front of me with a perverted look. I surveyed the surroundings and noticed I was placed in a bathtub in a hotel room.

I was completely drenched because he had splashed water on me to wake me up. What was worse was that my clothes were soaked, making every single part of my body exposed.

Staring at the now butt-naked Felix in front of me, I squinted my eyes and asked calmly, “Mr. Ludwick, what are you planning to do?”

Grinning, the pervert approached me and said, "What else could it be? Have you forgotten the reason we're here?"

"Mr. Ludwick, are you trying to force me into submission? I told you I had no intention of changing the venue!"

"So what? Don't you think this is even better? However, I'm afraid of hurting you during the process! My heart will shatter into pieces if that's the case!"

He placed his arms on the bathtub and leaned over.

Instinctively, I raised my leg and launched a kick in Felix's direction. However, he managed to evade my kick and moved away swiftly.

After he brought himself up, he wiped the water droplets that were on his face and complimented, "Oh, aren't you a feisty one! You made me all excited now."

I paid no heed to his words because the only thing I had in mind was to get in touch with Ashton. Since we were in a hotel, I was sure there was a landline in the room.

Once I thought about it, I brought myself out of the bathtub. Yet, the moment I got out of the tub, he held me by the neck and pushed me back into the tub.

I was appalled by the sicko and retaliated against him in an attempt to break free from his grasp. Nonetheless, my effort was futile because he was way too strong.

Eventually, I was bruised all over my body because I knocked into the bathtub while retaliating against Felix.

It was an awful scene, yet it seemed to have pleased the sadist even more. Right then, he started teasing me, "Tsk-tsk! You have such a gorgeous figure! I guess a woman who has given birth before is better than those virgins! What's so great about Ashton anyway? If you're mine, I won't approach another woman anymore!"

Using my knee, I launched a fatal blow in the direction of his crotch when he got caught up in delivering his arrogant speech.

"Argh!" He finally unfastened his grip when he felt the racking sensation. I grabbed the opportunity and sneaked away from him, making my way out of the bathtub.

However, the man couldn't be bothered by the pain at all. He grabbed my ankle and stopped me, causing me to stumble.

As a result, I fell to the ground and thought that would be it for me because I could literally hear my bones cracking due to the impact.

He then got out of the bathtub and pulled my hair to bring me up from the floor. Without a second thought, he slapped me in the face after he brought me up.

"Where do you think you're going? Since you have come to me, why are you playing hard to get all of a sudden?" That pervert didn't bother to hold back against me at all. My face was swollen after the several consecutive, merciless slaps.

The man, who had been proven to be aggressive, let loose of himself since there wasn't anyone in the room to restrain him.

Perhaps he wasn't satisfied with the few slaps in the face – he lifted me and kicked me in the abdomen after he pulled himself together.

I couldn't stand against the powerful force. Therefore, I bumped into the basin and had a hard time breathing due to the excruciating sensation coming from my head and my abdomen.

As a result, I collapsed on the ground because I was rendered defenseless by the sadistic man. That pervert approached me with a vicious smirk and crouched by my side after he reached me.

He ran his fingers across my shirt and stopped when he reached the collar. "You know what? I can't wait to devour you when you're in such a pathetic state! I wonder if Ashton will be disgusted when he looks at you right now!"

I gasped due to the pain I felt. Although I could barely open my eyes, I forced myself to glower at the man. "Felix, you better make sure I don't get to make it out alive! Otherwise—"

"Argh!" I felt as though I would pass out again soon as he started biting me on the neck.

Truth be told, I would break down soon if Stacey failed to show up as promised.

In the nick of time, Felix stopped when he heard the vigorous knock on the door.

Then he looked at me and yelled, “Scarlett, I’ll send you to hell for real!”

Immediately after his warning, he started strangling me once more. It felt as though I was merely a step away from hell.

Meanwhile, the person outside of the room wouldn’t stop knocking on the door. Eventually, he started yelling because no one was there to answer the door. “Felix! Open the door!”

H-Huh? Is that... a middle-aged man’s voice?

We were equally dumbfounded because we thought Ashton was the one who was at the doorstep.

Quickly, Felix cast me aside and rushed over to answer the door.

Although it was merely a few minutes, I was completely messed up due to Felix’s brutal act. In spite of my horrifying look, I brought myself up and rushed out of the bathroom to ask for help.

To my surprise, the person who had shown up was none other than Mr. Tuffin – the man who had abducted me from the parking lot some time ago.

Mr. Tuffin looked at Felix because he was shocked by my presence. “Why did you ask me over when you’re clearly in the middle of something?”

Felix, who was completely drenched, replied with a confused look, “What do you mean? I have never asked you to meet me here!”

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 270

“Weren’t you the one who had called me over because you have something to tell me? I wasn’t going to rush over, but you insisted you had something urgent to tell me and said it was about a new mission from the Moore family!” After he explained himself, the middle-aged man looked in my direction and asked, “What’s going on?”

Felix rebuked with his eyes wide open, “No! I’ve never contacted you! I didn’t receive any mission from the Moore family either!”

They exchanged glances and knew something was wrong almost immediately.

The vicious duo looked at me while Felix confronted, "Are you the one behind this?"

I supported myself and leaned against the wall to bring myself up. After I took a breather, I nodded and announced, "Yes! Since we're holding a grudge against one another, eventually, we'll have to settle the scores, right?"

Mr. Tuffin couldn't grasp the situation. He looked at Felix with a frown and asked, "Are you the one who has brought her over?"

Felix nodded with a horrified expression and told Mr. Tuffin, "Hurry up and let's go!"

Leaning against the wall, I neglected the pain I felt and warned them, "It's too late! Do you really think I'll let any one of you go after the things you have put me through?"

Slap! The middle-aged man landed a hard slap on Felix's face. He then got worked up and yelled, "You're such a fool! Do you know who the hell she is? Of all the people you could get your hands on, why the heck does it have to be her? Didn't you know that you're playing with fire!"

"C'mon, Ashton is just a businessman! He can't do anything against us apart from throwing us behind bars for a few days! What are you afraid of?" Felix wiped the blood from his lips and replied scornfully.

"You idiot! Don't you know Louis had acknowledged her as his goddaughter when they were in K City? And it just so happened that Louis is attending an event with Clinton today?"

"W-What? S-She's Louis' goddaughter?"

After giving it a thought for a few seconds, Felix made up his mind and cast a wrathful gaze at me. "Let's kill her!"

"Oh, you must be out of your f*ckin' mind! What should we do about the surveillance system of the hotel, huh? Do you really think you can get away unscathed if she turns out dead when you were the one who had brought her into the room? Please tell me you're not such a simple-minded fool!"

The middle-aged man was infuriated and could barely catch his breath. He added, "Louis has always been known for being extremely protective over his close ones! Meanwhile, Ashton is a cunning man that's capable of pulling the strings to send you to hell! Do you really think Mr. Clinton can keep you safe? And to think that you're the bastard who would drag me down along with you!"

Felix looked at me with his eyes narrowed to a slit. "Scarlett, I have never offended you! Why did you set me up? What are you coming after? Don't you think you should tell me about the rationale behind your action since you have gotten the better of me?"

Leaning against the wall, I didn't bother to conceal my bruises at all. Instead, I wanted to be as pathetic as possible. "I'm merely doing Stacey a favor while getting my revenge for the abduction that has occurred half a year ago. Coincidentally, I found out both of you are executing the orders from Zachary. I will never allow those from the Moore family to live a peaceful life! Therefore, I didn't mind putting my life at stake to achieve my goal!"

"You're crazy!" Felix was no longer the arrogant and proud man he was a few minutes ago.

Truth be told, I couldn't figure out the reason he was released from the police station.

His influence due to his position as an auditor affiliated with AC Credit and the Ludwick family wouldn't allow him to wield such great influences. Stacey wasn't a fool either – she came to me for help because the one behind Felix wasn't AC Credit or the Ludwick family; it was Clinton!

I should consider myself lucky because if it weren't because of Stacey, I wouldn't have figured out the relationship between Felix and Clinton, let alone Clinton and Cameron.

Previously, Ashton brought me to Pear Garden to get Macy out of jail. It turned out Cameron was the one who had brought Clinton over.

An instruction from Cameron was all it took to get Clinton to do her bidding.

Meanwhile, Felix, who was still being hopeful, hadn't given up on the thought of killing me. He looked at the middle-aged man and instructed, "Kill her! As long as she's dead, I'm sure we can get off the hook easily! Let's get Mr. Moore to deal with the surveillance system for us. I'm sure he can go against Louis."

Compared to Felix, the other man was relatively calm. All of a sudden, he ran and crashed into Felix in an attempt to knock him out.

Instinctively, Felix moved away and evaded the middle-aged man's attack. Since the latter had a relatively chubby built, he passed out after he knocked on the wall. His head started bleeding as a result.

I couldn't help but was surprised. Undeniably, he was a smart and shrewd man.

At the same time, Felix also realized what the middle-aged man was trying to do. Hence, he cursed, "Savini, you're such an a**hole!"

A few minutes later, a bunch of police officers and bodyguards barged into the room and surrounded us.

Felix was pinned to the ground by the police officers while Ashton, Louis, and John showed up in the room side by side.

Ashton, who had a gloomy expression, rushed over and placed his blazer over me.

The last to enter the room was a terrified Clinton. He got infuriated the moment he caught a glimpse of Felix. A few seconds later, he launched a kick on his stomach and warned him, "How dare you challenge the authority of the police when you're in J City! Who the heck do you think you are, scoundrel?"

It was a heavy blow on Felix. If the police officers hadn't pinned Felix to the ground, he might be sent flying by the powerful kick.

In the meantime, I was rushed to the hospital immediately after they found me.

After Ashton left, John, who had stayed by my side in the ward, held onto my hand and teased, "Do you really think you're capable of defending yourself? Who gave you the audacity to lure them out on your own? Do you have a death wish?"

I replied with a faint smile and checked on my pair of hands that were wrapped in gauze. "It's nothing serious, isn't it? Shouldn't you be congratulating me for a job well done?"

He scoffed, "If Uncle Louis and I weren't around, how would you get yourself out of the nasty situation? And if it weren't because of our influences, do you think Felix will be intimidated by the presence of Ashton, a businessman?"

I shrugged my shoulders nonchalantly and beamed. "Well, it turned out just fine, hasn't it? If none of you were around, I wouldn't have put myself at stake either."

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 271 - 275

Pausing for a while, I asked, "What's awaiting Felix?"

John told me the truth, "He will be sentenced to death or thrown behind bars for the rest of his life since he was the culprit behind a few innocent lives. Previously, Hector allowed Felix to get away after all the nasty things he has done because no one was around in J City. Since Uncle Louis has shown up and reported the things that Felix was involved in, he will never be set free anymore! As Hector was the one backing him up over the years, he, too, will have to bear the consequences of his actions. Honestly speaking, you did a great job because your action has allowed Uncle Louis to get his hands on the foundation of the Moore family."

I wasn't conscious of the exact relationship that was involved behind the scene, but I knew Cameron was a close acquaintance of Hector. They must have some sort of dodgy deals that could be exposed through a simple investigation. Perhaps Uncle Louis could get to the bottom of the Moore family's scandals over the years. If the Moore family wished to protect the sake of the greater crowd, they would have to forsake Cameron and chase her away from the family.

John stared at me for a short while before asking, "So... are you happy about this?"

I shrugged my shoulders and said, "Hmm... Not really, because the best is yet to come! This is merely the beginning of a wild ride!"

Before heading over to meet Stacey, I found out Louis was in town to carry out his duty, but he would depart after he was done with the things he had scheduled beforehand. Initially, I asked Louis to join me for a simple meal, but he had a lot of things on his plate and didn't have time for me.

Therefore, I headed over and meet Stacey in advance.

When she asked me to do her a favor, I thought of the options available. After a while, I figured that Stacey only wanted me to make use of Ashton's influence to keep Felix behind bars for a few years, alive.

However, I had the exact opposite idea. Since I was involved in the operation, I figured he would definitely come after me once he regained freedom. Thus, I would never allow him to make it out alive, let alone getting his revenge.

I decided to give him a fatal blow through Louis' aid after I had everything sorted out.

In spite of the flawless plan, I was traumatized because I was merely a step away from hell a few hours ago. After John departed, I fell asleep.

Halfway through my sleep, I opened my eyes and caught the silhouette of a certain someone by my side. It was Ashton – he stared at me with a poker face in the pitch-black ward that was illuminated by the streetlamps, making him extraordinarily unfathomable.

I looked at him quietly because I was conscious he was infuriated by my careless acts. He refused to talk to me the moment we made our way to the hospital. However, he urged the doctor to keep an eye on me over and over again as he was afraid something bad might happen to me.

Suddenly, the nurse switched on the light because it was about time to change the bag of saline solution, but she noticed something seemed to be off and made her way out since it wouldn't be necessary to change it yet.

I noticed his wrinkled blazer once the light was switched on. Ashton had a relatively haggard look while his eyes were bloodshot. Although he had chapped lips, it didn't impact his ethereal-looking face at all.

I thought he wouldn't break the silence should I keep quiet throughout the night, but he initiated a conversation and asked, "Aren't you going to talk about it?"

To be honest, I couldn't be sure of the things to talk about because all sorts of things flashed through my mind, including the part where his participation was all part of my intended plan.

Although he didn't expose me, I knew he had figured it out after he rendezvoused with John and Louis to rescue me.

I gave it another thought and put on a pitiable front in response because I thought he would feel better after teaching me another lesson as he had always done.

Ashton got infuriated and had his abysmal pair of eyes glued to me when he noticed my response. "How could you get yourself involved because of a jerk? Is it worth it?"

He was worried about my condition because I was bruised all over my body. Therefore, he asked in a serious tone to express his concerns.

Thus, of course, I replied with a miserable look in an aggrieved tone, "I-It hurts..."

I wasn't lying. It was like nothing I had ever felt throughout my entire life because Felix went all out and strangled me as though he wanted me dead. Thankfully, I managed to make it out alive.

Upon that, Ashton sneered sarcastically, "Oh? Does that mean you can feel the pain?"

I pursed my lips and played along with him because I was aware of his frustration. "I didn't expect him to be such an aggressive man either! At first, I thought you guys would rush to my rescue after a few punches, but it turned out to be slightly off track at the end."

"Are you blaming us for not being there for you?"

I shook my head and asserted, "No! I'm grateful to have everyone there in the nick of time!"

Just then, he recalled something and asked solemnly, "Why is Savini in the room when you're there to avenge Stacey?"

I was surprised by Savini's response as well. But when I thought about it, I reckoned Stacey was the one who had lured him over, but the cunning man knocked himself to the wall. Thus, he managed to make it seem as if he were there to rescue me.

I didn't have the evidence that he was the one who had abducted me previously. So they might not believe me even if I brought it up in front of the rest. Upon that thought, I decided to keep everything to myself.

"I'm not sure, but he seems to be a close acquaintance of Felix and has dropped by to meet him."

However, Ashton, knew that I was holding something back. Then, he glared at me and warned me, "Scarlett, tell me the truth!"

Raising my chin against my will, a dangerous glint could be seen in his eyes. "Are you sure you have never seen him before?"

I nodded and assured, "What makes you think I have?"

"Are you telling me Savini, who's the vice president of a technology company in A City, has shown up in the hotel because he was there to rescue you? Have you always perceived me

as a fool? Why would such an influential corporate figure sacrifice himself to protect someone he isn't affiliated with?"

I was baffled because I didn't expect Cameron to be affiliated with another influential figure from A City. Frankly, I was shocked by Savini's actual identity.

"Are you going to believe me if I tell you he's an accomplice of Felix?" I asked as I looked at Ashton.

Frowning, Ashton queried, "Did he deliberately hurt himself?"

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 272

I acknowledged his words with a nod and said, "The cunning man started hurting himself once he noticed that the cops were near."

"Did he know you before this?" I furrowed my brows when I heard his question because he had brought up the topic I wished to avoid the most.

A few seconds later, I told him the truth, "Rebecca used to send him to abduct me."

"When?"

"It was during the period when I had just taken over AC Credit and HiTech..."

Ashton frowned once again. He rebuked my statement with a determined look, "It's impossible... Rebecca couldn't be the one behind it..."

I chuckled at his response, but I felt dejected deep down. "I know Rebecca still holds a special place in your heart..."

Immediately, his face loomed with a gloomy expression as he stated, "It would be impossible for her to utilize Cameron's subordinate because she had just reunited with them back then."

"Ha! You're right because I don't think she's capable of executing such a complicated scheme! To begin with, she was never a smart woman!" I had no intention of rebutting his statement.

“Scarlett!”

Initially, I thought he was there because he was worried about me. However, I seemed to have misperceived his intentions – he was there to interrogate me.

As I was sleepy, I yawned and said, “Mr. Fuller, it’s time for you to leave because I need to sleep.”

Nevertheless, the infuriated man showed no signs of leaving as he leaned against the chair while glaring at me in the eyes indifferently.

His presence had intimidated the nurse who had dropped by to change the bag of fluid. She wouldn’t stop shivering in fear because she thought she had done something wrong and offended Ashton.

After she got the bag of fluid changed, she heaved a sigh of relief and walked out of the ward with the used bag of fluid immediately.

However, after she walked a few steps, she turned around and stuttered while delivering her instructions. “S-Sir, you have to apply the o-ointment that has been prescribed by the doctor on Ms. Stovall’s n-neck. I believe Ms. Stovall has the ointment with h-her.”

Immediately after the nurse departed, he stared at me and asked callously, “Where’s the ointment?”

“I’ll deal with it myself! You should just go back!” I pouted my lips as usual because I had enough of him.

He got up from his seat and neglected my words, searching high and low for the ointment. After he found the ointment on the nightstand, he squeezed some of it on his palms.

“I can do it myself!” As he approached me to apply it to my neck, I inched away from him because I didn’t want him anywhere near me.

It was too late because, by the time I finished my sentence, I could feel his palms on my neck. I pursed my lips and allowed him to apply the ointment.

I frowned due to the tingling sensation I felt and tried to move away from him because it was unpleasant.

“Does it hurt?” He hushed and started blowing my bruised neck to alleviate the pain I felt.

“No!” Since I was the one who decided to get myself hurt, I wasn’t in a position to complain about the injuries.

“You have to refrain from acting on impulse in the future. Even if you want to lure someone out, you have to ensure your own safety.”

I closed my eyes and remained silent while nodding because I had no intention to carry on with the conversation.

After he applied the ointment on my neck, he asked, “Anywhere else that hurts?”

I shook my head because there were certain parts that I couldn’t share with him.

He took me by surprise and unfolded the blanket, exposing my stomach that was bruised due to Felix’s aggressive kick. The tender skin on my stomach had turned purple as a result.

Glaring at me once more, he gritted his teeth and asked, “Does it hurt?”

I knew it wouldn’t do me any good to reply to him, so I kept mum.

After he applied the ointment on my stomach, he checked on my body to ensure I was fine before placing the ointment aside and tucking me in. In the end, the man instructed, “You should get some rest.”

“Alright... Thanks!” I replied with a nod.

He narrowed his eyes and queried, “What are we?”

“Uh... Humans?”

I rephrased my reply because I knew he was rendered speechless by my reply.

“We’re a married couple!”

“Since we’re a married couple, is it necessary for you to express your gratitude for such a trivial favor?” He cast a skeptical gaze at me.

Ultimately, I decided to keep my mouth shut because I was at a loss for words.

After spending most of my time on the bed for the upcoming few days, I heard the word of Felix's conviction. John was spot on – Felix was sentenced to death due to his involvement with a few other victims.

Meanwhile, Hector was terminated from his position because of his wrongdoings over the years.

As there were a lot of people that were involved in their dealings, Louis instructed some of his men to investigate those who used to be in touch with Hector when he brought back Hector to K City with him.

On the other hand, Marcus had long made his way back to K City because of an emergency that had arisen within his company that required his attention.

After Ashton had people back at the company to take over his role, we made our trip back to K City as well.

A week after we returned, we found out Rebecca had lost her baby. Consequently, she started behaving like a madwoman due to her miscarriage.

I had to follow up with the deal we had with OrbitTech and set up the necessary groundwork for the operation to take place soon.

Therefore, I spent the entire week working after we returned because I had a full schedule.

As Felix had launched a fatal blow on my abdomen area, we dropped by the hospital for a few rounds of check-ups as the doctor in J City advised.

When Ashton and I dropped by the hospital, we encountered Cameron and Rebecca in the corridor. They were on their way to the doctor's office for an examination as well.

To be honest, I was shocked because Rebecca was much skinnier than the last time we met.

Rebecca's eyes started brimming with tears as soon as she saw Ashton. She catapulted in his direction while wailing, "Ash, you're finally here for me!"

Ashton evaded her, but the fragile woman, who had collapsed to the ground, grasped Ashton's pants and stopped him. "Ash, I have lost my child! When Parker passed on, he told me I would live a blissful life as long as I have you by my side! What am I supposed to do when you're no longer around? I-I can't rely on anyone else... My life is miserable without you!"

The moment she spoke about Parker, Ashton leaned over and helped her up. "You need to take good care of yourself because you still have a long way to go in life."

I couldn't be sure of the emotions behind his words because he enunciated his reply callously.

Nevertheless, his words of encouragement were the best remedy Rebecca could ever ask to pull herself together. She held him firmly in between her arms as she started wailing again. "A-Ash, I don't want anything else... Please forgive me for the things I have done! A-As long as you're willing to forgive me, I'm willing to forsake other things in my life... I'll behave myself and treat your wife with respect as though she's my beloved sister!"

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 273

Sobbing, she declared, "I was too stubborn and unreasonable. Ash, I'll change my bad habits. I'll be good!"

Ashton frowned. After all, he had been taking care of her for years. It wouldn't be easy for him to forget her.

He glanced at me without a word, and I immediately knew what he was about to do.

After a pause, I told him, "You can stay with her. I'll go to the doctor myself."

He pursed his lips. "I'll join you later?"

"No. She needs you more than I do." He was obviously worried about her. If he leaves with me, he'll be worried the whole time. Why would I humiliate myself?

Tears rolled down Rebecca's face. "Scarlett, are you still mad at me? I apologize on behalf of my mom. I would've stopped her if I had an inkling of her intention."

With that, she fell to her knees with a loud thud while sobbing profusely.

Everyone in the hallway, including the patients in their wards, craned their necks to see what was going on.

Cameron, who was silent for the entire time, immediately tried to help her up. As her daughter refused to budge, she sank to her knees, too. "Scarlett, it was all my doing. Rebecca doesn't know I tried to abduct you. You made Rebecca lose her baby the same way. Do you feel better now?"

I furrowed my brows.. Interesting.

"Young lady, everyone makes mistakes. You should forgive them."

"Yes! Besides, she's still ill. Don't make things difficult for them."

The crowd's voice grew louder, criticizing me for being unreasonable.

I had run out of ideas. "Ladies, if you want me to forgive you, pay your respects to my child, whom you choked to death. Rebecca, your miscarriage has nothing to do with me. Did I choke or suffocate your child to death? You were the one who was afraid Sally might run a DNA test after you gave birth. If the results prove the child isn't Ashton's, he'll leave you for sure. You dared not give birth to your child and blamed its death on me!

"If I am that capable, I would've saved my child when Ms. Anderson kidnapped me and murdered my child. You did something wrong. I'm not obliged to forgive you every time you beg for forgiveness shamelessly."

With that, I stepped back and entered the elevator.

Ashton soon caught up to me as we entered the car.

I sneered. "Mr. Fuller, won't you accompany your crush?"

He sat in the driver's seat and grabbed my chin to kiss me deeply.

"Scarlett, why are you this rude?"

I shoved him away. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to hurt your crush. I'll control myself next time."

After struggling in vain, my anger heightened. "Ashton, you don't have to insult me this way. If you want to defend her, you're welcome to slap me. We'll both feel better that way."

He stopped and forced me to meet his gaze. "You're not mad. Is it because it's unnecessary, or do I disgust you?"

I was stunned.

His gaze darkened. "Do you think I will defend Rebecca? You don't think of me as your husband? Am I that heartless?"

I pressed my lips together and glanced at him silently.

"No!" I responded after a pause.

He felt responsible for Rebecca. Even if he knew what was going on, he had to fulfil his promise to Parker.

Besides, both Rebecca and I lost our babies. To others, we suffered from the same plight, so we should call it even.

From the perspective of a bystander, I shouldn't be holding a grudge against her.

Ashton gazed at me before sneering. "You've never thought of me as the father of your child. You don't care what I'll do, right? After losing the child, you asked for Marcus' help. You wanted to help John. You've never thought of asking me. Scarlett, what am I to you? A useless ornament?"

I was amused by his outburst. "Ashton, you're the one who can't get over Rebecca. You weren't there when I was in trouble. Did you forget how you went to Rebecca several times after midnight? I don't know what your feelings for me are."

Why is he so upset? I've tried my best to be magnanimous. Whenever he went to Rebecca, I said nothing. I didn't hold a grudge against her for killing my baby and forgave her. When she needs him, I even advised him to take care of her.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 274

Ashton stared at me wordlessly. Holding back his anger, he demanded. "Tell me. What should I do? Huh?"

His reaction upset me. "You don't have to do anything to please me. Do whatever you want. If you want to take care of Rebecca, go ahead."

"Ha!" He looked down and scoffed. Straightening his back, he whipped out his cigarettes. "Should I feel lucky for having such a magnanimous and understanding wife?"

His voice was full of contempt and mockery.

I replied lightly, "Mr. Fuller, you're welcome. I'm just doing my job."

Yes. I was saying everything out of fury.

He puffed on his cigarette and asked sternly, "Are we seriously arguing now?"

"Arguing? Are we arguing now?"

Ashton suddenly snickered and put out his cigarette. "When will you stop talking that way?"

"What do you mean? I'm just going along with you," I responded with a chuckle.

He inhaled sharply to control his anger. "Going along with me? That's just your presumption. Just be honest with me instead of hurting each other with mean words. We're a couple, not rivals. There's no need to argue to decide who's right and who's wrong every time. Do you understand, Scarlett?"

After a moment, I got off the car and picked up a brick by the flower bed. Handing the brick to him, I said, "Okay. I want you to beat the disgusting mother and daughter duo up. Tell them I'm no pushover. Also, tell Rebecca she has no right to take my husband away from me!"

Arching a brow, I gestured at the brick. "So? Will you go?"

Ashton was astounded by my reaction. "Are you sure?" he inquired helplessly.

"Why? You won't do it?" I glowered at him.

A hint of a smile appeared in his gaze. "Do you want me to end up in jail? So you can marry another man?"

I rolled my eyes at him. Returning the brick back to the flower bed, I got into the car again.

As I was no longer mad, he chuckled faintly. "What do you want for lunch?"

"I'm not hungry!" I wasn't hungry after getting mad earlier.

He started the engine and shot me a look. "That's because you didn't exercise regularly. You'll be starving after a rigorous workout at home."

It took me a while to realize what he meant. "Ashton, stop it!"

He sped away and replied faintly, "We barely did it for the past month. Scarlett, are you trying to deprive me of my husbandly rights?"

Damn it. He's f*cking annoying.

Sensing my anger, he added, "I've been holding back since we came back from J City. Stop torturing me."

"Ashton, will you stop?" Why is he saying this in broad daylight?

Back at the villa, before I could step out of the car, he carried me in his arms and went upstairs at once.

Both Mrs. Eriksen and Molly were at home.

In our bedroom, I avoided his gaze.

"Ashton, it's not dark yet. Let's not do this now."

As he inched nearer and ignored my plea, I immediately suggested, "Why don't you take a shower first?"

He frowned. "What's wrong?"

“Well, we just came back from the hospital, which is full of germs. You should take a shower.”

“Okay.”

Sensing my discomfort, he nodded gently. He picked me up, and we entered the bathroom together.

Winter had come. K City was chilly by now, but luckily our house was fitted with central heating. The bathroom was steaming hot, and my cheeks were flushed a crimson red soon.

Ashton’s deep and tender voice soon made me lose my guard.

“Don’t say no to me. Scarlett, we’re married. You’re my closest kin. No matter what happens, we’ll face it together. The Moore family isn’t as simple as you think. But don’t worry. I’ll be by your side.”

His sudden announcement confused me.

He didn’t explain further and left after a while.

The following day, I woke up with an aching body.

My eyes were shut as I grimaced in pain.

Ashton buckled his belt and planted a kiss on my forehead. He caressed my face lightly, but I couldn’t bring myself to move.

Soon, he left the bedroom. I was drained out by the activities last night.

With my eyes shut, I tried to drift off to sleep. But no matter how hard I tried, I couldn’t sleep as my body felt awful. Tears prickled at my eyes. I buried myself under the covers and started sobbing.

Footsteps sounded in the bedroom as Ashton’s voice, laced with fury, rang out. “Scarlett, why are you crying?”

I pressed my lips and said nothing.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 275

He pulled my covers open, causing the sunlight to blind my eyes momentarily.

Scowling, he inquired, "Are you trying to suffocate yourself?"

I wasn't in the mood to talk to him. "Ashton, can't I vent my feelings? Have you ever been considerate of my feelings?"

Knitting his brows together, he asked, "Are you unwell?"

I felt tempted to strangle him. "Can't you feel it?" I gritted out angrily.

His frown deepened. "Let's go to the hospital."

Infuriated by his suggestion, I threw a pillow at him. "Get out!"

Ashton left without a word and shut the door behind him.

I shut my eyes and lay on the bed, but I was too upset to sleep.

Mrs. Eriksen brought breakfast upstairs and called me hesitantly. "Letty, I brought breakfast. Why don't you eat something and apply some ointment before going back to sleep?"

"No need!" I wasn't someone who'd throw a tantrum without reason, so I merely replied to her coolly.

She paused before explaining, "Letty, Mr. Ashton left a while ago. He told me to watch you eat a little. If you feel unwell, apply the ointment and get some rest."

"No need!" My voice grew louder.

Mrs. Eriksen stopped trying to persuade me and placed the tray on the table. Before she left, something occurred to her. "Letty, actually, Mr. Ashton adores you. I watched him grow up. His grandfather brought him up, so he doesn't know how to take care of others. He's good at solving problems because that was what his grandfather taught him. Mr. Fuller wanted him

to take over the business. Mr. Ashton wasn't born a cold-hearted person. He might not know how to please you. But it's obvious he cares about you a lot."

She added, "He wanted to come up earlier, but you were mad at him. Hence, he told me to relay his wishes. You're a married couple and should understand each other. Don't argue over trivial matters as that would only bring harm to your relationship."

I was too exhausted to think of a reply. "I got it, Mrs. Eriksen. You should go back to work. I'd like to rest now."

She nodded. "Okay. Remember to eat your breakfast later."

She left right after saying that.

I lay in bed and stared at the scenery outside the window with my half-opened eyes. Winter in K City was a dreadful affair. It was drizzling now. This wouldn't help me feel better at all.

Every inch of my body was throbbing painfully. I couldn't fall asleep or bring myself to eat anything.

I wanted to lie in bed and do nothing.

I stared blankly at the ceiling. Actually, the news of Rebecca's miscarriage didn't lift my mood at all.

Annoyed, I tried to force myself to sleep. However, the more I wanted to sleep, the more my body refused to cooperate with me.

After a few tries, I sat up in frustration and made my way to the balcony.

I opened all the windows. The drizzling rain was splattering lightly as the chilly wind gushed into the bedroom, waking me up instantly. I felt terribly uncomfortable, so I sat by the window and allowed the rain and wind to waft through the open window.

The trees outside the villa were bare. No birds were visible. It was a desolate scene.

As the drizzle turned into a huge downpour, the annoyance in my heart faded away gradually.

After calming down, I felt sleepy. I leaned against the wall next to the window, closing my eyes to sleep.

Time flew by quickly. When I was about to drift off, someone pushed the door open.

Ashton had returned. He spotted me on the balcony as the cold wind wafted into our bedroom.

I sat up as he gazed at me, my drowsiness gone.

He hurried over to me and gritted out, "Scarlett, what are you doing?"

Pulling me back into the bedroom, he demanded, "Am I that disgusting to you? Why are you torturing yourself? Who do you think you are?"

After being awake for over twenty-four hours, I wasn't in the mood to argue with him. I looked up at him and lowered my gaze in exhaustion.

My throat was parched. Glancing around, I realized there wasn't any water around and gave up.

Ashton grew upset seeing my reaction. He tucked me up in bed before closing the windows and set the heating to the warmest temperature available.

My flimsy pajamas were wet by now. He rummaged through my closet and helped me change before tucking me in.

Mrs. Eriksen arrived and asked softly, "Mr. Ashton, is she alright?"

Ashton ordered gloomily. "Bring her some warm water. Reheat the dinner."

Nodding, she walked out and left us alone.

I was lying in bed when he pulled back the covers.

Stunned, I grabbed his hand. "Ashton, you..."

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 276 - 280

"I'll apply the ointment for you," he replied sternly.

"No need. I'm fine," I croaked out in a raspy voice.

His gaze darkened. "Either I help you apply the ointment, or you do it yourself. Decide."

I burst out furiously. "Ashton, will you please stop?" I was drained out, but he kept getting on my nerves.

He nodded. "So, I'll do it?"

His insistence annoyed the hell out of me.

I sat up and gave him a forceful shove. He was caught unaware and toppled to the ground. "Ashton, can you stop annoying me? I've told you again and again to leave me alone. Are you deaf?"

As soon as I yelled that out, I flopped down and buried myself under the covers.

I hadn't acted that way for some time.

Deep down, I knew it was wrong to lash out at him. But I couldn't help myself.

I thought he would leave, but he wrapped his arms around me gently. "I shouldn't have done that last night. I'm sorry."

He lowered his voice and cajoled, "Don't be mad at me. You can beat me up later after you feel better. Eat something, will you?"

Mrs. Eriksen arrived with dinner. "Dinner's ready!"

Ashton nodded and ordered, "Leave us alone."

After she departed, he picked me up and strode toward the table.

He placed me in his lap. I wasn't wearing shoes, so he told me to step on his shoes.

It seemed like he was cajoling a child. "Look at the delicious spread. Come on, eat up."

He was really bad at this. Offering a forkful of pasta to me, he coaxed, "Come on. Open your mouth!"

I closed my eyes and avoided him. "I can eat myself."

"Let me feed you." He pushed the pasta into my mouth. Utterly vexed, I insisted, "I can eat myself!"

I sat on the sofa, picked up a fork, and started eating.

I didn't have lunch, but I wasn't hungry at all. After a few mouthfuls, I stopped.

Ashton frowned at me. "Finish your food."

I knitted my brows and forced down another few bites. "I'm done. I want to sleep now."

"I'll stay with you." He pressed on the bell so Mrs. Eriksen would clear up the utensils.

I gazed at him in frustration. "Ashton, I want to sleep alone."

He stood firm. "I'll sleep with you," he insisted and reached out to hug me.

"I said, I want to sleep alone!" I shoved him away and yelled.

Immediately, I sucked in my breath as I had jostled my wound accidentally.

A hint of exasperation showed on Ashton's face. He wrapped his arms around me firmly. "Be good. I won't touch you or disturb you at night."

"Go away!" I gave him another push angrily.

His lips pressed in annoyance. "If it hurts, let's go to the hospital."

"No way!" He was about to drive me insane.

Ashton carried me in his arms and was about to head downstairs. "Ashton! No one goes to the hospital because of this! What shall I tell the doctor? That you forced yourself on me?"

"Fine. I'll help you apply the ointment. Then, we shall rest."

"You're crazy!" I couldn't be bothered to continue this conversation.

As I didn't retaliate, Ashton returned to the bedroom and put me down on the bed.

He started applying the ointment carefully. As I was frowning, he assured me. "I'll try my best to control myself next time. I won't hurt you from now on."

I ignored his words and closed my eyes.

After applying the ointment, he stood up and removed his jacket before lying down beside me. The stench of tobacco irritated me.

"Ashton, stay away from me. I hate the smell of tobacco!" I jogged him and shifted away from him.

He stiffened and got up. I thought he'd leave, but he entered the bathroom to take a shower.

Soon, he came out and wiped his hair dry before coming back to the bed. Pulling me into his arms, he announced, "I don't reek of tobacco anymore."

My eyes were already shut as I tried hard to fall asleep.

Alas, sleep refused to come. I tossed and turned in bed restlessly.

Suddenly, I sat up in bed. Ashton was astounded. "I'll go shower again," he offered as he thought the tobacco stench was still lingering around.

I got off the bed and looked around, but the sleeping pills I brought back the other day were nowhere to be seen.

I glared at him. "Where are the pills?"

He narrowed his gaze at me. "What pills?"

Utterly vexed, I swept the vase on the cabinet to the ground. "The sleeping pills! Ashton, where are my sleeping pills? Give them to me now!"

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 277

He gazed at me and replied in a low voice. "Why do you want the sleeping pills? I told Mrs. Eriksen to take them away."

As I was irritated, he stood up and put on his jacket. "Let's go to the hospital."

I pushed him away. "Ashton, just give me the pills, please. I just want to sleep. Can't you let me take the pills and sleep peacefully for one night? Why do you insist on bringing me out?"

Mrs. Eriksen heard the commotion and chimed in immediately. "The pills are with me. I'll go take them now. Letty, calm down. I'll bring them here now!"

Ashton stopped Mrs. Eriksen firmly. "She'll become dependent on it. You—"

"Shut up, Ashton!" I turned to Mrs. Eriksen and ordered, "Bring me the pills now!"

She looked at Ashton to gain his approval.

I yelled in fury, "Ashton, if you want to control me, why would you bring me back? Are you delighted to see me in pain?"

Furrowing his brows, he hugged me tightly to comfort me. "I wasn't trying to control you. It's bad to take too many sleeping pills. You might become dependent on it."

"Shut the f*ck up! If you won't let me sleep, send me to Marcus. Stop torturing me!"

"Scarlett!" His eyes reddened in anger. I was too stubborn and emotional, so he caved in. "Bring her the pills."

Mrs. Eriksen scurried away and promptly returned with a pill.

She only gave me one pill, but it was enough. I grabbed it from her and swallowed it without hesitation. Then I shoved Ashton away and lay on the bed.

He sensed something was amiss with me. Glancing at me in bed, he turned to Mrs. Eriksen and commanded in a low voice. "Call Jared now and tell him to come."

She nodded profusely and left.

After taking the pill, I calmed down and fell asleep swiftly.

However, even if a light sleeper fell asleep with the help of medication, he or she would still react to sounds.

When Jared arrived, I sensed him somehow. I also overheard their conversation.

Nevertheless, I couldn't open my eyes. Perhaps it was because of the pill I've taken earlier.

I heard Jared saying my condition could be related to depression.

He prescribed some medication and told Ashton, "Scarlett might be suffering from major depression right now. She feels calm in the worst situation. Make sure someone stays with her all the time. She might hurt herself anytime. When she's mentally and physically hurt, she'll make irrational decisions with no warning. At least she expressed her emotions today and vented at you. If she stops expressing her emotions, that means she might commit suicide anytime. Don't trigger her for the time being. Make sure she's in a good mood."

Ashton grunted in response.

I didn't manage to hear the rest of their conversation as I drifted into dreamland.

At dawn, I jolted awake. I thought the pill would allow me to sleep till the next morning, but I was wrong.

The lamp by the bedside table was switched on. I was afraid of the dark, so there would always be a light on in my room.

Wide awake, I rolled over but accidentally jostled my wound again. I inhaled sharply at the painful sensation.

Ashton, being a light sleeper, opened his eyes upon hearing my gasp.

As our gazes met, I knitted my brows. "Get out!"

His brows snapped together while he wrapped an arm around me. "Are you going to be mad at me forever?" he asked hoarsely.

I pursed my lips silently.

I wasn't going to be mad at him forever, but right now I didn't want to be sharing a bed with him.

I couldn't understand why I had overreacted, but I refused to back down and ended up dumping my negative feelings to him.

In fact, Ashton did nothing wrong. He was rough and failed to control himself when we had sex. That was it.

But I got upset nonetheless.

"Scarlett, you're the only woman in my life. I apologize for being rough on you when we had sex. I promise I won't do that again."

"So, you think I should forgive you?" I might be the only woman in his life, but he had always restrained himself perfectly in the past. Why can't he control himself now?

That isn't a valid excuse.

He chuckled. "Mm, I was too rough on you, so you shouldn't forgive me. When you recover, you can beat me up if you're still mad."

I rolled my eyes at him and shut my eyes to sleep.

With one arm around me, he leaned on my shoulder and whispered, "Scarlett, I'll get angry and jealous when another man comes near you. I feel upset when you ignore me and push me to another woman. Can you stop pushing me to others? I'm your husband, not something you can give up easily."

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 278

His voice was low and soft. Clearly, he was trying to ease the tension between us.

I knew I shouldn't be mad at him anymore unless I wanted a divorce.

After a brief hesitation, I shifted nearer. "It still hurts. I feel sleepy but I can't fall asleep."

He pulled me closer to him. "Mm, I know. Close your eyes and stop thinking of anything. You'll fall asleep soon."

It was already the next day by the time I woke up.

I thought Ashton would be at work, but he was still lying by my side with his eyes shut. Gazing at his Grecian nose, which cast a shadow on his cheek, my gaze trailed down his face. There was stubble on his chin as he stayed up late last night.

His sleeping figure was handsome and regal, a far cry from his usual icy demeanor. I couldn't take my eyes off him.

I had a good night's rest, so my brain was no longer muddled. I stood up to wash myself.

My movements must've startled him awake. He pulled me back to the bed, allowing my head to rest on his arm with a light peck on my forehead.

"You're awake?"

I nodded dazedly. "Why are you not at work?"

He rubbed his chin against my cheek, his stubble prickling my face uncomfortably. "It's the end of the year, so I will be busy at work soon. I slept in with you because I'm free today."

I pressed my lips together. "But I have to go to work today!" OrbitTech and White Corporation had started on the project. I was only in charge of the progress, but I had to pay attention anyway.

"I'll come with you." He came closer to me.

"Huh?" What does he mean by that?

He raised a brow before kissing the corner of my lip. "Does your company have a rule stating you can't bring your husband to work?"

No, but...

I stared at him. "I don't think that's a good idea." He was an attractive man in an influential position. If he followed me to work, the others would talk.

"It's fine. It's a great idea."

I was at a loss for words.

"I'll go wash up!" I rose to my feet and entered the bathroom.

The weather was getting colder as winter had arrived. There was a thick mist hanging in the air outside. I turned on the faucet and waited for a while before the water heated up.

Ashton came in after me. I noticed his dark eye circles. He must've slept late last night.

"What time did you fall asleep last night?" I asked.

He yawned and replied, "2 a.m."

That late?

It was only seven in the morning, so I told him, "Why don't you sleep in?"

Ashton pulled me into his embrace behind me as he answered, "Jared told me to be with you 24/7."

What the heck?

"You can wash up. I'll take a shower."

His sudden announcement took aback me. Why is he suddenly acting this way?

My gaze followed him instinctively before I caught myself in time. "You can take a shower. I'll wait for you outside."

Before I could leave, he grabbed hold of my arm. "Why are you avoiding me? It's not like you haven't seen me naked before."

Er...

He pecked on my lips lightly and said, "Go on. Wash up."

As he turned the faucet on, I stated my request. "Ashton, let's go to the doctor when you're free."

His eyes glinted. "You've finally thought it through?"

I nodded. "I heard taking too many pills is bad for my health."

"Ha!" He suddenly guffawed. As the water gushed down, he came to me and ran his fingers through my hair. Grabbing my head, he devoured my lips in a possessive kiss. When he finally released me, he spoke, "This isn't just about your dependence on sleeping pills. Stop running away from me, okay?"

I inclined my head. My lips were throbbing from his kiss, so I lowered my head and complained, "You're always rough. Why can't I run away?"

It was a criticizing remark.

He burst out laughing. "Yes, it was my fault. I'll be more gentle from now on."

I shoved him away. "Take a shower!" After washing my face briefly, I walked out.

I wasn't that desperate to watch him shower.

After having breakfast, Ashton followed me to White Corporation. We left home early in the morning, but because of the morning traffic, it was almost 9 a.m. when we finally arrived.

Luckily, I didn't have to clock in.

The elevator was packed with people. Ashton's arms formed a shield around me so the others wouldn't squeeze into me. He was tall and handsome. Besides, he had appeared in the financial news in K City frequently.

Most employees working in White Corporation recognized him instantly and kept stealing glances at him. Some even greeted him warmly.

However, I was put in an awkward spot. Ashton and I were locked in an intimate embrace, so someone asked, "Mr. Fuller, are you dating Ms. Stovall?"

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 279

I thought Ashton wouldn't be bothered to answer and would only smile politely, but to my surprised, he replied, "We've been married for a few years."

Everyone in the elevator was shocked at the news. I could feel their stunned gazes on me.

I parted my lips to speak, but there was nothing to say. In the end, I flashed a smile.

The curious employees started asking about our relationship, like how we started dating and got married.

To my relief, we arrived at our destination right then. I took Ashton's hand and apologized to the others. We exited the elevator and headed to my office.

After entering my office, I chided him, "I told you not to come here."

He arched a brow. "What's wrong? I was telling the truth earlier."

Stunned, I retorted, "I thought you hate people gossiping about you?" He had his private elevator back in Fuller Corporation, so he rarely spoke to his employees. Why is he so talkative back in the employees' elevator?

Does he enjoy talking to others about our relationship?

A smile flitted across his lips as he tugged me closer. "You're my wife. That's not gossip. Gossip is all about nonsense."

I pried his hands off and showed him the sofa. "You can't hug me whenever you want. I have to work, get it?"

Amused, he returned, "Am I a child?"

Well, no.

"Anyway, you can't disturb me at work. Get it?"

Ashton nodded obediently. He took a magazine and read it silently. I switched on my computer and started going through the files on my table.

I was in charge of only one project, so I wasn't that busy. Besides, Marcus was also involved.

After I finished dealing with the files, I looked up and realized Ashton was gazing at me with his chin on his hand.

"Why are you staring at me?"

He lifted an eyebrow. "You're gorgeous when you work."

I fell speechless after hearing his comment.

Soon, it was noon. I was wondering what we should have for lunch when Ashton's phone rang.

He answered it with a frown. Judging from his conversation, something must've happened to Jared.

After hanging up, he came to me and pulled me in for a hug. "I can't have lunch with you. Something is wrong with Jared's project, so I have to leave."

I gave him a nod. "Okay."

With him around, I couldn't really focus on work.

He grinned. "Are you that desperate for me to leave?"

Er, is it that obvious?

I flashed a smile. "No. You're busy, right?"

He brushed his finger across the tip of my nose affectionately. "Remember to have lunch. I'll see you at night."

“Sure!”

At the sight of his broad shoulders, I recalled what Stacey told me earlier. My heart skipped a beat as I called out, “Ashton, be careful!”

He turned around and shot me a grin. “Okay!”

Not long after Ashton left, I received a call from Rebecca.

Her voice was calm. “Scarlett, can we meet up?”

I rejected her at once. “Rebecca, I have nothing to say to you.”

She fell silent for a moment. “What about Ashton? Can we talk about him?”

I was quite irritated by now. “What about him?”

“I’m outside White Corporation’s building now. Let’s talk somewhere else.”

“Sure.”

Downstairs, I saw Rebecca clad in a white dress. As she had just suffered from a miscarriage, her face was pale and haggard. It seemed like she had lost some weight.

With her arms crossed, she stood beside a white Maserati. When she saw me, she raised her brows and said, “Let’s go!”

I nodded and entered her car.

“You seem to be doing well without Ashton.” I broke the silence. I wasn’t mocking her.

The Moore family gave her the best as they wanted her to run the company.

Her expression clouded over. “It has nothing to do with Ashton. Nothing to do with you, too.”

Clearly, she was in a foul mood.

At the cafe, we found a table and sat down.

She ordered a cup of black coffee. When it arrived, she stirred it slowly and elegantly.

I ordered a glass of milk as I wasn't interested in coffee.

As her gaze darkened, I spoke out. "You resemble your mother a lot."

Both of you like black and bitter coffee.

Rebecca looked at her coffee silently. She seemed to have understood what I was trying to say. "When will you stop?" she inquired.

Her sudden question took me aback. "What?"

She arched a brow icily. "Felix was sentenced to death. Mr. Clinton is currently under investigation. My mother got implicated, too. To take revenge, you've successfully killed my child and ruined my mother's reputation. Aren't these enough?"

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 280

"No!" I retorted. "I wasn't the one who killed your child. I've never wanted to sacrifice someone's life to comfort myself. Your mother is still influential, right? Cameron might be under investigation, but she'll still be a billionaire if she's innocent and gained her fortune rightfully. If she was involved in shady deals, she'll get caught eventually, right?"

Biting her lip, Rebecca took a deep breath and glowered at me. "Karma will come for you!"

I was amused. "Karma? You have a crush on Ashton, so your mother set up a trap to kill his wife. Now, she's about to lose her reputation and standing. This is karma."

Rebecca's jaw hardened angrily at my words. She grabbed her coffee and flung it in my direction. The coffee wasn't hot, but it stained my clothes instantly.

I sat still and stared straight at her.

Seemingly emotional, she stood up and glared at me. "Scarlett, you lost your child. If you want another, you can get pregnant anytime. What about other innocent people? Felix's about to die. Hector Clinton's career and my mother's future are ruined. Do you think you're

above us all? I think you're the most heartless person I've ever seen. After wrecking my relationship, you took the person I love away from me. You destroyed the life my brother arranged for me before he died."

I sneered and grabbed a napkin to wipe the coffee off my face. "Innocent? If Felix's innocent, then what about the people he killed? Don't you know why he's sentenced to death? Is Hector innocent? Don't you know how much money he has extorted over the years? What about the people he harmed? As for your mother, she isn't innocuous at all. You know how she murdered my baby, right? Look how much she has achieved over the years. Imagine how much illegal stuff she has done!"

I couldn't help but snicker at this point. "Your brother. Yes, Parker's indeed smart. He asked Ashton to take care of you because he knew he'd die soon. His death isn't anyone's fault. But his request trapped Ashton forever. You love Ashton, but does he love you?"

Rebecca's jaw was still clenched. I smiled at her and continued, "Clearly, you know Ashton doesn't like you. Your brother made you his responsibility, so no matter how much Ashton despises you, he'll still take care of you because he gave your brother his word. How could Parker burden Ashton's life with just one promise? Is he innocent?"

"Nonsense!" she blurted out. "You're wrong. If you didn't show up, Ash would marry me and take care of me forever. He was stumped because of your arrival!"

I chuckled. "Stumped? When his grandpa told him to marry me, he could reject the offer. Do you really think Ashton would allow it if he weren't willing? We've been married for only three years, but he has already fallen for me. What about you? How many years have you been by his side? Why didn't he marry you in the end? If he thinks of you as a woman, he would've married you before I came into the picture, right?"

Rebecca was sobbing profusely by now. I knew my words had gone straight into her heart like an iron shard. The pain must be too much for her to bear.

"Stop harming my mother. You've achieved your objective. I'll stop clinging to Ashton or try to ruin your marriage. I admit defeat. Spare my mother and the Moore family. We'll stay away from each other. You and Ashton can live happily ever after."

Rebecca sounded agitated. She knew well I wouldn't let Cameron off easily, but she still went ahead and begged.

Perhaps she loved Ashton dearly, or she enjoyed it when he paid attention to her. Nevertheless, that had nothing to do with me.

“I’ll live happily ever after with Ashton. Thank you for staying away from him. But I will not let your mother off easily. I’ve just started. There’s still a long way to go.”

Rebecca paled visibly. Desperate, she declared, “Scarlett, I agreed to stay away from you. Why won’t you stop? You know that if I insist on asking Ashton to take care of me, he won’t leave me alone. There will always be another person in your marriage. Are you okay if I cling to him forever?”

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 281

I drew my lower lip between my teeth. She was right. After all, Parker was dead. Ashton would have to keep his word, no matter what. If something had happened to Rebecca, he would need to take care of her.

I sneered at her. "Rebecca, if you're willing to sacrifice your whole life, I don't mind your existence. After all, we share a bed at night. You know he doesn't love you romantically. I can't believe you're okay with waiting for him. You're not even his mistress. If that's the case, why should I mind?"

As the color drained from her face, I continued, "Your existence might bother us occasionally, but you'll have to waste the rest of your life doing this. However, if you leave Ashton, you'll have a different life. You're pretty with a powerful family background. There will be other men who would make you happy. Look, Joe is a good example. It's obvious he really likes you. Even if Cameron's reputation gets torn to shreds, you can still take care of her. The Moore family is too strong for me to destroy. So, as long as you leave, I won't get to sabotage your future."

I was telling the truth. As long as Rebecca was willing to give up, my actions wouldn't bring harm to her. However, judging from her persistence toward Ashton all over the years, I knew she would refuse to leave as she was used to him.

Indeed, a menacing glint flashed across her gaze.

She shook her head. "No, I won't leave him. If you refuse to let my mother off, then we'll fight till the end. Let's make things difficult for each other. Scarlett, you want nothing else, but I want both him and my family. I won't give up."

I shrugged. "Fine. Let's see who will win."

Rebecca was greedy, as she wanted everything. She was right. It seemed like I wanted nothing else, but it was because I had nothing to begin with.

I didn't realize when Rebecca left the cafe. I sat in my seat as my heart clenched slowly. To her, losing a baby meant a few days of pain.

After I lost my child, I lost the will to live. She had her parents and relatives, but I had nothing else.

The coffee stain had dried off. I knew I must be a pathetic mess by now.

Standing up, I got ready to head back to work. Suddenly, I noticed someone standing beside me.

Ashton's sudden appearance gave me a shock. I thought he's busy?

"W-Why are you here?" I grabbed my bag and prepared to leave.

He narrowed his eyes. "Who were you with earlier?"

"No one!" I replied. Turning around, I noticed Jared and Joe taking a seat at a nearby table. It seemed like they had just arrived.

Ashton urged. "Why is there coffee on your outfit?"

The coffee had dried by now, but the stain was still visible. I furrowed my brows and lied, "I spilled coffee on myself accidentally."

Ashton snickered and glanced at me as if I were a clown making a fool of myself. "You poured coffee on yourself?"

I bit my lip and changed the topic. "Are you here to talk about work?"

He looked away from the empty cup on my table and insisted, "Who did this to you?"

"Will you beat her up or pour a cup of coffee over her head?" I frowned and retorted.

He arched a brow. "So that's what you like?"

I was rendered speechless.

"Forget it. You should go back to work. I need to return to my office!" Tattling on Rebecca was useless. After all, he wouldn't beat her up, would he?

He grabbed my wrist. "What did she tell you?"

I could feel my head throbbing. "Ashton, we can talk about this at home. You should go back to work."

Prying his hand off, I headed out of the cafe.

Soon, Ashton caught up to me. He draped his blazer over my shoulders. "You didn't drive here, right? I'll give you a ride home. Change into a clean clothes before going back to your company."

I knitted my brows and shook my head to refuse his offer. "No need. It's dry by now. I just need to deal with something back in the company. I'll head home right after that."

"Is it that urgent?" he inquired sternly. When I met his gaze, he softened and said, "Go home and take a shower. Don't you feel uncomfortable?"

"It's fine."

"Scarlett!" Ashton scowled. "We should get along better. After all, we're married. Why are you doing this?"

I frowned instinctively at his words. Mrs. Eriksen was right. He had been working hard to deal with the problems. I could see how hard he was trying to take care of me.

After a pause, I gave him a nod. "Okay. Let's go home, then."

His expression relaxed as he brought me to his car. After he drove away, I asked, "Don't you need to inform Dr. Crest and your friend?"

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 282

"It doesn't matter," he replied. We returned to the villa in no time.

Back home, I took a shower swiftly. When I exited the bathroom, Ashton was talking to someone over the phone on the balcony.

The door wasn't shut, so his voice floated over. He was talking to Rebecca.

"Rebecca, you shouldn't involve Scarlett in our business," he said unhappily.

"Ash, what do you mean by that?" Rebecca's voice was shrill. "Did she tattle on me?"

"No!" Ashton kept his voice low. When he heard my footsteps, he turned back and came into the bedroom.

I could hear Rebecca's displeased voice over the phone as she was loud. "Then why do you think I did it? Am I that horrible in your eyes?"

He wasn't about to waste his time to argue with her. "This is the last time. If it's because of your mother, you can come to me. Scarlett is my wife; I'm responsible for her."

"Ashton Fuller!" Rebecca yelled angrily. "My mother was trying to protect me. Was she wrong? Why do you insist on targeting her?"

Ashton frowned as his gaze landed on me. He gestured for me to dry my hair. I tilted my head and stood rooted to the spot.

After shooting me a smile, he spoke gravely, "I was trying to seek justice for my child. Was I wrong?"

Wow, what a brutal reply.

Rebecca immediately ended the call.

Ashton flung his phone aside and urged me to take a seat. He took my towel and began drying my hair.

His phone kept ringing incessantly. In the end, I looked back and told him, "You should answer that."

He spoke calmly. "I will. After I dry your hair."

It took him some time to dry my hair. Finally, he was ready to leave.

After he left, I returned to the company. I wanted to talk to Marcus about the new AI project because it was relatively new.

I looked around, but he was nowhere to be seen. His assistant told me Marcus was at the hospital as Benjamin was on his deathbed.

I immediately called Marcus, but he didn't pick up. I didn't know what was happening, so I called Sally instead.

When she answered my call, all I could hear was people bawling desperately. None of them were Sally.

"Ms. Fuller, what happened to Benjamin?"

"Tell Ashton he's dead. Come to the hospital with him. I need Ashton to manage Benjamin's funeral with Marcus," Sally told me calmly.

I was stunned to hear the news. Benjamin's dead?

I thought he was fine?

After getting the address, I headed there without hesitation. Ashton didn't answer my calls. He might be busy, so I sent him a text informing him of the situation and address.

When I arrived at the hospital, Benjamin was dead. Sharon had collapsed on the ground in front of his ward dejectedly.

Sally wasn't there, and neither was Marcus. Hearing my footsteps, Sharon looked up. Suddenly, she leaped at me and knocked me to the ground while yelling, "F*ck the Fullers!"

Your aunt took my husband away from me while you took my son away from me! Go to hell!"

As Sharon was too emotional, she started hitting and cursing me. I was caught unaware, so I couldn't escape from her claws in time. Soon, bloody scratches appeared on my cheeks and neck.

She had her hands on my hair and pulled out a handful of my locks. The nurse hurriedly tried to stop her.

Utterly devastated, Sharon shrieked. "Karma will punish the Fullers one day. You'll die a horrible death. Sally, this isn't over. Even if you have inherited White Corporation, I won't give up. You'll die a horrible death!"

When Marcus returned after dealing with the necessary procedures, he inquired, "What's wrong?"

I was still in shock at Sharon's actions. Shaking my head, I replied, "I don't know. She leaped at me right after I arrived. I think she's too upset now."

Sally showed up soon. When she saw Sharon, who was on the verge of an emotional breakdown, she furrowed her brows and came to me. "Are you alright?"

I assured her I was fine. Right now, I was concerned about Marcus. His father had just passed away, and his mother was brokenhearted. He seemed calm, but I wonder what he felt deep down.

Benjamin's body was sent to be cremated at the funeral parlor. His funeral was to be held next month. After Marcus dealt with everything and sent Sharon home, he came to Sally.

"My father handed White Corporation to you. I'll hand over my responsibilities as soon as possible and return to M Country," he said coolly.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 283

Sally nodded calmly.

It took me a few seconds to process the fact that Sally was going to take over White Corporation according to Benjamin's last wishes. I was confused because Marcus was Benjamin's son.

Marcus walked out of the hospital right after saying that. I ran after him, but I didn't know how to console him. "Marcus, have you had dinner yet?"

"I'm not hungry!" He seemed reluctant to talk to me.

I was at a loss for words. As he was heading to his car, I slipped into the driver's seat before he could do so. "I'll give you a ride back to your house."

It would be dangerous to let him drive now.

He narrowed his eyes menacingly. "Why? You pity me?"

My brows furrowed up. "No!" After starting the engine, I added, "You're my friend. I owe you one, so I can't leave you in the lurch."

"Ha!" He sneered. "So you're repaying my favor?"

I knew he was in a foul mood. I said nothing and focused on driving until we reached his house.

When the car came to a stop, Marcus' eyes were shut. He spoke tiredly. "You can stay in White Corporation. Sally will take over from now on. She's Ashton's aunt, so she won't do anything to harm you."

I pursed my lips. "What about you?"

"I'll return to M Country!" He massaged his temples. "I came back to take care of my mother. Now that the person she cared for is gone, I should return to M Country."

I knew little about his family affairs, so I said nothing.

After a brief silence, I offered, "Come on, let's go in. You should eat something and rest well. Don't think too much."

He looked at me, his gaze undecipherable. "Louis is planning to make you his daughter. Your future will be a bright one. Don't go overboard with your revenge. Many people had died in Zachary's hands accidentally. Be careful."

I nodded and sighed. "Do you have to return to M Country? The White family is rich. Even if you don't get to run White Corporation, there is still the Bauman family, right?"

He chuckled lightly. I noticed his lips were cracked. "Are you concerned about me? You don't want me to leave?"

Well, not really. I answered, "Yes, I don't want you to leave. I owed you too much. If you return to M Country, there's no way I can repay your favor."

He sat up. "Do you want to repay my favor?"

I nodded. Back then, if he hadn't arrived in time and asked me to hang on till the sun rises, I would've died together with my child. He had saved my life.

With a smirk, he suggested, "Then stay for the night."

I simply stared at him blankly.

He snickered at my reaction. "What's wrong? You're not willing? In ancient times, our ancestors would devote themselves to their patron to show their gratitude. But since you're married and I can't marry you, I could only ask you to stay for the night."

I gnashed my teeth helplessly. "Are you sure?"

Marcus laughed out loud. "It's just one night. Why are you overreacting? Benjamin might be a scoundrel, but he was in love with my mom when they gave birth to me. Although I wasn't close to him, he's still my father. I feel horrible after his passing."

He added, "If you're here, at least the house doesn't feel that empty."

My lips parted in disbelief. I thought...

Seeing my reaction, a faint smile flitted across his lips. "Why did you think I asked you to stay?"

"Nothing!"

"Mm, it's settled then." With that, he alighted from his car and dragged me into the house.

The White residence was huge. As Benjamin's remains would be placed here for a few days, the house's furnishings had been stripped to the bare minimum. It was spacious yet empty.

The Whites had few people. As there was an ongoing funeral, even the air felt chilly. I followed Marcus into the living room where he ordered the helpers to prepare dinner.

Sally returned a while later with a bunch of documents about the family's inheritance. Marcus glanced at her briefly before looking away coolly.

To my surprise, Sally came to Marcus. "You can have the White family's properties and cars. I only want to be the chairperson of White Corporation."

"Ha!" Marcus sneered and gazed at her intently. "He's still here, but you're already dividing his fortune? Aren't you afraid he'll haunt your dreams?"

Sally answered icily, "That was what he promised me, to give me the majority of the 50% shares he had. Hence, according to the bylaws, I have the right to become White Corporation's chairperson."

Raising his brows, Marcus retorted, "You're demanding that earlier than expected. Are you leaving the White residence before his funeral?"

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 284

Sally's reply was calm. "You don't have to be so mean. Both you and your mother own some shares in White Corporation. I won't take away what's yours."

"You can have everything," Marcus declared. "The shares mean nothing to me. You can have them. After all, you've schemed and worked hard all over the years."

"No need!" Sally's heels clicked on the floor. "I will only get what's mine. Please tell your mother to stop bothering me. That incident had nothing to do with me. She should move on by now."

"Nothing to do with you?" someone shrilled from the door. It was Sharon. Her eyes were reddened and swollen. Gazing at Sally menacingly, she declared, "If you hadn't seduced Benjamin, he wouldn't fall out of love with me. We've been together for decades! We grew up together and traveled all over the world!"

She walked into the house and sobbed. "I was with him when White Corporation was at its lowest point. He loved me dearly. When Marc was born, I took great care of him until he left to go overseas. I thought we'd live happily ever after, but I never expected your arrival would lead to our divorce in his fifties! Sally Fuller, you said it wasn't your fault, but we only started arguing after you showed up. If you hadn't acted all pitiful in front of Benjamin, he wouldn't have fallen in love with you! Things wouldn't have turned out this way! You're an heiress yourself. Why did you seduce a married man?"

Sharon's expression clouded over with hatred. "Why do you even love him? He can't even give you a child. Are the shares worth that much? You're nothing but a lowly b*tch!"

Her last sentence was an insult.

Sally's expression soured immediately. She clenched her hands like she was trying to control her anger. Suddenly, a soft laugh escaped her throat. "Yes, I'm a b*tch. But don't forget, you're also one. Sharon, think carefully. Why did Benjamin insist on a divorce?"

"Because of you, homewrecker!" Sharon yelled aloud. "You seduced him and ruined our family. It was all your fault!"

"Ha!" Sally scoffed. "It seems like you've forgotten about your past. Remember what happened in Victory Hotel ten years ago? Do you seriously think no one would know if you kept it a secret and forget about it?"

Sharon's face contorted. "W-What are you talking about?"

"You know what I mean. You didn't know that man showed the video of your wild night together to Benjamin, right?"

Sharon paled instantly. Her body trembled as she stuttered out, "Impossible. Benjamin found out? Seriously?"

Sally continued, her face devoid of expression. "He knew. To prevent a scandal from breaking out, he'd pay whenever the man blackmailed him with the video. Do you know how much he had suffered? You knew how much he loved you. Why did you upset him with your actions?"

"No!" Tears rolled down Sharon's cheeks. "I knew nothing about that night! I wanted to explain, but I was upset when I saw him with you. That was why I argued with him. I didn't know he knew everything!"

Sally watched her breaking down for a moment before explaining, "We were innocent back then. To cover up your scandal, he promised to give me some of his shares and money. Fuller Corporation was on the verge of bankruptcy back then. It was my father's effort, so I needed his help and agreed to his conditions. We put up an act so a scandal of his affair would break out. That man knew his video was useless by then. Do you know why that man ended up dying in a car accident? Benjamin arranged for his death because of you."

Sharon collapsed on the ground, wailing profusely. "Why didn't he tell me about it? Why?"

"Tell you?" Sally's expression darkened. "What can you do to help? After the man died, you nearly killed Benjamin for that scoundrel. Why would he tell you about it? So you can hate him for killing the man you loved the most?"

"That's utter nonsense! I don't love that man at all. That night was an accident. After he died, I went to look and saw you with him. I was so upset and ended up stabbing him. This is driving me crazy."

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 285

Marcus' expression was as dark as night.

As he stared at Sally, he uttered coldly, "Is there a point for you to say this now? Benjamin is dead. Are you trying to kill my mother too?"

Sally sneered, "So you want your mother to hate your father for the rest of her life? He's been framed for so many years, so why can't you let him die an innocent man?"

"I'm the one who should die! I should be the one to die!" Sharon cried out as she climbed to her feet. When she looked at Sally, she laughed. "He loves me. Yes, he loves me."

I sensed something amiss about her behavior, so I said to Marcus, "I think you should send her to the hospital. Something's wrong with her."

Few could withstand a shock as intense as that. After glancing at Sally, Marcus helped Sharon out of the White residence.

Now, the only ones left in the house were Sally and me. Looking at the apathetic woman, I mumbled, "Aunt Sally, it's getting late, so I'll be heading back first."

Before I could take more than three steps, she uttered, "Do you think I did this wrongly as well? That I shouldn't talk about these old matters?"

At that, I froze for a moment before turning to look at her. "Benjamin didn't mention it when he was alive. Maybe he had other plans."

"Ha," she scoffed. "He's only keeping it to himself because he's concerned about Sharon's feelings and reputation. What other plans can he possibly have?"

I could not help but frowned at her words, sensing the disgust in them. "Aunt Sally, Benjamin's plans are also his concerns. All he wants is to protect his first wife's reputation. The way you're saying it is dismissing half of her life."

She had endured in silence and stewed in hatred for half of her life. In the end, she realized she was the one at fault; she had been the one to hate and love the wrong person. There was no way Sharon could spend the rest of her life at peace.

She looked at me and narrowed her eyes. "Are you trying to put in a good word for Marcus? Do you mean that my life isn't the same as everyone else's? My entire life was ruined

because of her. I didn't marry the one I love, and I don't have anyone to grow old with. At the end of the day, I'm the miserable one."

To my surprise, I felt no urge to extend my sympathy to her despite seeing her suffering. "Aunt Sally, Benjamin gave you half of White Corporation's shares and the emergency fund. These are the things you exchanged for. All those years he had been with you, he gave you all his love and attention. You shouldn't be too greedy. You've enjoyed his wealth and love. Now that he's gone, you're complaining that he has wasted your time. Do you think that's right for you to do so?"

Everyone had a choice. When she made her choice to follow Benjamin back then, she should have known that a day like this would come. It was only a matter of time.

Glaring at me, she hissed, "It's all because you killed the daughter-in-law of the Fullers. You're on the side of the outsiders. Ashton's an idiot to have fallen in love with you."

I knitted my brows and stopped replying to her. Perhaps our brains functioned differently from each other. No matter what I did, I could not share the same thoughts as her.

When she looked for me because of Rebecca's baby, I knew she was someone who prioritized herself.

After leaving the White residence, the sky was already dark.

I headed back to the villa, thinking that Ashton had already gone home. However, I saw no signs of him at home.

Hence, I went to the study room. In the afternoon, I had gone through many documents in the office, and there were a handful of terms I was not familiar with. This would be the best time for me to research them.

While I was reading, Mrs. Eriksen asked me to go for my dinner. As I was too focused on my research, I told her not to disturb me.

By the time Ashton came back, it was already late at night.

He must have realized I was not in the bedroom, so he came to the study for me.

Noticing him, I looked away from the computer screen and fixed my gaze on him instead.
"You're back!"

He gave me a small smile before walking over to me. As he sprawled by the edge of the table, he asked me what I was looking at.

The faint fragrance from him made me subconsciously furrow my brows.

I was not one to use perfume frequently, and he rarely used them too. Furthermore, I could tell that the scent was a women's perfume.

Immediately, I dropped the smile on my face and stood up. Avoiding his hand that reached out to grab me, I went straight to the bedroom.

Stunned by my actions, Ashton quickly followed me as he queried, "What's wrong?"

"I'm tired," was my only reply to him before I entered the bathroom, about to wash up.

He stopped me and asked with a deep frown, "Scarlett, be honest with me, okay?"

"Aren't you tired after staying out for a day?" I was not angry. In fact, I was even smiling when I said those words.

In response, he narrowed his eyes and uttered icily, "I'm not. Did I come back too late?" After a pause, he apologized, "I'm sorry. I won't let you wait for me for that long from now on. I'll try my best to finish my work up as quickly as I can, okay?"

"No need for that. Your work is more important." I shoved him aside and entered the bathroom.

Before I could close the door, he squeezed in. Noticing my still-upset look, he furrowed his brows and hugged me from behind as he leaned his chin on my shoulder.

He murmured affectionately, "Nothing's as important as you." With that said, he rained kisses on me.

The scent of other women assaulted my nose, and frustration grew in me. Pushing him away again, I pursed my lips before ordering, "Ashton, go out. I'm going to shower."

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 286

As I had said those words harshly, he knitted his brows upon hearing them. “We’ll shower together.”

Instantly, rage coursed through my veins. “Ashton, do you not speak human? I said I’m going to shower. If you want to take a shower, go to the other bathroom.”

His expression darkened. “What’s the matter with you? Why are you losing your temper over nothing? What did I do to you?”

“Nothing!”

I was not in the mood to talk to him. If he were not going to leave, I would. If you’re not going to leave me alone, I’ll do it myself!

However, he was persistent in clinging to me—he pressed me against the wall and bit down hard on my shoulder. “Tell me why you’re angry, all right? Don’t keep me guessing.”

“Hurry up and take a shower. You smell,” I voiced instead as I scrunched up my face.

Lifting a brow, he raised his arm to take a whiff of himself. Instead of scrunching up his face like I did, he smirked. “Scarlett, do you have a dog’s nose? I’m surprised that you can even smell that.”

“Hurry up and shower now!” I yelled with a tinge of anger.

Amused by my reaction, he patiently said, “She’s sick. I was with Joe, so we went there together. I’m your husband, and I’ll be loyal to you for the rest of my life.”

By now, my lips were pursed into a thin line. Pushing him away again, I softened my tone to say, “Take your shower.”

With a small smile, he went back into the bathroom.

When he came back out again, he was in a bathrobe that revealed his muscular chest. It was a pleasant sight for my eyes.

When he saw me reading a book on the bed, he walked over to me and asked, "Why are you reading a travel guide? Do you want to go there for a trip?"

"I'm thinking of going to M Country. Macy and Jackson have been there for quite a while, but they haven't sent me any messages or calls. I wonder how they're doing, so I want to visit them." I have not seen them, including Nick, since my accident, and I was curious about how they were doing.

He nodded before taking the travel guide from me. As he put it aside, he uttered, "It's useless to read these. Come with me to M Country since I'll be heading there soon."

"Why are you going there?" Can he really leave the city when the company's so busy recently?

At that, he pursed his lips before pressing a habitual kiss on my forehead. "Some major issues have arisen for the few hospitals that Jared's managing. I'll have to go there to check things out. There are a handful of those hospitals in the country, so it's a pretty grave situation."

I froze. So that's why his phone has been ringing all day today.

In the beginning, I did not take Stacey's words to heart. However, the moment the seed of doubt had been planted, it would start growing uncontrollably. It was the same for everyone.

After a moment of mulling over his words, I asked, "Only Dr. Crest's hospitals?"

He nodded. "He's been managing the medical side of things."

"Then, could it be that..." I trailed off, realizing that my next words would sound like I was trying to sow discord between them. Hence, I changed the topic and asked, "How long have you known Dr. Crest?"

Hearing that, he laughed before lowering his gaze to look at me. "I've known him since my college days. Why are you asking about that all of a sudden? Why, are you finally interested to know about my past?"

I smiled before asking again, "How did the two of you become such close and trusting friends?"

To my knowledge, individuals had to have memorable days of heart-to-heart interactions before they could become friends that trusted each other.

Raising my head to look at him, I took in the sight of his defined jawline. Indeed, someone who possessed good looks would look good from any angle.

Hearing my question, he briefly frowned before answering, "I'll tell you more in the future. Are you feeling sleepy?"

It seemed like he was not keen on answering me, so I did not pressure him for one. All I replied was, "Okay."

After that, I fell silent.

His phone rang a few more times, but he never seemed like he was going to accept the call. When I looked at it from the corner of my eyes, I realized Rebecca was calling.

Thus, I frowned. "It's noisy."

Giving me back a similar frown, he silenced his phone. Unfortunately, even when silenced, the phone's screen continued to light up.

The call came in one after another, and I was starting to feel frustrated. To Ashton, I snarled, "Can't you just pick that call up? It's annoying."

When he grimaced, I could see a trace of gloominess in his expression. "Do you want me to?"

"Ashton, cut your crap. If you want to pick it up, then pick it up. If you don't, reject the call and look for her in person. It's annoying to keep seeing her name on the screen." It truly was. It was the middle of the night, but instead of sleeping, she was calling someone else's husband. This was honestly something that only Rebecca could do.

Dumbfounded by the sudden reprimand, Ashton stiffened for a few seconds before a cold look crept upon his face. "What do you mean by asking me to look for her in person? Scarlett, is there something wrong with you?"

"You're right. There's something wrong with me. Either you switch off your phone, or you leave the room."

He then picked up his phone and accepted the call on speaker mode. "Is there something you need?" he asked in a glacial tone.

"Ash, I'm all alone in the hospital now. Can you come and keep me company? I'm scared of being alone." Her voice was as sweet as cotton candy.

"Am I your dad, or am I your mom? Do you think I'll come to you just because you asked me to? Rebecca, you should know when to stop pushing your luck. Your brother asked me to take care of you, but he didn't tell me to sacrifice myself for you."

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 287

After a pause, he continued, "Also, stop calling me in the middle of the night from now on. My wife is a light sleeper, and she has a bad temper. If she wakes from the noise, I'll have to take a long time to coax her because she's hard to coax."

At that, he promptly ended the call and switched off his phone.

Gazing back at me, he raised a brow and asked, "Are you satisfied?"

I rolled my eyes. "You have a few screws loose."

I then burrowed myself into the blanket. And so did he. When he settled down on the bed, he placed a few kisses on me again.

It was getting late, so I closed my eyes, about to sleep. Right then, I sensed something wrong.

Frowning, I pushed Ashton, who was holding me tightly, away as I roared, "What are you doing?"

"I'm hard." I could hear no tinge of embarrassment from him, and he made it sound as if he were talking about the weather.

Nearly choking on my saliva, I took in a deep breath before replying, "If you want to act crazy, get out. Stop annoying me."

Like a shameless man he was, he pulled me into his arms and mumbled, "Where can I go? It's a cold and lonely night. Don't you think you're a little cruel to me?"

Holding my breath for a few more seconds, I plastered on a fake smile. "Mr. Fuller, thank you so much for your praises."

He smiled back. "You're welcome."

I was a second away from strangling him there and then.

He was so shameless to the point he might as well stop wearing clothes like a civilized person.

"Ashton, if you're not going to keep it to yourself, let's sleep in different rooms from now on. If you keep doing this, I won't be able to sleep. You know I've always had trouble resting." What I was telling him was nothing but the truth. No ordinary person could stand his actions for long.

He paused before whispering, "Twice a week. I won't touch you any other time, okay?"

Maybe strangling him was not enough; throwing him out of the window was better.

He doesn't mean twice; he definitely means two f*cking nights!

Rolling my eyes at him, I stopped arguing because I was too tired. Hence, I commanded, "Sleep."

In my daze, I felt him embracing me. When I hear his breathing getting heavier and heavier, I sighed. "Ashton, sleep in the guest room."

He hoarsely muttered, "Once?"

I pursed my lips, but my exhaustion was pulling me into the land of dreams. "Ashton, I'm very sleepy right now."

And I truly was. That was why I had no idea how I fell asleep.

The next morning, I woke to see him putting on his suit. He looked noble and elegant, worlds away from the animal he acted like last night.

At the sight of him, I mumbled under my breath, "Wolf in sheep's clothing."

However, the man had a keen sense of hearing, so he heard my words despite how quiet I said them. Narrowing his eyes, he walked over with a smile on his lips.

I ignored him as I shut my eyes, about to sleep for a while longer.

Unfortunately for me, he had never been nice to me. He dug me out from under the blanket before he started rubbing against my pajamas.

I only managed to get his hands off after several blows. When I finally succeeded, I shot him a grim look. "Ashton, don't you know how annoying you are? You won't let me sleep at night, but you won't let me sleep in the morning either. If you want to kill me, do it quick. Stop dragging it out."

A laugh escaped him, and he rubbed his face in my ear. "Scarlett, are you having your period?"

Instantly, wrath rose in me like a tide. I pulled the closest pillow to me and hurled it toward him. "Get lost!"

It seemed like he was used to it, as he pecked a kiss on my forehead before leaving.

...

At the start, I had no plans to leave the house today. However, Stacey called and asked to meet me.

After Felix's event, she had come to K City. She, a highly educated and witty woman, soon joined the Moore family's company after a few interviews.

We ended up agreeing to meet at a tearoom. It seemed like the residents of K City rarely drank tea, so it was tough for us to find one.

However, as long as we wanted to, a tearoom could still be found.

The tearoom she found was located in a more secluded district. The two of us then ordered a pot of floral tea after we sat down by the window.

"They've sentenced Felix to death, and I'm finally free. Thank you," she said right after she sat down.

With a faint smile, I replied, "No need for thanks. I have my own plans myself."

She smiled back, not minding her reply. "Mr. Fuller's company is in big trouble, right?"

Her words made me tensed up for a moment. I knew Ashton would not publicize the matter, and the only ones who knew were the few shareholders that had a prominent position in the company.

Finally, I inquired, "The Moore family did this?"

She shook her head. "No. It's Cameron's side. I've heard of Jared and her making a move earlier, so I'm sure this was planned. Everything went wrong for the two hundred hospitals managed by the Fuller Corporation in the country and overseas. That's why I'm thinking that they might be trying to destroy Fuller Corporation."

At that, I tensed up again. Ashton had been busy recently, but he was the kind of person who shared little with me, so I barely knew anything about the incident.

From Stacey's words, I realized the situation was grave.

"Any evidence?" Isn't Cameron under investigation? How did she find the time to set Fuller Corporation up?

Is she trying to divert our attention?

Stacey shook her head. "I just realized it recently. Before Mr. Fuller planned to come to K City to expand his business, I found out from Felix that Cameron and Jared have been meeting frequently. Back then, I didn't know what they were trying to do. Now that I think about it, they must have been planning for the hospitals' incident.

The few hundred hospitals have been making illegal extra fees. In fact, one of the old patients in K City's hospital had passed away for months, but the hospital is still finding reasons to charge the patient's family. There are a handful of cases like these in the country, and every hospital will come across a case like this. The hidden charges are always either checkups or medication. However, this case is much more serious than the others."

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 288

After a pause, she explained, "The hospital charged the family a million after the old patient passed away, and that's why the patient's children sued them."

Drawing my brows together, I uttered, "They're still charging the family medical fees after he passed away for months? What are they treating? His corpse?"

She shook her head. "I don't know. These are obviously questionable charges, but there are many similar cases. All the hospitals under Fuller Corporation have these cases. That's why it'll be difficult to handle them all now. There's a chance that Mr. Fuller might have to go to jail for this."

No way! Ashton can't possibly have done this!

"Jared has always been the one managing the medical side of the business, and Ashton has never asked anything about his management because he trusts him. Now that they're expanding the business overseas, all the business related to medical and research is Jared's responsibility. How can things turn out this way?"

Does Ashton and Jared have a secret past?

Stacey sighed. "Clearly someone has planned for this for a long time. All that's left now is to find out how Mr. Fuller is going to deal with it."

I pressed my lips together. "The children of the old patient have been paying the fees after he passed away? They said nothing even though they're paying a million for no good reason?"

No one would continue to pay the fees after their parents are gone, right?

She nodded. "They've even kept records of every receipt and medication, so everyone is talking about how evil Fuller Corporation is."

It was almost impossible for Ashton to turn the tables with all evidence pointing toward him while everyone was criticizing him.

Cameron really is ruthless. She's all quiet until she deals a deadly blow that no one can recover from.

After a brief while of contemplation, I said, "There are no results for Mr. Clinton's case in the investigation. Do you have any plans?"

Although Cameron and Clinton frequently contacted, neither of their accounts had any transfer of funds from each other, and no one could find a trace of evidence regarding cash transactions. Moreover, they had found nothing in Clinton's house.

Mulling over my words, she replied, "I'm not too sure about that. What about this? I'll go back and ask around for more details to see if I get anything useful."

I nodded; that was all we could do now.

...

Stacey and I did not converse for long as someone was bound to notice us if we stayed around too long.

I had originally planned to head straight back to the villa, but I suddenly recalled the White's matter. After a pause, I went to the White residence to visit Marcus instead.

However, it was not long before I was stuck outside a building in the city center.

A handful of people had gotten down from their cars and headed toward the building, trying to find out what was going on. Even just by looking out of the car, I knew that something major must have happened.

I was not a busybody, but I was trapped between two empty cars. In the end, I could not help but ask a middle-aged woman nearby what was going on.

Middle-aged women were either on social media or trying to gossip, so the moment she heard my question, she quickly responded, "Oh, young lady, if you're in a rush, it's best that you leave this place. Someone's trying to jump from the building ahead, and I heard it's the ex-wife of the White Corporation's chairman who just died. What a tough life for the rich too. Her ex-husband just died, and now she's being forced to jump because of the mistress. I'd say that J City's Fullers' woman is really something. I mean, look. She already has her

inheritance, but she's still forcing the man's first wife to kill herself. Karma will come to her for this eventually."

Outside the building was a noisy, chaotic crowd. After explaining the situation to me, the middle-aged women hurried over to watch the commotion.

For a few seconds, I was in a daze. The ex-wife of White Corporation's chairman? Sharon? Marcus' mother?

After a few more seconds of rumination, I locked my car and followed her toward the crowd.

Within a few minutes, the people had gathered into a large crowd outside the Prism building in the city center. Even the roads were blocked, and no cars could pass.

The Prism building was the location Ashton had chosen for the company's new headquarters. Around them were several offices of famous companies, including White Corporation and Moore Corporation.

Sharon was all the way at the top of the hundredth-floor building. If one did not squint, one would not have noticed someone about to jump.

Many passersby were gathered at the bottom of the building out of morbid curiosity, knowing that this was the result of grudges between wealthy families.

Someone had called the police early on, and the officers were already here. I could spot a fire engine around, and the police had already blocked off the building.

No one from the inside could come out, and no one from the outside could go in.

Not knowing what was going on, I tried calling Marcus, but none of my calls went through.

I then called Ashton, but he sounded like he was on the plane. Perhaps he was in a rush, for he only told me, "I'll be making a quick trip to J City, so I'll be back late. Don't wait for dinner for me."

With that said, he ended the call. When I tried to call him again, I heard the automated response telling me that his phone was not in service.

With no choice, I squeezed past the crowd to talk to the police. "Sir, can I go in? I know the woman who's about to jump."

"Who is she to you?" the officer inquired as he motioned for me to move backward and away from the scene.

As Benjamin and Sharon were already divorced, I could not think of who I was to her for a moment. In the end, I replied, "She's my friend's mother. Can I go up and talk to her?"

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 289

"Only family members are allowed into the building. Miss, please take a step back and don't intervene in our procedures." At that, the officer pushed me backward.

I nearly fell, but fortunately, someone supported me from behind.

"I'm Marcus, the son of the woman up there. Can I go up?" After Marcus helped me to a stable position, he then took out his identity card to show it to the officer.

After a glance, the officer responded, "Mr. White, go ahead."

Marcus shot him an exceptionally cold look before he towed me into the building. Trailing behind him, we soon reached the top floor.

Outsiders were usually barred from entering these office buildings, especially the top floors; individuals were only allowed in if they had an employee's card with them.

The top floor of this building was an open space with tall railings. Greeneries were planted everywhere, and there were even chairs, tables, and umbrellas. Evidently, this was a place meant for resting.

I did not know how Sharon had mustered the strength to get past the railing. She was standing on the short ledge that was only as wide as a palm, and her hands were holding onto the railing. Even from a distance away, I could see she had an exhausted look on her face.

The wind on the top floor was intense, and her body was swaying with it. If she were to pay less attention, she would have fallen off the building.

From this height, I was sure she would be unrecognizable if she were to fall.

It was terrifying to watch her stand by the ledge, and I vaguely realized the psychologist and rescue team were already on the top floor with us.

When Marcus brought me to the top floor, Sharon became even more agitated. With bloodshot eyes and a hoarse voice, she croaked, "Marc, I'm sorry."

Tamping down the fear in his heart, he looked at Sharon with an ashen face. In a trembling voice, he uttered, "Mom, don't be. I don't blame you for anything. Come to us first. Let's talk about whatever it is on your mind when we're back home, all right?"

However, Sharon shook her head, her face pale from the cold. "Marc, live a good life after this. You're the White family's only son, and your father loves you. He didn't have a child with Sally because he's afraid you'll have nothing after he's gone. You have to keep living and have a family. Take care of the family. That way, your dad and I will rest in peace."

She was telling him her last words.

By now, Marcus' eyes were red, and he was trying his best to collect himself. "Mom, I know. Come down. You have to find me a girlfriend, and you have to be there at my wedding. Mom, don't do this. Come back here and let's live happily as a family."

She shook her head, her tears streaming down her cheeks in melancholy. "Marc, don't blame me for this. I survived the past ten years on my hatred for him. I refused to give in, and I refused to admit defeat. But I don't hate him anymore, so life is now meaningless to me. It's been so many years, and I owe him an apology. I have to look for him in the afterlife. I couldn't grow old with him in the world of the living, so I'll accompany him in the world of the dead."

Sharon was determined to die, and I could see the despair in her eyes as she stared at Marcus. Without the strength to live, death was the best option.

Marcus knew that well, but how much sorrow would he have to face to lose his mother right after he lost his father?

When he realized Sharon was refusing to heed his words, he broke down. "Mom, if you escape from this, what will I do? You'll leave me behind. You're my only family left. What am I going to do if you're gone?"

Sharon cast him a loving look. "Marc, without me, you'll have a better life. I'm your burden as long as I'm alive. Listen to me, don't go to M Country. Stay in White Corporation. Your dad wants to give you the company. Once I'm dead, you'll have more of the shares, and you'll still be White Corporation's chairman. Manage the company and live well."

At that, Sharon instantly let go of the railing. Marcus' eyes widened, but it was too late by the time he reached the railing.

"Mom!" he screamed as tears escaped his eyes. Subconsciously, he climbed the railing, about to follow in her footsteps.

Fortunately, the swift members of the rescue team stopped him and injected him with sedatives.

It was as if the sky had heard his cries. When Sharon fell off the building, it started raining. It gradually washed the blood puddle on the first floor away.

Marcus was sent to the hospital while a mortician brought Sharon's body away. The crowd dispersed.

Within a few hours, the scene ended with a death.

I spend several hours in the hospital watching over Marcus. Sedatives coursing through his vein, he lay unmoving on the bed as he stared at the ceiling. It was as though he was dead, too.

The doctor came by a few times to check on him, and he reassured me that there were no major issues. His heart had stopped for a while from the extreme sorrow he felt, but fortunately, he was young and he would recover.

The sky gradually darkened. I went downstairs to buy some food to eat. By the time I return, the sedatives had worn off.

Marcus was sitting on the bed when I entered. The moment he saw me, he whispered hoarsely, "Where is she?"

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 290

I knew he was asking about Sharon, so I hid my sadness away and replied, “She’s been sent to the funeral parlor.”

Although I did not witness her final moment, I had overheard the conversation of those who had. As she had fallen from such great height, their description of her final appearance was that she was crushed beyond recognition.

For a brief moment, I could even imagine it.

He nodded, an abnormally distant look in his eyes. When he looked at the soup I brought, he asked, “Do you only have soup?”

I froze, not used to his calmness after going through such tragedy. Then I nodded before shaking my head. “What do you want to eat? I’ll buy it right away.”

“It’s fine. I’ll take that.” He took the soup from me and began drinking it like he normally would. It was as though he had not just gone through a tragedy several hours ago.

His unusual reaction worried me, but I did not know how to console him. “What else do you want to eat? I can buy it for you.”

He paused his motion and shook his head. After a beat, his gaze landed on me. “Have you eaten?”

I stiffened, but shook my head. “I’m not hungry.”

He put down the bowl before he stood up and grabbed his jacket. Looking at me, he uttered, “Let’s go. Let’s grab a bite and a walk.”

As he dragged me out of the hospital, I stared at his towering figure, unable to spot anything different about him from the usual.

However, there was one thing that was different—his gaze. He had a murderous gaze, and that was something he never had. It was hatred—deep hatred.

I was shocked by it. Where did that come from?

After boarding the car, I ruminated for a while before suggesting, "Marcus, let's go to Central Park. I'll make whatever you want to eat at home."

If we were to go somewhere crowded, I was sure that it would only make him even more upset.

His hands on the steering wheel visibly tensing, he glanced at me. "Why aren't we going to the White residence?"

My mouth set in a hard line. "The White family has maids, and I won't get to cook when I'm there." Then, I tentatively asked, "You want to go back to there?"

After lowering his gaze for a second, he started driving in the direction of Central Park. "No."

The hospital was not far from Central Park, so we soon returned. As it had been a long while since I came back here, the fridge was essentially empty.

It took me a second after peeking into the fridge before I said, "Give me a moment. I'm going to buy some things back from the supermarket downstairs."

"I'll come with you."

With a faint smile, I shook my head. "It's fine. I can go alone."

He looked at me for a little longer. A silent agreement.

As it was already late, there were not many groceries in the supermarket. After picking some food that I knew how to prepare, I soon left.

When I returned to the house, I saw Marcus was no longer in the living room. After I placed my groceries in the kitchen, I went around to search for him.

The study room was where I found him, and he seemed like he was typing something into the computer.

When he saw me, he only looked at me and flatly replied, "You're back."

Nodding, I flashed him a smile. "I'm making pasta. It'll be done in a while."

The only answer he gave me was a quiet hum.

It was normal for me to overthink the situation, for his reactions would worry anyone else, too. He did not seem depressed or melancholic. It really was as if nothing had happened to him.

He hid his feelings so well that it seemed like Sharon had not died, and life was still going on as usual.

Once I was done with the pasta, I turned around, about to get him to eat. To my shock, he was leaning against the doorframe, arms folded, with a gloomy look on his face.

Sweat covering my back from the shock, I shakily asked, "Marcus, what's wrong?"

The gloomy look dissipated, and he asked, "Are you done with the pasta?"

I nodded, fear still lingering in my heart. After scooping a serving out from the pot, I placed the plate on the table.

As I watched him eat, I could not help but mumble worriedly, "Marcus, are you okay?"

He paused and lifted his head to look at me. "What?"

I shook my head, sensing him becoming distant from me. "Hurry up and eat. It won't be nice to eat cold pasta."

He narrowed his eyes. "You're not hungry?"

I gave him a small smile before shaking my head. "I'm not. Eat more."

At that, he pursed his lips and fell silent.

As I watched him eat, I wondered if he tasted nothing of the pasta. It was as though he was only eating to fill his stomach.

After the meal, he sat on the couch, staring at the television that he did not turn on with a dark gaze.

At that moment, I felt as though I was reliving the moment when John found out about his father's death. Back then, John's eyes were filled with darkness. It was as if he had fallen into a black hole, determined to drag everyone into the void.

After keeping the plates, I sat down beside him and said, "Marcus, you have to keep going forward. Your mom wants you to have a bright future."

He was silent for a moment. "You're consoling me?"

I was at a loss for words.

After a while, I finally said, "It's getting late. You should rest early. I'll come around to deliver breakfast to you tomorrow. Put your work aside; you should rest at home for the next few days."

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 291

I did not know how to console him, so all I could do was give him reminders.

Lifting a brow, he cast an icy gaze at me. "You're not going to stay?"

After a pause, I shook my head.

Then I grabbed my jacket and left.

So many things had happened unexpectedly. By the time I reached the villa, it was already past midnight.

Before my car entered the garage, I saw the man standing by the doorway. He was a towering man. Under the dim streetlight, he looked like a weary traveler.

After parking my car, I stood by the doorway. Once again, it started drizzling.

His expression darkened. "Are you planning to stand outside for the rest of your life?"

With that said, he strode toward me. The more droplets landed on him, the more distant he seemed to me.

Pressing my lips tightly together, I muttered, "Didn't you say you'll be late tonight?" What I had understood from his call earlier was that it was likely he would not return tonight. After all, J City was far from K City. It would take him half a day just to fly there and back.

He sneered, "Do you think this isn't late?"

He was right; it was already past midnight.

Instead of saying anything else, he pulled me into the villa. Staring at me with a dark look, he asked, "Where did you go?"

“Central Park,” I replied, not planning to hide anything from him. Whatever happened today was major, and I was late in coming home. Even if I said nothing about it, he would find out about it tomorrow.

He narrowed his eyes dangerously. “Why don’t you say there for a few more days? It’ll save you the trouble from having to travel around.”

I nodded. “Sounds good. I plan to do that too.”

“Scarlett!” He gritted out, “Who is your husband?”

Speechless for a moment, I huffed, “You’re the one who asked me to move there. Why are you angry at my reply?”

“Am I not allowed to be angry? You’re spending most of the day with Marcus. Why don’t you just take him in as your godson? That way, you can keep him company every second of your life.”

Looking at his enraged expression, I retorted, “Why don’t you tell me to marry him instead?”

Smack! He slammed his hand onto the table, looking a second away from strangling me to death. “So it’s right of you to come back after midnight?”

I dropped my head, whispering miserably, “No. You only know how to lose your temper every time. You don’t even bother asking me why I’m there or what happened. All you do is lose your temper. You’re even saying that I’m in the wrong just by coming home late. Ashton, you’re unreasonable.”

He tensed, nearly barking out an angry laugh. A beat later, some of the anger melted away from his face, and he asked, “All right. Tell me then. Why did you go to Marcus’ place?”

I sat down and muttered, “Get me a glass of water first.”

He froze as the corner of his lips twitched. “Scarlett, you-”

“Forget it if you don’t want to. Don’t yell at me again. I’ll stop talking if you want me to.” After all, it was not like he could do anything to me, even if he got mad.

His dark eyes stared at me for a while as he bit down on his thin lips. In the end, he said, "You'd better say something I want to listen to later, or else..."

He did not continue his sentence. Instead, he gave me a glass of water and sat down opposite me. "Speak."

I cupped the glass with both hands as I ruminated over the events before replying, "Benjamin's dead."

He raised a brow at that. "I know. Aunt Sally told me about it." After a pause, he narrowed his eyes and uttered, "That's all?"

I sighed. "Marcus' mother, Sharon, jumped off Prism building today. I'm scared that Marcus would not be able to take it, so I spent some time with him at Central Park. That's why I'm back late tonight."

He furrowed his brows and questioned, "What actually happened?"

In recent days, he had been busy. Perhaps Sally only mentioned Benjamin's passing to him; she might not have even told him any details.

After all, this was the Whites' family matter. At the end of the day, Ashton and I were outsiders.

After a brief thought, I continued, "The day Benjamin passed, Sally told Sharon things from a decade ago, and I think they really affected her. Her mental state did not seem right near the end. Maybe she couldn't take it, so she followed in Benjamin's footsteps."

He only nodded, having little thoughts about the Whites' family matter. Then he looked at me and said, "Marcus has his own life to continue, so don't keep going there. Don't forget that I'm your husband, not him."

I could hear the jealousy oozing out of his words.

Pursing my lips, I huffed, "Ashton, I'm just repaying a favor. Can you not assume that everything is as complicated as you think they are?"

"Repaying a favor? You've got so many ways to repay a favor. Did you have to go there yourself?" There he was, being sarcastic again.

Anyway, he was not in a good mood, and he did not wish to talk much to me. Therefore, I did not take his words to heart.

Instead, I said, "It's already late. Aren't you sleepy?"

He shot me a glance before storming up the stairs.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 292

Knowing that he was fuming on the inside, I did not make him angrier anymore. When I returned to the bedroom, he was not around, and I was sure he must have gone to the study.

I then went to wash up in the bathroom. It had anti-slip tiles, so I usually took off my house slippers when I went in.

However, I somehow managed to slip and fall a few steps into the bathroom.

"Ah!" I shrieked in fear.

Bang! The bedroom door burst open to reveal Ashton, panting by the doorway. It seemed like he had rushed over.

When he saw me on the floor, he frowned as he lifted me up into his arms. "Are you hurt?"

"I sprained my ankle."

He then reached out to pinch my ankle, and I could not help but gasp from the pain. "Ouch!"

"So you know it hurts?" he snarled. "Do you use your eyes to breathe?"

Pouting, I whispered, "How am I to know that the floor is so slippery. Who in their right mind would want to fall?"

He gave me a taunting look. "Who can you blame if you were the one to not watch where you were going?" After a pause, he continued, "What were you about to do?"

"Shower!" Why does he have such a terrible temper?

He placed me gently into the bathtub and filled the tub before coldly saying, "Do you need me to wash you?"

"No need!" came my quick reply.

He continued, staring at me apathetically. "It's as if you've lost your parents-in-law when his parents died, Scarlett Stovall."

I-

What kind of logic is that?

How did he even connect this to that?

"Ashton, is this fun for you? It's not whatever you think it is; I slipped on accident. Moreover, Marcus helped me in the past, and now that he's having so many troubles. What's wrong with me helping him a little? Have I ever said anything about your relationship with Rebecca? Besides, there's nothing between Marcus and me."

Ashton was being melodramatic. If not for Marcus' appearance back then, I would have died with the baby. Now that he was facing such a tragedy and there was no one around him he could talk to. What was wrong with me being concerned about him as a friend?

"Ha!" He barked out a laugh. "Do you have to help him in this way? Scarlett, do you think you're the only one who knows how to repay a favor? Will it kill you to get someone to take care of Marcus instead?"

"Sure! You get someone to do that, then!" I huffed. "If that's the case, you could've found someone to take care of Rebecca, too. Why did you have to do it yourself then?"

The anger overwhelmed him and took away his words for a moment. With an expression as dark as charcoal, he uttered, "Stop talking about things from the past. Hurry up and shower. Call me when you're done."

"There's no need for that!" I was furious, too. "I can do this myself!"

His lips twisted into a sneer. "You can? Are you planning to jump out of the tub and slip one more time? Are you that keen to cripple yourself?"

"You-" Inwardly, I was seething and closed to erupting like a volcano, but I did my best to tamp it down. "Get out."

Even as he left, I could see that he was in a foul mood.

Half an hour later...

After my shower, I stared at my swollen ankle under the water. I stood up by myself while holding onto the edge of the bathtub.

It was a level of pain I could bear, so technically, I could do this by myself.

On the rack beside the tub were my towel, pajamas, lotion, and essential oil. As I sat by the edge of the tub, I started applying the lotion on myself. As the scent of the essential oil was too strong, I left them alone.

Just as I was about to grab the towel to dry my hair, I knocked over the bottle of essential oil, and the glass shattered on the ground.

At the loud sound, I stiffened for a moment. Staring at the glass fragments by my feet, I could not help but frown at how inconvenient it would be for me to crouch down and clean up the mess.

However, the mess would not clean itself, so that was what I did. Just as I was about to crouch down, Ashton entered to see me in my odd position.

"Scarlett, are you a masochist?" he gritted out in a deep voice.

I lifted my head to look at him before realizing I was still naked. Promptly, I reached out to tug the pajamas to cover myself, but the lotion fell onto the ground when I did that.

Staring at it, he sneered. "Why don't I give you all my glassware at home for you to break them?"

Seriously, this man-

"I didn't mean to do it!" I huffed as I peeked at him. "Carry me out. I can't move around like this."

Under my feet were all glass fragments, and if I were to put my foot down, the soles of my feet would not look like soles when I leave the bathroom.

When he noticed I was no longer angry, he walked toward me with a faint smile. "Isn't it nice for you to be so quiet like this?"

He then carried me up into his arms as he swiftly bit my lips. I glared at him, thinking, He's really taking advantage of me whenever he can.

Back at the bedroom.

He placed me onto the bed, but instead of standing back up, he murmured, "Didn't you say that you like to repay favors? How are you planning to repay my favor for carrying you out of the bathroom?"

What the f*ck!

Is this a favor?

It's barely anything worth mentioning!

"Ashton, is this entertainment for you?" You only carried me out! How shameless can you be?

With no signs of blushing, he said, "Can we do it tonight?"

This...

I raised a brow. "Aren't you tired?" He just traveled between J City and K City, but he still has the energy for nightly activities?

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 293

He curled his lips and raised his eyebrows while giving me an extremely seductive stare. "Do you want to try?"

Darn it.

"Ashton, I'm too tired. I can't!" This man was really trying to take advantage of me whenever there was an opportunity.

It was as if he didn't hear what I had said. With a heavy breath, he asked, "Can't or won't?"

Won't!

However, I couldn't say that.

After a moment of consideration, I pulled myself away from him and uttered seriously, "Ashton, I think you should purchase a blow-up doll. That way, you can do it whenever you want."

He squinted while pinning me down. "How would you know if it'll be convenient? Have you tried it?"

I...

"It's late, we should sleep!" I avoided him instantaneously while moving my body away.

Upon seeing that, he stared at me and sighed. "Scarlett, when are you going to treat me as your husband?"

For a moment, I was stunned and didn't know how to respond to him. I wriggled my body and buried myself underneath the blanket.

When I realized he had held onto my ankle, I couldn't help but furrow my eyebrows. Upon lifting up the blanket, I saw he was already fully clothed. He placed my ankle on his lap and squeezed it gently.

I held back even though it hurt a little. It should heal after a while because it was just a sprain.

When he saw that I was looking at him, he frowned. "Is it painful?"

I nodded. "It's alright, I'm fine!"

It hurt a bit more when he applied pressure. The sprain area was swollen, that was why it hurt when he massaged it.

I took a deep breath instantaneously and bit my lip slightly while enduring the pain.

He stared at me and with an uncertain tone in his voice, he asked, "Is it painful?"

I pursed my lips and replied softly, "I'm fine, it's alright now. It'll get better in a few days. Ashton, it's late already, quickly go to bed!"

His expression suddenly changed while he stared at me and said, "Scarlett, you're so dull. What do you mean by fine? Just be clear if it hurts or not. What's the point of you holding it in? Since I'm your husband, will it kill you just to cry out in pain or be loving with me? Why are you acting like a widow all the time?"

I was taken aback. I opened my mouth instantly, but couldn't utter a single word.

Upon seeing his angry face, I replied softly, "It's painful!"

He took a glance at me while regaining his composure. Then he said, "There's no need for you to act tough in front of me next time. The reason for me marrying you is to make you my wife, not a Barbie."

I pursed my lips. What kind of metaphor is that? After a while, I nodded my head. My heart fluttered with joy.

It was quite swollen around my sprained ankle. Ashton stopped massaging after noticing I was in pain.

After that, he applied some medicine on it and gently rubbed my ankle. He stared at me and said, "It's better for you to stay indoors tomorrow. Focus on your recovery."

I nodded and looked at him. "Ashton, thank you."

All these years, I had never been cared for in such a way. Deep down in my heart, I knew he was amazing.

He frowned while packing up the medicine box. "Do you have to be so formal with me?"

I was stunned and recalled the moment when he said there was no need for such formality between a married couple.

After I had paused for a moment, I bent down and held his face in my hands. I gave him a kiss on the forehead and said, "Ashton, I'm not being overly courteous with you but I really just want to thank you for taking such great care of me."

He stared at me, held my hands, and kissed me so passionately that left me feeling weak at my knees.

Not long after, he let go of me and said, "Alright, if you really want to thank me, then stay at home for a few days. Don't go out."

I wanted to agree with him initially, but after remembering so much had happened to the White family and Fuller Corporation, it wouldn't be possible for me to stay at home and do nothing.

I looked at him and said, "I can ask Mrs. Eriksen to accompany me while I go out. It would be fine as long as I'm being cautious."

His face darkened. "Who has the final say, you or me?"

This man was overbearing. He single-handedly destroyed his perfect image that I had built.

I remained silent while he packed up the first aid kit. He removed his coat and glanced at me. "Rest well and don't think too much. I'll go for a shower."

I ignored him and snuggled under the blanket. At that time, I had trouble falling asleep and I couldn't find my cell phone. Then I saw his phone was on the bedside table.

I turned towards the bathroom and exclaimed, "Ashton, can I use your cell phone?"

“Spot check?” Half of his body was out of the bathroom, and he smiled. “Just use it; you know my password.”

I gave him a glare and said, “It’s not a spot check, I just want to use it for fun.”

He raised his eyebrow and went back into the bathroom.

I grabbed his phone and clicked the video application I had downloaded for him. He didn’t delete it, so I thought he would have at least taken a look at it. Upon opening it, I only found out that not only did he not watch it, but he also hadn’t registered at all.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 294

Since I was bored, I registered his phone number on his behalf.

After that was done, I lay on the bed and went through some of the videos. Then someone called his cell phone.

It was Joe.

Ashton was still in the shower as I could hear the water running. I told him about it and he asked me to pick up the call.

Before I could say anything after the call was connected, Joe started yapping away. “Ashton, what are you doing? Why haven’t you picked up my calls earlier?”

I wanted to tell him that Ashton was in the shower, but he interjected further.

Joe continued ranting, “We need to go to the hospital because there are some stuff we need to settle, especially the one at K City south district. There’s a patient who had passed away two months ago, and the hospital is still asking for payment which is almost five million. This matter is escalating as of now. The patient’s family is creating a ruckus at the public health department. We need to sort this out as soon as possible and we are having problems dealing with the media too.”

"Yes, I'll let him know shortly!" I replied. I couldn't help but wonder, how did Jared create such a huge problem?

"Scarlett?" Joe was shocked. "Why did you pick up Ashton's phone? Where is he?"

I was sleepy and gave out a yawn while replying, "He is showering. I will relay your messages to him. If there's nothing else, I'm going to hang up now."

He might have thought that I was eavesdropping on the call, so he exclaimed angrily, "Scarlett, how could you be so nonchalant after eavesdropping on someone else's call? Do you have any principles? Not only did you steal someone's man, but now you even want to spy on other people's matters. How can you do such a thing? Initially, I thought the main reason for Ashton marrying you was because of his grandfather. From the looks of it, you must have deceived him as well."

I became quite speechless. "Mr. Quinn, have you been reading too many novels? How can your brain think of such things? Even Ashton wouldn't go around talking about our marriage, but you have been talking non-stop about it. Do you like Ashton or what? If you like him and hate me so much because I've stolen him, I wouldn't mind if you and him have an underground relationship. Also, let me be clear with you. Ashton told me to pick up his phone. Please be clear about the situation next time."

He stammered and said, "Scarlett, what nonsense are you talking? I'm referring to Rebecca, don't you know Ashton's heart is with her all this time? You're still trying to sound logical even though you've ruined their relationship."

Ha-ha!

I couldn't help but feel amused. "Mr. Quinn, what do you mean by ruining their relationship? How in the world can you tell that Ashton's heart is with Rebecca? Isn't it just some booty call? Based on your logic, it seems that you care for Rebecca. Does that mean your heart is with her as well?"

"Scarlett, y-you..." he stammered even more.

I paused for a while before saying, "You what? Please stop acting as if you understand other people very well in the future. You have a brain, so don't rush into things or make things up. Whether Ashton has true feelings for Rebecca, I don't have a clue. But please, manage yourself better before talking about others."

After saying that, I hung up the phone immediately.

When Ashton came out from the shower, his hair was still wet and he was wearing a pair of shorts. He dried his hair with a towel and looked at me. "Was it Joe?"

I nodded and stared at him. "You'll sleep in the guest room tonight."

In a moment of shock, he raised his eyebrow. "Why? What did he say?"

"Nothing!" I wasn't in the mood to use my phone anymore, so I threw it to one side and buried myself underneath the blanket.

Ashton pulled the blanket away and embraced me in his arms. His hair was still dripping wet. I resisted a little, pushed him away with my arm and said annoyingly, "Don't touch me!"

He pursed his lips and frowned. "What did he say?"

"Nothing!" I was displeased and wanted to ignore him. After that, I lifted my hand and pinched his waist.

He allowed me to do whatever I wanted without protest. Then he said helplessly, "Are you more relieved?"

I stared at him and pursed my lips.

He sighed. "Joe's temper has always been quirky. I'll let him know next time. Why are you angry at him?"

What did he mean by me being angry at him?

I was uncomfortable because the water on his body started dripping onto me. I couldn't help but complain, "Ashton, let go of me. You're wet."

He was dumbfounded. "I'll just dry it then. Why are you lashing out? If you're still annoyed, you can continue pinching me. If that doesn't help, you can hit me!"

I ignored him because I felt utterly down. I covered myself with the blanket and said coldly, "You'll sleep in the guest room tonight."

Upon seeing that I was inconsolable, he picked up his cell phone helplessly and phoned Joe.

In no time, the call was connected.

Ashton lowered his voice and asked, "What did you say to Scarlett?"

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 295

He had the call on speaker. Joe took a few seconds before he replied in an aggravated manner, "Ashton, what else could I possibly say to her? She lashed out and scolded me earlier. Don't tell me you're calling me to yell at me too?"

Ashton let out a cough and said in a deep voice, "It is understandable for her to scold you. I was even beaten up because of you. Find an opportunity to apologize to her."

Joe frowned. "What for? I didn't even provoke her. Why should I apologize?"

"If you don't apologize, I will have to sleep in the guest room. Do you think you should apologize now?" Upon hearing Ashton's words, I became speechless instantly. It sounded as if I had mistreated him.

Joe paused for a while then said, "Ashton, you... Are you in love?"

Without any hesitation, Ashton nodded. "Yes, she is my wife."

"Alright, I'll set a time and invite Jared as well. Let's have a meal and I'll apologize to... your missus!"

"Yes!" Ashton hung up right after.

I hid under the blanket and couldn't see what he was doing. A few seconds later, he turned off the lights and plopped onto the bed.

He tugged the blanket a few times. "Scarlett, it's winter now. K City's way colder than J City. If you don't share the blanket with me, you might need to help me dial for an ambulance tomorrow morning."

Soon, he stopped tugging and lay quietly next to me.

Listening to his shallow breathing, I thought he might have fallen asleep. I wriggled out of the blanket carefully and saw his upper body laying bare beneath the dim light.

Normally, he would sleep in his pajamas. It was obvious that he slept without clothes on purpose that night.

After some time, his body was cold to the touch. Upon seeing him fast asleep, I removed the blanket that was wrapped around me and placed it over him.

Suddenly, he grabbed my hand and slithered under the blanket. With his arms pulling me into his embrace, I could feel the coldness from his body surrounding me.

"So you're worried that I might catch a cold? Hm?"

I wanted to kick him instantly. However, he held me down swiftly and said, "Your leg is still hurt, don't move too much."

"Ashton, you bastard!" I couldn't help but yelled. Then I pursed my lips and stared at him sullenly.

He pulled me into his arms again and uttered, "Joe didn't do that on purpose, and it's my fault for not handling it well. Initially, I should have made our relationship known to the public, but I had some work to manage in K City. Many people are eyeing on K City too. If someone catches our weakness, I'm worried I might not protect you well then."

He let out a sigh and hugged me tightly.

I was speechless for a moment. I knew he had a lot on his plate, and that was why I had never forced him.

I had a good sleep that night. After many rainy days in K City, the sun was bright when I woke up the next day.

Ashton wasn't in the bedroom. As I stretched my body, my ankle was still hurting. I got out of bed and was getting ready to wash up.

Mrs. Eriksen brought some breakfast to the room while Ashton and Jared followed her from behind.

Upon seeing that I was awake, she placed the breakfast on the bedside table and said, "It seems like a good day today. I think it'll start snowing these two days. Letty, go ahead and wash up. After your breakfast, come downstairs and we'll admire the winter roses in the courtyard. They have just bloomed yesterday, how beautiful."

I was surprised. There weren't winter roses or snow in J City. Based on what she had said, it would start snowing in just a few days. I beamed. "Yes, yes, that'll be great!"

After Mrs. Eriksen went downstairs, Ashton had Jared examine my sprained ankle.

"Her ligaments were strained. She should be fine after applying medicine and having a few days of rest." While saying that, he removed his rubber gloves and threw them into the trash bin.

Ashton nodded. Then he looked at me and said, "Rest up after you have your breakfast. I have something to discuss with Jared in the study. Call me if there's anything, alright?"

I nodded obediently.

Since I had just woken up not too long ago and hadn't washed up yet, I got out of bed and headed for the shower after they left bedroom.

The moment my foot touched the ground, a sharp pain shot through my entire body. Fortunately, I could get used to it after taking a few steps.

After a brief shower, I returned to bed, panting. It seemed like I had overestimated myself, and it would be difficult for me to go to work that day.

I reached out to grab a glass for some water. However, I lost sight for a moment and dropped it on the floor instead. The glass shattered instantly.

While I was on the floor picking up the glass pieces, the bedroom door opened. Ashton frowned angrily and said, "Did you scald yourself?"

He walked towards me and carried me onto the bed. While doing so, his lips were tightly pursed and his gaze was intense.

I felt as if I had done something wrong. "No, the glass shattered."

He lifted his head and gazed at me. "Do you want some water?"

I nodded.

He got up and poured a glass of water for me. Meanwhile, he told Mrs. Eriksen to help with the cleanup.

Upon remembering he had a discussion with Jared, I said immediately, "Go back to the study. Dr. Crest must be waiting for you."

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 296

He placed the breakfast that Mrs. Eriksen had brought earlier next to me. "No worries, he can wait."

After he had accompanied me for breakfast, Ashton went back to the study.

I couldn't sleep even if I wanted to because I had a good slumber the night before. I was bored after being on my cell phone for some time.

I wanted to spend some time in the study reading books, since my ankle wasn't hurting much after Jared had applied some medicine on it.

Slowly, I motioned towards the study. As I was about to knock on the door because Ashton and Jared were in the room, I heard them talking in hushed voices. "How is she now?"

"She has been having high fever and is absent-minded most of the time. The Moore family found a doctor for her and she is well-taken care of. Since Cameron was transferred away, she doesn't have the time to be there for her."

There was a silent pause before Jared asked, "Are you planning to visit her?"

"No. She didn't have anyone when Parker died, but now she has the Moores. She will be fine."

Jared nodded and said, "It seems like things have progressed for you and Scarlett compared to before. Are you serious about Scarlett?"

"Ashton's voice was rather calm yet slightly arrogant. "What about you? Have you moved on after so many years?"

"Moved on from what?" Jared seemed unhappy.

"Since you have, it's time for you to find someone else to settle down together," Ashton said firmly.

"Damn!" That was the first time I heard Jared swearing. "Ashton, there must be something wrong with you. Are you worried that I might intervene in your marriage, that's why you're focusing on my personal life? Why don't you ask Joe to get married!"

"He is in love with someone. It's only a matter of time before he gets married. As for you, what's going on with Macy? I thought you're serious about her when you sacrificed your life to save her during the accident. Why aren't you doing anything about that lately?"

That was the first time I thought of Ashton as someone who was meddlesome. Jared opened the door while saying, "I think you should just set up a matchmaking agency."

The moment they saw me at the door, they were stunned. Ashton raised an eyebrow. "What's the problem?"

I shrugged. "I'm here for some books!"

Out of curiosity, I turned to Jared and asked, "Dr. Crest, what's going on between you and Macy? Haven't you been in contact?"

Jared was taken aback. He replied after taking a pause, "I don't know!"

Upon hearing him uttering those three words nonchalantly, I almost lashed out at him. I thought he would treat Macy differently based on the conversation he had with Ashton earlier.

But why did he sound so nonchalant about it!

I left after picking up some books, then I took a glance at Ashton. "Send me to White Corporation if you're not busy."

Mrs. Eriksen was right. K City started snowing in just a few days. I wasn't able to head out because of my injured leg.

During my recovery, I gained more weight because I was either reading books or sleeping in the villa.

Upon seeing that my ankle had almost fully recovered and thinking that I could finally go out for a walk, K City snowed heavily.

I loitered on the balcony while admiring the snowy white scenery. Ashton was busy with work and didn't have the time to accompany me.

At that moment, I recalled something Macy had said. When we were younger, she wanted to find a city that would snow so she wouldn't miss out on every winter.

In just a blink of an eye, new year was around the corner. I recalled when Jackson said he would return with Macy by the end of the year.

I reached out to grab my cell phone right away and phoned him. The call was connected after a few seconds.

I could hear Jackson's hoarse voice on the other end. "It has started snowing in M Country. What about K City?"

I nodded. "Yes, it has already started snowing since two days ago and the snow level is rather high. The whole world has turned white. So are the both of you coming back anytime soon?"

I paused for a moment before expressing my thoughts. "I miss the both of you."

Jackson seemed to have caught a cold as his voice was rather hoarse. "I was planning to go back initially, but it's not even three months and now it's already winter. I have been pondering if I should go back but I'm worried my body wouldn't be able to keep up with everything. I might need to wait until early spring."

"What about Macy? Why hasn't she called me or returned my calls for so long? I really miss her." My heart shrank as I stared at the snow falling outside the window.

"She is taking an afternoon nap with the baby. I'll let her know to return your call once she wakes up."

My brows instantly furrowed. "Jackson, be honest with me. Has something happened to her? If not, why wouldn't she reply to my messages? I would understand if it's once or twice, but it has been three months now. Why isn't she responding?"

After a prolonged silence from Jackson, I couldn't help but asked anxiously, "What happened to Macy? Are the both of you alright?"

"She... She's alright. It's because she hasn't fully recovered after giving birth and I brought her to M Country for rehabilitation. She wouldn't allow me to tell you whenever you call." Nothing seemed strange when he said that.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 297

We were miles apart. I wasn't too sure if Jackson was being honest, so I said, "Jackson, give me your address in M Country. I'll come over for a visit in a few days. I want to see your child."

"The weather is too cold so just stay at home since you usually fall sick easily. M Country is way colder compared to K City. You wouldn't get used to it here. Just wait until Macy has recovered and the baby grows older, then we will come back," Jackson said hurriedly. At that moment, I heard the baby's cries on the other end. "The baby is crying. I need to go now. I'll send you pictures of the baby shortly. I'm going to hang up now."

He hung up the call right after. I was stunned for a moment with the phone in my hand.

Since Ashton was busy with Fuller Corporation's hospital and I wasn't able to help him in any way, I decided to not bother him further.

It was snowing heavily when Sally arrived at the villa. Her body was covered with snowflakes in just a few minutes when she got out of the car and entered the villa.

Mrs. Eriksen was shocked to see her. "Ms. Fuller!" Sally was familiar with Mrs. Eriksen because she had been working for the Fullers for many years.

Sally was stunned for a moment. "Mrs. Eriksen, why have you come to K City?"

"Because of Mr. Ashton and Letty. These few days, Letty hasn't been feeling well and Mr. Ashton told me to come over and take care of her. How... are you these years?"

Sally smiled and looked over while I was preparing to get up and greet her.

"Scarlett, where is Ashton?"

After asking Mrs. Eriksen to prepare some tea, I looked at her. "He has a lot of work to do at the office and hasn't been home for a few days. Why are you looking for him, Ms. Fuller?"

Upon sensing the animosity from the way I'd addressed her, she frowned. "Scarlett, are you still mad at me about what happened previously?"

I smiled and gestured her to take a seat. "You're overthinking. I was just addressing you without thinking twice."

She let out a gentle sigh. "Scarlett, I hope you won't hold a grudge towards what had happened in the past. I'm the daughter of the Fuller family and now we are in the middle of a crisis. Your Aunt Helen couldn't be able to conceive anymore because of her previous injuries. You are aware of my current situation and know that I might not bear children anymore. We were hoping for Ashton to provide an heir to the family. At that time, when you had a miscarriage. Rebecca came to me, saying that she was pregnant with Ashton's baby. As an elder, it was impossible for me to not do anything and abandon an heir who belongs to the Fuller family. Who would have thought... Ah!"

Her face looked drained. Even though her clothes were thick, it was obvious that she had lost quite a bit of weight. Furthermore, some wrinkles could be seen on her face that was once flawless and well taken care of.

Compared to the last time I had seen her, she had aged considerably.

At that moment, I didn't think it was necessary to continue with that topic, so I changed the topic. "Is there anything you would like to talk to Ashton about? I'll give him a call."

I picked up the cell phone and was about to call Ashton when she quickly said, "No, you don't have to call him. I'm here for you."

"Me?"

She nodded while her pale lips moved slightly. Then she uttered, "Letty, as you know, the Whites have been dealing with a lot of problems lately. We don't have many family members to start with. Now that Benjamin and Sharon are dead, I'm the only one remaining in the family. Your uncle hasn't been buried yet. There are too many tasks concerning the Whites, and I can't handle all of them myself. Since you're married to Ashton, you're also part of the Fullers. I understand he is busy with his company. I can't be much help in regards to that, so

I wouldn't want to burden him even more. Since you don't have much to do now, can I ask you for help?"

So this is why she came here today. I paused for a moment, then I uttered, "Initially, Ashton and I wanted to help you after finding out what has happened to the White family. However, I was injured recently and something came up with Ashton's company, that's why we got delayed. If there's anything you need our help with, let us know."

The most difficult thing to organize in the world was a funeral. Even though the White family was prestigious, they didn't have many family members. Furthermore, as a young widow, it was normal for Sally to be responsible for many tasks.

Initially, it was Marcus' responsibility to manage everything. However, before he could fully grieve after Benjamin's death, Sharon died, too. Now he would need to handle both his parents' funeral. It must be very traumatizing for him.

Sally felt more relieved by my assurance. "It's really not too big of a deal, actually. I was just thinking that the White residence is too huge and it's usually empty since Marcus left. It's really lonely for me to stay there alone. Therefore, I was thinking if you would want to move in to the house and accompany me for a few days until Benjamin's funeral is over."

I noticed the dark circles beneath her eyes. It must be due to the lack of sleep for the past few days. Since I gave my word earlier, it wouldn't be appropriate for me to reject her.

After a moment of consideration, I replied, "Alright, but I need to have a talk with Ashton before that."

"No need for that!" Sally exclaimed hurriedly. "I will inform him. It must be hectic for him at work these days, and he wouldn't have the time to take care of you as well. You should bring Mrs. Eriksen along with you. In that case, he would be relieved knowing that someone is taking care of you."

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 298

I nodded. Somehow, I was perplexed about it.

After that, she smiled and said, "Go upstairs and pack up your stuff in a bit, then we will leave for the White residence. Fortunately, it's not snowing too heavily today and the roads have been cleaned. If we were to wait for a few days more, I'm afraid the snow would be heavier and they might even block some roads."

I was taken aback. "Do I have to move today?"

She nodded. "Yes, it would be more convenient that way. I'll give Ashton a call later and inform him about this. The White residence is pretty well-equipped so you just need to bring some clothes and shoes. I'll let the butler know that you're going over as well. He'll get everything prepared according to your preference."

I shook my head. "There's no need for that. I'm just staying there for a few days and wouldn't be needing much stuff anyways. Furthermore, it's near to home, I can come back and grab whatever I need then."

She smiled and shifted her gaze to Mrs. Eriksen who was standing on one side. "Mrs. Eriksen, do pack up as well. We will be leaving in a short while. Have a look and see what Letty might need. Please help her pack up."

Mrs. Eriksen was stunned and she looked at me. "It's just nearby, what's the matter? It wouldn't be much of a hassle to travel back and forth. Why do we have to move?"

"It's more convenient to stay there. Going back and forth at night is simply too troublesome. So just bring along whatever that's necessary."

Mrs. Eriksen said little and went upstairs to pack up.

Initially, I thought it was a last-minute plan. To my surprise, I noticed Sally had brought two drivers when I arrived at the entrance. I was dumbfounded.

"I thought that I should be well prepared since it's been snowing heavily, that's why I had everything arranged." She explained instantly after seeing my shock.

I remained quiet since it was impossible for me to take back my words and refuse to go with her.

The White residence.

Because of the snow, the scenic view from the White's villa became even more breathtaking.

There were quite a few winter roses planted in the family's courtyard. With a bed full of pink roses accompanied by the snow, the view was extremely magnificent.

Along the snow-covered pebbles, there was a path that led directly to the villa's entrance.

Upon entering the villa, I could see Benjamin's memorial tablet was placed in the living room. The villa that was once glorious and lively was now awfully quiet.

Meanwhile, a few servants were busy cleaning up the courtyard and Sally had one servant brought me to the room that was on the second floor.

As I was admiring the snowy view from the living room balcony, I suddenly thought that new year was just around the corner.

This year had passed rather quickly.

"Did she ask you to come over?" I heard an icy voice coming from behind.

I turned around and saw Marcus. He seemed to have lost more weight since the last I saw him. His face was thin and sullen, accompanied by a pair of darkened eyes which looked icier than the snow outside.

I grabbed onto my coat instantaneously and asked him, "How have you been?"

He took a glance at me while he motioned towards the black sofa in the living room and sat down on it. "Not too good. What about you? Did Ashton agree with Sally bringing you over here?"

He lit up a cigarette and took a few puffs. His face remained darkened.

I walked towards the sofa and sat down, while facing him from across the room. "It's just for a few days. He's been busy with work and didn't have the time for me as well. Since you have a lot to handle, I'll be more than happy to help."

He curled his lips sarcastically. "You might be of help to Sally indeed."

I couldn't help but feel that his current tone was strange. I pursed my lips and asked, "How's everything going with Sharon's funeral?"

Since Sharon and Benjamin had divorced, the Baumans were in charge of the funeral.

"It's quite well!" He massaged his brows.

It was normal for him to lose sleep after what had happened recently. Upon noticing he wasn't interested in continuing the conversation, I kept quiet. Since Sally had gone to the company for some work matters, I had little to do in the White residence.

Not long after, I heard Marcus' heavy breathing. It seemed like he had fallen asleep.

I got up, grabbed a blanket, and placed it over him. Suddenly, he pulled my hand. "Stay with me!"

Before I could react, he was asleep once again.

He was still holding onto my wrist, and I tried to pull back a few times. As I could not free myself, I frowned and exclaimed, "Marcus, let go of me!"

He lifted his hand and nailed me down next to him. "Accompany me for a while, it's been a few days since I last slept."

Seeing that he was extremely exhausted, I remained silent and pretended everything was alright. I continued sitting next to him. After some time, he fell into a deep sleep after being bone-tired for many days.

Seeing Marcus sleeping soundly for quite some time, I too fell asleep because there wasn't much for me to do.

Out of nowhere, I was woken up by a startling sound. I opened my eyes hazily, unsure of what was going on. Then I heard Sally's voice.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 299

“Letty, what are the both of you doing? There are many servants going in and out of the villa. The both of you... should avoid being like this. You as well...”

I wasn't sure what was going on. Coming back to my senses, I lifted my head and looked around.

Ashton appeared out of nowhere. His handsome face had intensely darkened, and he looked murderous.

I looked at him and uttered in a croaky voice, “You're back!”

He stared at me silently, and his gaze was terrifyingly dark. I only realized that I was leaning in Marcus' arms when I had fallen asleep.

That was why upon entering, they saw Marcus and I sleeping soundly while leaning against each other.

The moment I knew why Ashton was angry, I stood up instantaneously. However, because I had been sitting for too long, I felt dizzy straight away and I fell back onto the sofa.

Before I knew it, I landed on Marcus' lap. He woke up and had his arms around me. “You need to take care of yourself since you're weak.”

I was stunned. Suddenly, I was dragged up and Ashton uttered, “Mr. White is a loving person. However, you don't need to worry about my wife.”

While saying that, he hugged me tightly in his arms and I felt a wave of coldness surrounding me.

“Huh!” Marcus stretched his waist and said casually, “Why are you so nervous, Mr. Fuller? Are you afraid that I might steal her?”

Marcus was obviously trying to provoke him. Ashton pursed his lips, and his eyes narrowed dangerously. "Mr. White, where do you find such confidence? Why would you think she might like you?"

Marcus raised an eyebrow, shifted his gaze, and looked at me with a smile. "Letty, what do you think of me? Do you hate me?"

It seemed like he had other intentions while saying that. Ashton's grip around my hand tightened.

I pursed my lips and remained silent because it was all too silly.

Seeing that I was silent, Ashton glared at Marcus and said sarcastically, "My wife is a stellar person. However, Mr. White, you need to remember that she is a married woman."

I felt that their conversation was rather silly.

He gave Marcus an icy stare and carried me into the room that was just a few steps away.

After he shut the bedroom door, Ashton immediately cornered me in the doorway.

His hand grabbed tightly onto my waist as he lowered his head and glanced at me. There was a hint of suppressed anger in his voice. "Aren't you going to explain yourself?"

I pursed my lips and let out a sigh. "There's nothing going on between us. He might have been suffering from a lack of sleep because he was busy with his parents' funeral. When he fell asleep, I just wanted to cover him with a blanket. Then he pulled me and that led to what you saw earlier."

I apologized after seeing the sad look on his gorgeous face. "I know. I shouldn't have done that. However, Ashton, I can't just ignore him. If it weren't for him, I wouldn't be standing here. This has nothing to do with whether I like him. It's the fact that he had saved me before and I owe him because of that. He was by my side during my darkest days. In turn, I should be here while he is going through a tough time. I hope you can understand that, alright?"

He pursed his lips and gazed deeply into my eyes. After a moment of hesitation, he replied, "Yes, I can understand that!"

He continued, "You're allowed to be there for him during these times but you have to keep your distance after everything is settled, alright?"

He wore a black coat that day. There were drops of melted snowflakes on his shoulder. After not seeing him for a few days, his hair had grown longer, and he looked more haggard.

I nodded. It must have been hectic for him these few days. Since I could finally have some of his time, it would be wasted if we continued bickering!

He put his arms around me and pecked my forehead with his lips lovingly. "Let's go out for dinner. What do you feel like having?"

I was taken aback. "Aren't we staying for dinner with the Whites?"

"No. It's been a few days since I last saw you, so let's have a meal together. Just the two of us!" He hugged me and pressed me against his chest tightly. "Do you miss me?"

I could hear his heart beating and my lips curled instantaneously. "What are we going to eat?"

He pulled away from me slightly, cupped my face in his hands, and caressed my face. "What do you feel like eating? Why don't you miss me?"

I knew he wanted to hear me say that I missed him, but I couldn't bring myself to say that for now.

"Let's have steak."

He chuckled. "Hm, do you miss me?"

He buried his head against my neck. "Last night, I've thought about you the entire time in the hotel. I just wanted to hold you like this forever."

He had never spoken such sweet things to me. I couldn't stop myself from staring into his deep, shimmering gaze.

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 300

For a moment, I felt the warmth exuding from within.

“This morning when I was staring at the snow outside the balcony, I wondered to myself if you had a good rest in the hotel last night. After all, it wouldn’t be as comfortable compared to staying at home. There wouldn’t be any heater or warm clothing. You looked weaker when I saw you earlier.” Even though I whispered those words, he was listening to them intently.

I could sense a smile in his baritone voice. “Alright. Tonight I’ll let you make it up to me!”

I lowered my head and blushed.

Upon hearing that we wanted to head out for dinner, Sally didn’t say much. After all, Ashton was around and he was the one who mentioned that he wanted to take me out. She remained silent, even if she wasn’t too pleased about that.

After we left the White residence, Ashton drove and brought me to a restaurant in the city center.

The crowd was huge at night. Fortunately, he had chosen a high-end area and there weren’t many people.

The ambience was nice and quiet. After the waiter guided us to our seat, Ashton looked at me and said, “Besides steak, what else do you want?”

I rested my chin on my hand while staring at the city’s bright lights. Without any hesitation, I replied, “Up to you, I’m fine with anything!”

He took a glance at me and saw that I was gazing at the scenery outside the window. Without questioning further, he ordered the food. “What plans do you have this new year?”

I shifted my gaze away from the bright lights and looked at him. “Wouldn’t it be the same as in previous years?”

But it was only at that moment that I realized in the previous years, Ashton and I would return to the Fullers’ family home to spend the new years when George was still alive.

However, he wasn't there anymore. Since we weren't close to Uncle Charlie and Aunt Helen, it would be pointless to go back.

I pursed my lips at the thought.

Seeing my unease, he said, "I think the Stovall family would ask you to go over. What do you think of that?"

I had almost forgotten that Louis had asked me to be his god-daughter. "Then I guess I'll be heading over to K City for New Year's Eve."

Macy and Jackson were both abroad, and I didn't have any other relatives in J City. At the very least, Aunt Sally, Joe, Jared, and the Stovall family would also be here.

Upon thinking of Jared, I instantly asked Ashton, "Is everything settled at the hospital?"

He looked haggard. These few days must be hectic for him.

After the waiter served the food, Ashton cut my steak and handed over to me. "Yes, I think everything will be settled next year. No hurry. Let's think of how we want to celebrate New Year first."

Upon seeing that he had cared little about that, I was taken aback. I couldn't help but ask, "Dr. Crest has always been in charge of the hospital. How has he been dealing with such a big problem?"

"He's dealing with it. Accompany Aunt Sally these few days. I might need to go on a business trip tomorrow. I'll be back in a few days."

I sulked, with my chin resting on my hand. "New Year is almost here but you're still busy with work."

He smiled and brushed my hair. "I'll make it up to you after that. Let's renew our vows next year. You can decide on the theme?"

I was stunned. "Why is there a need to renew our vows?"

He chuckled and said, "I've shortchanged you for our wedding. Let's have one and make it perfect for us. Furthermore, being a part of the Stovall family, we will have Louis walk you

down the aisle. He will be happy to see his daughter being happily married. It would be a wish come true for him.”

“How is it possible for you to understand Uncle Louis so well, even though you have only met him a few times? What if he didn’t really mean it to have me as a god-daughter?” I laughed.

“Everyone in K City knows Louis is a man of his words. Since he has announced publicly that he wants you to be part of the Stovall family, that’s what he will do!”

I lowered my head and had difficulties with swallowing my food.

Upon noticing my changed expression, Ashton took my hand. “What else do you feel like eating?”

I shook my head. There was so much food on the table. “Ashton, do you think there are parents in the world who would really abandon their children? Even though I’ve only met Uncle Louis a few times, he has already portrayed such willingness to make me as his god-daughter. That means I’m not that bad. Why didn’t they want me?”

I suppressed the bitterness from overwhelming me. For over twenty years, I told myself that my life was fine even without them.

Grandma loved me even though I wasn’t related to her by blood. She loved me like her own. That was enough.

Growing up, my heart would ache even more whenever I saw my friends accompanied by their parents or relatives.. Why was I still alone in the end?

Ashton stood up and walked over to me. Then he embraced me in his arms while caressing my back. “You still have me, right?”