

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 101

He wrapped his arms around me and trapped me in an embrace. Eyebrows raised, he asked, "You're falling asleep just like that?"

I was becoming really annoyed by his antics. I turned to face him and said, "My arms are sore. Why don't you go settle it yourself in the bathroom?" Seriously, how could you expect anyone to do it every day? Especially a pregnant woman.

His eyes darkened as he grinned from ear to ear, "It's an honor to let you know how tough I am."

Me? You call this tough?

I ignored him, shut my eyes, and begged for sleep to come.

His voice softened. "Come on, don't sleep yet. You don't like it wet, right? Help me dry up. Then, we can sleep."

I grimaced. "Do it yourself."

Ashton rested his chin on my shoulder, but his hands stayed put. "There are some things that couples do together."

Fine. I won't be getting any sleep anyway if this goes on.

I broke off from his embrace, sat up, picked up the towel he had thrown aside a moment ago, knelt on the bed, and began to wipe his hair.

His upper body was still wet, with water droplets trickling down. I pursed my lips. Doesn't he know he should dry himself before coming to bed?

"You're getting water on the bed!" I exclaimed in annoyance, eyes on the damp patch under him. "The next time you do something like this, you're not sleeping here."

He chuckled. "Fine. Next time you should help me dry up in the bathroom."

I pressed my lips together, opting to ignore him.

After I was finished with him, I laid down to sleep. I was unsure what he was up to, but he went out shortly and came back with several ointments.

I was tired, and had no intention to ask.

His cell phone began to ring in that arrogant tone again. He answered in a chilly voice, "Rebecca, what is it?"

I did not expect him to answer his phone hands-free, playing the call on loudspeaker. On the other end, Rebecca spoke in a low voice, "Ash, come stay with me, please? I can't stand being alone."

Hasn't she gone back to Pear Garden with Cameron? Why is she still broadcasting her loneliness here?

"Call Joe, will you? I have to give Scarlett a massage later. She's pregnant. Her calves and feet have gotten swollen, so she needs to be massaged every day."

He said it very calmly and soon hung up the phone, not waiting for Rebecca to say more.

I glowered at him. "What do you mean my feet have gotten swollen? I'm barely four months along. Why do you say that?"

He smiled faintly, already placing my thigh on his. Next, he began applying essential oils gently on my skin. "Alright, you're not swollen. You're just fat!"

I really wanted to punch him.

My temper would rise if I kept this up.

So, I opted to close my eyes and went to sleep, ignoring the idiot.

I had been lethargic recently. I could sleep all day long and still be able to sleep through the night.

I did not know when exactly Ashton fell asleep, but he was no longer in the room by the time I woke up. I knew he would be busy these days, so I did not give it much thought.

I washed up, went downstairs, grabbed something simple to eat, and then left the house.

I was surprised that Cameron and Zachary wanted to meet me, but I knew it would come to this eventually. We had arranged to meet in a coffee shop in the city center.

When I entered the shop, Zachary was gazing at Cameron affectionately as he put a fine gold-rimmed watch on her wrist.

I could tell they were very much in love.

“It looks like I’m late,” I walked to the table and announced my presence with a smile on my face.

When Cameron saw me, she kindly led me to the seat next to her. “What would you like to drink?” she offered.

I put up a faint smile, “Anything, really.”

“I hear their Blue Mountain coffee is great. Care to try one?” Cameron suggested. It would not feel right to refuse, so I nodded, “Thank you!”

After we placed our orders, Zachary’s gloomy eyes fell on me. He sighed, “Ms. Stovall, you certainly look like Cam in her prime.”

For a moment, I did not know how to respond to that, so I got straight to the point, “Is there something you’d like to discuss with me?”

Since I brought it up, Cameron smiled too and said, “My dear, I haven’t even asked how you’ve been.”

Zachary, on the other hand, spoke up, “It’s like this. You know Cam and I liked you very much from the first time we saw you. We may have gotten our daughter back, but fate had already bound us together. If you don’t mind, Ms. Stovall, we’d like to have you join our family.”

I knitted my brows. I had a hunch that one would not simply seek out someone else without having an agenda. Thus, I replied, “Meeting you two has been a great blessing. Please, do tell.”

Cameron’s expression shifted, and it was not in a good way. She paused before saying, “Ms. Stovall, it should be clear to you what kind of relationship there is between Rebecca and Mr. Fuller, am I right?”

Is she here to speak on behalf of her daughter?

I grinned and nodded casually, “Yes. Crystal clear, in fact. You want to persuade me to divorce Ashton so that your daughter can marry the one she likes, am I right?”

The two seemed awkward right then, but they were people who practiced self-restraint. Cameron looked a little guilty. “I can understand how you feel, Ms. Stovall. Zachary and I had not considered this thoroughly, but please think of this as a mother’s fondness for her daughter.”

I nodded. I felt indifferent, actually. “Ashton and I are husband and wife in the eyes of the law, no matter how you put it. It’s certainly inconsiderate of you to try to talk me into getting a divorce. Besides, even if I were willing to let Ms. Larson take my place, Ashton would have to agree to that as well. Furthermore, I’m three months pregnant. As parents yourselves, what choice do you think I should make for my child?”

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Zachary was a businessman, and profits always came first in his world. After he heard what I said, he placed a gold card in front of me. “Ms. Stovall, you don’t have to worry about your child’s future. The money I have here is enough for you to purchase a suite in K City. Whatever you need down the road, name it, and I’ll help you.”

I smiled faintly. Wow, they’re certainly all in on this!

I grinned as I examined the gold card on the table. The whole thing was rather absurd. “How terrible it must have been to suffer the loss of a daughter for twenty years. I suppose it must be painful for Ms. Larson as well, spending her early years without her parents. You two have gone through this, and it’s certainly not what I want my child to experience. I believe my child would prefer staying with his parents over swimming in luxury.”

After a pause, I went on, “In addition, the Fuller Corporation’s current financial entitlements may be insufficient compared to what you have, but this doesn’t mean that it will stay that way. You admire Ashton, so you must know that his future is quite promising. If that’s the case, I don’t have to seek farther for what I want.”

Cameron and Zachary exchanged glances, feeling rather embarrassed.

I shrugged as the coffee was served. "I admire the love you have for your children. And perhaps I'm envious too. But that's all there is. Ms. Larson is lucky to have such supportive parents, but I want to secure a better future for my child as well."

Cameron let out a loose sigh and said, "Zachary and I haven't thought this through. Please, Ms. Stovall, don't take this to heart. As parents, it's easy to lose our sense of propriety for the sake of our children."

I nodded, "Yes, of course!"

I have said everything that should be said. I supposed there was nothing more for me to add that would not be a waste of breath.

I grabbed the bag beside me and made to get up, maintaining my composure as I took my leave. "I understand your objective in meeting me today. I've also made myself very clear. If there's nothing else you want to say, I'll be leaving."

I had barely taken several steps when Cameron rushed in front of me, looking shaky. "Ms. Stovall, please take this. You're still young. You still have plenty of opportunities to have children in the future. Please reconsider. Allow Zachary and I to take you in as our goddaughter, and you can enjoy the same prospects as Rebecca does. All you need to do is give up Ashton, and you shall receive tenfold of your current privileges. I know you'll be mad, but I beg you to think about it."

This was all quite laughable to me. Looking at the bank card she pressed into my hand, I grinned, "Ms. Anderson, I've always thought of you as someone sensible, empathetic, and governed by principles. But now, you seem quite ordinary to me. You talk about taking me in as a goddaughter, but honestly, even if I were your flesh and blood, I don't think I'd admit that we're related. We'd better go our separate ways."

Cameron looked like she wanted to say something, but I shoved her aside. Humans are really disgusting creatures. We carve out an image to show that we are good and harmless, call ourselves entrepreneurs, and then shamelessly accept the admiration and praise of others. Even so, we aren't able to conceal our shady nature.

Cameron lost her footing and fell to the ground. Repulsed, I looked on coldly as Zachary helped her up. "Sorry, I didn't mean it," I said flatly.

"That's presumptuous! I only hope that Ms. Stovall won't think that our methods are too cruel." Zachary's anger had begun to show, and his plucky face turned hostile. "Since Ms. Stovall rejected such a peaceful settlement, we shall resolve this differently."

"Surprise me!" With that, I left the premises. After experiencing such an ordeal, I couldn't help but thank my grandmother. She might have been living a hard life all these years, but she had taught me to follow my conscience. Thus, I did not become as corrupted as them.

I exited the coffee shop and headed straight to the company.

To be frank, I was not in a good mood, but I could bear it.

I bumped into Nick downstairs. He seemed to be in a hurry, so I pretended not to have seen him, but he came up to me instead.

He stepped into my path. "I haven't seen you in a while. What have you been up to these days?"

"Work!"

His mouth twitched. "Come on, don't be such an ice queen. At any rate, I'm still a fan of yours. Can't you be a bit friendlier towards me?"

I turned to face him and changed the subject, "Where's your biological father?" If Cameron is Nick's mother, where did his father go?

Perhaps the question came up too suddenly, for his face instantly sank. He scowled at me, "Why do you ask?"

"Just curious!" Cameron was a piece of work too. Who knows how many men she has bedded.

"He's dead." He dropped a simple reply, then carried on, "Have dinner with me tonight. I will answer all your questions then."

"Not interested!" I steered away from him and entered the elevator.

"I'll cook for you," He added hurriedly.

The elevator doors closed, automatically putting an end to his nonsense.

Back at the office, I called for Stacey, who did not look very well. I couldn't help but ask, "What happened to you?"

She sighed. "Mr. Fuller wanted to look at AC's audit personally. I'm so stressed right now."

I chuckled. "There's nothing to be stressed about. He just wants to take a look at it. You know I do that too. What's the difference? Just dock it like you always do, and there won't be a problem."

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Then I recalled seeing her with a man downstairs yesterday, so I pried some more, "Was that your boyfriend yesterday? The one who came to fetch you downstairs?"

She froze for a moment as surprise came over her. "What?"

"The handsome fellow in the black Cadillac. Is he your boyfriend?" It was just a casual question, and yet she seemed so skittish.

I joked, "I saw you two by chance. Why are you so nervous? Don't worry, a married woman such as I can't possibly steal him away."

Her smile seemed a little forced. "Ms. Stovall, I don't mean that. You know how I refrain from talking about my private life with the people here. Moreover, there are many women in the company, all of whom have pledged not to get married or have children for at least five years of working here."

Fuller Corporation was a good place to work in, but George Fuller had set a rule that female employees were not allowed to develop romantic relationships or have children within their first five years of working here. He took into account that women might take maternity leave and marriage leave sometime during their employment, which would affect their work.

This rule was unreasonable in the first place, so after Ashton took over the company, it was basically pushed aside. However, because the rule was set by George, his grandfather, it could not be removed directly. So, although this rule was written in black and white, female

employees were allowed to keep their options open, and they would not be penalized for taking maternal leave or marriage leave.

But this was her private life after all, and I had no right to pry, so I smiled in return, "Well, I just happened to see you two together yesterday, and I got curious."

I handed her the processed documents and said, "Here, get to work! Since Ashton has requested to check AC's audit personally, you should probably put in more effort. In addition, please do a summary for the credit audit report."

"Yes, Ms. Stovall!"

As she walked out of the office, I looked up at the clock. It was already noon.

That's strange. Based on Ashton's recent habits, he should have come to take me out to lunch by now.

Someone knocked on the office door. I snapped out of my thoughts to find Jared there. He seemed to be in a rush. Before I could say anything, he invited himself in and dragged me out.

"Dr. Crest, what's the matter?" Because I was shorter and smaller than him, I could not keep up. I was basically trotting behind him.

When we got in the elevator, he knitted his brows and announced sternly, "Ashton got into a car accident. He's been taken to the hospital."

Car accident?

I was confused. He was fine just last night, wasn't he?

"How is he? How did it happen?" He could compete in the National Championship with his set of driving skills. How could he possibly get into a car accident?

"Let's go check on him first!" Jared did not say much after we got out of the elevator, leading me to his car in a hurry.

Jared sped all the way, and very soon, we arrived at the hospital.

I hurriedly followed him to the ER, where Joe was standing guard at the door.

“What happened?” Jared asked, catching his breath. We came in a hurry.

Joe seemed fine at first glance. When prompted by Jared, however, he did not answer right away. Instead, he peered at me awkwardly before looking towards the other end of the corridor.

I followed his gaze and froze. Rebecca was there too. Her hair was unkempt, and the back of her hands was injured. She looked miserable.

“I wasn’t there too. I don’t know what happened,” said Joe. Then he approached Rebecca.

Ha!

Not much thought was required to figure out what happened. Ashton must have been with Rebecca, that’s why he got into an accident,

“Can I speak to the patient’s family?” A doctor wearing a white coat came out of the ER with the patient’s medical records in hand.

“How is Ash? Is he alright?” Rebecca quickly rose to inquire when the doctor called.

As a medical personnel himself, Jared was much calmer. He asked the doctor, “How is the patient’s condition?”

“The patient hit his head and is currently in a coma. We won’t know the specifics until he wakes up. Also, we found some glass fragments deep below the ribs, so we’d have to perform a minor operation on him to remove them. If his family is here, can you please sign this?” The doctor surveyed us all before producing a consent form.

Rebecca scurried over, “Me! Let me sign!”

The doctor nodded and asked her, “Miss, what’s your relationship with the patient?”

Rebecca froze in her steps and bit her lip.

I stood aside with my arms crossed and said flatly, “Does a signature by the patient’s lover have any legal effect?”

The doctor frowned in alarm. "Everyone, the patient is in critical condition. You'd better take this seriously. Furthermore, please be informed that the surgical consent form is only valid if it's signed by the patient's parents, wife, or children."

I walked over to him, took the consent form, and signed it casually, all the while maintaining an icy stare. "Are there any other documents that need to be signed??"

The doctor shook his head in a daze, "And what's your relationship with the patient?"

"I'm his wife!"

I added, "If that's all there is, I'm going back to work. I have other matters to attend to."

The doctor probably sensed a complicated relationship here, for he looked back and forth between Rebecca and me, paused, and said, "Since you're his wife, I'll need you to go through the hospitalization procedures. I'll also suggest that you stay for the night to care for the patient."

I was quite irritated at this point. "Is he dying?"

One comment caused several heads to roll as they turned to stare at me.

The doctor furrowed his eyebrows, "No, the patient's condition isn't serious. Only flesh wounds."

"There we go!"

Since he was not on his deathbed, there was no need for me to stay.

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After going through all the formalities that required signatures and completing all related procedures, I passed the documents to Joe. Jared had entered the operating room.

Joe did not look pleased when I handed him the documents. "Scarlett, what's the meaning of this?"

"Isn't it clear?" I looked at him, eyebrows creased. "I've done everything I'm required to, so I don't think I'm needed here anymore."

"Is that how you perform your role as a wife?" Joe sneered. "Your husband is lying in there right now, and you're here thinking of ways to stay far away. Is this how a wife should behave?"

The whole scene was hilarious. I looked at Rebecca, who was drowning in misery on one side, then turned to face Joe. I laughed. "I must say, I don't know what other people's wives would do when they find out their husband and his mistress have been involved in a car accident. But, in my case, the fact that I refused to delay Ashton's operation is the greatest kindness I can give him. To be honest, if it weren't for the sake of my unborn child, I'd rather not sign at all."

"Scarlett, you're a vile woman!" Rebecca cut in before Joe could respond.

I nodded, glaring at her twisted features. "Yes, I guess I'm quite vicious, but that's not enough. I should have prayed for the two of you to die together in that car crash, like a pair of lovers."

"Scarlett, don't you have a heart?" Joe berated. He could not tolerate me cursing at his sweetheart.

"Apparently not!" Anything else I said would be taken as tongue-in-cheek. I regarded the operating room, with its lights on, then turned to leave the hospital.

It was three in the afternoon by the time I returned to the company. Stacey brought in AC's documents and reported, "Ms. Stovall, AC's audit has been revised, but Mr. Fuller is not in the office. Can you sign it?"

I looked up at her and, for a while, but said nothing. She got a little flustered by the staring and rushed to speak, "Ms. Stovall, this document is urgently needed. I don't want to cause any delay at work, so..."

"Is Felix your boyfriend?" I spoke in a chilly tone.

Her face instantly paled. "Ms. Stovall, I..."

"Is he working at AC?" I added, eyeing her sharply.

For a moment, her hands clutching the document began to tremble, but she remained silent and merely bit her lip.

Eventually, I took my eyes off her and sighed, "Stacey, I like to think I've treated you fairly. From the day you joined the company until now, no matter what happens, the first thing on my mind has always been about getting the best possible offer for you."

I went silent after that, leaving the rest unsaid. When she did not respond, I spoke some more, eyes fixed on her, "The Fuller Corporation's audit is a big deal for both our companies. During this period, if anything happens to AC or the Fuller Corporation, the other AC is to blame."

"Ms. Stovall, I..."

I did not give her a chance to talk as I continued, "Take the audit data back and review it once more. Make sure there are no errors before sending it to the president's office to be finalized. Inform AC that collaboration is a long-term deal, not something that only lasts several days. Of course, if the matter is only between you and AC, then we have a solution, and I'll leave that to you. Don't allow the problem to escalate to the point where the leaders of the two companies have to sit down and talk it over."

After I was finished, I asked her to leave. I was not dumb. I knew nothing about auditing. Ashton spotted a problem.

He did not blame me directly but instead approached Joe, indicating that this matter mostly had to do with Joe. Deception and framing one another in the workplace were common occurrences.

Besides, Joe never really saw eye to eye with me. If he wanted to throw a wrench in the works and eventually cook up some problems to kick me out of the company, it would not be difficult.

Stacey was my employee. I leave most of the tasks to her. If she were to act a little selfishly and side with him, I would have to leave the company sooner or later.

I was familiar with Stacey's character. She could be moved only by matters of the heart. Other ways would prove difficult.

It was both a surprise and a coincidence to come across Felix that day. I connected the dots, threw in Stacey's personality to the equation, and basically had the whole story figured out.

I did not have much to do anyway, and I was feeling a little depressed as well, so there was no use staying at the company. I gathered my things and prepared to leave.

Before I could do that, Nick, who had changed into a formal suit, appeared at the door. With his arms folded, his eyes landed on me, "Let's have dinner together!"

I frowned. "I don't want to!"

"We can go for something grand. How about a barbeque?" He said as he walked in and grabbed the car keys on my desk. "Going in my car would attract too much attention. We need to keep a low profile, so let's take yours."

I rolled my eyes at him. "Where?"

With a cheerful grin, he said, "Just come with me."

I did not really want to go, but I felt a tightness in my chest just thinking about Ashton and Rebecca, so I might as well grab a bite to eat.

I did not expect Nick to take me to such a humble part of town. He drove into a small, dark lane that seemed to have become worn down over time.

The shady walls covered in poincianas looked absolutely stunning against the backdrop of the setting sun.

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Not long after that, he parked the car then turned at me, "The next lane is just narrow enough for two people to cross at the same time. So, we'll get off here and walk."

We got out of the car. As he had said, the lane was narrow indeed, just the right size for two people to pass through. Against the setting sun, the poincianas on the gray wall lit up quite brightly.

“This place is off the beaten track. How did you find it?” I had spent so many years in J City, but I had not been here at all.

The lane looked rather old.

He leisurely tucked his hands into his side pockets, “I stumbled into it by chance a few years ago. This lane was built around the mid-twentieth century. J City was originally a village on water, where most buildings were constructed with white walls and black tiles. You basically can’t find a lane as deep as this one in the south.”

I nodded. This lane certainly resembled more like northern architecture.

He glanced at me with his eyes aglow. “This lane was built by the local marshal for his wife. It’s over a thousand meters in length and over five hundred centimeters in width. Many couples like to come here on dates.”

“Sounds romantic.” The blooming branches on both sides of the walls gradually switched from poincianas to roses. These roses were beautifully trimmed, and they looked gorgeous in full bloom, making up marvelous scenery.

If one were in a bad mood, walking along this lane would provide pleasantries.

He shrugged. “It is.”

Back in our university days, Macy and I agreed that we would make a lot of money in the future, and then the two of us would travel the world together. I wanted to see the mysteries of the world outside, experience different cultures, and witness the traces left by the ancients.

I was not sure what happened next but, after graduating from university, this dream was buried. We had given over to reality and the harsh society, forgetting what we dreamed of in the first place.

“Scarlett!” Nick announced abruptly. I regained my senses and turned to face him.

He was a short distance in front of me, holding his cell phone. I looked up to find him snapping photos with a smile. "It's a shame you didn't pursue acting. You have the face of a celebrity, and you're really photogenic."

I knew he was sneaking shots at me, but I did not bother pointing it out. I asked about the roses on either side, "Do these flowers bloom all year round?"

He nodded. "That's right. Roses don't have seasons, and we're in the south, where the climate is perfect for these plants to prosper, so they get to bloom all year round."

It's splendid!

We walked like this under the sunset, enjoying the ease and comfort.

He put his phone back into his pocket, gave me a sideways glance, and then asked me sternly, "Why must it be Ashton?"

I froze and replied flatly, "It doesn't have to be him." I just so happened to meet him when I was young and experienced love for the first time. Hence, he has become indispensable to me.

He stopped in his tracks and proceeded to block my path, his face all serious. "You'll leave him eventually, right?"

I could not resist a laugh as I shoved him aside. "Who knows what the future holds," I said.

So what if I do leave him? It would be best if we don't meet the one who sparks our souls too soon. Otherwise, it'll be hard to get over them for the rest of our lives, and we may end up disappointing others who capture our hearts.

Without knowing it, we had come to the end of the road. It opened up to a crowded food street lined with stalls selling an assortment of food and supplies to the masses.

Many Hanfu enthusiasts were walking along the street in their favorite clothing, which was delightful scenery in and of itself.

We finally arrived at our destination after some more walking. It was already getting dark.

"You don't mind hanging out at a roadside booth with me, do you?" Nick found a seat at a barbecue stall and said to me with his chin propped up.

"If I say I do, are we hitting up a different stall?"

He got up. "Alright, let's do that."

I dragged him back to his seat and passed him the menu. "I don't like spicy food, but I'm fine with everything else."

When he noticed I had selected some food from the menu, he pulled a seat next to me and chuckled, "I knew you were different from the other girls."

I snickered as I peered at him, "How so?"

He ordered his food and said, "Most girls believe that eating at roadside booths is degrading. They aren't willing to try because they associate it with a lack of hygiene."

I let my eyes linger on him before answering in a flat tone, "And what makes you so sure I don't think that eating here is degrading? Or that I don't mind the dirt?"

He seemed dumbstruck. "Do you really think that?"

"Does it matter?" I took a sip of water and put on a faint smile. "In the absence of mutual understanding, you brought a female friend to this roadside booth. Either you're testing her, or you like the food here so much you simply want to share your joy with her. These are two separate concepts."

"If it's the former, regardless of the woman's reaction, you aren't worthy of the mutual attraction between the two of you. If it's the latter, then cherish it, for there aren't many out there who can share wonderful moments."

He turned to me. "What about you? If Ashton loses everything one day, will you still love him? If he's no longer the president of Fuller Corporation."

"There are no ifs in life!" I cut him short. The waiter chose this time to bring us our meat, and I fumbled with the grill knob.