

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.

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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."

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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?”

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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."

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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?"

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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."