

# In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 341

I nodded and replied, "I'm fine. Sir, my family is here now. Thanks for your help, and sorry for all the trouble. You can go now."

Looking slightly intimidated by the expression on Ashton's face, the driver shuddered a little. Bowing his head, he muttered one last apology before bolting out of the door.

However, the nurse didn't seem to want to leave. She stood by the bed, arranging the medicine bottles slowly, shooting admiring glances at Ashton when she thought he wasn't looking.

Ashton was a handsome man to begin with, and he attracted the attention of people wherever he went. Besides, because of the cold, arrogant expression he constantly wore on his face, girls tended to flock to him in droves.

"How did you get hit by a car?" Ashton asked, shooting a look of consternation at my bandaged foot. It quite resembled a dumpling.

I thought for a moment before replying sheepishly, "I got lost in my thoughts while walking and accidentally walked onto the road. That's how I got myself into this spot of trouble."

Ashton frowned. "What do you even have eyes for?"

I pouted sulkily. Tilting my head at him, I demanded, "Shouldn't you be hugging and comforting me right now? I'm not really in the mood for another lecture."

The nurse finally left the room. I looked up at him and muttered, "Stop being so cold all the time. I might misunderstand one day and think you have zero concern for me."

He walked over to me and looked down at my bandaged injuries. Sighing, he said, "Make sure you look out for cars when you're walking. Thank goodness you only sustained light injuries this time. If it were any more serious, I might see you at the mortuary."

I was speechless.

This man's thought process never failed to amaze me.

Ashton glanced at the box of pastries next to my bed. “Were you buying these when you got knocked over by the car?”

I nodded enthusiastically and smiled up at him. “Do you want to try some? They taste pretty good. I had pastries from this shop once and they were the best I’ve ever tasted. I went and got more of them today!”

Ashton frowned—he wasn’t exactly a big fan of pastries. “Do you want to eat them?”

I raised an eyebrow and jerked my chin towards my bandaged hands. “Do you think I could eat by myself now?”

His lips curved into a smile, looking so handsome that it was almost a sin. “Show me how much you love me, and I’ll consider feeding you.”

“Show you what?” I asked, cocking my head in confusion.

He told me. However, one look at the mischievous expression in his eyes told me all I needed to know.

I froze for a second before registering his words.

He brought his face closer to me. I was too lazy to play games with him—instead, I planted a kiss on his cheeks and asked smilingly, “Are you happy now?”

Ashton smirked and grinned back at me. “Just barely!”

After a few bites of the pastries, I gazed at him and ventured cautiously, “Ashton, do you think the dead can come back to life?”

On the day of Marcus’s death, I saw his lifeless body laying in a pool of his own blood. How was it possible that he had come back to life?

Ashton gazed at me and knitted his brows. “Did you see something? Why are you suddenly asking that question?”

“Oh, it’s nothing!” I replied, laughing it off. I tried to change the topic hastily. “I was just a little curious, that’s all.”

My injuries weren't that serious, and I found it too difficult to rest in the hospital. After a few hours there, I found myself begging Ashton to take me back to the villa.

After dropping me off in the bedroom, he made his way to the study, saying that he still had work to do.

Thoughts of Marcus still haunted my mind. I couldn't stop thinking about the man I had met in the city center today.

After lying in bed for a long time, I finally gave in and gave John a call.

When he finally picked up the phone, he sounded very tired indeed. "It's been five hours, you know. Tell me honestly—why did you skip our appointment today?"

At this, I suddenly remembered that I was supposed to meet John at Joy Luck Boutique for my gown fitting today.

Immediately, I started apologizing to him. "I'm terribly sorry, but I got knocked down by a car on my way there. I just got back from the hospital. Sorry, I should've informed you about it."

"What? You got knocked down by a car? What happened?" John yelled.

The story was too long and complicated for me to tell him about it right now. Instead, I jumped straight to the point. "John, do you know who the coroner in charge was of inspecting Marcus's body?"

John spluttered in confusion, "Marcus has already been cremated and turned to ashes! What's going on now? Did you suddenly discover that you were in love with him all along?"

Feeling rather annoyed, I snapped, "Oh, stop talking rubbish? I saw someone who looked exactly like John today. They looked perfectly identical! I could almost swear they were the same person."

"Did you get injured because you were chasing after him?" John sounded rather mocking now. "My dear Scarlett, the man is dead. Do you really believe that he would suddenly come back alive? Unless he faked his death, there's no way you'll ever see him again. Stop digging yourself into a bigger mess and get ready for the banquet!"

I pursed my lips. I wanted to argue with John, but he would probably think I was going insane.

After making some small talk, I hung up the phone miserably.

At that moment, I realized that Ashton had been standing in the doorway, listening to our entire conversation. His expression looked rather grim.

“Are you done with your work?” I asked, hastily dropping my phone aside.

He continued to gaze at me, his cold eyes boring straight into mine.

“Stop making calls here and there. If you’re as tired as you claim to be, go to sleep immediately!” His words were supposed to comfort me, but they sounded aloof and detached to my ears.

I nodded. I wanted to tell him something else, but he had already left the room, slamming the door shut heavily behind him.

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He’s mad?

I was not sure what he was mad about. I just found it odd.

That night, Ashton did not return to the bedroom, probably because of the medication.

Although I was injured, I managed to fall into a deep sleep that night. Amid the daze, I could have sworn I sensed someone standing by my bed.

But I was practically dead to the world. My eyes were sealed shut.

The next day.

I was awakened by a cool feeling on my elbow, and when I opened my eyes Jared was changing my dressing.

Startled, I instinctively opened my mouth to speak, "Dr. Crest, did Ashton call you to come here?"

He nodded, his eyes focused on applying medicine for me.

Mrs. Eriksen came up with breakfast for the day. "Letty, Mr. Ashton has gone out for work. He wants you to eat your fill and rest at home!" she informed me.

I nodded, alarmed, and turned to ask Jared, "Is it busy at the company lately? So busy that they have to work overtime on weekends?"

He raised his eyes and looked at me, brows arched. "Not really."

I glanced back at Mrs. Eriksen and, after a pause, said, "Was he in the study the whole night?"

To which she answered, "When I went to check in the morning, I saw Mr. Ashton exit the study. I'm not sure if he was there all night though."

This did not seem right. I had a feeling Ashton might have been mad, but I had no clue what or who he was mad at.

After treating my wound, Jared looked towards me and said, "For the next few days, I advise you to stay in bed, don't go walking around, don't come into contact with water, and stay away from vigorous exercises too."

I nodded at him. "Did Ashton sound angry when he called you this morning?"

He knitted his brows and said nothing. Then, he packed up the first aid kit and left without a word!

What just happened?

The day went by.

In the evening, Ashton did not come home until after dinner. His face was pale. I took the initiative to talk to him, "Mrs. Eriksen has a wonderful meal prepared just for you."

He merely peered at me, his expression a cold one. "I've taken my dinner!"

He's still mad?

Then he stormed up the stairs and entered the study, leaving me completely baffled.

"Letty, do you mind taking this up to him? Mr. Ashton doesn't look very good. Maybe he's dealing with a lot of issues at work. You two should have a good chat as husband and wife. Life's like that. You're happy one day and then sad on another. Marriage is all about communication."

Mrs. Eriksen spoke. Then she handed me the tray of home-cooked food she had prepared. They were all Ashton's everyday favorites.

At the entrance to his study.

I knocked a few times on the door and, after some time, when no one came to answer it, pushed it open and entered the room.

The study was barely lit. A strong smell of tobacco drifted in the air when I stepped in.

"Ashton?"

I turned on the lights to find Ashton leaning back on his chair next to the European-style desk, his eyes shut tight. The gloom on his face signaled that he would not tolerate disturbances at that time.

I placed the tray of food on the desk, and whispered to him, "Ashton, Mrs. Eriksen's prepared some of your favorite food. Please try some."

His eyes were closed so I could not get a good read of his emotions but, judging by the chill in the study, it seemed pretty clear that he was still bristling with anger.

The second I noticed the screen on his computer, I was stunned. It was a video of my car accident in the city center the day before.

Why is he watching this?

"Uncle Louis says we're expected at the Stovall residence next Monday to go over the family registry. You've been busy recently, so maybe I..."

"Scarlett!" Ashton interrupted me. His eyelids snapped open, revealing a pair of bloodshot eyes.

"Do you love him?" He said, his voice low and stern. He turned in his chair, his dark eyes fixed on me. "You managed to spot him in a sea of people, and then you went after him with little regard for your life. Is it because you can't get over him?"

The way he spoke was extraordinarily calm and ironic. I froze on the spot, having understood the reason behind his fury.

I leveled my gaze at him and ultimately chose not to evade the question, so I said, "It's not what you think. He's just an ordinary friend. But even so, if I chanced upon his lookalike on the streets, I would want to find out more about that person, just to assure myself. After all, I owed him my life."

He rose and slowly made his way towards me. His voice was low and deep as he enveloped me with his coldness. "What do you mean it's not what I think? Are you saying you know what's on my mind?"

I pursed my lips and subconsciously stepped back. When I hit the cold wall behind me, I realized I was cornered.

"Ashton, are you angry because I can't get over him, or are you mad because you believe I shouldn't get upset over a dead person?"

He sneered. "What do you think?"

I pursed my lips. I, for one, knew that this man was extremely possessive and domineering. After a pause, I said, "Whichever it is, Marcus is dead. That's an undeniable fact, isn't it?"

"What if he isn't?" he countered, his eyes darkened even more. "If he's alive, would you still want to repay his life-saving grace by offering your affection?"

I frowned, finding his argument awfully stubborn. Suppressing my emotions, I put my foot down and replied, "No ifs, and that's final!"

From the way I see it, Marcus was already gone. Only guilt and regret remained.

Ashton's overreaction undoubtedly meant he could not bring himself to accept that the regrets I had for Marcus would increase little by little over time.

He gazed at me, his dark eyes as deep as the sea. A long while later, he tugged his dry lips. Then, his slender and tall figure fell back onto the chair.

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"Get out!" he ordered, his voice cold and harsh.

The black jacket he was wearing made him seem more distant than usual. His dark eyes, which rarely revealed any emotions, to begin with, were unusually icy as well.

I opened my mouth to say something but, in the end, no words came out.

My gaze fell on his computer. Suppressing the pain in my heart, I said to him, "Ashton, I don't know why you get so mad at me over a person who's no longer living in this world. If you really think I'm that fickle and capricious, then we can file for divorce. Relationships between people will eventually end one way or the other. Every gathering will have to disperse in the end. Some live on while others die. I don't blame you, and I won't resent you."

There are some things in the world that you have to let go of if they are no longer within your grasp, especially when it comes to matters of separation... and death.

Between the two, I would pick separation over death every single time. That way, at least both parties were still alive.

A cold glint mixed with anger flashed in his eyes. He raised his hands and, in one fell swoop, shoved his computer and some other junk off the desk. They crashed onto the ground and shattered into smithereens.

"Divorce?" His thin lips outlined a vicious grin. "Scarlett, what does this marriage look like to you? Do you see it as a trade? Or a momentary pleasure? I wonder how it is that you can utter the word 'divorce' so freely. Have you been rehearsing it over and over again in your mind, to the point that it comes out so smoothly? Huh?"

I stepped back subconsciously when my eyes came into contact with his cold gaze. My heart ached. "You were the one who drafted the divorce agreement. You were the one who kept hinting at me about divorce. You can deny it all you want, but you can't let go of your responsibilities towards Rebecca, and I feel guilty for Marcus, so... it would be better for both of us if we just split!"

I did not know why I could be so calm and composed at a time like that. I could even describe my internal frustrations, which had been repressed for so long, in a calm and concise manner.

Perhaps I had them buried deep within my conscience for so many years, and I felt that the timing was right to bring them up since the topic of divorce was now on the table.

We clearly acknowledged the helplessness and grievances we had for each other. Furthermore, no matter what, we were basically incapable of achieving mutual understanding. So, divorce might just be the best option.

"Better for both of us?" His sharp glare gave me the chills as he curled his lips, ready to mock me. "For you, maybe. The man who you initially thought had gone to heaven suddenly showed up among the crowd. Before that, you had decided to put the past behind you but then your heart grew restless again at the sight of him. What you harbored was not guilt, but regret. And when you saw him again, you were tempted."

He sneered. "My responsibilities towards Rebecca? What a joke. Here I am working my hardest to give you a sense of security while all you think about, Scarlett, are a million ways to get rid of me. Good gracious!"

His words might be harsh and mean, but I chose not to refute them. No matter what he said, it was useless for me to set things straight.

I glanced at him with an impassive expression. Compared to his anger, I took his reaction in stride. "Ashton, let's stop lying to ourselves!"

I did not want to argue, for I did not even know where to start. I could not even tell how our relationship hit the rocks. Was I at fault or was he being a pain?

So I did not want to fight. Grandma said that if two people loved each other, no matter what obstacles laid between them, they would always be able to forgive and tolerate each other. Maybe love was what we lacked, and thus we could not find relief.

I turned to leave but he caught my arm and held me within his grasp. He had me pressed against the table and began to kiss me aggressively.

From the bottom of my heart, I wanted to resist his strength and dominance. I turned my head away to evade his attack while I tried my best to push him away.

But, sadly, men and women differ in strength. To him, my strength was comparable to a mosquito. He clasped one hand around my waist and pinched it so hard that I winced in pain.

His free hand held my head in its grip, forcing me to reciprocate his kiss.

It was unbearable. I lifted my hands to push him away, but he bit down so forcefully that I yelped.

“Ashton, let go of me! I don’t want this!”

He snickered. “We are a couple. This is what couples do. What’s wrong with that? Heck, you don’t want to do it with me because you’d rather do it with Marcus, is that right? You’re still thinking of someone who’s already dead. What for?”

Slap! I hit his face as though on instinct, while the disgust and pain intertwined in my heart.

He stopped abruptly. His face resembled the turbulence that gathered before the pouring rain. The storm he was brewing made me tremble all over.

I thought he would hit me back or push me to the ground out of fury, but he did not.

Instead, he raised a hand and held my chin in place before taking a brutal bite of my lips. After that, he proceeded to ravage me like a feral beast.

I roared, “Ashton, no! I said no! Release me!”

He scoffed. “When have you ever wanted it? When have you ever asked for it? Huh?”

My mind went blank. Just when it was about to short-circuit, I felt a burst of pain spread throughout my body.

I did not resist. In fact, I had no way of resisting.

I questioned myself over and over again in my head. How did we end up like this? Is it because we have fallen out of love? Is that why he can step all over me as he pleases?

As I looked at him, I noticed there was nothing but a bottomless abyss in those dark eyes of his. There was only eternal darkness.

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How dreary! How ridiculous!

I could not help but snigger, with him in my sight. A faint smirk curled up the corner of my mouth.

He glanced at me, his eyes darkened once again as he lowered his head and kissed me. "Say my name!" he called.

I pursed my lips and tilted my head to one side. I closed my eyes, refusing to see him.

His thin lips hovered at my ear, his voice softened a little as he repeated, "Scarlett, say my name!"

I said nothing. My mind was forming a plan to escape. I deserved to make him wait for me to tell him personally that I cared about him, that I loved him, and that I wanted him.

But I could not bring myself to tell him. Over the years, I had buried so much in my heart, including his coming to Rebecca's defense time and time again, his never-ending care towards that woman, and the harm he had caused me so nonchalantly and in so many ways.

I had suppressed so much of that. Over time, those frustrations began to take root, multiply, and became more and more intense.

Love could not be that all-forgiving. In the highly selective social circle, anyone could be tolerated. Anyone could fit.

"Ashton, let's file for divorce!" I said it, not on impulse or out of anger, but after putting in considerable thought.

He stiffened. I pushed him aside. Then I grabbed my clothes to cover myself, though just barely, all the while showing little emotion.

"Are you serious?" he exclaimed. His dark eyes fell on me, looking extremely tense.

I pursed my lips and nodded. Then, I gazed into his dark eyes as I explained it to him. "Let's just calm down and think this through. Perhaps it was a mistake right from the start. What Grandpa considers as 'a good match' might not resonate with our definition of it. My feelings for you at the beginning might not have been love at all, but admiration. Your feelings for me, on the other hand, might just be guilt accumulated over time by your neglect towards me.

There was no love between us, only bits and pieces here and there that were combined together to resemble something like it.

When he spoke, the gloom on his face resembled a dark cloud that had been accumulating droplets for some time now. "Not love!"

It seemed like he said that out loud for himself to hear. In the days that followed, I kept thinking about the many couples in the world. How many of them stayed together through a lifetime of responsibilities just because they were made for each other, and how did these so-called couples who claimed they love each other spend the rest of their lives together? First comes lust, then comes love. Perhaps, there never was such a thing called love, and everything else was just an excuse for our own consolation.

He forced me into a corner, a ruthless sneer crossing his face. "What do you know about love? Tell me, what does love mean to you? You keep talking about divorce. You make it sound like it's such a trivial matter. Do you think just because I spoil you, because I protect you, that I deserve your abuse?"

I lowered my gaze. My legs gave way as I slumped onto the floor, still leaning against the cold, hard wall. Hugging my knees, I said, "The woman whom you love, spoil, and protect is currently lying on a bed in the hospital."

"Ho!" he scoffed. "You just have to bring that up, don't you? You just have to force me to give up on Rebecca, to prove that I love you? Scarlett, you are one horrible woman. Why must you take things to the extreme?"

I pressed my lips as I stared at my toes, before looking up at him. "You only realize that now?"

He smirked with disdain. "And what about you? You fill your heart with someone that's already dead, and then you're quite willing to throw your life away to chase after a shadow. What does that make you?"

I calmed down and stared back at him. "Since we have our own hurdles, then we might as well file for divorce. I don't want anything from the Fullers. Grandpa transferred HiTech to my name, I can transfer that to you. I don't want your house or your car. Luckily, we don't have any children. Since we agree that this is a huge mistake, we can get a divorce now and start over. It's not too late."

"Screw this!" Ashton violently knocked over the table lamp beside him. It fell to the ground. Still fuming, he roared at me, "What do you mean 'not too late'? You're the one who can't let go of the past. What's that got to do with me?"

I was exhausted. I felt like I was trapped in a dead-end, with no way to get out.

Ashton's temper seemed to have reached its limit. I could not tell which statement was spoken out of anger and which one was for real.

I pushed him away, stood up against the wall, and said, "I'll move out and live on my own for a while until both of us have calmed down. And then, we can discuss the divorce."

Yet he held me down again, his thin lips pressed against the corners of my mouth. They lingered, and then, in a voice that sounded restrained, he asked me, "Have you ever loved me?"

I bit my lips, my heart aching as though it had just taken a bad hit. Even breathing became difficult. "Does it matter?"

"It does!" He kissed me, and continued in a depressed mood, "After we divorce, is there still a chance between us? No?"

I pursed my lips. "No!" Who in the world would file for divorce, only to end up together again? Since people file for divorce because they fall out of love, it's only natural that they won't fall for each other again.

"Ha!" he snickered. "Then why should I agree to that?"

He bit my lips again, his eyes filled with bloodlust and a tinge of coldness. "It doesn't matter if you don't love me. I'll give you time. One day you'll surely fall for me. You'd better forget about Marcus. I don't care if he's dead or alive. Either way, I won't let you be with him. Scarlett, you belong to me, and only me!"

He grabbed his clothes and swiftly put them on before throwing a cold glance at me. "Stay put!"

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As I watched him slam the door and leave, my mind buzzed away. It was fine in the beginning, so how did it become like this?

Moments later, Mrs. Eriksen came upstairs. When she saw me on the floor, seemingly at a loss, she merely sighed. "Oh dear, you two..."

"Mrs. Eriksen, I want some peace!" I said, overcome by fatigue. I rose from my spot, stumbled out of the study and into my bedroom, where I proceeded to lock the door.

I must have blacked out after that.

I laid on the bed, in a daze, until midnight, when I was awakened by a nightmare.

There was no one beside me. I got up to pour myself a glass of water. I checked the time. It was three o'clock in the early morning. I supposed I would not be able to fall asleep again after this hour.

I had not eaten anything that night. I opened the door and went downstairs. Mrs. Eriksen had left some food for me. I took several bites but, honestly, I did not have much of an appetite.

As I headed upstairs, I glanced at the study out of habit. There was no one inside. The chaotic mess had been cleaned up.

It seemed Ashton did not return at all that night. I retired to the bedroom and looked through the email sent by OrbitTech again.

It did not take long for the weather to get cold, as the second round of heavy snowfall in K City came as expected.

The entire yard was covered with snow. To avoid traffic jams, people have already begun to shovel snow outside their homes.

Mrs. Eriksen was surprised to see me up and about when she came in for work. She said, "The new year's rolling in soon. People are stocking up on new year goods and decorations. Letty, what do you say we go shopping after breakfast? See what the stores have on sale."

I grinned at her. "I have somewhere to go in the afternoon, so I'll have to pass. Has Ashton purchased the air ticket to J City for you?"

Mrs. Eriksen's son and daughter lived in J City. She usually spent the new year break with them every year. For me, I used to spend it with either Grandma or George. It was great while it lasted.

Now that both of them were gone, it had become quite lonely during festivities, as though the holidays had become meaningless.

I wonder what's going on at Macy's. With that thought, I had the urge to give Jackson a call, but I shrugged it off when I checked the time. It was too early to do that.

I simply turned to Mrs. Eriksen and said, "I'm heading to the company in a while. Ashton's not here, so you don't have to make breakfast for us."

She looked like she wanted to say something, but I had already grabbed the keys and gone out the door.

Work at the White Corporation started at nine. I got there early, so I waited in the office for a while before I went looking for the person in charge of OrbitTech to discuss work.

Research and development of AI could not possibly be achieved in a few short days, but I was pleased to see the progress we were making.

As I came out of the R&D Department, I bumped into Sally. It had been a few days since she moved back to the White residence, and it seemed she had officially returned to work at the White Corporation as well.

She saw me egging to leave, and said, "Are you in a rush?"

I shook my head. "No. What's up?"

She clasped her hands and spoke, "The new year's just around the corner. What plans do you and Ashton have this year? Are you returning to J City or staying here in K City? I heard that the Stovall family is adding you to the family register. What are your plans for the coming year?"

"Not sure," I said, facing her. "Why don't you ask Ashton?"

With that said, I got ready to leave, but when I reached the lobby I chanced upon a group of people just entering the building.

Among them were Ashton and Joe. They must have come to talk about work.

In the reception area, Ashton's slender figure was particularly eye-catching. He stood with one hand in his pocket and seemed to be chatting with Joe about something important.

Our eyes met. He frowned at me, apparently still bitter about what happened. Briefly stunned, I pursed my lips and looked away as I headed towards the exit.

"Scarlett, have you had your breakfast?" Joe spoke as he came up and blocked my way. I could not pretend that I did not see them.

I stopped walking. My eyes darted to Ashton, who was still wearing the suit from last night. I could see the wrinkles.

"Later!" I replied. Other colleagues greeted me from the side and I responded to them in turn, ready to leave.

I looked back at Joe and said, "I have other matters to tend to, so I'll get going!"

"Come on, Scarlett. Ashton and I are going for lunch soon. You should come with us!"

"No, thanks. I really have other things to do. You go ahead!" I said, feeling for my car keys.

Ashton's face grew cold. He threw an icy glance at Joe and uttered calmly, "Are you that free?"

I pressed my lips. I had no intention to linger, so I said to Joe, "I'm leaving. See you!"

Then I left without waiting for Joe to respond.

I managed to hear Joe's petulant strife with Ashton from behind me. "You're saying I'm too free? Ashton, you're one to talk. Who was the one who didn't sleep at all last night and spent every waking moment drinking? Who's the depressed one here?"

I was not sure what to make of that.

I got out of the building and into my car. I had barely got the engine started when my phone rang. It was Stacey.

I turned the engine off to take her call. "Hi. What's up?"

"Can you come to J City, hopefully by today?" she said, sounding quite serious over the phone.

I froze at her request. "What happened?"

There was a pause before she continued, "I don't really know how to put this. I think they want to keep this a secret from you. That's why they haven't called. But the truth will come to light sooner or later. So... why don't you come back and take a look at it yourself? You need to know the cause."