

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 1391

His sharp words caused Tiffany's expression to turn sour. "They're my niece and nephew. Why can't I see them? Do you have to behave like this, Ashton? We're a family!"

I wondered if Nicolas would say the same. After all, the man was so cold-blooded. Simone looked at the kids in anticipation, and all of a sudden, all eyes were on Ashton, waiting for a satisfactory answer.

I knew I had to act quickly before they did anything to him.

Simone would be my best bet.

"It's not like that, Tiffany. Ashton is just worried about the babies."

I plastered a smile on my face as I headed over to the nanny. I took Gregory, who had started crying the moment he realized he was in a new environment, into my arms. I coaxed the child gently, and he soon quietened down.

"Gregory was abducted right after he was born, so he's always on edge and very sensitive to his surroundings. He feels safe when he's close to someone familiar. That's why Ashton hopes we can all take things slow, but of course, we're more than happy to let Dad and Mom carry them."

My words put everyone present in a tight spot because the Hall family members were accountable for what had happened to Gregory. There was no way they could deny what they did.

I carried my child over to Simone's side, allowing her to look at him. "Mom, meet Gregory."

As expected, Gregory burst into tears the moment he saw Simone, eliciting a frown on the old couple's faces.

"It's okay. You can carry him." Nicolas quickly added impatiently, "How annoying. Ask the servants to bring them around the house. They should get familiar with this place."

I breathed a sigh of relief and quickly handed Gregory back to the nanny before I gestured to Joseph to bring the children out for a walk.

Since Nicolas had spoken, Tiffany could only sit down on the couch without playing with the children. Nathaniel, who had been silent all this while, came forward and held out his hand toward Ashton. "Welcome home, Ashton."

Ashton took a brief look at him and shook his hand grimly.

Their first encounter was rather peaceful. Perhaps what Tiffany said was true. The whole family actually looked forward to Ashton's homecoming; everyone except for Nicolas, of course.

Just as I was deep in thought, Nathaniel stepped forward. "Dad, since Ashton is back, why not I bring him over to the company to take a look around?"

"Forget it." Nicolas turned down his second son's offer crudely as he walked toward the dining hall. "Let's eat first."

Nathaniel did not seem even a little disturbed by his father's attitude. He shrugged his shoulders and followed after the older man. He must have gotten used to Nicolas' behavior.

I looked at them begrudgingly, wondering how everyone would dine together with this thick tension going on.

Ashton had already calmed himself down when he clasped my hand and pulled me over to the dining room.

The chemistry around the table was awkward beyond measure. Nicolas sat at the host's seat with his emotionless face while Simone asked the servants to set up the table with a small smile on her face, giving me the impression that she was forcing it.

I stole a look at Ashton, but he did not return my gaze. Instead, he tapped the back of my hand lightly, signaling me to relax.

After some time, Nicolas finally gestured for everyone to start dining.

Nicolas placed a piece of cut steak in his mouth the moment the food was served. Everyone else began digging in at his command without any intention of striking a conversation.

Halfway through the meal, Simone suddenly lifted her head and looked at me with a smile. "Letty, I made you soup earlier on. It will help you strengthen your body. Let me go get it for you."

Although she was smiling, I was sure she was just putting up a front.

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I quickly got to my feet upon seeing Simone getting up. "It's okay, Mom. I'll help myself."

Although I doubted her sincerity, she was still Ashton's mother. I knew better than to let her get the soup on my behalf.

I followed her over into the kitchen and saw her turn off the stove. She grabbed a ladle and poured me a bowl of soup carefully. Her hands moved adroitly as she worked, and I could not help but think she must be a good cook herself.

I noticed her fit figure as she bustled about in her kitchen. It must not be easy to maintain such a body at her age.

I walked over to get the bowl of soup from her, but she dodged my hand and put the bowl on the kitchen table forcefully instead.

My hand froze in the air before I realized the smile on her face had long faded away. She looked cold and cruel now.

Although such a change was not totally unexpected, the speed at which her expression changed still caught me by surprise.

“Since it already spilled, I guess I won’t get to try it anymore,” I said, turning to leave.

“What’s the rush? There’s still some soup left. I spent a long time preparing it. You should really try,” her dry voice rang behind me immediately.

Her lofty tone made her live up to her name of a true Hall.

“Let’s cut straight to the point. There’s no use wasting time here. Ashton is a smart man. He will know something’s going on. I know you’re just trying to leave a good impression on him by being nice to me out there. If you don’t want him to be suspicious of you, you’d better cut to the chase with whatever it is you want to tell me. Out with it now.”

It was at this moment that I thought Simone must have had a hand in poisoning me.

“I admire your honesty, and I guess I could say you have some brains too. Perhaps that’s why Ashton likes you, but don’t expect the Hall family to treat you like he does. Since you’re already here, you’d better follow our house rules and behave properly.”

Simone came from a good family. She was an amiable person before the accident, but it seemed like I had got ahead of myself. I thought too highly of her.

After all, she had spent such a long time with Nicolas. There was no way she would stay the same woman.

I glared at her coldly for a few seconds before talking. For a split moment, I felt a surge of pity for her. “You must really miss your son after such a long time, but sadly, there’s nothing you can do because there’s no way Nicolas will let you keep in touch with someone he loathes. You did nothing to save your own son when he planned the accident. But look at you now. You’re pretending like you’re his mother when he comes back after all these years. You have no moral ground to lecture the person he loves the most. Do you think this is how you show your love for him? Or do you think this will appease the guilt in your heart?”

I could roughly understand how Simone felt as the words tumbled out of my mouth. I took up the half-filled bowl as I looked at her from the corner of my eyes. "All you can see is me being domineering toward Ashton, but have you ever thought that his heart is bleeding because of you? I might not be the best wife for him in your eyes, but at least I won't ever leave him to suffer alone."

A smirk curved on my lips as I turned to leave with the bowl of soup in my hand. But just as I was going out of the kitchen, I bumped into Ashton.

"Why are you here?" I asked.

Ashton blocked the kitchen entrance and glanced at Simone before looking at me. "What took you so long?" he uttered softly.

"We got carried away talking with one another. You have nothing to worry about. It's not like I'll do anything to her," Simone interrupted with a bitter smile on her face.

Women had their own struggles when transitioning from being mothers to mothers-in-law. It was understandable that they might feel jealous because they thought they lost their sons to their sons' wives.

"It's difficult to say you won't do anything to her," Ashton said reproachfully, not bothering to try treating his mother nicely.

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"How could you..." Simone's sad voice almost broke when she heard him.

"I'm fine, really," I stated clearly before pulling Ashton out of the kitchen. I did not want to be the catalyst that made their relationship go downhill.

Not long after we walked out, we saw the maid leading Bill into the house through the front door. Behind him stood a spectacled young man dressed in formal wear. I trailed Ashton's gaze and

took a closer look at the new guest. We both stiffly froze the moment it clicked.

Armond was here.

Armond felt our burning gazes and looked up without shying away. A sly smile played on his lips, sending a shiver down my spine.

Bill entered the dining hall and greeted Nicolas courteously, "Mr. Hall, I've brought the man here."

Everyone around the table put down their cutlery at the announcement of a guest. Simone had just gotten out of the kitchen as well. She had her hair tied up and looked all freshened up like an elegant lady after the little brush we had back in the kitchen.

Nicolas nodded without haste and looked at the man behind Bill. "So... you're Armond?"

"Yes. It's nice to meet you, Mr. Hall." Armond bowed like a gentleman, but I could still spot a glint of sinister spite in his eyes through his glasses.

"I've looked at the research project you oversaw in M Country. Everything was very well done, so keep up the good work. Mr. Young will surely continue supporting you if you do," Nicolas said disinterestedly.

"That's very kind of you, Mr. Hall. I will do my best to make sure you and Mr. Young see good results," Armond replied with a smile.

"Take your time," Nicolas said, waving his hand dismissively. "I'm a businessman. I'm only interested in maximizing the profit of my investment, so you should probably focus on making my investment worth it and stop things difficult for Ashton and his family."

It seemed like what Tiffany said was true. Nicolas was really putting an end to all this and letting Ashton go.

Nicolas' words struck Armond like a lightning bolt. The smile on his face became rigid and unnatural. He probably did not know the relationship between the father and son yet. "What's with the sudden change? We've been working together really well all this while. It won't take long before we can take Ashton down."

"That's enough," Nicolas cut him short, his face darkening. "Didn't Mr. Young teach you that it's impolite to ask too many questions? The Hall family didn't give you the money and status you enjoy right now for you to create trouble. Do I have to discuss and explain my decisions to you right now?"

A scowl spread across Armond's face as he squinted his eyes at Ashton and I. "So you're expecting me to put aside our grievances and work together with him under you?"

I gulped a mouthful of cold air at Armond's sharp words.

If Nicolas were an imposing tiger, then Armond would be a venomous snake. You would never know when he would decide to strike you.

Even Ashton and I knew better than to not distance ourselves from him no matter what.

Surprisingly, Nicolas did not disagree with the statement. "This matter does not concern you," he stated blankly. After a period of silence, he opened his mouth once more. "See the guest out."

"Right away, Mr. Hall."

Just as Armond was about to disagree with Nicolas, Bill interjected. With that said, the man turned and left with Armond without giving the latter a chance to speak.

Although Armond was discontented with the arrangement, openly challenging Nicolas wasn't an option, so he left the estate reluctantly.

Ashton pulled me over to our seats once Armond left.

However, before I could even resume eating, I heard Ashton's voice ringing clearly beside my ear. "Armond isn't someone who

lets people control him. Instead of letting him off just like that, why not leave him to me?"

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Nicolas looked up at Ashton, unfazed. "Don't try to act smart with me. That guy might be a beast, but I own the whole island. Nothing goes unnoticed under my nose. This is the only thing you need to bear in mind. He's a lot better than you in many ways."

"I'll admit he's better when it comes to doing unscrupulous things," Ashton said, "I admit I'm not as good as him in this regard. I don't have what it takes to do things like harming my own son. I don't think I'll ever beat him in that aspect."

"Are you blaming me right now?" Nicolas interrogated with a hint of anger in his voice.

"Ashton," I quickly cut in, putting my hand on his and shaking my head.

At my action, my husband clenched his jaw and kept quiet. Before long, his shoulders slanted helplessly. "I'm just giving an example. If you think you can trust Armond, ignore what I said."

Ashton was a man full of pride. No one would believe him if he were to behave obsequiously to people he disliked. Showing his true colors on and off was more his style, and such a thing was good for us in some sense. The Hall family would be aware that it would not be easy to totally undo what they did to us.

Nicolas letting Armond go right in front of us was a clear warning. He wanted us to know that he still had a way to get back at us if we went against him.

The peaceful family meal we had was nothing more than a facade.

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After Ashton secretly sent out our location yesterday, he ordered people to sneak to the island to look for the antidote.

But even the best-laid plans could go awry. Nathaniel knocked on our door early the next morning.

Ashton was sitting on the couch working on his tablet, so I went to get the door myself. "Morning, Nathaniel. Is there anything you need?"

"Go get ready. We're going to the research center on the island to take a look," he replied, glancing at Ashton.

My mind raced at his suggestion.

No Hall family members were pushovers, nor were they fools. They knew we had our own agendas for coming to the island. After Nicolas blatantly turned down Ashton's request to be involved in the family business, there was no way Nathaniel would be kind enough to risk incurring his father's wrath just to help us.

Ashton came up beside me when I was lost in my thought. "Sure thing, Nathaniel. Scarlett and I will be downstairs in a bit."

"Alright." Nathaniel nodded briefly and walked off to the staircase.

Ashton stood at the door, watching his brother walk away before he closed the door behind him.

When he began dressing, I headed over to help him with his tie. "What do you think of Nathaniel?" I asked.

Ashton's gaze lowered before he looked back into the mirror to fasten his cufflinks. "He's easily the most tricky one in the family. He looks harmless on the outside, but his thoughts are deep as the sea."

When I was done with his tie, Ashton took his coat from the hanger. He shot me a quick look and caught my gaze in the mirror before saying, "He might look amicable, but his every step is calculated. Since he's plotting something, let's play along and see

who comes out on top. It so happens that they just sent a message saying security is so air-tight at the research center it's difficult to break in, so we should just go take a look ourselves."

Ashton summarised his observation of his brother as he got ready. He seemed confident he would be able to deal with Nathaniel.

I applied on some makeup as I listened to him speak. After I was done, I picked up a cardigan and trotted downstairs with him.

Everyone moved around on scooters on the island, so it took us less than five minutes to get to the research center.

The entire building, which looked modern and innovative, was securely guarded by a transparent protective layer made of special materials. There were surveillance cameras every one hundred and fifty feet, so there were no blind spots. It would not be possible for even a fly to make its way in. Nathaniel scanned his handprint at the security checkpoint, and we walked in through the main gate. Security was seen to be tighter the further in we ventured. Passwords and iris recognition were required to go into the base of the research center. To call it a tech company might sound glamorous, but it was nothing more than just where a bunch of people in white coats worked.

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After a trip around the center, we figured that the main industry on the island was pharmaceutical.

Healthcare was an industry essential to humans both in life and in death. Not only did the Hall family had the manufacturing and sales of drugs covered, but they were also involved in researching. They had the know-how to monopolize the whole industry. I finally understood why an affluent philanthropist like Bill Young would work under them.

We did not come across the poison center the entire morning. The whole production chain was legal, sanitary, and green.

When our group arrived at the last research lab, we bumped into Armond, who was busy inspecting the lab at the time.

“Why are they here, Mr. Hall?” Armond asked coldly without the slightest effort to hide his enmity toward us.

“Oh right, I forgot to tell you. I need you for another project, so just put your current project aside for a while,” Nathaniel answered without much emotion in his voice.

“Put my project aside?” Armond glared at both of us spitefully. “I thought you would know what you’re doing, but it turned out you’re just the same as these two good-for-nothings. Are you really kicking me aside now that your family is happily reunited? I have not forgotten the sufferings the Murphys went through because of your family. I will make sure you guys pay.”

“The Murphys only have themselves to blame. The police would not have something on them if they were truly innocent,” I interrupted.

What I saw at Armond’s villa was still fresh in my memory. They were the ultimate villains on earth. They came in second to no one.

No mother would be able to carry herself with composure when faced with the culprit who abducted her own child. Just as I was about to lambast Armond, Ashton tugged me by my sleeve – he was signaling me to calm down.

“You’ve done enough to us,” Ashton pointed out, looking at Armond right in the eyes and pulling me into his arms. “Since we’re all working for the Hall family, I guess I can put your offenses behind.”

I whipped my head toward Ashton in horror and disbelief.

Armond had been disgruntled when Nicolas took our side yesterday. Is Ashton trying to stoke the man’s anger?

As I anticipated, Armond was vexed. “So you’re saying I have to be grateful to you after losing so much on my end?” he replied sarcastically.

“You don’t have to. I’m not that petty. You simply need to make sure you’ve learned your lessons from our past dealings,” Ashton rebutted coldly with a smile.

John’s ability to insult people seemed to have rubbed off on Ashton. I widened my eyes in shock, unable to believe the words that I had just heard come out from his mouth. My husband could outdo John himself.

A chilling stillness filled the air after Ashton spoke. “More like I’ll teach you a lesson!” Armond cried out as he heaved a punch in full speed at Ashton’s face.

Ashton pulled me backward and stood in front of me instinctively.

Just as the impact was about to reach Ashton, a hand flashed before my eyes and caught Armond’s fist with precision. The next thing I knew, the man was hit on the shoulders and flipped over. His body slammed against the floor in a painful thud.

“Mr. Murphy...”

The many security guards around dared not move a muscle because the person who had attacked Armond was none other than Nathaniel himself.

Armond’s face contorted in agony as he groaned on the ground, but Nathaniel seemed totally unfazed. “We will compensate for all the losses your family suffered. You should know your place here. You have no right to touch anyone from the Hall family,” Nathaniel commented passively as he adjusted his suit.

Armond glared at him in fury from below.

Unlike me, who was completely stunned by Nathaniel’s swift reflexes, Ashton did not seem surprised by it.