

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 1546

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In the old classroom, there were about more than ten children of different ages lining up in two rows. All of them were dressed in the same type of white hospital gown. Apart from feeling anxious due to the arrival of the strangers, they looked clean without any visible wounds. Based on my observation, there were no physical signs which implied that they had gone through a traumatic experience.

Heaving a sigh of relief, I was thankful that none of the children was in a pathetic state as imagined by me earlier.

Ashton stepped onto the stage and glanced at them before he asked Joseph, "Have you done a background check for all of them?"

Joseph replied respectfully, "Yes, most of the children's information is well kept in the orphanage of M Country, except for these children. Basically, there isn't any record for them. Thus, they are sent here temporarily."

Ashton did not really react to his words. Squinting his eyes, his mind drifted into contemplation.

On the instant, the whole classroom was in pin-drop silence. At the moment, only the heavy panting of the children due to their anxiety was still audible.

Audrey was excited as it was her first time seeing many children at the same time. When Ashton was still deep in his thought, she took the chance to squeeze out from my back and walked toward them.

I instinctively stretched out my hand, yet I was not in time to hold her back.

Fortunately, Gregory reacted fast and moved forward instantaneously. Grabbing hold of Audrey's hand, he accompanied her to inspect all the children one by one.

Those who lined up in the first row were about Drew's age. Since they were younger, they looked a bit shy and timid. Audrey just roughly browsed through the first row before she held Gregory's hand and moved on with the second row.

All of a sudden, she came to a halt in front of a boy whose body size appeared to be the smallest. Her big round eyes were glued to him.

After gazing at him for a while, she took out a lollipop from her pocket and handed it to him. "Take this."

However, the boy was indifferent and did not accept it.

Out of curiosity, I looked intently at the boy. For a split second, I was stunned as he looked familiar to me. However, when I took a closer look at him, the sense of familiarity was gone. My heart flinched at the sight of his sunken cheeks and dry skin due to malnutrition.

The laboratory where the inhuman experiment was carried out was just like a smaller scale of society, and only the fittest could survive. He must be in the so-called lower level of society and ended up as the victim of bully. That was why he appeared to be a lot thinner compared to the rest of them.

As a mother, I was relieved that Audrey was soft-hearted and sympathized with the weaker ones.

Assuming that the boy did not dare to receive the lollipop from Audrey, I encouraged him gently, "Don't be afraid, just eat."

As a pitiful boy who was treated as a specimen in the laboratory, I expected him to be lack of confidence and nod shyly at me to express his gratitude. Out of my expectation, he only raised his head and gazed at me. I was impressed by the unusual calmness in his pair of eyes. He was apparently more matured than the other boys of the same age. I presumed that he must have gone through a lot all this while and had a complicated background.

After gazing at me placidly for a few seconds, he shifted his gaze away. The next moment, he raised his hand abruptly and stretched it toward Audrey's neck.

In an instant, Gregory dragged Audrey one step backward and blocked in front of her. He yelled with a stern look, "What are you doing?"

Audrey almost stumbled and fall. After she managed to balance her body, she was confused with the current situation. Both of the boys were facing each other as if they were opponents on a wrestling stage.

Ashley's eyes lit up as something crossed her mind. She tugged at her clothes casually and jumped a few times on the spot.

Out of a sudden, something dropped from her shoulder.

Audrey's face lit up when she picked up the thing. Showing it to Gregory, she said cheerfully, "Greg, see this? He is actually helping to take this away from my shoulder! He doesn't intend to hurt me!"

There was a piece of small wrapping paper for a candy.

Audrey had a sweet tooth like Gregory. Since we did not allow her to take too much candy, she was smart enough to secretly took the candy and hid it elsewhere so she could savor it without our knowledge.

If I was not mistaken, Audrey must have eaten a candy earlier and hid the piece of wrapping paper under the collar of her blouse so nobody would discover it. Gregory was used to walking behind Audrey in order to cater to her safety. If not, they would be walking abreast. Therefore, it was impossible for him to spot the piece of wrapping paper. On the other hand, the little boy was a little taller than Gregory and he was standing face to face with Audrey a while ago. Hence, he could easily spot the piece of the wrapping paper under her collar and was about to help her take it out. Yet Gregory who was overprotective of his sister had misunderstood him.

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Everyone was relieved after the previous tense moment was proven to be a misunderstanding.

After knowing that the boy did not have any bad intentions, Gregory finally stepped aside.

Audrey handed him the lollipop again with a cheerful smile. "Thank you so much! Now you can eat the candy! This is my favorite candy! It's really yummy!"

This time, the boy did not reject and took it at once.

Audrey's smile widened as the boy held the lollipop in his hand.

At the same time, Ashton made a decision and announced, "Let all of them stay and give them financial aid under Madam's name till they grow up.

Joseph replied in acknowledgement, "Noted."

Ashton turned to look at Gregory and instructed, "Gregory, bring your sister over here."

Upon hearing his words, Gregory held Audrey's hand and led her back obediently.

When both of them were in front of Ashton, Gregory said respectfully, "Daddy, I've brought Audrey back."

"Good," Ashton nodded and turned to look at Audrey. "Next time, never ever approach any strangers without your Mommy and my permission. Can you promise me that?" Ashton asked sternly.

There was only the usual intimidating indifference on his cold, expressionless face.

Audrey could sense the displeasure in Ashton's tone. Instead of refuting as usual, she nodded obediently and replied softly, "Alright, Daddy."

"Let's go home now," Ashton said again.

Next, he turned to face us and prepared to leave, letting both Gregory and Audrey walk in front of him.

Gregory obeyed Ashton's instructions as usual and stepped out at once, with Audrey trailing closely behind him.

After walking forward for two steps, Audrey came to a stop abruptly. She turned to look at the little boy and was reluctant to move forward.

Ashton followed her gaze and knew at once about what was playing in her mind. After pondering for a while, he lowered his head and asked her, "You want to bring him home as well?"

Pouting her lips, her forehead creased into a frown as she gazed at the boy with a look of sympathy. She gulped and said softly, "He's so thin. If he continues to stay here, he will starve. Aunt Emma ever mentioned that the children in the orphanage are the most pitiful. I just feel like helping him..."

I could sense that she was being tactful with her words, especially her last sentence. She was more like mumbling at that time, apparently fear of infuriating Ashton.

John probably had taught her before that she was not supposed to be rude especially when she was on certain occasions. As a result, she did not dare to make a big fuss despite her reluctance to part with the boy.

Ashton was an assertive person who would not easily change his mind. I thought it would not be an exception this round, and Audrey would end up feeling upset. Nonetheless, he was being sympathetic unexpectedly.

Instead of replying to Audrey right away, he moved forward and looked straight at the front. In a low and stern voice, he instructed, "Come over here."

He was obviously instructing the boy.

The boy moved swiftly from his current spot to the front of all the orphans.

When he stood right in front of us without anyone blocking his way, we were shocked to see his exceptionally thin figure. Even though he was actually wearing the smallest gown, it was far too

loose for him. I even doubted whether he would be blown away as well if there was a gust of strong wind.

My heart started to ache as a surge of sympathy welled up from within me. I truly felt for Audrey. I myself could not resist feeling sad for the boy, what's more Audrey was just a child. She surely had a stronger feeling than me.

Standing right in front of Ashton, the boy looked helpless like a small tree in front of the enormous mountain.

"I'm giving you two options. If you choose to go home with me, I will raise you well and bear the cost of your education fee. In return, you will need to attend classes together with my daughter and stay by her side all the time, putting her safety as the top priority. If you choose to continue staying here, Fuller Corporation will provide you financial aid, but you will be on your own. Think about it and make your choice. The final decision lies in your own hands."

Ashton remained indifferent as usual and did not soften at all although he was facing a child.

Within seconds, the boy made his choice and replied firmly, "I choose to go back with you."

Before Ashton gave his instruction, the boy had approached Audrey. Imitating Joseph, he lowered his head and bent his body as he stretched out his hand to lead the way. "Miss, please walk in the front."

In a blink of an eye, Audrey's face brightened up as she trotted out to catch up with Gregory.

Meanwhile, the boy was fully aware of his status and trailed behind them obediently.

Tucking both of his hands in the pocket, John pondered as he gazed at the boy's figure. So they just let the boy follow them home without a second thought? They are willing to take the risk and raise him even if they don't have any clue about his background?

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“Audrey likes him, so what can I do?” asked Emma. “You’re just a pot calling the kettle black. Based on how you spoil children, if it were you, wouldn’t the result be just the same?”

John did not get the response that he was hoping for. He pursed his lips and helplessly said, “We were talking about the children. Why did you start criticizing me instead? Oh, woe is me...”

Emma glared at him with narrowed eyes and didn’t bother to respond to him.

These two were destined to be a bickering couple.

Drew went along with Gregory. Of course, Emma and John followed closely behind.

Ashton and I trailed behind some distance away from the rest of them.

Side by side, we walked through the corridor together. It was a rare moment for the two of us. Looking at the lanky young boy shuffling along at the back, I felt a flurry of mixed emotions in my heart.

I was not against Ashton doing charity, but how he did it did not sit well with me. Even though he did so out of consideration for Audrey, we couldn’t foresee what would happen in the future. Maybe one day, the boy would grow up and think that he was humiliated and started to harbor evil thoughts.

“Besides,” I paused before continuing in a serious tone, “I don’t like the look in this boy’s eyes. He may look young, but he doesn’t have the youthful exuberance of a young lad. His eyes are like a pool of dead water...”

Just like that person.

I was lost in my own thoughts when I felt a familiar warmth on my shoulder. I turned my head. Ashton had slid his arm around me and enveloped me in a comforting side hug.

“Audrey is pure-hearted by nature. We must handle the situation carefully to keep it that way,” replied Ashton. Each step he took was calm and steady. The way he spoke, as if he had it all under control, somehow managed to put me at ease. “My daughter will grow up safely and peacefully. No one can disrupt that. A few days later, I will look for a chance to send the boy away. By that time, I’ll need you, my dear wife, to help cover me.”

He was two steps ahead of me the whole time. My worry was all for nothing.

I smiled and agreed to his plan. “If necessary, I can be the bad guy. Audrey is already not that close with you. I do not want anything else to drive a wedge between your relationship with her.”

In order to maintain a happy family life, husband and wife need to work together as a team.

Ashton lightly squeezed my upper arm and smiled to himself. I wasn’t sure if he took what I said to heart.

It soon became apparent that our concern was not unfounded. Audrey was very fascinated with this boy who followed us back from the orphanage. She even paid more attention to him than to Gregory!

The moment we stepped into our home, Ashton ordered our maid to see to the boy’s cleaning up. Every few minutes, Audrey would approach them and secretly stare from the side.

This made me rather uneasy.

Excessive fascination is often the start of sinking into a bottomless pit. Even with familiar people, we could never know what covert schemes were simmering in their hearts. Not to mention this time around, we have an orphan with unknown origins.

After some careful contemplation, I called over Gregory to have a little chat.

“Greg,” I said with a smile while tenderly stroking his wet hair that was sticking to his head after a wash, “can you do Mommy a favor?”

Gregory, being the good-natured boy that he was, nodded and agreed at the drop of a hat. “Sure, Mommy. What do you need me to do?”

I thought for a while. Then, I moved to his side and whispered into his ear. “Audrey spent too much time playing today. Can you think of a way to get her to go back to her room and sleep?”

“Sure,” answered Gregory. With that, he went over to Audrey, who was pretending to play with some toys by the pillar. She was actually peeking at the boy the whole time.

Soon, the siblings were engaged in a discussion.

I looked from afar, feeling satisfied and confident. I guess having more children around really did have its perks!

In Audrey’s eyes, Gregory was far more appealing than Ashton and me. Asking him to persuade her was more effective.

I had full confidence that Gregory would succeed, but I didn’t expect it to be that quick.

In less than a minute, Audrey threw her Barbie doll to one side and happily scampered upstairs.

Feeling surprised, I hurriedly stopped Gregory and asked him what he had done. “Greg, what did you say to your sister? Why did she agree to go sleep so quickly?”

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“Nothing much,” replied Gregory calmly. “I only told her that if she goes to bed now, I will play with her tomorrow right after I come home from school.”

“That’s all?” To say that I was dumbfounded would be an understatement. Thanks to John, Audrey was so cheeky that even

Ashton could not handle her. Yet, Gregory managed to convince her so easily?

“That’s all,” confirmed Gregory. Without any change in his expression and tone, he continued, “So Mommy, if I can make Audrey sleep early again tomorrow, can I play on the laptop for half an hour more?”

“Okay...” I was still reeling in disbelief that Gregory persuaded his sister with just a simple offer. I gave my consent unknowingly.

“Thank you, Mommy!” Gregory grinned triumphantly. “Good night, Mommy!”

He turned to walk upstairs without a backward glance right after saying that.

His indomitable aura and unfazed manner reminded me once again that everyone would have their own Achilles’ heel.

Thinking of how Audrey had Ashton and John wrapped around her finger as well, I laughed helplessly.

I looked to the side and saw Ashton walk over. He had come in from the balcony when I was unaware. He eyed me with amusement and asked, “What are you thinking of that made you so happy?”

“Nothing much,” I replied. I couldn’t let him know that he was inferior compared to his son in the eyes of his daughter. Therefore, I swiftly changed the topic. I looked at his phone and asked, “You’re done with work?”

“With Joseph around, there’s nothing much for me to worry about.” Ashton proceeded to sit down on the sofa next to me and placed his phone on the coffee table. “I have found a well-to-do family. The husband and wife are both infertile. They would be happy to adopt a son.”

He had been on the phone the moment we reached home. I see, so he had been busy making arrangements as to that boy.

The Fuller and Stovall families were wealthy; thus, the money needed for bringing up a child was not a big problem. Out of goodwill, we were more than willing to take up this responsibility.

The only problem was that we could not obtain any information about this child. Hence, his past was a mystery. My women's intuition kept alarming me that this could mean he potentially posed an unimaginable threat to my children.

When it came to our own children, all mothers would inevitably be selfish.

Perhaps it was out of guilt, I couldn't help but comment on what Ashton told me. "Material wealth is a secondary factor. The most important thing is that they are of good character. Good family education and environment are crucial for a child to grow healthily."

Ashton was about to respond when I glanced at him from the side and noticed a silhouette quietly standing by the door. I was caught by surprise. Upon seeing my reaction, Ashton put a pause to whatever he was about to say as well.

The boy had just bathed and changed into pajamas. His hair was still quite wet, and his fragile body was next to the door frame. When our eyes met, I could see a brief flicker in his eyes.

Did he hear everything we said just now?

I felt awkward about it, but Ashton lightly beckoned for him to come over.

Soon, the boy trudged over in slippers and stood before us. The flicker in his eyes a moment ago was now concealed.

"What is your name?" asked Ashton.

The boy looked up at me, then answered, "My name is Shaun."

"You could remember so clearly?" If I was not mistaken, children who were experiment subjects were taken away from their families at a very young age. They would not have such a clear memory of their original names.

Ashton scrutinized the boy closely. He did not say anything, but he gave off a very imposing vibe.

Unexpectedly, under Ashton's gaze that could make a grown man cower in fear, the boy was unruffled and unaffected. He was as bold as ever, like how he had been at the orphanage. He nodded his head to show affirmation. "I remember everything clearly. I was just captured and held there a month ago."

After hearing him say that, I came to a realization.

Nicolas' experiment was to verify the flexibility of the genes in Ashton's body. Naturally, he would have to select research subjects of different ages. This boy who called himself Shaun was just the right age, so he was abducted.

This explanation justified everything, but I couldn't help but feel something didn't add up somewhere.

It was just like he was purposely leading me to think in that direction so that my suspicions toward him would be abated.

However, I quickly denied my own doubts.

This boy standing before me was just a child. He was a poor soul who lost his family. Even staying alive was a challenge to him. How would he have the capacity for deception?

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At that moment, I felt that I was too cynical. I had assumed that a child would behave in the same way as a scheming adult.

"Alright," said Ashton. He didn't seem to be suspicious of anything, he just nodded and excused Shaun. "It's getting late, you should go get some rest."

"Yes, sir." Shaun bowed slightly in a respectful manner and turned to leave the living room.

Everything was silent once again. I noticed that Ashton's gaze was pinned on Shaun's retreating back. Evidently, he was just as suspicious of him as I was.

"What are you thinking?" I asked.

Hearing my voice, Ashton turned to face me. Out of nowhere, he said, "No matter how obedient or cultured he may sound, these are not reasons for him to stay and get close to Audrey."

After saying that, he lifted the cup of hot tea to his lips. He then took his time savoring the tea and did not say anything else.

Since our thoughts were aligned, there was no need to say everything out loud. Seeing that Ashton was as concerned as I was, the uneasiness that I felt arising out of worry for my daughter's safety was repressed.

The next day, Ashton woke up early in the morning. After having breakfast, he took Gregory and me to the villa in the western suburbs.

The normal accompanying staff was replaced by M Country mercenaries who were hired by John. After they changed into casual clothes, they were put under Millie's command.

Joseph was already waiting at the entrance of the villa.

"Where is she?" Ashton asked coldly.

"In the master bedroom on the first floor. Ms. Hall kept begging for us to get a doctor..."

Ashton simply ignored what he said and went into the villa with long strides.

I expected a Hall property to be either luxurious yet low profile or high-class and extravagant. Upon entering, I immediately noticed the peculiar interior of the villa. Colorful graffiti covered the walls. There wasn't much furniture in the living room, but there were

many carefully placed items in various shapes. It seemed to be for practicing skating.

Tiffany always appeared before everyone in heels. Who would have known that she had such a hobby in private?

While curiously studying the house, we followed Ashton to the room where Tiffany was.

As soon as Joseph opened the door, we saw a man and a woman huddled together at one side of the bed.

Looking more closely, the woman was none other than the haughty Tiffany Hall. Perhaps due to lack of rest, her face was pale at the moment.

The man was seated on the bed, with the lower half of his body covered under the blanket. He did not make a move to get down from the bed even after seeing us.

Both their eyes were slightly red and swollen. It was quite obvious that they had cried before we came in.

“Ashton! What right do you have to chase away my personal doctor? Can you bear the responsibility if someone dies?” Tiffany started yelling at us the moment she saw us. “He is your brother-in-law! How could you be so heartless?”

Tilting his head slightly, Ashton glanced toward the bed indifferently. “So? Isn’t he still alive and well?”

“You...” Tiffany was so angered that she could not speak. She kept sputtering and was unable to form a coherent sentence. “I... You. You’re being unreasonable!”

Ashton was unfazed by the maniacal Tiffany. He walked to the side of the bed and stared down at the man. Even while standing at the door some distance away from them, Ashton’s formidable aura could still be felt.

Except for Tiffany, everything else in this villa was unusual. From the bizarre renovation to the baffling furniture, it was hard to tell whether the scruffy and bearded man was an artist or a reclusive shut-in.

If I wasn't mistaken, when Tiffany mentioned "brother-in-law", she was referring to the man on the bed.

From what I remember, Tiffany was not married. Moreover, based on her identity and status, it was hard to link her and the man together with the concept of love and marriage.

Tiffany seemed to be very afraid that Ashton would harm the man. As soon as he got close, Tiffany sat on the side of the bed and held the man in her arms tightly. Her eyes were alert and panicked. "Ashton, please don't hurt him. I was the one behind everything. I will bear responsibility for all of it. Please consider the fact that I am your sister and hire someone to care for him. I have already caused him too much harm. I cannot drag him into my mess anymore."