

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 643

Nora turned to me and queried, “Scarlett, if we indeed get to go home this time around, what would you want to do most of all?”

What did I want? That question lingered in my mind as I continued trudging forward, deep in thought.

There wasn’t any food I was especially craving. After a moment’s pause, I concluded, “I want to see the person I miss most, give him a hug, and apologize to him face-to-face.”

Nora seemed taken by surprise. Then she curiously pressed, “Is it somebody you’re in love with?”

I gave her a faint smile but declined to reply.

Night had fallen when we finally reached saw signs of human life. The village we’d arrived at was located in quite a rural area of the mountains, and perhaps due to its inaccessibility, there didn’t seem to be many inhabitants around.

From the number of lamps we’d counted shining in the dark, there were probably thirty to forty households scattered throughout the village.

“Let’s find a place to hunker down for the night,” Nora suggested, already making her way towards the door of the nearest cottage.

“Woof! Woof!” A dog suddenly rushed out into the yard and began sounding the alert at our sudden intrusion.

We clung to each other, terrified. Fortunately, the dog was leashed to a rope. It strained against its tether, barking continuously.

The owner of the cottage had evidently heard the ruckus. Out stepped a middle-aged man with tan, weathered skin.

He spoke, but none of us understood what he was trying to say. After a while, Tabitha gasped. "We might have unknowingly crossed the border into Venria!"

We all froze. The arduous journey we'd made, crossing peak after peak, hadn't brought us any closer to home. We'd even gone so far that we were in another country altogether.

The man's foreign tongue threw us all into disarray. Upon seeing our confused faces, the owner of the cottage seemed to further mistake our intentions. He waved his axe at us threateningly in a bid to chase us off his property.

Fortunately, a young woman, approximately sixteen years of age, ran out of the cottage just then. She tugged at the man's sleeve.

The young woman urgently conferred with the man for a while. He then grew noticeably calmer and lowered the axe in his hand.

The man then turned toward us and gestured. Uncomprehendingly, Tabitha made a few hesitant motions with her hands in return, trying to convey our goodwill.

We couldn't tell if he understood. He did, however, let us into his home eventually.

The cottage we entered was a dismal sight and stripped down within. Its clay walls were caked with soot, doubtless from the fire that was burning in its hearth.

A filament lamp hung from the ceiling, the sort that farming villages would have used decades ago. The lamp burned dimly at a bare fifty watts, probably to save on electricity costs. Shadows filled the entire cottage.

There were some bowls and utensils in a neat stack in a corner. The roof of the cottage was, in fact, a tent stitched together out of gunny sacks. There was dust everywhere. It turned to grime at damp spots where rainwater had seeped in.

The small heaps of blackened dirt that covered the tent looked sure to be full of pests.

The man took out two bowls from a cabinet and placed them before us.

Due to the language barrier, the man continued to gesture furiously. He seemed to be inviting us to eat.

We peered at the bowls in front of us. The food was steeped in chili. Nora recoiled ever so slightly, asking, "What dish is this?"

"It's pickled onions. I think it's supposed to be a starting dish. Shall we try it?" Tabitha exclaimed rather adventurously. She had more of an appetite than the rest of us for more exotic and unusual delicacies.

Having endured hunger for a whole day, we dug in rather gratefully. The flavor of the pickled onions, spicy with a hint of sourness, was quite refreshing.

It had been a few days since we'd really tasted anything. The pickled onions thus thoroughly satisfied our tastebuds.

As we ate, the man and his daughter squatted in a corner. They gazed at us with curiosity and awe, mixed with a tinge of fear.

Sensing their uneasiness, Nora persisted in her attempts to communicate with them. Along with her hand signals, she deliberately spoke a few basic words, emphasizing each syllable slowly.

It worked. Somehow, both father and daughter came to understand that we were here to borrow a device to contact home.

They were stumped, however, by what exactly a phone was.

We'd run into another roadblock. We could only wait until the next day for the man to seek help from his fellow villagers. Until then, we'd have to take shelter in this battered cottage. Compared to spending a night out in the open mountains, however, this was considered a win.

When we blearily woke the next morning, the man was already up in the tree in his yard plucking fruits.

His daughter stood beneath the tree with a basket, picking up the soft fruits he'd accidentally let tumble onto the ground.

Every time she bent over to pick up some fruit, she'd beam a smile in our direction. It was as if she was eagerly trying to transmit her simple joy to us.

"Really makes you rethink the link between happiness and wealth, doesn't it?" Tabitha mused, looking rather wistful. She looked almost like a child with her slender frame.

Nora crossed her arms, leaning against the door frame. "Why? Are you thinking of something sad?" she quizzed, raising an eyebrow.

Tabitha shrugged. "Not really. I was reflecting on this whole turn of events, and I feel as if I've been enlightened. How we live our lives should be entirely up to us. It doesn't matter what other people think."

"It's all been destined!" Tessa quipped. This discussion aligned with the philosophical tendencies she'd been harboring all this way. We'd finally managed to pique her interest.

Nora massaged her temple, groaning, "Can we take a break from philosophy for once?"

Tessa ignored Nora. She marched straight out into the yard and began picking up fruits with the young girl.

They still couldn't communicate with words but smiles and gestures seemed to suffice for now.