

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 1441

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Marcus looked at me directly. "I already gave you the answer."

His answer dashed my fantasies. "Oh, ok."

You look alike, but you're not the same.

This whole mess is because of my face.

"Are you disappointed?" Marcus hit the nail on the head.

I shook my head, hiding my true feelings. "No, I'm glad it's resolved. I don't have to worry about this anymore; it's a relief. I only regret that I'm not Gregory's mother."

Marcus said jokingly, "If you've changed your mind about kids, I'm always ready to make a baby with you."

"Pfft." I rolled my eyes and snatched the water out of his hands. "You're still trying to take advantage of me after admitting that you've been lying to me for years? Don't make me kick you to the curb!"

Marcus' head injury didn't stop him from using his arm. He held his glass easily as he whined, "You're going to treat a patient like this?"

I glared at him and dropped the subject.

Though my memories hadn't returned, that didn't mean I was a muddled mess.

There were too many mysteries surrounding Marcus. I would unravel them one by one once he had recovered.

Marcus spent six years taking care of me in the hospital. That was proof enough that he didn't bear any ill will toward me.

Drowsy after the meal, Marcus soon fell into a deep sleep. I left to get some fresh air in the corridor.

My phone began ringing just as I sat down. It was an unknown number.

I had a sinking feeling that the caller was my cold neighbor. This sort of mysteriousness suited him.

I checked on Marcus through the window. He was sound asleep, his chest rising and falling steadily with each breath.

Once I ascertained his safety, I picked up the call. "Hello, may I know who's calling?"

A familiar voice drifted through the receiver. "Ms. Stovall."

I knew without a doubt that this was Ashton.

His tone was unique, cold like the lakes in late autumn with an inexplicable charisma. It was easy to recognize.

Ironically, his call felt like winning the lottery. I didn't expect someone as powerful as him to call me voluntarily.

I collected myself and calmed my nerves. "Mr. Fuller, how can I help you?"

"I have the results of your paternity test with Gregory. I'll send someone to pick you up."

I noticed that I was already used to his concise manner of speaking.

"You've caught me at a bad time. I'm at the hospital." I turned around and checked on Marcus once more. "My friend is alone in the hospital, and I can't just get up and leave. Can we reschedule?"

Ashton seemed to completely ignore my request as he talked over me impatiently, "Ms. Stovall, do you know how many thousands of people are employed at the Fuller Corporation?"

“Huh?” Surprised, I nodded though he couldn’t see me. “I’ve seen it on the news. Why?”

“To accommodate a change in my schedule, thousands of employees will have to change their schedules as well. Ms. Stovall, are you sure you want to be responsible for a change like that?”

My jaw fell open at his statement. What was I thinking? That I could outmaneuver a businessman at the top of his field?

In the end, I could only tell him the address of the hospital.

He hung up immediately after I ended my sentence.

Impatient jerk! What a rude b*stard!

I was left staring at the call log of my phone. I decided to ask the housekeeper to come and take care of Marcus.

Marcus woke up just as I pushed open the door.

“Did I wake you?” I asked apologetically.

“No.” He shook his head weakly. He looked even paler after his short nap.

After some hesitation, I said, “Marcus, I’m leaving for a while as I have some things to attend to.”

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Marcus’ half-awakened eyes promptly lit up, and his inflection elevated a notch. “To see who?”

I replied with a stutter, “It’s...”

He did not wait for me to finish. “Go ahead if you want to, but be careful. There may be something more to the traffic accident than meets the eye.”

His tone was calm, but his words discouraging.

I nodded. "I understand. I'll be back as soon as possible."

With that, I poured a glass of water and left it within his reach. "Rest up first. Mrs. Kingsley will be over soon."

"Okay."

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I left only when Mrs. Kingsley arrived.

I was about to hire a ride when a black van honked at me.

Its number plate was not unfamiliar to me. Ashton had once unloaded from this vehicle when he moved in next door to Marcus.

I instinctively reached over for the handle. When the door to the rear seating opened, there sat Ashton.

Cautiously, I withdrew my hand. "Mr. Fuller?"

"Get in."

Ashton spoke briskly and without much emotion, so much so that I was unsure whether I had imagined hearing him.

I caught a glimpse of his fingers rapping upon the armrest ever so often. Their movements were casual yet confident. Only then did I understand that he had been waiting for some time, so I promptly lowered my head and entered without a fight.

The soundproofing inside the vehicle was excellent as it was relatively quiet even while we traversed the bustling commercial district.

I was first between us to break the silence. "Have you found out the results of the paternity test yet, Mr. Fuller?"

“Not yet.” Ashton’s lips lifted somewhat patronizingly before he went on to light up a cigar for himself.

My body had been subsisting on medication and supplements during this period and was more sensitive than most. I cupped my nose inside my knuckle against the smell of tobacco drifting toward me.

In the next moment, the windows to the side steadily lowered.

When I turned, I saw that the freshly lit cigar was now resting quietly inside the ashtray. With the inside of the car completely ventilated by the night breeze, the scent of the tobacco quickly dissipated.

I felt warm inside and pursed my lips as I regarded him and his considerate gesture.

Ashton’s gaze was directed forward and unwavering. The calmness that was also reflected in his gaze made him hard to decipher.

Shortly, the car rolled to a halt.

Joseph came up to open the door. “Mr. Fuller.”

It would appear that he, too, had been waiting for a while as well. Upon detecting my presence, he bowed in greeting. “Ms. Stovall.”

He then walked himself to Ashton’s right and whispered into his ear as he led the way.

I followed behind in silence with a clamminess inside my palms.

Even though it was conclusive enough over on Marcus’ end, I could not help but hope for some luck and some surprises going in.

We did not have to wait very long before the doctor arrived with the paternity test report in hand. A bunch of the specialized terminology was broken down and explained, but it was all Greek to me.

Ashton must have noticed my unease. He stretched out his legs and said staidly, "Be concise."

The doctor immediately closed the file and replied solemnly, "Ms. Carlette Stovall and Gregory Hall are not biologically related."

"No?" I could not mask my disappointment. Could it be that Marcus was right while Emery and the rest were mistaken about this?

I absentmindedly looked to Ashton for his reaction. His face was darkened as he sat frozen in his seat.

After a brief pause, he looked up and instructed Joseph, "Send Ms. Stovall home."

His tone was frostier than before, and there was a subtle sense of urgency about it.

Joseph, too, seemed surprised at the outcome and took a while to recover. He then duly gestured to the door, saying, "After you, Ms. Stovall."

I did not get up right away, turning to the side instead. "Mr. Fuller!"

It was the ties that bind. I refused to believe that Gregory's attachment toward me came out of nowhere. We must be missing something.

Even though I was unable to convince myself, I would not be able to accept this if the results currently in Ashton's hands had been tampered with.

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Ashton seemed to disregard me as he reprimanded Joseph with severity. "Must I repeat myself?"

I remained in denial. "Perhaps there was an issue with the DNA sample you got from me. Maybe we could..."

Ashton was in no mood to listen to me any longer. He calmly took the report from the doctor and inspected it carefully once more.

I did not know how I mustered the courage to vocalize the fury I felt inside at the sight of his aloofness. "Ashton Fuller!"

That outburst finally seemed to yield some response from him. However, he merely paused in the act of reading; he did not look up at me.

I tried to make a dogged attempt to state my case but was cut off firmly by Joseph. "We should be going, Ms. Stovall."

Even if that was not something I wanted to hear, I felt the man's good intentions. He was merely concerned that I might anger Ashton.

Left without alternatives, I could only back off. For now.

I had to break into a jog in order to keep up with Joseph's lengthy strides. "Are you sure the result of the test is reliable, Mr. Campbell? Surely you must know the truth, having worked for Ashton for as long as you have?"

"Don't worry yourself over this, Ms. Stovall. Rest assured that Mr. Fuller will look into it."

Joseph brought me to the rear exit and issued some instructions to the chauffeur before he turned back.

The more I thought about it, the more I sensed something amiss. I decided to go back and question the examining doctor.

I backtracked to the house which I had come from and saw a young lady enter as I turned the corner.

The door was ajar, so I sneaked up and stood outside to eavesdrop.

Ashton was still in there while two people were engaged in a heated exchange. The woman sounded agitated as she snatched

the paternity test report from Ashton's hands. "Why are you looking at me like that? How could you suspect me because of something someone else said? I'm your own sister!"

The woman was so upset that she was heaving as she hurled the report onto the floor.

The doctor had already been dismissed earlier, so the only ones left inside were Ashton, the woman, and Joseph, who had just gone in.

The latter hesitated before he checked with Ashton if he should pick up the report. "Mr. Fuller?"

Ashton calmly got to his feet. "Let's go."

The woman did not seem like she was going to let up and seized ahold of Joseph. "You! Who allowed you to come back?"

To his credit, Joseph remained unperturbed. "It's been a while, Ms. Hall. Mr. Fuller was the one who sent for me."

"So he's the one stirring things up here. Moving out from the Hall family on the account of an outsider? We're your real family. Is this how you're going to treat us?"

This Ms. Hall sounded increasingly indignant, as though she was genuinely hurt by how Ashton was handling this situation.

Ashton was unmoved, and there was even a hint of frivolity in his inflection. "Perhaps then, someone could explain what the deal was with Scarlett's obituary?"

"I see that you've found out about it." The woman paused before she continued defiantly, "So what if I was the one who issued it under your name? You ought to know that I've sent people out to search for her until we finally found the body two years ago. I was afraid that you and Gregory would be saddened, so I took the initiative to take care of things of my own account."

A coldness flashed across Ashton's eyes as he adjusted his tie.

For a man of few words like him, such an untimely gesture betrayed his sentiments. I could sense his mounting hostility within the house even from a distance.

Ashton snorted, "More than a few people had told me that Scarlett's still alive."

The Hall woman sneered as she looked askance at Joseph, "Did he tell you that? Or was it that good-for-nothing from the Stovalls? The body we found was verified by DNA testing. It was without a doubt Scarlett's."

Ashton smugly raised his chin. "Since we both appear to have a case, it seems only right for me to look into the identity of that woman who looks just like her."

His chilling voice seemed to have frightened the woman.

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She appeared a little rattled as she ranted, "Don't you believe me, Ashton?"

"The truth trumps debate, wouldn't you agree?" Ashton's eyes swept meaningfully over her before he started for the door.

I was jolted to my senses and went on to hide in the emergency exit nearby.

The two men had only just left when the agitated voice of the woman emanated from the inside. "Find out exactly who my brother met up with recently! Be thorough about it!"

Only then did I slip away to the entrance and hired a ride out.

En route, I mentally tried to piece together what had just transpired.

However, I was not able to grasp the nuances within.

Emery did not seem the type to mistake anyone for someone else. Ashton did not blow up in my face; he had merely sent me away so he may question his own sister.

One was a Hall and the other a Fuller. Yet both were siblings. This was intriguing indeed.

So Ashton was completely unaware of the obituary. If that was the case, why was he not surprised at the appearance of someone who looked exactly like his ex-wife?

Scarlett Stovall's DNA was found on that corpse two years ago. Gregory and I have no blood relations. Was this the truth?

If only I had not lost my memories.

There would be no problems had I not forgotten the past.

I would be able to know if I liked the child, what kind of enemies I had, and who I loved.

No one would be able to lead me by the nose then.

When I reached the hospital, I sat outside the corridor for a while before returning to Marcus' ward. A few people plain-clothes policemen were inside.

Marcus was having his statement taken, and he smiled when he saw that I had returned. "Hey Letty, you're back."

"Yeah." He explained the situation when I walked to the side of the bed, "The police would like to get a better understanding of the case in order to solve it sooner."

I nodded in acknowledgment before I filled the empty glass on the table with water.

"Have you gotten into any fights with anyone recently, Mr. White?"

"Not that I can remember."

“Or offended anyone when you misspoke? Or had any disagreements over business dealings?”

“No. White Corporation has always been above board in our operations. We value trust...”

Any possible criminal motive had been covered through their inquiry but without making any headway.

There was a tall one amongst the officers who seemed to direct his focus rather strongly upon me. “Was Ms. Stovall also inside the car during that time?”

I nodded cooperatively. “That’s right. Marcus and I were together. We were on our way home.”

Then the rest of them started to drive the same questions they had for Marcus my way.

Mostly, they were about who I might have encountered recently and whether any of them stood out to me.

I had just regained consciousness and did not have many friends apart from Marcus, Emery, and the others.

But speaking of enemies...

There seemed to be just the one.

Rebecca’s murderous look still gave me the jitters when I recalled it.

When I was about to mention it, Marcus put the attention back on himself. “She could not remember much as she had only come out of a lengthy coma recently. Basically, she was with me most of the time and rarely interacted with outsiders.”

The officers nodded upon hearing that and did not probe further.

They seemed to get on well with Marcus and left him with some good wishes before they departed. “Leave this to us. You take care of yourself.”

I turned to him after they left. "Do you know someone in the station?"

"I helped them out with a few cases when I went overseas a couple of years back."

As he seemed to have no intention of elaborating, it would not seem proper for me to press further. "The overseas cases must have been quite dangerous. It's a good thing that you made it out okay."

The man smiled slightly as he seemed to have remembered something when I spoke. "Indeed. But by the looks of it, it was worth the trouble."

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After Marcus had his breakfast the next morning, I prepared to go home and make him some staple dishes.

Even if he did not say so explicitly, the distinctively average fare offered at the hospital clearly did not appeal to his fussy taste buds.

I had just reached the gate when a loud screeching of brakes rang out. Turning around, a black automobile skidded to a stop to my side. Out stepped a woman with flowing blond locks, wearing a glittery dress. She came right at me.

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Her face was obscured by a pair of shades, so I was not able to tell who she was right off the bat.

It was when she removed them that I recognized her as Rebecca.

Rebecca must have gotten used to the attention; her getup was more over the top than the last time I saw her.

The woman gnashed and ground her teeth as she stabbed a finger at my nose. "Scarlett Stovall, you slut. How the hell did you manage to still stand there in one piece?"

She did not seem inclined to veil her blood-lust toward me in the least.

I must be an idiot if I still couldn't figure out why.

The thought of the moment when our lives hung by a thread had my fingers tighten into a fist. "Were you the one who tampered with Marcus' car?"

"That's right." Rebecca raised her voice to shift the blame onto me. "So what if I did? Anyone who tries to protect you deserves to die!"

Before I could react, she lunged at me and caught me by the jaw, forcing me to look directly into her eyes. "How is it that you can manage to dodge a bullet every single time? But know that this is just the beginning. Next time, I'll have you know what real horror is!"

The vise-like grip she had on me hurt my face.

I gritted my teeth and shook her off. "Does a human life really have so little value to you?"

Rebecca let out a scoff, acting as though she had just heard the biggest joke ever. "Human life? Isn't mine worth nothing to all of you? I'll never forget how I've been left to die inside of that freezing cell, so don't you dare die on me yet, Scarlett. I'll have you suffering for the rest of your life!"

With that, she spat on the ground and turned to leave.

As I watched her silhouette fade into the distance, I finally understood why Emery had called this woman a raving lunatic who couldn't be reasoned with.

I took a deep breath before I pulled out my phone and calmly called the police.

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When I sent Marcus his lunch, I was guilt-ridden and subconsciously avoided making eye contact.

It was as Marcus had described it when they took his statement. He was an honest-to-goodness businessman. Genial and humble, he would not casually make an enemy of anyone.

I was the cause of the accident that day; I had unwittingly dragged him into my mess.

When I had all of the meat placed on his side, Marcus finally sensed that something was off. "You look distracted. Are you not used to the spare bed?"

There was little else I could do except come clean. "I'm sorry. That accident happened because of me."

Marcus nodded. He paused briefly before he replied, almost jokingly. "It looks like that person really wants you dead."

"It does appear to seem that way."

Rebecca must have been tracking me for a long time and knew that Marcus and I were quite inseparable. That was probably why she had targeted him.

There were no grudges between them. Rebecca would not have gone ahead and done what she did if she had even the slightest sliver of compassion within her. In retrospect, perhaps she might have been inside the car that suddenly intercepted us that day.

Rebecca was psychotic. She had already concluded that I was that Scarlett Stovall and wanted me dead, regardless of the collateral damage caused.

It would appear imperative that I establish my own identity. Should the police be unable to take her to task, I fear that I would be treading on thin ice going forward.

At the same time, I was curious about what sort of enmity there was between Scarlett and Rebecca that the latter had to seek vengeance no matter the cost.

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Upon receiving my report, the police arrested Rebecca, who went by the alias of Vivian Wiesmann. As she had been quite meticulous, it took considerable effort on their part to investigate thoroughly before they could formally charge her.

It was unbelievable how she managed to reappear on television a few days after. I was sure someone exceedingly powerful must have her back.

The day Rebecca was released arrived around the same time Marcus was to be discharged.

After I was done with the paperwork for Marcus, I returned to the ward, only to find Rebecca standing outside the door.

She was heavily made-up and dressed to the nines, as usual. Already into the weather of October, she was still wearing a sparse black spaghetti-strap dress. With her straps and golden tresses billowing in the wind, anyone would be excused for thinking that she was here for a televised interview.

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I heard her footsteps as she waltzed up to me. "His injuries look rather serious, so I'm surprised that he recovered this quickly. It's just as well, so my courtesy call doesn't come to waste."

With that, she received the fruit basket from her agent and pushed it in front of us. "Oh, the traffic accident was a prank taken too far on my part. I hope we can see an amicable resolution to this. Let's take it that it never happened."

Her flighty tone told me that she was not at all apologetic.

This was not an olive branch. It was obvious that all she wanted was for us to turn a blind eye to it.

My face dimmed as I spoke coldly, "Who let you out?"

“Of course, it was the protector of the people, the lovable boys in blue.” Rebecca shrugged wantonly before she loosened her grip and outright chucked the fruit basket aside. She then leaned in with brazenness. “So long as I draw breath, you can expect no peace!”

“Enough!” My fists tightened until they trembled. “I’ll say this once again. I’m not Scarlett Stovall. Even if I was, you’ve no right to treat anyone this way!”

“Hmph,” Rebecca sneered, then stood herself upright with arms akimbo. “You’re afraid, Scarlett, as you should be.”

She paused before she laughed even more gleefully at this point. “The last time was just the appetizer. Look forward to the full course!”

With that, the woman turned and strutted off in the most pompous manner possible. “We’ll meet again, Scarlett. Very soon!”

The insouciance of her tone sounded like she was doing a lap of honor.

I attuned myself to my own breathing with my eyes closed, hoping to calm my emotions. I would have confronted her had Marcus not held me by the wrist. “Calm down. She meant to provoke you. It’s better to not act impulsively because we don’t know who’s backing her.”

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Marcus’ car had to be scrapped. It was inconvenient for him to drive, seeing as to how he had just recovered from a serious ailment, so we could only hail a ride back.

We were barely past the first intersection when our cab was swiftly surrounded on all sides by several black sedans.

Out stepped men in formal dressing. It was obvious that they had no good intentions. However, our driver was so unnerved as he

articulated himself properly, “Who... Don’t be stupid... This is a law-abiding society... I’ll call the police!”

The suited men outright disregarded the driver’s threats. It took them no effort to drag him out of the driver’s seat and have him subdued. Never mind calling the police, the man was so cowed that he did not even dare to breathe too loudly.

The one in charge walked to the backseat and located my position with pinpoint accuracy. “Make it easier on yourself, Ms. Stovall.”

Marcus and I exchanged looks. We were sure that neither of us had any clue as to what was going on. “I’ll cooperate, but first things first. Where are you taking me?”

Marcus almost lost his life the last time and had not fully recovered. Now that trouble had come knocking again, I was determined not to implicate him this time.

Upon hearing that, Marcus seemed to want to speak up, but I quietly pinched him in on the wrist, imploring him to act with restraint.

I was quite certain that these people were not in cahoots with Rebecca. She would not be so banal as to get someone on my case immediately after showing off in front of me.

It could not be Ashton either. He may be offish as heck, but I knew he was someone who always acted honorably. He would always either get someone to check in first whenever he needed to call on me or send Joseph to pick me up. He was not one to employ such a manner of invitation.

That being said, apart from them, I could not think of anyone else who would do such a thing.

I must regain my memories. I won’t be able to respond decisively if I were to keep getting caught on the back-foot like this.

“You’ll find out when you get there,” the man replied. He dispensed with any more formalities and reached out to grab me with his large mitts.

There was no way Marcus could sit idly by. Despite his weakened state, he struggled against the suited man to protect me.

At this critical juncture, the shrill screaming of brakes tore into the fray and echoed all around us, trapping our previously menacing aggressors within.

In the corner of my eye, I spotted Joseph's familiar face.

"Mr. Campbell!" I cried.

Joseph spearheaded the charge of his men and neutralized the strapping of the suited men in mere minutes.

He then approached, a little short of breath. "Come with me, Ms. Stovall."

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"Okay," I replied without much hesitancy.

Marcus, who had been silent all this time, also expressed his sentiment. "I'll go too."

I paused and turned to Joseph to seek his opinion.

Apparently, it was no issue as Joseph slightly nodded his head, so all of us bundled in and left together.

We saw the sirens roar pass when we turned at the intersection. I guess the police must have been alerted by some passers-by.

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Joseph led Marcus and I to an old mansion that appeared to boast a real sense of history behind it.

Anyone with some understanding of real estate would know that the value of heritage sites could not be measured in its modern monetary worth. Only the cream of the crop would be able to reside in places like that.

Inside the living room, Ashton and that Hall woman sat across from each other. The atmosphere appeared somber.

Gregory was fiddling with a tablet in another part of the room, deliberately incognizant to what was happening on this end.

We were ushered to Ashton's side. "They're here, Mr. Fuller. Ran into some trouble with some people who tried to abduct them along the way, but my men and I managed to get there in time."

"Understood," Ashton replied plainly before he raised his head. His cold eyes swept past Marcus and fell right upon me.

I would consider myself acquainted with Ashton to a certain extent, but not so much with that woman. I regarded her as briefly as I would any stranger that I passed on the street.

Her disquiet did not elude me.

She reacted to me as though she had just seen a ghost. Her eyes were peeled wide open, face white as a sheet. "You... You're alive?"

After my encounters with Alexander and Emery, this sort of response did not faze me anymore.

It would seem that many thought that I should not still be existent in this world.

How Alexander and Emery straddled joy and sincere relief upon discovering me similarly came across as a surprise.

This woman's reaction, though, was reminiscent of Rebecca's.

Be it Rebecca or this wildly expressive socialite before me, I understood the insinuations hidden within their words. You ought to be dead!

I had no impressions of her whatsoever. But judging from the conversation I overheard and her physical resemblance to Ashton, I understood that they were family. Hence, I maintained a basic level of cordiality. "Ms. Hall."

She clutched at her own chest in a dramatic mixture of astonishment, panic, and disbelief, as though she was suffering a cardiac arrest. "You... You..."

Not a single line was uttered before she got her emotions in check and regarded Ashton calmly. "It's just someone who looks like her. The real Scarlett's dead. That has been established even by the police. You've been fooled, my dear brother."

The woman sounded so certain; she did not seem at all worried about flaws in her narrative.

Indeed, everything pertaining to the one who was declared deceased had been destroyed. There was nothing left that could be used to expose her.

As she was his kin, even a fool would know who Ashton would trust between the two of us. The fact that he allowed his own son to take the name of the Hall family was a case-in-point.

Gregory was preoccupied with the screen in his hands and only noticed me when the maid brought him some water. He sprung to life and immediately tried to run toward me with tablet in hand. Unfortunately, he was held back by the maid, who was concerned that he might disturb his own father, who was in the midst of some serious talk.

"I want to play with you, Ms. Stovall!" the boy shouted as he fought to free himself from the maid's grasp, shattering the silence in the otherwise quiet living room.

The maid grew increasingly anxious, as though the boy's cry had just gotten her into major trouble. She kept trying to call for restraint from the young master of the house.

I could only speak out comfortingly, "Be a good boy, Greg, and wait there. I'll come over to you when we're done here!"

Gregory pursed his lips in reluctance but pliantly lowered his head. "Okay. I'll stay put. You have to come quickly, Ms. Stovall!"

An obedient and gentle child was especially endearing.

While the living room fell back into silence as soon as Gregory did, the mood had only grown considerably more awkward.

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Joseph then passed along two copies of the paternity test report to Ashton, who received and swiftly slammed them down upon the coffee table in front of him. "Would you be so kind as to explain why you said Audrey was conceived between Scarlett and another man, my dear sister!"

Tiffany looked so nerve-wracked as she swallowed hard. Her face turned green, and her teeth chattered. "I tried to fight for her custody, but the Stovalls would not let her go. You were unwilling to back off, so I had no choice but to do this. I needed you to go all out for the lawsuit and bring our family's successor back to us. The Stovall family is likely to treat the girl well, so the arrangement assuages the enmity between the two families. It can also help you to forget someone you should not be missing, so what's wrong with that?"

Tiffany eased out of her initial reticence and grew bolder over time.

Her tone turned increasingly forceful and haughty.

In contrast to Tiffany's pretentiousness, Ashton was comparatively placid.

A pair of dark and staid eyes transfixed upon her. There were no emotions discernible upon his face. Toward the end, the corner of his lips lifted slightly, and the most subtle of movement from it was filled with scorn. "If memory serves, I believe that I have given you a chance before. What have you got to say for yourself?"

The woman's face stiffened in an instant.

She looked upon Ashton in fear. "Were you suspicious from that day on? Have you distrusted me ever since you saw this woman, or have you never once believed me? If I had not done what I did, do

you think we could have managed to get by peaceably all these years?"

There was finally some semblance of emotion on Ashton's face as his eyes surged with boiling rage. "You're right. I did forget a great many things, so I won't talk about relationships. You can't blame me for your lack of appreciation of the many chances I've offered you, Tiffany Hall."

Tiffany reacted as though she just got swiped across the face. She fell back to slump into the couch, rendered speechless.

She probably had not expected that Ashton's indifference would supersede even their blood ties.

However, it was clear from the resolve in his voice that there was no way back for them.

She remained in a state of shock momentarily before she regarded Ashton indignantly. "You've been bewitched by these people!"

She suddenly cast an accusing finger in my direction and howled, "Never mind that this woman has Scarlett's face. Even if she is Scarlett herself, Dad will not have let her near you. I admit that I was wrong to lie to you, but do you distrust your own father as well? If not for Scarlett's promiscuity, the Hall family would not have had to leave our home behind. Have you already forgotten everything Dad told you?"

It grew increasingly apparent that the motionless Ashton could no longer stand the sight of her.

Joseph read his sentiments. He shot a glance over to his men, and someone came up to forcibly escort Tiffany out a heartbeat later.

Even if they were family, it was Ashton who ultimately wielded power. His acquiescence earlier was out of a desire to avoid being calculating.

The living room returned to a state of tranquility with the exit of Tiffany.

Ashton unexpectedly turned to Marcus. His eyes darkened, and the laughter he let out was unnerving. "I happened to bump into two of your old friends, Mr. White. Let's show them in."

With that, he snapped his fingers. A bodyguard brought a woman and a boy of age six or seven in through the side door.

The woman's cheeks were sallow and pallid; she wore only thin long sleeves on such a chilly day. She was so frail that she looked like she could be bowled over anytime by a gust of wind.

The boy was in humble children's clothing and seemed uncomfortable in the presence of strangers. The mother and son pair huddled together as they eyed their surroundings warily.

The expression on the woman's face froze when her gaze fell upon Marcus. She stood rooted to the spot, and her frazzled eyes started to well up with tears.

The brows of the usually composed Marcus furrowed, and he appeared conflicted.

Ashton's portentous voice rang out anew with a hint of levity. "According to this lady, she's your wife and the boy your biological son. So I'm curious, Mr. White, as to how you became engaged to be married to Scarlett under these circumstances? Was she aware of this?"

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Wife and son?

Even though I knew Marcus had some secrets of his own, I was truly baffled at the information Ashton had revealed.

My feelings towards Marcus were purely platonic. If he had been married before, I could still accept it. However, I couldn't accept the fact that Marcus was wealthy while his wife was living a difficult life, poor as a church mouse.

Maybe I should stand by Marcus' side and wait till the truth is revealed, but the dumbfounded look on his face told me enough.

Marcus ignored Ashton's words and stomped towards the woman and child. He glared at her as he grabbed her wrist to take her and her child away.

Joseph immediately blocked his way, realizing Marcus' intention.

Ashton sat on the couch impassively as he watched the scene unfold. "Mr. White, we're not done here yet. You haven't admitted to the relationship between you and this mother and child, yet you wanted to take them away from my house? Are you disrespecting me in my own house?"

Marcus gritted his teeth and reluctantly looked at me. He finally released a deep sigh and admitted, "As you said, I'm her husband and the father of her child."

He recovered his usual arrogant composure after a brief pause. "Can I take them away now?"

Ashton finally let out a smile in satisfaction and gestured his subordinates to clear the way.

Marcus took two steps, then halted. As he turned to look at me, his eyes were filled with apology. He was apprehensive but still left with them.

Once the trio had left, Ashton composed his expression. Joseph left with the rest of the subordinates after he had passed a document to the man.

Only Ashton and I remained in the spacious living room after that.

The man swung his gaze towards me. I could feel his solemn aura pressuring me to speak.

Unable to withstand the discomfort further, I said, "Mr. Fuller?"

Ashton replied, "It looks like Ms. Stovall doesn't have a fiancé anymore."

Huh? Is he being sarcastic?

"I don't understand what you're implying." Ashton should have some basic respect for Marcus despite them not seeing eye to eye.

Let's first put aside the moral aspect of Marcus' actions. Can Ashton admit honestly that he didn't have the least bit of malicious intent when he exposed Marcus in public?

"I'm not implying anything." Ashton raised an eyebrow and continued, "I'm not a man with many skills. The only thing I'm good at is doing business. Since you lost a fiancé because of me, I shall repay you with one."

"Repay? How do you repay a fiancé?"

Ashton threw the document Joseph had given him on the table and pointed at it with a single finger. "Have a look."

I reviewed the document curiously and realized that it was a contract. The contract's content was for me to be Ashton's wife.

The whole situation was incomprehensible.

Ashton said indifferently, "Are you done with it?"

I nodded, then shook my head violently. I muttered, confusion in my tone, "I don't understand what you're trying to do."

Ashton studied me with a somber look. "Gregory needs a mother, and I need a wife to fight for my daughter's custody. I don't see why we can't help each other."

His eyes were cold, and his gaze was sharp. It was unnerving for me to meet his gaze.

I was able to think clearly after a while. I threw the contract back onto the table and avoided meeting his piercing eyes that were boring into me. "That is your own problem. Why would I help you?"

"You're suffering from amnesia," Ashton remarked condescendingly, "It has been two months since you woke up, and

no one has sincerely helped you recover your memories. I can help you with that.”

I scoffed. “I can find my own memories without your help. Such an excuse is too unconvincing.”

Thinking my words may be too unreasonable, I added, “I think it would be best if Mr. Fuller discusses this situation with your fiancéé, Ms. Ziegler. I believe she would be more than willing to help your cause.”

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“Sure...” He nodded. When he raised his lashes, his eyes were filled with determination. “But you’re the most suitable to play Scarlett Stovall.”

My brow furrowed, and I pondered. Even Emery and Alexander indeed had a hard time distinguishing me from the real Scarlett Stovall. So I’m not worried in the slightest bit about the Stovall family catching me. “All this talk, Mr. Fuller, yet you’re only listing down your demands. A win-win proposal is important in every business, right?” My heart thudded in anticipation.

This doesn’t feel like my first time negotiating something this important.

Ashton leaned back against the couch and crossed his legs when he saw me relent. “Leave your safety and lost memories to me.”

It would’ve sounded like an empty promise if it was given by any other person other than Ashton. But with him, I only felt a sense of safety and assurance.

As they said, money couldn’t buy you everything, but you couldn’t survive without any money. In short, money could help you solve most of the problems. Moreover, Ashton had more than just wealth to offer. No one dared to go against the Fullers with their current status in K City. Thus, I would get a free pass everywhere simply with one word from Ashton.

If he was giving me his word, that meant he already knew about Rebecca harassing me and the guy in a suit who stopped me today. There were too many people with malicious intentions around me, so his resources would be a huge help. I was well aware of that.

Most importantly, compared to Marcus' reluctance, Ashton's promise to help me "recover my memories" was the thing I desperately needed. So I gritted my teeth and agreed, "You've got a deal!"

The corners of Ashton's lip quirked up as he rose to leave. "Let's go."

"Go? Go where?" I asked, puzzled.

"To sort out the relationship between you and Marcus, of course," Ashton said with a deadpan expression. He then added, "Also, we need to move all your stuff into my house."

"That will not be necessary." The rejection came out automatically. Even though I had started to have a good impression of him, it didn't cancel out the fact that Ashton was a self-centered jerk. "Don't we need to sign the contract? I've studied it. Cooperating with you to fight for your daughter's custody and act as a lovely couple in front of the media. I know what that entails, so there is no need for us to live together."

Ashton looked at me calmly, retorting, "Marcus' wife and child have returned. Are you sure you want to live under a roof with them?"

My mouth hung open for a second before I snapped it shut because I didn't know what to say while Ashton had made his decision. "I'm picky when it comes to my sexual partners. Stop hesitating. Let's go."

Did he insinuate that I'm not up to his standard of a sexual partner?

That comment is so unnecessary and insulting!

He is the one who benefits the most, yet he's acting as if he's on a high horse, giving me some hand-outs.

However, what he said is right... I was fine with staying at Marcus' house when I was his fiancée, but now...

I blew out a breath and followed behind the stoic man.

When we reached the White residence, the woman and boy had cleaned up, and they were waiting in the living room with Marcus. I felt like an outsider when Ashton and I entered.

"What's the matter?" Marcus approached me, ignoring the presence of the woman and the boy completely.

"Ashton wants me to be his fiancée and the mother to Gregory," I spoke directly since I had considered Marcus to be a close relative.

There wasn't much of a reaction from the man; it was as if he had anticipated my reply. "What do you think? Is that what you want?"

"You have your own family, and I don't want to live my entire life not knowing what I want. He can help me with my lost memories and protect me at the same time. Moreover, I like Gregory." I lowered my head, avoiding his eyes as I spoke.

Discounting the identities of the woman and boy, I knew of Marcus' feelings towards me after we had been together for so long. I couldn't help feeling guilty when I picked someone else over him so easily. I felt like a cold, heartless person.

"Understood." Marcus nodded, keeping mum after that.