

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 1621

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Nora and I used to be close, so naturally, I was glad to know that she was still alive. However, because of her relationship with Nathaniel, I was unsure how to feel about her then.

The man was like a walking disease because he had infected the minds of many around Ashton and me.

Even Marcus told me that he would never have made a deal with Nathaniel if it were not for me, for he knew that nothing good ever came from dealing with that devil.

I did not mind Nora blaming us for not saving her, but I worried for her well-being if she continued to stay with Nathaniel.

“But she’s a mother. Armond thought he could control everyone, but like everyone else, he fled in the face of death. If Nora had been left behind, there’s a chance that she could’ve survived. I believe she was only able to look like you because she could not escape in time,” suggested Ashton calmly.

“You mean she got disfigured and had plastic surgery?”

With Ashton’s help, I finally figured out what happened back then.

Nora had a chance at survival because Armond left her behind before the explosion. Forced to choose between living on for her child and dying with the man she loved, Nora hesitated when she should be running.

In the end, she decided to choose her child but barely survived the explosion because of her hesitation. Then, Nathaniel somehow managed to save her and turn her into my doppelganger to serve him.

Still, that did not explain why Nora was so hostile toward Ashton and me.

I remembered how surprised I was to see her on the island and how strong she was then. Even though Armond was no longer around, she was ready to raise their child all on her own.

“How did you convince Nora to go to the island anyway?” From the way the woman talked to Ashton, I could tell she was more upset with my husband than me. Ashton is a businessman, so if I had to guess, I would say that he promised Nora something in exchange for her to go to the island. She probably got upset because Ashton didn’t live up to his promise.

Ashton then chuckled at my question. “You’re definitely on to something here. How did you get so clever? At this rate, I don’t think I’ll be able to keep anything from you anymore.”

“Don’t change the subject; I’m being serious now. You had amnesia after the explosion, so do you think that’s the reason why you couldn’t remember what you promised Nora? If that’s the case, that means we’re still in her debt.”

Ashton tightened his grip on the steering wheel and straightened his back before replying, “I promised her that I would keep Armond alive for her.”

“What?” At that moment, I did not know what else to say.

What Ashton meant back then was that he would not harm Armond. However, nobody expected the man to give up on his own life like that.

I don’t think Nora is an unreasonable person. Even though Ashton failed to keep his promise, she should know that he was not to be blamed for what happened. She’s not trying to make Ashton pay for Armond’s demise, is she?

Fortunately, what Ashton said next relieved me of my puzzlement.

“The child. He’s not with Nora or Nathaniel; I’ve checked. Nora must’ve lost him in the explosion.”

With that, Ashton finally cleared things up for me.

Nora only went to the island with her child because she trusted Ashton. What started with the hope of saving Armond eventually ended with Nora tragically losing both her loved ones.

Although nobody was at fault for Armond's demise, Nora had more than enough reasons to blame Ashton for what happened to her face and her child. To her, Ashton was the one who ruined her life.

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I remembered how emotional and irrational I got when my children were kidnapped. Back then, I would rather the kidnappers took me as their hostage instead despite what Ashton and John said.

With the love of her life dead, her child missing, and her face modeled to look like someone else, it was enough to fill Nora with hate and change her completely.

I knew Ashton would have disarmed the bomb if he could, but that was just not possible. This is probably what Armond wanted. Even in death, the man continues to haunt our lives, and there's nothing we can do about it.

Feeling helpless, I sighed before asking Ashton to take us home. Nothing much we can do for now. What's bound to happen will eventually happen, whether we like it or not.

On the way home, I could not stop thinking about how I could make up for Nora's losses. Her child was still an infant when Armond's men took him away. Maybe he's still alive somewhere. But even Nathaniel couldn't find him; what chance do we have now that it's been six years?

As much as I wanted to help Nora, I could not come up with a practical solution.

Because of how sudden our meeting was, I forgot to confirm with Nathaniel if he had really dealt with Marcus, who personally told me that he gave his life in exchange for mine. If that was true, then I owed Marcus my life.

Even though I met Ashton after the six-year coma, Marcus could have taken me somewhere far away and had me all to himself, but he did not do that. I wonder if Marcus hesitated to keep me to himself because he knew that he was going to die soon. Even the kindest man sins sometimes, so it's not that hard to believe even the vilest man is capable of kindness, and Marcus is definitely not the vilest man I know.

I was so caught up in my own thoughts that I did not even notice that we had reached home.

Leaning in, Ashton unfastened my seatbelt for me before giving me a comforting smile. "We're home. If you continue to frown that, I'm afraid that our daughter will have no choice but to smother you with love."

I could not help but chuckle when I thought of how Audrey would always put her arms around my head to comfort me. "There's no better way to die," I remarked jokingly before getting out of the car.

Then, I waited for Ashton to walk over to grab my hand before we entered the house together.

John had witnessed Ashton's cooking skills when the man pretended to be an amnesiac, so when Ashton promised to make desserts for Audrey, John was ready to see the whole thing flop. Like a pesky fly, John followed Ashton around in the kitchen and made disapproving sounds and faces while the man worked.

Fortunately for John, Ashton was in a good mood, so he decided to ignore any form of disturbance.

Ashton put the cake into the refrigerator when he was finally done but realized that the children were nowhere to be seen.

When I went outside to wait for the children, I saw the chauffeur watering the flowers in the garden as if he had completely forgotten about his other duty.

“Boris.”

“Yes, Mrs. Fuller? Is there anything I can help you with?” Boris put the watering away before turning to me.

“No. I just wanted to remind you to pick up the children. That’s all,” I replied with a polite smile.

Boris was not getting any younger, so I could understand that he would need a reminder from time to time.

“What? I thought you picked them up today. Aren’t they in the house right now?” The chauffeur was utterly puzzled by my reminder.

“Me?” At that moment, I could feel that something had gone wrong.

“What’s going on?” inquired Ashton, who just got out of the shower and was already in his pajamas.

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Sensing that he had made a mistake, Boris hurriedly explained himself. “I always arrive at the school one hour early to pick up the children, but you were there yourself today. I wanted to send you home along with the children, but you told me that you wanted to bring the children elsewhere and asked me to go home.”

Boris’ face was as pale as a ghost when he paused for a while to figure out what had happened. “Could it be that you’ve just forgotten about picking them up, Mrs. Fuller? Maybe they’re in their rooms napping right now. Yes, that must be it! I’ll go check on them right now. Just give me a minute.”

Losing three children was no small matter, which was why the chauffeur got so nervous that he did not even wait for my response before dashing into the house.

At that point, Ashton and I exchanged looks, for we both figured that it was Nora who pretended to be me and took the children away.

Then, both our phones rang at the same time.

Ashton picked up his phone but remained silent until he hung up. Whoever it was that called him, I could tell that they did not bring good news.

“Who is it?”

“Nathaniel. He wants us to have dinner at his place,” replied Ashton as he stared into space.

I knew that man would make a move sooner or later, but he still caught me off guard.

After taking a deep breath, Ashton gestured at my phone. “This can’t be a coincidence. I think you should read your text message.”

Hurriedly, I unlocked my phone and did as Ashton said. The message I received read: Mommy, we’re at Uncle Nathaniel’s house. Come pick us up. Gregory.

Even though the message came from Gregory, it was not sent from his phone, so I assumed he figured out a different way to reach me.

We were not out of the woods yet then, but still, I was relieved to hear from Gregory.

“Go change. We’re going to save our son.”

“What about our daughter?”

“All of them! We’re going to save all of them.” Somehow, I was confident that I would get my children back, and I could not help but smirk at the thought of it.

Ashton, too, smirked at me and said nothing else.

As a parent, I thought it was quite normal to have a favorite among my children as long as I remembered to love all of them.

Ever since I found out about Nora, I worried that she would try to replace me someday and fool Gregory and Audrey into thinking that she was their mother.

All the woman needed to do was spend some time with my children and show them her motherly love, and she could have easily taken my place.

Gregory's message was a candle in the dark to me. Whether he deliberately sent it to me or not, I was just glad that he trusted me enough to do that, and that was all that mattered to me.

It was not my first time arriving at Nathaniel's villa, but I never went there for the same reason.

When a maid led us into the living room, Nora was trying to gain Audrey's trust by offering the girl the cake Nathaniel bought at Black Angle. However, Audrey remained fiddling with her doll's arm uneasily while sitting beside her brother.

Seeing how Audrey was reluctant to try the cake, I could not help but feel proud of my girl. Good girl!

"Hey, Audrey," called out Ashton in his deep voice.

The second the little girl heard the familiar voice, she leaped to her feet and rushed over to her father. "Daddy!"

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Gregory and Shaun followed closely behind.

"Mommy." Gregory tilted his head upward and smiled brightly at me.

I reveled in the warmth that spread through my body at his loving address. Stroking his head fondly, I cooed, "Good boy, Gregory."

Audrey's gaze darted between Nora and me as a frown appeared on her face. "Two mommies?"

"No, this is Mommy," Gregory insisted softly. "Didn't you tell me that Mommy smelled weird? Why don't you smell her now?"

A light bulb seemed to go off in Audrey's head as she immediately stretched her arms out toward me and cried, "I want a hug!"

I carried her with a smile on my face. Audrey wrapped her arms around my neck, and I giggled at the ticklish sensation.

"Do you smell it now?" I asked good-naturedly.

Audrey nodded vigorously and exclaimed, "Yeah!" She turned her head to face me and continued, "This is Mommy's smell! You're Mommy!"

I could not help but chuckle at her innocence, and I pinched her cheek fondly as I teased, "Could you tell me how I smell different compared to Ms. Nora?"

"Hmm." My daughter pouted her lips in deep thought before shaking her head. "I don't know how to explain it."

"We wanted to play a prank on you two, but it looks like you knew everything from the start," Nora interrupted as she set the cake in her hands aside. "Audrey, won't you tell me how you knew we were different? I even used the same perfume as your mommy."

Audrey raised her volume and replied, "It's not the perfume! I-I- It's just different! I know it's different."

As if fearful that we would continue interrogating her, she buried her head in my chest and avoided our gazes.

I could empathize with her display of obstinance; I had seen many children bottling up out of frustration at being unable to express themselves.

At the same time, I thought I understood what Audrey meant about my unique smell. Call it a mother's instinct, I suppose.

I thought of Ashton then and the scent of his pheromones, which could not be overshadowed by the faint smell of his expensive colognes and cigars.

"Okay, she won't ask you any more questions about that. Come on, Mommy will take you home. Daddy made a cake for you all. Don't you want to eat it?" I subtly shifted the conversation topic to encourage Audrey to open up again.

My tactic worked, and Audrey exclaimed in glee, "Yes! I want cake!" She probably had forgotten all about Nora's questions at that point.

As expected, food typically took center stage in a glutton's mind.

Except when it came to Shaun. Is it possible to forge a bond so quickly with a kid to whom she isn't related?

However, this was not the time for me to dwell on this issue.

We should leave this wretched place ASAP.

"Why are you in such a rush to leave, Scarlett? Aren't you going to introduce me to your kids? We look so much alike, after all." Nora looked at me with an indecipherable smile on her face, looking like she had no intention to let us leave uneventfully.

Ashton spoke up coldly, "You think you can keep me here?" The authority in his tone had Gregory and Shaun glancing at him subconsciously.

"You're always so impatient, Ashton," Nathaniel drawled lazily. He had picked up on the tense situation and sauntered over with his hands in his pockets. "I've always been helping Gregory with any problems he's facing in his computer science studies. So much time has passed; I'm sure he must be brimming with questions. Plus, Nora and Letty are finally reunited after being separated for years. Why must we cut short the sisters' reunion? Stay a while longer and let them have a chat."

He had walked up to Nora by then. Standing side-by-side, I thought they made a fine pair with their matching smiles of faux kindness even if one of them happened to look exactly like me.

Nathaniel's words brought a smug smile to Nora's face. "Of course. I'm Nora Stovall. Don't tell me you forgot about your older sister? We're twins, for goodness sake."

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It seemed that Nora Stovall was the new identity Nathaniel had arranged for the former Ms. Oberick. I realized that Nora was determined to conjure a relationship with me.

Outwardly, Ashton and I appeared unaffected by her announcement, treating it as a terrible joke.

Audrey, however, took Nora's words seriously. "You're twins with Mommy? Is it like Greg and me? Greg is a boy, and I'm a girl, so we look different. Do you look the same because you're both girls?"

Before I could clear things up, Nora cut me off. "That's right! You're such a smart girl, Audrey!" She smiled so brightly that her eyes had narrowed into slits. Nora added, "You and your brother can call me Aunt Nora from now on!"

I could not explain why, but Nora's face that so perfectly mirrored mine suddenly became a glaring sight.

I would not have minded the children calling her Aunt Nora in the past when she was still a kind person. Now that she was notorious for her greed and ambition, I could not find it in me to allow my children to acknowledge such a relative.

How should I explain this to the kids, though?

Thankfully, Ashton spoke up and freed me from my dilemma.

Quietly and somewhat sternly, he said, "Gregory."

"Yes, Daddy."

Ashton continued without blinking, "Was what Uncle Nathaniel said true? Are you struggling with your computer science homework?"

His words implied that he was blaming Gregory.

If Gregory could solve his computer science problems alone, he no longer needed Nathaniel's help, and we could leave for good.

I thought it rather inappropriate to drag the children into this, yet I remained silent. I was aware this would be the wrong time for me to voice my opinion.

Everyone had their way of solving things, after all.

It turned out my worry was for naught. Gregory had lived with Ashton for many years, and he was well aware of his father's expressions and intentions. Some thought later, Gregory had an answer for his father.

"No, Daddy. I can solve them on my own now." With that, Gregory turned to Nathaniel next and bowed respectfully. "Thank you for your guidance, Uncle Nathaniel. I can solve those problems alone now, and I shan't need to trouble you again. I don't have any more questions on computer science."

Whether it was Gregory putting up a tough front or caving out of fear toward Ashton, I was relieved that he had not made the wrong choice despite his past relationship with Nathaniel.

Ashton nodded lightly as satisfaction flashed through his gaze. He stared at Nathaniel and said, "You heard that."

It was impossible to discern Nathaniel's true feelings on the matter behind his smile. He chuckled and replied to Ashton, "What about Nora and Letty's long-awaited reunion? We were so excited to introduce you to some of our friends. Staying a while longer won't hurt anyone. Why, Scarlett, don't you want to get to know your older sister a little better?"

He stressed his last sentence, and his weird tone hinted that he was up to something.

It was not until Audrey piqued up that I knew he was targeting the children.

“Mommy, isn’t Ms. Nora your older sister? Don’t you want to be together if you haven’t seen each other in a long time? Just like how I want to be with Greg forever and ever!”

I explained hastily, “Audrey, don’t say that. Mommy’s just like you as in I only have an older brother. I don’t have an older sister. You know Mommy and Uncle John meet all the time. We have a great relationship, right?”

“Oh, yeah.” Audrey nodded innocently. Barely a moment later, she exclaimed, “But Mommy, the two of you look the same! Aunt Emma said that people who look the same on TV are long-lost twins!”

I held in my urge to hunt down Emma that very instant.

The situation turned incredibly awkward after Audrey’s outburst.

Suddenly, Shaun broke his silence and said, “The dolls you play with every day have the same face, but they’re not from the same family.”

“You’re right, Shaun! Does that mean Mommy and Ms. Nora aren’t sisters at all?”