

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 1631

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incurable. You owe me that, Scarlett.”

I let his comment slide. It would be petty of me to argue with a patient.

The illness seemed to dull Marcus’ intuition. He had not realized that I was no longer the meek and spineless woman who was all ready to forgive and forget.

The ward fell into a suffocating silence as he eventually registered my rejection. Marcus slowly lay down on the bed and stared blankly at the ceiling.

“I guess you won’t even spare a glance for me even if I sacrificed myself for you. My efforts were meaningless, so meaningless. I should just die right now.”

Marcus stopped speaking after that, his eyes glazed over with tears.

Some people resorted to telling white lies to appease a dying patient. In their eyes, it was a way of encouraging the patient to fight for their life.

Marcus was too smart to fall for that; plus, he knew me far too well. He would only scoff at my white lie or even see it as my pity, and that would only worsen his condition. Honesty was the best policy in this situation.

I simply could not agree to his demands and give him false hope.

Marcus was not the only person who loved me. I owed it to the people I loved to live well and not harm others in the process.

I sat in the ward for a moment longer. Unsure if the non-response was due to Marcus falling asleep, I decided to take my leave.

“Get some rest. I’ll visit you again tomorrow.” After I got up, I check his vitals one last time and grabbed my purse. I turned around and walked to the door.

Marcus’ hoarse voice rang out the moment my hand touched the door handle.

“Scarlett, don’t ever visit me again unless you change your mind and agree to marry me.”

I whirled around only to find him lying on the bed like before as if he had never woken up.

It was now clear that he had not fallen asleep. Instead of mumbling groggily, Marcus’ words represented the emotional baggage that he had stubbornly carried around with him for over ten years.

I said sorry to him over and over again in my heart, yet I could not bring myself to utter an apology to his face. Like a coward, I pretended I had not heard a thing and left the ward.

Camelia practically jumped out of her seat when she saw me. Anxiously, she asked, “How did it go?”

She clenched her fists tightly as if the action would give her the strength to face any news I gave.

I dared not discuss my conversation with Marcus in detail. Instead, I merely shook my head and said, “It wasn’t good.” I felt wetness pricking the corners of my eyes.

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I repeated myself, “It wasn’t good.”

Hope seemed to leave Camelia’s gaze almost instantaneously. Her entire demeanor darkened, which suggested that this outcome had not been within her expectations.

And why wouldn't she be disappointed? She had made such a huge sacrifice by bringing the woman Marcus loved to his deathbed, yet he showed no sign of improvement.

All she wants is for her beloved husband to live. It's not too much to ask, yet no one can give her the answer she seeks or dissuade her from her mission.

Taking in Camelia's pale countenance, it was not difficult to tell that she had not been eating properly for a while now. After some coaxing, we managed to usher Camelia and her son to a nearby Chanaean restaurant.

Ashton ordered eight dishes, and the food arrived in quick succession.

Camelia remained in poor spirits. She turned to her child and said simply, "Let's eat."

With that, she picked up her fork and immediately got lost in her thoughts. She was so still that she resembled those living statues on the streets.

I sighed before filling the bowl in front of me with some soup. "You need to take care of yourself. If you fall sick too, who's going to take care of Marcus?"

Then, I stood up and placed the bowl in front of her child while coaxing, "Be a good boy and eat. You need to eat well so you can take care of your mommy." I started ladling some soup for Camelia in the meantime.

Thankfully, the boy had not inherited Marcus' or Camelia's trademark obstinance. He glanced at his mother before quietly picking up his spoon to eat.

When I returned to my seat, Ashton had placed a bowl of soup in front of my plate.

I smiled at Ashton gratefully. My gaze darted to Marcus' son several times as he ate, and I asked, "What's your name?"

“Tobias White.” He lifted his head to meet my gaze, and I noticed Marcus’ eyes on him. The only difference was the youthful innocence in his gaze.

“Tobias White,” I muttered to myself as my lips curved upward in a smile. “It’s a great name, fitting for a brave boy. You need to take care of your mommy and help her to stay strong, okay?”

“Okay!” Tobias nodded determinedly like a soldier accepting his battle summons. He seemed rather comical with his cheeks puffed from the food he had stuffed into his mouth earlier.

Camelia had done a great job of raising her child. Grudges between the adults did not stop Tobias from accepting the kindness of others.

I smiled in relief and tore my gaze from Tobias, just in time to see Camelia sighing deeply.

“Marcus’ situation will become utterly hopeless if you give up.”

I could not help but frown after saying those words. After the storm had passed, Marcus’ most reliable companions were now ironically Camelia and me.

This realization served as a timely reminder for me not to give up hope till the very end.

As time passed and more of our loved ones passed on, it suddenly became imperative to hold on to those still around us tighter than ever, regardless of past grudges or grievances.

Ashton seemed as calm as ever, though he placed a warm hand over mine, silently lending me some strength and encouragement.

Camelia smiled ruefully and uttered, “I wouldn’t have waited till now if I was going to give up. I just don’t get it. Marcus loves you so much that he was willing to put himself through hell for you. Why would he give up so easily over an illness? Where did his fighting spirit go? I thought someone as ruthless as him would be fearless as well, but I guess he’s nothing but a coward.”

I replied hastily, “Don’t say that in front of your kid.” Though I was disappointed about Marcus’ situation, I refused to show my

feelings to her child. Dejection was nothing short of a plague—contagious and deadly. What they needed now was hope instead of stewing in despair.

“Why can’t I say that?” Camelia grew agitated all of a sudden. “He was the one who messed with me. He stole my heart and then cast it aside. I gave up everything because I loved him! When he was so sick he could barely care for himself, I stayed with him and nursed him. I’ve seen him in his best and his worst, and I’m his longest companion! I have every right to criticize him!”

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She brought her hand down on the table with a loud slam and shot to her feet. “I’m saying this loud and clear now. Marcus is a wimp!”

Not only were we taken aback, but even Tobias froze upon witnessing his mother’s burst of temper for the first time.

Everyone’s attention was riveted on Camelia, and time seemed to have stopped for a moment.

However, her menacing attitude faded away almost as quickly as it manifested. Immediately after, her shoulders sagged, and tears welled up in her red-rimmed eyes. As she tried to get a hold of her unraveling emotions, her mouth pressed into a thin line.

Alas, she lost the battle, and the dam broke.

She used to be a sheltered, naive girl. However, her world was turned upside down since she met Marcus, and she had been torn apart in the name of love.

Now that Marcus fell ill, she thought that he would need to rely on her, and she could stay with him forever. However, he chose death instead. What a sick joke.

She knew he had given up, and that was the last straw that broke her composure.

A wave of emotion assailed me, and the back of my eyes prickled with tears.

Tobias' voice trembled, sounding scared and pained. "Mom, are you okay?"

The sight of the mother who was on the verge of breaking down and her visibly upset child was chipping away at my empathy. If I didn't come apart at the seams, I would definitely be affected by my surroundings.

Ashton's hand tightened on mine, pulling it forward and placing it on his chest.

"Cry if you want to. You don't have to pretend to be strong when one of your family members is sick." His voice was soft yet clear, and every word emanated a sense of security.

As I steadied my nerves, I suddenly heard a woman's wailing reverberating across the room. Camelia slumped onto a chair and hid her face behind her palms, her body wracked with sobs.

Tobias dissolved into tears, too as he stood up and came to his mother's side, rubbing her back comfortingly. It was the only thing he could do at that moment.

Tears streamed down my face quietly, and Ashton wiped them away with his fingers. I didn't crumble under the weight of emotions with him being the pillar of support for us. Instead, I was able to stand on the sidelines, sharing in Camelia and Tobias' pain but not interrupting them.

Silence blanketed the room again after some time. Camelia had calmed down, but her nose was runny while her eyes were red and swollen. She squinted, barely able to see through her bleary vision.

After consoling Tobias, she glanced at us and lowered her head sheepishly. "Sorry for that. I must have shocked both of you."

"Not a problem. You needed to vent. If you bottle your emotions up, you'll get sick," I reassured.

She gave a wan smile and didn't say anything else, only tousling Tobias' head with an affectionate expression, as if she could overlook the messier parts in life. At that moment, she was a completely different person from the one who had just sobbed uncontrollably.

Camelia was exhausted down to the marrow of her bones from caring for Marcus who was terminally ill.

"How about this? Leave Marcus' next treatment to Ashton and me. You should take Tobias home and rest for a bit." We had hit it off since our first meeting, and I wanted to do something for her, no matter how small it was.

"It's fine." Camelia smiled, her gaze bouncing between us and Tobias. She joked, "I don't want to wash my hands of Marcus. He's stuck with me for the rest of his life. I want him to be indebted to me so much that he wouldn't be able to repay me in this lifetime."

Then she expelled a long sigh, caressing Tobias' arms as she murmured, "Tobias, you can love a person too much. Don't do it, okay?"

Camelia felt better after crying, and her muscles didn't feel as stiff. Before she returned to the hospital, she heeded our suggestion to take a hot shower at a nearby hotel and changed into a set of clean clothes, looking so much more refreshed.

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Coincidentally, it was mealtime for Marcus. Camelia used to serve him, but today, she passed the tray of food to me.

Staying alive was a lengthy process and didn't require any fancy reasons, just as long as both parties understood each other.

Camelia and I were on the same page when it came to saving Marcus.

Pushing the door open, I was greeted with Marcus' back as he sat on the edge of the bed. Camelia mentioned that he was very feeble, so this might be a good sign.

"Oh, you're awake. Here, you should eat something. The housekeeper has specially prepared some of your favorite food."

I walked to the foot of the bed and raised the overbed table, laying out all the food. Although they were pre-packed in insulated lunchboxes, they didn't lack in fragrance and flavor.

Yet Marcus didn't move a muscle, appearing uninterested.

I reckoned it was too arduous for him to get out of bed or turn around. Hence, I rounded the bed and voluntarily went to help him up.

As soon as my hand made contact with him, he shook it off irritably, his pale face looking sullen. He was evidently still irate at what happened.

I let out a sigh and straightened, drawing out in a patient tone, "You can't be so childish to be using your health as a bargaining chip, right?"

Marcus snorted derisively. "Your memory must be lacking not to remember that I'm a person who would do whatever it takes to get what I want."

I was dumbstruck and switched tactics to divert his attention. "Fine, let's agree to disagree that you will fight to the bitter end, but your health is important if you want to revolt. If you have something to eat, wouldn't your battle last longer?"

Enraged, he looked up and shot daggers at me. "You're just trying to deceive me now."

His furrowed brows told me his chest must have been hurting during our conversation. But in a blink of an eye, he had managed to smooth out the pinched expression, and once again, he looked normal.

That didn't escape my attention, of course.

Marcus clenched his fist as if he had something to prove and stated, "If my eating is the only compromise, I'll continue my hunger strike until I waste away from thirst or hunger, whichever comes first. The door's that way if you can't stomach it. No one's stopping you."

I was officially out of moves.

He was right, though. It was either out of sight, out of mind, or giving in.

It was common for patients to threaten others like this.

Since we were at an impasse, I chose to back down today and left him alone.

"It's all right if you don't want to have a bite. I'll come again tomorrow. If you want anything, inform me on WhatsApp, or you could rest if you don't have much of an appetite."

Then, I left the ward without another word.

Camelia insisted on staying to take care of Marcus. Thus, we volunteered to look after Tobias since it was not the wisest choice for a kid to stay in a hospital for a prolonged time.

Ashton instructed the doctor to administer nutritional supplements for Marcus intravenously before taking us home.

When we reached home, the kids were already asleep. Only Summer and Jared were in the living room, surrounded by a mountain of documents, furiously calculating something.

"Mom, Dad, you're back." Summer heard our footsteps, immediately putting down the tablet in her hands, and stood up.

"Yeah," I answered with a smile and introduced them to each other. "This is Tobias White, Camelia's son. He'll be staying with us temporarily. Tobias, this is Summer."

"Nice to meet you," he greeted sincerely.

"You, too." Summer continued courteously, "If you need anything, just come to me, okay?"

"Got it. Thank you."

I changed into a pair of indoor slippers and dragged my weary body to the couch, pounding my fist on my shoulders and thumbing through a document on the table quickly.

Cost accounting of the club project...

"You're doing cost-benefit now? Have you finished with the location and favors?" The Wenville project, which Summer and Jared had worked hard on, ended less than a week ago. They should be taking a break, not rushing headlong into the next project.

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[/ Returning from the Dead: His Secret Lover](#)

I encouraged it when kids had ambition and motivation. However, they could also take a breather under my roof.

Summer flashed a half-smile. "Mom, before completing the Wenville project, Mr. Cress and I already started on the club affairs, such as site approval, sale and purchase of properties, and renovations. They are all settled. After the quotations are approved, the company will allocate the final sum of capital, and we can prepare for the ribbon-cutting ceremony."

Who would have known that my daughter would favor a career in business and work tirelessly toward it? I might have been a little too narrow-minded before this and hadn't taken her seriously.

I chuckled ruefully and decided not to backseat her, leaving to give them some space. "You're adults, so I won't comment much. Go to bed soon. Don't overwork yourselves."

"I know, Mom. I'll head up shortly," Summer assured me.

Humming in approval with a nod, I led Tobias upstairs. "Come on, Tobias. I'll show you your room. Are you afraid to sleep alone? If you are, leave a light on tonight, okay?"

"I'm not afraid." He might be reserved, but he was a self-sufficient kid for his age.

I glanced back over my shoulder while climbing up the stairs to see that Summer and Jared had already returned to their frenzy working state. They looked like they were fighting on the battlefield instead of merely performing analysis.

Perhaps to Summer, it was indeed a battle. Her streak of independence was way ahead of the curve, and she was soaring to greater heights.

If Macy were able to see her, she would be proud.

After Ashton turned off the lights and got into bed, I instinctively curled up to him.

"Marcus said he would only consent to the treatment if I married him."

"His illness is caused by radiation. Nicolas wanted to use it on me back then, but he secretly replaced me with Nathaniel's help."

Although Ashton didn't ask about my relationship with Marcus, it didn't mean he wasn't curious. He was only refraining from asking to avoid putting more pressure on me.

"Immature," he growled in the dark. Evidently, he was miffed.

Tightening my arms around him, I shifted into a more comfortable position. "I said the same thing to him, but what could I do? Patients are usually irrational."

Ashton cradled my cheek in his big palm, his thumb stroking it. "Did he anger you?"

"No," I said lightly. "Only you could elicit such a response from me. If you don't anger me, then all is well."

Suddenly, he tittered as he recalled an old memory of the distant past. "I was young and childish back then to bully you and make you angry. Sometimes I couldn't even understand myself, but now my goal is crystal clear. I only want you to be happy and never cry again."

I let out a long, contented sigh, my brain foggy with sleepiness. The sentimental words slid off me as I replied mindlessly, "You're such a sweet-talker. It's unlike you."

I dimly registered Ashton leaning in closer, murmuring into my ear in a low voice, "We have too little time together as it is. If I don't say it at least twice or thrice a day, I wouldn't be able to make up for the lost time."

I could feel his breath on my ear and neck. That night, I fell into a deep slumber.

I woke up at six in the morning, Marcus' illness still lingering in the back of my mind.

Remembering that I hadn't made the kids breakfast in a while, I padded to the kitchen and started preparing with Mrs. Eriksen, including Marcus and Camelia's portion to be brought to the hospital later.

Although parenteral nutrition could help sustain one's life, the damage to the body would still be inevitable if solid food was not consumed. The housekeeper's cooking might not be to Marcus' taste, but he would never outright reject food specially prepared by yours truly.

While the chicken soup was simmering, Tobias had come downstairs dressed impeccably, standing guardedly by the kitchen door and looking to lend a helping hand. "Ms. Stovall, can I help?"

"Why didn't you sleep in a little more?" I yawned widely and led him out to the living room. "Take a seat here. When the food's done, we'll have breakfast together before heading to the hospital to visit your dad. Sounds good?"

"Yes," he answered obediently and settled on the couch.

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Afraid that Tobias would be bored, I had the maid bring out the set of Legos the kids enjoyed. "Do you know how to play with these?"

He gave a clueless shake of his head.

After all, he had been moving from one city to another with Camelia these few years and probably never had the chance to have fun like a normal kid. Needless to say, toys were a foreign concept to him.

"Come, I'll show you how. See, every piece of Lego has a serial number. Assemble them all according to this diagram into a complete model. Then you're done." I crouched down and picked up two pieces, fixing them together, and gestured. "Just like this. Understand?"

"Yes." A slight smile finally appeared on his face. He immediately started piecing a few segments together.

"Looking great, kid." I tousled his hair and showered him with praise before returning to my tasks.

About twenty minutes later, the silence in the living room was disrupted by Audrey's giggles.

"I want a bunny!"

"A dog! A big bad dog! Woof!"

"You liar! This isn't a parrot. It's a little bird! Stop lying and make another one for me. This time, I want a tiger!"

The entire house would be roused awake by Audrey's loud voice at any minute.

"Audrey Stovall!" I rushed out and barked, "Summer was working late last night. Quit shouting so loudly."

Audrey stilled and responded with an exaggerated O-shaped mouth, putting her index finger to her lips.

Thinking she was taking me seriously, I planted my hands on my hips exasperatedly when a giggle escaped her a second later.

What's so funny?

I headed over to both of them and noticed that the Lego pieces of a plane model were fitted together to create shapes of a bunny, a dog, and a parrot. Though the angles were a little off, the general structures were there.

"You did all this?" I didn't think Legos could be played this way and was a little surprised.

"Yeah." Tobias nodded, his fingers nimbly assembling Legos into a rough shape of a tiger.

This kid is creative. He's going to accomplish something in the future.

Audrey held a dog in one hand and a parrot in another, having them attack each other.

Seeing Shaun halfway down the stairs out of the corner of her eye, Audrey called to him, "Come here, Shaun! This person is so good at playing Legos."

"Okay," came his mild response. He made a beeline toward the living room, took a seat in an empty spot beside Audrey, and picked up the bunny Tobias made, casually studying it.

There was undeniably inequality in the world because, in front of Audrey and Tobias, Shaun's precociousness was especially apparent. His demeanor and gaze looked like they were of a grown-up.

"Don't be rude, Audrey. He has a name, and it's Tobias White. Remember that and address him properly next time, okay?"

Instead of replying to her mother, Audrey exclaimed, "Both of you share the same family name?"

Tobias and Shaun exchanged a glance without saying a word.

“Since it’s fate, all of you have to get along well with each other. I’ll finish up breakfast. Remember, do not fight.”

Leaving the kids to their own devices, I went back to the kitchen.

During breakfast, Audrey held on to a candy-shaped Lego and didn’t let it go throughout the meal.

“It’s not a real candy, and no one is going to snatch it away from you. You could ask Tobias to make you a few more later. Now, put it down and eat your breakfast,” I joked in a mirthful tone.

“No,” Audrey said while spooning chicken soup into her mouth. “Shaun made this for me, and there’s only one in the world. No one can touch it. I’m bringing it to school!”

I jolted in surprise and shifted to peek at Shaun, who was sitting in a corner.

Tobias put so much thought and effort into crafting those clever Lego models, but a mere candy took precedence over all of them?

John interrupted, “So can I have the rest of the Legos in the living room?”