

When There Is Nothing Left But Love Chapter 868-872

Chapter 868

Just a few seconds later, I realized with a start that something was amiss. I leaped to my feet and dashed out of the private room. Meanwhile, Holden raced after me, but my rapid acceleration had already placed me beyond his reach.

The lobby looked just as it had when we'd first entered. Even the people lounging around lazily were the same. Out of the corner of my eye, however, I felt the combined gazes of those who had been playing poker at the side suddenly turning towards me.

Coincidence? Most probably not, I mused.

I surveyed the lobby. Turning around, I raised my voice and called towards Holden, who was just catching up, "Ashton had a great deal of faith in you. I was the one who had a bad feeling about you, so I kept an eye out. I didn't know whether the Moore family would be able to bankrupt you, but I'm pretty sure they can manage to humiliate you, at the very least."

Holden wrinkled his brow. With a glint in his eyes, he asked, "What do you mean by that?"

I scoffed, "Holden, you were the mastermind, so you should have thoroughly investigated everyone involved before proceeding with your plan. It was pure negligence on your part to underestimate me."

Holden bit his lip, his face growing darker. He then took a step forward, towered over me, and demanded, "Who are you?"

I shrugged, smiling faintly. "How shall I say this? Perhaps I should start from the beginning. My name is Scarlett. I was born in R Province, and my Grandma was the one who raised me. My parents searched for me for many years, and I only reunited with them recently. I only just found out that I'm Zachary and Cameron's daughter. They're giants in the commercial world, and I'm lucky to be their daughter. I have to admit that it's rather convenient for me to ride on their reputation sometimes."

Hearing that, Hunter's frown deepened. "Wasn't Larson the last name of the daughter that Zachary brought home? You..."

He trailed off uncertainly. I bestowed a kindly smile on him, then replied, "Sorry to disappoint you. There was a bit of a mix-up. Afterward, we decided not to make a fuss of things in the interest of my safety."

Holden narrowed his eyes, a hint of suspicion still lurking in his gaze. I met his eyes without flinching, then said evenly, "Holden, you seem rather doubtful still. Why don't you bet on it then? Let's find out whether I'm speaking the truth."

Having thus issued the challenge, I immediately picked up my phone and dialed Zachary. The phone rang a few times before he picked up. "Hey, Letty, how're things?" Zachary inquired.

Holden's pupils constricted; there was still a glimmer of skepticism in his manner.

After a while, I continued in an innocent tone, "Dad, I'm still at the casino. Ashton isn't with me at the moment, but I'm with Holden."

Zachary answered pleasantly, "All right. Send my greetings to Holden."

I nodded, steadfastly gazing at Holden. "Sure!"

The phone had been on speaker mode, and Holden was naturally privy to the entire conversation. When he heard our conversation, he glanced at me, staggering slightly.

Ending the call, I then punched in another number. This time, the recipient answered the call almost instantly. "Miss, we're all prepared! We can make a move anytime."

I looked at Holden. At that moment, his face had grown thunderous. Through gritted teeth, he said, "Let's go and meet Ashton then."

At that, I smiled winningly at him, then instructed over the phone, "All right, wait out for a moment. If Ashton and I haven't left this place within half an hour, don't wait for me to call. Proceed immediately as we originally planned."

My orders were readily received. "All right!"

After I'd hung up, Holden looked at me and begrudgingly admitted, "You've really planned everything out, I suppose."

I flashed him a sunny smile. "I don't have a choice. Besides, isn't it better to nip things in the bud? We can't go about placing our lives in the hands of strangers, can we?"

Holden snorted at my remark. He then brought me to another spot on the second floor, past multiple private rooms. At the last room in the back, Holden keyed in the password to unlock the door.

When the door slid open, I carefully assessed my surroundings. Nothing seemed particularly surprising as I had been in far more pressing situations than this.

This room was very much the same as any of the others. The typical furniture was present in its usual arrangement, with a poker table and surrounding sofas. The setting was made noteworthy by the fact that most of its occupants were people I knew.

I was mildly surprised to see Abe again. Oddly enough, he didn't appear out of place here at all.

Around the table, Ashton and Abe both held cards in their hand, seemingly in the midst of negotiating. When I suddenly appeared, all eyes were riveted on me.

Obviously, Ashton was taken aback. He put his cards face down on the table, then walked towards me. "Why did you come over?"

As he spoke, he shot a glance at Holden, who merely shrugged in return. "I had no say in this."

At the same time, Abe squinted at me, evidently bewildered. He didn't seem able to recall who I was. That wasn't shocking. However, considering the multiple women he'd encountered over the years, the women Abe had met probably numbered in their hundreds, even thousands. I was merely one among his many faceless victims. The only conceivable difference that set me apart from the rest was probably the fact that I'd managed to escape. I was lucky that he'd never gotten to torture me.

Abe's eyes flickered with recognition. However, as he saw Ashton and me standing side by side, Abe gazed at me, then intoned in a low voice, "Is it you?"

I smiled at him brightly. "Long time no see, Mr. Abe."

Chapter 869

Abe glanced at Ashton, then sniggered.

"What were you planning to do, Holden? Why did you bring her in?" Abe asked menacingly.

Holden, however, turned to Ashton. "Mr. Fuller, it's getting late. Mrs. Fuller looks a little tired. Perhaps you should be heading home to rest," he suggested matter-of-factly.

"Holden Taylor, what exactly do you take me for?" Abe roared. With one swift motion, he furiously swept the cards off the table.

Holden, however, remained looking steadily in Ashton's direction. "You'll have to meet Dad tomorrow. You should get some rest tonight," the man urged, a note of warning in his voice.

Indignant at having been ignored multiple times, Abe flew into a rage. He suddenly drew out a pistol and pointed it straight at Holden. "Taylor, let me ask you again, what do you take me for?" Abe bellowed.

The solid presence of the pistol immediately draped a dense cloak of tension over the room. Ashton silently shielded me with his body as he watched the situation unfold.

Holden, however, seemed accustomed to Abe's behavior. He glared defiantly at Abe, then said coolly, "Mr. Abe, if you fire that pistol, I'm afraid neither of us will be walking out of Gold Star Casino tonight."

Abe's face had turned purple. He had evidently dedicated his full strength towards restraining his anger.

After what seemed like an eternity, Abe slowly lowered the pistol. He looked at Ashton and suddenly laughed harshly. "Mr. Fuller, perhaps some other day then. Don't worry. There'll be plenty of opportunities for us to meet again. Off with you!"

Nonetheless, Ashton's gaze never wavered. He remained expressionless even as he nodded politely. "I'll be happy to meet for drinks. As for other activities, I still abide by the same principle that I won't do anything to hurt anyone else."

With that declaration, Ashton grabbed my hand and practically hauled me out of the private room. I was utterly bewildered by the entire event and had so many questions to ask. My curiosity died on my lips, however, as I saw the urgency with which Ashton dragged me through the corridors of the casino.

The first floor was bustling with its usual activity. Ashton weaved through the raucous crowd with me in tow until we finally arrived at the exit. Zachary's appointed personnel were already waiting for us there. With that, we hurriedly linked up with them and got into the car.

Ashton had just started the car when a crowd of people swarmed out, forming a barricade on the road before us.

They weren't there for us. A few burly men had thrown a man out of the casino and were now determinedly laying their fists and kicks into him.

Their chosen target was screaming for mercy, but his cries fell on deaf ears. Only when they'd observed that the man was half dead did his assailants consider their mission complete. They headed back inside, none the worse for the wear.

Ashton coldly watched as the man convulsed a few times as he lay on the ground. He struggled to get up but crumpled to the floor each time. At last, he lay flailing on the floor like a trampled earthworm.

I felt a sudden surge of sympathy for the man. "Ashton, can we help him?" I asked impulsively.

Ashton clenched his jaw and said nothing. I didn't press the matter either. It was a casino, after all. It was not the place for kindness or pity.

The man, however, lay squarely in our path. Unable to drive away, we could only sit in the car watching him.

After a while, the man seemed to have exhausted all of his strength. He lay unmoving on the ground like a corpse. Ashton's eyes narrowed. He then stepped onto the accelerator as hard as he could. The sound of the engine revving was accompanied by the sudden lurching forward of the car. I was convinced that Ashton had made up his mind to run the man over where he lay.

The man, however, reacted to the firing of the car's engines as if he had been shot. He vehemently clawed his way up and sprawled onto the hood of our car. Blood still shone freshly on his face and from the corner of his mouth. The man then cracked a smile at Ashton and asked weakly, "Are you really going to stand by and let me die?"

Baffled, I turned to Ashton. Do they know each other? I wondered.

Despite that, Ashton continued looking straight ahead evenly.

The man laughed, but it came out as barely a wheeze. "You're both witnesses to the whole incident. Pity me and give me a ride to the hospital, won't you? My leg's broken, and I can't walk."

I found the man's utter nonchalance towards the danger he was in rather astounding.

Ashton, however, pressed his lips into a thin line. He barely spat out the command, "Get lost!"

Even so, the man shamelessly clung on. In fact, he'd almost clambered up onto the front of our car entirely. Lazily, he drawled, "If you aren't willing to let me into your car, I'll continue lying here then. I wouldn't want to frighten that beautiful lady next to you, either."

Ashton was already seething at that moment. Without hesitation, he stepped on the accelerator once again. The car surged forward, and the man lost his balance, rolling off the hood then landed with a heavy thud on the floor. Ashton, however, made no move to stop the car. He looked as if he fully intended to run the man over.

Fortunately, the man reacted with what would be lightning speed in his condition, narrowly avoiding being crushed by our car.

The man's violent curses followed us as we drove off. "You're insane! If you really ran me over, you'd have killed me!"

Yet Ashton paid no heed to him. After a while, his cries of abuse faded in the distance.

I was quivering from the aftermath of that encounter. My entire back was drenched in cold sweat. I looked out the car window, focusing on the light of the street lamps flashing past. After I'd calmed down considerably, I turned back to look at Ashton. His face remained as grim as it had been the entire night. I was compelled to ask, "Just what was going on tonight?"

Chapter 870

Ashton and Abe had clearly planned for their meeting in advance. I didn't know the contents of their discussion, but by entrusting me to Holden, Ashton must have been confident that Holden would ultimately fail Abe.

Ashton gave me a sideways glance. "Are you afraid?"

I shook my head, then nodded, conflicted. Upon seeing my confused expression, Ashton broke out into a delighted laugh, shattering the tension that had hung delicately over the car.

"Are you afraid or not?" he repeated, teasing.

I thought for a while before answering him solemnly, "A little of both, I guess. I'm afraid because I don't know anything. If anything happens to you, I don't know what to do. I'm not that afraid yet because I know that you always have a firm grasp of the situation. Besides, you're responsible. You will never put me in danger."

Ashton drove on, looking straight ahead. His gaze was unfathomable. "What if I tell you that everything's out of my hands now?"

I stiffened, but Ashton continued while glancing at me, "Scarlett, no matter what happens, you must ensure your own safety first. Forget about me. No matter the situation... just look out for yourself."

Ashton's sudden announcement startled me. What exactly does he mean by that? I wondered, disconcerted as I watched him intently. "Ashton, is there something that you're not telling me?"

Yet the man merely drove the rest of the way to the hotel in silence.

I had intended to continue questioning Ashton, but weary from the entire day's proceedings, I fell asleep the moment my head hit the pillow.

When I next opened my eyes, it was already morning. Ashton was already up and on the phone out on the balcony.

When he noticed that I was awake, Ashton hung up the phone, then called out to me, "We're heading over to the Taylor residence in a while. We'll leave once you're done washing up."

I nodded. After all, I had been expecting this ever since we'd arrived at Moranta.

On our way to the Taylor residence, Ashton filled me in on them. The Taylors were a distinguished family dating back generations. They'd made a fortune producing arms during the war, and Ashton's grandfather had remained in the country, enjoying relative peace. On the other hand, Archie, Holden's father, had instead been conscripted. Both George and Archie met through a group of mutual wartime comrades, one that also included Channing. Having stood shoulder-to-shoulder in the face of death, the bond between this group of men remained unbroken even with the passage of time.

After the war, Archie had returned to Moranta to inherit his family business. The other Taylors had passed away due to illness or accident, leaving Archie the sole survivor.

Naturally, any contention that ensued in the Taylor household was in large part due to the struggle for a portion of the family's wealth.

As Ashton and I entered the sprawling villa that was the Taylor residence, the sight of elegant, antique structures greeted us. Resplendent with fastidiously pruned greenery, piping brooks, and flower-filled meadows, the Taylor residence was no mere mansion. It seemed more like a palace to my wonderstruck eyes.

We followed the maid into the living room, where quite a crowd was already gathered. I guessed that they must be members of the Taylor family. Archie was nowhere to be seen. From the ghastly looks on the faces of everyone present, Archie's condition did not seem optimistic.

“Mr. and Mrs. Fuller, Mr. Taylor’s upstairs. May I invite you to follow me?” A voice courteously spoke from beside us. We turned to see the Taylor residence’s housekeeper. He looked to be around fifty or sixty years of age and exuded a reassuring air of dependability.

Ashton and I followed him up to the second floor of the house. He led us outside a room thick with the smell of disinfectant and medicine. A doctor was hurrying around, scribbling notes in his pad while giving orders to the maid, probably instructions on how to care for the patient.

“Mr. and Mrs. Fuller, please,” the housekeeper said again, gesturing towards the open doorway of the bedroom.

The smell in the room was almost pungent. An old man lay on the bed connected to an IV drip that hung from a stand beside him. When Ashton and I entered, the housekeeper announced, “Mr. Taylor, Mr. Fuller is here.”

Upon hearing those words, Archie struggled to sit up. The maid dashed over to assist him. When he was comfortably resting against the bed frame, Archie focused his attention on us.

The extended period of sickness he’d endured had reduced Archie to skin and bone. His face was sunken and sallow and looked almost like a death mask.

Ashton and I drew closer to the side of his bed. Raising his voice slightly, Ashton said, enunciating, “Hello, Mr. Taylor. I’m Ashton. I’m sorry I’m only visiting you now as I’ve had pressing matters to deal with.”

Archie mustered a weak smile. He seemed breathless, and the maid carefully strapped an oxygen mask around him. After taking several slow breaths, she removed it. Archie then whispered, “I’m glad enough that you’re here now.”

Later on, Ashton and Archie chatted, their conversation mainly revolving around the past. After a while, however, Archie shut his eyes, obviously fatigued.

The housekeeper, who had retreated to the side, sidled up to Ashton. "Mr. Fuller, I think Mr. Taylor needs some rest for now. May I invite you and Mrs. Fuller to head downstairs for a while? We've prepared some light bites for your refreshment."

Ashton nodded. We then followed the housekeeper back downstairs.

Not a single soul had left in the interval that Ashton and I had been upstairs. As we descended the stairs, a woman marched towards the housekeeper, demanding anxiously, "Neil, how's Father? Is he better? Did he ask for us?"

Chapter 871

Neil shook his head, then said gravely, "Mr. Taylor is doing fine. I'm sorry, Ms. Kate. Mr. Taylor didn't ask for any of his family members."

"Why doesn't Father want to meet us? Even now, why is he still refusing to meet us?" Kate cried hysterically and stomped off in frustration.

I watched her departing figure rather curiously but said nothing.

Right then, Neil brought Ashton and me to a separate room, apart from the rest of the house. He had a few cakes and drinks brought in, then left us to our own devices.

I turned to face Ashton. "Shouldn't we get going? We've already met Mr. Taylor, after all."

"Why are you in such a hurry to leave? What about Mr. Fuller's matters?" A voice rang out just as the door burst open. Alarmed, I froze in my seat. When I looked over to the speaker, I found myself staring at Holden.

Holden was leaning against the door frame, clutching a sheaf of documents in one hand. He wore the same careless attitude with an accompanying smirk on his face, looking utterly irresponsible.

Ashton had also turned to look at Holden. However, he pursed his lips and said nothing.

Holden strode in casually, then placed the documents he'd been holding onto the table before us. Fixing his gaze on Ashton, Holden said, "Dad got me to hand this over to you. Everything's written clearly inside. If you're concerned about any missing details, you may invite a lawyer over right now to take a look at it. If not, then sign it."

A quick glimpse of the documents revealed it to be a contract by the Moranta Foreign Trade Association.

Ashton merely cast an unworried glance at it, then signed it without a second thought.

Holden raised an eyebrow. "Impressive," he remarked, examining the contract. "All right then. If there's nothing else, I'll look forward to working with you, Mr. Fuller."

Ashton nodded and replied solemnly, "Please thank Mr. Taylor on my behalf. I won't let him down."

At that, Holden nodded in response. "Mr. Fuller, at the rate your business is expanding, are you planning on achieving a complete monopoly?"

Ashton remained silent.

Just as Holden was opening his mouth to speak, Neil charged into the room. "Mr. Holden, Mr. Taylor has just passed away."

The news landed like a bolt of lightning. Holden stood as if rooted to the spot, then roughly shoved the stack of documents towards Neil. "Hold this!" he muttered brusquely, then sprinted out of the room.

Neil flashed us an apologetic smile. "Mr. Fuller, I'm terribly sorry. Mr. Taylor's sudden passing has thrown the Taylor family into a frenzy. I'm afraid we won't be able to continue hosting both of you. I humbly seek your understanding."

Ashton waved away his apology, then said soberly, "We'll head upstairs to say a final farewell to Mr. Taylor then."

Neil agreed.

The entire crowd had since migrated to Archie's bedroom, spilling over into the hallway. Some family members were fussing by his bedside, while others were wailing with grief. A few stood stoically in the shadows, their faces ashen as tears streamed quietly down their faces.

Upon seeing Neil approach, Kate once again stepped forward and tugged at his sleeve. "Neil, has Father's will been written yet? Did he leave any instructions before he died?"

Kate's voice penetrated through the fog of sorrow that lay over the room. Besides, the impending answer to her question was of great interest to everyone present.

Neil's calm gaze swept over the room. Then he said mildly, "Mr. Taylor did say that if anything happened to him, Mr. Holden would be left in charge of his affairs. The lawyers will be over to read out Mr. Taylor's will in a while."

"What?" Kate scorned, evidently displeased. "Why did Father ask a fool like Holden to take charge of his affairs? The Taylor family isn't short of members. Why did Father choose that bastard? Isn't his existence enough of an embarrassment to the Taylors?"

A murmur spread across the room. The other members of the Taylor family gradually rose up with one voice to oppose the appointment of Holden.

Neil, however, looked unfazed. Placidly, he announced, "I know that there may be some disagreement to Mr. Holden being in charge of the Taylor family. However, this is Mr. Taylor's last wish. He has already transferred all of his belongings to Mr. Holden. If anyone opposes this arrangement, they're free to

leave the Taylor family and thereby cut off all ties with the household. If you wish to stay, you'll remain under the head of the Taylor family. You'll have to obey Mr. Holden then."

Neil's proclamation immediately quelled the Taylor family's desire to revolt. Kate, however, remained looking rather vexed. She looked sourly at Holden.

Not long after, the lawyer arrived.

At the sight of his dark suit, the room seemed to light up in anticipation. Each one seemed eager to find out what Archie had bestowed upon them with his passing.

The lawyer seemed to be on familiar terms with the Taylors. After a respectful bow to Archie, he settled down, retrieving a set of documents from their briefcase. He then addressed the waiting room in a measured tone. "My condolences to all. Archie lived to a ripe old age and was able to get all of his affairs in order before he passed. I have here in hand Archie's last will and testament. I will read it out to all of you shortly."

A hush fell over the bedroom. After glancing at his audience, the lawyer continued, "Dear members of the Taylor family, if these words are being read to you, I would have already departed. Having been the head of the Taylor family for decades, I'm well aware that all my things must be in order before I leave. I won't have any of our family members behaving disorderly in my passing and becoming a laughingstock to the media and other families." The will opened briefly with these statements, emphasizing Archie's responsibility and the Taylor family's wellbeing without much emotion.

Chapter 872

The lawyer paused and took a sip of water from the glass that Neil had thoughtfully prepared for him before continuing. "For the sake of the Taylor family's future development, I am leaving all of the decision-making rights concerning the Taylor family to my son, Holden Taylor. Holden will be the sole manager and distributor of the Taylor family's enterprises and assets. This may not be a popular decision, but it was carefully made with the growth of the Taylor family in mind and must be strictly obeyed..."

Minute details regarding the distribution of property and details about the Taylor family's enterprises comprised the rest of the will. Various expressions clouded the faces of those gathered in the room. Kate glowered at Holden, a mixture of hatred and resentment on her face.

The threat that Neil had issued on Archie's behalf, however, was still fresh on everyone's minds. Regardless of their dissatisfaction, none of the Taylor family members was willing to renounce the Taylor family name and the benefits that accompanied it.

I believed that Archie had wisely foreseen the numerous objections that Holden's appointment would meet with. He'd thus instituted this clause in anticipation. However, the fact remained that Archie was no longer present to dictate things. The Taylor family might formally recognize Holden's leadership, but there were sure to be ripples of displeasure beneath the surface. The path ahead of Holden looked set to be a bumpy ride.

After Ashton and I had said our goodbyes, we got ready to leave.

"Mr. Fuller, may I have a word?" Holden shouted, sprinting after us. He caught up, panting and obviously overwhelmed by the entire proceedings of the morning.

Ashton waited patiently for Holden to catch his breath before remarking icily, "Holden, we can always talk another day. I believe that you have more urgent matters to deal with than ours."

As soon as Ashton said that, he grabbed my hand and stalked off, pulling me along. We left Holden standing there, looking after us rather dazedly.

The moment we got into the car, I turned to Ashton with interest. "Why did Archie select Holden to be his successor out of his numerous other family members?"

Ashton immediately retorted, "Why did you pick me out of all the men in this world?"

I was dumbfounded. What kind of question was this? What sort of answer was Ashton expecting me to give?

Fine! I thought, slightly miffed. Then I slumped down in my seat. I'll stop asking questions.

Back at the hotel, the phone was ringing incessantly. When I answered, sobs poured through the line. "Mrs. Fuller, I know you've already helped me a tremendous amount. I shouldn't be asking you for more, but I'm really at a loss now. You're the only one I can turn to! I'm still short of forty thousand for Renee's operation. Can you lend me that amount? I'm begging you, Mrs. Fuller. I know it's utterly shameless of me to keep asking for your help, but there's no one else I can turn to. Please help me."

It was Mrs. Brooks – Sasha's mother.

I frowned slightly. I wanted to refuse her, but my heart suddenly softened with a twinge of pity. "Mrs. Brooks, haven't you raised enough funds for the operation? Why are you suddenly short of another forty thousand?"

She choked, "It's all my fault! I shouldn't have told my jerk of a son just before I was about to pay the remaining forty thousand! He stole the money and gambled it all away! Why wasn't I the one who fell sick instead? What should I do now? Good Heavens!"

Sasha's mother incoherently rambled on, clearly on the verge of a complete breakdown. Parker was a notorious gambler, as Joseph had once uncovered. However, I didn't expect him to be quite so base as to steal money set aside for his sister's lifesaving operation. He clearly cared about nothing else other than himself and satisfying his own lusts.

I replied slowly, "Mrs. Brooks, I can lend you the money, but this will be the last time. The money doesn't concern me. I'm willing to give the money as long as it will save her life. However, I sincerely hope you won't squander it, or always rely on others to bail you out."

She thanked me profusely, her voice hoarse. My heart ached for her, but we each had our own tribulations after all.

When Ashton finally emerged from the bathroom, I had just hung up and phone and was busy transferring the money to the account that Mrs. Brooks had given me.

Ashton glanced at me, then asked in an unruffled manner, "Shall we go out together tomorrow?"

I considered, then shook my head. "Aren't there a ton of things waiting for you back at Fuller Corporation? Now that we've paid our obligatory visit to Mr. Taylor, when are you planning on heading back to the office?"

Ashton tossed his towel aside, then replied gruffly, "We won't be going back for a while. We have to attend Mr. Taylor's funeral first."

That had slipped my mind entirely. I lowered my eyes with a mix of resignation and frustration.

Looking at me, Ashton gently encircled me with his arms. In a gentler tone, he said, "Why don't you tell me what's bothering you?"

I didn't plan on concealing what had just transpired over the phone. With a few brief sentences, I outlined our conversation, then looked at him sheepishly. "I just transferred forty thousand to them. You won't scold me for that, will you?"

A smile hovered on Ashton's lips. "Why would I scold you? I'm pleased that my wife is a kind-hearted, charitable woman. If we can resolve an issue with money, it shouldn't be an issue at all. Forty thousand isn't too much to fork out for a good conscience!"

I leaned against Ashton's warm body, stroking his toned arms. "Thank you," I whispered gratefully. Whenever I counted my blessings in life, I made sure to count Ashton twice.

I didn't think of myself as an exceptional individual. As a matter of fact, Ashton's affection for me was a result of good fortune rather than any inherent merit of mine. Whether it was destiny or pure dumb luck, he was mine nonetheless, and I was thankful for that fact.

My mind wandered back to the events at the casino, and I abruptly probed, "Wasn't Abe in A City? Why did he suddenly turn up in Moranta? Were you on the verge of signing a contract with him in that private room?"

Ashton looked at me, a smile playing on his lips. "When did my wife get to be quite so clever?"