

# In Love, Never Say Never 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!”

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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.

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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!"

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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?"

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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?"

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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,

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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."

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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?"

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