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## In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 1396

When I finally came back to my senses, I realized that everything was just as Ashton had said—there was no small fry in the Hall family.

Nathaniel disregarded Armond, who was still on the floor, and wore a smile as he turned toward us. “Let’s head over to our next stop.”

He walked past Armond and headed toward the door casually as if nothing had happened. His indifferent behavior unsettled me.

Ashton looked at Nathaniel’s back quietly before he took my hand in his and followed after his brother.

Crash!

“You’ll regret this, Nathaniel Hall!”

A loud noise of shattering glasses reached my ears right after we went out of the room. I jumped at the noise and looked back at the mechanical door nervously as a bad feeling ate me up from the inside.

“Don’t worry, Scarlett.” Nathaniel’s voice pulled me back to reality. He still had that calm and reliable look on his face. “He’s just a nobody. I’ll take care of him,” he assured.

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After the elevator door opened, Nathaniel led the way and went out. I caught a glimpse of his gaze as he walked out, and a wave of suspicion crept into my heart.

When Ashton saw how I was refusing to move, he patted me gently on my back. "Don't worry, Nathaniel will make sure everything is okay," he said softly.

I met Ashton's determined gaze before I looked at the enigmatic man waiting for us outside the elevator. This was the first time I felt so unsure ever since I set foot on the island.

Will anything happen to us? Will our children be safe? We're surrounded by the Halls, and Armond is after us. Will everything be okay?

"Ashton's right," Nathaniel tried convincing me to step out. "Both of you can trust me."

He sounded genuine and honest, and he looked so too. If I had not seen with my own eyes how he took Armond down single-handedly, I would have been deceived by his looks.

The pressure from Ashton's hand intensified on my shoulder. He was asking me to get my act together so Nathaniel would not suspect that we had already seen right through him.

I forced a smile on my face. "Of course. You're the only person we can trust."

Nathaniel and I nodded at each other, and I went out with Ashton holding my hand. We continued our visit looking at the research projects undertaken by the family.

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After the confrontation in the morning, everyone seemed to be distracted. We took a cursory look at the facilities and had some casual exchanges before finding any excuse to leave.

I was worried about the children, so Ashton and I headed back to the castle the moment we could.

Before we arrived at the nursery, we heard someone arguing.

"I'm sorry, but Mr. and Mrs. Fuller have already insisted that no one other than our own nanny can touch the kids."

"I understand, but I'm a certified nanny who has been working for the Hall family for many years. The children are almost one! You should really leave things to the professional. I'm not here to harm the children, I'm only here to make some assessments."

"No, we're good. We'll take care of the babies ourselves."

Joseph was arguing with the nanny Nicolas had assigned for the children. They were speaking in Ustranasion, and the negotiation was done cordially.

I stood at the door for a second, thinking about what I should do to turn down Nicolas' offer, but Ashton barged right in.

"Get out," he ordered. The whole room fell into dead silence at his sudden appearance.

The nanny Nicolas hired was a Chanaean woman. Despite her perfect skin and well-kept body figure, her eyes betrayed her age. Her dyed hair and colored contact lenses could easily make anyone mistake her for a local from M Country, but under a closer look, her skin tone said she was from Aploth.

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The woman was taken aback by Ashton's commanding tone, but she quickly recollected herself and tried negotiating again.

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The woman took a step closer to us and started speaking to us in Ustranasion. "Mr. Hall has the best of the children in mind. They are the family's heirs. They need special care and upbringing to ensure they grow up to be capable members of the family. I'm sure you can understand why..."

"Speak your native language," Ashton interjected her impatiently.

The woman stared at him and continued speaking in Ustranasion. "I'm sorry, I don't understand what you're..."

"It seems like you don't even know your mother tongue. How can someone like you teach my children? Get out of my sight, now," Ashton threatened, not bothering to give her a chance to explain.

"How dare you!" Before the woman could continue, Joseph had already stepped in between them. He cast a severe glare at the woman and gestured at her to leave. "This way, please."

Upon seeing everyone so adamant about her leaving, the woman stomped out in a fury.

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Once the commotion died off, Ashton walked over to the children to check on them. When he was sure Gregory and Audrey were alright, his tense face relaxed.

“All of you may leave first.” I felt I had to talk to Ashton alone after some consideration.

Joseph and the nanny left without any objection, closing the door behind them after they left.

I went closer and squatted down beside Audrey, toying restlessly with her chubby hands. “Do you think it’s worth it, Ashton?” I blurted out anxiously.

My husband read my face and understood my concern almost immediately. “I’m not losing any one of you.”

I understood what he meant. It would not be a complete family anymore without me. He was willing to undertake great risks to keep the family intact.

“But it’s only the second day, and I’m already gripped by fear. What if something happens? I know the Halls will never harm the children, but what if...”

Armond would do whatever it took to get rid of us. What will happen to the children if something happens to us? The Halls are only gonna groom them into cold-hearted beasts.

As for Nathaniel, he might seem harmless, but God knows what he’s planning in his head.

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I was so lost in all these worrying thoughts that I did not realize Ashton staring at me for some time. He circled his arms around me from behind, causing a familiar scent to waft around me and invade my senses.

“It won’t take long. My men are already on the island. I’ll bring you, the children, and the cure home safely. Summer is still waiting for us at home. You need to stay strong,” he whispered in my ears in a low voice.

My hard look softened instantly when I looked at my children.

Macy left and entrusted her daughter to me. There was no way I could leave Summer behind. Besides, how could I let Gregory and Audrey grow up without their mother?

I held on to Ashton’s hands around my waist and pursed my lips in determination. “I’ll stay strong.”

I knew there was no turning back since the day I fell in love with Ashton.

A week went by peacefully after Ashton sent the nanny away.

His men, who had already located the most possible spot where the antidote was hidden, were already planning on how to break in to acquire the cure.

But Ashton received a text from Armond the next day, asking him for a meet-up at the golf course on the island.

I obviously would never let him go alone. I started packing my clothes as the hour of their meeting approached, getting ready for whatever was to come.

As usual, Ashton looked calm and composed as he sat on the couch reading some documents.

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I could not wrap my head around how he could remain unflustered under such a circumstance.

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“Do I have something on my face?” Ashton asked, growing uncomfortable under my drilling stare. He put down the document in his hands and folded his legs before leaning on the couch. “Do you also want to put some foundation on my face? You’re putting on makeup on your own face, but you’re staring at me. You’d better move on to the next step on your routine though, one side of your face is so pale.”

I retracted my gaze and looked at the mirror, only to realize I had forgotten to put on foundation on one side of my face. I spread it out evenly as I talked to him. “Are you not worried at all about Armond? What if it’s a trap?”

I swore Armond as my nemesis a long time ago. I could never sit still at the mere mention of his name.

Ashton took up the documents again and replied lackadaisically, “I’m not a bit worried about Armond. On the contrary, It’s the person behind him who has to worry. Before he has a clear idea about the Moore and the Stovall family, he will not dare to snatch the children away, and neither will he do anything to us. Because if he does anything hasty, there will be a bounty on his head.” Ashton paused for breath shortly before he continued, “I forgot to tell you that I’ve got some returns from an investment. I’ve already used the small amount of money to open a bank account in Sumanthova. The money will go to

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whichever bounty hunter in the world who's able to chase the perpetrator down."

It turned out that he had had everything planned out. I must have forgotten that I had married a shrewd man.

"A small amount of money? How small is small?" I asked jokingly.

"Not a lot. Around a billion," he replied, not bringing his eyes to meet mine.

I was dumbfounded by his answer and turned my head to hide my surprise. Though shocked, deep in my heart, I felt a sense of relief.

A billion might not be a lot to our family, but this was a phenomenal sum of money in the eyes of bounty hunters who had to risk their lives every day. The interest of such a sum of money was enough for them to retire and live a carefree life. It went without saying that no one would be able to resist such a tempting offer.

This is why Nicolas would never destroy us and risk going against all the bounty hunters around the world if he knew what he was getting into.

.....

Armond was nowhere in sight when we arrived at the golf course.

Ashton asked the bodyguards from the Hall family to check the whole compound for suspicious individuals, but they only found the caretakers and workers on the site.

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I spread my gaze across the limitless sea. A barb of disquietude lodged in my heart as I fell back in Ashton's embrace. "Is he trying to pull our leg? I bet he won't show up today."

I was secretly hoping he would not make an appearance. After all, his presence meant nothing good.

But I was disappointed by the confidence in Ashton's eyes. "No. He will be here."

After many years of strife between the two, Ashton knew the man like an open book.

His surety was probably a result of knowing that each of them was stubborn.

The grudges passed on from the past generation had lingered to their generation. One of them pursued relentlessly, and the other fled tirelessly. Both of them were fiendishly clever, but they became sworn enemies just because of a slip on Armond's side.

Armond was set on restoring his dignity by vanquishing Ashton, and this would never change.

The man would seize every opportunity he had to seek revenge, so he would definitely come.

As for Ashton, I knew him far too well. He was deliberately giving Armond a chance. He might even put an end to their standing conflict this time, or he probably just wanted to create havoc to disrupt the security on the island so we could grab hold of the antidote.

Regardless of what his motivation was, I needed to act accordingly.

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After we sat down around a table, we waited anxiously for Armond to turn up.

It was not until the sun set and the moon rose to the dark sky that Armond finally showed up.

The golf course was close to the pier, allowing Armond to come on a yacht with many men following behind him.

He sat down opposite Ashton across the table after he made his way over.

His subordinates spread out in a neat line behind him, outnumbering us by onefold.

“I’m sorry I’m late. Something came up,” he said casually. He seemed a lot more temperate compared to the last time we saw him.

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“Get to the point.” Ashton’s patience was wearing thin.

Armond clapped his hands, and immediately, two men and a woman came forward at his signal. The woman had a child in her hand, and she was being held hostage by the men on both of her sides.

Her face became clearer as she came closer. “Aunt Sally...?” I mumbled as I scrutinized the woman’s face under the faint light.

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The woman made her way into the light and looked up at me. It was really her—the second and last heir of the Fuller family.

I saw Ashton's grip tighten around the arm of the chair when he saw Sally, but the expression on his face remained unchanged. "What does she have to do with us? She's already married to Jim, so she's one of the Murphys."

"Ha!" A cold smirk played on Armond's lips. "Kudos to you for remaining as cool as a cucumber under this situation, Ashton Fuller."

With that said, Armond darted his gaze at his men and tilted his chin.

The bodyguards nodded and kicked Sally in the joints. She fell to her knees in pain, causing the baby to start crying at the sudden jerk. The guards then took out their guns and pointed right at the frightened woman who dared not move an inch.

My first reaction was to dash over, but Ashton's hand grabbed me firmly. He sat on the chair unmoved, his mouth set in a grim line. I could not tell what he was thinking at that moment.

I was as anxious as a cat on a hot tin roof. "What do you think you're doing, Armond Murphy? They're your uncle's wife and child, your family! They're innocent!"

He must be crazy to do something this outrageous.

"My family? Innocent?" Armond let out a deep chuckle as he turned to question me with a menacing smile that quickly vanished. He soon resumed

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his cruel and cold face. "I'm innocent too. There are thousands of bloodthirsty evildoers in the world, but your husband purposefully singled me out and wants to hunt me down. I'll admit that there are unsettled scores between our families, but the truth is that the Murphys are no more than scapegoats of a misunderstanding between your husband and his father. My whole family was torn apart because of that problem. Now, you tell me who's the innocent one here."

Armond was sounded self-possessed and concerted as he spoke, but his words surely hit their mark.

When he finally stopped talking, he sat back in the chair, digging his hands into his pocket. In a blink of an eye, a pistol appeared in his hand, locked and loaded.

"Let the game begin," he smirked, pointing his pistol around carelessly between Ashton and Sally. "Come on out, Mr. Hall."

As soon as he spoke, a ruffling sound came from somewhere. The sound of footsteps followed. A man's shadow elongated under the road lamp. It was Nathaniel.

From his calm demeanor, it was apparent that he had been here for a long time. Ashton and I had simply not noticed him.

Now that I thought about it, it made total sense. Given the foolproof security on the island, there was no way Nathaniel would not realize anything. Besides, it was not like he had completely let down his guard toward Ashton. We had been here for a whole afternoon, so we have given Nathaniel ample time to know what we were up to.

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But Nathaniel did not seem to be coming towards us. “It seems like I’ve underestimated you. I can’t believe you dare to return to the island on your own. What do you take the Hall family for?”

“Well, well,” Armond replied casually with a smug smile on the corner of his lips, “Nathaniel Hall, I respect you for your caliber. Since you’re a talented young man, I’ll give you one last chance. Apologize now, and I’ll let you go.”

Nathaniel cocked his head and looked down at Armond, his eyes narrowing. “It’s time you change that insolent attitude of yours,” he said, agitated.

Indeed, Armond should be watchful of his words as he was on the Halls’ territory. It would be as easy as breathing for the Hall family to annihilate Armond and his men.

Armond rested his hands on his lap as he leaned back against the chair. He stared into the space blankly as he began talking to himself. “Why do I feel as if I’m getting the same patronizing vibe from the two of you? What a disgusting pair of brothers.” He then turned toward his men and uttered, “Well? What are y’all waiting for?”

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The tone of his voice changed at that last sentence. When he finished speaking, the bodyguards behind Nathaniel took out their guns and aimed at him.

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“Apologies, Mr. Hall. We don’t want to be trapped on this island for the rest of our lives!” the bodyguard nearest to him said with a flash of guilt on his face.

Nathaniel had clearly not expected that to happen as it was evident that he was momentarily stunned. However, he snapped out of his shock the next instant and swept his glance calmly across his bodyguards who had turned against him. Keeping his composure, he paused for a moment before letting out an unfathomable smile. “I’ve known long ago that you have no loyalty, but my dad didn’t believe me.”

Armond sneered, “It’s not too late for him to find out now.”

Then, he looked towards Ashton with an expression as cold as ice and said, “It’s your turn to speak now, Ashton. Between this woman from the Fullers and your biological brother, who are you going to side with?”

With that said, Armond rubbed his gun with a mirthless smile on his face. His intention was obvious. Whomever Ashton picked would continue to live; the other one would not be able to leave the island.

The entire golf course was already under Armond’s control. There was no way Ashton could escape from the situation. As such, it seemed like he had no choice but to make a decision.

However, he remained unusually calm, and without batting an eyelid, he stated, “What if I refuse to choose?”

“You’re probably the only person who can still sound so high and mighty in this situation,” Armond replied while straightening his back. His expression darkened as he nodded purposefully and said, “Since you refuse to choose, everyone shall die together with you!”

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Sally was so terrified that she burst into tears when she heard that. "Don't do that, Armond! Let that child go. He's your uncle's only offspring!"

Turning a deaf ear to her words, Armond looked at Sally, his eyes void of any emotion. It seemed like he was already accustomed to life and death; a life lost meant nothing to him.

Armond lost his patience after a while and pointed his gun at Nathaniel's chest. "You still have ten more seconds to decide. Ten, nine... "

Just then, a woman's voice sounded from afar.

"Armond."

Everyone looked in the direction of the voice and saw Nora walking towards them with Joseph supporting her.

Nora was carrying an infant in her arms. She did not look as bubbly and energetic as she used to. Instead, she had become gentler and had a more feminine air to her.

The woman looked at Armond with a passionate gaze. With tears in her eyes, she smiled and said, "We finally meet again."

As she said that, she walked towards Armond resolutely.

I noticed the changes in Armond's expression when he caught sight of Nora and her child.

It was a mixture of shock, confusion, and surprise.

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“Is this my child?” His hand that held the gun dropped.

Nora smiled faintly as she looked at the infant in her arms lovingly. “Yes. I wasn’t able to inform you earlier. Our baby looks so much like you,” she uttered softly.

As Armond looked at Nora and the baby, it seemed like his hostility subsided a little. He narrowed his eyes, making it difficult for me to guess what he was thinking about.

“Armond,” Nora called out his name again gently and said, “It doesn’t matter to me what you’ve done during the past two years or what plans you have for the future. Now that we are parents, can we free ourselves from all the grudges and feuds and start anew? Ashton has promised me that he wouldn’t pursue the matter further if you’re willing to stop here.”

Armond looked at Nora before shifting his gaze towards Ashton. He gave an imperceptible nod, looking convinced.

I felt a surge of hope rise within me at that moment. However, before my happiness could sink in, Armond started speaking again in his chilling voice. “As usual, Ashton is still so arrogant. He has even resorted to unscrupulous tactics such as threatening someone else’s wife. Why would I need your forgiveness? Do you really think you’re more superior than me?”

The man took a pause before lifting his head and fixing his gaze on Ashton with bloodshot eyes. “Do you think that by doing this, you will be able to threaten me?”

No reply came from Ashton. Instead, he picked up the glass beside him and took a sip of water slowly. It seemed like a provocation.

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