

In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 917

A request for promotion lay among the stack of promotion documents. I opened it and read Stella's name written boldly on it. Stella wrote in a sincere, flowing manner, carefully detailing her experience at the Fuller Corporation as well as the expectations that had been placed on her. I noticed that Stella had occupied her position for barely more than a year. However, in all her time at Fuller Corporation, she had not produced any particularly outstanding work. After careful consideration, I set Stella's request aside.

After a while, Ashton turned to me once he'd completed all his tasks on hand. He glanced at the pile of promotion letters with interest, then picked up Stella's cast aside one and gave it a casual once-over. Ashton then commented, "There's no need to take this so seriously. We've had no lack of remarkable employees. It's not even in the criteria for promotion anymore."

I nodded, then looked at him curiously. "Have you been very busy lately?"

Ashton arched an eyebrow and declared, "Yes!"

I sighed, "These matters used to be managed by the respective heads of department. Everything's on you now, so it'll be a miracle if you weren't busy. You should be supervising the work and contributions of a few directors at most, not the entire company."

"There's a name list that's already been vetted. You can take a look," Ashton advised. I flipped through the stack accordingly and located the document. Scanning through the list, nearly all of its names had been nominated by the respective directors and senior management.

Was my meticulous analysis of each individual completely unnecessary then? I felt slightly ridiculous and laughed sheepishly. "If I told you that I didn't see it, would you believe me?"

Ashton gave me a hand, then pulled me up. "Sure. Leave it. I'll come back to sign these afterward."

I had a sneaking suspicion that Ashton had been delaying me on purpose.

When we entered the elevator, Ashton pressed me against the wall. In a low, hoarse whisper, he demanded, "Aren't you going to reward me a little?"

I blinked at him, baffled. "What kind of reward do you want?" I queried.

Looking at my bewildered expression, Ashton frowned. His handsome face looked almost petulant at the moment. He flung my hand aside and retreated to another corner of the elevator to sulk.

I was used to his pettiness, however, and leaned towards him flirtatiously. Tiptoeing, I planted a kiss on his lips, then teased, "If we don't manage to do it here, I'll compensate you tonight, OK?"

Childish as he was, Ashton was easily won over. The man warmed to my proposal instantly and grinned. "Now that's an idea."

I couldn't resist smiling back at him. Just then, I recalled the matter with Sally and inquired curiously, "Ashton, Mom said that she ran into Aunt Sally at the hospital. She sounds like she's seeing someone now. Have you been in touch with her recently?"

Ashton shook his head. "I've been busy lately and haven't been to see her. She's getting on in years, and it must be lonely for her, living on her own. It would be good for her to have someone keep her company."

I nodded, approving. Sally had lived in the White residence for years. She'd spent her days fighting with Sharon when she wasn't caring for Benjamin, then had been greatly troubled by Marcus. All these years, Sally had never had the chance to do anything for herself. If Sally had indeed managed to find someone to enjoy the rest of her days with, that would be ideal.

When the elevator doors opened, Ashton hauled me out of it. Streams of employees getting off work flowed ceaselessly through the lobby. Many lingered leisurely around the front counter, chatting idly.

I glanced at their faces inquisitively. In the middle of the crowd, a man in his twenties was clutching a bouquet to his chest. With one knee on the ground, both his posture and face were brimming with ardor.

Curious, I pulled Ashton over to take a closer look. The man was in the middle of a proposal, and further examination revealed the object of his affections to be Stella. I was a firm believer in the magic of youth, and it was no wonder that Stella had the man before her looking so absolutely smitten.

Bashful, Stella's entire face was suffused with red. She looked rather awkward, perhaps due to the large crowd that had gathered around them in eager anticipation of her reply. She gazed helplessly at the man who was still kneeling hopefully before her, then said in a low voice, "Justin, can we discuss this back at home? Let's go back first."

Sally reached out and tugged at him, but Justin seemed resolute on seeing his proposal through. He gazed at her adoringly and declared, "Stella, I really do love you! Say yes, and I promise I'll take care of you for the rest of your life."

The crowd was hollering and cheering. In just a split second, a chant picked up, "Say yes, say yes..."

The smile that had frozen on Stella's face faltered. It was evident now that she hadn't been shy. She was merely embarrassed at having been placed in this difficult spot. While surveying her surroundings, Stella's eyes fell upon me. She gulped, then turned back to Justin, stating, "Justin, I don't understand why you would propose to me. You know that I don't love you and naturally won't agree. Why are you fooling yourself? I've told you this more than once already. Please leave, and don't ever use this sort of romantic proposal to harass me ever again, OK?"

Nobody present had imagined that that heartfelt and moving proposal would end so tragically. A hush fell over the crowd, and quite a number crept off tactfully.

Still kneeling, Justin's face had turned crimson with shame.

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"You didn't say that the last time," Justin finally managed uncertainly. He looked immensely vulnerable, his heart having been promptly ripped to shreds before an entire crowd.

Stella looked at him coldly. "What else did you want me to say, then? I thought I'd refused you obviously enough. Couldn't you tell?"

At that, Justin hung his head, deflated. Even the vibrant bouquet he'd brandished confidently before now hung crumpled before him. Justin had bitterly wrung it in his despair. "Why? Is it because I'm not rich enough? Or that I..."

"It's none of those reasons! I don't love you. It has nothing to do with your money or your abilities at all. I don't love you, pure and simple. You can go now. I'm begging you, please don't embarrass me like that ever again, OK?" I'd only ever been exposed to the sunny, endearing side of Stella. Thus, I was rather startled to see that she was capable of such harshness as well.

I dragged Ashton with me out of the lobby, then sighed longingly. "After so many years at university, no one has ever confessed their love to me so grandly before. It only works if the person you're proposing to love you back, of course. But I rather like this heady rush of emotions and romance."

Ashton's grip on my arm tightened slightly. "What do you like?"

Glancing at his sober expression, I laughed. "I like the impulsive, romantic ways of these youths. Since we've gotten older, I haven't been feeling many strong bursts of emotions. Life doesn't seem as exciting anymore."

Upon that, Ashton pulled me to face him. Gravely, he asked, "Are you tired of me because I'm old?"

Is Ashton approaching menopause? I wondered wryly.

I smacked my forehead in exaggerated frustration. "I didn't say you were old. I meant that I admired youths for their wholehearted and energetic approach to life. I've been motivated to live my days in the same way, rather than always dragging my feet around. Ugh... Stop twisting my words!"

Ashton wagged an eyebrow at me. "What wholehearted and energetic things do you plan on doing?"

Instantly, I became speechless at his words. I should have known better than to talk about things like romance with an old pedant like him.

After a while, I laughed a little too brightly. "Let's not dwell on such things! It's getting late, and John should have already arrived. We shouldn't make him wait."

I then wrenched my hand away from Ashton's steel grip and forcefully terminated the conversation.

A question lingered in my mind, however. Stella's blushing, rosy face resurfaced in my mind, and I couldn't help but ponder. Does Stella already have someone she loves? Is that why she rejected Justin?

At that time, John had indeed already reached the restaurant and was midway through his meal. Looking at the half-eaten dishes spread out over the table, as well as the nearly empty bottle of wine, I cried ruefully, "Mr. Stovall, you're really getting more and more impolite."

John looked at me in amusement and sniggered. Then he called for a waiter to bring another round of dishes. "I had to fill my stomach first before the sight of you two behaving all lovey-dovey made me nauseous."

I shook my head wordlessly at John, then sidled into the seat opposite him. "How's Uncle Louis?" I asked.

John shrugged. He filled Ashton's glass with wine, then answered, "There's no concrete evidence. His superiors are biased against him. Uncle Louis has always lived an open, honest life. All the ammunition that those green-eyed monsters have against him are their own baseless rumors. There's nothing for them to uncover. Uncle Louis should be able to return within a few days."

I nodded. The waiter laid out another round of dishes, and we tucked in eagerly. Ashton and John fervently discussed the state of the market between glasses of wine. I had planned on asking John about his relationship with Hannah but refrained as Ashton disapproved of gossip.

Midway through the meal, I rose to go to the bathroom. When I emerged from the stall, I heard a woman's voice saying, "Don't you pity Rebecca? Her ex-boyfriend got stolen from her, and now her current partner's cheating on her. She's really unlucky!"

Another voice answered, "I don't know about that, but I heard Mr. Quinn's woman used to be with Mr. Crest. Clearly, Mr. Quinn isn't too picky. After all, he's even willing to accept his friend's hand-me-downs! It's strange, but there you have it."

"That's right. Don't forget, Rebecca was tossed aside after Mr. Fuller got tired of her too. These rich people have no morals at all. They treat women and clothing alike, to be used and then cast away."

I furrowed my brow, looking over at those two women airily gossiping away. Judging by their elaborate outfits and appearance, they were probably socialites. I wasn't part of that circle and naturally didn't like to concern myself with their affairs.

Yet, I was bothered by what those two women had just said.

Mr. Crest? Jared?

Had he ever taken a woman for a ride? Who was it?

No one came to mind. However, Joe was practically groveling at Rebecca's feet, so deep was his affection for her. Having gotten this opportunity to prove himself to her, why had Joe ended up offending her instead?

Bang! My deep reverie was abruptly interrupted by the sound of a door being flung open. A woman dressed entirely in black strode out from a stall.

I automatically looked up, then started in surprise.

Kristina? Isn't she in W City? Why did she come back?

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Our eyes met. A glimmer of hesitation appeared in Kristina's gaze before she looked away. Sauntering towards the sink, she asked icily, "Don't you think it's a joke?"

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