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# In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 1316 - 1320

With that, I walked away and didn't look back.

He didn't follow us out; he had no reason to, nor did he have any need to. My attitude had been enough to make him come to his senses and realize that trying to claim custodial rights over Summer was a lost cause. If he dared piss me off, I would go to much further lengths to hide Summer away than just transferring her to another school.

While in the car, I snuck another look out the window at the café while John was busy buckling his seatbelt. "I have a weird gut feeling," I told him, frowning. "call some of your best men from the company's IT department over to the house."

He silently considered the idea for a moment before taking out his phone and swiftly tapping the screen several times. After that, he started up the car engine and drove us home.

Half an hour later, we arrived at the Stovall residence, where a group of five or six nerdy-looking boys wearing glasses and a similar style of checkered shirt were already waiting for us inside.

"Mr. Stovall," they politely greeted, bowing in John's direction.

John made a simple sound of acknowledgment, turning to face me. "The nation's highest-ranking graduates in the IT field this year are all here. Just tell them whatever you need from them. They might seem a little dense, but they're good at what they do."

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I nodded, stepping forward and cutting to the chase. "Have you all brought your laptops?"

"Yes, Ms. Stovall," the guy in the corner called out loudly. His gaze was fixed on the floor, and I could tell he was nervous from how badly he was trembling.

The rest of them weren't faring any better; some were clenching and unclenching their fists nervously, while some were hanging their heads. I gave John a questioning glance, as if to ask, "Are you sure these guys are the real deal?"

He only crossed his arms, proudly lifting his chin in the air as if anticipating my reaction.

His self-confidence left me with many suspicions, but I had no other choice except to trust him.

Clearing my throat and taking a deep breath, I announced, "I will send some information regarding the Crest family as well as the log in details and password to my personal account to each of your smartphones I want you all to spare no expense in investigating the Crests' criminal history or finding out anything else that will give us an upper hand over them. Got it?"

"No problem, Ms. Stovall!"

The loud bark startled me, and I turned towards the source of the voice to see the boy from earlier staring at me intensely. His attitude had changed completely from before, as if a switch had been flipped.

After holding his stare for a few seconds straight, he suddenly lowered his voice and ordered, "Let's go!"

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The rest of the boys instantly got moving, bowing before me before lining up and heading for the dining table where they had their laptops already turned on and ready to go.

In the blink of an eye, the room was filled with the furious, rapid clicking sounds of multiple keyboards.

Taking a step closer and leaning in, the once stiff boys were now all gazing intently at their screens, eyes slightly squinted as the tips of their fingers flew across the keyboard at inhuman speeds.

I nodded in satisfaction. I would have expected nothing less from John.

About ten minutes later, the guy closest to me ceased his actions and turned the laptop around to show me the screen. "It's all done, Ms. Stovall," he explained matter-of-factly. "All of the Crest family's finances have now been frozen. They will not be able to spend a single cent of it unless I remove the virus."

"Good work." I reached out and patted his shoulder in an act of encouragement.

The words had barely left my mouth when I heard someone yell, "Something's wrong! There's someone trying to rewrite our program, and they're doing it rapidly! Mine is getting destroyed!"

Everyone else instantly snapped out of their dazes and got back to work on their laptops. Their anxious expressions made even John and I feel slightly nervous.

In the following fifteen minutes, I witnessed what I could only call "utter defeat".

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The group of initially enthusiastic technicians was slowly being taken down one by one. First, their laptops were being controlled remotely, and then their firewalls were getting taken down, and so forth. In the end, I saw the laptop nearest to me completely shut down by itself, unable to be rebooted no matter what its owner tried.

## In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 1317

“That’s impossible. How can such a small company possess such powerful technology?”

As though dealt a heavy blow, the boys scratched their heads in defeat. It seemed like these rookies were no match for the technology the other party used to stop us.

The Crests had compensated a hefty sum because of the incident at the chemical plant. Their business was affected later on, so they couldn’t possibly have enough money to hire computer experts or solve this crisis in such a timely manner and even retaliate against us. Based on the Crest family’s connections, there weren’t many who could be behind this.

“It’s not your fault.” I grabbed my phone after some thought and went to the garden in the backyard before speed dialing Ashton.

He answered within a second.

“What is it?” As always, Ashton sounded calm and confident, as though everything was within his control.

“Are you the one protecting the Crest family?” There was a hint of hostility in my voice as well as a trace of anger, and I was sure he could tell over the

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phone. "You knew a long time ago that Jared was released from prison, didn't you?"

Besides Ashton, I really couldn't think of anyone else who would be willing to shield such a despicable family like the Crests or have so much power and influence in J City, not to mention how they countered the computer experts John recruited in J City without much efforts.

I was angry because Ashton obviously knew about the terrifying things Jared had done in the past, but had the audacity to hide his release from me. If I knew about it earlier, Summer wouldn't have been tricked by him again and innocently placed her trust in him.

Silence drifted across the line before Ashton replied in a low voice, "Jared won't hurt Summer."

What's that supposed to mean?

I haven't even mentioned Jared posing as a teacher to approach Summer. How does he...

Panic instantly engulfed me.

"Were you involved in Jared becoming a teacher named Mr. Cress?"

I was dreading his answer and unsurprisingly, it didn't come, but his silence was enough of an answer.

"You've gone too far, Ashton!" I lost my temper. When I thought about all the days I felt so troubled I could barely sleep or eat, my eyes stung with tears of betrayal. "You're not the one who's having a hard time. Who gave you the right to forgive that man in Summer's place? Jared is a master of deception. If

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something happens to Summer this time, do you really think we'll get so lucky again to find a suitable donor to cure her?"

"I won't let any of this happen again." Ashton reassured in a firm tone, "I've met with Jared. We've been friends for decades. I can tell when he's lying, and he's not. He's a changed man now."

"So? Before what happened to Summer, wasn't he your best friend too? And then what happened, huh? Ashton, I never knew you were such a magnanimous and selfless man that you could even find it in yourself to forgive someone who crossed the limit!"

Ashton sighed in resignation and lowered his voice. "If that's the case, I deserve to die a thousand times over as well."

Words failed me all of a sudden and silence stretched between us through the phone.

In the end, Ashton was the one to break it.

"Letty, I love Summer as much as you do. You've also seen how happy she's become after interacting with Jared. She's slowly getting better. As parents, we shouldn't overprotect our children. She needs to get out there more and build her confidence to face the real world. Both of us couldn't get Summer to open up, but Jared succeeded. It's worth giving this a try for Summer's sake, right?"

Before I could respond, he powered on, "I know what you're worried about. I've arranged for people to watch Jared twenty-four-seven. If he so much as poses a threat to Summer's health and safety, they'll immediately lock him up. I promise you, he came back this time only to help Summer open up again. He doesn't have other motives."

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I was beginning to suspect Ashton was born with some sort of supernatural power because just a few simple words from him seemed to put me under a spell, instantly quelling the boiling rage in me.

Truth be told, even if I disagreed, what could I possibly do? Faced with an opponent like Ashton, whatever tricks we used would be ineffectual against him because he had countermeasures for everything we threw his way. For example, I had no idea that he paid such a steep price to employ such adept “watchdogs” for the Crests.

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“Fine. I’ll allow Jared to continue using his identity as a teacher to help Summer with her emotional struggles, but only for this. You must warn him not to expose his identity or even think about gaining custody of her. Also, I’m only giving him two years. Two years, that’s it. If Summer still hasn’t returned to normal by then, he has to leave immediately.”

“Understood. If you want to, I can get him to put it down in black and white,” Ashton suggested.

“There’s no need for that.” Although I had acquiesced, I wasn’t going to go easy on him. In a tone oozing with sarcasm, I spat, “Knowing Jared’s character, we can forget about having it in black and white. Even if he makes a blood oath, he won’t deserve my trust. You’re his guarantor, so if anything happens, I’ll hold you accountable.”

“Then, you probably won’t get the chance,” Ashton countered in a lighter tone, probably relieved that I had conceded.

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“Let’s hope you’re right.” Women weren’t as forgiving as men and worry still gnawed at my chest. “I’m gonna be frank with you. I still don’t fully believe that Jared has turned over a new leaf.”

“Trust me. You won’t be disappointed.” I could hear the smile in Ashton’s voice.

“We’ll see.”

Not in the mood to joke around, I hung up the call immediately.

The moment I turned around to head back into the house, I saw John leaning against the glass door with his hands stuffed into his trouser pockets, looking me with a long face.

“Lemme guess. You heard everything.” I raised my brows.

“Yeah.” John inhaled deeply and straightened up before walking over to give me a solemn look. “Summer likes me and I like her too. You might as well transfer all rights to me and let me take her in as my own daughter.”

“Huh? What the hell are you talking about?” My eyes went wide with shock.

“Is there anything wrong with my suggestion? Look at what Ashton said about giving Jared a chance. Does someone like him even deserve a chance? Summer can’t handle anymore trauma. Let me adopt her and I’ll see who’d dare to harm a hair on her!”

It was very rare to see John disagreeing with Ashton. Seeing how dead serious he was, I couldn’t hold back my laughter. John seemed to really regard Summer as his biological daughter.

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I shook my head helplessly and stepped forward to smack him on the shoulder. "When you show the same amount of concern for Kiki, then we'll talk about handing my daughter over to you, hmm?"

Without waiting for his response, I walked past him and went upstairs.

It was approximately eight o'clock when Emery called me. Her appointment for her treatment overseas had been brought forward. We chatted for a while and she had to hang up the call to board the plane. She was an easy-going person, but I hoped that she would come back with good news this time.

The next day, John insisted on sending Summer to school with me.

I parked the car at the same spot as the previous time. Jared's tall figure was particularly eye-catching among the group of children, but he had deliberately dressed in a simple outfit. His jaw was covered with stubble, making him look like he had aged a decade.

Having not seen him for a few days, Summer broke into a run toward him the moment she got down from the car.

Jared instinctively crouched down to hold Summer. Both of them were all smiles, garnering a lot of envious gazes. Of course, those who felt that way were merely outsiders. John, on the other hand, was dripping with jealousy.

He watched Summer and Jared laughing heartily with a murderous look on his face, looking like he was only a step away from tearing down this scene. I noticed his lips moving subtly as he mumbled something under his breath. From his expression, I could tell that it wasn't anything sweet.

Jared nodded at us in greeting, seemingly much more courteous than the previous day.

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His behavior reminded me of Ashton back then. I had seen it too many times. Thinking about the scheming mind behind the kind facade, fear gripped my heart.

Afraid that I might regret my decision, I stopped looking at him and simply said, "I'll have to trouble you to take care of Summer in school, Mr. Cress."

"It's no trouble at all. It's my job. Besides, Summer is a very good girl." Jared stroked Summer's head and they smiled at each other, getting along very well.

Finding this scene absolutely unbearable, John's brows scrunched together as a grim expression took residence on his face. He and Summer were still not on talking terms because of the matter about the school transfer. Unable to let go of his inflated ego to initiate a conversation with her, he felt all the more depressed.

## In Love, Never Say Never Chapter 1319

John's becoming more ridiculous the older he gets. I can't believe he's being so serious with a child.

Pursing my lips, I discreetly signaled Summer with my eyes, to which she instantly understood. With that, she walked over to hold John's hand and started behaving adorably. "Uncle John, will you come pick me up tonight? Can you bring me for some ice cream? You know I love eating ice cream with you the most, Uncle John!"

It was difficult for a man, no matter how old he was, to remain unmoved when a little girl said such sweet words to him, especially in such a cute voice.

True enough, the sullen look on John's face was replaced by delight. Although he proudly raised his chin, he couldn't conceal the smile on his lips.

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He feigned indifference as he looked down at Summer, clearing his throat mechanically before saying, "It depends on your performance. If you're a good girl, then I'll reward you. If not, there'll be no ice cream for you!"

"Okay!" Summer raised her chubby hand and made a salute gesture, almost losing her balance and looking absolutely adorable.

John finally caved, crouching down to take Summer's hand as his gaze abruptly softened. "Be a good girl, mm? Listen to your teachers and have fun with your friends, okay?"

He was an imposing man who had once raised a colossal uproar, but he was like a tamed lion in front of Summer. The cautious way he treated her made others envious, thinking how nice it would be to have such a warm man as their family.

But I knew that he was actually overwhelmed with worry about Summer's safety just like me.

Still a child, Summer didn't understand the hidden meaning in a grown-ups' words and took it literally. "Mm! I got it, Uncle John. I'll make many, many new friends and work hard to become mini Superman!"

Witnessing a child's innocence was the best way to wash away all our troubles and sorrows. Summer's brilliant smile was immensely reassuring, and I found myself relaxing considerably. Without saying anything else, we let Jared lead her in.

This time, as I watched this so-called "Mr. Cress" walking into the building hand in hand with Summer, the weight in my heart was no less lighter than the previous time.

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While I was lost in my thoughts, John suddenly leaned over and confidently announced, "Don't worry. I've arranged an assistant for Jared, to make sure that he'll never get the opportunity to be alone with Summer."

Hearing this, I visibly slumped with relief.

...

Bryson's court trial received quite a lot of media attention. There were reporters waiting outside the courthouse, while the courtroom was filled with people there to bear witness.

Surprise filled me when I saw Zander in the defense attorney's seat. He had only recently passed the bar examination but was already defending a business tycoon like Thora in court. For a newly qualified lawyer, this was a form of recognition as well as an honor.

Unfortunately for him, although he tried very hard to defend his client, he failed to gain the upper hand over Brooklyn in the face was numerous valid pieces of evidence.

The first verdict stated that Ziegler Investment was required to compensate Bryson eighty percent of his investment, totaling up to a hundred and sixty million.

After emerging from the court, seeing as there was a high chance he was going to win the lawsuit, Bryson decided to bring us out to celebrate. Before we left the premises, Zander caught up to us with his assistant in tow.

"What can I do for you, Mr. Hoffman? As a lawyer, you should know that I can put in a request for you to be disqualified in court if you contact our witness in

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private.” Brooklyn was an eloquent speaker in court and someone you wouldn’t want to offend in private.

“Of course, I know that, but surely it’s not against the law to have a chat with Ms. Stovall?” Zander replied calmly.

My brows furrowed in dubiety. He’s doomed to lose the lawsuit. As his opponent, what is there for us to talk about?

Despite being uncertain about what Zander was playing at, I still agreed to his invitation and went to the pantry in the courthouse alone with him.

“Go ahead and get straight to the point, Mr. Hoffman.” If he wanted me to order Brooklyn to go easy on him, then I would immediately end this discussion.

“I admire your candor, Ms. Stovall. Since you insist, I’ll cut straight to the chase. My client, Ms. Ziegler, hopes you can persuade Mr. Queen to drop the lawsuit and settle things privately. As for the compensation, Ms. Ziegler said that she can pay the full amount of two hundred million.”

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I was mystified by what he said. They refused to entertain Bryson before, but all of a sudden, they want to settle things privately? What are these people really up to?

When I remained silent, Zander took in a deep breath and continued explaining, “Both the Zieglers and the Queens are prominent families in K City. There’s no need to go head to head with each other for merely two hundred million. Ms. Ziegler has also expressed that Mr. Queen’s investment will reap the most profits in the future. So, do we have a deal, Ms. Stovall?”

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“You’re asking me?” I feigned cluelessness. “Mr. Hoffman, I’m afraid you’re mistaken. The plaintiff in this lawsuit is Bryson. I’m just the assistant of the lawyer representing him and don’t have much of say in such this. Sorry, but I’m afraid I can’t help you.”

Probably never expecting that I would be so uncooperative, a frown formed on Zander’s face, obviously displeased about the outcome. “Ms. Stovall, don’t fool around with me. No law firm in the entire city dared to accept this lawsuit; all except yours. It’s easy to see that everything about this has very little to do with Mr. Queen.”

A small intern couldn’t possibly have the authority to make his own decisions when two hundred million was involved. Needless to say, he must be acting under Thora’s instructions.

Before the lawsuit was officially filed, Thora behaved very arrogantly. Seeing that Bryson had no connections or status in K City, even though she knew she was in the wrong, she still abused her power and bullied him, forcing him to suffer a loss. Now that things weren’t in her favor, she wanted to make peace to preserve her company’s reputation. Businessmen were indeed cunning little b\*stards.

Alas, just like Zander had expected, both Bryson and I weren’t doing it for the money.

I lowered my head and chuckled softly, intentionally avoiding giving him a direct answer. “Mr. Hoffman, both of us were in the same batch before. I really never thought that my first lawsuit would be against you as well. This must be fate, don’t you agree?”

Zander’s face darkened subtly, but he refused to give up and tried to convince me again. “Ms. Stovall, let’s not discuss personal matters during work hours.

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Perhaps you're not satisfied with the conditions I stated? Could you be more forthright, so that it'd be easier for both sides to continue cooperating? What do you say?"

Zander was as rigid as ever.

Pressing my lips together, I walked past him toward the exit. "If it's a truce you want, show some sincerity. Get your client to come and see us personally, or you can forget about this."

Worried that something might happen to me, Brooklyn and Bryson both waited by the corridor. When they saw me coming out, they immediately came up to me.

"How did it go, Ms. Stovall? Did he make things difficult for you?" Bryson asked with concern.

Before I could answer, Zander emerged from the pantry with a gloomy face. As he passed by us, he nodded expressionlessly and left without looking back.

"He's definitely bad news since he's defending that woman," Bryson spat while staring after his retreating figure.

My mouth curved into a helpless smile. "Well, then. It's a good thing I rejected that bad man's request to settle things peacefully for you. Mr. Queen, you won't accuse me of overstepping my boundaries, will you?"

"Of course not!" Bryson exclaimed with a grin. "I can't even thank you both enough for helping me. Naturally, everything else is for the two of you to decide."

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“Great.” I nodded and told the truth. “The defense attorney said that they can pay two hundred million in full with the condition that we drop the lawsuit. I’ve rejected the offer on your behalf and expressed that unless Thora personally comes forward to apologize, we will not settle it peacefully.”

“That’s an additional forty million. How generous of Thora,” Brooklyn joked.

“Forty million is nothing! It’s won’t bring me the same satisfaction as winning this lawsuit! You really do understand me well, Ms. Stovall.” Bryson beamed with joy. “Today’s such a happy day. This calls for a celebration and it’s my treat. Both of you don’t have a say in this!”

Having said that, he took out his gilded phone and called his subordinate and instructed, “Book the largest private room in The Jade and get the manager to open their most expensive bottle of red wine. I’ll be there with my guests in fifteen minutes...”

I mentally rolled my eyes. This man was constantly flaunting his wealth, but unlike those truly filthy nouveau riche, he treated others with sincerity and knew when to show gratitude. Hence, it was impossible to dislike him.

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