

When There Is Nothing Left But Love Chapter 1473-1477

Chapter 1473

A question still lingered at the back of my mind. Disturbed, I wondered, "Why on earth would Ashton lie to me?"

Was it because Ashton already knew that I was Scarlett and wanted to distract me from the truth?

John read the uneasiness on my face and remarked somewhat impatiently, "There's no need to overthink things. I simply don't understand how you're willing to overlook the maniacal things that the Hall family has done on Ashton's account. If I had known, I'd have ruined them on the stock market instead."

"What makes you think I will?" I shot back, meeting John's gaze steadily. "What right does someone who harmed me have to raise my children?"

John was taken aback. He leaned forward, spreading his hands on the smooth tabletop. Skeptically, he asked, "Didn't you feel sorry for Ashton when I hurt him?"

"The one who harmed me was the Hall family, not Ashton. Why would you hurt him?" I asked quizzically. Besides, Ashton was the father of my child. I didn't want to see Gregory disconsolate.

John had a grave look on his face. "Don't you know that Ashton is the Hall family's front man right now? Do you think I would have given Gregory up if it hadn't been for Ashton's continued resistance?"

I felt rather disconcerted. It appeared that we were caught between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand, I couldn't just abandon Gregory like that. However, Ashton remained a stubborn obstacle between us.

Just as I was fretting, an idea occurred to me. Turning towards John, I asked, "John, are the mercenaries you hired really the best?"

John looked bewildered by the abrupt shift in the conversation. He scratched his head, then nodded slowly. "What are you planning to do?"

I flashed a wicked grin at John, then said, "Can they help to kidnap two people for me? Wait, one will do."

After all, once one had been kidnapped, the other would surely deliver himself.

"Who do you want to kidnap?" John probed.

Without hesitation, I announced, "Ashton!"

"You want to kidnap him?" John asked, raising an eyebrow. "What do you want to kidnap him for? To teach him a lesson? Have you forgotten when you hated him? Once the matter ended, you'll fall back in love with him all over again, and the blame will fall squarely on me. I'm not taking the fall for this one again." "Of course not!" I assured him, laughing a little at John's panic. "Legal custody of Gregory belongs to the Hall family, but it's under Ashton's name. If we kidnap Ashton and bring Gregory over, we wouldn't be contravening any laws, would we?"

John took a deep breath, then exhaled slowly. "Are you serious about that?"

I rearranged my features into the sternest face I could put on, then challenged John, "Do I look like I'm joking?"

John examined me, then said doubtfully, "I can't tell. Women change their minds more quickly than the wind changes."

"Will you help me or not?" I pressed him.

"I'll help," John agreed at last. "It's a huge task, though, so we should plan it well. The luster of the Hall family may have dimmed, but they're not entirely incapable yet. It won't be that easy to lay hands on their sole source of income. Perhaps we should return to M Country first, where the rest of our family is waiting. We shouldn't disappoint them..."

John rambled on, but the rest of his words fell on deaf ears. I wiped my mouth and led Audrey away from the table. "Audrey, are you feeling tired yet? Let's go find a place to sleep."

John stretched out a hand to stop me but quickly withdrew it when I rolled my eyes contemptuously at him. "Letty, don't be reckless. The plane is leaving soon. Let's go home first. As for the kidnapping..."

I had strode to the entrance of the VIP lounge with Audrey with John doggedly tailing us. His words died away at the sight of the airport security. John then quickly corrected himself, "As for that matter, we'll have to wait for a suitable moment."

Audrey and I paid no heed to John. I raised a hand to wave a casual goodbye to him before sauntering away. "Got it! Remember to get the plane to turn back!" I reminded John helpfully.

My reluctance to leave K City actually stemmed from the fact that it was the only place I was familiar with. I hadn't expected that John would let us go so easily. The belligerent man who had held his ground before Ashton had now buckled.

Chapter 1474

John drove us to the city's finest hotel. We proceeded straight into the presidential suite.

We had barely sat down when John began video calling the rest of our relatives in M Country. He fixed his phone on the table, angling it such that both Audrey and I also appeared within the frame.

Our call was picked up almost instantly.

The moment Zachary and Cameron flickered into view, their eyes almost immediately glimmered with tears. They seemed so overcome with emotion that they were unable to speak for a while.

Louis had since retired and was in high spirits. He thus spoke first, nodding contentedly, "We are happy to see that you're doing well."

I felt rather embarrassed in the face of these supposedly dear family members that I had absolutely no recollection of. They had evidently missed me, however, and I was moved by their affection. After approximately half an hour of conversation that flowed naturally after a while, we ended the call as Audrey was complaining of sleepiness.

John left his phone lying on the table and immediately picked Audrey up, carrying her into the room. As John delicately held Audrey in one arm, he patted her gently on the back with the other. It was the model image of fatherliness.

John ensured that Audrey was tucked into bed and turned off the lights before heading back into the living room.

“Can you drive?” John asked as he took a seat beside me. He’d picked his phone up and was jabbing at it.

“I don’t know,” I admitted, shaking my head. After I’d regained consciousness, Marcus had been the one sending me everywhere. Afterward, Ashton too had arranged for a chauffeur for me. I’d thus not had the chance yet to even come into contact with a steering wheel. “I think I can try, though. Why don’t you buy me a car?” I ventured.

John ignored my playful request. “That means you can’t drive, then. You’ll head downstairs on your own later. The chauffeur and the car are already waiting for you at the entrance of the hotel. I’ll stay to accompany Audrey, so I won’t be seeing you off.”

“How did you know I wanted to leave?” I gaped at John in astonishment.

Without batting an eyelid, John replied smoothly, “I know you far better than you think. Go back and do what you have to do. Once you’ve wrapped up the loose ends, there won’t be a need to look back and regret anything. Leave Ashton’s kidnapping plans to me. I’m not fond of that fellow, but since you’re set on a family reunion, I’ll find a way to fulfill your wish. I’ll use him as a servant at the most.”

I could not help but find John’s stoicism endearing. I was clearly very important to him that he was willing to put aside his immense hatred for Ashton to please me. At that moment, I knew then the full weight of what Scarlett meant to John.

It was past five in the evening when I exited the hotel. A gray Mercedes-Benz was the only car parked out in front. I approached it cautiously. As I went near, I could hear the sound of the doors unlock. Thus, I immediately opened the car door and slid into the passenger seat.

I was stunned to see that the chauffeur was a woman.

“Pleased to meet you, Ms. Stovall. I’m Millie. You have previously hired me to protect you and your children. After what happened, Mr. Stovall kept me in his service to await your return. You can ask me anything you like. There’s no need to feel shy,” she chirped.

Millie’s straightforward explanation and heartiness comforted me. I immediately took a liking to her frank manner.

“I’ll leave my safety in your capable hands then,” I replied her warmly. Fastening my seatbelt, I instructed, “To the Fullers’.”

Within the next second, Millie had revved the engines, and the car hurtled forward.

We arrived at the Fullers’ villa in less than twenty minutes.

“We’re here,” Millie said matter-of-factly as she turned off the engine.

I took a deep breath. It was a while before I felt confident enough to face what lay ahead of me. I unbuckled the seatbelt rather hesitantly.

“Do you need me to go in with you?” Millie asked.

“There’s no need,” I asserted. “Ashton will be alarmed if I bring someone with me. Go back and look after Audrey.”

I sounded more self-possessed than I was. Deep inside, I was trembling. I stepped out of the car and took a breath of fresh air. Millie's driving hadn't helped matters. The breakneck speed at which we'd flown through the streets had only served to increase the level of adrenaline in me. Consequently, my heart was still pumping madly.

I straightened myself out, then walked up to the entrance of the villa. As I crossed the threshold, however, I ran right into Ashton.

"Ms. Stovall?" Joseph, who was following behind, exclaimed in amazement.

Gregory had been dragging his feet listlessly beside Joseph. When he heard Joseph's yelp, he immediately perked up and dashed over to me.

"Mommy! I thought you didn't want me anymore. I want you to be my mommy forever! Don't leave me behind," Gregory bawled, clinging desolately to my leg.

Chapter 1475

I quickly knelt down next to Gregory and pacified him, saying, "Silly boy, Mommy only left for a while. How could I have left you behind? Didn't we agree that we'd stick together?"

However, Gregory could not be so easily appeased. He frowned in deep thought. After a moment, his eyes lit up. Extending his tiny pinky towards me he claimed, "We didn't make a pinky promise last time, so it didn't count. Now we have to!"

I put on an unsmiling face and hooked my pinky with Gregory's. He cheered up considerably afterward.

Looking down at Gregory clad smartly in a tuxedo, I guessed that the three of them were heading out to dinner. In a friendly manner, I asked, "Are you going out to dinner tonight, Gregory?"

Before Gregory could reply, Ashton cut in with a low voice, "We're going to meet my parents. You have to come too."

We're going to meet the Hall family? I thought, amused. I guess today isn't a wasted trip after all.

I smiled cheerfully at Ashton, then replied, "Sure! Let me go back and change. Wait here for me."

"It's alright," Ashton commanded, halting me in my tracks. "You can come as you are. There's no need to be so formal."

Without another word, Ashton got into the van parked just outside the yard.

I shrugged and followed after him, holding tightly onto Gregory's hand. At least I've saved some time and trouble going back to change.

I was actually supremely interested to meet the Hall family. They must be a callous bunch who attempted to wipe out their own son and daughter-in-law without blinking.

We boarded the van. I sat in the back with Gregory while Ashton sat in the front. We seemed to have come to a mutual understanding that the earlier matter with John would not be discussed.

Gregory was thrilled to see me and naturally chattered on endlessly, filling me in with all the news from school that I'd missed in my absence.

When the van was idling at a traffic light, I suddenly thought of Audrey. Experimentally, I asked, "Gregory, you don't really like to mix with the younger children at school, do you? Do you find them dull? If you have a younger sister who's very childish, would you dislike her?"

"Of course, I won't!" Gregory declared stoutly. "I'll stay with my sister always and protect her. I won't let anyone bully her!"

The firmness with which Gregory spoke made an amusing contrast with his still-babyish voice. A picture of Gregory and Audrey holding onto each other suddenly surfaced in my mind.

I laughed, then ruffled Gregory's hair. I looked at him fondly, commending, "You've really grown up into a fine young man, Gregory!"

Looking up, I saw Ashton sneakily watching us through the rearview mirror. However, Ashton looked away from the mirror the instant our eyes met, All that remained was the stiff, icy look on his face.

He issued me with another look of utter contempt that doubled up as a warning.

Ashton didn't seem to care that I had told Gregory about Audrey. It felt like he had full assurance that he would be able to acquire custody of both Audrey and Gregory.

Time flew by as I was thus occupied in thought. It seemed as if we'd arrived at the Hall residence within mere minutes.

Ashton led Gregory and me forward while holding onto Gregory's hand, I followed closely.

"Mr. Ashton, Mr. Gregory," the maids standing by both sides of the door chorused as we entered. The living room, however, seemed to be completely still. I presumed that we had arrived earlier than we were expected.

Upon further inspection, however, I realized that I had jumped too quickly to conclusions.

The entire Hall family had already assembled, and they filled the living room. They'd spread themselves out on the sofas but remained oddly hushed. Some were flipping through the papers while others scrolled through their phones. No one exchanged a single word. A suffocating silence hung in the air.

At the sound of our incoming footsteps, Tiffany's head snapped up. The moment her gaze landed on me, she looked aggressive.

Ashton, however, stepped forward, placing himself squarely between Tiffany and me. Ashton's sturdy body formed a solid barricade that prevented further escalation of the tension that charged the air between us.

Tiffany sulked. She flung her phone away from her, crossing her arms in front of her chest in annoyance.

Ashton ignored her completely. He strode into the room with the two of us in tow, paying no attention to the various looks that were suddenly focused intently in our direction.

We'd barely taken a few steps into the room when Tiffany said incredulously, "Ashton, have you been too busy with work after firing me from the company? We're having a family dinner tonight. It's not the time for you to bring random strangers home."

Chapter 1476

Obstinately, Ashton remained standing where he was. He cast a backward glance to see Joseph hurrying in with a stack of gifts.

“Scarlett prepared these small tokens for Mom and Dad,” Ashton explained evenly.

Baffled, I looked at Ashton. When had all these been prepared? Had Ashton already predicted that I’d leave John behind to attend the dinner with him?

My mind was swimming with thoughts.

Tiffany tossed her head uncaringly. Joseph, laden down by the weight of the gifts in his arms, tottered awkwardly into the room.

Just then, a deep voice commanded regally, “There’s no need to make such a fuss. We’re family, after all. Housekeeper, take those things from him.”

As if on cue, the housekeeper nervously stepped forward, stiffly receiving the items from Joseph. The atmosphere within the room instantly eased.

It was Nathaniel who had spoken. I’d only heard his voice before and had only taken the briefest of glances at his photo. I was surprised to see that he was casually attired and looked rather youthful. Nathaniel appeared distinctly approachable, unlike the elderly patriarch I’d envisioned in my mind.

Experience told me, however, that there was more below the surface than met the eye.

As he watched the housekeeper set the items down conscientiously, Ashton suddenly turned and leisurely placed his arm around my shoulder. He then led Gregory and me to the sofa next to where Nicolas was sitting.

We’d barely sat down when Tiffany began her whining once more.

“Ashton, you take pains to ignore me whenever we’re in the office. Let’s take this opportunity today to thrash things out. You’ve removed me from my position as the Finance Director and terminated my subordinates. What are you planning to achieve? Don’t forget that the company doesn’t belong to you alone! I’m your own flesh and blood. I should be the one you trust the most!”

As Tiffany spewed her discontent, the maid arrived with cups of hot tea for us. Ashton calmly poured out a cup, then handed it to me. “Have some tea,” he said placidly.

Tiffany bit her tongue in anger. She seethed as she watched Ashton deliberately stir his tea, then drink it slowly. “Are you even listening to me?” Tiffany asked querulously.

Ashton glanced coolly at Tiffany. Menacingly, he growled, “Shut up.”

It felt as if the air in the room had congealed, and the temperature dropped by a few degrees. A shiver danced down my spine.

The smug look on Tiffany’s face remained. She seemed snooty, even emboldened by the fact that she was on her turf and under the Hall family’s protection.

Tiffany thus paid no heed to Ashton’s solemn warning. Instead, she drew herself up and pounced onto me, clawing at my arm. “It’s all because of you! How dare you pretend to be Scarlett and seduce my brother? Get out!”

Ashton stood up. Towering over Tiffany, he glared at her with such hatred that even I, despite not being the object of his attention, quaked inwardly.

It was Tiffany’s first time witnessing this side of Ashton. She gaped at him, cowering in terror.

Ashton's muscular arm suddenly shot out and grabbed Tiffany's neck in a stranglehold.

His movements were so swift that it frightened even Joseph, who was used by now to Ashton's capricious ways. "Mr. Fuller!" he gasped.

Ashton, as if possessed, maintained his merciless grip on Tiffany's neck. Within less than a minute, Tiffany's pale face had turned a deep shade of violet.

Locked in Ashton's hands that clamped upon her neck like iron shackles, Tiffany struggled. She frantically hit his arms, pleading for release.

She barely managed to gasp, almost inaudibly, "Ash... Ashton... let go..."

"You're right. You're my own flesh and blood. You should know how brutal I can be, yet you continued testing my limits. You deserve what you've got coming to you." Ashton said with a deadly calm.

Indeed, Ashton looked entirely prepared to let Tiffany die by his own hand.

I was absolutely sure that if no one stopped him, Ashton would have finished Tiffany off there and then.

That moment felt utterly surreal. It was as if a gruesome scene from a movie was playing out right before my very eyes. I instinctively reached out to shield Gregory from the sight, my heart palpitating wildly.

If Ashton murdered Tiffany in cold blood, the rest of Gregory's life would be hell.

I gulped. Summoning all the courage I had left within me, I reached out and tugged Ashton's sleeve gingerly. "Ash... Ashton?" I stammered.

A brief shudder ran through Ashton. With a start, he released Tiffany.

Tiffany crumpled to the floor like a rag doll.

The maid ran forward anxiously and helped Tiffany over to the sofa. All other eyes in the room, including that of Nicolas', were fixed on Ashton simultaneously. Nicolas slammed his newspaper onto the table, jolting the already-frayed nerves of everyone present. "Are you trying to rebel against me?" he roared.

Ashton glanced at me, then down at Gregory, apparently unaffected by Nicolas' outburst. He then looked over to Tiffany's inert body with undisguised contempt.

He strolled over to where she lay feebly, then sneered, "Will you say it, or shall I make you?"

"I'll admit it, I'll confess to everything! Just have mercy on me. I was wrong, Ashton," Tiffany babbled. She was almost incoherent with fear. Clenching the pillow she'd picked up from the sofa, Tiffany hid her face behind it as if she could thus avoid Ashton's wrath.

"I lied! You were never engaged to Thora. She promised me benefits in return for matchmaking the two of you... Joseph is your most loyal subordinate. Emery has both a good professional and personal relationship with you. I was the one who manufactured Scarlett's obituary. She didn't betray you. Audrey's also your daughter... Dad was the one who arranged for the hypnosis. We sealed your memories for your own good! I was wrong, but surely it doesn't merit a death sentence! Give me another chance, please, Ashton. I'm begging you, please have mercy on me..."

Tiffany was almost groveling at this point. She had crawled onto the floor and knelt at Ashton's feet, clutching at him wildly. Tears poured down her face in torrents.

My hands still covered Gregory's eyes, but Tiffany's sheer despair permeated any refuge I could offer him from this nightmarish sequence of events. He began to whimper.

I stroked Gregory's back, partly to comfort and partly to quieten him down.

Tiffany's every desire had been accommodated to since she was young. Everything she ate or wore had to be of luxurious quality. Tiffany could get anything she set her heart upon. This fine upbringing had thus culminated in her attitude of absolute complacency.

However, Ashton had viciously brought Tiffany's whole world crashing down about her. She could not even begin to comprehend the bitter environment that Ashton had grown up in, in which he'd carefully cultivated his thirst for vengeance.

As Ashton had declared, Tiffany got what she deserved.

Tiffany's near-incoherent ramble had ignited, rather than extinguished, the fury within Ashton. Narrowing his eyes, Ashton looked at Nicolas.

"Do you want to explain?" Ashton snarled. The grimace he wore looked almost demonic in its rage.

Nicolas remained unfazed. He had watched his daughter's disgrace without flinching. I thought I'd even seen a glimmer of loathing flash across his eyes as if despising Tiffany for the shame she'd incurred.

After a moment, Nicolas replied smoothly, "I'd initially thought that you showed the most promise and was the one most set to inherit my position among the three of you. From the looks of it now, however, I think I overestimated you."

Nicolas then gave a slight nod to the bodyguard who had been standing unobtrusively in the side of the room. He immediately fished out a stack of documents and spread them out on the table.

The photo stood out immediately amongst the rest of the documents. It clearly featured, in high definition, a snapshot of the time I'd spent with Marcus.

"You almost lost your life six years ago because of Scarlett. I saved you! After so many years, you're still adamant about committing the same mistake. Now, you're betraying your family for another Scarlett once more. Take a good look. Is this person the woman you love? She's just a substitute! When are you going to wake up and realize that?" Nicolas shouted.

Ashton's eyes swept over the array of documents, then pursed his lips critically. "It's true that you saved me. Don't pretend to be so noble, though. You knew that I had to be alive for the Hall family to continue living in peace."

Ashton paused. He picked up the photo and examined it closely, then snorted, flicking it away as if it was useless garbage. "There's no need for you to interfere with my business. Perhaps you should worry about your own route of escape first."

"Have you remembered everything?" The neutral expression on Nicolas' face suddenly shifted.

Ashton, however, remained silent.

Maddened by Ashton's absolute disregard for him, Nicolas violently stood up, bellowing, "Ashton, I'm talking to you!"