

When There Is Nothing Left But Love Chapter 1583-1587

Chapter 1583

"Yep," I said with a forced smile. Of course, I swallowed down what was supposed to come after it; that his skin was just as thick.

Holden caught sight of my expression and immediately figured out I was mocking him. His eyes narrowed and he whined, "Scar! Why are you mocking me again-"

Suddenly, a pair of hands roughly shoved a piece of fruit into Holden's mouth.

Holden frowned and chewed. "What is this?"

"Dragon fruit," Ashton said coldly.

"Sh*t! I have trypophobia!"

After that, he made a beeline for the bathroom.

After a series of loud retches, the sound of the toilet flushing rang out.

Ashton glanced at me and shrugged innocently. "I had no clue."

Holden walked out of the bathroom. "Sh*t. Ashton, are you a proper man or not? That was below the belt!"

Ashton leaned against the sofa wordlessly.

I burst out laughing. "Well, as the saying goes, do stupid things, win stupid prizes. God's teaching you a lesson."

Holden suddenly started babbling even more. "God? I fought God a long time ago and I'm only standing here because I won! If not, I'd probably have been chopped up and fed to the fishes. No one can teach me a lesson now unless I want to be taught."

As he spoke, he returned to his comfortable perch on the sofa and lay down casually, completely making this place his home.

He almost seemed as if he were dozing off for a second before he bounced back up like a spring. After he sat up straight, he suddenly stared at me intensely, looking almost like a wolf staring at its prey.

"Just to remind you, if you keep staring at me like that, the man behind you is going to teach you another lesson."

Holden was staring at me like a predator staking out its prey, and Ashton was like the hunter right behind him with his rifle pointed straight at Holden's head. As for me, the poor deer stuck in between, I felt goosebumps beginning to rise on my arms.

It was already hard enough to hold back my laughter at the mere sight of Holden, so I really couldn't find it in me to actually be serious on top of that.

Holden looked back and waved Ashton away. "I'm talking business here. Don't butt in, buddy."

He placed a hand on the armrest of my armchair and leaned over. His sentimental gaze was still staring into my soul. "You're pretty good at keeping secrets, huh? I've known you for so long, and yet I've never known that you were such an artist."

Ashton reached out and pulled him back. "Hey, watch it. Haven't you heard that you should never go after your friend's wife?"

"But--"

"No exceptions."

Holden was speechless and sighed heavily in response. "All right, I see what you're doing. I can't believe I've spent the last six years helping you find your wife and this is how you treat me! What happened to us being friends?"

The two of them stared each other down, as stubborn as bulls. For some reason, the whole scene looked strangely comedic.

"Hey, hey, you've been friends for so long! Is it really worth it to fight right now?" I quickly decided to become the mediator. "It was just a joke! Just be the bigger person and step down, both of you. Let's get back to business. Why were you talking about art just now?"

Holden was clearly still in a huffy mood and he said impatiently, "There's an organization in Eastern Epea who's been selling art pieces under your name. It's really made a huge change to our currency!"

When we heard the word 'currency,' Ashton and I exchanged glances. Clearly, we had arrived at the same conclusion.

Suddenly, a familiar male voice called out from the doorway, "Oh, do you guys have a visitor? Maybe we should have come another day."

I turned to see Nick and Rose walk in.

Nick was holding Rose's hand and she was holding onto his arm affectionately. Every few steps, they would glance at each other as if making sure the other person was still there. It definitely seemed like they were on great terms.

I could tell from just Rose's gaze alone. She was smiling so hard her eyes shone and crinkled at the corners.

Because of our past issues with Jackson, Nick and I weren't exactly close anymore and we chose not to interact with each other if possible. All I heard about him was whatever I got from Cameron, and I was happy to hear that he was on good terms with Rose again. I was also glad to hear that he had managed to expand the company through the Walker family's help and was extremely successful now. Apart from being happy for him as an older sister, I was also relieved to see that the two of them were so lovey-dovey.

The giant river flow of time had always been unforgiving with washing people away. Unfortunately, as mere human beings, we couldn't do anything but watch them leave. Luckily enough, there would always be those people left behind that could huddle together for warmth.

"What are you guys doing here?" I moved aside with a smile, leaving some space on the sofa for Rose to sit down.

She clearly had gotten past all of the Jackson drama and just sat down right next to me. "I heard that you guys came back, and I kept thinking about dropping by, but I was in Europe at the time, so I pushed it all the way to now. You're not mad, are you?"

"Of course not! I'm glad to see you. Don't worry about that," I said breezily. Catching on to what she said earlier, I continued, "Has the Harrisons' business already broken into Epea?"

"Not yet," Rose said, a bright red blush suddenly creeping onto her cheeks. She glanced at Nick before saying, "We went for our honeymoon. Nick had been really busy the past year with work, so the moment he got some free time about six months ago, he took me on a global tour."

Holden smiled meaningfully and interrupted, "Good for you, Mr. Harrison! I told you, men do best when they're with women. Now you know why we tried so hard, right?"

Rose's smile stiffened at Holden's words.

I sighed. Holden was straightforward, but he definitely needed to learn about picking a time and place.

"Don't listen to him. Mr. Taylor's gone insane from counting dragon fruit seeds," I quipped impatiently.

Holden probably imagined it unwillingly and ran off to the bathroom as he started to retch again.

“What happened to him?” Nick asked.

“Probably overdosed on dragon fruit,” Ashton said calmly.

“Ah,” Nick said, not trying to pick a fight. He then changed the subject and said, “We’ve brought you a present.”

He gestured toward the door, and his butlers walked in with a large package.

“Open them,” he commanded.

The butlers opened up the package and revealed the gift inside. It was an oil painting.

I was taken aback and fell silent in shock.

What’s going on? Is today National Art Day or something?

“What do you think? We won this at an auction in Granatano. It cost six point eight million!” Nick said as he admired the painting.

With the Harrisons’ prestige, it wasn’t out of the ordinary for them to give such an extravagant gift. Maybe due to my lack of artistic talent, I couldn’t understand the point of spending so much money on such a fragile piece of canvas.

Out of politeness, I received it with a smile. "I like it! I really like the scenery depicted in it."

I really had no idea what else to praise out of lack of artistic talent, so all I could do was randomly point some things out.

"This is the 'Summer Walk!'" Rose said in shock. "Scarlett, have you forgotten? This is your own painting!"

"Huh?" I said in a daze. "My painting?"

"Yeah!" Rose nodded frantically before saying happily, "Nick said it was fate to run into it even halfway across the world, so we decided to buy it as a present for you. It's both charity and also a way for you to own your own work!"

"Haha..." I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. "Here's the thing, though. I don't know how to draw. Didn't Nick tell you?"

Rose shook her head in disbelief and turned to look at Nick.

Nick immediately burst out into laughter. "I said it on purpose. I thought it was weird because I knew that Scarlett couldn't draw, but I didn't want to affect your mood on our honeymoon so I just made up a story. Sorry, darling!"

Rose started panicking. "Huh? Why didn't you say so earlier? Doesn't that mean we didn't end up getting a souvenir for Scarlett? Nick! How could you?"

Nick just shrugged.

“Okay, let’s not go any further into this.” I knew a couple’s spat could go on for a long time. It was starting to get late, too, so I went straight into the subject. “Nick, what exactly is going on?”

Chapter 1585

“What else could it be?” A defiant voice called out from the bathroom. “F*ck, it feels like I’ve just puked my guts out. I’ve only been at your house for a few minutes and I’m already within an inch of my life!”

For some reason, his voice sounded funny to me. He should start a comedy show, I thought to myself.

Holden’s expression soured at the sight of my mirth and he clutched his stomach as he walked toward us. He had to support himself against the wall as he staggered into the living room and said, “Your drawings may not be worth a penny, but art is priceless. If you sell it, your money won’t be clean anymore. How could you miss such a simple theory?”

His words hit the mark for me. After a brief moment of hesitation, I finally realized how terrifying this all was.

Only dirty money had to be laundered. If it was dirty money, that meant it had been acquired illegally. The moment the transaction got discovered by the policemen, I would at least be arrested for aiding and abetting a crime as the so-called owner of the painting. Even if I didn’t think about the sentence I would get, I would still lose my freedom. I barely managed to get my freedom back, but it seemed like I was on the verge of losing it again.

Why?

Everything was starting to fall into place, so why is everything going downhill again?

I felt myself growing numb after all of my inward complaints.

Suddenly, a warm palm enveloped mine and I came back to my senses, realizing Ashton was holding my hand. I tried my best to bring myself back to reality.

The reason evil people were evil was that they didn't know anywhere else apart from hell. Not only did they not realize any mistakes, but they also tried to drag innocent people inside. All they wanted to do was to see me panic and fret and cry, so if I showed them that they had gotten to me, they would have achieved their goal.

"That's right," Nick said seriously. "That's why I brought Rose over once we landed. People are really cunning nowadays and you all need to be careful. I know you know how to get rid of being suspected as a culprit in money laundering since you studied law, but I just wanted to remind you to do it as soon as possible. It would be bad if you only try to solve it when it comes knocking at your door. By then, it'll be even harder to get out of it."

"Okay," I replied dully. I couldn't smile anymore and decided to send them off. "I got it. It's been a really long day, so I'm going to head upstairs now. Feel free to continue on with your conversation."

"But Scarlett, we just arrived-"

"Rose," Nick interrupted. He could clearly tell that I didn't want to continue talking and glanced at Rose. After indicating for her not to continue the conversation, he helpfully suggested, "It's getting late, we'll make ourselves scarce so you can rest. The kids are at home waiting for us, anyway."

I couldn't exactly be aloof in the face of his considerate words, so I sent them out before trudging upstairs.

I still heard Holden gossiping behind me as I left, "Isn't Nick gay? Has he always been such a manly man?"

I took a hot shower and had just lay down when Ashton walked in and took off his jacket before lying down next to me, pulling me into his embrace.

“Are you stressed out?” Ashton asked quietly after hugging me for a while.

Everyone’s mood changed under the influence of their surroundings, and naturally, Ashton had already grasped the ins and outs of my own mood swings. His tone was so gentle I felt like I was floating on a cloud.

“A little bit.” I flipped around and burrowed into his embrace like a scared rabbit until I was flush against his chest. Sighing in relief, I murmured, “When will we be able to live our lives peacefully?”

“I’m always here for you to rely on,” Ashton said as he leaned over and patted my arm with a warm hand.

His protective gesture suddenly made me feel like a kid again.

I shot my head up and bit onto his chin in retaliation.

“Ouch!” Ashton hissed as he frowned deeply. In just a second, though, his brows relaxed, and he acted as if nothing had happened.

“Did it hurt?” I asked, knowing the answer.

“It itched a little bit,” he said seriously.

Chapter 1586

I couldn't hold in my laugh. "You're getting really good at this. I don't think I'll be able to catch you when you lie to me from now on!"

Ashton curled his lips, tightened his hold on me, and said, "We're married. You can't call that a lie. It's more like a tease."

"So you're actually thinking of lying to me?" I pulled a hand out and pinched his nose, stopping him from breathing.

Rather than getting upset, Ashton broke into a laugh and eventually reversed the situation after some hassle, where he pinched my cheeks instead.

"You done?" Ashton subdued me and gave me a rather meek warning.

"No." I did not know why, but I just wanted to rebel against him.

Ashton did not know how to deal with me. So, he casually tightened his pinch hold, which prompted me to yell, "Woah! This is domestic violence! I'm crying..."

He was at a loss and let go. So, I took the opportunity to tackle and pin him down.

That made Ashton admit defeat and carefully lay there. His hands were on my waist because he was worried I might get hurt. "Alright, Ms. Stovall. You win. What's my punishment?" he said after letting out a deep sigh.

“That’s no fun.” I got down of him and lay beside him.

It was less of a high since the win was too easy.

With that, Ashton turned to the side and looked at me enthusiastically with his chin on his hand. “Aren’t you still upset at the thing with Nathaniel?”

“What can that do?” I questioned, suddenly feeling more carefree about the matter.

Be it money laundering or Nathaniel. There was no escape for me. I only acted weird because my emotions got the better of me. There was nothing to be afraid of once it was over.

Being married was such a peculiar thing. One simple banter and all that negative emotions would instantly disappear. It felt better than talking to a psychiatrist.

When I snapped out of it, I realized Ashton did not answer. So, I turned around to find him with his eyes closed.

“Why aren’t you talking?” I asked him.

Hearing me, Ashton came to and said, “I think we need to get Audrey’s enrolment application done as soon as possible in case she feels disconnected from her peers and can’t get used to living in a society.”

“You’re worried that she might not get enough human interactions and actually fall for Shaun, aren’t you? Tell me, do you not like Shaun?” I pursed my lips into a smile and exposed him.

“I don’t like anyone!” Ashton replied with a hint of disdain in his eyes and a smug tone.

When he finished, he pounced onto me, leaving me no time to react, and pulled the cover over us.

“What are you doing?!” I held him off by the chest, astonished. How is it possible for men to think of doing that all the time!

“I lost. You need to punish me.” Ashton knitted his brow. The look on his face was actually so sincere.

“You’re the one that’s getting punished. Why are you squishing...”

My attempt to reason failed terrifically.

Emery was now a big deal within the domestic investment scene since she owned shares from many companies. Even if half of those bankrupted, she would still be able to live a life of luxury with just the other half. So, she was the best choice for a company as people get way too much time on their hands the richer they get.

Summer wanted to be more involved with Gregory and Audrey’s lives, so she tagged along to help us out.

For the sake of convenience, Audrey and Shaun were both transferred to Gregory’s school. That said, I did manage to secretly put in a word with the principal, asking for them to be in separate classes.

First of all, I did not want them to have too many interactions. And secondly, the Fullers would only be taking care of Shaun until adulthood, not forever. Therefore, he should live his life like how an average child would.

After we left the school, we went to the largest mall in the area and started acquiring things they would need for school.

After a round of shopping, we passed the toy shop, where Audrey broke free from Summer and dived into the ball pit. Thus, we sat on the side and waited for her.

Not long after, I felt something pulling at my sleeve, so I turned around and saw a little girl with a flower basket.

Chapter 1587

“Flowers, Ma’am?” the girl asked with her big round eyes and puffy cheeks. She looked the same age as Audrey, and the clothes she wore were old but still clean, even though there were some random smudges on her face.

I noticed it and quickly took out some tissue, wanting to help her clean it. However, as soon as I reached out, the girl backed away.

She tried to take a huge step back, but kids do not make much distance with those short legs of theirs.

“Don’t be scared,” I told her, trying my best to smile and make myself more approachable. I waved the tissue in my hand to indicate that I meant no harm. “You have something on your nose. Let me wipe that off for you, my dear. Okay?”

The girl was still naive, so she let down her guard in no time and got closer, quietly letting me clean her face without even making a sound.

Seeing what was going on, Emery pulled out a budded flower from the girl’s basket and fiddled it. “It’s a hot day, little girl. Why are you here doing business instead of staying at home? Are you that materialistic?”

'What are you saying?' Emery always had a sharp tongue when it came to strangers.

But the girl did not understand what she meant and merely blinked at Emery innocently.

I was a little amazed by her reaction, so I asked, "Aren't you afraid of her?"

"I'm not. She's a pretty lady." The girl did not even blink as she said that right at Emery's face.

"Ahem..." Emery blushed instantly, but she kept up her act. "That won't work, kid. I'm not going to cough up my money just because you gave me some compliments. I'm a businesswoman too. I don't do deals that aren't beneficial to me, understand?"

"I understand." The girl nodded. "So, that one you have will only cost you two bucks. I won't be making any profit from you."

"Not making any profit? If that's the case, why don't you give it to me for free?" Emery teased. "You cheeky girl. I bet the supply cost is at most half of that. You're just trying to trick me from another angle, aren't you?"

Hearing what Emery said, the girl shook her head violently. "That's not true. My flowers are the best and freshest flowers. They usually cost two fifty each, but I figured you won't have fifty cents, so I gave you a discount."

All of a sudden, it looked like Emery got serious as she turned her whole body around toward the little girl. "Let me educate you on what for free means. It means presenting an item to someone without subjecting it to payment, little girl. So, you give this to me for free, and I don't have to pay for it, understand?"

The girl might not be able to understand all the technical terms, but she understood that she was not going to get the flower's cost. So, her eyes turned red in an instant as she dropped her basket to the floor.

"Alright now, don't worry. The lady here is just joking with you. We'll definitely pay for it." I comforted the child and pulled Emery in for an apology. "What is wrong with you today? Why are you bullying a little girl? Quick, she's about to cry..."

Emery did not seem thrilled about it. "You're being too innocent here. In this day and age, little con artists like her are everywhere! They exploit the sympathy of mothers like you and hike up the price of each flower. They make hundreds in one day! It's way better than those labor work. I'm not the only one that's heartless. Everyone else is doing the same thing! Look, you see anyone showing their concern for what's happening here?"

With that, the little girl's eyes got watery, and tears welled up, looking like they would burst in any second.

Nevertheless, I could not refute Emery's claim. People only took care of themselves even during the olden days, let alone now.

"She's not lying." Summer's voice interrupted my thoughts. I turned around and saw that she was picking up something from the little girl's basket on the floor.

Soon enough, she passed me a piece of paper. "That's the receipt for the flowers. She's not lying."

I took a look, and it was indeed, as the little girl said, two fifty each. She had a total of thirty flowers in her basket.