

# When There Is Nothing Left But Love

## Chapter 239-243

### Chapter 239

Wordlessly, I just listened to her with no intention of interrupting. She got the waiter to refill her cup before continuing, "When I was 24, both of us started to envision our future. I even imagined what my life would be like after getting married to him. I found it beautiful and worth looking forward to, but the reality is cruel. Very few children born from ordinary families can easily gain the respect of others. Only those who are born of noble birth are gifted with inherent superiority and elegance, which make them stand out from the crowd."

She looked at me with contempt in her eyes. "Very few people possess inherent nobility because a trait like this only runs in the blood."

I frowned inadvertently but let her continue.

She leaned back slightly before speaking again, "Because of our difference in family background, I was rejected by the Moore family. Being the proud woman I was, I left

Zachary in a fit of anger, wanting to make a living for myself. So on the day I left K City, I vowed to one day become someone the Moore family looked up to.”

Here, she chuckled with self-mockery. “But fate is a funny thing. I only realized I was pregnant after leaving K City. My pride did not allow me to go back to Zachary, but I was young and it was my first child, so I couldn’t bring myself to abort it. Unfortunately, I couldn’t raise her either. While I was caught in a dilemma, my belly grew bigger and bigger. In the end, I had to give birth to her. I’d thought of finding a man to make things easier, but how could I settle for anything less than Zachary? So after giving birth, I went abroad alone.”

Seeing the sorrow lining her features, my brows drew together slightly. This woman had been fueled by ambition her whole life, but now, I wasn’t sure if it was a good thing.

A brief silence ensued before she went on, “Do you know how difficult it is for a woman in her twenties to live abroad? It’s like walking on a tightrope. I couldn’t sleep at night as I was plagued with thoughts about my child, missing her day and night. But I couldn’t go back to get her, not until I’d saved enough money and had a stable income. Ten years passed just like that. When I went back to R Province to look for her, I found that she had already been thrown out by that damnable man. My child whom I had risked my life for!”

Noticing the mist pooling in her eyes, I lowered my gaze as a dull ache formed in my chest. Even if I sacrificed my life, I would never be able to get my child back. A sneer escaped my lips as I looked at her again. “So? Is this an excuse for you to hurt others?”

She shook her head, calming herself before replying, “Sixteen years. That’s how long I’ve been looking for Rebecca. Even as I longed for her during those sixteen years, I prayed that she was living a good life. To find her, I wasn’t willing to have a baby with someone else

after I got married and would rather be a stepmother. I've been atoning for my mistakes for so many years and now, I've finally found her. You may say that I'm selfish and evil. I won't deny it. But as a mother, I'm willing to do whatever it takes to fulfill all of Rebecca's wishes. Right now, I only live for her."

I sneered. "You love your daughter more than life itself. Don't you think other people would feel the same about their own child?"

"Nothing else is more important than my daughter." She looked at me, raising her tone a little when she said, "Scarlett, you had a choice. If you'd chosen to get rid of the child and leave Ashton from the start, things wouldn't have turned out this way. I gave you a choice, didn't I?"

I really had the urge to laugh, but my anger overpowered it. There were indeed shameless people in the world who could make their selfish and evil deeds sound so noble.

"I'm impressed, Ms. Anderson. As expected of someone who has been through many hardships in life, you can even justify such heinous crimes so effortlessly. Since your hands are covered with my child's blood, aren't you afraid that your grandchild will receive retribution because of you?" I was no saint. My heart would never waver just because of a couple of sob stories.

Right then, I realized that it was truly impossible to perform the virtuous act of burying the hatchet.

Her face darkened at my words. "Do you think you pose a threat to me just because you're associated with Louis Stovall now? To put it bluntly, you're nothing but an ant beneath my boot. If I want you dead, do you think there's anything you can do to stop me?"

Hah!

What arrogant words!

"My life isn't worth that much to begin with. If you have what it takes to claim it, by all means, go ahead. Indeed, being associated with Uncle Louis isn't all that impressive, but you'd do well to remember that the child you killed belonged to Ashton. Not to mention, I'm now connected to Louis Stovall in addition to the White family. Oh, by the way, I forgot to tell you. I also have a brother called John Stovall. You should know him. With a line-up like this, what do you think are the chances of me pushing the Moore family off the edge?"

"You..." Cameron's face blanched.

"Those are very arrogant words, young lady. What makes you think you'd be able to convince that many people to help you?"

I hadn't sensed Zachary's presence, but I wasn't intimidated by him whatsoever. He came over and sat beside Cameron, cocking a brow at me. "The matter regarding the child was a mistake on Cameron's part, but Ms. Stovall, do you really think you have the power to topple my family?"

## Chapter 240

Since the cat was let out of the bag, there was no need to put up a pretense. "It wouldn't hurt to try. Worst case scenario, I'd just lose my worthless life and join my child in the afterlife. No big deal."

He frowned slightly and glanced sideways at Cameron, lowering his voice as he reprimanded, "Harming a child? Since when did you become so inhumane?"

Cameron looked aggrieved upon being questioned. "Zachary, do you know how hard Rebecca's life has been? I just couldn't bear to see our daughter suffer anymore!"

"Outrageous!" Zachary seethed with anger. "You'll only end up ruining Rebecca by overindulging her like this."

Cameron bowed her head, her eyes turning red. "Both of us have owed her too much over the years."

Zachary heaved a sigh and directed his gaze to me. "Ms. Stovall, what's done is done. You can state your condition. We'll do our best to compensate you for the harm we've caused."

I felt like laughing. This couple was really something else; one committed the crime while the other offered hush money. They made quite the pair.

I straightened my back and looked them in the eye. "Since both of you are so sincere, forget about money and status. You know that I'm not lacking in those. How about this? A life for a life. Rather than waiting for karma to run its course, you both can make it happen right away. If I'm not mistaken, Ms. Larson is nearing her due date. Why don't you let both children accompany each other in the afterlife?"

"Don't step out of line, Scarlett!" Cameron's face flushed with panic. "Do you really think you're all that just because you have some influential figures on your side? Let me tell you, you're still an amateur!"

I smiled coldly and nodded without an ounce of anger. "You're right, Ms. Anderson. I know I'm still an amateur, but time is on my side and there are plenty of opportunities to come."

"You're a smart person, Ms. Stovall. Is it really worth it to make everyone unhappy and ruin your own future because of a child?" This was an undisguised threat.

My lips curled into a sneer. "It is! I'll leave you two alone now. Have a good chat." Then, I looked at Cameron, smilingly brightly at her as I said, "Ms. Anderson, we've got all the time in the world. I'm in no rush."

Her face was especially grim. Letting my smile drop, I went back into the hotel.

Their feelings were their business. All I cared about was my own feelings, and right now, I felt great.

People with power and wealth could indeed do whatever they wanted. One life was but a speck of dust to them. How absurd!

Back in the lobby, I found that almost all the guests had already left. When Louis spotted me, he broke into a kind smile and said, "The Stovall family is large, but since you're now my daughter, let's pick a good day to welcome you into the family. A daughter of mine deserves to be treated with dignity and respect."

A smile stretched across my lips even as my eyes stung with tears. In a voice thick with emotion, I replied, "Thank you, Uncle Louis!"

He clucked his tongue and chided, "Silly girl, you should be calling me Dad now!"

I pressed my lips into a thin line, then smiled with tears in my eyes and blurted, "Dad!"

"That's more like it!" He chuckled heartily. "Give me your current address. I'll be carrying out an inspection in other provinces for the next two days. When I'm back, I'll take you out for some good food."

I nodded and stated, "I'm living in Central Park. Remember to be careful on your trip."

He nodded with a smile. "Alright, alright. I'll have your brother take care of you these few days. We're a family now. Just tell him if there's anything you need."

Hearing those words, a warm bubbly feeling rose in my chest.

After Marcus sent off all the guests, he walked over to us and said to Louis, "Uncle Louis, don't worry. I'll take good care of your daughter."

Louis cackled with laughter, then squinted at us and whispered, "Tell me the truth. Are you two dating?"

Marcus blinked in surprise before grinning. "Uncle Louis, I'm afraid this isn't for me to answer."

"Hahahaha!"

Everyone laughed in unison at that. After sending off Louis, Marcus bid Sharon goodbye.

Sharon glanced at me, then turned to Marcus with a complicated expression on her face. "You should know your own limits. Don't complicate matters. If a scandal involving the two of you were to spread in K City, it'd affect the Fuller family and the White family, and now the Stovall family as well. Things will get messy."

Marcus nodded and reassured her, "Don't worry, Mom. I know what I'm doing."

Then, we left the hotel and got into the car.

I couldn't help but look at him in suspicion. "Although Louis has always wanted a daughter, he's a high-ranking politician. It doesn't make sense for him to accept a random girl as his daughter just based on feelings."

He started the car and smiled. "Well, would you look at that? You're not a lost cause after all. You both have the surname Stovall. Do you think it's a coincidence?"

"What do you mean?"

He drove while explaining, "John played a part in this too. He's Louis' nephew and currently under his care. In fact, John has mentioned about you to Louis more than once already. I guess he's said everything that needed to be said."

I was taken aback, struggling to wrap my mind around this revelation. "Isn't John's father a businessman?"

He arched a brow at me. "You should ask him yourself when you have the time. Louis doesn't have children of his own. As for his brothers, one is dead while the other is disabled, so even though their family is large, none of them are close to each other."

## **Chapter 241**

I nodded, making a few guesses of my own. Indeed, John was brought back to K City by the Stovalls a few years ago. I didn't ask him anything about what happened after that, so I didn't know the details. We were still kids back when he came to R Province, and Grandma never told us about the investor who had committed suicide.

For so many years, I'd never asked John about his origins in detail either.

After an entire night of mingling, I leaned against my seat, feeling sleepy. In my drowsy state, I vaguely noted that the car had entered the residential area.

Marcus stopped the car. Seeing me nod off, he got down and came over to my side to open the door for me. "Do you need me to carry you?"

My eyes flew wide open just then, and I hurriedly shook my head. "I can go up on my own!" Sharon was right. If someone were to take such indecent photos of us, things could get ugly for everyone involved.

I wasn't surprised to see Ashton at the gate, but a frown appeared on my face. Is this his way of convincing me to go back with him?

He was sitting on the doorstep, looking like an abandoned child.

After several days of not seeing him, he had visibly lost weight. His former defiant and overbearing demeanor was nowhere in sight, and I noticed that his eyes were bloodshot.

Marcus frowned slightly as he informed me, "I'll head inside first."

I nodded and shifted my gaze to Ashton, who was slowly getting to his feet, catching a glimpse of the white gauze wrapped around his hand.

If I could change the past, I would make sure that I never crossed paths with Ashton in this lifetime. Even though it meant living an impoverished life, I would be more than willing.

I was physically and mentally exhausted. Within three years, I had become completely unrecognizable.

We stared at each other for a long time. I tried to think of something to say, but nothing came to mind.

In the end, I said curtly, "Go back and don't come here ever again!" Ignoring his intense gaze, I skirted around him and walked toward the door.

"You're living together?" he asked with a hint of fatigue in his voice.

I frowned, pausing momentarily. "This is none of your business!"

"Mm." Then, he continued in a weak and raspy voice, "Is this really how things are going to be between us?"

Is this how things are going to be? I honestly didn't know. I had thought about a hundred ways to torture him, but I knew I would be the one getting hurt in the end. Thus, I gave up the idea.

"I know that you hate me and blame me! It's all my fault for not protecting you and our child, but Scarlett, I can't accept how things are between us now. If you hate me, you can take your revenge however you want, but... come home with me at the very least. We're husband and wife. We still have to face this together, right?"

Pursing my lips, I felt my heart squeeze in my chest. "Then let's get a divorce!" I would learn how to let go of my hatred for him. To stop hating the person I once loved would be pushing me to my limits.

My heart felt like it was being shredded to bits, and it hurt everywhere.

Humans are ironic. It's wrong to love, but wrong to stop loving too.

With nothing more to say to him, I swiveled around to climb the stairs.

"After everything we've been through, you're going to end it with just a simple sentence?" he said in a voice that was so low I could barely detect any emotion in it.

I stopped in my tracks but didn't look back.

"Scarlett, if you really hate me, are you willing to let me off just like that? The best revenge is making the other person's life a living hell. Is what you're doing considered revenge or giving up?"

Mystified as to what would prompt a proud man like Ashton to say something so out of character, I inadvertently looked over my shoulder at him.

With a frown, I said, "You know provocation won't work on me, Ashton!"

His gaze seemed to pierce into my soul when he urged, "Come home with me. Only then will you have an outlet for your anger and hatred."

"Aren't you afraid that I might wake up in the middle of the night and stab you to death?" I would never have entertained that idea in the past, but things were different now. When you were filled with so much hatred, killing wouldn't even be enough to dispel it.

He pressed his lips together as his eyes flickered with a barrage of emotions. "I guess I'll just have to wait and see!"

I looked up and saw that the lights upstairs were already switched on, with Marcus' tall and slender figure by the French windows.

At this distance, I couldn't see the look on his face, but I could make a rough guess.

When Ashton followed my line of sight, he frowned in displeasure but didn't comment.

A long moment passed before I glanced back at him, feeling much calmer than just now. "I'll go back with you, but you must do something for me."

"Tell me."

"I want everyone in K City to know who I am to you, and cut all ties with Rebecca while you're at it. Lastly, don't question what I do from now on!"

His brows scrunched together as he nodded resolutely. "Alright!"

After a short pause, he continued, "I'll come to pick you up tomorrow."

"Mm."

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Upon reaching the corridor, I saw Marcus waiting by the door with his arms crossed over his chest.

He looked at me calmly and asked, "All settled?"

I nodded and bent down to change my shoes. "I can't very well hide behind you forever. Besides, I said I was going to face it myself."

"Hah!" He scoffed. "You're just worried that people will spread rumors about the two of us and end up implicating the Fullers and Stovalls, right?"

I twisted my lips together at his choice of words. "Marcus, I'm still Ashton's wife. Indeed, your mother's worries are well-founded."

He was a good man, but I couldn't be so selfish. Besides, I already had my plate full with Ashton alone. I couldn't juggle between him and Marcus.

Seeing the downcast look on his face, I leveled my gaze with his and said, "Thank you for these past few months, but I can't keep playing dumb, Marcus. I'm sorry."

## **Chapter 242**

Without looking at his expression, I straightened and went into my bedroom. In this world, no one would go out of their way to help someone else for no apparent reason. There had to be a motive. I was smart enough to know why Marcus treated me so well.

Sometimes, I wanted to continue feigning ignorance just so that I could stay. However, humans were complex beings. I couldn't very well put on a facade forever, not to mention the current me couldn't afford to be ignorant anymore.

"Scarlett!" He paused before asking in a low voice, "Have you ever... felt anything for me?"

His question stunned me, and my mind couldn't formulate a response for a while. "I'm sorry, Marcus!"

A low laugh came from behind me. "Okay. I understand."

His simple words carried a sense of heaviness.

Even so, there was nothing I could do about it.

I parted my lips, attempting to say something, but no words could escape.

Back in my bedroom, my chest tightened uncomfortably. Even after a whole night of tossing and turning, I still couldn't fall asleep.

During the past two months, I never once thought about how I was going to spend the rest of my days.

Besides solving the matters between Ashton and me, there was also Marcus. I had no qualms accepting his meticulous care. In fact, I even enjoyed it. However, I seemed to have forgotten that there was nothing I could give him, and at the end of the day, he was the one who'd get hurt.

I was broken and beyond repair, so I shouldn't drag him into my mess.

The night passed by so slowly that I thought the sun would never come up.

The next day.

After a sleepless night, my head buzzed with a pounding headache.

Marcus was already in the living room. Upon sensing my presence, he looked at me with a neutral expression. "Have some breakfast first."

I nodded, my gaze landing on the homey meal comprising of eggs, bacon, and bread spread out on the dining table.

As we sat across from each other., he remained silent and ate his food elegantly.

Upon noticing the dark circles beneath his eyes, I asked without much thought, "Didn't sleep well last night?"

He met my gaze and replied tersely, "Eat more." With that, he filled my plate with more food.

I studied him for a while but remained silent otherwise.

My mind had wandered off when my phone rang. When I felt Marcus' eyes on me, I snapped out of my daze and glanced at my phone.

Ashton's phone number was flashing across the screen.

Seeing my lack of reaction, Marcus raised his brows. "Aren't you going to answer it?"

After picking up my phone and swiping it to answer, I placed it against my ear and waited for him to speak first.

"Do you have a lot of stuff? I can go up and help you with them. I'm downstairs now," Ashton spoke in a monotonous voice.

I got up and walked to the windows, then pulled the curtains open. True enough, the man was standing tall and proud downstairs, clad in a black suit.

"It's fine," I declined in a flat voice, then added, "I'll meet you downstairs."

"Okay. I'll wait for you," he answered in a tone that matched mine. I guess this had always been the way we interacted.

After ending the call, Marcus looked at me with pursed lips. "You haven't finished eating."

I stared at him and hesitated for a moment, knowing that he was in a bad mood. "Thank you, Marcus."

Except for this, I didn't know what else I could say. Since everything in the bedroom was arranged by him, I didn't have anything to take with me.

I skirted around him to walk out of the bedroom, but he abruptly grabbed my wrist. Before I could react, he grasped the back of my neck.

It all happened so quickly that I had no way to dodge him. I hurriedly shoved him away and massaged my neck as anger simmered in me. "Marcus, I thought you respected me!"

He huffed out a laugh. "You always see the good in humanity!"

My expression was grave when I stared at him, then I said in a heavy tone, "Goodbye."

This happened because of me, so I didn't have the right to lecture or criticize him. Hence, I had to bear the consequences.

Ashton was waiting by the gates downstairs.

Upon seeing me come out, the crease between his brows eased slightly, and he extended his hand to me. "Let's go home."

His voice was so soft that it was almost carried away by the wind.

I pursed my lips and ignored his outstretched hand, then brushed past him and marched toward the car.

Just then, Marcus' menacing voice came from behind. "You'd better take good care of her, Ashton, or I won't let her go the next time."

I faltered in my steps and looked over my shoulder to find that both men were staring each other down in a silent battle.

Ignoring them, I got into the car and vaguely heard Ashton saying, "There won't be a next time."

Ashton revved up the engine and started driving. Since he didn't make conversation, neither did I. Instead, I gazed out the window to watch as high-rise buildings whizzed past.

As we passed by more buildings, it began to dawn on me that K City was much more than just a bustling city.

"What would you like to eat?" Ashton finally broke the silence, asking me airily. When he glanced sideways at me, his eyes darkened slightly with a hint of frost seeping out of them.

With pursed lips, I replied succinctly, "I'm not hungry." It was true since I already had something to eat earlier.

He kept silent and parked the car in front of a breakfast place, glancing at me to declare, "Well I am."

After getting out of the car, he entered the shop and found a table before settling into a seat. With an expressionless face, he asked, "Do you eat pancakes?"

I wasn't hungry to begin with, so I gave him a nod. "Anything's fine."

Right after that, I bowed my head and scrolled through my phone. Just then, I received a text from John. Are you meeting up with OrbitTech's president in J City this Wednesday?

## **Chapter 243**

It had almost slipped my mind. I swiftly replied to him, already making plans to visit Jackson and Macy in J City as I hadn't seen them for quite some time. Making a mental calculation, I realized that Macy's child was probably already two months old.

Right then, my phone was abruptly snatched out of my hands. I whipped my head up and was met with Ashton's obsidian eyes. With a frown, I questioned, "What's wrong?"

He put the phone out of my reach and instructed, "Eat first."

My frown deepened as I looked at the food in front of me, not having much of an appetite. "I already ate earlier. I'm not hungry."

"It doesn't matter. You should eat more." He pushed a plate of stacked pancakes toward me.

I sighed aloud to express my displeasure but didn't kick up a fuss.

After having breakfast, I could vaguely sense that he was in a foul mood, but I couldn't figure out the root cause of it. Hence, I chose to be silent.

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Silence hovered between us all the way back to the villa. The moment we stepped into the bedroom, Ashton abruptly hugged me from behind. "Did he touch you?" he asked in a deep and hoarse voice, evidently trying to suppress his rage.

Befuddled by his question, I didn't get the chance to react when he started peppering me with fervent kisses, suckling the skin of my neck and shoulders.

My brows furrowed as his actions became rougher. Despite the anger surging in me, I managed to calmly say, "Did you bring me back here because Rebecca can't satisfy you now that she's pregnant? Am I replacing her?"

He paused just then and lifted his head, his breathing becoming heavy with anger. "Scarlett, am I really that despicable to you?"

"Aren't you?" I refuted, turning my head to look at him and meeting his bloodshot eyes.

The temperature around us seemed to plummet drastically.

An inconspicuous smile appeared on Ashton's handsome face, and his gaze on me was like a knife stabbing into my chest. "Very well. I won't disappoint you then!"

He pushed me onto the bed without waiting for me to react. Then, he jerked off his necktie and threw it aside, the buttons of his collar coming undone from his rough movements.

I was dazed for a while before realizing what he was about to do. With my heart pounding wildly against my ribcage, I scrambled off the bed to make a run for the door.

However, before my feet touched the ground, I was pressed down by his body, and the scent that was solely his instantly filled my senses. "Based on Marcus' personality, he probably wouldn't have taken you by force, right?"

Then, he said through gritted teeth, "Let's do something different, shall we?"

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Mrs. Eriksen was originally delighted that I was back, so she made a scrumptious meal and came upstairs to deliver it. Upon reaching the door, she cheerfully called out, "Letty!"

However, she immediately froze when she saw Ashton and me in that posture.

"Get out!" Ashton's features twisted with rage and viciousness.

As Mrs. Eriksen had never been at the receiving end of his wrath, she stood paralyzed for a split second before hastily backing away and closing the door.

"Hah!" A laugh escaped my lips as I stared into his impenetrable dark eyes, mocking him in a voice dripping with sarcasm. "Haha! I'm actually grateful that the child isn't alive. I can't imagine how miserable his life would be with a father like you."

He pinned me with a dangerous gaze and clenched his jaw in an effort to control his temper.

During those few seconds, I thought that he was going to hit me.

But the impact didn't come.

All he did was lean forward to place his lips to my ear before gritting out in a low and hoarse voice, "Let's have another one and see if he'll be miserable or blessed."

I was stunned.

Then, Ashton smashed his lips against mine.

My mind only registered the stinging pain on my lips several moments later.

"Are you an animal?" I yelled angrily.

"Hah!" He sneered. "Good to know that you still feel pain!"

"Ashton..."

Before I could curse him to hell and back, I felt his whole body stiffen all of a sudden just as his breath hitched slightly.

Taking a closer look at him, I noticed that his gaze was fixated on the scar spanning my lower abdomen.

He raised his hand to touch it, but I slapped it away as an idea popped into my mind.

"Why? Does the scar disgust you?"

As he looked at me, I could see the heartache and pain swirling in his eyes. However, I merely found it hilarious and ironic.

"Does it still hurt?" He seemed to have regained control over his emotions as his gaze returned to being indecipherable.

My heart wrenched in pain at his absurd question, and I struggled to draw air into my lungs for a moment.

I pushed him away and got up, then put on my clothes mechanically before uttering, "You're even more farcical than I thought, Ashton."

With that, I swiveled around and went downstairs.

Mrs. Eriksen was in the kitchen. Seeing me come down, she stole a glance at me and turned slightly embarrassed. "You must be hungry, Letty. Molly and I cooked some food earlier. Would you like some?"

I shook my head and turned her down. "No, thank you. I'm going out for a walk."

I was rather surprised to bump into Rebecca at the villa's entrance, but then again, it wasn't all that strange. With one hand supporting her protruding belly, Rebecca got out of the car with the help of her nanny.

The driver drove off after she gave him some instructions. Then, she walked toward the villa with the nanny's support.

When she saw me leaning against the door frame with my arms folded across my chest while looking at her icily, she paused in her steps. The initial excitement on her face was replaced by surprise and hostility.

"Good morning, Ms. Larson. Aren't you going to move in now that your belly has grown so big?" I didn't mean for it to sound sarcastic but simply felt that it seemed inappropriate for a pregnant woman to go back and forth like that.

